Letters to an Unknown

by Prosper Mérimée

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image of PROSPER MÉRIMÉE PROSPER MÉRIMÉE

WORKS OF PROSPER MÉRIMÉE

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PROSPER MÉRIMÉE

I MET Mérimée frequently in society. He was a tall man, erect in his bearing, pale, and, excepting his smile, had the appearance of an Englishman; he had, at all events, that cold, distant manner which forbids in advance any attempt at familiarity. Merely to see him one was impressed by his callousness, either natural or acquired, by his self-control, by his determined self-repression. On ceremonious occasions, especially, the immobility of his countenance was conspicuously manifest.

Even in the society of his intimate friends, and when relating a witty anecdote, his voice retained its habitual calmness and tranquillity, with never an outburst, never a sign of enthusiasm. The drollest details he described in the most precise language, in the tone of a man asking for a cup of tea. All evidences of sensibility he had mastered until it seemed a quality absent from his nature. Not that it was so—quite the contrary; but race-horses there are so well trained that, once under their master’s hand, they never so much as make a sudden start.

His training, it must be said, had begun early. When ten or eleven years old, I imagine, having committed some impropriety, he was scolded severely and sent from the room. Weeping and in great distress, he was just closing the door when he heard laughter within the room, and some one said: “Poor child! he believes we are really angry with him!” Intolerable to him was the idea of being a dupe, and he

resolved thereupon to overcome a sensitiveness which had caused him such humiliation. He kept his word. “Remember to mistrust,” such was his motto.

To guard against every manifestation of pleasure, never to abandon himself unreservedly to the expression of emotion, to be tricked neither by others nor by himself, in his conduct and his writings to have in view the constant presence of an unsympathetic, mocking spectator; to be himself that spectator—these are the most distinguishing characteristics of his nature, of which every phase of his life, of his work, and of his talent bears the imprint.[1]

His attitude was always that of an amateur; it can hardly be otherwise with one who is endowed with the critical temperament. From turning the tapestry around and around, one ends by seeing nothing but the wrong side; and thus, instead of lovely figures, gracefully posed, one sees only the rough bits of embroidery silk. To such a one, it is irksome with forbearance to engage in any public work; to cast in his lot even with the party of his choice, with the school of his preference, the science which he pursues, the art in which he excels; and if, at times, he descends voluntarily into the contest, more frequently he regards it from afar.

At an early age he was placed in comfortable circumstances, then in an employment which was both congenial and interesting, that of Inspector of Historic Monuments. He then succeeded to a seat in the Senate Chamber, and later to a post at court.

As Inspector of Historic Monuments, he was capable, painstaking, and valuable; in the Senate he had the good taste to be usually absent or silent; at court, he enjoyed perfect freedom of action and of speech. To travel, to study, to mingle with men and affairs, such was his real occupation, and his official claims proved no restraint to the indulgence of his tastes. We must remember, too, that a man of such genius compels respect, even in the face of obstacles. His irony pierces the best case-hardened armour. Let us see with what ease and grace he handles it, even to the point of directing it against himself, thus making a double shot.

One day, at Biarritz, he had read one of his novels to the empress. “Not long afterward I received a visit from a policeman, who said he had been sent by the grand-duchess. ‘In what way may I serve you?’ ‘I come in the name of her royal highness, to beg that you will attend her this evening with your novel.’ ‘What novel?’ ‘The one you read to her majesty the other day.’ I replied that I had the honour to be her majesty’s jester, and that without her permission I could not accept engagements outside the court. I flew without delay to tell her the incident, expecting that the result would be, at the very least, a war with Russia, and I was no little chagrined not only to receive authority to go, but to go that very evening to the home of the grand-duchess, to whom the policeman had been assigned as factotum. However, to soothe my feelings I wrote a letter to the grand-duchess giving her a piece of my mind. This letter, ‘giving her a piece of my mind,’ must have been an interesting composition, and I am sure the factotum did not show himself again.”

As for formal gatherings, it would be impossible for any one to address them with more seriousness of demeanour and with less inward deference. Grave, sedate, of dignified carriage, when making an Academic visit, or delivering an impromptu address in public, his manner was irreproachable; but all the while the bird-organ behind the scenes was playing a comic air which turned both the orator and the audience to ridicule. “The president of the Antiquarian Society rose from his seat, all the other guests following his example. He began to speak, saying that inasmuch as from those aspects I was a man of notable attainments, he wished to propose my health, as senator, as man of letters, and as a scholar. There was only the table between us, and I was strongly tempted to hurl a glass of Roman punch at his head.... The next morning I listened to the minutes of the proceedings of the night before, in which it was stated that I had delivered a most eloquent address. I made a speech, to urge that all the adverbs be omitted from the report, but my request was not granted.”

While a candidate for the Academy of Inscriptions, he was taken to call upon some

learned persons of formidable aspect; he wrote, on his return: “Have you ever seen dogs entering a badger’s hole? Before they have had some experience in this occupation, they make, on entering, a desperate show of fierceness, and not infrequently come out much faster than they go in, for the badger is an ugly beast to visit. I never touch the door-bell of an Academician that I am not reminded of the badger, and compare myself, in my mind’s eye, to the dog I have just described. I have not yet been bitten, however, but I have had some ludicrous encounters.”

He was elected, and had, along with others, his archæological burrow. It is easy to guess, however, that his was not the temperament to be restricted to this or to any place of hiding. For him there were always several modes of exit. In him were two individualities: one which acquitted himself conscientiously of the essential duties and ceremonials incumbent upon him as a member of society; the other dwelling beside or above the first, and in contempt or resignation observing his actions.

Similarly, in his affections he had within him two distinct personalities. The first, the natural man, was kind, even tender. In friendship no one was more loyal, more trustworthy. Once he had extended his hand, there was no withdrawal. We see an instance of this in his defence of M. Libri, in opposition to the decision of the judges and to public sentiment. It was the act of a knight, who single-handed combats a whole army. Fined, and condemned to prison, he assumed no martyr’s airs, and in submitting to his misfortune, brought to it all the grace that he had brought of courage to its provocation. He has never referred to it, save in a preface, and then only by way of apology, stating that he had been compelled “during the preceding month of July to spend a fortnight in a place in which he was not at all inconvenienced by the sunshine, and where he enjoyed unlimited leisure.” Nothing more. It is the prudent, subtle smile of a gallant man.

He was, moreover, helpful and obliging. People who approached him to ask a favour went away discouraged because of his cold aspect, but a month later he would call

upon them with the requested favour in his pocket. In his correspondence he gives expression to a striking phrase, to the truth of which all his friends will bear testimony: “It seldom happens that I sacrifice others to myself, and when this does occur I am overcome with remorse.”

Toward the close of his life there lived in his home two elderly English ladies, to whom he seldom spoke and to whom apparently he gave little attention; yet a friend of mine found him in tears because one of them was ill. He never spoke of his most profound sentiments. Here we have a correspondence of love, which developed into friendship lasting for thirty years; the final letter was written the last day of his life, and yet no one knows the name of his correspondent. To one who can read these letters understandingly they are all that is graceful, tender, and delicate, truly affectionate, and—who would imagine it?—at times poetic, imaginative even, like a German lyric.

The following incident is so strange, that it must be quoted almost wholly:

“You have been such a long time writing to me that I began to be very uneasy. Besides, I have been harassed by an absurd idea, which I have not dared to tell you before. I was visiting the amphitheatre at Nîmes with an architect of the department, who was explaining to me at length the repairs which he had had made there, when I saw ten feet away a lovely bird, a little larger than a tomtit, with a linen-gray body, and wings of red, black and white. This bird was perched on a cornice, gazing at me fixedly. I interrupted the architect, who is a great sportsman, to ask him the name of the bird. He told me he had never seen one like it. I approached, and, perching a few steps beyond, and still watching me, the bird did not take flight until I was close enough to touch it. Wherever I went the bird seemed to follow, for I saw it on every tier of the amphitheatre. It had no companion, and its flight was noiseless, like that of a bird of night.

“The next day I returned to the amphitheatre, and there was my bird again. I had

brought some bread with me, which I threw to it. The bird looked at the food, but would not touch it. I then tempted it with a big grasshopper, thinking from the shape of the bill that it would eat insects, but the bird paid no attention to the grasshopper. The most learned ornithologist in the city told me that no bird of that species lived in the country.

“Finally, when I visited the amphitheatre for the last time, I found my bird again, still pursuing my steps, following me even into a narrow, dark corridor, where, bird of light that it was, it should not have dared to venture.

“I recalled then that the duchess of Buckingham had seen her husband in the form of a bird the day of his assassination, and the thought came to me that you were dead, perhaps, and that you had assumed this form in order to visit me. In spite of myself, I could not shake off this foolish idea, and I was delighted, I assure you, to see that your letter bore the date of the day when I had first seen my mysterious bird.”

It is thus that, even in a sceptic, affection and imagination are stirred; ‘tis a “piece of folly,” to be sure, but it is no less true that he was on the threshold of dreaming and in the highway of love.[2]

But along with the lover dwelt the critic, and the conflict between these two personages in the same man was productive of strange results. In such a case, it is better, perhaps, not to look too closely. “Do you realise,” said La Fontaine, “that I am as blind to the faults of persons whom I may love never so little, as if I were a mole living a hundred feet under the ground? No sooner do I feel an atom of love, than I hasten to moisten it with all the incense of my store-house.” This, perhaps, is the secret of his charm.

In the letters of Mérimée harsh words fall like rain amidst the soft ones; “I will admit that you have become much more beautiful physically, but not morally.... You still have a sylph-like figure, and, although I am somewhat blasé concerning black eyes, I have never seen any so large in Constantinople or in Smyrna.

"Now comes the reverse of the medal. In many respects you have remained a child, and you have become a hypocrite into the bargain.... You imagine that you are proud, but I regret to tell you that what you think is pride is only the petty vanity which one would expect in a religious temperament. It is the fashion nowadays to preach. Shall you follow it? That would be the finishing stroke." And a little farther on: "In all that you say and do, you substitute invariably a conventional for a genuine sentiment.... I respect convictions, even those that seem to me the most absurd. You have a great many ridiculous notions (pardon the word), of which I should hesitate to deprive you since you are so fond of them, and have no others to take their place."

After two months of affectionate words, of quarrels, and of meetings he concludes thus: "It seems to me you become more egotistical every day. When you speak of us, you mean only yourself. The more I think of this, the more deplorable it appears.... We are so unlike that it is hardly possible to understand each other." It seems that he had met a character as restive and as independent as his own, "a lioness, though tame," and he analyses it thus: "It is a pity we can not meet the day after having a quarrel, for I am sure we should be in a perfectly amiable frame of mind.... Without doubt, my most dangerous enemy to your heart or, if you prefer, my strongest rival, is your pride. Whatever wounds that, excites your indignation. This notion you carry out, perhaps unconsciously, in the most trifling matters. Is it not, for instance, your pride which is satisfied when I kiss your hand? This, you have said to me, makes you happy, and to this sensation you abandon yourself, because a demonstration of humility is gratifying to your pride."

Four months later, while he is absent from Paris, after a more serious misunderstanding: "You are one of those chilly women of the North, who are governed only by the mind.... Farewell, since we can be friends only at a distance. When we have grown old, perhaps we shall meet again with pleasure." Then, with a word of affection, he recovers his serenity. But the antagonism of their

temperaments is bound to reappear. “Seldom do I reproach you, except for that lack of frankness, which keeps me constantly in a rage with you, compelled as I am always to search for your meaning under a disguise.... Why is it, when we have become all we are to each other, that you must reflect for several days before replying frankly to the simplest question of mine?... Between your reason and your heart, I never feel sure which will win; you do not know yourself, but you give the preference always to your reason.... If you have committed any wrong, it is assuredly that preference which you give to your pride over all the tenderness of your nature. The first sentiment is to the second as a colossus to a pygmy. And that pride of yours is at bottom nothing but a kind of selfishness.”

All this ended in a warm and lasting friendship. But do you not consider admirable his delightful manner of love-making? They met in the Louvre, at Versailles, and in the adjoining woods; they took long walks, even in January, several times a week; he admired “a radiant physiognomy, a splendid bearing, a white hand, superb black hair”; a mind whose intelligence and attainments were worthy of his own, the charms of an unusual type of beauty, the attractions of a broad and miscellaneous culture, the fascinations of a toilet, and a coquetry cleverly directed and managed; he breathed the exquisite perfume of an education so well chosen, and of a “nature so refined, that it summed up for him an entire civilisation”; to sum it all up, he was under the charm. Then the spectator reappears and resumes his post. He disputed the purport of a reply, of a gesture; he dissociated himself from his feelings that he might form an unbiassed judgment; he expressed candidly and epigrammatically his views one day, to regret them the next.

Such was the man as we find him reflected in his books. As a dilettante he wrote and studied, passing from one subject to another, as suggested by the occasion or his own fancy, without devoting himself to one system of knowledge, without dedicating himself to the worship of one idea. This was owing to no lack of study or of natural endowment; few men, on the contrary, have enjoyed a broader mental

training. Besides French he was master of six languages, including their literature and philology: Italian, Greek, Latin, English, Spanish, and Russian. I believe, also, that he read German. An occasional phrase, or a reference in his correspondence, shows the extent to which he had directed these studies.

Calo he spoke in such a manner as to astonish the Spanish gipsies. He was familiar with the various Spanish dialects, and was able to decipher the archaic title-deeds of Catalonia. He understood perfectly English versification. Those only who have studied an entire literature, both in print and in manuscript, during the several successive periods of its development, in style and in orthography, are able to appreciate the skill and perseverance necessary to know Spanish as the author of Don Pedro knew it, and Russian as the author of The Cossacks and of The False Demetrius knew it. With a natural gift for languages, he pursued their acquirement even after reaching maturity. During the latter part of his life he became interested in philology, and while living in Cannes devoted himself to the critical studies which compose the comparative grammar.

To this acquaintance with books he had added that of monuments, his reports proving that throughout France he was the acknowledged expert in this branch of learning. He understood not only the purpose, but the technique, of architecture. Each ancient church he visited in person, conducting his examinations with the aid of the best architects the country afforded. His memory of local affairs was excellent by nature and by careful training.

Born in a family of artists, he was clever in the use of the brush, and as a water-colourist was equally skilful. In short, in this, as in everything he did, he went to the very foundations of the subject. Evasive expression he detested, writing no word until he had reached definite and absolute conclusions. It would be difficult to find a historian whose head was so complete a store-house of information relating to the past, who was himself, indeed, a whole library, a whole museum of information.

He possessed, besides, the rarer gifts of a knowledge of life and a clear imagination, by the exercise of which those relics of the past were revivified and lived again. He had travelled widely, having made one journey to the Orient and two to Greece; he had visited England, Spain, and other countries twelve or fifteen times, and wherever he went he had been a close observer of the manners and customs not only of the best society, but of the peasantry also: “Many a time have I broken bread with people whom an Englishman would not notice for fear of losing his self-respect. I have even drunk from the same bottle with a convict.”

He had lived on familiar terms with Spanish gipsies and toreadors. Many an evening he had told stories for the entertainment of a group of peasant men and women of Ardèche. One of the places where he felt most at home was in a Spanish venta, with the “mule-drivers and peasant women of Andalusia.”

He sought out types perverted, and types unsullied, “through an inexhaustible curiosity for every variety of the human species,” and thus formed in his memory a gallery of living pictures inestimably more precious than any other kind; for those of books and of edifices are but empty shells, once tenanted, but whose structure may be known only by imagining the forms that dwelt therein, from the poems that have survived. By a sort of divination, keen, accurate, and swift, he made this mental reconstruction. In the Chronicle of Charles IX, in The Experiments of an Adventurer, and in the Theater of Clara Gazul it is evident that such was his involuntary method. His writings tend naturally to the demi-dreams of the artist, to scenic effect, and to romance which clothes the dead past with new life. With splendid acquirements and talents like these, he might have occupied in the field of history and of art a position of eminent importance and distinction; yet as a historian he has taken but a mediocre place, and as an artist, his rank, while a high one, is of narrow limit.

The bent of his mind led Mérimée to be suspicious, and suspicion carried to excess

is harmful. To obtain from the study of any subject all that it is able to bestow, one must, I fancy, give oneself to it without reserve, be wedded to it, indeed, but not treat it as a mistress to whom one is devoted for two or three years, only to discard and take a new one. A man produces the best of which he is capable only when, after conceiving to himself some form of art, some method of science, in short some general idea of his subject, he becomes so enamoured that he finds it possessing attractions above all else—himself especially—and worships it as a goddess, whom he is happy only in serving.

Mérimée, also, was capable of cherishing this affection and adoration, but after a time the critic within him awoke, bringing the goddess to trial, only to discover that she was not entirely divine. All our methods of science, all our forms of art, all our general ideas, have some weak spot; the inadequate, the uncertain, the expedient, the artificial, abound therein; only the illusion of love can find them perfect, and a sceptic does not remain long in love. He put on his magnifying glasses, and in the enchanting statue discovered a lack of poise, a vagueness and insincerity of construction, a modernity of attitude. Becoming disgusted, he turned away, not without reason, to be sure, and these reasons he explains in passing. He sees in our philosophy of history an element of speculation, in our mania for erudition the futility, inutility; he sees extravagance in our taste for the picturesque, and insipidity in our paintings of realism. Let inventors and simpletons, through vanity or stupidity, accept, if they like, such a system, such a style; but as for himself, he rejects it, or, if he has not rejected, he regrets that he has not done so.

“About the year of grace 1827 I belonged to the Romantic school. We said to the Classicists, ‘Without local colour, there is no hope of salvation,’ meaning by local colour that which in the seventeenth century was known as manners and customs. But we were mighty proud of our word, and imagined that we had invented both the word and the thing for which it stood.” When, later, he wrote some Illyrian poems which were construed by the critics beyond the Rhine with the utmost seriousness,

he was able to boast of having, indeed, created local colour. “But,” said he, “the process was so simple, so easy, that I came at last to doubt the value of local colour itself, and forgave Racine for having clothed with civilisation the savage heroes of Sophocles and Euripides.”

Toward the end of his life, he avoided resolutely the acceptance of all theories; they were, in his opinion, good only to work on the credulity of philosophers and as a means of livelihood for professors. He accepted and repeated only anecdotes and small facts of observation in philology; for instance, the exact date when one ceases to meet in Old French the two cases derived from the Latin declension. By dint of his craving for certainty, knowledge came to be to him but a withered plant, a stalk devoid of blossoms. In no other way can we explain the lifelessness of his historical essays, Don Pedro, The Cossacks, The False Demetrius, The Social War, The Conspiracy of Catiline, studies vigorous, exhaustive, well-maintained and well-developed, but whose characters are not alive, probably because he did not care to give them life. For in another work, The Experiments of an Adventurer, he has caused the sap to return to the plant, so that it may be seen successively under its two aspects, dull and rigid in the historical herbarium, fresh and green in the work of art. In placing his Spaniards of the nineteenth century as the contemporaries of Sylla in this herbarium, they were as clearly seen by his inner vision, no doubt, as was his adventurer; at any rate, this would have been no more of a tax upon his mental retina. He was reluctant, however, to permit us to see them thus, conceding only facts which could bear the test of proof, refusing to give his own assumptions rather than authentic occurrences, critical to the impairment of his own work, severe to the point of suppressing the best part of himself, and of placing his imagination under the ban.

In his artistic works the critic still rules, but in this case his office is usually one of service, to control and to direct his talent like a spring which is confined within a pipe that it may gush forth in a stream slender and compressed. Certain gifts were

his by nature which no amount of application can bestow, and which were never possessed by his master, Stendhal—the talent for scenic effect, for dialogue, for humorous situations. He knew the art of introducing two characters, and by their conversation alone of bringing them in strong relief before the vision of the reader. Like Stendhal, moreover, he understood personal peculiarities, and was a skilful story-teller. These clever powers he subjected to a severe training, and, by a double strain, endeavoured to compel them to yield the best results from the smallest material.

From the very first he had delighted in the Spanish drama, which is overflowing with vigour and action; and he borrowed a number of its situations to compose, under a fictitious name, some short pieces of deep purport and modern significance; and, a thing unique in the history of literature, many of these imitations—The Crisis and Perichole, for example—are superior to his original stories. Nowhere else do the characters stand out so distinctly and so energetically as in his comedies. In The Conspirators, and in The Two Heirs, each personage, according to Goethe, resembles one of those perfect watches of transparent crystal, in the face of which is visible, not only the exact time, but also the action of the entire interior mechanism. All the minutest details are burdened with significance.

It is the attribute of great masters of painting in five or six strokes of the crayon to sketch in a face which, once seen, can never be forgotten. Even in his less popular comedies—for example, in The Spaniards in Denmark—there are characters, like the Lieutenant Charles Leblanc and his mother, the spy, who will remain forever in the human memory.

If, indeed, so confirmed a sceptic had deigned to have any moral sensibility, he would have explained, I fancy, that to a good judge of mankind every individual is reduced to three or four essential qualities, which manifest themselves completely in a few significant actions; all else is but acquired, and therefore unimportant, to

exhibit which is but a waste of time. Intelligent readers will take this for granted, and it is for intelligent readers only that one should write. Leave idle chatter to chatterers; deal with vital points only, and these exemplify by none but convincing actions. To condense, to curtail, to summarise life, is the purpose of art.

Such, at any rate, was his, which he realises even better in his romances than in his comedies, where the requirements of stage effect and of humorous situations can not fail to exaggerate incidents, to caricature truth, and to conceal behind a theatrical mask the living face.[3] The novelist, less hampered by restrictions and with wider resources at his command, may draw his characters with a more accurate and also a freer hand. Many of these novels are masterpieces, and we may believe that they will continue in the future to be held as classics.

For this assumption there are several reasons: In the first place, they have lived already for thirty or forty years, and Carmen, The Taking of the Redoubt, Colomba, Matteo Falcone, The Abbé Aubain, Arsène Guillot, The Venus of Ille, The Game of Backgammon, Tamango, even The Etruscan Vase, and The Double Mistake, are almost all little structures that stand now as firmly as the day they were erected. This is explained by the fact that they are built of carefully selected stone, not of stucco and other popular materials. Here we find none of those descriptions which pass out of fashion after half a century, and which to-day we consider so tiresome in the romances of Walter Scott; we see none of those reflections, disquisitions, interpretations, which we think so tedious in the novels of Fielding; nothing but action, and action never fails to be instructive. This is all the more striking inasmuch as important action only is introduced, intelligible alike to readers of another country and another century. In the works of Balzac and of Dickens, where this precaution was not observed, many minute details of local or technical significance will be lost, like a plastered wall which crumbles away, or they will be serviceable only to commentators in their commentaries.

A second reason for their endurance is the brevity of these romances, the longest of them consuming but half a volume, while one is but six pages. All, however, stand out clearly and are carefully developed, the interest centred around a single action and a single purpose. Now we must consider posterity in the light that we do a foreigner, in that it does not exercise the forbearance of contemporary readers, and that it does not tolerate tediousness; for how many persons to-day will submit to the eight volumes of Clarissa Harlowe? We must remember, in short, that human attention overtaxed ends invariably in bankruptcy; it is prudent, therefore, when after a century its consideration is still sought, to speak in language concise, clear, and open.

It is wise, moreover, in addressing posterity to choose interesting subjects and to treat them in an interesting way. Interesting subjects: that would exclude events essentially tame or commonplace, characters essentially colourless or ordinary. To treat these in an interesting way: which means situations and passions of sufficient vitality, after the lapse of a century, to have them serve actual conditions. The types chosen by Mérimée were sincere, strong, and original. We may compare them to medallions of durable metal, in bold relief, set in an appropriate frame and amid harmonious surroundings; an officer’s first battle, a Corsican vendetta, a slave-trader’s last voyage, a slip from the path of integrity, the sacrifice of a son by his father, a secret tragedy in a modern salon. Like the novels of Bandello and the Italian fiction-writers, almost all his tales are sanguinary, and are painful, besides, from the cold-bloodedness of the recital, the accuracy of the action, and the skilful convergence of details.

Far better, each one is, in its little setting, a record of human nature, a record, complete and of far-reaching import, to which a philosopher, a moralist, may return year after year without exhausting its interest.

Multitudes of dissertations on primitive and savage instinct, wise treatises, like those

of Schopenhauer, on the metaphysics of love and of death, can not be compared in value to the hundred pages of Carmen.

The wax taper of Arsène Guillot summarises many volumes concerning the religion of the common people and of the inmost feelings of courtesans. I know of no more scathing sermon against the blunders of credulity or of imagination than The Double Mistake, and The Etruscan Vase. In the year 2000 The Game of Backgammon will be read again, probably, to learn what it costs to cheat.

Notice, finally, that at no time does the author force himself on our notice that he may emphasise the lesson, but remains in the background, leaving us to draw our own conclusions. He effaces himself even deliberately so as to appear altogether absent. Future readers will show consideration for a host so polite, so graceful, so discreet in doing the honours of his own home. Good manners are at all times pleasing, and a more courteous host than Mérimée it would be impossible to find. Greeting his guests at the threshold, he introduces them and then withdraws, leaving them at liberty to examine and to criticise undisturbed. He is not obtrusive; he does not call attention to his treasures; never will he be caught in the act of a display of vanity. Instead of exposing his knowledge, he conceals it; to listen to him, it would seem as if any one at all might have written his book. Now it is an anecdote related to him by one of his friends, and which he has transcribed on the spot; now it is “a selection” from Brantôme, and from d’Aubigné. If he wrote The Experiments of an Adventurer, it was because he had once, for a fortnight, had nothing better to do. For writing The Guzla, the recipe is simple: to procure statistics referring to Illyria, to get the travels of the Abbé Fortis, and to learn five or six Slav words. This resolution not to over-estimate himself comes to be in the end an affectation. So great is his dread of appearing pedantic that he flies to the opposite extreme, and the result is his tone of flippancy, his unceremonious manner of the man of society.

The day may come when this will prove to be his vulnerable point, when it will be

asked whether this perpetual air of irony is not intentional; whether he is justified in joking in the very midst of tragedy; whether his apparent callousness is not due to the fear of ridicule; whether his free-and-easy tone is not the effect of embarrassment; whether the gentleman has not been harmful to the author; whether his art was sufficiently dear to him. On more than one occasion, notably in The Venus of Ille, he availed himself of this to mystify the reader. Elsewhere, in Lokis,[4] a grotesque idea, with double meaning, lies at the foundation of the tale, like a toad in a chiselled casket. He seemed to find delight in seeing a woman's fingers unlock the casket, and a pretty face terrified by the sight of some object of loathing made him laugh. It appears that he wrote almost always at random, to amuse himself, to pass the time, without allowing himself to be swayed by an idea, with no conception of a great unity of purpose, with no self-subordination to his work.

In this, as in all else, he was disenchanted, and we find him finally out of tune with life. Scepticism engenders melancholy; and in this regard his correspondence is truly depressing. His health failed gradually; he spent his winters regularly at Cannes, realising that life was slipping away from him.

He took care of his health; he watched over himself; it is the sole concern which the man continued to feel until the end. By the advice of his physician, he practised archery, and as a distraction painted views of the adjacent country. Every day he might be seen walking in silence along the country roads with his two Englishwomen, one carrying his bow, the other his box of water-colours. In this way he killed time and cultivated patience. Out of kindliness of heart he went to a lonely cabin half a mile away, to nurse a cat; he collected flies for a pet lizard; these were his favorite companions. When the railway train brought a friend to visit him, he recovered his animation and became once more his charming self; his letters were so always, for his quaint and exquisite humour he could not repress. But of happiness there was none; to him the future was dark, almost as dark as it is to us to-day;

before closing his eyes it was his sorrow to witness the complete destruction of his country's edifice. He expired September 23, 1870.

If one should endeavour to sum up his character and his genius, he will find, I fancy, that with a tender heart, the gift of nature, endowed with superior intelligence, having lived the life of a gentleman and having worked with somewhat of industry, producing a number of books of the highest order, Mérimée did not, however, accomplish all the good that was his to yield, did not attain to all the happiness to which it was his right to aspire. Through his fear of being a dupe, he was suspicious in every phase of life—in love, in science, in art;[5] and yet he was the dupe of his own mistrust. One is sure always of being the dupe of something, and it may be better, perhaps, to reconcile oneself to the fact in advance.

H. TAINE.

November, 1873.

LETTERS TO AN UNKNOWN Lettres à une Inconnue

I

Paris, Thursday.

I RECEIVED your letter in due time. Everything about you is paradoxical, and the same reasons lead you to act in a manner precisely contrary to that of other mortals. You say you are going to the country. Well and good; that signifies that you will have nothing to do but write, for in the country the days are long, and idleness is propitious for letter-writing. At the same time, the watchfulness and solicitude of your guardian being less interrupted by the customary engagements of the city, you will have to submit to more catechising when letters come to you. In a château, moreover, the arrival of a letter is an event. Not at all; while you may not be able to

write, you may, on the other hand, receive no end of letters.

I am beginning to be accustomed to your ways, and am no longer surprised at anything you do. I beg you, however, to take pity on me, and do not put to too severe a test the unfortunate habit I have formed—I know not how—of thinking everything that you do to be right.

I recall having been somewhat too frank, perhaps, in my last letter, on the subject of my own disposition. A friend of mine, an old diplomat, and a very shrewd man, has often said to me: “Never speak ill of yourself. Your friends will always do that for you.” I begin to fear that you will interpret literally every word of disparagement I said of myself. You must understand that my cardinal virtue is modesty; I carry it to excess, and tremble lest it may prejudice you against me. Some other time, when I am more happily inspired, I will give you the exact nomenclature of all my characteristics. It will be a long list. To-day I am not feeling well, and dare not launch forth into this geometrical progression.

You can not possibly guess where I was Saturday night, and what I was doing at midnight. I was on the roof of one of the towers of Notre Dame, drinking orangeade and eating ices, in the company of four of my friends and of a matchless moon, all of us attended by an immense owl that flapped his wings around us. Paris, indeed, in the moonlight and at that hour, presents a truly beautiful picture. It resembles the cities described in the Thousand and One Nights, whose inhabitants were enchanted while they slept. Parisians, as a rule, go to bed at midnight—the more stupid they. Our party was a curious assemblage; there were four nations represented, each one having a different point of view. The tiresome part of it was that some of us felt obliged, in the presence of the moon and of the owl, to assume a sentimental tone, and to utter commonplaces. To tell the truth, everybody began gradually to talk nonsense.

I do not know why and by what association of ideas this semi-poetic evening recalls

to my mind another, which was not in the least poetic. I went to a ball given by some of my young friends, to which were invited all the ballet girls of the Opera. These women are, as a rule, dull, but I have observed that in moral feeling they are superior to the men of their class. The only vice which separates them from other women is poverty. You will be singularly edified by all these rhapsodies, so I shall hasten to a close, which I should have done long ago.

Good-bye. Do not bear me a grudge for the unflattering portrait of myself which I have given you.

II

Paris.

Frankness and truth are virtues seldom esteemed by women as desirable; rather are they qualities to be avoided. For this reason you regard me as a Sardanapalus, because I attended a ball at which the ballet girls of the Opera were present. You reproach me for that evening as if it were a crime, and you reproach me for commending those poor girls as if that were a still greater crime. I repeat it, give them wealth, and thereafter only their good qualities will be seen. But an insurmountable barrier has been raised by the aristocracy between the different social classes, so that neither class may discover how much alike are the happenings on each side of the barrier. I want to tell you the story of a ballet girl that I heard in this same shocking society. In a house in the rue Saint Honoré lived a poor woman who never left the little attic room which she rented at three francs a month. She had one daughter twelve years old, who was always neatly dressed, very demure, and extremely reserved in manner. This little girl went out three afternoons in the week and returned alone at midnight. It was known that she was a chorus girl at the Opera. One day she goes down to the porter’s room and asks for a lighted candle. It is given to her. The porter’s wife, surprised not to see her come downstairs again, climbs to

the garret, finds the woman dead on her wretched pallet, and the little girl occupied in burning unread an enormous quantity of letters which she was taking from a large trunk. She says: “My mother died last night, and charged me to destroy all her letters without reading them.” This child has never known her mother’s real name; she is now absolutely alone in the world, without any resource but to act the vulture, the monkey, or the devil at the Opera.

Her mother’s last word of counsel was to urge her to be prudent, and to continue to be a ballet girl. She is, moreover, very discreet, deeply religious, and it is with reluctance that she refers to her story. Tell me, please, if it is not infinitely more creditable for this little girl to lead the life she does, than for you who enjoy the singular good fortune of an irreproachable environment, and of a temperament of such refinement that it seems to me to sum up the qualities of an entire civilisation. I must tell you the truth. I can endure the society of ignoble people only at rare intervals, and then only because of an inexhaustible curiosity which I feel for every variety of the human species. I can never tolerate low society among men. To me there is something too repulsive in them, especially in our own countrymen. In Spain, however, I made friends always with the mule-drivers and the toreros. Many a time have I broken bread with people whom an Englishman would not notice for fear of losing his self-respect. I have even drunk from the same bottle with a convict. I must admit that there was no other bottle, and one must drink when he is thirsty. Do not from this imagine that I have a preference for the rabble. It is simply that I like to see other manners, other faces, and to hear another language. The ideas are always the same, and if one eliminates all that is conventional, I believe that good manners may be found elsewhere than in a drawing-room of the faubourg Saint Germain. All this is Arabic to you, and I do not know why I say it.

August 8.

I have been a long time finishing this letter. My mother has been extremely ill, and I

very anxious. She is now out of danger, and I trust that in a few days she will be in perfect health. I can not endure anxiety, and while her life was in danger I was quite daft.

Adieu.

P.S.—The water-colour which I intended for you is not turning out well, and I am so dissatisfied with it that I shall probably not send it to you. Do not let this prevent you from sending me the needle-work you have made for me. Be sure to choose a trustworthy messenger. As a general rule, never take a woman as a confidante; sooner or later you will regret it. Learn also that nothing is more common than to do wrong merely for the pleasure of doing it. Abandon your optimistic ideas, and realise that we are in this world to struggle and contend with our fellows. In this connection I will tell you that a learned friend of mine, who reads hieroglyphics, says that on the Egyptian coffins were often found these two words, Life, War; which proves that I have not invented the maxim just quoted. In hieroglyphics it is expressed thus: image of an urn and an arm weilding a sword. The first character signifies life, and represents, I believe, one of those vases called canopes. The other is a reduced shield, with an arm holding a lance. There’s science for you!

Again adieu.

III

Paris.

Your reproaches please me greatly. I am, indeed, predestined by the fairies. I ask myself often what I am to you, and what you are to me. To the first question I can have no reply; as for the second, I fancy that I love you as if you were a fourteen-year-old niece of whom I were the guardian. As for your exceedingly moral relative, who has so much ill to say of me, he reminds me of Thwackum, who is always saying, “Can any virtue exist without religion?” Have you read Tom

Jones?—a book as immoral as all of mine together. If it has been forbidden you, I am confident you have read it. What a farce of an education is that which you are getting in England! What does it amount to? People lose their breath preaching to a young girl, and the result is that this young girl desires to know the identical immoral being for whom people flatter themselves they have given her an aversion. What an admirable story is that of the serpent! I wish Lady M—— could read this letter. Fortunately, she would faint about the tenth line.

Turning the page, I have reread what I have just written, and it seems to me that there is very little coherence and connection of ideas. That is a fault of mine, but I write just as I think, and as my thoughts are more rapid than my pen, the consequence is that I am forced to omit all the transitions. I should, perhaps, follow your example, and erase all the first page; but I prefer to resign it to you for reflection and curl-papers. I must confess, too, that just at this moment I am deeply absorbed in an affair which, I avow to my shame, dwells stubbornly in one-half of my brain, while the other half is entirely filled with you. The portrait which you draw of yourself I like tolerably well. It does not flatter you any too much, and all that I know of you pleases me prodigiously....

I am studying you with the liveliest curiosity. I have theories about the most trifling things, about gloves, about boots, about curls, etc., and I attach great importance to such things, because I have discovered that there is an actual relation between the temperament of women and the caprice (or, to express it better, the connection of ideas and the reasoning) which causes them to choose such and such a fabric. Thus, for instance, it is for me to have demonstrated that a woman who wears blue gowns is a coquette, and poses as a sentimentalist. The demonstration is easy, but it would take too long. How should you like it if I were to send you a wretchedly bad water-colour, larger than this sheet, and which could be neither rolled nor folded? Wait until I can make you a smaller one, that can be sent in a letter.

The other day I went sailing. On the river there were any number of little sail-boats, carrying all sorts of people. There was one very large boat in which were several women of questionable manners. All these boats had landed, and from the largest stepped a man about forty years old, who was amusing himself by playing on a tambourine. While I was admiring the musical talent of this creature, a woman of perhaps twenty-three, approached him, calling him a monster, telling him that she had followed him from Paris, and that if he would not allow her to join him he would repent it. All this occurred on the bank, about twenty feet from our boat. The man with the tambourine continued playing while the deserted woman was thus holding forth, and with the utmost indifference replied that he did not intend to have her in his boat; whereupon she climbed out to the boat moored farthest from the bank, and threw herself into the river, splashing us abominably. Although she had extinguished my cigar, indignation did not deter me, or my friends either, from pulling her out of the water before she had been in it long enough to swallow two glasses. The beauteous object of all this despair had not so much as budged, and murmured between his teeth, “Why rescue her, when she wished to drown herself?” We took the woman to an inn, and as it was getting late, and it was almost dinner-time, we left her to the care of the tavernkeeper’s wife.

How does it happen that the most indifferent men are the best beloved by women? This is what I asked myself as I sailed down the Seine, what I am still asking myself, and what I beg you to tell me, if you know.

Good-bye. Write to me often; let us be friends, and pardon the incoherence of my letter. Some day I will explain the reason.

IV

Mariquita de mi alma (it is thus that I should commence if we were in Granada), I received your letter in one of those moments of melancholy when one views life

only through dark glasses. As your epistle is not as amiable as it might be—pardon my frankness—it has contributed not a little to the continuance of my sulky mood. I wished to answer your letter Sunday, promptly and sharply; promptly, because you had censured me in an indirect sort of way, and sharply, because I was furious with you.

I was interrupted at the first word of my letter, and this interruption prevented me from writing to you. Thank the good Lord for this, for the weather is fine to-day, and my ill-humour has become mollified to such an extent that I no longer wish to write to you save in a style of honey and sugar. I shall not quarrel with you, therefore, about thirty or forty passages in your last letter, which gave me a terrible shock, and which I am quite willing to forget. I forgive you, and with so much the more pleasure because I really believe that, in spite of my wrath, I like you better when you are pouting than in any other mood. One passage in your letter made me laugh all by myself for ten minutes. You tell me short and sweet: “My love is promised” and thus you bring on the great knock-down blow without any preliminary skirmishes.

You say you are engaged for life as you would say, “I am engaged for the quadrille.” Very well. I have apparently employed my time to advantage in discussing with you questions of love, marriage, and the like; you are still on the point of believing, or at least of saying, that when you are told to love a certain gentleman, you love him. Have you promised by a contract signed before a notary, or on vignetted paper?

When I was a school-boy I received once from a seamstress a note surmounted by two hearts aflame, united as follows: image of two parallel hearts pierced by an arrow; there was, besides, a declaration of the most affectionate kind. My teacher first confiscated my letter, and then locked me in my room. The object of this budding passion proceeded to console herself with my cruel teacher.

Nothing is so fatal as engagements to those in whose behalf they are made. Do you

know that if your love were already promised, I should believe confidently that it would be possible for you to love me? Why should you not love me? for you have made me no promises, since the first law of nature is to take a dislike to everything that has the appearance of an obligation. And, indeed, every obligation is in its nature irksome. In short, if I had less modesty I should come to the conclusion that if you have pledged your love to some one, you will give it to me, to whom you have promised nothing. Joking aside, and speaking of promises, since you do not care to have my water-colour, I have a strong desire to send it to you. I was dissatisfied with it, and began a copy of an infant Marguerite of Velasquez, which I wished to give you. Velasquez is not easy to copy, especially for daubers like myself. Twice I have begun my Marguerite, but now I am even more discontented with it than I was with the monk. The latter is still subject to your orders. I will send it whenever you wish, but it will not carry conveniently. Not only this, the spirits which sometimes amuse themselves by intercepting our letters might possibly take care of my picture. What reassures me is that it is so bad that no one but I could have made it, and no one but you be blamed for it. Let me know your pleasure.

I hope you will be in Paris about the middle of October, at which time I shall have two or three weeks' leisure. I should not care to spend them in France, and for a long time I have intended to see the Rubens pictures at Antwerp, and the Art Gallery at Amsterdam. If I were sure of seeing you, however, I should renounce Rubens and Van Dyck with the greatest cheerfulness. You see that the sacrifice costs me nothing. I do not know Amsterdam. However, it is for you to decide. Here your vanity will lead you to say: "A great sacrifice, indeed, not to prefer me to those fat Flemish women, with their white caps and baskets of fish, and in a picture gallery besides!" Yes, it is a sacrifice, and a great one too. I give up the certainty, that is, the very great pleasure, of seeing the paintings of a master, to the very uncertain chance that you will compensate me. Observe, that leaving out of consideration the impossible supposition that you might not please me, if I were to prove a

disappointment to you, I should have good reason to regret my works of art and my fat Flemish women.

You seem to be devoutly superstitious even. I am reminded at this moment of a pretty little Grenada girl, who, on mounting her mule to go through a mountain pass at Ronda (a spot notorious for robbers), piously kissed her thumb, and struck her breast five or six times, absolutely certain after that that the robbers would not show themselves, provided the Inglés (meaning myself, for every traveller must be an Englishman) would not swear too much by the Holy Virgin and the Saints. This shocking manner of speaking becomes necessary on bad roads in order to persuade the horses to go.

Read “Tristram Shandy.” I should enjoy immensely your opinion of the story of that person. You are unjust and jealous—two admirable qualities in a woman, two faults in a man. I have them both. You ask me about the affair which preoccupies me. To tell you that, it would be necessary to describe my life and my character, of which no one has the least idea, because I have never yet found any one who inspired me with sufficient confidence to tell it. After we have met often we may perhaps become good friends, and you will understand me. To have a friend to whom I could express all my thoughts, past and present, would be to me the greatest blessing. I am becoming sad, and I must not end this letter in such a mood. I am consumed with the desire to have an answer from you. Be kind, and do not make me wait long.

Good-bye. Do not let us quarrel again, and let us be friends. With respect I kiss the hand which you extend to me in sign of peace.

V

September 25.

Your letter found me ill, and very dreary, busily engaged with some extremely troublesome affairs, so that I have not had time to take care of myself. I have, I

think, inflammation of the lungs, which makes me exceedingly irritable. In a few days, however, I propose to take myself in hand and get well.

I have decided not to leave Paris in October, in the hope that you will come then. You shall see me or not, at your pleasure. It will be your fault if you do not. You mention particular reasons which prevent you from trying to meet me. I respect secrets, and do not ask your motives; only, I beg you to tell me, really and truly, if you have any. Are you not moved, rather, by some childish notion? Perhaps some one has read you a lecture on my account, and you are still under its spell. You should have no fear of me. Your natural prudence, doubtless, counts for much in your disinclination to see me. Be reassured, I shall not fall in love with you. A few years ago that might have happened; now I am too old, and I have been too unfortunate. I can never fall in love again, because my illusions have caused me many desengaños.

When I went to Spain I was on the point of falling in love. It was one of the beautiful acts of my life. The woman who was the cause of my voyage never suspected it. Had I remained, I might have committed, possibly, a great blunder, that of offering a woman worthy of enjoying every happiness that one may have on earth, in exchange for the loss of all that was dear to her, an affection which I realised was far inferior to the sacrifice that she would probably have made. You recall my maxim, “Love excuses all things, but one must be sure that it is love.” You may be sure that this precept is more rigid than those of your Methodist friends. In conclusion, I shall be charmed to see you. You, perhaps, may gain a real friend, and I, it may be, shall find in you what I have long sought—a woman with whom I shall not be in love, but one whom I may have for a confidante. We shall both gain, probably, by a closer acquaintance. Still, you must act as your lofty sense of prudence dictates.

My monk is ready. At the first opportunity, therefore, I shall send you the picture

framed. The child Marguerite, still unfinished and too badly begun to be ever completed, will remain just as it is, and will serve as a blotting-pad for a sketch I shall do for you when I have time. I am dying of curiosity to see the surprise you have in store for me, but in vain do I rack my brain to guess it. When writing to you I omit all transitions, with me a very necessary trick of style.

You will find this letter, I fear, terribly disconnected. The reason is, that while writing one sentence another comes to my mind, and this occasions a third before the second one is finished. I am suffering greatly to-night. If you have any influence Above, try to obtain for me a little health, or, failing in that, resignation; for I am the most impatient invalid in the world, and treat my best friends abominably.

Stretched on my couch, I think of you, of our mysterious acquaintance, with pleasure, and it seems to me that I should be very happy to chat with you in the same desultory way that I write; besides, there is this advantage, that words vanish, but writing remains. I am not tormented, however, by the thought that some day my words, either living or posthumous, may be published. Good-bye. Let me have your sympathy. I would I had the courage to tell you a thousand things that make life sad. But how can I, when you are so far away? When are you coming? Again good-bye. If your heart prompts you, you have an abundance of time to write to me.

P.S.—September 26.—I am even more low-spirited than I was yesterday. I suffer tortures, but if you have never had gastritis you can have no conception of what it means to suffer pain that is indefinite and at the same time intense. It has this peculiarity, that it affects the entire nervous system. I should like to be in the country with you. I am sure you would cure me. Good-bye. If I die this year, you will be sorry that you did not know me better.

VI

Do you know that you are sometimes very kind? I do not say this as a reproach

veiled by a cold compliment, but I should be glad indeed to receive frequent letters like your last one. Unfortunately, you are not always so charitably inclined towards me. I have not replied earlier, because your letter was only delivered to me last night, on my return from a short trip. I spent four days in absolute solitude, without seeing a man, much less a woman, for I do not call men and women certain bipeds who are trained to fetch food and drink when they are ordered to do so. During my retreat I made the most dismal reflections about myself and my future, about my friends, and so on. If I had had the wit to wait for your letter it would have given quite another turn to my thoughts. “I should have carried away happiness enough to last me at least a week.”

The way in which you came down on that worthy Mr. V. is delightful. Your courage pleases me immensely. I should never have supposed you capable of such capricho, and I admire you all the more for it. It is true that the remembrance of your splendid black eyes counts for something in my admiration. However, old as I am, I am almost insensible to beauty. I say to myself that “it amounts to nothing”; but I assure you that when I heard a man of very fastidious taste say you were very pretty, I could not repress a feeling of sadness. This is the reason (but first let me assure you that I am not the least bit in love with you): I am horribly jealous, jealous of my friends, and it grieves me to think that your beauty exposes you to the attentions of a lot of men incapable of appreciating you, and who admire in you only those things for which I care the least.

In fact, I am in a beastly humour when I think of that ceremony which you are to attend. Nothing makes me more melancholy than a wedding. The Turks, who bargain for a woman while they examine her as they would a fat sheep, are better than we, who have glossed over this vile trade with a varnish of hypocrisy which, alas! is only too transparent. I have asked myself often what I should find to say to a wife on the first day of my marriage, and I have thought of nothing possible, unless it were a compliment on her night-cap. Happily, the devil will be extremely clever if

he ever entraps me into such an entertainment. The part which the woman plays is much easier than that of the man. On such an occasion she models her conduct on Racine's Iphigenia; but if she is at all observant, what a lot of droll things she must see! You must tell me whether the reception was beautiful. All the men will pay you attention and favour you with allusions to domestic happiness. When the Andalusians are angry, they say: Mataria el sol á puñaladas si no fuese por miedo de dejar el mundo á oscuras!

Since September 28, my birthday, an uninterrupted succession of petty misfortunes have assailed me. Besides this, the pain in my chest is worse and I suffer great distress. I shall delay my trip to England until the middle of November. If you are unwilling to see me in London, I must abandon the hope, but I am anxious to see the elections. I shall overtake you soon after in Paris, where chance may bring us together, even if your whim persists in keeping us apart. All your reasons are pitiful, and are not worth the trouble to refute, and all the more since you yourself know that they are worthless.

You are joking, certainly, when you say so pleasantly that you are afraid of me. You are aware that I am ugly, and have a capricious temper, that I am always absent-minded, and often, when in pain, very irritating and disagreeable. What is there in all that to disturb you? You will never fall in love with me, so rest easy. Your consoling predictions can never be realised. You are not a witch. Now the truth is that my chances of death have increased this year. Do not be anxious about your letters. All letters and papers found in my room shall be burned after my death; but to plague you, I shall bequeath you in my will a manuscript continuation of the Guzla, which amused you so much.

You have the qualities of both an angel and a devil, but many more of the latter. You call me a tempter. Dare, if you will, to say that this title does not apply to you far more than to me. Have you not thrown a bait to me, a poor little fish? and now that

you have me caught on the end of your hook you keep me dangling between the sky and the sea as long as it amuses you; then, when you grow tired of the game, you will cut the line, I shall drop with the hook in my mouth, and the fisherman will be nowhere to be found.

I appreciate your frankness in confessing that you read the letter which Mr. V. wrote me and entrusted to your charge. I guessed it, indeed, for since the time of Eve all women are alike in that respect. I wish the letter had been more interesting; but I suppose that, in spite of his spectacles, you consider Mr. V. a man of good taste. I am out of sorts because I am suffering.

I am reminded of your promise to give me a schizzo—a promise you would never have given if I had not begged for it—and I feel in better humour. I await the schizzo with the greatest patience. Adieu, niña de mis ojos; I promise never to fall in love with you. I do not want to be in love ever again, but I should like to have a woman friend. If I should see you often, and you are all I believe you to be, I should become very fond of you, in a truly platonic way. Try, therefore, to arrange it so that we may meet when you come to Paris. Shall I be compelled to wait many long days for a reply? Good-bye again. Pity me, for I am very downcast, and I have a thousand reasons for being so.

VII

Lady M. told me last night that you were going to be married. This being so, burn my letters. I shall burn yours, and then good-bye. You already know my principles on this question. They do not allow me to continue in friendly relations with a married woman whom I knew as a young girl, with a widow whom I knew as a married woman. I have observed that when the civil status of a woman has changed, one’s relations with her have changed also, and always for the worse. In brief, right or wrong, I can not endure that my friends should marry. Therefore, if you are going

to be married, let us forget each other. I beg of you not to have recourse to one of your usual evasions, but to answer me frankly.

I declare that since September 28 I have suffered disappointments and vexations of every description. Your marriage was only another of the fatalities that were to fall on me.

One night not long ago, being unable to sleep, I reviewed in my mind all the vexations which have overwhelmed me during the last fortnight, and I found for them all but one compensation, which was your amiable letter, and your equally amiable promise to make me a sketch. Yet now I wish I could stab the sun, as the Andalusians say.

Mariquita de mi vida, (let me call you so until your marriage), I had a superb stone, finely cut, brilliant, sparkling, in every point perfect. I believed it to be a diamond, which I would not have exchanged for that of the Grand Mogul. Not so at all! It turns out to be but an imitation. A friend of mine, who is a chemist, has just analysed it for me. Fancy my disappointment. I have spent a great deal of time thinking of this imitation diamond, and of my good fortune in having found it. Now I must spend as much time, and more even, in persuading myself that it was not a genuine stone.

All this is only a parable. I took dinner the other evening with the false diamond, and made but a surly appearance. When I am angry I am rather skilful with the rhetorical figure called irony, and so I extolled the good qualities of the diamond in my most bombastic style and with frigid composure. I do not know, I am sure, why I tell you all this, especially since we are soon to forget each other. Meanwhile, I love you still, and commend myself to your prayers—“nymph, in thy orisons be all my sins remembered,” etc.

Next Friday your picture will leave by mail, and should certainly reach London by Sunday. You might send for it Tuesday at Mr. V.’s, Pall-Mall.

Forgive the insanity of this letter; my mind is distracted with gloomy thoughts.

VIII

My dear platonic Friend: We are becoming very affectionate. You say to me, Amigo de mi alma, which from a woman's lips is very sweet. You give me no news of your health. In your former letter you told me that my platonic friend was ill, and you should have known that I was anxious. Be more definite in future. It is all very well for you to complain of my reticence, you who are mystery incarnate! What more will you have on the story of the diamond, unless it is the name? Details, perhaps; but they would be tiresome to write, and some day they may amuse you, when we shall find nothing to say to each other, seated in our arm-chairs on opposite sides of the chimney corner.

Listen to the dream that I had two nights ago, and if you are sincere, interpret it for me. Methought we were both in Valencia, in a beautiful garden where there was an abundance of oranges, pomegranates, and other fruits. You were seated upon a bench, resting against a hedge. Opposite was a wall about six feet in height, separating this garden from another garden on a much lower level. I was standing facing you, and it seemed to me that we were speaking to each other in the Valencian tongue. Nota bene, that I am able to understand Valencian with much difficulty. What sort of a deuced language is it that one speaks in a dream, when one speaks a language that he does not know? For lack of something else to do, and from habit, I went and stood on a rock, looking over into the garden below. There I saw a bench also with its back against the wall, and seated on this bench was a Valencian gardener playing the guitar, and my diamond was listening. This sight put me instantly in a bad humour, but at first I gave no sign of this. The diamond raised her head, and seemed astonished to see me, but she did not start, or appear otherwise disconcerted.

After a time I stepped down from the stone, and said to you, casually and without mentioning the diamond, that it would be a great joke to throw a big stone over the

top of the wall. This stone was very heavy. You were eager to help me, and without asking any questions (which is not natural to you), by dint of pushing we succeeded in placing the stone on the top of the wall, and we were making ready to push it over, when the wall itself gave way and crumbled, and we both fell with the stone and the débris of the wall. I do not know what happened then, for I awoke. That you may understand the scene better, I enclose a drawing of it. I was unable to see the gardener's face, which is most exasperating.

You are very kind. I have said this to you frequently of late. It was very kind of you to have answered the question that I asked you recently. I need not tell you that your reply pleased me. You have even said, unconsciously, perhaps, several things that have given me pleasure, and especially that the husband of a woman who resembled you would have your sincere sympathy. I can readily believe you, and will add that no one could be more unfortunate unless it were a man who loved you.

You must be cold and sarcastic in your perverse moods, with an insuperable pride which forbids you to acknowledge when you are in the wrong. Add to this your energetic temperament, which compels you to disdain tears and complaints. When in the course of time and of events we become friends, it shall be seen which of us knows better how to torment the other. Only to think of it makes my hair stand on end. Have I interpreted correctly your but? Rest assured that, notwithstanding your resolutions, the threads of our lives are too closely intermingled for us to fail to find each other some day or other. I am dying to see and talk with you. It seems to me that I should be perfectly happy if I knew that I should see you this evening.

By the way, you are wrong to suspect Mr. V. of undue curiosity. Even if it were equal to yours, which is not possible, Mr. V. is a Cato, and under no consideration would he break a seal. Therefore send him the schizzo under cover, and have no fear of any indiscretion on his part. I should like to see you as you were writing, Amigo de mi alma. When you are having your photograph taken for me, say those words to

yourself, instead of “prunes and prisms,” as ladies say when they wish to give their mouth a pleasant expression.

Try and arrange it so that we may meet without any secrecy and as good friends do. You will be distressed, no doubt, to learn that I am not at all well and am horribly bored. Do come soon to Paris, dear Mariquita, and make me fall in love with you. Then I shall be no longer lonely, and in compensation I shall make you very unhappy by my whims. For some time your writing has been very careless and your letters short. I am convinced that you have no love for any one, and never will have any. However, you understand well enough the theory of love.

Good-bye. You have my best wishes for your health, for your happiness, that you may not marry, that you may come to Paris—in short, that we may become good friends.

IX

Mariquita de mi alma: I am grieved to learn of your indisposition. When this letter reaches you I hope you will have fully recovered your health, and that you will be in a condition to write me longer letters. Your last one was maddeningly brief and stiff, a style of writing to which you formerly accustomed me, but which is now more annoying than you can imagine. Write me a long letter, and tell me all kinds of pleasant things. What is your malady? Have you some vexation to endure, or is it a sorrow? In your last note there are several mysterious phrases, as all your phrases are which intimated this. But between ourselves, I do not believe you have ever known the luxury of that organ called the heart. You have troubles of the mind, pleasures of the mind; but the organ known as the heart is developed only about the twenty-fifth year of age, in the 46th degree of latitude.

You will knit your beautiful black brows at this, and say, “The saucy man doubts that I have a heart!” for this nowadays is the great assumption. Since so many novels

and poems of passion, so called, have been written, all women affect to have a heart. Wait a little while. When you have really discovered your heart you will tell me about it; you will recall regretfully these good days when you were ruled only by the mind, and you will realise that the vexations you now suffer are mere pin-pricks compared to the dagger-thrusts that shall overwhelm you when the days of passion shall have come.

I have been grumbling about your letter, but it really contains some very agreeable news: that is, the definite promise, graciously given, to send me your photograph. This gives me great pleasure, not only because I shall then know you better, but especially because it will be a token of your growing confidence in me. I see that I am making progress in your esteem, and congratulate myself. When am I to receive this portrait? Will you give it to me yourself? If so, I will come to receive it. Or will you give it to Mr. V., who will send it to me with all due discretion? Have no fear of either him or his wife. I should prefer to receive it from your own white hand.

I shall start for London early next month. I am going to see the election. I shall also eat some whitebait at Blackwall, look over the cartoons of Hampton Court, and then return to Paris. If I were to see you it would make me very happy, but I dare not hope for it. However that may be, if you will send the sketch under cover to Mr. V. just as you do your letters, I shall receive it promptly, for, if nothing happens, I shall be in London the 8th of December.

I have censured your curiosity and indiscretion in opening Mr. V.’s letter, but to tell you the truth you have some faults that I like, and your curiosity is one of them. If we were to meet often, I am afraid you would take a dislike to me, and that the opposite would happen with me. At this moment I am thinking of the expression on your face. It is a little severe, that of a lioness, though tame.

Adieu. I send a thousand kisses to your mysterious feet.

X

By all means, by all means, send Mr. V. what you have for so long a time led me to expect. Enclose a letter too, a long one, for if you were to send a letter to Paris I should probably cross it on my way. Caution Mr. V. to take care of the letter and the package, and tell him that I shall call for them in person the last of next week. What would be on your part even more friendly, and what you do not suggest in your letter, would be to tell me when and where I might see you. I am not counting on this, however, and I know you too well to expect any such proof of your courage. I rely on chance only, which may give me some talisman or clew.

I am writing to you lying on a couch, suffering tortures; colour that of a sun-scorched meadow. I refer to my own colour, not that of the couch. You must know that the sea makes me very ill, and that the glad waters of the dark blue sea are pleasant to me only when I watch them from the shore. The first time I went to England I was so ill that it was a fortnight before I regained my usual colour, which is that of the pale horse of the Apocalypse. One day when I was dining opposite to Madam V., she exclaimed suddenly, “Until to-day I thought you were an Indian.” Do not be frightened, and do not take me for a ghost.

Forgive me for referring so often to the diamond. What must be the feelings of a man who is not a connoisseur in gems, to whom the jewellers have said, “This stone is an imitation,” and who nevertheless sees it sparkle brilliantly; who sometimes says to himself, “Suppose the jewellers are not good judges of diamonds! Suppose they are mistaken, or else wish to deceive me!” I look at my diamond from time to time (as seldom as I can), and every time I see it it seems to me genuine in every respect. What a pity that I am unable myself to make a conclusive chemical analysis! What do you think about it? If I could see you, I should explain what is obscure in this matter, and you would give me some wise advice; or, better still, you would make me forget my diamond, genuine or false, for there is no diamond that

can stand comparison with two lovely black eyes.

Good-bye. I have a terrible pain in my left elbow, on which I am leaning to write to you; besides, you do not deserve three closely written pages. You send me only a few lines, carelessly written, and when you write three lines two of them are certain to throw me in a rage.

XI

You are charming, dear Mariquita, too charming even. I have just received the schizzo, and I now possess both your portrait and your confidence, a double happiness. You were in an agreeable mood the day you wrote, for your letter was long and kind, but it has one fault, that is, it is indefinite. Shall I see you, or not? That is the question. I know well enough how it may be solved, but you do not want to come to a decision. You are, as you will be all your life, vacillating between your own temperament and the habits you acquired in the convent. That is the cause of all the trouble.

I swear to you that if you will not permit me to call and see you, I shall go to Madam D. and ask her to give me some news of you. In this connection, Madam D. might give you a satisfactory proof of my discretion, for I even resisted the desire which made my fingers tingle to open the package containing the picture. Applaud me.

Why are you unwilling that I should see you on the promenade, for example, or, better still, at the British Museum or the Ingerstein Gallery? I have a friend with me who is exceedingly curious about the large package which I untied while his back was turned, and also about the change in my spirits due to its arrival. I have not told him a word that approaches the truth, but I think he is on the scent.

Good-bye. I wished to tell you of the safe arrival of the picture, and of the very great pleasure it has given me. Let us write frequently in London, even if we are not to see each other there.

XII

London, December 10.

Tell me, in the name of God, “if you are of God,” querida Mariquita, why you have not answered my letter. Your letter before the last, and especially the picture which accompanied it, threw me into such a flutter that the note I wrote you on the spot did not have any too much common sense. Now that I am calmer, and have had several days in London to refresh my mind, I shall try to reason with you.

Why do you not wish to see me? No one of your friends knows me, and my visit would seem entirely natural. Your principal motive seems to be the dread of doing something improper, as they say here. I do not take seriously what you say concerning your fear of losing your illusions upon closer acquaintance with me. If this were the real ground of your hesitation, you would be the first woman, the first human being, whom such a consideration prevented from gratifying her inclination or her curiosity.

Let us consider the impropriety of it. Is the thing improper in itself? No, for nothing is more open and above-board. You know in advance that I shall not eat you. The thing, then, is improper, admitting that it is improper, only in the eyes of society. Observe in passing that this word society makes us miserable from the day when we put on clothes that are uncomfortable, because society so orders it, until the day of our death....

In sending me your portrait, it seems to me that you gave me a proof of your faith in my discretion. Why, then, believe in it no longer? A man’s good judgment, and mine in particular, is the greater the more is expected of him. This granted, and being fully convinced of my discretion, you may see me, and society will be none the wiser, consequently it can not exclaim at the impropriety. I will even add, with my hand on my heart—that is, on my left side—that so far as I am concerned I see not the slightest impropriety in it. I will say more: if this correspondence is to continue

without our ever meeting, it becomes the most absurd thing in the world. All these thoughts I leave to your reflection.

If I were vainer, I should rejoice at what you say of my diamond. But we can never fall in love—with each other, I mean. Our acquaintance did not begin in a manner to lead to that point: it is far too romantic for that. As for the diamond, my travelling companion, while smoking his cigar, spoke of it without knowing my interest in the matter, and said some very deplorable things. He seems to have no doubt of its falseness. Dear Mariquita, you say you would never wish to be a "crown diamond," and you are quite right. You are worth more than that. I offer you a sincere friendship, which, I hope, may some day be of value to us both.

Good-bye.

XIII

Paris, February, 1842.

An hour ago I read your letter, which has been on my table ever since Tuesday, concealed under a pile of papers. Since you did not disdain my gifts, I send you some conserves of roses, jessamine, and bergamot. You might offer a jar of it to Madame de C., with my best respects. It seems that I once offered you a pair of Turkish slippers, and you have persisted in refusing them, so that I should like to send them to you anyway. But since my return I have been robbed. No sign of any slippers; I can not find them high or low. Will you accept this instead? Perhaps this Turkish mirror will please you better; for you seem to me to be even more coquettish than you were in the year of grace 1840. It was in the month of December, and you wore striped silk stockings. That is all that I remember.

It is for you to decide the protocol of which you speak. You do not believe in my gray hair. Here is a sample in proof of it.

I give nothing without expecting a return. Before you go to Naples, you will be good

enough to take my directions and to bring me back what I shall tell you. I might give you a letter to the director of the Pompeiian excavations, if you are interested in such things.

You make of your precious self such a dazzling portrait that I see the time of our next meeting postponed to the Greek Kalends. Allah kerim! I am writing in the midst of such an infernal racket that I do not know exactly what I am saying. I have a great many things to say, however, about ourselves, which I shall defer until after I have heard from you. Meanwhile, good-bye, and preserve that splendid bearing, that radiant countenance, which I admired.

XIV

Paris, Saturday, March, 1842.

For two hours I have been trying to decide whether I should write to you. My pride offers many reasons why I should not do so, but although you are perfectly sure, I hope, of the pleasure your letter gave me, I declare I can not refrain from telling you so.

So you are rich; so much the better. I congratulate you. Rich, which is, interpreted, free. Your friend, who had such a happy inspiration, must have been somewhat of an Auld Robin Gray; he was evidently in love with you. You will never confess it, because you are too fond of mystery; but I will forgive you; we write to each other too seldom to quarrel. Why should you not go to Rome and to Naples to enjoy the pictures and the sunshine? You are capable of appreciating Italy, and you will return richer in impressions and ideas.

I do not advise you to visit Greece. Your skin is not tough enough to resist the multitude of hideous creatures that prey on people there. Speaking of Greece, since you take such good care of what is given you, here is a blade of grass which I plucked on the hill of Anthela at Thermopylæ, the place where the last of the three

hundred died. This little flower has in its constituent atoms probably a few of the molecules of the late Leonidas. I recollect, besides, that on this very spot, as I lay stretched upon a pile of straw in front of the guard-house (what a profanation!), I spoke of my youth to my friend Ampère, and said that among the tender remembrances which I had preserved there was but one in which there was no touch of bitterness. I was thinking at the time of our beautiful youth. Pray keep my foolish flower.

Tell me, should you like some more substantial souvenir of the Orient? Unfortunately, I have given away all the beautiful things that I brought back with me. I could give you quantities of sandals, but you would wear them for others, thank you. If you wish some conserves of roses and jessamine, I still have a little left, but let me know at once, or I shall eat them all. We hear from each other so seldom that we have a great many things to say concerning ourselves. Here is my history:

I visited my dear Spain again in the fall of 1840. I spent two months in Madrid, where I witnessed a ridiculous revolution, several superb bull-fights, and the triumphal entry of Espartero, which was the most comical parade I ever saw. I was a guest in the home of an intimate friend who is almost like a dear sister to me. In the morning I went into Madrid, and returned to dine in the country with six women, the oldest of whom was thirty-six. In consequence of the revolution I was the only man at liberty to come and go freely, so that these six unfortunates had no other protector. They spoiled me terribly. I did not fall in love with any of them, as I should perhaps have done. While I did not deceive myself as to the advantages which I owed to the revolution, I found it very agreeable, nevertheless, to be a sultan, even ad honores.

On my return to Paris I treated myself to the innocent pleasure of printing a book for private circulation. There were only made a hundred and fifty copies, with superb

paper, illustrations, etc., which I presented to people whom I liked. I should offer you this rare book if you were worthy of it; but I must warn you that it is a historical and pedantic work, so bristling with Greek and Latin, nay, even with Oscan (do you even know what Oscan is?), that you could not so much as nibble at it.

Last summer I happened to fall on a little money. My minister gave me three months' holiday, and I spent five running about from Malta to Athens and from Ephesus to Constantinople. During these five months I was not bored for five minutes. What would have become of you, to whom I was once such an object of terror, if you had met me during my Asiatic journey, with a belt of pistols, a huge sword, and—would you believe it?—a moustache that extended beyond my ears! Without intending any flattery, I should have struck fear into the heart of the boldest brigand of melodrama. At Constantinople I saw the Sultan, in patent-leather boots, and a frock-coat, and again, afterwards, covered with diamonds in the procession of the Baïram. On the same occasion, a handsome woman, on whose toe I had stepped by accident, slapped me severely and called me a giaour. This constituted my only intercourse with the Turkish beauties. At Athens, and in Asia, I saw the most splendid monuments in the world, and the loveliest landscapes possible to imagine.

The only drawback consisted in fleas and gnats as big as larks; consequently I never slept. Meanwhile, I have grown old. My passport describes me as having turtle locks, which is a pleasant Oriental metaphor for saying all sorts of disagreeable things. Picture to yourself your friend as quite gray. And you, querida, have you changed? I am waiting impatiently until you become less pretty, so that I may see you. In two or three years from now, when you write to me, tell me what you are doing and when we are to see each other. Your "respectful remembrance" made me laugh, and also that you should presume to dispute its place in my heart with Ionic and Corinthian columns.

In the first place, I do not care for any but the Doric, and there are no columns, not

even excepting those of the Parthenon, which can be compared to the memory of an old friendship. Good-bye; go to Italy, and be happy. I start to-day for Evreux, on a matter of business, expecting to return Monday night. If you wish to eat rose leaves, say so; but I warn you there is only a spoonful left for you.

XV

Paris, Monday night, March, 1842.

I have just received your letter, which has put me in a bad humour. So it is your satanic pride which has kept you from seeing me. It is not for me to reproach you, however, for I think I saw you the other day, and was restrained from speaking to you by a feeling quite as paltry. You say you are better than you were two years ago. It is very well for you to say that. I admit that you are more beautiful, but, on the other hand, you seem to have absorbed a good dose of selfishness and hypocrisy. These may be very useful, but they are not qualities for one to brag about. As for me, I have become neither better nor worse; I am not more of a hypocrite than I was, and I may be wrong. Certain it is that I am not loved more on this account.

Since this purse was not embroidered by your own fair hand, what do you wish me to do with it? You ought, indeed, to give me some of your own work; my mirror and my conserves deserve that much. You might at least have told me whether you received them. When you go to Italy, and pass through Paris, you will probably not find me here. Where shall I be? The devil only knows. It is not impossible that I may meet you at the Studj; but then, again, I may go to Saragossa to see that woman of whom you say that you are worth as much as she. As for a sister, there will be no other than herself. Tell me, therefore, and that before you leave for Paris, when you expect to go to Naples, and whether you will take charge of a volume for M. Buonuicci, the Director of the Pompeiian excavations. When I go away I shall leave this volume either with Madame de C. or elsewhere.

I recall having seen, a long time ago, a Madame de C. at a house where there were some theatricals, in which I played the part of the fool. Ask her if she remembers me.

Good-bye now, and for a long time, no doubt. I am sorry not to have seen you. Write to me now and then. It will always be a great pleasure to hear from you, even though you continue the beautiful system of hypocrisy upon which you have entered so triumphantly. I will commend you to Buonuicci, you and your society, as greatly interested in archæology. You will be pleased with his cordiality.

XVI

Paris, Saturday, May 14, 1842.

You will know, in the first place, that I am not burned to death. “The railway accident on the left bank of the Seine!” It is thus that we have begun our letters in Paris for the last four days. In the next place, I will say that your letter has given me a great deal of pleasure. I found it here on my return from a short trip I have just taken on business; that is why I have been so long in replying. To be frank—and you are aware that I have not yet overcome this fault—I will admit that you have become much more beautiful physically, but not morally. You have an exquisite complexion, and lovely hair, to which I paid more attention than to your bonnet; and this was probably worthy of notice, since you seemed irritated at my failure to appreciate it. But I have never been able to distinguish lace from calico. You still have a sylphlike figure, and, although I am somewhat blasé concerning black eyes, I have never seen any so large in Constantinople or in Smyrna.

Now comes the reverse of the medal. In many respects you have remained a child, and you have become a hypocrite in the bargain. You have not learned how to conceal your first impulses, but you think you can reconcile them by having recourse to a variety of petty means. What do you expect to gain thereby? Do not

forget that great and beautiful maxim of Jonathan Swift: That a lie is too good a thing to be lavished about! Your magnanimous idea of being severe on yourself will carry you far, no doubt, and a few years hence you will find yourself in the happy condition of the Trappist, who, after torturing himself again and again, should discover one day that, after all, heaven has no existence.

I do not know to what promise you refer, and there are also many other obscure passages in your letter. We can never bear the same relations to each other that exist between Madame de X. and myself; the first condition in the attitude between a brother and sister being unlimited confidence, and in this respect Madame de X. has spoiled me.

I am silly enough to grieve over that scarf-pin, but I am consoled at the thought that you also are sorry for it. This is still another beautiful trait in your character. How flattered your stoicism must have been at this victory over yourself! You imagine that you are proud, but I regret to tell you that what you think is pride is only the petty vanity which one would expect in a religious temperament. It is the fashion nowadays to preach. Shall you follow it? That would be the finishing stroke. I must drop this subject, for it always puts me in a bad humour.

I think I shall not go to Saragossa. I may go possibly to Florence; but I have quite decided to spend two months in the south of France, examining churches and Roman ruins. We may run across each other, perhaps, in some temple or circus. I advise you strongly to go straight to Naples. If you should have to wait five or six hours at Leghorn, however, you might employ them better by going to Pisa to see the Campo Santo. I advise you to see The Dead, by Orcagna, the Vergonzoso, and an antique bust of Julius Caesar. At Civita Vecchia you need see only M. Bucci, from whom you will want to buy some very old gems. You must give him my compliments. Then you will go on to Naples. You will stop at The Victoria, where you will spend several days drinking in the air, and watching the sky and the sea. You will go now

and then to visit the studios. M. Buonuicci will take you to Pompeii. You will go to Paestum, and there you must think of me. When you stand in the temple of Neptune, you may say to yourself that you have seen Greece.

From Naples you will go to Rome, where you will spend a month persuading yourself that it is useless to try to see it all, because you shall return there in the future. Then you will go to Florence, and remain there ten days. After that you will do what you like. When you come to Paris, you will find the book for M. Buonuicci and my final instructions. At that time I shall probably be at Arles or at Orange. If you should stop there, be sure and inquire for me, and I will show you an ancient theatre, which will not interest you especially.

You promised me something in return for my Turkish mirror. I rely implicitly on your memory. Ah, I have great news for you! The first of the forty Academicians to die will occasion me to make thirty-nine calls. Of course I shall be as awkward as possible, and no doubt I shall make thirty-nine enemies. It would take too long to explain the reasons for this attack of ambition. Enough that the Academy is now the goal of my aspirations.

Good-bye. I will write again before leaving. Be happy, but bear in mind this maxim, that one should never do foolish things unless they please you. Perhaps the precept of M. de Talleyrand is more to your taste, that one should beware of first impulses, because they are usually honest.

XVII

Paris, June 22, 1842.

Your letter has been tardy in coming, and I became impatient. I must reply at once to the principal points. First, I received your purse. It exhaled a most aristocratic perfume, and is very pretty. If you embroidered it yourself, it does you credit. But I have recognised in it your newly acquired taste for the practical: in the first place, it

is a purse to hold money; next, you valued it at a hundred francs at the stage-coach. It would have been more poetical to declare that it was worth one or two stars. All the same, I prize it quite as highly. I will put my medals in it. I should have cared more for it if you had condescended to put in it a few lines from your fair hand.

Secondly, I do not care for your pheasants. You offer them in a disagreeable fashion, and, besides, you say unpleasant things to me about my Turkish conserves. It is you who have the taste of a heretic, if you are unable to appreciate what the houris eat.

I believe I have answered everything that was sensible in your letter. I will not quarrel about the rest. I abandon you to your own conscience, which, I am sure, is sometimes even more severe than I, whom you accuse of harshness and indifference. The hypocrisy which you practise so well in sport, will play you a trick some day—that is, it will become natural to you. As for coquetry, the inseparable companion of the horrid vice which you extol, you have always indulged in it. It became you very well when it was softened by frankness, warm-heartedness, and imagination, but now—now, what shall I say?

You have beautiful raven hair, a lovely blue cashmere, and you are always charming when you wish to be. Say that I do not spoil you! As for that essence of which you speak, it is your own kindness which you thus designate. I like that word essence; yes, the real essence of roses, which is always frozen like that of Adrianople. I will tell you this Oriental story.

There was once a dervish who seemed to a baker to be a saint. The baker one day promised to give him white bread the rest of his life. At this the dervish was enchanted. But after awhile the baker said to him, “We agreed on brown bread, did we not? I have first-class brown bread. It is my specialty, is brown bread.” The dervish replied, “I have already more brown bread than I can eat, but——”

Right here my cat jumped on the table, and I have had all I could do to keep her from lying down on my paper. She has made me forget the rest of the story, which is

a pity, for it was very pretty. Do you know that, with my other air-castles, I have built this one: to meet you in Marseilles in September, to show you the lions there, and have you eat figs and fish soup. But I am obliged to be in Paris by August 15, to write a report for my minister; consequently, you will eat fish soup by yourself, and you will visit the Museum and the caves of Saint-Victor without me. On the other hand, when you reach Paris you may, if you like, receive from my own hand the directions I have made for your trip to Italy.

Since your wishes always are realised, I pray you humbly to wish that I may become an Academician. This would be a great gratification to me, provided that you were not present at my reception. However, you have abundant time for the realisation of your wishes. It will be necessary for an epidemic to break out among those gentlemen before my chances are advanced; and to improve them, I should be obliged to borrow a little of that hypocrisy in which you are now so skilled. I am too old to reform; if I should try, I should be still worse than I am at present.

I am curious to know what you think of me, but how shall I ever find it out? You will never tell me, either the best or the worst that you think. Formerly I had not much of an opinion of my precious self, but now I have a little more self-esteem; not that I think I have improved, but it is the world that has grown worse.

In a week I start for Arles, where I intend to drive out a lot of beggars who live in the old theater. A fine occupation, is it not? It would be kind of you, before I go, to send me a letter brimful of sweet things. I am fond of being spoiled; besides, I am horribly sad and discouraged. I must tell you that I am spending my evenings revising my books, which are to be reprinted. I find them very immoral, and sometimes stupid. I am trying to reduce the immorality and the stupidity without going to too much trouble. The consequence is, a bad attack of the blue devils. I say good-bye, and kiss your hands most humbly. Can you guess what I found among my papers? A short blue thread, twice knotted. I have put it away in the purse.

XVIII

Châlon-sur-Saône, June 30, 1842.

You guessed correctly the end of the story: the dervish was imposed upon by the baker, but, all the same, the holy man did not like brown bread.

I am in a city which is particularly odious to me, alone in an inn, listening to a frightful south-east wind. It parches everything it touches, and the harmonies produced as it whistles down the corridors are enough to bring the devil up to earth. The result is that I am furious with all nature. I am writing to you in order to cheer me a little, and I am comforted by the thought that in your approaching journey you will have many such days as this. I saw in Saint Vincent's church an exceedingly pretty young girl making stations. Isn't that what you call the prayers, or something of the sort, that are said before a series of pictures representing the principal scenes of the Passion? Her mother was near, watching over her with strict attention. While taking notes on ancient Byzantine columns, I asked myself what this young girl could have done to merit such a penance. The case must have been one of deep gravity.

Have you become deeply pious, following the general fashion of the day? You must be pious for the same reason that you must wear a blue cashmere. I should be sorry, however, if this were so. Our piety here in France is repugnant to me. It is a sort of mediocre philosophy, which springs not from the heart, but from the mind. When you have seen the devotion of the common people in Italy, you will agree with me, I hope, that theirs is the only genuine religion; only one must be born beyond the Alps or the Pyrenees to believe this.

You can not conceive of the disgust which I feel for our society of the present day. One would suppose that it has tried in every way possible to add to the burden of suffering necessary to the management of society. I shall await your return from Italy; you will have seen there a state of society where, on the contrary, everything

contributes to render existence more agreeable and more tolerable. We shall then resume our discussions on the subject of hypocrisy, and it is possible that we shall come to an understanding.

I have spent almost the entire winter studying mythology from old Latin and Greek archives. It has proved to be extremely entertaining, and if there should ever come into your head the desire to know the record of the thoughts of men, which is vastly more interesting than the history of their deeds, inquire of me, and I will recommend three or four books for your reading which will make you as wise as I—and this is saying no little!

How are you employing your time? I sometimes ask myself this question, without being able to give a satisfactory answer. If I had to cast your horoscope I should predict that you would end by writing a book; it is the inevitable result of the sort of life you lead, and which all the women of France are leading. First, there is imagination, and sometimes affection; then follows hypocrisy, after which one attains to the pious stage; and finally, one becomes an author. God grant that you may never reach that point!

I hope to see Madame de M. in Paris this year. If she comes, I should like to have you meet her. You would then discover that brown bread is more difficult to make than you seem to think. If you are willing, nothing will be easier than to make the acquaintance of this baker.

Good-bye. The wind continues to blow. I am obliged to remain a month in the country, and if you have any time to spare, and wish to give me a great deal of pleasure, you have only to write to me at Avignon, where I shall call for your letter.

XIX

Avignon, July 20, 1842.

Since you take that view of it, upon my word, I capitulate. Give me brown bread; it

is better than none at all. Only, allow me to say that it is brown, and continue to write to me. You will observe how humble and submissive I am!

Your letter reached me when I was steeped in melancholy, caused by the sad news of the death of the duc d'Orleans, which I had just learned upon returning from a trip into the mountains. I was sadly in need of a letter of another character; such as it was, your letter has at any rate proved a diversion.

I shall reply to it item by item. The figure of rhetoric of which you think yourself the inventor, has been known for a long time. With the aid of Greek, one might give it a new and whimsical name. In French it is called by the less stately name of a lie. Employ it with me as little as you can. Do not overtax it with others. It should be kept for unusual occasions. Do not make too great an effort to find the world silly and ridiculous. It is, alas! only too much so. You ought, on the contrary, to endeavour to imagine it as it is not. It is better to have too many illusions than not to have any at all. I still have a few, some of which are not very sound, but I make strenuous efforts to retain them.

Your story is very familiar. "There was once an idol." Read Daniel; but he was mistaken—the head was not of gold; it was of clay, like the feet. But the idolater held a lamp in his hand, and the reflection from this lamp gilded the idol's head. If I were the idol (you will observe that I do not on this occasion assume the attractive rôle), I should say: "Is it my fault that you have extinguished your lamp? Is that any excuse for destroying me?" It seems to me that I am becoming somewhat of an Oriental. So be it!

If you knew Madame de M. you would love her to distraction. She does not give me white bread, but she gives me something that takes its place. She is not a baker's wife; she is a baker.

I grieve to see that you are becoming more and more affected. I am fully informed about your piety. I thank you for your prayers, if you do not mean them for a figure

of speech. As to your blue cashmere, I am rather sceptical of your piety, because piety in 1842 is a fashion, just as blue cashmeres are. You will fail to understand the connection, but it is perfectly clear notwithstanding.

I regret very much that you are reading Pope's translation of Homer. Read the translation of Dugas Montbel, which is the only one worth reading. If you had the courage to brave ridicule, and time to spare, you would get Planche's Greek Grammar and his Dictionary. For a month the grammar would put you to sleep, but its effect would be seen later. After two months you would enjoy looking up the Greek words, translated usually almost literally by M. Montbel. Two months later still you would be able to guess fairly well, by the awkwardness of his expression, when the translator has failed to reproduce clearly the Greek phrase. By the end of a year you would read Homer as you read a melody with its accompaniment: the melody being the Greek, the accompaniment the translation. It is possible that you might then wish to study Greek seriously, in which case you would have the pleasure of reading many delightful books.

But I am supposing that your time is not absorbed in the selection of toilettes, or in displaying them before your friends. Everything in Homer is remarkable. The epithets, which in the French translation seem so strange, are wonderfully correct. I remember that he speaks of the sea as purple. I never understood what he meant until last summer, when I was in a little boat on the Gulf of Lepanto, going to Delphi. It was just at sunset. Immediately afterwards, the sea took on a magnificent deep violet tint, which lasted for ten minutes. To see this effect requires the atmosphere, the sea, and the sun of Greece. I hope that you will never become enough of an artist to recognise with pleasure that Homer was a great painter.

The final words of your letter are full of enigmas. You tell me that you will write to me no more, which would be a great misfortune. However, I yield to your decision, and you will hear nothing more from me except compliments. I believe I have

already addressed to you several of these. You solicit one, I imagine, when you say you have neither feeling nor imagination. By continually denying their existence you may bring ill luck on yourself. One should not trifle with such things. But I have an idea that you intended only to try the experiment of your rhetorical figure on me. Fortunately I know how much to believe.

If you can think of anything pleasant to say to me, you might write. I shall remain here for a fortnight still. I want to add one word about the life I am leading, tramping the fields without meeting any other obstacle than rocks. Farewell. I hope you find me this time sufficiently submissive and well-behaved, Signora Fornarina?

XX

Paris, August 27, 1842.

I find awaiting me here a letter which is not so fierce as your recent ones have been. You might have sent it to me down there. Such a rare treat could not be too soon received. I hasten to congratulate you on your Greek studies, and to begin with something that interests you, I will tell you what in Greek are called persons who, like you, have hair of which they are justly proud. It is euplokamos. Eu means well, plokamos, a curl of hair. The two words together form an adjective. Homer has said somewhere: νυμφη δε εὐπλοκαμοσα Καλυψώ, Calypso, nymph of the luxuriant tresses. Is it not very pretty? Ah! for the love of Greek, etc.

I regret exceedingly that you start so late in the season for Italy. You run the risk of seeing everything through odious rain-storms, which deprive the most beautiful mountains in the world of half their splendour; and you will be obliged to take my word for it when I praise the radiant skies of Naples. Neither will you have any good fruit to eat, but must content yourself instead with fig-eaters, birds so called because they live on figs.

I do not at all agree with your version of the parable.

On my return I had an adventure which mortified me not a little, since it showed me the sort of reputation I enjoy with the public. I was packing my luggage at Avignon, preparing to start for Paris, when there entered the room two venerable figures who introduced themselves as members of the Municipal Council. I supposed they had come for the purpose of talking about some church, when they announced pompously and verbosely that their visit had as its object to commend to my honour and to my virtue a lady who was to be my travelling companion. I replied, very peevishly, that they need have no fears concerning my honour and my virtue, but that I was not at all pleased to travel with a woman, for I should then not be able to smoke on the road.

Upon the arrival of the stage-coach I found within a woman, tall and pretty, simply and stylishly dressed, who said she was ill, and despaired of ever reaching Paris alive. We entered into conversation. I was as polite and agreeable as it is possible to be when I am compelled to remain long in the same position. My companion talked intelligently and with no Marseilles accent. She was an ardent Bonapartist, of very enthusiastic temperament; she believed in the immortality of the soul, not overmuch in the catechism, and was on the whole an optimist. I could not help feeling that she had a certain fear of me.

At Saint Etienne the two seated britzska was exchanged for a double carriage. We had the four seats to ourselves, and consequently twenty-four hours of tête-à-tête in addition to the preceding thirty. But although we chatted (what a pretty word!) unintermittingly, I was unable to learn anything of my opposite neighbour, except that she was going to be married, and that she was excellent company. To come to the point, we took on, at Moulins, two uncongenial travellers, and finally reached Paris, where my mysterious lady precipitated herself into the arms of a very ugly man who must have been her father. I took off my cap to her, and was about to get into a cab, when my unknown, leaving her father, came up to me and in a voice full of emotion, said:

“I am deeply touched, sir, by your kindness to me. I can not tell you how grateful I am. Never shall I forget the happiness I have had in travelling with such a celebrated man.” I am quoting her words. But this word celebrated explained the Municipal Councillors and the trepidation of the lady. They had evidently seen my name on the post-office register, and the lady, who had read my books, expected to be swallowed alive. This most unjust opinion of me must be shared, doubtless, by more than one of my lady readers. What ever put it into your head to want to know me? I was in a bad humour for two days following this incident; then I resigned myself to it. It is a remarkable fact, that after I became a great scamp I lived for two years on my former good reputation; but now that I have entirely reformed I still pass for a scapegrace.

As a fact, my wild life lasted but three years, and even then my heart was not in it. I threw myself into dissipation not from inclination, but partly from despondency, and partly, perhaps, out of curiosity. I am afraid, however, that this fact will injure my chances for membership in the Academy. I am criticised, also, for not being religious, and for not going to church. I might act the hypocrite, but I should not know how to go about it, and, besides, I should not have the patience.

If you are astonished that all the goddesses are fair, you will be still more astonished at Naples when you see statues with the hair coloured red. It seems that it was the fashion, formerly, for ladies to use red powder, nay, even gold powder. On the other hand, you will see in the paintings at the studios many goddesses with black hair. It is difficult for me to decide which colour I prefer. Only, I advise you not to powder your hair. There is a terrible Greek word which signifies black hair. Melanchaites (Μελαγχαίτης); this χα has a diabolical sound.

I shall remain in Paris all the fall, I fancy, hard at work on a moral book, which will be about as amusing as the social war in which you will engage in Naples. Good-bye. You promised me some words of affection, and while I am still waiting

for them, I am not very sanguine of receiving them.

You used to admire my wealth of antique gems. Alas! the other day I lost my most beautiful one, a magnificent Juno, while doing a kind act; that is, while carrying home a drunken man who had fractured his thigh. And that stone was an Etruscan. Juno held a scythe, and there is no other monument where she is so represented. Do sympathise with me!

XXI

You write charmingly in Greek, and much more legibly than you write in French. But who is your Greek teacher? You can not make me believe that you have learned to write that running hand from a book only. Who is the professor of rhetoric at D.?

Your letter is very gracious. I say this because I know that you enjoy compliments, and also because it is true. As I shall never learn, however, to correct my unfortunate habit of saying what I think to people who are not all the world to me, you may as well know that I see you are making rapid progress in wickedness, and that I am grieved thereby. You are becoming ironical, sarcastic, and even diabolical. All these words are, as you know, taken from the Greek, and your professor will explain to you what I mean by diabolical; διάβλος, that is, calumniator. You ridicule my best qualities, and even when you praise me you do so with reservations and hesitations which rob the praise of all its worth.

It is a fact that at one time in my life I frequented bad society, but I was attracted to it through curiosity only, and I was always there as a stranger in a strange country. As for good society, I have found it often enough deadly tiresome. There are two places where I am at ease, at least, where I flatter myself I am in my proper element: first, among unpretentious people whom I have known for a long time; secondly, in a Spanish venta, with mule-drivers and Andalusian peasants. Write this in my funeral oration, and you will have told the truth.

If I mention my funeral oration, it is because I believe it is time for you to compose it. I have been seriously ill for a long time, and especially for the last two weeks. I have attacks of dizziness, spasms of pain, and frightful headaches. Something terrible must have happened to my brain, and I fancy that before long I may become, as Homer says, a companion of the shadowy Proserpine. I should like to know what you would say then. I should be charmed if you were to grieve for two weeks. Do you think this is too much to ask?

I am spending part of the night writing, or else in tearing up what I wrote the night before, consequently I make slow progress. What I am writing interests me, but the question is, Will it interest the public? I consider the ancients far more interesting than ourselves; they had no such paltry aims, nor were they so engrossed as we are in a multitude of silly trifles. I find that my hero, Julius Caesar, at the age of fifty-three, committed all sorts of follies for the sake of Cleopatra, forgetting all else for her; this is why he came so near drowning, both literally and figuratively. What man of our century, among our statesmen, I mean, who is not completely callous, completely heartless, by the time he aspires to a seat in the Senate? I should like to explain the difference between that age and our own, but how shall I do it?

Have you come to a passage in the Odyssey that I consider wonderful? It is where Ulysses is living with Alcinoüs, still unknown, and after dinner a poet comes before him and sings of the war of Troy. The little that I have seen of Greece gives me a clearer understanding of Homer. Everywhere throughout the Odyssey is seen that amazing love cherished by the Greeks for their native land. There is in modern Greek a charming word: it is ξενιτεία, an alien. To be in a strange land is for a Greek the greatest of misfortunes, but to die there is the most terrible calamity of which they can conceive.

You scoff at my epicureanism. Have you ever tried to imagine the nature of the entrails which the Greek heroes ate with such relish? The modern philosophers still

eat them: they are called κονκονρέτζι, and are simply delicious. There are little wooden skewers made of the fragrant wood of the mastic tree, with something crisp and spicy around them, which makes one readily understand why the priests used to reserve for themselves this dainty morsel from their victims.

Good-bye. If I were to pursue this subject, you would think me more of a glutton than I am. I have no appetite at all, and nothing in the way of little delicacies can any longer tempt me. This means that I am only fit to throw to the crows. There will be deuced weather all through October, and that will finish me!

XXII

Paris, October 24, 1842.

You are exceedingly kind to leave me in ignorance of that part of the globe which is so fortunate as to possess you. Shall I address this letter to Naples, or to ..., or even to Paris? In your last letter you say that you are about to start for Paris, perhaps for Italy, and since then not a single word of news. I have a suspicion that you are here, and that you will inform me of the fact after you have left; this will be highly in character.

Since writing to you I went away for several days, when, upon my return, I found your letter, dated so long ago that I thought it useless to send an answer to.... I marvel greatly that you have learned without assistance to write the Greek characters, as you say you have. If you will only be a little patient, with such talent as yours you will become a second Madame Dacier. For my own part, I no longer take any interest either in Greek or in French; I have fallen into a fossil state, and whether I read or write, the letters dance up and down before my eyes in a most disagreeable way.

You ask if there are any Greek romances. Certainly there are, but in my opinion they are very tiresome. You might procure a translation of Theagenia and Charicleia,

which the late Racine liked so well. Try to swallow it, if you can. There is also Daphnis and Chloe, translated by Courier. The latter is affectedly artless, and none too meritorious. Finally, there is an admirable story, but it is very, very immoral. I refer to The Ass, by Lucian, also translated by Courier. No one ever admits that he has read it, but it is his masterpiece. About that you must decide for yourself. I wash my hands of the responsibility.

The trouble with the Greeks is that their ideas of decency, and even of morality, were very different from ours. There are many things in their literature which might shock, nay, even disgust you if you understood them. After reading Homer, you can take up confidently the tragedy writers, who will amuse you, and whom you will enjoy because you have a taste for the beautiful, a sentiment which the Greeks possessed in the highest degree, and which a happy few of us inherit from them.

If you have the courage to undertake history, you will be charmed with Herodotus, Polybdus, and Xenophon. I find Herodotus enchanting, and know of nothing more entertaining. Begin with The Anabasis, or with the Retreat of the Ten Thousand. Take a map of Asia, and follow the course of these ten thousand rascals in their journey. It is a gigantic Froissard. Then read Herodotus, and finally Polybdus and Thucydides. The last two are very serious. Procure also a copy of Theocritus, and read The Syracusans. I would recommend also Lucian, who is the wittiest of all the Greek writers, according to our standards of wit, but he is very wicked, and so I dare not.

Here are three pages of Greek. As for the pronunciation, if you wish, I will send you a page which I prepared especially for you. It will teach you the best method, that is, the pronunciation used by modern Greeks. The classical is easier, but it is absurd.

We began our correspondence by telling jokes, then we did what? I shall not remind you. And now we are becoming erudite. There is a Latin proverb which eulogises the happy medium. When I began to write I intended to say all sorts of severe things,

and it is to Greek that you owe the absolute sweetness of my letter. It is not that I bear you less ill-will for your persistent insincerity, only, while writing, I have lost some of my bad humour. If you are not in Italy, do not regret it. The weather there is frightful, with rain, cold, etc. Nothing is more hideous than a land which is not accustomed to these two plagues. Good-bye. I should be very glad to know where you are. Ἐῤῥωσο (grow strong).

This is the end of a Greek letter.

P.S.—Opening a book, I have found these two little flowers, which I plucked at Thermopylæ, upon the hilltop where Leonidas died. It is a relic, as you see.

XXIII

Thursday, October, 1842.

Should you like to hear an Italian opera with me to-night? I have a box on Thursdays with my cousin and his wife. They are now travelling, and I have the box to myself. You should come accompanied by your brother, or by one of your relatives who does not know me. You would please me greatly by coming. Send me a line before six o'clock, and I will let you know the number of the box. I think La Cenerentola will be given. Invent some pretty fiction, which you must tell me in advance, to explain my presence; but manage it so that I may speak with you there.

XXIV

Friday morning, October, 1842.

I thank you very much for having come yesterday. You gave me a great deal of pleasure. I hope your brother saw nothing extraordinary in our meeting. I have an Etruscan seal for you; I can not endure the one you are using. I will give you the other the next time I see you. I enclose the page of Greek which I prepared for you.

When you have a relapse into an erudite mood it may be of use.

XXV

Tuesday night, October, 1842.

I have lost nothing, as it seems, by waiting for your letter. It is studiously perverse; but believe me, perverseness is not becoming to you. Abandon this style, and resume your customary coquetry, which suits you marvellously.

It would be nothing short of cruelty on my part to wish to see you, since this would cause you to be so ill that it would require an enormous quantity of cakes to cure you. I can not imagine where you have conceived the idea that I have friends in the four corners of the globe. You know perfectly well that I have only one or two friends in Madrid. Believe me, I am very grateful for the kindness you showed me at the Italian opera the other night. I appreciate, as I should, your condescension in letting me see your face for two hours; and truth compels me to say that I admired it extremely, as I did your hair also, which I had never seen so closely before.

As for your assertion that you have never refused me anything that I asked, you will have to remain several million years in purgatory for that pretty fib. I see that you are anxious to have my Etruscan stone, and as I am more magnanimous than you, I shall not say, like Leonidas, “Come and take it!” but I shall ask you again how you wish me to send it to you.

I have no recollection of comparing you to Cerberus; yet both have, indeed, several points of resemblance, not only because, like him, you love tarts, but also because you have three heads. I mean to say three brains; one, that of a shocking coquette; another, that of an experienced diplomatist; the third I shall not tell you, because I am not going to say anything amiable to you to-day. I am very ill and miserable on account of several misfortunes that have descended on my head. If you have any influence with Destiny, pray him to treat me kindly for the next two or three months.

I have just been to see Frédégonde, which bored me to death, in spite of Mademoiselle Rachel, who has magnificent black eyes, without any white, like the devil's, they say.

XXVI

Paris, Tuesday night.

I do not understand you, and I am tempted to believe you to be the very worst of coquettes. Your former letter, in which you tell me that you no longer know me, put me in a bad humour, and I have not replied to it promptly. You say, also, with a great deal of civility, that you do not care to see me, for fear of becoming tired of me. Unless I am mistaken, we have seen each other six or seven times in six years, and if we add together the minutes, we may have passed three or four hours together, half the time saying nothing. However, we are well enough acquainted for you to have learned to like me a little, the proof of which you gave me Thursday. We know each other really better than people who meet in society, considering the length of time we have conversed in our letters with a certain amount of freedom.

Confess, then, that it is scarcely flattering to my self-esteem that now, after an acquaintance of six years, you should treat me thus. Nevertheless, as I have no means of overcoming your resolutions, it shall be as you wish in this case, but I think it is rather silly not to see each other. I beg your pardon for using this word which is neither polite nor friendly, but which, in my opinion at least, is unfortunately true.

I did not in any way ridicule you the other evening; on the contrary, I thought you extremely self-possessed. As for the antique seal, you shall see an impression from it on this letter, and it is subject to your orders, when you have told me where I shall give it to you—no, how you wish it sent to you. Let us not offend the eternal fitness of things.

I ask nothing from you in exchange, for the reason that everything I have asked you have refused me. If you consider it wrong to see me, is it not wrong, also, to write to me? As I am not very proficient in your catechism, there is some confusion in my mind on this point. I speak too harshly, perhaps, but you have wounded my feelings, and when I am unhappy I can not escape from it, as you can, by devouring cakes. In truth, that is quite worthy of Cerberus.

XXVII

Paris, Saturday, November, 1842.

Das Lied des Claerchens gefällt mir zu gar; aber warum haben Sie nicht das Ende geschrieben?

The interest which you manifest in that Etruscan stone is truly delightful to see! How many cakes do you think it is worth? You have never even asked about the inscription it bears. It is a man turning a ewer. I should say an amphora, which is a Greek word and more high-sounding. In former times, perhaps, the seal belonged to a potter; there is, indeed, a mythological allusion which I might explain to you if I would. As for the other seal, it has a strange history. I found it in the chimney-place, as I was poking the fire, in the rue d'Alger; it is a very large, heavy bronze ring, and the characters on it are mystical. It is supposed to have been used by a magician, or even by the gnostics. You have noticed on it a small man, a sun, a moon, etc. Is it not a curious thing to find in the ashes in the rue d'Alger? Who knows if it is not to the mysterious power of this ring that I owe your song of Claire?

I am really ill, but that is no reason why I should not go out. If, for instance, you wished to receive the Etruscan ring from my own hand, I would give it to you with the greatest pleasure; while it would be conspicuous and cause gossip if I should send it in a letter by your bearer. But I do not want to ask anything more from you, for you become more despotic every day, and you have acquired the most odious

subtleties of coquetry. It appears that you do not appreciate eyes without any white, and that you admire blue-white eyes. You take good care, also, to remind me of your own eyes, which I remember quite well, although I have seen them so seldom.

Who has taught you this peculiarity, which you dare to tell me you did not know? Was it your Greek teacher, or your German teacher? Or am I to believe that you learned by yourself to write German script, as you did the Greek? Another article of faith to add to your aversion to mirrors! You ought to cultivate a German flower called die Aufrichtigkeit.

I have just written the word End at the close of a piece of very learned writing, which I composed in the worst possible humour; it remains to be seen whether this word does not signify dulness and prolixity. However, now that it is finished, I feel relieved of a burden and much happier, which explains my blandness and amiability towards you; otherwise I should have told you some sharp truths about yourself.

You should see me, if it were only to escape from the atmosphere of flattery in which you live. We must go some day to the Museum to see the Italian paintings. It would be a compensation for the journey you failed to take, and to have me for a guide is an inestimable privilege. This is not a condition on which I shall give you my Etruscan stone. Say how, and you shall have it.

XXVIII

Paris, November, 1842.

M. de Montrond says that we should beware of our first impulses, because they are usually trustworthy. One would suppose that you had given much consideration to this beautiful maxim, for you practise it with rare constancy. When a good resolution occurs to you, you postpone it indefinitely. If I were at Civita Vecchia I should seek among the gems of my good friend Bucci for some Etruscan Minerva; it would be the most appropriate seal for you. Meanwhile, my potter is all ready, and I

still say, like Leonidas: Μολὼν λαβέ. I think I shall keep it for some time still, until the eve of your departure.

I must tell you that I am feeling much better, and am less a prey to the blue devils. I find pleasure even in my work, which I have not done for a long time. I am forming great plans for the winter, which is a sign of better spirits. This is why I write so cheerfully, for if I had written immediately after receiving your German letter I should have criticised your faults in my most severe style. You will not be deprived of this even now, because if I see the world to-day through rose-coloured glasses, that is all the more reason why they will soon reflect a darker hue.

I should be glad to know what you are doing, and how you occupy your time. When I see you so learned in Greek and in German, I conclude that you are very lonely at ..., and that you are spending your life among your books, with some wise professors to explain them to you. Yet I wonder whether it is not otherwise in Paris, and I fancy the days there passed in amusements of another kind. If I had not lived so long in the strictest solitude, I should know all about your actions and movements, and the reports that I should hear would give me an impression of you very unlike the one I receive from your letters.

While you love to praise yourself, it pleases me to believe that you are more natural with me, by which I mean less insincere, than you are in society. There are in you so many contradictions that I am terribly puzzled to reach an exact conclusion; that is to say, to the sum total + so many good qualities, — so many bad ones = x. It is this x that I find confusing.

When I saw you at the home of our friend Madame V., just as you were leaving Paris, your extreme elegance and style astonished me greatly. The cakes that you devour so hungrily, after the fatigue of the opera, have astonished me still more. Not that I do not place love of admiration and epicureanism among the chief of your faults, but I supposed that these faults had a mental rather than a tangible form; I

imagined that you cared very little for dress, and that eating was to you only a diversion; that you enjoyed making an impression by your beautiful eyes and your clever sayings, rather than by your gowns. See how mistaken I was!

But this time you shall not reproach me with pessimism, for while you have been falling from grace day by day, I fancy that I have improved. It is unreasonably late and I have abandoned a highly learned company of Greeks and Romans to write to you.

I am just reminded that I must rise early to-morrow—that is, to-day—which prevents me from explaining in what way I am better than I used to be, while you have been amusing yourself teasing me about Madame.... I will defer my own praises for another time; besides, I have come to the end of my paper.

XXIX

Paris, December 2, 1842.

There is in some old Spanish romance a very pleasing tale. A barber had his shop at the corner of the street, and the shop had two doors. Through one of these doors he used to pass out into the street, stab a passer-by, then hurrying into the shop, he went out the other door and bandaged the wounds of his victim. Gelehrten ist gut predigen.

I bear no grudge against your blue cashmere or your cakes; all such things are perfectly natural. I even admire coquetry and greediness, but only when one confesses them frankly. But you, who very justly aspire to be something more than a mere woman of the world, why should you have its defects? Why are you never frank with me? To give you an example of frankness, will you, or will you not, come with me to the Museum next Tuesday? If you are not willing, or if it will inconvenience or embarrass you to come, you shall receive your Etruscan seal in a little box Tuesday evening, and it will be delivered to you as naturally as possible.

Your propensity for coquetry is very amusing. You chide me for being indifferent, but if I were not so, or if I did not make a show of indifference, you would drive me mad. Why does one carry an umbrella? Because it rains.

Notwithstanding your wishes, Madame de M. will certainly come to Paris. She has to purchase the trousseau of her daughter, who is to be married in the spring. Unless an unforeseen revolution occurs, the said trousseau will be made in Paris, and the marriage, also, may take place here.

I am not acquainted with the future husband, but by means of intrigue I had a hand in dismissing a former one whom I disliked, although an exceptional man in many respects. In the first place, he was not tall enough; besides, he has no less than five or six grandeeships accumulated on one small body. This action is in itself a proof of my amelioration. Formerly, it amused me to see others held up to ridicule, but now I should like to have almost everyone shielded from derision. I have also become more humane, and the last time I saw the bull-fights in Madrid I felt none of the pleasure with which I was inspired ten years ago by a similar exhibition. In fact, I have a dread of all kinds of suffering, and for some time I have believed in mental suffering. In a word, I endeavour as far as possible to forget the ego. This, in brief, is the list of my perfections.

It is not through vanagloria that I am ambitious to become an Academician. One of these days I shall present myself for admission, but I am sure to be black-balled. I hope I may have patience and persistence sufficient to accept the disappointment and to persevere in my endeavour. If the cholera breaks out again, I may perhaps succeed in attaining a seat. No, I have not the least bit of vanagloria. I take things too literally, perhaps, but I have been disillusioned of taking a poetical view of life. However, you may be sure that you will never know either all the good or all the ill in me. All my life I have been praised for virtues that I do not possess, and slandered for faults which are not mine. I imagine you at present as spending your evenings

with your two brothers. Good-bye.

XXX

December, Monday morning.

Now this is what I call talking. To-morrow at two o'clock, at the place which you appoint. I hope to see you to-morrow relieved of your headache, in spite of which you are kinder than usual. Good-bye. I shall be delighted to see the Joconde with you. I am obliged to hasten to the four ends of Paris, and I have only time to thank you for your almost unhoped-for graciousness.

XXXI

Wednesday.

Is it not true that the devil is not so black as he is painted? I am rejoiced to learn that you did not catch cold, and that you slept well. It is more than I can say. Be so good as to consider that the Museum will be closed January 20 for the exhibition of paintings, and that it would be a pity not to say farewell to it. Of course, you will find a thousand-and-one buts to this suggestion. Take care that you do not regret, on January 21, that you did not recover the courage that you found yesterday.

XXXII

Paris, Sunday evening, December.

Your letter did not surprise me in the least. I was expecting it. I know you well enough now to be sure that when you have had a kind thought you are sure to repent of it, and try to have it forgotten as promptly as possible. You understand very well, too, how to sugar-coat the most bitter pills. I owe you this in justice. As I am not as strong as you, I can say nothing to overcome your heroic resolution not to return to

the Museum. I am confident that you will do exactly as you please; only, I hope that in a month from now you will be more charitably inclined towards me. Perhaps, after all, you are right. There is a Spanish proverb which says: Entre santa y santo, pared de cal y canto.

You compare me to the devil. I observed Tuesday evening that I did not pay attention enough to my dull old books, and too much to your gloves and boots. But, notwithstanding all you tell me with your diabolical spirit of coquetry, I do not believe that you fear any repetition at the Museum of our past folly. Frankly, this is what I think of you, and how I explain your refusal: you like to have some indistinct target for your coquetry, and that target is I. You do not wish to come too close to it, because, in the first place, if you should fail to strike it your vanity would suffer too much; and again, if you should see it too distinctly, you would discover that it was not worth aiming at. Have I guessed it correctly? I wished, the other day, to ask when I might see you again, and perhaps if I had insisted you would have named a day. Then I thought that after you had said Yes you would write me No, and that this would have distressed and angered me.

I continue to speak to you with the most absurd frankness, but my example makes no impression at all upon you.

XXXIII

Sunday, December 19, 1842.

It is evident that you have had professors in Greek and in German, but one may be permitted to doubt if you have had any in Logic. Really, was such reasoning ever heard of!—for instance, when you say you do not want to see me, because, whenever you see me, you fear you shall never see me again. By such reasoning, I consider your letter as null and void. The only thing which I can make out is that you have a handkerchief to give me. Send it to me, or say that I may receive it from

your own hand, which would suit me much better. I hate surprises that are announced beforehand, because I imagine them much more beautiful than they prove to be.

Agree with me, and let us see the Museum once more together. If I bore you, that will be the end of it, and I shall not take you there again; if not, what prevents our meeting from time to time? Unless you give me some intelligible reason, I shall persist in believing that which seems to vex you so much. I should have written to you immediately, but I had mislaid your letter, which I wished to read again. I turned my desk topsy-turvy, and set it in order, which is no trifling matter. Finally, after burning several reams of old papers, which had seemed destined to collect dust on my desk, I concluded that your letter had vanished by some sort of witchcraft. I found it awhile ago in my Xenophon, where it had hidden itself, I don't know how; and I have read it again with admiration. Assuredly you feel very little of that veneration of which you sometimes speak, else you would not say so many sinrazones; but I will forgive you, if you will let me see you soon, for you are much more agreeable when you talk to me than when you write.

I am distressingly ill, and cough hard enough to rend rocks apart, yet I am going Monday evening to hear Mademoiselle Rachel recite from Phèdre before five or six great men. She will believe that my cough is an intrigue against her. Write to me soon. I am horribly blue, and you would be doing an act of charity to say something kind, as you do occasionally.

XXXIV

December, 1842.

It is some time since I have felt like writing to you. My nights are passed writing prose for posterity to read. This is because I have been dissatisfied both with you and with myself, which is most extraordinary. I find myself to-day in a more

indulgent frame of mind. This evening I heard Madame Persiani, which has reconciled me with human nature. If I were King Saul I should put her in the place of David.

I am told that M. de Pongerville, the Academician, is going to die. This grieves me, because I shall not take his place, and I should prefer that he wait until my time were come. This Pongerville made a metrical translation of a Latin poet named Lucretius, who died at the age of forty-three from the effect of a love-potion which he took to make himself beloved or lovable. But previous to this he had composed a long poem on The Nature of Things, a poem atheistic, impious, abominable, and so forth.

M. de Pongerville's health troubles me more than it should, and, besides, I shall be obliged to start out at ten o'clock day after to-morrow for the vexatious fatigues of New Year's Day. Why is it a matter of course that everybody on this day should either go visiting or else feel it necessary to raise Cain? I have still other grievances, which would make you laugh, so I shall not tell them to you.

Do you know that if we continue to write to each other in this tone of friendly confidence, keeping to ourselves our secret thoughts, we have only one resource: that is, to be more careful of our style, then to publish some day our correspondence, as has been done for Voltaire and Balzac? You have a remarkable habit of considering as non-existent things of which you do not wish to speak, which certainly does great credit to your diplomacy. It seems to me that you grow more beautiful. This I thought impossible, for the boundless sea is not increased by the addition of a few drops of water. This proves that what you lose in one direction you gain in another. One improves in beauty when one is in health; one is in health when one has a wicked heart and a good digestion. Do you still eat little cakes?

Good-bye. I wish you a happy ending of the old year, and a happy opening of the new year. Your friends will wear away your cheeks on that day. When I have finished the writing which I mentioned a while ago I shall go to London for a two

weeks' holiday. This will be towards Easter.

XXXV

December, 1842.

You must know that I have been very ill since we met. I have had all the cats in the world in my throat, all the fires of hell in my chest, and I have spent several days in bed, meditating on the things of this world. I seemed to be on the slope of a mountain, whose summit I had barely crossed, with infinite fatigue and little pleasure. This declivity was very steep, and tiresome to descend, and it would have been convenient to come to an opening before reaching the base. The only source of consolation that I have been able to discover along this descent is a little sunshine afar off, a few months spent in Italy, in Spain, or in Greece, in oblivion of the entire world, the present, and, above all, the future.

All this was not enlivening, but some one had brought me four volumes of Dr. Strauss' Life of Jesus. In Germany this is called an exegesis; it is a Greek word which they have discovered, and it signifies discussion or interpretation carried to an extremely fine point; but it is highly amusing. I have noticed that a subject proves entertaining in proportion as it is devoid of a profitable conclusion. Do you not agree with me, Señora caprichosa?

XXXVI

Tuesday night, December, 1842.

It is no longer a question of Jean-Paul; it is a question of French, and of the French of the period of Louis XV. Fine reasoning that, founded entirely on selfishness. There are certain people who buy a piece of furniture the colour of which pleases them; then, because they are afraid of spoiling it, they hide the article under a linen

cover, which is never removed until the furniture is worn out.

In all that you say and do you substitute invariably a conventional for a genuine sentiment. This is, perhaps, etiquette. The question is to know what it means to you, in comparison with something else with which, in my opinion, it would be silly and ridiculous to compare it.

You know that while I have very little sympathy for false reasoning, I respect convictions, even those that seem to me the most absurd. You have a great many ridiculous notions (pardon the word) of which I should hesitate to deprive you, since you are so fond of them and have no others to take their place. But we are dreaming. Is it not the realities of life that awaken us invariably from our dreams? Should we still try to close the crevice through which we see fairy-land?

What is it you fear? In your letter to-day, among a lot of harsh words and gloomy, pessimistic thoughts, you say something which is true: “I think I never loved you so much as I did yesterday.” You might have added, “I love you less to-day.” I am sure that if you felt to-day as you did yesterday, you would be full of remorse, as I predicted. Yet you seem scarcely touched by it. My remorse is of a very different quality.

I repent frequently of sticking too closely to my occupation of being a statue. You opened your heart to me yesterday; I should like to have given you the same confidence, but you did not wish it. The linen cover still conceals the furniture! This is a subject upon which you compel me to scold you sharply. Yet, never did I feel less in the mood for scolding before receiving your letter. After all, I am like you: pleasant memories drive out the disagreeable ones.

By the way, how affectionate you are! You are reserving a surprise for my departure. You can guess how impatient I am. Last night, while returning from dinner, I discovered that I knew by heart the speech of Tecmessa which you had admired; and as I was in a thoughtful mood I translated it into verse—English verse,

of course, for I detest French verse. I intended giving it to you, but I have changed my mind. Besides, I found a horrible fault of quantity in the word Ajax. It must be Ajax, must it not?

When shall I see you, to tell you what you never tell me? You see that we rule the weather. It clears for our benefit. Between two storms we have always one halcyon day. Tell me, please, that it may be two days, for I am tied down to work now.

XXXVII

Paris, January 3, 1843.

Hurrah! this is what I call talking! You are so amiable when you wish to be. Why is it that you are so often unpleasant? No, indeed, written thanks are of no value; and after all my diplomacy in securing such cordial letters of introduction for your brother, I certainly deserve a few words of kindness from you. I will forgive you cheerfully for all your ridicule concerning balloons and the Academy, about which I think much less than you suppose. If I ever become an Academician, I shall be no harder than a rock. By that time I shall be perhaps somewhat shrivelled and mummified, but for all that I shall be a devilish good fellow.

The only way in which I can have Persiani for my David is to go to hear her every Thursday. As for Mademoiselle Rachel, I am not gifted with the faculty for enjoying poetry as often as music, and this—Rachel, not music—reminds me that I promised you a story. Shall I tell you now, or shall I reserve it until I see you? I am going to write it, for I shall have something else, no doubt, to tell you then.

Well, then, about two weeks ago I dined with Rachel at the home of an Academician. It was to introduce Béranger to her. There were any number of great men present. She arrived late, and I did not like her entrance. The men said so many silly things to her, and the women did so many silly things, that I remained in my corner. Besides, I had not spoken to her for a year.

After dinner, Béranger, with the kindness and common sense habitual to him, told her that it was a great pity to fritter away her talents in the salon, and that there was but one audience worthy of her, that of the Theater Français, and so on. Mademoiselle Rachel seemed to approve cordially of the lecture, and, as a proof that she had profited thereby, she played the first act of Esther. An assistant was needed to read the other parts, and she had a copy of Racine brought to me most ceremoniously by an Academician who was performing the functions of a cicisbeo. I replied churlishly that I did not understand poetry, and that there were people in the room who, being in that business, could scan it much better than I. Hugo asked to be excused on account of his eyes, some one else for another reason. The host made a sacrifice of himself.

Imagine to yourself Rachel, dressed in black, standing between a piano and a tea-table, with a door at her back, assuming her theatrical expression. This visible transformation scene was highly amusing and very pretty; it lasted about two minutes, then she began:

“Is it thou, dear Elise?” ... The confidante, in the midst of her reply, dropped her glasses and her book; ten minutes passed before she had recovered her place in the book, and her eyes. It is evident to the audience that Esther is losing her temper. She continues. The door behind her opens; a servant enters. Some one makes a sign for him to retire. He hastens out, and can not succeed in closing the door. The said door, unlatched, swings back and forth, accompanying Rachel with a melodious creaking which is extremely diverting. As this noise did not cease, Mademoiselle Rachel laid her hand upon her heart as if she were ill, but in the manner of one accustomed to expiring in public. This created an opportunity for several persons to come to her assistance.

During the intermission Hugo and M. Thiers began to dispute on the subject of Racine, Hugo contending that Racine had a small mind and Corneille a great one.

"You say this," replied Thiers, "because you yourself have a great mind. You are the Corneille of an age in which Casimir Delavigne is the Racine." At this Hugo shook his head with assumed humility. I leave you to judge if modesty was in evidence.

By this time, however, she had recovered from her swoon, and the act was concluded, but fiascheggiando. Some one who is well acquainted with Mademoiselle Rachel remarked, as we left the house, "How she must have sworn to-night, after going home!" The words gave me food for thought. This is my story. All I ask of you is, not to compromise me by repeating it to any Academician.

I did not recognise you Sunday until I was quite near. My first impulse was to join you, but seeing you with so many others, I went on my way. I did well, I think. It seems to me that heretofore I have always seen you with pale cheeks, from which I concluded Sunday that they appeared rosy in comparison with the solemnity of the day.

Good-night, or rather good-morning. Monday, or rather Tuesday, for it is three o'clock in the morning.

XXXVIII

Thursday, January, 1843.

Let us take advantage of the fine weather to-day.

Onc homme n'eut les dieux tant à la main, Qu'asseuré fut de vivre au lendemain.[6]

At the appointed place, then, "at two o'clock to-morrow, Thursday." I say to-day, for it is now one o'clock. The stars are shining brightly, and as I returned a while ago from the ministerial assembly, I found the walking as tolerable as it was the last time we were out. Wear your seven-league boots, however—it is safer. If by chance you should be out when this letter arrives, I shall wait for you until half past two; if you do not come at all to-day, then Saturday. To any one else but you I should say

something else.

I wished to write you a letter to-day, but remembering my promise, I have decided not to do so. I did wrong. You should have appointed the day and the hour, which would have saved us the inconvenience of missing each other. I hope, however, that this will not happen. I suppose you are really anxious to take this walk, for your letter is colder than usual. There is a charming equipoise in your actions. You are unwilling that I should ever be perfectly happy, so you make your plans in advance to put me in a rage. This will be, perhaps, more difficult than you think, for although I have been ill for two days, the world to-day looks rose-colour.

I dined yesterday at a house where, as I entered the room late, among a lot of women I thought I saw you. Consequently I was struck dumb for a quarter of an hour. I did not glance in the direction of the person I supposed to be you, unable to decide, as is always the case when one is embarrassed, whether to speak to you or not.

Making a desperate effort finally, I walked up to the lady, who turned out to be a Spanish woman whom I had met several times. It only rests with her to believe che ha fatto colpo. I am sending you Dickens' Sketches, which amused me when I read them. You may have read them already, but no matter! At two o'clock, then, to-day, Thursday.

XXXIX

Paris, Sunday, January 16, 1843.

I thank you for having thought to reassure me, but I am anxious about those flushed cheeks of which you speak so lightly. I regret sincerely, I assure you, that my persuasions brought you out in that frightful downpour. It happens seldom that I sacrifice others to myself, and when this does occur I am overcome with remorse. Anyhow, you are not ill, and you are not angry, which is the most important consideration.

It is a blessing that a small misfortune arises now and then to turn aside greater ones. We must give the devil his due. It seems to me we were both depressed, although happy enough at heart. Some joys are so deep that they do not show on the surface. I hope you felt a little of what I experienced. Until you tell me the contrary, I shall believe that you did. You say twice in your letter, “Good-bye, until we meet again!” You are sincere, are you not? But where and when shall it be? My last suggestion proved to be so unfortunate, that I am altogether discouraged. Henceforth I shall trust your inspirations only.

I have a wretched cold this evening, but the rain is not responsible for it, I fancy. I spent the entire morning in a room without fire, examining Chaldean and Persian talismans and rings, while the antiquarian was dying for fear I should steal them. Just to tease him, I remained in the cold room longer than my wishes inclined me.

Good-night, and may we soon meet. It is now your turn to command. Were it only to have you assure me that the rain has not given you a cold, or made you despondent or vexed, I should like to see you.

XL

Sunday night, January, 1843.

As for me, I was not very tired, and yet when I followed on the map the course of our peregrinations, I see that we should both have been worn out. The reason is, that happiness gives me strength, while from you it takes it away. Wer besser liebt? I dined out, and later went to a ball. I could not go to sleep for a long time, thinking of our walk.

You are right in saying that it was a dream. But is it not a great blessing to be able to dream when one wishes? Since you are the dictator, it is for you to say when you care to dream again. You say we were not considerate of each other. I do not understand. Is it because I made you walk too far? But how could we do otherwise?

So far as I am concerned, I am perfectly satisfied with the way you treated me, and I should compliment you even more, if I did not fear that compliments might make you less kind in the future.

As for our follies, think no more about them; that is our prerogative. When you are inclined to find fault with anything, ask yourself if you would really and truly prefer the contrary. I should like you to answer this question frankly. But frankness is not one of your most conspicuous virtues.

You once ridiculed me, and took in an uncomplimentary sense what I said one day about sleepiness, or, rather, the lethargy that sometimes overcomes one too happy to find words in which to express his emotion. I noticed yesterday that you were under the influence of that drowsiness, which is well worth waiting for. I might in my turn have reproached you for your own reproaches; but I was too happy to disturb my happiness.

Good-bye, dear friend, but not for long, I hope.

XLI

Wednesday night, January, 1843.

I have been waiting all day for a letter from you. I thought the pavements dry enough, and the sky bright. But it appears that now you must have sunshine like that of last Thursday. Besides, I am sure you needed a long time to compose the letter which I received a while ago. It is made up of blame and threats, all very gracefully expressed, as you understand how to do. In the first place, I must thank you for your frankness, to which I will reply with a frankness equal to your own.

To begin with the reproaches, I think you make a great deal out of nothing. You have brooded over the affair until it has assumed an importance that does not belong to it, so that you have succeeded in making what even you yourself call frivolities a star-chamber matter.

There is but one point which is worth the trouble of an explanation. You speak to me of precedents, as if you believe that I am scheming with all the patience and Machiavellianism of an old cabinet minister to establish them. Refer a little to your memory, and you will see that nothing is farther from the truth. If it were necessary to discuss the question of precedents, I might mention that of the salon in the rue Saint Honoré the first time I saw you again; then our first visit to the Louvre, which came near costing me an eye. It all seemed a simple enough matter at the time, but now it is another thing. You must have discovered that sometimes I act upon impulse, but that I give it up as soon as I realise that you are displeased; more frequently, however, my impulses are limited to thoughts rather than to acts. Enough said concerning reproaches and precedents.

As to your threats, be assured that I am keenly alive to them; and, although fearing them greatly, nevertheless I can not forbear telling you once more all that I think. Nothing would be easier than to make you promises, but I feel that it would be impossible for me to keep them. Be satisfied, then, to go on as we have in the past, or else let us stop seeing each other.

I must tell you that even the obstinacy with which you set yourself in opposition to these frivolities, as you call them, renders them all the dearer to me, and makes me attach to them a new importance. This seems to be the only proof that you are able to give me of your feelings towards me. If I must resist the most innocent temptations in order to see you, it is a saint’s labour which surpasses my strength. It would be, unquestionably, a great pleasure to see you, but the condition of transforming myself into a statue, like that king in the Thousand and One Nights, is insupportable to me.

We have now come to a clear understanding with each other. You shall decide, according to your wisdom, whether we are to postpone our next walk several thousand years, or to the first bright day. You see I do not accept your advice to

practise hypocrisy. You knew beforehand that this would be impossible. The only hypocrisy of which I am capable is to conceal from the people I love all the pain they cause me. I can sustain this effort for some time, but not forever. When you receive this letter, it will have been a week since we met.

If you persist in your threats, write to me promptly. This will be on your part a favour which I shall appreciate.

XLII

January, 1843.

I am no longer surprised that you learned German so well and so quickly; you possess the genius of that language, for you write in French sentiments worthy of Jean-Paul; as, for example, when you say, “My malady is a sensation of happiness which is almost pain.” In prose this means, I hope, “I am quite well again, and was not very ill.”

You are right to scold me for lack of consideration for those who are ill. I have reproached myself bitterly for having made you take that walk, for having allowed you to sit so long in the shade. As for the rest, I have no regrets, nor have you either, I hope. Contrary to my usual habit, I have no distinct recollections of that day, but am like a cat who licks his whiskers for a long time after drinking his milk. Admit that the peace of which you sometimes speak with admiration, that the kêf, which is superior even to the best that we know, is as nothing in comparison to the happiness “which is almost pain.” Nothing is more insignificant than the life of an oyster, especially of an oyster which is never eaten.

You profess to spoil me, while the fact is that you yourself have been so spoiled that you ill understand how to spoil others. You are pre-eminent in your ability to provoke them; but in point of compliments I think you owe me several in compensation for the magnanimity with which I have allowed you to scold me. I

marvel at myself. Thus, instead of your usual sermon, in your next letter tell me something pleasant, or rather say all those charming extravagances that come to you so easily.

You have compelled me to take up once more my Asiatic journey better than I could have done it for myself. A faster train than the railway affords is waiting for us, and we have it in our minds. I took your “hint,” and since receiving your letter I have accompanied you to Tyre and to Ephesus; together we have crept into the beautiful grotto of Ephesus. We sat beside the ancient tombs, and conversed of many things. We quarrelled, and made up again; it was all as it was in the country the other day, only there was nothing to disturb us except several big, inoffensive, but repulsive-looking lizards. I can not, even in the mind’s eye, picture you as sympathetic as I should like to have you; at Ephesus even, I fancied you as a little sulky, and abusing my patience.

The other day you spoke of a surprise that you would have for me, but how do you expect me to believe you? All that you can do is to yield when you have reached the limit of your futile excuses. But how is it possible for you voluntarily to contrive a gift, when you have a genius for refusing all I ask? I am perfectly sure, for instance, that it would never occur to you to propose a day for us to go for a walk. Do you prefer Monday, or Tuesday? I am anxious about the weather; nevertheless, I trust to our good demon, as the Greeks say.

By the way, I want to read you a passage from a Greek tragedy, which I shall translate literally, and of which you shall then give me your opinion. I believe the Spanish comedy has dropped behind, somewhere between the place we landed and that where we re-embarked. But as I believe you were reading the history of the count de Villa-Mediana, I will try and find the little poem of the duke de Rivas for you.

Good-bye. Do not have any second thoughts, and give me a place in your first. You

know in which place I belong. Remind me to tell you a story of a somnambulist, which I intended telling you the other day.

XLIII

Paris, January 21, 1843.

You are very kind, and I thank you for your first letter, which has given me more pleasure than the second, for the latter has a flavour of second impulses. It is not bad, however. But you must write more legible German. I am sadly in need of the commentaries which you offer me—verbal ones, of course, for they are the best kind. At first I read heilige Empfindung, then afterwards I thought it should read selige. But there are two meanings. Does it mean a sensation of happiness, or sentiment that is dead, past? If I had seen you writing, I should have guessed, probably, from your expression what you intended to say. That was double coquetry on your part, coquetry in writing, coquetry of ambiguity.

Alas! you overrate my knowledge in matters of dress. I have, however, very positive ideas on that subject. I will submit them to you, if you like; but I do not understand most of the beautiful things that should be admired, unless they are explained to me. If you will point them out to me, I shall understand immediately, I assure you. But when, and where? These two questions engage my attention quite as much as your why and wherefore.

Do you not look back longingly to the beautiful warm days of the spring? No danger then of wetting those wonderful little boots! If you will tell me that you have remembered them, and that you still think of them, you will give me renewed patience; but you must do something more than think; you must resolve. I have no desire to recall your promises, for I hope you will add to your good faith by fulfilling them graciously, and not keep them waiting too long. I was so utterly overcome with dismay by that storm, and by its consequences, that I have become

entirely sugared over with suavity and self-sacrifice. I have now sufficient confidence in you to believe that you will not take advantage of it to become tyrannical. You have, I regret to say, strong leanings in that direction. That was formerly a fault of mine—tyranny, I mean—but I flatter myself I have overcome it. Good-bye, then, dearest! Think of me sometimes.

XLIV

January 27, 1843.

Hear what happened to me. I was feeling very ill this morning, but was obliged to go out on business. Returning about five o'clock in a hideous mood, I fell asleep before the fire as I was smoking my cigar and reading Dr. Strauss. Now it seemed to me that I was still seated in my arm-chair, fully awake, and reading, when you entered the room, and said to me, "Is not this the simplest way to see each other?" "Not the best way," I replied, for it seemed to me there were two or three other persons in the room. However, we conversed as if that made no difference; whereupon I awoke, and found that some one had brought a letter from you. See how lucky it was I fell asleep!

I am not conscious of having written you anything out of the way, consequently I have no apology to offer. It would be your place rather to apologise, but you do so with so little penitence, and with so much irony, that it is very evident you have lost that veneration with which you formerly honoured me. I can not, however, harbour resentment against you in spite of my resolutions, so I resign myself to remain your victim, only do not take advantage of my generosity; that would be neither handsome nor generous.

You speak of the sunshine, and remind me of it almost as if it were the Greek calends. Probably we shall have more sunshine next June, but must we wait until then? It is true that you are escarmentada of cloudy weather, but while using due

precautions, might we not take advantage of the first fair weather? I would not have you catch cold on my account. Be sure to wear your overshoes. No matter in what old costume, to see you is always pleasure enough for me.

What is this pain in the side of which you speak so lightly? Do you know that pneumonia begins that way? You went to the ball, and probably caught cold going out into the air. Relieve my mind at once, I beg of you. I would rather think of you cross, than ill. If you are entirely well and in good spirits, and if the weather is never so little fine Saturday, why should we not take that walk? We could go somewhere, far away from everybody, and then walk and talk.

If you can not, or will not, come Saturday, I shall not be angry, but anyway, try to come soon. When I ask you for anything, you grant it only after having kept me fuming for so long that you prevent me from feeling as grateful as I should, perhaps; and you deprive yourself, moreover, of all the merit which would have been yours had you been promptly generous.

To converse together, and—what has sometimes happened—to think together, is this, then, a pleasure of which you grow weary so soon? ‘Tis true that one can speak only for himself, but each one of our excursions has been to me more delightful than the preceding one, because of the memories which it has left with me. I make an exception of the last one, and that one I should like to forget altogether, and replace it by another in which you would run no risk of catching cold. Thus peace is made, and I await your orders to ratify it Thursday evening.

XLV

Paris, February 3, 1843.

Does not this lovely weather make you think of Versailles, and consequently does it not make you wish to laugh? If you were the least logical you would not laugh. I am sure you are aware that Versailles is the capital of the Department of Seine-et-Oise,

where there are officers for the protection of the weak, and that French is spoken there. In such a place you would be as safe as in Paris. Moreover, what you wish to do is to walk without meeting any of your gossiping acquaintances. At Versailles, on a day when the Museum is closed, you are sure of meeting no one. I do not remind you of the air, or of the beauty of the grounds, which have their own value, and which influence always the nature of one's thoughts.

I am confident, for instance, that at Versailles you would have had no sign of that attack of temper of the other day. That you have now recovered from it I am sure, for the closing words of your letter bore the inspiration of your good genius. The beginning was suggested by your evil genius. I write in great haste, for I am overwhelmed in business matters, which are proving very tiresome. Think of me sometimes, and do not be angry. Don't laugh too much when you think of me.

XLVI

Paris, February 7, 1843.

Allow me, if you please, to make a very simple calculation, and all will be said on the subject of Versailles. Is an hour's stroll in that lovely garden such a difficult thing to imagine? Now, did we not spend two hours together at the Museum that dreadfully foggy day? I have finished.

You make me laugh at your idea of the commissions to which I am ordered to attend. Although those are not lacking, the commissions to which I referred are assemblies where several persons together are unable to accomplish the task that one alone could do much better.

Do not fancy that you are the only one who does errands. I have run all over Paris buying gowns and hats, and I have an engagement next Wednesday to select a rococo shepherdess costume. All this is for Madame de M.'s two daughters. Give me your advice. What sort of costumes should they have for a masquerade ball? A

Scotch and a Cracovian costume are now on the way. I have one shepherdess dress, but I need still another disguise. Here is their description: the elder is a pale brunette, not quite so tall as you, very pretty and vivacious; the younger is quite tall, and fair, an unusually handsome girl, with the sort of hair that Titian adored. I should like to have her go as a shepherdess, with powdered hair. What would you advise for the other?

I ask myself why you seem to me to be more beautiful than ever, and am unable to find a satisfactory answer. Is it because your expression is less startled than it was? Yet, the last time I saw you you reminded me of a bird that had just been caged. You have seen me under three aspects. I know of but two of yours—when you are terrified, and again with a sort of radiant defiance which I have seen on no face but yours.

You accuse me unfairly of being fond of society. I have been out but one evening in a fortnight, and that was to call on my minister. I found all the women in mourning, several of them wearing mantillas—no, not mantillas, but black beards which made them resemble Spanish women. I thought it was very pretty. I am strangely depressed and morose. I should like to pick a quarrel with you, but do not know what to quarrel about. You ought to write me a kind and sympathetic letter. I should try to imagine how you looked as you wrote it, and that would comfort me.

Does my novel interest you? Then read the end of the second volume, Mr. Yellowplush. It is a fairly good caricature, in my opinion. Good-bye. Write to me soon.

I reopen my letter to beg you to observe that the weather has the appearance of clearing.

XLVII

Paris, Sunday, February 11, 1843.

I am not quite sure whether I should believe implicitly all that your letter tells me of your indisposition, and of the affairs that detain you. Among all the pleasant things that you say, I think it is clear that you are not particularly anxious to see me. Am I mistaken, or is it that I am so unaccustomed to your soft words that I can not believe them true? Tuesday, shall you be well, shall you be unengaged, shall you be as sweet-tempered as you were last Wednesday? The weather yesterday afternoon was superb; perhaps we shall be as fortunate next Tuesday, if my barometer does not deceive me.

I have something for you, which you will probably think very silly. Since seeing you I have run around considerably, and have played a number of Academic tricks. I am not in good practice, which is to my disadvantage, but I believe I can soon pick it up again. To-day I have visited five illustrious writers of poems or prose, and if night had not overtaken me I am not sure that I could not have finished up my thirty-six visits at a single stretch. It is ludicrous when rivals happen to meet. Some of them look at me as if they would like to eat me alive. I am, indeed, thoroughly worn out with all these dutycalls, and it would be delightful to forget them all during an hour spent with you.

XLVIII

February 11, 1843.

Does not this snow-storm take it upon itself to say No, without your interference in the matter? This should cure you of your bad habit of refusing. The devil is wicked enough, without your efforts to rival him. I was very ill last night, suffering from fever and sharp, shooting pains. I am somewhat better to-night. It seems to me that in your last note you are trying to find an excuse to quarrel about our walk. What was wrong about it, unless you caught cold? I made you walk so fast that I have little anxiety on that score.

There was in your appearance an air of health and vigour that was delightful to see. Besides that, you are losing gradually your habitual restraint with me. These walks are an advantage to you in every way, not to mention the variety of archæological knowledge that you acquire without taking any trouble at all. Already you are past-mistress on the subject of vases and statues.

Every time we meet there is a crust of ice between us to be broken, and it is at least a quarter of an hour before we can take up our last conversation at the point where we left it. If we saw each other oftener, however, doubtless there would be no ice at all. Which do you prefer, the end, or the beginning of our meetings?

You have not thanked me for not mentioning Versailles to you. I think of it often, I assure you. I have something to show you, which I forgot; it belongs to auld lang syne. Come, guess, if you can. When I see you I forget all I intended to say. I made a note of a lecture I wanted to deliver about your jealousy of your brother. In your rôle of sister, as I conceive it, you ought to wish for your brother to love some good and worthy woman. Bear in mind that you can not prevent it in any case, and if you will not be a happy, or at least a resigned confidante, you will certainly become estranged from him.

Good-bye. My finger is deucedly painful, but I am told this is a good symptom. By way of diversion, I will think of your hands and feet. You think of them seldom, I am sure.

XLIX

February 17, 1843.

It is possible that I was unjust towards you; if so, I ask your pardon. At the same time, you do not try to put yourself in my place, and because you do not look at things from my standpoint you insist that I take your point of view, which is impossible. You do not, perhaps, give me all the credit I deserve for my efforts to be

like you. I do not understand your present attitude towards me. Not only so, but speaking literally, I have seen for a long time that you love me better at a distance than when I am with you.

Let us talk no more of this now. I wish only to say that I do not censure you, and that I am not offended with you, and that if at times I am depressed, you must not suppose that I am angry. You have made me a promise, which you may be sure I shall not forget, and yet I do not know if I shall remind you of it. There is nothing I dislike so much as quarrels, but I should have to quarrel with you in order to jostle your memory. Nothing that pains you would give me pleasure; therefore I will agree to the programme which you have arranged.

Indeed, that was a happy inspiration of ours the other day. What a snow, and what a rain! What a pity it would have been to put me off until to-day! You are always afraid to follow your first impulses; do you not know that they are the only ones which are worth anything, and which always succeed? I have an idea that the devil is constitutionally slow, and decides always on the longest way around. To-night I have been to the Italian Opera, where, in spite of the constant applause given my enemy, Madame Viardot, I enjoyed myself.

I have received from Spain the books for which I have been waiting in order to continue my work, so that temporarily I am in high spirits. I wish I knew that you were thinking of me, and especially that we were thinking together. Good-bye. I am charmed that you like the pins. I was afraid you might disdain them; but, despite the pleasure it would give me to see you wear them, do not wear the blue shawl next time. You are right in saying that it is too showy.

L

Paris, Monday night, February, 1843.

If I were not afraid of spoiling you, I should tell you of the pleasure I have had from

your letter, with its very gracious promise, and, more than all, your eagerness for the return of dry weather. Is it not great folly on your part to wish to make fixed dates for our walks, as if we could ever be sure of a day? Was I not right in saying, “Come as often as you can”? When we have had two days of fine weather, we may take it for granted that it will rain for two months afterwards. What matters it if at the end of a year we find ourselves so much ahead by a few days’ promenade? Indeed, your letter is full of first impulses, that is why I like it so well. I fear, however, that you are so generously disposed only because we can not take advantage of your good intentions. Nevertheless, your promises are somewhat reassuring, and if you do not keep them you will be very, very sorry.

You made me think of all sorts of things the other evening at the opera, with your iris-coloured gown. But you need not be coquettish with me. I love you no better in iris-colour than in black.

Tell me the truth, were you not angry with me when you reflected? If so, that would have been for me an unfortunate first impulse the other day, and that would have caused me both pleasure and distress. When I see you I shall know which.

I know the superstition attaching to knives and sharp instruments, but not that about pins. I should have thought, on the contrary, that pins signified attachment, and that is the reason, perhaps, which made me select them. Do you remember that you would not allow me to pick up yours at Madame de P.’s? I still cherish this grievance against you, along with many others. I forgive them all to-day, but when you have added others to them I shall be as indignant as ever.

It is a great misfortune to be unable to forget. My writing to-day resembles a cat’s scratching. I can not yet sharpen my pen, and doubt very much whether you can read my scrawl. It is almost as intelligible as what you write in blank.

I suppose you are going in society a great deal this carnival season. In arranging my desk I have discovered that I failed to go to the ball given by the Director of the

Opera. What has become of the happy time when such things pleased me? Now they bore me to death. Do I not seem very old to you?

There is some appearance of clearing weather, but I dare not say a word. I have sworn to leave you perfect liberty. Theodore Hook is dead. Have you read Ernest Maltravers, and Alice, by Bulwer? They present charming pictures of youthful and of mature love. I have them both, when you wish them.

LI

Thursday night, February, 1843.

In vain have I tried to find in your last letter some excuse to be angry with you, for even anger would be a relief. I have burned your letter, but I remember it only too distinctly. It was very sensible, too sensible, perhaps, but very kind also. For a week I have had such a strong desire to see you, that I have even brought myself to the point of regretting our quarrels. I am writing to you now, and do you know why? Because you will not reply, and that will make me furious, and anything is preferable to the despondency in which you have left me. Nothing is more absurd; we were perfectly right to say farewell.

You and I understand so thoroughly the meaning of reason, that we should act in the most reasonable way possible. But after all, happiness is found only in folly and in dreams. It is strange, but I never believed, until this last time, that our quarrels could be serious. But it is now ten days since we parted in such a solemn manner that I am terrified. Were we more angry than usual, more clear-sighted? and did we love each other less? There was between us that day something, certainly, which I do not remember distinctly, but which had never existed before.

It never rains but it pours. At the same time that we parted, my cousin changed his day at the Opera, so I shall not meet you there in future on Thursdays. I recall, also, that you predicted, prophetically, that I should forget you for the Academy, and it

was before the Academy that we said good-bye. All this is very silly, but it haunts me, and I am dying to see you, were it only that we might quarrel.

Shall I send you this letter? I have not quite decided. I went yesterday, on the strength of a Greek verse, to Saint Germain l'Auxerrois. Do you remember when we used to understand each other?

Good-bye. Write to me. I feel a little comforted from having written to you.

LII

Paris, February, 1843.

It has happened often during my life to do reluctantly things which I have been afterwards very glad to have done. I hope that you may have the same experience. Suppose the contrary had occurred, would you not have felt some impatience for having come alone? Would you not have suffered some distress (let me believe you would) for having caused me sorrow?

Do you now recall with pride that strange influence which you have twice exerted on my thoughts and on my resolutions? The only mistake made has been to feel a little uncertainty. Are you not astonished, as I am, with that strange coincidence (I shall not say sympathy, for fear of offending you) of our thoughts? Do you recollect that on a former occasion we had an experience almost as miraculous? and more recently still, beside a stove in the Spanish Museum, you read my thoughts as quickly as they came into my mind? For a long time I have suspected something of the diabolical in you, but I am reassured somewhat, remembering that I have seen both your feet, and neither one is a cloven foot. It may be, however, that you have concealed beneath those little boots a tiny hoof. I beg you to relieve my suspense.

Good-bye. Here is the book of which I spoke.

LIII

Paris, February 9, 1843.

I was very uneasy when no word came from you. Not that I feared you had changed your mind, but I thought you were ill, and chided myself for taking you that long walk, returning through the wind and rain. Fortunately, it was the post-office, taking its Sunday holiday, which kept me waiting for your letter. Although the delay caused me intense suffering, I did not for a single moment blame you. I am glad to tell you this, so that you may know that I am overcoming my faults, as you also are overcoming yours. Good-bye, then, for a little while. My eyes no longer pain me. Yours, I fancy, sparkle as brightly as ever. What mountains we make out of molehills! Would it not have been a mistake not to see each other again?

I am very blue and miserable. One of my intimate friends, whom I intended to visit in London, has just suffered a stroke of paralysis. I do not know whether it will be fatal, or, what would be even worse than death, whether he will linger on in that frightful condition of unconsciousness to which this disease brings the most brilliant minds. I am uncertain whether I ought not to go to see him at once.

Write to me, I pray you, and say something sympathetic, so that I will forget my gloomy forebodings.

LIV

Thursday morning, February, 1843.

Alas! Yes, poor Sharpe[7] has just been stricken down most suddenly and painfully. I have had no news from him since the 5th, and if you know some one in London who can tell you anything authentic, I beg you to write and learn his condition, and whether there is the least hope for his recovery. You may, perhaps, be acquainted with his sister. It was at her house, I suppose, that you met him.

No matter what you say, second thoughts are only too evident in your letter. A few amiable words, however, slipped from you unconsciously. You go to a great deal of trouble to be disagreeable, and it is only by strenuous efforts that you succeed in being so.

Have you ever reflected that it is an admirable plan to place in a beautiful palace pictures and statuary, and to allow people to go there to enjoy them? Unfortunately, this superb place is to be closed, in order to hang there some hideous modern daubs. Does not this grieve you? Agree with me, and let us go and say good-bye to all those venerable statues. Saturday is an excellent day, for only Englishmen come then, and they do not get in the way of those who like to examine the pictures closely. What do you think of Saturday—that is to say, day after to-morrow? That will be the last Saturday. This word “last” grieves me. So, then, Saturday.

You speak of your remorse on account of my eye. What is the character of your remorse? The accident might have been avoided in two ways: I need not have exposed the eye to danger, and you might have taken care of it for me. It is this last fact that causes you remorse—that ought to do so, at any rate, before your second impulses come to you. If I do not hear to the contrary, I shall await you Saturday, at two o’clock, in front of the Joconde, unless the weather is bad. But it will be fine weather, I hope, and if any disappointment comes it will be most assuredly your fault.

Why do you use such small paper, and why do you write only three lines, two of which are to quarrel with me? What matters it if one’s life is short, provided it has been full of happiness! Is it not better to have rich memories, rather than many years of emptiness which have nothing to recall?

LV

Paris, February, 1843.

Our letters crossed each other, and my suspense has been relieved sooner than I had hoped. I am very grateful. Notwithstanding the ambiguity of its style, I am deeply gratified by what your letter tells me. That verb of which you have such dread has to me a sweet sound, even when it is accompanied by all those adverbs which you understand so well how to weave around it.

Ridicule, if you like, my melancholy mood, aroused by the ruins of Carthage. Marius, sitting beside them as we were, dreamed, it may be, that he would enter Rome once more, while in my future I see little to hope for. You frighten me, dear friend, when you say that you dare no longer trust yourself to write to me, and that you have more courage to speak to me. You say the reverse of this when we are together. Will not the result be that you will neither speak to me nor write to me? You were vexed with me, you say. Was this just, and had I deserved it? Had I not your promise, and, in some measure, your example also? Have you remained blind to this? Have you retained an unpleasant memory? Are you still angry? All this is what I am anxious to know, and what, I am sure, you do not intend to tell me.

I am beginning to know you by heart, and this, I believe, is the cause of my frequent low spirits. There is in you such a strange combination of contrasts and contradictions that it is enough to provoke a saint....

I heard sad news yesterday. Poor Sharpe died last Wednesday. The news of his death came at the moment not only when I believed him out of danger, but about to resume his ordinary occupations. I can not accustom myself to the thought of seeing him no more. It seems to me that if I were to go to London I should certainly find him there....

LVI

Thursday night, March 1, 1843.

I was very much afraid I should not be able to see you Saturday, when I had been

promising myself to give you a good scolding for your indifference the other day. But I have succeeded in overcoming all the obstacles. So, then, Saturday. It is a long time since we have had a falling out. Do you not think this very pleasant, and greatly preferable to the quarrels we used to have, the only benefit of which was our reconciliations? You still have one fault, however, that of making yourself so scarce. We see each other hardly once in a fortnight. Each time there seems to be a new crust of ice to be broken. Why do I not find you again just as you were when I left you? If we met oftener this would not happen. To you I am like an old opera which you must needs forget in order to hear it again with any pleasure. I, on the contrary, would love you better, I think, were I to see you every day. Prove to me that I am wrong, and appoint a day in the near future when I may see you.

My fate at the Academy will be decided March 14. Reason tells me to hope, but some vague feeling of presentiment tells me just the opposite. In the meanwhile, I am making calls most conscientiously. People are extremely polite, perfectly accustomed to the parts they are playing, and taking them seriously. I am doing my very best to take mine equally seriously, but that is difficult for me to accomplish. Do you not think it comical that some one should say to a man, “Monsieur, I consider myself one among the forty of the most intellectual men in France—I am quite your equal,” and other remarks equally as facetious? Of course, this must be said in a variety of ways, according to the person to whom I speak. This is my occupation at present, and if it lasts much longer I shall be perfectly exhausted. The 14th corresponds to the Ides of March, the day when my hero, the late Caesar, died. This is ominous, is it not?

LVII

Paris, March 11, 1843.

It is a perfect shame, almost a crime, indeed, not to take advantage of this beautiful

weather. What say you to a long walk to-morrow, Thursday? You should be the one to make the suggestion, but you take care not to do it. We must positively go out to salute the coming of the first leaves. You can almost see them grow.

I am thinking, also, that you have told me the sunshine has a happy influence on your mood. I should like to make the test. I love you in all sorts of weather, but I think I am happiest when I see you in the sunshine. Good-bye.

LVIII

Paris, Friday morning, March 13, 1843.

Here is your scarf. It was found last Saturday, in the anteroom of his Royal Highness, monseigneur le duc de Nemours. No one asked for an explanation of its presence in my pocket. I should have returned it sooner, if I had not hoped that the wish to recover your property would lead you to send me some news of yourself. I perceive that, while you were very eager concerning the first point, it has not succeeded in triumphing over your indifference as to the second. Why are you so afraid of the cold? I recollect that we had one experience in the snow which did not result disastrously. Now there will be a thaw which will keep the streets impassable for I don’t know how long. Answer me quickly. I am grieved to see that you love to torment me.

. . . . . .

LIX

Paris, Saturday night, March, 1843.

Your letter does not show the least sign of repentance. I regret the loss of the amber pipe which you selected. There is something particularly agreeable in carrying often in my mouth a gift from you. But let it be as you wish. I say this very frequently, and

yet there is never any reward for my resignation.

I am completely hardened by my present occupation. The Cathedral presses like a dead weight upon my shoulders, to say nothing of the responsibility which I accepted in a moment of zeal, and which I now repent from the depths of my soul. I envy women their lot, for they have nothing to do but to make themselves beautiful, and to prepare for the effect which they seek to produce on others. The word others has an ugly sound, but I imagine that it engages your attention more than it does mine. I am very much vexed with you, without knowing exactly the reason, still there must be some good reason, for I could not be in the wrong. It seems to me you become more egotistical every day. When you speak of us, you mean only yourself. The more I think of this the more deplorable it appears.

If you have not written to London for that book, do not write; it is absurd to give a woman such a commission. While I value very greatly a rare book, I should not wish you to cause the least shadow of embarrassment by asking for it. The editor of the book is, I am told, a worthy Quaker, who has found some recent proofs that the Spanish Catholics of the fifteenth century were devoid of all morality, notwithstanding the Inquisition, and, it may be, because of it. The original copy, and the only one in existence, cost fifteen hundred pounds sterling. It has a hundred pages and more. I was wrong to mention it to you, and still more wrong to realise so tardily the absurdity of the thing. Good-bye....

I was about to send you this letter when I received yours. I have been so engrossed in my reports and investigations that it has been impossible to write sooner. I proposed a walk for Tuesday, on condition that we should have an hour more together. Tell me if you are unengaged Tuesday. Your absent-mindedness is very attractive, but have I anything to do with it? That is the question. What have you to ask my pardon for? Your sentiments are not at all like mine.

We are so unlike that it is hardly possible to understand each other. All this does not

prevent me from anticipating the pleasure of seeing you. I thank you for your last letter; it is very sweet. You did not say where you were going in the country, or when you expected to start. I shall go to Rouen in a few days. Again, good-bye. I hope to see you Tuesday, and that you will be in good spirits, and less downcast than I am to-day.

LX

Monday night, March 21, 1843.

I am terribly blue, and full of remorse for my anger to-day. The only excuse I can offer is that the transition between our delicious stop in that wonderful resting-place and the remainder of our walk was too abrupt. It was like falling from heaven into hell. If I distressed you, I am as repentant as I can be, but I hope I have not caused you to suffer as much as I have myself. You have reproached me oftentimes for being indifferent to everything; I suppose you meant only that I was undemonstrative. When I am not myself, it is because I am in bodily anguish. Admit that it is sad, after so long an acquaintance, and after having become the friends we are, to see you always suspicious of me. The weather to-day has been like our mood. It will clear to-night, I think. The stars shine brighter than I have ever seen them. Let us arrange some less stormy excursion. Good-bye. No more quarrels! I shall try to be more reasonable. Do you try to be ruled more by your first impulses.

LXI

March, 1843.

I was as tired as if I had walked four or five leagues, but the fatigue was so agreeable that I should like to repeat it. All was so successful, that while I am accustomed to the success of a well-arranged plan, nevertheless I share your astonishment. To be so free, and so far away from the world, and that, too, by

making use of the benefits of civilisation, is it not amusing?

Do you know why I took only one blossom of those pretty white hyacinths? It was because I wished to save some for another time. What do you think of that? Besides, after consulting my map, I discovered that we had mistaken the distance, and were about a quarter of a league out of the way. We ought to have gone farther on, but we need regret nothing, and next time we shall know better. For the first time it was not bad.

You were charming. You told me nothing I did not know in saying that you returned to me what I had given you; but to hear you say this is a joy to me, for it proves that you did not mean the cruel things you said on one of our ill-omened days. I have forgotten them all to-day. Will you not, also, forget my anger and my rudeness?

You ask whether I believe in the existence of the soul. Not altogether. Nevertheless, when I reflect upon certain things, I find an argument in favour of that hypothesis. It is this: How can two animate substances give and receive a sensation by a union which would be insipid but for the sentiment attached to it? This is an extremely pedantic way of saying that when two lovers kiss each other the sensation they receive is altogether different from that felt in kissing the softest of satin. But the argument has its value. We will discuss metaphysics, if you like, next time I see you. It is a subject which I find very interesting, because it can never be exhausted. You will write to me, will you not, before Monday to say where we shall meet? We must be there on the hour, not on the half hour. Be sure and remember it; consequently, we must start on the half hour. This is clear, is it not?

It is half past four, and I must rise before ten o’clock.

LXII

Friday, March 29, 1843.

I divine, by one of those intuitions of the mind’s eye, that we shall have fine weather

for several days, but it will be followed by a long siege of bad weather. On the other hand, our last walk, which was almost a failure, we should consider as not having taken place. The bears alone are the better for it. I envy them the interest you take in their welfare, and I am thinking of having me a costume made which will give me some of their charms. Hitherto, we have always walked from the east towards the south, and it might be a good idea to try the opposite direction. First we should find our starting-point, and the muddy stream that flows near it, and we will end our walk where we usually begin it. It is devilish hard that just now I am uncommonly busy; however, if Saturday, at three o'clock, would be convenient, we could go on our voyage of discovery until half past five; if not, we shall be obliged to postpone it until Monday, which is a long time to wait.

If you knew how sweet you were the other day, you would never again be the tease you are sometimes. I wish you had been less reserved with me. At the same time, while your words were more ambiguous than the Apocalypse, I seemed to read your thoughts clearly. I wish you had the hundredth part of the pleasure which I have in following your thoughts. There are two persons in you, so you see you no longer resemble Cerberus. From three, you have come to be two. One, the better one, is all heart and soul. The other is a pretty statue, highly polished by society, gracefully draped in silk and cashmere, a charming automaton, the springs of which are adjusted with infinite skill. When one thinks he is speaking to the first, he finds he is speaking to the statue. Why must this statue be so attractive? If it were not for this, I should hope that, like the Spanish oaks, you would lose your outer bark as you grow older.

It is better for you to remain as you are, but let the first person take the precedence over the automaton. I am getting all tangled up with my metaphors.

At this moment I am reminded of a white hand. It seems to me that I wished to scold you, but I can not remember the reason. It is I this time who am suffering with my

back. The pain attacked me after my return the other day, but I can not, like you, find relief in a twelve-hours sleep. The fact is, I am not as careful of my strength as you are. I hope to have a letter from you to-morrow, but you must write another also to tell me whether it is to be Saturday or Monday. Here is a third combination: Saturday, until four o'clock, and again Monday, from two until five. This, I think, would be a perfect arrangement. I must not fail to have your reply before noon Saturday.

LXIII

Friday night, April 8, 1843.

For two days I have had a horrible headache, and you write me all sorts of dreadful things. The worst is that you have no remorse, and I had some hope that it would be otherwise. I am so downcast that I have not even the energy to abuse you.

What, then, is this miracle of which you speak? It would be a miracle to make you less self-willed, but I shall never accomplish that. It is beyond my power. I shall have to wait, therefore, until Monday to hear the solution of the enigma, since you can not come to-morrow. Do you know it will have been a week since I saw you? It has been a long time since that has happened before. To make amends, we must take a long walk, and try to avoid disputes. Two o'clock, if that suits you. I shall expect you promptly to the minute. Your idea about Wilhelm Meister is rather pretty, but, after all, it is only a sophism.

One might as well say that the memory of a pleasure is a variety of pain. This is especially true of half-pleasures, by which I mean pleasures unshared with another. You shall have those verses, if you insist upon it. You shall have, also, your portrait in Turkish dress, which I have begun. I have placed a nargile in your hand, to add to the local colour. When I say you shall have all this, I mean, of course, if you pay for it. But if you will not pay up gracefully, I am going to take a terrible revenge. I was

asked yesterday for a drawing for an album which is to be sold for the benefit of the earthquake sufferers, and I shall give your portrait. What do you say to it? I ask myself sometimes what I shall do in five or six weeks from now, when I shall see you no longer. I can not realise yet that it is to be.

LXIV

Paris, April 15, 1843.

I have suffered such intense pain in my eyes yesterday and this morning that I could not write to you. I am a little better to-night, and the weeping has almost stopped. Your letter is somewhat amiable, which is most unusual. There are even a few expressions of affection, without any “buts” or second thoughts. We look at many things from different standpoints. You fail to understand my generosity in sacrificing myself for you. You ought to thank me as an encouragement. But you believe that all is due to you. Why is it that we agree so seldom in our point of view?

You acted sensibly in not speaking of Catullus. He is not an author whom one should read during Holy Week, and in his works are many passages impossible to translate in French. It is easy to see what love meant in Rome fifty years before Christ. It was a little better, however, than love at Athens in the time of Pericles. Women had already gained a little importance, and compelled men to do silly things. The position of woman is due not to Christianity, as it is customary to say, but to the influence exerted on Roman society by the barbarians of the North. The Germans were idealists. They worshipped the soul. The Romans cared only for the body. Women, it is true, for many ages had no souls. They have none still in Oriental countries, which is most unfortunate. You know how two souls can hold converse. But yours is not willing to listen to mine.

I am glad to know you enjoyed those verses of Musset. You are right in your comparison of him to Catullus. Catullus, I believe, used better language. Musset

made the mistake of denying the existence of the soul, just as Catullus had done. For the latter, however, there was some excuse, on account of the age in which he lived. It is a most unseasonable hour. I must stop in order to bathe my eye. As I write I weep constantly. Good-bye until Monday. Pray for sunshine. I shall bring you a book. Wear your seven-league boots.

LXV

Paris, May 4, 1843.

I am unable to sleep, and am as cross as a bear. There are several things I should like to say about your letter, but I shall say none of them, on account of my bad humour, or rather, I shall try to restrain it a little. Your distinction between the two egos is very pretty, and is a proof of your profound selfishness. You love only yourself, and that is why you feel a sort of affection for the ego which resembles yours. Several times, day before yesterday, I was shocked to see this. I was thinking of it sadly enough, while you were completely absorbed in admiring the trees.

You are right to enjoy travelling on the railroad. In a few days it will be possible to go to Rouen and to Orléans in three hours. Why should we not go to see Saint Ouen? Yet what could be more beautiful than the woods where we were the other day? Only, I think you should have remained there longer. When one has sufficient imagination to give a plausible explanation for that branch of ivy, one should not be at a loss for occupation to last some time. I wonder if you have that ivy in your hair this evening? If you have, I am sure that it will add to your coquettishness.

I am so vexed with you that you will think, it may be, that the I which you admire is too much in evidence. In fact, I am thinking seriously of putting into execution the threat I made you one day.

How did you enjoy the fireworks? I was at the house of an “Excellency” who has a lovely garden, from where we had a good view of them. The crowning piece was

fine. They are really far more wonderful than a volcano, for art is always more beautiful than nature. Good-bye. Try to think of me occasionally.

Our walks have now become a part of my life, and I can hardly realise how I lived without them. It seems to me you take them very philosophically. But how will it be when we see each other no longer? Six months ago we resumed our conversation at the very same point where it had been interrupted. Shall we do the same again? I have an indefinable fear that I shall find you changed. Every time we meet you are enveloped in an armour of ice, which melts only after a quarter of an hour. By the time I return you will have amassed a veritable iceberg. Well, it is better not to cross the bridge until you come to it. Let us continue our dreams.

Should you suppose a Roman capable of saying pretty things, and of showing affection? I will show you Monday some Latin verses, which you shall translate for yourself, and which fit our habitual disputes like a glove. You shall see that the ancients are a great deal better than your Wilhelm Meister.

LXVI

Wednesday, June, 1843.

Your letter was so kind and affectionate that it has blown away the last remaining cloud of the recent storm. But I feel that we shall not be sure of having forgotten it until we have buried our quarrel beneath other memories.

Why should we not take a walk Friday? If it will not inconvenience you, it will give me the greatest pleasure. I hope we shall have fine weather. You promised, moreover, to tell me something which must be too important to be deferred. I shall bring along a Spanish book, and, if you like, we will read.

You have not yet told me whether you would pay me for my lessons. The time which we spend otherwise than in what you are pleased to call talking nonsense, seems to me so ill-employed that I ought at least to earn something for my pains.

Why should I not give you Spanish lessons at your house? I could call myself Don Furlano, or something else, and bring you a letter of introduction from Madame de P. describing me as victim of Espartero's tyranny.

I am beginning to find our dependence on sunshine and rain somewhat irksome. I want, also, to paint your portrait. You have promised often to invent some plan of meeting. You pretend to govern, but, as a fact, you discharge your duties very badly, and I can judge very unfairly, therefore, of your possibilities and your impossibilities. If you were to reflect upon the delicate problem of how to see each other as often as possible, would you not be doing a worthy action? There are many other things I wish to say to you, but it would be necessary to refer to our quarrel, and I desire to blot it altogether from my memory. I want to remember only our reconciliation, which you seem to regret. That would be unkind in you. I am sorry, indeed, that I must owe so much happiness to such an unfortunate cause.

Good-bye. Consider your statue, and animate without first harassing it.

LXVII

Paris, June 14, 1843.

I am delighted to learn that you are better, and very sorry that you should have wept. You misunderstand invariably the meaning of my words. You interpret as anger or unkindness what is only sadness. I can no longer recall what I said on that occasion, but I am sure that I intended to express but one thing, which was that you had grieved me sorely. All these quarrels prove how very unlike we are, and since, notwithstanding this difference, there exists between us a strong affinity—it is the Wahlverwandschaft of Goethe—there results inevitably a struggle in which I suffer keenly. When I say that I suffer, do not understand it as a reproach against you. Things which a moment ago seemed rose-colour to me, now look black. You know perfectly well how to efface with two words this blackness; and as I read your letter

to-night I feel that, perhaps, after all, the sun is not hidden forever.

But your system of government is still the same; you make me lose my temper, after having given me moments of exquisite happiness. One more philosophical than I would enjoy the happiness when it comes, and not trouble himself about the unhappiness. It is my misfortune to have a temperament that remembers all the wretchedness of the past when I am unhappy; but, on the other hand, I recall all the joy when I am happy. For nearly three weeks I have tried hard to forget you, but I have not succeeded any too well. The perfume which your letters breathe has proved a great barrier to my self-imposed task. Do you recollect how I noticed that Indian perfume one day when we had offended each other grievously, and were afterwards reconciled?

I am head over ears in business matters. Write to me promptly. I have been working hard, and upon some absurd affairs. I will tell you about them when I see you.

LXVIII

Paris, Saturday night, June 23, 1843.

I was beginning to be extremely anxious about you. I have been afraid that you had suffered from being in the dampness so long, and blamed myself for being so tedious in telling you that silly story. Since you did not catch cold, and are not angry with me, I can now remember with pleasure every moment that we spent together. I agree with you that on that day we were more perfectly—if perfection can be compared—happy than we had ever been before. Why was it? We said nothing, or did nothing extraordinary, unless it was that we did not quarrel. And observe, if you please, that our quarrels always begin with you. I have yielded to you on an infinite number of points, but for all that I have not been sullen about it. I should be delighted if the pleasant memory of that day would be profitable to you in the future. Why do you not tell me at once what your letter explains only so so, and yet with a

certain frankness that pleases me?...

I am flattered to know that my story amused you. At the same time, my author's vanity is wounded that you are satisfied with my sketchy outline, for I had hoped that you would ask to read it, or to have it read to you. Since you do not care for it, however, I must be resigned. Nevertheless, if the weather is fine Tuesday, what is to prevent our sitting on our rustic bench while I read it to you? It will take but an hour. Better still, let us simply walk. Are you willing? It must be understood that there are to be no arguments. Write me your final decision. I went to the station to meet Madame de M. and her daughters, all three looking splendidly. There is nothing definite as to my departure, although, judging from the indications, it will probably be very soon. You need not expect me, however, to say good-bye next time I see you.

LXIX

Paris, July 9, 1843.

You are right to forget quarrels, if you can. As you say, very sensibly, the closer you examine them the more important they grow. It is best to dream as long as possible, and as we can always repeat the same dream, it becomes almost a reality. I am feeling better since yesterday, and slept all last night, which I had not been able to do for a long time. I believe, too, that my spirits have been lighter ever since I let off steam the other day.

It is a pity we can not meet the day after having a quarrel, for I am sure we should be in a perfectly amiable frame of mind. You promised to appoint a day, but it has not occurred to you to do so, or else, what would be even more unkind, you thought it would be an indecorous thing to do. It is this constant preoccupation of yours which is so often a cause of disagreement between us. As the hour of our separation draws near, I become more discontented with myself, and the result is I behave as if I were

discontented with you. I might have said that you hold yourself too much in check in order to please me. I catch myself incessantly flying into a rage against this restraint, which, even in its most agreeable aspect, conceals an underlying basis of sadness. But dream, therein lies wisdom. When? That is the whole question.

You ought to translate for me a German book which gets on my nerves. Nothing is more irritating than a German professor who thinks he has discovered an idea. The title is alluring. It is: das Provocations-verfahren der Römer.

LXX

Paris, July, 1843.

Your letter is very kind, almost affectionate, indeed. I would I were in a less melancholy mood, that I might enjoy it to perfection. The best I can do is to express my appreciation of all that it contains of graciousness, and to repress the somewhat gloomy thoughts that fill my mind concerning it. It is unfortunate that I can not become so completely absorbed in my dreams as you do. But let us leave this subject and talk of something else.

I am going away in ten days. I went to the country yesterday to make a visit, and returned very weary and very blue; weary, because I was tired out, and blue, because of the thought that it was a beautiful day wasted. Do you never chide yourself for a similar reason? I hope not. Sometimes I believe that you feel all that I feel, then come drawbacks, and I doubt everything.

Good-bye. If I write any more I shall say something that you will misunderstand....

LXXI

Thursday night, July 28, 1843.

I have read your letter (the former one, I mean) at least twenty times since receiving

it, and each reading has given me a new and a sorrowful sensation, but at no time have I felt the least anger. I have tried in vain to find an answer to it. I have come to any number of decisions, to no purpose, and to-night I am just as uncertain and just as downcast as when I first read it. You have guessed my thoughts well enough, perhaps not entirely. You could never divine them altogether. I am so capricious, moreover, that what is true at one moment ceases to be so a little later.

You are wrong in your self-accusations. You have, I imagine, no other cause for self-reproach than that which I myself have. We allow ourselves to dream on, without wishing to awake. You and I are too old, perhaps, to let ourselves dream thus purposely. I, for my part, agree with the sentiment of that Turk; but to be nothing, could anything be worse than that? I have changed my opinion very much on this point.

I have been tempted several times not to write to you, not to see you. This would be quite reasonable, and the reason could be very well supported. The execution would be more difficult. By the way, you are mistaken in accusing me of not wanting to see you. I intimated no such thing. Is this another of my thoughts which you have misinterpreted? You, on the other hand, tell me so most explicitly. There is still another thing we might do: that is, not to write to each other while I am away. We may think of each other, or of any one else, and on my return meet again or not, just as inclination shall counsel. This is reasonable enough, but its execution might be embarrassing. When I am not thinking about your letter, and only of your loveliness, do you know what I should like? I should like to see you once more.

This Hôtel de Cluny affair has retarded my departure. I ought to be now on the way, and am very much afraid that I shall not be able to sign an abominable report, where it is necessary for my name to appear, before Monday. Since you wished to see me Monday, perhaps you would have no objections to saying a final good-bye Saturday. I am wrong, it may be, to suggest this. God only knows in what sort of mood you

are! After all, you are free to say yes or no. I promise you not to be angry.

LXXII

Paris, Thursday night, August 2, 1843.

I am not as poetical as you. The χθών εὐρυοδείη, that is to say, the broad earth, in spite of the mackintosh, was colder even than you, and I caught cold; but I bear no malice. To do that I should have to read all that you say, and that you consider agreeable. How many buts there are always! How clever you are to deprive others of the charm which may belong to them, and to absorb it for yourself! I say charm, but I am wrong, doubtless, for I do not believe that marmots have any. You were one of those pretty creatures before Brahma transmitted your soul into a woman's body.

To do you justice, you wake up sometimes, and, as you say yourself, it is to fall out with me. Be kind and gracious, as you know so well how to be. Notwithstanding my crossness, I had rather see you with your grand, indifferent airs than not to see you at all. I told you wisely that all that botanical collection was no good, but you will always have your own way. I have discovered things much more curious than those found in country rambles, and from less evident indications too. Take my advice, throw all those faded flowers in the fire, and let us go and look for fresh ones. Good-bye.

LXXIII

Paris, August 5, 1843.

I was awaiting your letter with great impatience, and the longer it delayed the more I expected evidences of second thoughts, with all their unpleasant consequences. As I was prepared for all manner of injustice from you, your letter affected me more favourably than it would have done at another time. You tell me that you, too, have

been happy, and this assurance cancels all the others that precede and follow it. This is the best thing you have said to me for an age, and it is almost the only time when I have thought you had a heart not unlike others.

What a glorious walk that was! I am not at all ill, and I was happy enough the other day to store up health and good spirits for a long time to come. If happiness is of short duration, it can be renewed. Unfortunately, the weather is bad, and besides you speak of going away. Perhaps this rainy weather has destroyed your desire to travel. From me it takes even the energy to form new plans. If, however, there should come a good day before you leave, would it not be well for us to take advantage of it, and to say a long farewell to our park and our woods? I shall not see their trees again this year, at least, and the thought saddens me. I hope that you, too, feel the same regret. When you discover a ray of sunshine let me know, and we will visit once more our chestnut trees and our mountain. You gave me and ourselves a passing thought for one brief moment, but will the memory of it not remain for a long, long time?

LXXIV

Vézelay, August 8, 1843, at night.

I thank you for having written a word to me before my departure. It is the kind intention that has pleased me, not what your letter tells me. You say such extraordinary things. If you mean half of what you say it would be the wisest course for us not to meet again. The affection which you have for me is only a sort of mental pastime. You are all intellect. You are one of those chilly women of the North who are governed only by the mind. There are things I could say to you, but you would not understand. I prefer to assure you again of my sincere regret for having caused you pain. It was entirely unintentional, and I hope you will forgive me. Our temperaments are as unlike as our stamina. How can it be helped? You may divine my thoughts sometimes, but you will never be able to understand them.

Here I am in this horrible little town, perched on the top of a mountain, bored to death by the townspeople, and hard at work on a speech that I am to make to-morrow. I am in politics, and you know me well enough to realise how odious I find the business of a political campaign.

For consolation, I have a most congenial travelling companion, and an admirable church to look upon. The first time I saw this church was soon after having seen you at.... I asked myself to-day whether we were more foolish then than we are now.

What is certain is that we had formed, probably, a very different impression of each other from the one we have to-day. If we had known then how often we should quarrel, do you suppose we would have cared to meet again? It is frightfully cold, with rain and lightning at intervals. I have a ream of official prose to spin off, and will leave you all the more cheerfully because the things I should write to you are not particularly affectionate. It is, however, the force of circumstances that irritates me most.

I go to Dijon in a few days. It would please me if you would write to me there, especially if your pen could find something less cruel to write than it did last time. You can not form an idea of one of our evenings at the inn. One of the most charming plans of which I have thought is to go somewhere in Italy to spend the time that must intervene between my political tour and the trip to Algiers. You, I fancy, are thinking of some way to be in the country when I return to Paris. What will be the result of all these plans?

As I was leaving Paris I met M. de Saulcy, who had just received a letter from Metz. Your brother was spoken of in the highest terms, which is very gratifying to those who recommended him. I should have written this earlier but for the thousand and one annoyances incident to my departure.

Good-bye. I believe this little talk with you has made me feel better. If I had more paper, and not so many reports to prepare, I think I might be capable now of saying

something affectionate. As you are aware, my attacks of temper usually end in that way.

At Dijon, General Delivery, and do not forget my titles and degrees!

LXXV

Avallon, August 14, 1843.

I expected to be in Lyons the 10th, and am not within sixty leagues of that place. I shall not have any news from you until I reach Autun. If you want to be kind you will write to me again at Lyons.

Vézelay pleases me more and more. The view from there is superb, and besides it is sometimes a pleasure to be alone. As a usual thing I find myself rather dreary company, but when I am depressed, with no good reason for being so, and when this depression has in it no vestige of anger, it is then that I enjoy complete solitude. This was my mood during the last few days of my stay at Vézelay. I took long walks, or lay down on the edge of a natural terrace, which a poet might well call a precipice, and there I philosophised on the Ego, and on Providence, on the hypothesis that there be a Providence. I thought of you also, which was more agreeable than thinking of myself. But even the thought of you was not the most cheerful, because no sooner did it come to me than it occurred to my mind how happy I should be to see you here in this obscure corner of the world. And then—and then, it all ended with this other disheartening thought, that you were far, far away, that it was not easy to see you, and not even certain that you would care to see me.

My presence at Vézelay greatly mystified the population. Whenever I sketched, especially in a well-lighted room, large groups of people would assemble around me, and every one had some conjecture as to my occupation. This distinction proved a great bore, and I should like to have had a janissary beside me to keep back the curious. Here I have become once more one of the multitude. I came to visit an old

uncle whom I scarcely knew, and with whom I am obliged to stay two days. To entertain me, he has taken me to see several mutilated heads found in the excavations made nearby. I am not fond of relatives. You are compelled to be on familiar terms with people you have never seen, simply because they happen to be descended from the same grandfather that you have. My uncle, however, is a most worthy man, not especially provincial, and if we had two ideas in common I might even find him agreeable.

The women here are as homely as the women in Paris; and they have, moreover, ankles big as stumps. At Nevers the women had extremely pretty eyes. They wear no national costumes. Besides our moral perfections, we have the advantage of being the most stunted and the ugliest people of Europe.

I send you an owl's feather which I found in a gap of the Abbot's Church of the Madeleine at Vézelay. The former owner of the feather and I found ourselves for a moment face to face, each one equally startled by our unexpected encounter. The owl was less brave than I, and flew away. She had a formidable beak, and eyes that were terrifying, besides two feathers shaped like horns. I am sending this feather to you that you may admire its softness, and also because I have read somewhere in a book of magic that when one gives a woman an owl's feather, and she places it under her pillow, she dreams of him. Will you tell me your dream? Good-bye.

LXXVI

Saint-Lupicin, August 15, 1843, at night. Six hundred metres above the sea-level; in the midst of an ocean of lively and famished fleas.

Your letter is diplomatic. You practise the axiom that language has been given to man that he may conceal his thoughts. Fortunately for you, your postscript disarmed me. Why do you say in German what you think in French? Is it because you think only in German, that is, that you do not think at all? I am unwilling to credit it. At

the same time, there are things in you which irritate me to the last degree. Why are you still shy with me? Why have you never wished before to tell me anything that would have given me so much pleasure? Do you suppose that there are synonyms in a foreign language?

You can not form any conception of this place. Saint Lupicin is in the Jura mountains. It is extremely ugly, dirty, and inhabited by fleas. In a little while I shall be obliged to go to bed, where I shall repeat my experience of the nights spent at Ephesus. Unfortunately, however, when I awake there will be neither laurels nor Grecian ruins to meet my eye. What a hideous country! I think often that if the railroads were more comfortable we might go together to some such place, and then it would seem beautiful. There are flowers here in the greatest profusion; the air is remarkably pure and vigorous, so that the human voice can be heard at a distance of a league.

To prove that I am thinking of you, here is a little flower which I plucked in my walk at sunset. It is the only kind that I can send. All other varieties are colossal.

What are you doing? Of what are you thinking? You never tell me what you really think, and it is folly for me to ask you. I have had but few comfortable moments since I came away. Skies of leaden gray, all sorts of accidents, and all sorts of discomforts; a broken wheel, a bruised eye—but they are all patched up now in some sort of fashion. But what I find most difficult to become accustomed to is solitude. I believe this year it is more unendurable than ever before. I mean solitude in the midst of life and animation. It seems to me that if I were in prison I should be more comfortable than I am tramping over the country. Nothing is more depressing. I long for our walks more than anything else. It cheers me to have you say that you still love our woods. Although my tiresome absence is to be prolonged indefinitely, nevertheless I hope we shall visit them again.

The Department of the Jura, with its mountains and cross-cuts, delays me more than

ten days. I have one disappointment after another. It is as if I were still crossing my first mountain. I have not the least desire to go to Italy. It is pure imagination on your part. Your letter pleased me at times, and at others enraged me. I read sometimes between the lines the sweetest things in the world, and again you seem more chilly than usual. It is only the postscript that satisfies me. I saw it only the last thing. It is at such a great distance from the rest of the letter! If you write immediately, send it to Besançon; if not, address it to me in Paris. I do not know where I shall be a week from this time.

LXXVII

Paris, September, 1843.

I am terribly dull without you, to use an expression that you affect. I did not realise the other day, clearly at least, that we were saying farewell for a long, long time. Is it true now that we shall see each other no more? We separated without speaking, almost without looking at each other. It was almost like a former occasion. I felt a sort of calm happiness, which is not usual to me. It seemed to me for a few moments that I desired nothing more. Now, if we can experience that happiness again, why should we refuse it? It is true that we may quarrel again, as we have done so many times. But what is the memory of a quarrel compared to that of a reconciliation? If you feel about this half as I do you must be anxious to go again for one of our walks. I am going away on a short journey next week. Saturday, if you like, or even the Tuesday following, we might meet.

I have not written sooner because I had persuaded myself that the suggestion to revisit our woods would come from you. I was mistaken, but I am not very much offended. You possess the secret of making me forget many things, and of making sentiment take the place of reason. Let me see you once more. I shall have no reproaches for you. One is fortunate to be able thus to dream.

LXXVIII

Paris, September, 1843.

Our letters crossed. You realise now, I hope, that my anger, which I now regret deeply, was not caused by what you imagine. Your letter proves, however, that it is impossible for us not to quarrel. We are too unlike. You are wrong to repent of what you have done. I was wrong to wish you to be other than what you are. I beg you to believe that I have not changed. I regret more than all having left you as I did, but there are moments when one can not be composed. I want to see you now that we may repeat one of our beautiful dreams of last summer, and to bid you a long farewell, leaving you with a sweet and tender mood.

You will, of course, consider my idea ridiculous. Yet it pursues me, and I can not help telling it to you. You will be quite justified in refusing. I think I now have sufficient self-control not to lose my temper. I am not sure, however; yet whatever you decide will be right. I can only promise that I have the very best intentions to be calm and patient.

LXXIX

Avignon, September 29.

I have not heard from you for many days, and it has been almost as long a time since I have written to you. But I have a good excuse. The business in which I am engaged is extremely fatiguing. All day I must walk or drive, and at night, no matter how tired, I must despatch a dozen pages of prose. I speak of commonplace writing only, for, from time to time, I have some extraordinary piece of work to do for my minister. But, since those things are never read, I can safely indulge in all manner of nonsense.

The country that I am exploring is charming, but the people are stupid to the last

degree. No one ever opens his mouth that he does not sound his own praises, from the man who wears a frockcoat to the porter. There is no sign here of the tact which distinguishes the gentleman, and which it gave me so much pleasure to discover among the common people of Spain.

Except for this, it is impossible to find a country more like Spain. The general aspect of the landscape and of the town is the same. The workmen lie down in the shade and wrap themselves in their cloaks with an air as tragic as that of the Andalusians. Everywhere the odour of garlic and oil is mingled with that of oranges and jessamine. The streets are protected by canvas during the day, and the women have small, well-shod feet. Even the patois has in it a suggestion of the Spanish accent. Late in the season as it is, there is still a tremendous buzzing of gnats, fleas, and bugs, which are fatal to sleep. I must endure this life for two months still before looking on human beings again! I am thinking constantly of my return to Paris, and in imagination I enjoy no end of delicious moments spent with you. Perhaps the very best thing for which I long is to see you coming in the distance, and to win from you a little nod in token of recognition....

You ask me for a drawing of a Roman capital. I have not a single one left. I have sent all my sketches to Paris. Besides, you would find a capital very uninteresting. The decoration consists of either devils, or dragons, or saints. The devils belonging to the early period of Christianity have in them nothing attractive. As for the dragons and the saints, I am sure you have very slight regard for them.

I have begun to draw for you a Maçonese costume. It is the only one that I have seen which possesses any grace. Even the girdle is arranged so oddly that the most slender waist could not be distinguished from the stoutest. One must have a special kind of physical organism to wear such a costume. The cheapness of cotton-stuffs, and the ease of communication with Paris, have caused the national costumes to fall into disuse.

I gave myself a sort of sprain last night. I am writing now with one foot stretched on a chair, in a state of impatience difficult to describe. When will the swelling leave my foot? That is the question. If I were obliged to spend five or six days more in this position I do not know what would become of me. I believe I should prefer to be seriously ill rather than to be tied down as I am by such a trifling thing. At the same time, this causes me no little pain.

Avignon is full of churches and palaces, all surmounted by high towers, with machicolated battlements. The great Palace of the Popes is an example of Middle-Age fortifications. It shows the friendly security that reigned in this land about the thirteenth or fourteenth century. In the Palace of the Popes you ascend a hundred steps of a winding stairway and then find yourself suddenly facing a wall. Turning your head, you see, fifteen feet above you, the continuation of the stairway, which can only be reached by means of a ladder. There are, also, subterranean chambers, which were used during the Inquisition. You are shown furnaces where the irons were heated to torture the heretics, and the remains of a complicated instrument, also used for torture. The inhabitants of Avignon are as proud of their Inquisition as the English are of their Magna Charta. “We,” they say, “invented the auto-da-fé, the Spaniards only imitated us!”

At Vienna a few days ago I saw an antique statue which overthrew all my previous opinions concerning Roman statuary. I had always seen the conventional ideal of beauty exert its influence on the imitation of nature. In this instance it was altogether different. The statue represents a huge, fat woman, with enormous hanging throat, and folds of fat covering her ribs, just as Rubens painted his nymphs. It is all portrayed with a fidelity to nature amazing to see. What would the gentlemen of the Academy say to it?

Good-bye. It is time for the post to leave. Write to me at Montpellier, and again at Carcassonne. I hope it will not be long before I shall go to find your letter, which

always makes me happy.

Good-bye once more.

LXXX

Toulon, October 2.

It has been a long time, dear friend, since I wrote to you. As soon as my foot returned to its normal size, I felt that I must make up for lost time by touring the county of Avignon. I have learned, also, how to appreciate the difference between the gnats of Carpentras, Orange, Cavaillon, Apt, and other places. Nearly all of them possess in common the characteristic of preventing an honest man from going to sleep. I shall not tell you about the beautiful things I have seen, or the humbugs I have discovered.

But do you know what a draquet is? It is the same thing as a fantasy. I will explain the meaning of these two barbarous words. You must know, in the first place, that the wealth of the Department of Vaucluse consists principally in silks. In every peasant's lodge silk-worms are cultivated, and silk is spun, from which arises a disagreeable odour. Very frequently, skeins of silk are found hanging on the bushes. Towards evening, there are peasant women imprudent enough to come and gather these skeins of silk, hiding them in their baskets. The basket gradually becomes heavier, with constantly increasing weight, until it puts one in a perspiration to carry it. When, after a long and fatiguing journey, the bank of a stream is reached, the basket has become absolutely insupportable, and is placed on the ground. Immediately there jumps from the basket a tiny creature, with an immense head, who moves himself by a sort of lizard's tail. Chuckling and giggling, he plunges into the stream, saying: "M'as ben pourta!" which signifies in Provençal, or in the idiom of the draquets, "You have carried me very well!" I have met more than one woman who had been hoaxed in this way by these mischievous demons, and am extremely

sorry not to have made the acquaintance of one myself. I should have enjoyed it enormously.

My journey lengthens as the days grow shorter. I go to-morrow to Fréjus, and from there to the islands of Lérins, where I may find, perhaps, the remains of the first Christian church of the West. I am more than half inclined to believe I shall find nothing at all. But one must follow one's profession conscientiously, and examine everything of historical significance.

It is impossible to find anything dirtier and prettier than Marseilles. Dirty and pretty applies equally to the women of Marseilles. They all have expressive faces, lovely black eyes, beautiful teeth, tiny feet, and imperceptible ankles. On their little feet they wear cinnamon stockings, of the colour of Marseilles mud, coarse in quality, and darned with twenty different shades of cotton. Their gowns are badly made, and are always shabby and soiled. Their beautiful black hair owes its glossiness almost entirely to the use of candle tallow. Add to this an atmosphere of garlic mixed with the fumes of rancid oil, and you have a picture of the Marseilles beauty. What a pity it is that in this world nothing should be perfect! Ah, well, they are charming, the Marseilles women, in spite of it all. It is a veritable triumph.

My evenings, which are now long, begin to be horribly tiresome. 'Tis true that I have usually volumes of letters to write and reports to prepare for two or three ministers, but these pleasant occupations have not kept me from having the blues for the last three weeks. My dreams are as dismal as they can be, and my waking thoughts are no brighter. Not a single word from you, when I need it so sadly! If you write to me promptly, address your letter to Carcassonne. I must hear from you to cheer me up....

After leaving Carcassonne I shall go to Perpignan, to Toulouse, and to Bordeaux. I hope I may find there some souvenir from you. The sketch I am making for you is not yet finished. I shall give it to you when I return to Paris. I wish you would tell

me if there is something more you should like me to bring you. Here is a flower from a prickly shrub which grows near Marseilles, and which has the perfume of sweet violets.

Good-bye.

LXXXI

Paris, Friday morning, November 3, 1843.

Is it possible that you mean all you write me? What, then, is this strange diffidence which prevents you from being frank, and which makes you try to invent the most extraordinary lies, rather than let escape from you one word of truth, which would please me so much to hear? Among the good sentiments of which you speak there is one, you say, that I do not understand; and, since you do not try to make me understand it, I am unable even to guess it. I confess I am no more clever with the two others.

Do you believe in the devil? To my mind the whole thing hinges on that. If you are afraid of him, take care that he does not carry you off. If, as I imagine, the devil is out of the question in this case, it remains only to inquire whether one harms or wrongs some one else. I am telling you my catechism. I think it is better than yours, but I will not vouch for it. I have never made an effort to convert any one, but neither has any one, to the present time, been able to convert me. You reproach yourself, moreover, much more severely than I have ever reproached you. Sometimes, ‘tis true, I yield to sadness and impatience; but I accuse you with nothing, except occasionally that lack of frankness which keeps me in an attitude of almost continual suspicion, forced as I am to seek for your meaning under a disguise. If I were convinced of the truth of what you said the other day I should be very unhappy, for I could not bear to make you suffer. You see, however, that from saying sometimes one thing, sometimes another, you make me doubt everything. I

no longer know what you think, what you feel. For once, at least, write to me openly.

LXXXII

Paris, November 16, 1843.

I can see you now in imagination with the expression you wear sometimes; the expression of your bad days, I mean. I fear that you are not only cross with me, but also that you have taken cold. Relieve my mind at once on these two points. You were so kind and gracious that I could forgive you, I think, even a return of your bad humour, if you would but tell me that our walk did you no harm. I have slept almost all day, in that condition of semi-unconsciousness that you like. This cold weather is most discouraging. There used to be Martinmas summer, which was some consolation for the death of the leaves, but I fear that this has passed away, like so many of the things of my youth.

Write to me, dear friend. Tell me that you are well, and that my grumbling has not vexed you. You will not correct me of this fault. If I were not accustomed to think aloud when I am with you, I should be almost tempted to be angry always, because you are then so sweet that one can not regret having caused you sorrow. However, I will think only of the moments when our thoughts were in accord, and when it seemed to me that you forgot my plaguing and your own pride.

Your letter has just been delivered to me. I thank you most heartily for it. You are just as kind and charming, as you were day before yesterday, and this is doubly appreciated, for the pleasant things that you say I know are sincere, and are not dictated by any fear of my anger. If you only realised the delight I take in one word of yours that comes from the heart, you would be less stingy of them. I hope your present mood may continue.

I suppose you enjoyed yourself tremendously at your ball last night. I went to the

Opera. Ranconi was either drunk or imprisoned for debt, so it was proposed to shut the doors against us. At last, however, after continued protests on our part, they gave us “The Elixir of Love.” I then returned, and corrected proofs until three o’clock in the morning.

So you fancy that the Academy fills my thoughts? I find this is the first thought I have given to it to-day. There is but scant chance of success there. Do you know of any witchcraft that will draw my name out of the pine coffer known as a ballot-box?

LXXXIII

Paris, Tuesday night, November 22, 1843.

I have learned on good authority of your exhaustion. It is the reaction from a moral to a physical attitude of obstinacy. It is difficult for me to believe that your wilfulness is altogether involuntary. Even if it were so, you would be in the wrong. What is the result? By giving ungraciously, the sacrifice that you are making is deprived of all its merit. You suffer from the pain of this sacrifice all the more keenly because you have not the consolation of knowing that it is appreciated. In your own words, you are suffering a double remorse. I have told you this more than once. You accuse me of injustice, but I think the reproach undeserved. You do not judge me fairly.

It is true that we have such different temperaments, especially such different points of view, that we can never be able to agree in judgment. I have tried not to give way to anger, with but poor success, I fear, and I ask your forgiveness. At the same time, I have made some improvement, you will admit. Why do you wish to dispute the subject: “Which one loves the better?” The first thing to do would be to agree on the meaning of the verb, and that we shall never do. We are both too ignorant ever to be of accord, especially too ignorant one of the other. I have thought several times that I understood you, but you have always eluded me. I was right when I said you were

like Cerberus: three gentlemen at once.

I am never sure whether your head or your heart is in the ascendant; you yourself do not know, but you decide always in favour of the head. It is better to quarrel than not to see each other. This seems to be the only thing entirely demonstrated. When shall we quarrel again? Do not forget that Friday is my reception day. During the last four days I have embraced about thirty of my fellow-members, principally those who, having promised me their support, have broken their word.[8]

LXXXIV

Paris, December 13, 1843.

We left each other in anger; but to-night, when I reflect upon it calmly, I regret nothing that I said, unless it be a few hasty words, for which I ask your pardon. Yes, we are great fools. We should have realised it sooner. We should have seen how contrary were our sentiments and our feelings about everything. The concessions we have made to each other have had no other result than to make us more unhappy. More far-seeing than you, I blame myself bitterly for this mistake. To prolong an illusion of which I should never have dreamed, I have caused you the keenest anguish.

Forgive me, I pray you, for I, too, have suffered. I would I could leave with you more joyous memories of me. I hope you will attribute to circumstances the vexation I may have caused you. Never in your presence have I appeared as I wished to be, or rather as I had intended to appear in your eyes. I had too much self-confidence. My heart has sought to struggle against that which my better judgment has demonstrated. Everything considered, perhaps you will come to see in our folly only its lovely side, to remember none but the moments of happiness which we have spent together. I do not upbraid you in any way. You have tried to reconcile two incompatible beings, and you have not succeeded. Should I not be grateful to you for

having tried to accomplish for me the impossible?

LXXXV

Paris, Tuesday night, 1843.

All day I have expected a letter from you. This is not what has kept me from writing before, but I have been frightfully busy. I believe the fine weather to-day has had a solacing effect on my mood. I am no longer angry, even if I was so, and I can think with less sorrow of your lecture of yesterday. The clouds, perhaps, are greatly to blame for what happened between us. Once before we quarrelled in stormy weather; it is because our nerves get the better of us. I have a strong desire to see you, and to know your state of mind. Suppose we attempt to-morrow to take that walk in which we failed so disastrously yesterday? What do you think of it? Your pride will, of course, not respond to this suggestion, but I am now appealing to your heart.

It will be very kind of you to send me an answer before noon to-morrow, whether you will or will not come. Do not come, however, if you are in a bad humour or if you have a previous engagement, and, above all, if you have the slightest doubt that our walk will obliterate the hideous impressions of yesterday.

LXXXVI

Paris, Saturday night, January 15, 1844.

I am grieved to know that you are ill, but you must permit me to form my own opinion as to the manner in which you caught this cold. An accident of this kind seldom keeps one in the house; still more seldom does it confine one to the house as long as you remain there. All your illnesses have occurred too conveniently not to be a little suspicious. Formerly you were more unreserved. You wrote me simply a page of reproaches, and admitted that you were angry. Now you follow a different

system. You write me sweet little coquettish notes, and say you have taken a sudden cold, or that you are ill. I believe I prefer the former method. Luckily, you get over your sulks and recover from your illnesses.

I hope to see you Tuesday in a cheerful mood, if you think it worth while to be agreeable. Your treatment of me is like the sun, which appears only once in a month. If I were in better spirits, I could pursue the comparison still further; but I, too, am ill, only I am not so fortunate as you in being petted by all who come near me, and of being fond of tea made of dates and figs.

You ask me to make you a sketch of our woods. This would be almost impossible without seeing them again. You can no longer remember Bellevue, you say; you should understand, therefore, how difficult it would be for me to draw it from memory. Besides that, I am not as close an observer as you. When with you I see nothing else. Yes, these woods are beyond belief, so close to Paris as they are, and yet so far away. If you insist upon it, I will do the best I can, but you must first tell me what you want to have, that is, what part of the woods.

Good-bye. I am not especially pleased with you. A month passed without seeing you is a little too much. I have, to-morrow and the day after, two unpleasant duties to perform. I will tell you about them. Good-bye.

LXXXVII

Paris, February 5, 1844.

You chide me for my harshness, and, perhaps, with some reason. It seems to me, however, that it would be more reasonable for you to call it anger or impatience. It might also be fitting on your part to reflect whether this anger or this harshness is justifiable or not.

Consider if it is not a most discouraging thing for me to be engaged in an incessant struggle with your pride, and to see your pride get the better of me. I confess that I

fail to understand your meaning when you speak of your obedience, which always puts you in the wrong, and which gives you no credit for anything you do. The contrary, it seems to me, is nearer the truth; but on your part it is a question of neither wrong nor merit. Recall for a moment frankly what you are to me. You agree to come with me on those walks which are my life; but your coldness, perpetually renewed, which disheartens me more and more; the pleasure designed, or, as I prefer to believe, instinctive, which you take in making me desire that which you refuse obstinately, may be an excuse for my harshness.

If you have done any wrong, however, it is most certainly that you let your pride take the precedence over your affections. The first sentiment is to the second as a colossus to a pygmy. Your pride is, in reality, only a variety of selfishness. Will you some day abandon this grievous fault, and be as lovable to me as you know how to be? Willingly would I accept this condition, if you would promise to be entirely frank, and if you had the courage to keep your promise. It would be for me, perhaps, a sad experience; nevertheless, I should accept it joyfully, since in any case you would be happy, you say.

Good-bye, and may it not be for long. Wear your seven-league boots, and we shall have a lovely walk; if the weather were no worse than it has been for several days, you would run no risk of catching cold. I am suffering severely from headache and dizziness, but I hope you will cure me.

LXXXVIII

Paris, March 12, 1844.

That is all right. As if I had not vexations enough of every kind! A hundred calls to make! A library which orders me to write and discuss forty pages of prose matter! Proofs to correct! It seems to me that, knowing all this, you might at least send me a few lines of encouragement. I have almost reached the end of my courage, and of

my patience. Fortunately, it will all end next Thursday.[9] Thursday, at one o'clock, I shall become once more an ordinary biped. In the meantime, is it too much to ask you to send me a few words of affection, such as you found to say the last time I saw you? It is three o'clock, and I must leave you for my proofs of Mademoiselle Arsène Guillot. Monday, or, rather, Tuesday.

LXXXIX

Thursday night, March 15, 1844.

It[10] has pleased me the more keenly because I expected to be defeated. The returns were reported to me as they were counted. It seemed impossible for me to win. My mother, who had been suffering for several days from an acute attack of rheumatism, was cured on the spot. Now I have all the greater desire to see you. Come and find out if I love you more or less, and that as soon as possible. I am now suffering for all the visits I have made, for I must thank everybody, friends and enemies alike, to show that I am magnanimous. I had the good fortune to be black-balled by some men I detest, for it is a cause for thankfulness not to be obliged to carry a burden of gratitude to people whom you dislike. Write to me, I pray you, and tell me when you will allow me to see you.

I have a great desire to take a long walk with you.

You are a witch, indeed, to have foreseen the result as you did. My Homer deceived me, or, it may be, it was to M. Vatout that his threatening prediction was directed.

Good-bye, dearest friend! Between my proof-reading, my reports to make out, and, in a measure also, the worry that I have endured for three days, I have scarcely found time to sleep. I am going to try now. I have some amusing incidents to tell you of men and things.

XC

March 17, 1844.

I thank you for your congratulations, but I want something more. I want to see you, and take a long walk. I think you have taken the matter too tragically. Why do you weep? The forty seats were not worth one little tear. I am exhausted, used up, demoralised, and completely out of my wits. Besides this, Arsène Guillot made a notorious fiasco, and raised against me a storm of indignation of all the so-called virtuous people, especially of the fashionable women who dance the polka and go to hear the sermons of P. Ravignan. At all events, it was reported that I behave like the monkeys, who climb to the top of the trees, and then, from the uppermost branch, make grimaces at the world beneath them. I am sure that this scandalous story has cost me many votes; but I have won them from another side. There are certain members who black-balled me seven times and who now assure me that they were my warmest partisans. Do you not think that all this is well worth the trouble of lying, especially for the goodwill I bear these people? This world in which I have lived almost exclusively for the last two weeks makes me wish all the more ardently to see you. We, at least, are sure of each other, and when you tell me fibs I can scold you for them, and you know how to win my forgiveness. Love me, venerable as I have become during the last three days.

XCI

Paris, March 26, 1844.

I fear the address may have seemed a little long to you. I hope it was not as cold where you were as it was on my side. I am still shivering. We ought to have taken a short walk after the ceremony. You noticed what a shocking cough I have. It might have been considered almost as intentional. Before the meeting the orator insisted that I should tell him in what part of the hall was sitting the lady to whom he had sent the invitations. Did you like him better in his costume than in a dress suit? You

may persuade me of many things, but you will never be able to convince me that you were not speaking seriously about cakes when you were hungry. I uphold the use of my adjective, and you yourself even have recognised the justice of it. That was readily proved by your anger. You say you can only dream and amuse yourself. You know, besides that, how to conceal your thoughts, and this is what grieves me. Why is it, when we have become all we are to each other, that you must reflect for several days before replying frankly to the simplest question of mine? One would suppose that you suspected traps set for you on every side. Good-bye. I was delighted to see you there. I had some difficulty in finding you, hidden away behind your neighbour's bonnet. Another example of your childishness! Did you see what I sent you, in full view of the Academy? But you are never willing to see anything.

XCII

Monday night, March, 1844.

I am beginning, I imagine, to solve your enigma. Upon reflection, by a sort of instinctive divination, I have come to the following conclusion: without doubt, my most dangerous enemy to your heart, or, if you prefer, my strongest rival, is your pride. Whatever wounds that, excites your indignation. This notion you carry out, perhaps unconsciously, in the most trifling matters. Is it not, for instance, your pride which is satisfied when I kiss your hand? This, you have said to me, makes you happy, and to this sensation you abandon yourself, because a demonstration of humility is gratifying to your pride. You are willing that I should be a statue, so that you may breathe life into my soul, but you are not willing, in your turn, to be a statue; above all, you are unwilling that this equality of happiness should be reciprocal, because anything like equality is distasteful to you.

What am I to say to all this? If your pride would be content with my obedience and humility, it ought to be satisfied; I shall yield to it always, provided it allows your

heart to follow its good impulses. So far as I am concerned, I shall never place in the same rank my happiness and my pride, and if you were to suggest to me any new forms for my humility to assume, I should adopt them unhesitatingly. Yet, why should there be any question of pride, that is to say, selfishness, between us? Is the joy of self-forgetfulness for the other's sake a matter of indifference to you? That extraordinary sentiment of affection which we both sometimes feel, which this morning, for instance, took us where we had not the slightest reason for going—is not the influence of such an emotion far sweeter and more intense than that exerted by your demon of pride? You were so sweet this morning that I am both unwilling and unable to scold you. Nevertheless, I am in a beastly humour.

I told you I was invited to a tiresome dinner. Only fancy, I made a mistake in the day, and mortally offended the people, who were not expecting me, and who, in my turn, tired me to death. I spent the entire evening lamenting that I had not remained at home with my thoughts. I am now expecting a disagreeable letter from you. I wanted to write to you first, because I shall be furious, without doubt, day after to-morrow. How did you endure the cold the other day? Does the cold to-day not daunt you? I do not know whether you had better go out to-morrow. I fear to take the responsibility of advising you, and prefer that you should decide. More humility for you!

XCIII

Strasburg, April 30, 1844.

I am still here, thanks to the procrastination of the Municipal Council. I was obliged to spend one day making use of all my most stately eloquence to persuade them to restore an old church. They reply that they need tobacco more than monuments, and that they intend to make a shop of my church. I shall leave to-morrow for Colmar, and hope the next day, that is, Thursday, to be in Besançon. I shall remain there only

long enough to lay a few flowers on Nodier's tomb, and then I shall try to return quickly to our woods. The season here seems more advanced than in Paris. The country is exquisite, of a green that no painter could reproduce.

I am glad to find you so merry; I can not say as much for myself. I believe I have fever every night, and I am in a horrible mood. The cathedral, which I used to admire so extravagantly, now appears ugly, and even the wise and foolish Sabine virgins of Steinbach have barely found favour in my eyes.

You are right to love Paris. It is, after all, the only city in which one really lives. Where else should we find such promenades, such museums, where we have quarrelled so many times, and said so many tender words also? I should like to believe your promise, that we shall continue our interrupted conversation as if we had never parted. I am sure of what awaits me. A thick crust of ice will envelop you, and you will not even recognise me. Yet, even though there be another scene, that is better than not to see you at all.

Good-bye.

XCIV

Paris, Saturday, August 3, 1844.

I suppose you went to the country, taking French leave, in spite of your promises. That is very kind of you. I have been silly enough to expect every day some sign from you. It is difficult for one to change his habits. In case you should be in Paris, which is scarcely probable, or in case, which is still more improbable, that you should care to attend a meeting of the Academy, I have two cards of admission for you. It will be very tiresome. Meanwhile, I have done my best in my difficult task, which is almost finished. I shall then go away for a month or two. If this caused you any regret, or, what I should like better, the wish to see me, you could make me soon forget my moroseness.

XCV

Paris, August 19, 1844.

It is settled definitely that I am to leave for Algiers from the 8th to the 10th of next month. I shall remain there, or, rather, I shall travel here and there until driven away by the fever or the rainy season. In any case, I shall not see you before January. You ought to have thought of that before going away. When I say that you shall not see me until next year, I mean that it will depend on you. While you have been learning Greek, I have been studying Arabic, but it seems to me a diabolical language, and I shall never succeed in knowing two words of it. Apropos of Syra, that chain which you like has been in Greece, and in many other places besides. I selected it because it is of very antique workmanship, and I fancied it would please you. Does it recall our long walks and our interminable conversations?

I dined Sunday with General Narvaez, who was entertaining in honour of his wife's birthday. There were scarcely any but Spanish women present. I saw one who is trying to starve herself for love, and is gradually and quietly passing away. This mode of death must seem to you the height of cruelty. There was another, Mademoiselle ... whom General Serrano stationed there for his Catholic Majesty; but she is far from dead, and even appears to be in excellent health. There was also Madame Gonzalez Bravo, a sister of the actor Romea, and sister-in-law of the same Majesty, who has, it is said, an immense number of sisters-in-law. This one is extremely pretty and clever.

Good-bye....

XCVI

Paris, Monday, September, 1844.

We parted the other day equally vexed the one with the other. We were both wrong,

for it was simply the force of circumstances that was to blame. It would have been better not to meet for a long time. It is evident that we can not see each other without disagreeing. We both want the impossible: you, that I should be a statue; I, that you should not be one. Each new proof of the impossibility of that which in our hearts we have never doubted causes bitterness to us both. I regret all the distress I may have caused you. I am too ready to yield to my absurd quick temper. As well get into a passion because ice is cold.

I hope you will forgive me now. I am no longer angry, only very sorrowful. I should not feel so bad if we had not parted as we did. Farewell, since we can be friends only at a distance. When we have grown old, perhaps we shall meet again with pleasure. Meanwhile, in happiness or in distress, do not forget me. I asked you this, I don't know how many years ago. We hardly ever thought then of quarrelling.

Again, good-bye, while I have the courage to say it.

XCVII

Paris, Thursday, September 6, 1844.

It seems to me like a dream that I have seen you. We were together such a little time that I told you nothing of what I wished to say. You yourself appeared to be uncertain whether I was a reality. When shall we meet again? I am at present engaged in a most servile and tiresome business, that of canvassing for membership in the Academy of Inscriptions. Some of my experiences are ridiculous, and I am often tempted strongly to laugh at myself, a temptation which I repress, however, for fear of shocking the gravity of the Academicians. I have embarked upon this business—or, rather, others have pushed me into it—somewhat blindly. My chances are not bad, but the solicitation of votes is most repugnant to me, and the worst feature of the whole thing is that I must wait such an age for the result, certainly until the last of October, and perhaps longer.

I am uncertain whether I shall be able to go to Algiers this year. My one consoling thought is that I shall then remain in Paris, and shall, therefore, see you. Will that give you any pleasure? Tell me that it will, and humour me. I have become so callous from all these tiresome visits that I need all the tender indulgence you can grant me to put a little new courage and energy into me.

You have no cause to be jealous of the Academy. It is, of course, a matter of selfinterest for me to win, just as I should wish to win a game of chess with a skilful adversary, and yet, I fancy, neither losing nor winning will affect me a quarter as much as one of our quarrels. But what an obnoxious business is that of canvassing for votes! Have you ever seen dogs entering a badger's hole? After they have had some experience in this occupation, they make, on entering, a desperate show of fierceness, and not infrequently come out much faster than they go in, for the badger is an ugly beast to visit. I never touch the doorbell of an Academician's that I am not reminded of the badger, and compare myself, in my mind's eye, to the dog I have just described. I have not yet been bitten, however, but I have had some ludicrous encounters.

Good-bye.

XCVIII

Paris, September 14, 1844.

All our preparations were made to start to-day, when there came a commotion which scattered our plans to the winds. There was a collision between the Department of War and the Department of the Interior. War will not have us. We shall remain, therefore, or, to be more accurate, I am not going to Africa. I shall be out of town on business for a fortnight, and shall then return to Paris. Aside from the vexation one feels when a plan miscarries, and the keen regret for having wasted two months in acquiring a lot of useless information, I am taking my disappointment with the

greatest imperturbability. Perhaps you can guess why.

In your last letter there are several disagreeable sentences, about which I might well pick a quarrel with you, were it not that I find it profitless—as you say you do—and, what is even worse, dangerous and depressing to dispute with each other at a distance.

I can not imagine how you spend the twenty-four hours of the day. I am able to guess how you employ fourteen of them, but I should like to be informed in detail as to the other ten. Do you still read Herodotus? What a pity that you do not attempt a little of the original, with the translation of Larcher, which you have, I think. You would encounter no difficulties, except the excessive use of the Ionian η. If you can get a copy of Zenophon's Anabasis, you might enjoy it, especially if you have a map of Asia beside you as you read. I no longer remember The Dialogues of the Sea-gods (of Lucian). Read, rather, Jupiter Convicted or Jupiter the Tragedian, or even The Festival or The Lapethæ, unless you are keeping them for me as a surprise.

I am sure you are looking smart with your dazzling gowns and your flowers, and yet I am taking it on myself to advise Greek readings for you! Good-bye. Write to me soon, and do not ridicule me. I am going away Monday to gracious knows where, but it will not be far, according to all indications.

XCIX

Poitiers, September 15, 1844.

If I have delayed a reply to your letter of last month, which I found on my arrival here, it is not, as your guilty conscience will whisper, in retaliation for your remissness in sending me any word of yourself. You let ten days pass without even so much as thinking of writing me a line, which was very bad of you.

You speak in your letter of your reflections while at D. I suppose you enjoyed yourself there very much, and I am compelled to believe that you enjoy yourself

only when you have an opportunity to play the coquette. Since leaving Paris I have had the most tedious sort of time. Like Ulysses, I have seen many customs, men, and cities, and I have found them all hideeously ugly. Then, I have had fever several times, which has surprised and also annoyed me, for it means that I am losing health. The country about here is the most level and the most uninteresting in France; yet there are a great many woods, with magnificent trees, and solitudes where I should love to have met you.

Your memory is now associated in my mind with a host of places, but I like to think of you especially in the woods and the museums. If it is any pleasure to you to know that you occupy a place—a large place, too—in my thoughts, you may be gratified to know that you are not forgotten in the midst of the busy life I am leading. Each tree recalls such and such a conversation. I spend my time meditating on our rambles.

I applaud Scribe most heartily for having made a virtuous and non-Catholic audience laugh at the expense of virtue. I am equally astonished at what you tell me of his delivery. Formerly he read like a cabby. One must believe that it is the Academic uniform which imparts this self-possession, and this thought consoles me not a little.

Since leaving Paris I have not unrolled my dissertation twice. If this continues, I do not believe, really, that I shall be able to change a line of it, and I have no doubt that at the last moment I shall be terror-stricken because of the quantity of nonsense I have allowed to remain. Until I have really set my sails in the direction of Paris I shall not know with any certainty the date of my departure. If the government does not compel me to go farther than Saintes, I fancy we shall reach Paris about the same time. What happiness if I could see you the next day! Good-bye. Write to me at Saintes; I expect to reach there soon, and to remain several days.

C

Parthenay, September 19, 1844.

Your letter, which I received while at Saintes, proved a slight diversion to the tribulations which I endured there. I was forcibly prevented from plunging into despair four thousand of my fellow-citizens who sent delegations to me with extravagant appeals.

Between my sense of duty and my natural tenderness of heart, I was miserably unhappy. Finally, I took the wisest course, and acted the proconsul, but I shall not dare to show my face in Saintes next year. I observe with delight that you still remember Paris. I feared you had forgotten our woods and our grassy sward. As for me, every day makes me more eager to see them again, especially now that I have started towards Paris. From the indications, I shall reach there in advance of you. I shall be there in ten days at the latest, barring accidents impossible to foresee.

And you? This is the all-important thing. To be in Paris without you will seem infinitely harder than tramping over the country, as I am doing at present. I am thirsting to see you, with a craving which to you is incomprehensible. Can you, will you come once more to say farewell to your domains on the left bank? I try not to think about it, but I can not succeed. In order to prepare myself for disappointments, like Scapin returning from his travels, I try to imagine your ladyship as a statue, armed against me as she has sometimes appeared. ‘Tis of no use; I can picture you only as you were the last time we were together, seated so comfortably on a mass of rock. To tell the truth, I think of this because, in the first place, you gave me your promise, and again, I can never persuade myself that we have changed, united in thought as we have been in our separation. If you have any thought of returning, write to me at Blois, where I shall soon be.

After the twenty-fifth, write to me in Paris, and tell me when I shall see you, and make it as soon as possible. I am writing to you from a wretched town, infested with

owls, and with but one abominable inn, where they keep up an infernal noise. I find so many hairs in my food that I can hardly eat. I saw to-day at Saint-Maixent women who dressed their hair in the style of the fourteenth century, and with bodices belonging to almost the same period, which were made so as to show the shirt, which was of coarse linen, buttoned below the neck and split open like that worn by men. In spite of the ginger-bread on the lower edge, it seemed to me very pretty. I almost sprained my hand to-day, and it is not strong enough to write longer.

Good-bye.

CI

Perpignan, November 14.

You have been such a long time writing to me that I began to be very uneasy. Besides, I have been harassed by an absurd idea which I have not dared to tell you before. I was visiting the amphitheatre at Nîmes with an architect of the department, who was explaining to me at length the repairs which he had made there, when I saw, ten feet away, a lovely bird, a little larger than a tomtit, with a linen-gray body and wings of red, black, and white. This bird was perched on a cornice, gazing at me fixedly. I interrupted the architect, who is a great sportsman, to ask him the name of the bird. He told me he had never seen one like it. I approached, and, until I was close enough to touch it, the bird did not take flight, perching a few steps beyond, and still watching me. Wherever I went, the bird seemed to follow, for I saw it on every tier of the amphitheatre. It had no companion, and its flight was noiseless, like that of a bird of night.

The next day I returned to the amphitheatre, and there was my bird again. I had brought some bread with me, which I threw to it. The bird looked at the food, but would not touch it. I then tempted it with a big grasshopper, thinking from the shape of the bill that it would eat insects, but the bird paid no attention to the grasshopper.

The most learned ornithologist in the city told me that no birds of that species lived in the country.

Finally, when I visited the amphitheatre for the last time, I found my bird again, still pursuing my steps, following me even into a narrow, dark corridor, where, bird of light that it was, it should not have dared to venture.

I recalled then that the Duchess of Buckingham had seen her husband in the form of a bird the day of his assassination, and the thought came to me that you were dead, perhaps, and that you had assumed this form in order to visit me. In spite of myself I could not shake off this foolish idea, and I was delighted, I assure you, to see that your letter bore the date of the day when I had first seen my inexplicable bird.

I arrived here during atrocious weather. A rain, the like of which is never seen in the north, has deluged the entire country, cutting up the roads and transforming the rivulets into great rivers. It is impossible for me to leave the city to go to Serrabonne, where I have business. I do not know how long this condition of things will continue.

There is a fair in progress at Perpignan. Besides, most of the Spaniards fleeing from the epidemic come to this town, so that I have not been able to find lodgings at any of the inns. Had I not succeeded in exciting the sympathy of a hat manufacturer I should have been compelled to sleep in the street. The little room in which I am writing is very cold, and I am sitting before a smoky chimney-place, execrating the rain which beats against my window-panes. The servant who attends me speaks only Catalonian, and understands me only when I speak in Spanish. I have no books, and do not know a soul in the place. Finally, and worse than all, if a north wind does not rise I shall be obliged to stay here I don’t know how long. I am unable even to return to Norbonne, for the bridge which might assure my retreat is unsafe, and should the water rise it will be carried away. An admirable situation this for reflection and for writing one’s thoughts. But as for thoughts, I have none left. I can only fume and

fret, and have hardly sufficient energy even to write to you. You do not mention having received a letter which I wrote you at Arles. Perhaps it crossed with yours.

I went to the fountain of Vaucluse, where I was tempted to inscribe your name; but there were so many wretched verses there, so many Sophies and Carolines, etc., that I did not wish to desecrate your name by putting it in such bad company. It is the wildest spot imaginable, with nothing there but water and rocks. The only vegetation is a fig-tree which has pushed its way, somehow or other, up through the rocks, and a few lovely capillary plants, of which I enclose a specimen. When you have taken capillary syrup for a cold, you have not known, perhaps, that this plant had such a charming form.

I shall be in Paris about the 15th of next month. I do not know which route I shall take. It is possible that I may return by way of Bordeaux, but if the weather does not improve I shall go by way of Toulouse. In that event I shall reach Paris a fortnight earlier. I shall hope to find a letter from you at Toulouse. If it does not come I shall be mortally offended with you.

Good-bye.

CII

Paris, December 5, 1844.

I had sworn not to write to you, but I am not sure that I could have kept my promise much longer. I did not know, however, that you were suffering. Our walk was so charming that I did not think it possible you could have retained an unpleasant memory of it. Apparently, what annoys you is that I am more stubborn than you. That is a fine reason, is it not, and one of which you should be proud? Should you not rather be ashamed of yourself for having made me so? And then you say that I was harsh, and ask me if I did not realise it? Indeed, no. Why did you not mention it then? If I was so, I beg your pardon. It seems to me that when we parted you gave

not the slightest evidence of resentment against me. I supposed that you felt as confidential, as friendly towards me as I did to you. Shall I tell you that this was the sweetest memory I have preserved of our meeting? When I see you so, it makes me very happy. If you were angry at the time, it does credit to your power of dissimulation. But I prefer to believe in your second impulses, rather than that you were insincere. Tell me if I am mistaken.

This evening I began the drawing that you ordered. It is difficult to do, and I should like to have your instructions. Do you really insist on that field of thistles? You say you consider it one of the most beautiful places in the world. I shall bring you the sketch I have made, and also your portrait. I have given your eyes their wicked expression, but do not believe that this is how they look usually. I know a better expression, which I love all the more because I see it so seldom. You shall see it all, however, and I shall hear what you have to say about it. When you come to pay me, you will be good enough to remember that I am not an ordinary painter, and that it is not the work for which you are to pay, it is the trouble and the time. Besides this, it is well always to show generosity towards artists.

While you were recovering from your indignation I have been almost vexed with you. I fancied you would write sooner. It is in part from having expected your letter, and in part owing to a foolish sentiment of pride that I did not anticipate you with a letter. You observe that I accuse myself also for my faults. Pardon me for my injustice; it was not anything in the past, at least, that made me unfair towards you.

Since I saw you I have been ill almost continuously. I think it was due to the Spanish lesson on the “broad earth,” as Homer says. Your letter cured me. I think now it was your manner of leaving me that was responsible for my illness. You did not deign to turn your head to say good-bye. We shall have many pardons to ask of each other, when we meet, for all our uncharitable thoughts!

It is horribly late, my fire has gone out, and I am shivering with cold. Once more

good-bye, and I thank you from my heart for having written. I waited a week for your letter. Are you not also stubborn?

CIII

Paris, Thursday, February 7, 1845.

[11] Everything passed better than I expected. I found that I was unusually self-possessed. I do not know if the audience was as satisfied with me as I was with it.

CIV

Friday, February 8, 1845.

Since you did not think me ridiculous, all is well. I should not have been happy to know you were there, looking at my coat of tarragon colour, and my face ditto. Why not to-morrow? Otherwise we should have to wait until next Wednesday, and I have not the courage for that. We have a great many things to tell each other. If I had seen you there I should have lost all my serenity.

CV

Toulouse, August 18, 1845.

I have just found your letter at this place, which is very fortunate, indeed, for I was furious not to have any news from you at Poitiers, as I had expected. You will say, in reply, that I had no business to expect you to think of me sooner than you have done. How could I help it? I can not become accustomed to your ways. You are never so near forgetting me as when you have tried to persuade me that you were thinking of me. Happily for me, between these periods of forgetfulness there are oases of recollections, and it is of these that I think without ceasing.

I see none of those beautiful grottoes of which you tell me, and have no need of them in order that my mind should be filled with thoughts both sad and gay. When it comes to scenery, I am not hard to please, as you know very well. When out walking with you I pay no attention to the scenery.

I should like to flatter you as you ask me to do, but I am in too bad a humour. For two weeks I have been in a continuous rage, first with the weather, then with the architects, and finally with you and myself. The weather, which has been abominable all this time, cleared unexpectedly yesterday, but the heat is now overpowering, accompanied by a sirocco, which is most exhausting to the vitality. I spent twenty-four hours at the home of a representative, and if I had ever had the ambition to be a politician, that visit would have caused me to change my mind. What an occupation! What kinds of people one must visit, and be on good terms with, and flatter! I will say with Hotspur: “I had rather be a kitten and cry mew.” If one must be a slave, I prefer the court of a despot: most despots, at least, wash their hands.

I regret to learn that you were starting so late for D., which means, I fear, that it will be an age before you return. What enables me to endure my present occupation with patience is the thought that upon my return I shall see you again standing beside the lions of the Institute, and that after you have plagued me to death for a quarter of an hour you will make me forget all my troubles. How long shall you remain at D.? This is what I am now anxious to know.

You will go, very likely, to England, and Lady M. will once more expound all her beautiful theories about the baseness of falling in love. I should like to be sure that yours would be the first friendly face to greet me on my return. Unfortunately, this can not be, and you will wait until every leaf has fallen before returning to Paris. God only knows if you will not come back three-quarters an Englishwoman. Give me your promise that this will not be, that you will try not to stay away too long, and

that you will not be any worse on your return than you are now. You are well enough as you are.

Write to me at Montpellier, from which place I am going to bring you a hand-bag. Write again to Avignon. I am planning my time so that I shall return September 20. This will be difficult to accomplish, but I hope to succeed in it.

Good-bye. Your letter ends very nicely, but why do you never speak to me in the way you sometimes write?

CVI

Avignon, September 5, 1845.

I am grateful to those people who fell ill and detained you in Paris; and even more grateful to yourself, that is, if you think less about their rheumatism than you do of the pleasure you will give me by remaining. In all probability I shall return in a fortnight, or, rather, I shall stop over for a little while at home between my journey from the South and that North. The next one, I hope, will be but a brief one, not even long enough for you to miss me.

I am rejoiced to know that you are in such robust health. I can not say as much for myself, for I have been ill ever since I came away. I had counted on the lovely weather and warm sunshine of Languedoc to work a cure for me, but I have been disappointed. I returned yesterday in an exhausted condition from a long business errand, in which I caused more vexation than I do ordinarily, except where you are concerned. I am suffering from dizziness, and almost everything appears to my vision in double.

While you are enjoying ripe, luscious peaches, I am eating very acid yellow ones, of a singular flavour, but which are not specially unpleasant to the taste. I should like to have you try them. I am eating figs of all varieties, but have no appetite for any of these things.

The evenings are terribly lonely, and I am beginning to long for the society of bipeds of my own class. The provincials I do not consider as anybody at all. They are tiresome creatures to look at, and altogether foreign to the circle of my ideas. These Southerners are strange people: I think sometimes that they are witty, and again that they are only vivacious. They seem to me this time more unattractive than usual. As I travel this pretty country, the only thing which I should really enjoy would be to dream at my leisure, and for this I have no time. You can guess, can you not, of what I should love to dream, and with whom?

I should like to tell you several good stories, which are well worth sending two hundred leagues, but, unfortunately, none that I have heard will bear repeating.

I saw, the other day, the ravages wrought by a flood, in which a hundred and twenty sheep were drowned, and many houses swept away. You can beat that in Paris, but what you will never see there is a view comparable to that which is unfolded at every step one takes as he travels through the region of Avignon. Come and see it, or, rather, wait for me in Paris, and we will stroll in our woods, which will then be lovely. Write to me at Vézelay (Yonne).

CVII

Barcelona, November 10, 1845.

Here I am, having reached the end of my long journey without encountering either brigands or impassable rivers, which is still more unusual. I was cordially received by the registrar, who had my work-table and my record books already arranged for me, and where I shall certainly lose the little eyesight that still remains to me. To reach his despacho, one has to pass through a Gothic room, built in the fourteenth century, and a marble court-yard, where there are orange trees as high as our roofs, all laden with ripe fruit. It is most poetic, as is also my apartment, which, in point of luxuries and comforts, reminds me of the caravansaries of Asia.

One is, however, more comfortable here than in Andalusia, but the natives are in all respects inferior to the Andalusians. They have, moreover, one crowning fault in my eyes, or, rather, in my ears; that is, that I can not understand one word of their jargon. While at Perpignan I saw two superb gipsies shearing some mules. I spoke to them in caló, to the great horror of the Colonel of Artillery who was with me; but he discovered that I was more familiar with it than they, and that they bore striking testimony to my knowledge, of which I was not a little proud.

To sum up the results gained from my journey, I feel that they were not worth the trouble of travelling so far to get, and that I might just as well have finished my story without coming to disturb the venerable dust on the archives of Aragon. This is an admission of honesty on my part, of which my biographer, I hope, will take account. On my journey, when I was not sleeping, that is to say, for nearly the whole route, I built thousands of air castles, which lack only your approval. Reply immediately, and write the address in very large and legible characters.

CVIII

Madrid, November 18, 1845.

I have been here a week or more. It is extremely cold, with occasional rains, a climate quite like that of Paris. The only difference is that I look out daily on mountains whose summits are hidden in snow, and that I am living on familiar terms with several very beautiful Velasquez paintings. Thanks to the unspeakable slowness of the people of this country, I began only to-day to poke my nose into the manuscripts which I came to consult. An academic deliberation was necessary to grant me permission to examine them, and I can not say how much stratagem in order to obtain information of their existence. After all, it seems a very small matter, and not worth the trouble of such a long journey. I think I shall have concluded my researches in good time, which is to say, before the end of the month.

I find everything here wonderfully changed since my last visit. People who were friends when I left have become mortal enemies. Many of my former acquaintances are now great lords, and are excessively overbearing. In short, I care less for Madrid in 1845 than in 1840. People think aloud, and no one inconveniences himself for another. Their frankness is most astonishing to us Frenchmen, and to me especially, whom you have accustomed to something so different. You should make a journey to the other side of the Pyrenees in order to learn a lesson in veracity.

It would be impossible for you to imagine the expression of their faces when the object of their affections fails to put in a prompt appearance at the place of rendezvous, or the clamorous noise of their sighs, which they have no hesitation in uttering aloud; one is so accustomed to such scenes that there is no gossip or scandal about them. Every one knows that he will do the same on Sunday. Is it right, or is it wrong? I ask myself this question every day, without coming to a decision. I see happy lovers abusing the intimacy and the confidence of their relations. One tells what he has eaten for dinner, another describes his cold, giving every disgusting detail. The most romantic lover of them all has not the slightest conception of what we mean by gallantry. Lovers here are, properly speaking, only husbands unsanctioned by the Church. They are the drudge, the scapegoat of the legal husbands; they attend to all of madame's errands, and take care of her when she is ill.

It is so cold that I shall abandon my intention to go to Toledo. For the same reason there are no bull-fights in progress. On the other hand, there are no end of balls, which I dislike heartily. I am going, day after to-morrow, to visit Narvaez, where I shall probably see his Catholic Majesty. If you answer by return post, you may write to me here; if not, to Bayonne, poste restante. When I am weary and bored, that is, every day, I think that you will come, perhaps, to meet me on my arrival, and this thought gives me new life. Notwithstanding your fiendish coquetry and your aversion to the truth, I like you better than all these outspoken persons here. Do not

take advantage of this confession.

Good-bye.

CIX

Paris, Monday, January 19, 1846.

I regret to know that you are not braver. One should never wait until he has tooth-ache, and it is because one has a dread of the dentist that he prepares the way for such odious suffering. Go, by all means, to see Brewster, or some one else, as soon as possible. I will go with you, if you like, and if necessary will hold you in the chair. Be assured, also, that he is the most skilful man of his profession, and, besides, he is systematically conservative.

You are extremely kind to reproach yourself for the pathetic story you told me. On the contrary, you should have rejoiced that you did a good action. There is nothing for which I have a greater contempt, even detestation, than for humanity in general; but I should like to be rich enough to remove from my knowledge all the pain with which individuals are afflicted.

You do not say a word about that in which I am most interested, that is, when I may see you. This proves that you do not care to see me. Will you take a walk Wednesday? If you have the tooth-ache, do not come. If you have any other ailment, I shall admit of no excuse, for I shall not believe in it.

CX

Paris, June 10, 1846.

When I opened the package of books I was silly enough to think I should find a note from you, and that you would have been inspired by the glorious sunshine. Not a line! So I had to read once more your letter received this morning, which seemed a

little stale at the second reading. To-day is not the first time I have observed in your correspondence, and in general in your whole attitude towards me, a sort of impartial equilibrium. You are never nearer committing some act of perversity than when you have just shown me a sign of your affection and amiability. You promised to give me a day soon, but if I were to wait for you to keep your promises the patience with which heaven has endowed me would be exhausted.

The other day you said good-bye to me with as much indifference as that with which you had greeted me. It was not so the previous time. It is a curious phenomenon that water which has boiled freezes more readily than cold water. You are an illustration of this fact in physics. When you left me you were in your sulking mood, so I shall expect you to be charming Wednesday. We must visit our pretty avenues again, after they have been newly gravelled for your benefit. You will give me much pleasure by coming. But this is not the way to appeal to you. If you have any curiosity, I will reward it by showing you a monument of auld lang syne. I will give you something besides; at least, I intended to give you something, but you have treated me so cruelly—first in writing the kind of letter I received this morning, and then in writing nothing at all when you sent the books—that I am not sure whether I shall offer you this present. Still, if you ask for it, I shall probably yield.

As you know, I have become an accomplished weather prophet. The wind is due north-east, and this means several fine days ahead. I wish you would pay as much attention as I do to the sun and the rain.

CXI

Dijon, July 29, 1846.

I hoped to find a letter from you here, but suppose you are enjoying yourself too much to think of writing to me. There was nothing for me at Bar either, which surprised and incensed me. Is it the fault of the mail, or is it yours? I had always

believed the mails to be infallible. What are you doing, and where are you at this moment? I do not know, indeed, where to address this letter, so I am taking my chances in sending it to Paris. Write to me next in Paris, and then to Clermont-Ferrand.

I have seen many customs, many men, and many cities since I left you two weeks ago, and, like Ulysses, in my peregrinations I have encountered all sorts of annoyances. Each year I find provincial life more stupid and more unendurable. This time I have the blues, and see everything from a pessimistic stand-point, perhaps because you have neglected me so unmercifully. The only pleasant experience that I have had was in travelling through the dense forests in the Ardennes, and these reminded me of some other forests with pleasanter associations. I fear you seldom think of them.

As a finishing stroke, I have learned what frightful folly has been accomplished here by means of our money. Those who have been guilty of this are silly and virtuous heads of families, against whom I am obliged to hurl my thunderbolts of denunciation as a warning that they will probably die of starvation. This fierce vocation is most obnoxious to me. I need a letter from you to sweeten my temper.

Again I return to my subject. Why have you not written to me? I shall now be, I don’t know how long, without any word from you, for my itinerary is too unsettled to designate any stopping-places. To sum it all up, I see no reason why I should not be furious. In all probability you are perfectly contented where you are, and I have no expectation of seeing you before winter, when the Opera will draw you back to Paris.

Good-bye. When you desire to think of me, you shall see that I know how to be magnanimous. Do not send a letter to Privas, but to Clermont-Ferrand. I have just learned that I shall not be obliged to go to Privas. After leaving Clermont I shall go probably to Lyons, but you shall hear from me beforehand.

CXII

August 10, 1846. On board a steamship, whose name I do not know.

I went to the mountains of Ardèche in search of a remote spot where there were neither electors nor candidates, but I found instead such swarms of fleas and of flies that I am in doubt whether elections are not preferable. Before leaving Lyons I received a letter from you which made me very happy, for I was really somewhat uneasy. Although I ought by now to be accustomed to your neglect of me, I can not help thinking, when I do not hear from you, that something extraordinary has happened to you. What would be truly extraordinary would be that you would condescend to think of me as often as I think of you.

I regret to learn that you left for D. much later than you had expected, and that, in consequence, your return will be delayed. I do not doubt that you will enjoy yourself very much at D.; but if some thought of our walks should come to you while the pleasures that you love so well are at their height, you would be doing a meritorious act by hastening your return. I made a tremendous hit last night with my rustic companions by telling them ghost stories so gruesome that their hair stood on end. The moon shone magnificently, lighting up the regular features and sparkling black eyes of the young girls, without showing off their dirty stockings and the grease on their hands. I fell asleep feeling very proud of my success with an audience perfectly new to me. The next day, when I saw my Ardèchoises in the sunlight, with their villainous hands and feet, I almost regretted my eloquence of the preceding night.

This infernal boat causes my pen to skip up and down in the most ridiculous fashion. One would have need of a special system of education to learn to write on a dancing table. I am too sleepy and tired to write another word, so I will say good-night. Write to me the day you arrive in Paris, and the following day we must see our woods again. I shall be in Paris the 18th at the latest; more probably I shall return the 15th.

Again good-night.

CXIII

Paris, August 18, 1846.

I arrived to-day in a middling condition of preservation, but my head is still dizzy from travelling four hundred kilomètres without a stop. I need your bodily presence to restore me. But when do you intend to return? That is the question. I suppose you find the sea and the marine monsters far too captivating to think of coming so soon. I need you very much, however, I do assure you. I can not tell you the number of annoyances and disappointments that have accumulated on me during this short journey. I recall Gloster's dream: "I would not sleep another such night though I were to live a world of happy days." Returning here I feel more isolated than usual, and more depressed than in any of the cities I have just left. I feel somewhat as an emigrant who returns to his native land and finds there a new generation.

You will think I have aged shockingly during this journey. 'Tis true, and I should not be surprised if something like the fate of Epimenides were to happen to me. All this means that I am horribly blue and cross, and that I have a great desire to see you. Alas! You will not hasten the time of your return by one hour. I should be wiser to wait in patience. When your gowns shall have faded in the sea air, or when you receive new and fresh ones from Paris, you will, perhaps, think of me, but I shall be then at Cologne, or may be at Barcelona. I expect to go to Cologne the first of September, and to Barcelona in October, for I am told that marvellous manuscripts are to be found there.

They say that a woman enjoys nothing so much as to display her fine gowns. I have nothing to offer you equivalent to such joys, but I can not endure to think that such things as these constitute your happiness. God is all-wise! Whatever may be the news you have to tell me, write to me promptly. Shall we see each other before all

the leaves have fallen? Do you mean to have me eat peaches from Montreuil this year? You know how I love them! If you have any affectionate memory of me, I hope it will inspire you to form a generous resolution. I have fever, and my hand trembles abominably as I write.

CXIV

Paris, August 22, 1846.

Our letters crossed. I hoped that yours would bring me better news, I mean to say, the announcement of your speedy return. Before your departure you seemed to be in a much greater hurry to see me again. I have complained for a long time of the too great variance between your saying and your doing. Apparently you are spending your time so happily, so agreeably, that you do not bestow even a thought to the time of your return to Paris. You ask me if this will give me much pleasure, which is making game of me most wickedly.

I am horribly desolate here, even more so than when travelling, and yet I am too busy to have time to notice the absence of people from Paris; but that makes no difference to me. It is you, it is our walks for which I long. If you liked them half as much as you say, you would not keep me waiting for them so long. I thought of them during all the time of my journey, and now I think of them more than ever. But you, you have forgotten them.

Paris is absolutely minus intelligent inhabitants. Hosiers and representatives are the only people left in the city, which amounts to the same thing. I expect to leave early in September for Cologne. Shall I see you again before then? I fear very much that you will reply that it is not worth coming for so little. Thus half of our year will have passed and you away or ill. I am tempted to go to —— to see you, and I should yield probably if you gave me any encouragement. However, we shall see.

Good-bye. I am in too bad a humour to write more. I end as I began, by repeating

that nothing would give me more pleasure than to see you, especially if the pleasure were shared by you. Otherwise, stay where you are as long as you will.

CXV

Paris, September 3, 1846.

I had imagined, in my guilelessness, that you would prefer one or two walks with me to a week more of whitebait, but since you are not of the same opinion, let it be as you will! I am lacking even the courage to refrain from writing to you, as I pledged myself to do, and it is what I should do if I were not so silly. My journey to Cologne has been for two days a little unsettled. One of my travelling companions has decided not to go, and another perhaps can not, so I am running the risk of finding myself without a companion on the blue Rhine. That I shall consider a slight calamity, but I am uncertain if I shall come this way as I return. Thus we are in great danger, at least I am in great danger of not meeting you until November. The responsibility rests with you. I am sure it will weigh on you easily.

I shall not start before the 12th of September. I hope you will let me hear from you before then, and also that you will send me word of any commissions you wish me to do for you. It is possible that I shall be in Paris again about the beginning of October; but if I have the least courage I shall go to Strasburg, to Lyons, and from there to Marseilles. I fear this courage will be lacking, especially if you think of returning. During your absence I have made from memory two full-length portraits of you. They are both like you, but need to be retouched. We shall see if you will like them. I am bored to death, and should like to see it rain in torrents, but the weather is perfectly dry. Nothing falls but the leaves. There will remain not the sign of one in October.

You will be pleased to learn that you are to hear the same husky singers as last season at the Italian Opera, besides having another Brambilla. There are but five

new voices, and a Mademoiselle Albini, who had no voice at all in 1839, but who has found one somewhere, it seems, since then.

Good-bye. I do not say it without malice. What exasperates me more than anything else is that you have received my proposition to visit you at —— with the most disdainful silence; but I shall give it no further thought.

CXVI

Metz, September 12, 1846.

It is extremely fortunate that you decided to write to me before my departure, else I should have gone to Germany without any news of you. Your letter came just as I was about to start. Upon the promises you give me, and whose accomplishment I expect with over-confidence, perhaps, I shall return early in October, probably the first. I hope a few leaves will still remain. We shall see if you are as good as your word.

To-morrow I go to Trèves, and from there either to Mayence or to Cologne, according as the weather is inviting or not. In any case it would be well for you to write to me at once at Aix-la-Chapelle, and then immediately afterwards at Brussels. I need not tell you to write something pleasant which will tempt me to return. When I have started, once on the way, I have the greatest difficulty in stopping, and it will require promises of the most alluring kind to keep me from pushing on as far as Laponia.

I believe I mentioned making two portraits of you. I have now at least three, and with each unsuccessful attempt I begin again, without destroying the former effort. Well, you shall see whether my memory has played me false or true. You ask me which gown? To tell the truth, I gave little consideration to that, but the resemblance lies elsewhere than in the gown. I despair of being able ever to catch the indefinable expression on your face.

I have just arrived here after a sleepless night in a stage-coach, and my head is excessively giddy. My candles seem to be dancing around on the table. A yachting trip is arranged for to-morrow. We shall be stranded frequently, for the Moselle is extremely shallow, but this is not cause sufficient to prevent me from sleeping.

I shall write to you probably from some German inn, and most certainly from Lille, where I shall stop. I may be able by that time to announce the day of my arrival. I learn with great satisfaction that you are tired of ——; I predicted that you would be so. Any one who lives in Paris can not possibly be contented in the country. One says and does such a lot of extravagances that would not be noticed in Paris, but which at —— are as big as a house. Knowing you as I do, I fancy that you have already had this experience.

I shall forgive everything if you will tell me of your return the first or second of October.

CXVII

Bonn, September 18, 1846.

I have been for six days in this beautiful land—not of Bonn, I mean, but of Rhenish Prussia—where civilisation is very advanced, except in the matter of beds, which are always four feet long, while the sheets are only three. I am leading a German life, that is, I rise at five o'clock and go to bed at nine, after having eaten four meals. So far, this sort of life agrees with me very well, and it is not a bad thing to do nothing but open my mouth and bat my eyes. The German women have become horribly ugly since my last visit.

Here is a sketch of the prettiest hat I have seen; it was while on a steamboat going between Trèves and Coblenz; the surroundings are not shown in the illustration, which I give on the next page. It is a capote, around which is draped a piece of plaid stuff, falling over the edge, and one corner of which is looped up on the left side of

the hat by means of a small green, white, and red rosette. The capote is black, the German lady very fair, with feet like those in the drawing.

N. B.—The drawing is made to the scale of a centimètre for a mètre. I wish you would introduce these hats. You would make them fashionable.

Speaking of monuments, I have seen none that I cared for; the German architects seem to me worse than ours. The Münster at Bonn has been looted, and the Abbey of Laahr painted a colour calculated to make one gnash his teeth. The scenery on the Moselle is much overdrawn. In reality it is not remarkable. Since passing the Tmolus I have seen nothing to stir my sense of the beautiful. My admiration extends no farther than its shade trees, and the way in which cookery is understood; in this land the all-important business is zu speisen. After having dined at one o'clock, all good people have tea and cake at four, then at six they take a roll with sliced tongue, out in the garden; this enables them to exist until eight o'clock, when they go to the hôtel for supper. What becomes of the women during this time I can not imagine; what is certain is that from eight until ten o'clock not a man is at home. Every one goes to his favourite hôtel to drink, eat, and smoke. The explanation is found, I fancy, in the feet of the women and the excellence of the Rhine wine.

I suppose you will be in Paris in a few days. When I see the woods along the Rhine and the Moselle still green, I picture to myself those of our climate as bare as broomsticks. This, unfortunately, is only too probable. It is as you wished it. Good-bye. I regret that I did not ask you to write to me at Cologne, but it is now too late.

CXVIII

Soissons, October 10, 1846.

It appears that you were very cross last Saturday; but, save a few little clouds still floating in your letter, you had recovered your serenity by Sunday. To continue the

metaphor, I should like to see you some day under settled conditions of weather, without previous storms. Unfortunately, it is a habit that you have formed. We part almost always better friends than when we met. Let us try to have, one of these days, the unbroken amiability of which I have sometimes dreamed. I think we should both find it to our advantage.

You make me threats for the sole pleasure of depriving me of the consolations of expectation, and you are so conscious of this fault that you say you are excusable concerning a certain promise you have already made me once, and which you are now unwilling to keep. Is it not the result of mere chance that you are enabled to say you had kept your word? You were unwilling to see me longer than a quarter of an hour, which shows intentional treason on your part. I know your opinion of these subterfuges, and am willing to abide by your own judgment. You have it in your power to make me very happy or very unhappy; it is for you to decide which.

The frightful weather which has continued since Saturday is the same, doubtless, that you have in Paris. It causes me no vexation, except in thinking of our woods, with the leaves scattered by the wind, and the ground soaked by the rain, and of the remoteness of our next walk. While tramping over the fields yesterday, in a veritable deluge of rain, I could think of nothing else. And do you regret the rain for the same reason, or only because it prevents you from going shopping?

What day were you at the Italian Opera? Was it by any chance Thursday, and might we have been near each other without suspecting it? I should like to have caught a glimpse of you surrounded by your court, in order to see if you act when in society as I should wish.

I hope to be in Paris Thursday evening, or Friday at the latest. If it is fine weather Saturday, will you go for a long walk? In the opposite case, we might take a short one, or else go to the Museum. The memory of these walks is both a delight and an affliction. It is an impression that needs constant renewal, else it would become a

torment.

Dear friend, good-bye; I am very grateful for all the tenderness shown in your letter; what there is of unkindness and coldness I shall endeavour to forget. I believe you indulge this proclivity as a sort of ornament of fancy, behind which you screen your true self. I love to know that beneath it you are all heart and all soul: this is evident, notwithstanding all your efforts to conceal it.

CXIX

Paris, September 22, 1847.

The Revue is bothering me to death about Don Pèdre. I should like to know your opinion concerning it. I am torn between avarice and modesty, and shall be obliged, also, to ask you to read a part of it. The work seems to me to have the disadvantage of everything that has taken long and painstaking efforts to accomplish. I have given myself a great deal of trouble to achieve an accuracy for which nobody will thank me.

You will readily see that since your departure I have had frequent visits from the blue devils....

The opinion you express of Don Pèdre pleases me very well, because it harmonizes with my own wishes and with what I consider to my advantage. There is one point, however, on which my heart fails me, and which has prevented me from concluding the whole business before I leave. I should be glad to have your advice, verbally, and I shall then point out a few little things from which you will be better able to judge.

I have never been more sadly impressed than on my last visit by the stupidity of the people of the North, as well as by their inferiority to those of the South. The average Picardian seems to me to be more unintelligent than the very lowest of the Provençals. In addition, I should freeze to death in any one of the inns where I am

driven by my sorrowful fate.

CXX

Saturday, February 26, 1848.[12]

I believe you are now a little better. I don't know why you could be so uneasy about your brother. No wonder you have no news. Bad ones come very soon. I begin to get accustomed to the strangeness of the thing, and to be reconciled to the strange figures of the conquerors who, what's stranger still, behave themselves as gentlemen. There is now a strong tendency to order. If it continues I shall turn a staunch republican. The only fault I find with the new order of things is that I do not very clearly see how I shall be able to live, and that I can not see you.

I hope, though, it will not be long before the coaches can go on.

CXXI

Paris, March, 1848.

I am distressed to know of the failure of the —— house, in which, I fear, you have investments. Reassure me on this point, I pray you, and if any disaster comes to you, let us endeavour to comfort each other. For a long time to come, each day will bring us new calamities. We must sustain each other and share with each other the grain of courage that is still left in us. Will you see me to-morrow, or later? It seems a century since we met. Good-bye; you were very kind the other day, and I regret that you were not kind for a longer time.

CXXII

Paris, March, 1848.

I think you are too easily alarmed. Affairs are no worse than they were yesterday,

which does not mean that they are right, and that there is no danger. As to your proposition to go away, it is exceedingly difficult to advise you, or to see distinctly through this dense fog veiling our future. There are people who think that, everything considered, Paris is a safer place than the provinces. I myself share this opinion.

I do not believe there will be any fighting in the city, because, in the first place, there is not yet a sufficient motive, and, again, because courage and intrepidity are on one side, while on the other I see only bombast and poltroonery. If civil war were to break out, it is in the provinces, I think, that it would be first declared. There exists already a deep-seated objection to the dictatorship of the capital, and it may be that manœuvres which can not now be foreseen will lead to this result in the west or elsewhere. As to riots and their consequences, remember what they accomplished in Paris during the first revolution, and what they amounted to more recently in the provinces.

The Department of Indre, where you wish to go, passed through one two years ago at Buzançais, more deplorable in its results than any of ‘93.

Understand that I am not advising you, and that I am reasoning only theoretically. I do not believe there is any immediate danger, and, moreover, even in the event that conditions should become more serious, Paris would still be the safest refuge. Anyway, between Indre and Boulogne, I should choose the latter place, which has the advantage of proximity to the sea. I should be deeply distressed, however, to have you leave without seeing me. Could you not delay your departure a few days? You see that everything passed quietly yesterday. We shall have such parades for a long time to come before any shots are fired, even if this timid country ever comes to such a point. Good-bye.

CXXIII

Saturday, March 11, 1848.

The weather is taking a hand in thwarting our wishes. I hope it will be more favourable towards us Monday. This continued rain and cold makes me anxious about your sore throat. Take good care of yourself, and try to turn your thoughts from all that is taking place. I am aching and stiff after a night at the guard-house; but, after all, fatigue is an advantage in such weather as this.

I should like to see something more than your shadow. I am sorry that you retired so early. The happiness of seeing you is as great under the Republic as under the Monarchy; it will not do to be too sparing of it. In what a strange world are we living! The most important thing I have to say to you is that I love you more and more every day, I believe, and also that I wish you would gain courage enough to tell me the same.

CXXIV

Paris, May 13, 1848.

I hoped you would not go away so soon, and without saying good-bye. I even wrote to you yesterday, expecting to see you to-day. I do not know why I can not become reconciled to this journey. You do not say, however, how long you intend to remain away, drinking milk, and that is the essential consideration. I should be glad to have you attend the reception in a new bonnet at the Academy, Thursday, for new bonnets will be seen there seldom hereafter, I fear. I make this request to you purely in the interest of the Academy. In my own, I count on a beautiful walk with you for next Saturday. If you should decide to go to the Academy Thursday, send to my house before noon for the tickets.

CXXV

Paris, Wednesday, May 15, 1848.

Everything went as well as possible, because they are so stupid that, notwithstanding all the faults of the Chamber, the latter was stronger than they. There are no killed or wounded, and perfect quiet reigns. The National Guard and the people are in perfect sympathy. All the leaders of the mob have been arrested, and the city is so full of armed troops that for some time to come there will be nothing to fear. I shall hope to see you Saturday. In fact, everything has happened for the best. I have been present at some extremely dramatic scenes, which interested me intensely, and which I will describe to you.

CXXVI

June 27, 1848.

I returned home this morning after a short campaign of four days, in which I was exposed to no danger, but wherein I have been enabled to appreciate all the horrors of the time and of this land of ours. In the midst of my grief and sorrow I am impressed above all else with the stupidity of this nation. It is without parallel. I do not know whether it will ever be possible for her to turn her back upon the savage barbarism in which she is so prone to wallow.

I hope all is well with your brother. I do not think his regiment has had any serious engagement. At the same time, we are overcome with fatigue, having had no sleep for four nights.

Have but little confidence in the newspaper reports of the dead, wounded, etc. Day before yesterday I passed along the rue Saint Antoine, where I saw many windows shattered by cannon and fronts of shops injured; but, except for this, the destruction is not as great as I had supposed or as has been reported. These are the most extraordinary things I saw, which I shall describe briefly, in order to go to bed: 1. The prison has been defended for several hours by the National Guard, and

surrounded by insurgents. They said to the National Guard: “Do not fire on us, and we will not fire on you. Take care of the prisoners.” 2. I entered a house on the corner of the Place de la Bastille: it had just been captured from the insurgents. I asked the residents there: “Did they take much from you?” “Nothing was stolen,” was the reply. Add to this that I took to prison a woman who was cutting off the heads of the militiamen with her kitchen-knife, and a man whose arms were red with blood from having bathed them in the gore of a wounded man, whose body he had ripped open, and you will have some conception, will you not, of this glorious nation? One thing is certain, and that is that we are going to the dogs!

When do you mean to return? The fighting will be over in six weeks at the most.

CXXVII

Paris, July 2, 1848.

I need very much to see you to cheer me up a little after the painful experiences of last week, and it is with the keenest pleasure that I learn of your intended return, sooner than I had dared to hope. Paris is quiet, and will continue so for some time to come. I do not think the civil war, or rather the socialist war, is over, but another battle as horrible as the last seems to me impossible. It was brought on by an incalculable number of circumstances, which can not occur again.

You will find, when you return, few of the hideous traces of the battle which your imagination probably pictures to you. The larger part of them have been effaced by the glazier and the house-painter. Still I can readily imagine that you will find us all with long faces, and much sadder than when you left. Well, how can we help it? It is the fashion of the day, and we must accustom ourselves to it. We shall gradually reach the point when we shall cease to look forward to the morrow, and consider ourselves fortunate when we wake in the morning and find ourselves alive.

What I really miss more than anything else in Paris is yourself, and if you were here,

I believe all the other conditions would be more supportable. It has rained for the last three days. At present I watch it as it falls with the utmost indifference; but I should not care to have it continue too long.

You speak so indefinitely of your return that I have no ground on which to build, and you are aware that I am anxious to know how long I shall have to remain in purgatory. You mentioned six weeks when you said good-bye, and you now say that you will return sooner than that. How much sooner? That is what I should like to know. Let me hear, also, the result of the disagreeable affairs which kept you from being present at my birthday fête, celebrated by the firing of cannon and guns.

Good-bye; in order to be patient I need to hear from you very often. Write to me at once, and send some remembrance. I am thinking of you constantly. I thought of you even while looking at those deserted houses in the rue Saint Antoine, and during the fight at the Bastille.

CXXVIII

Paris, July 9, 1848.

You are like Antæus, who regained strength as soon as he touched the earth. No sooner do you reach your native land than you fall again into your old faults. You reply very prettily to my letter. I begged you to tell me how much longer you intended to stay away eating amiles; a date was not much trouble to write, yet you preferred three pages of circumlocutions, of which I can understand nothing, except that you would have come if you had not remained. I see, also, that you are spending your time most agreeably. I had no idea that Madame ——’s scarf was bought to use as a memento. You might have told me, at least, on whom you had thought proper to bestow it. In short, I am not at all pleased with your letter.

The days here are very long and tolerably warm, but as peaceful as could be wished, or rather hoped, under the Republic. All indications point to a long truce. The

disarmament is carried on vigorously, and is producing good results. One curious symptom is observed. In the insurgent neighbourhoods are numerous informants willing to point out the hiding-places and even the leaders of the barricades. It is an encouraging sign, you know, when wolves begin to fight among themselves.

I went yesterday to Saint-Germain to order the dinner for the Bibliophilist Society, and came across a cook who was not only very capable, but, moreover, eloquent. He told me he considered it a pity that so many people object to artichokes served à la barigoule, and he understood instantly the most fantastic dishes that I proposed. This great man resides in the wing of the Château Neuf where Henry IV was born. From this spot one enjoys the most entrancing view imaginable.

Two steps away you find yourself in a forest of magnificent trees and of beautiful undergrowth, and not a living soul to enjoy it all! ‘Tis true, it takes fifty-five minutes to reach this charming place, but would it be impossible to go there some day for dinner or luncheon with Madame ——? Good-bye. Write to me soon.

CXXIX

Paris, Monday, July 19, 1848.

You divine things perfectly when you are willing to take the trouble, and you have sent me, besides, what I asked for. What matters it if it be a repetition! Am I not like the poor ex-king? “I receive always with renewed pleasure,” etc. What I can not express is my delight in receiving this familiar perfume, which is all the more delicious because it is familiar, and is associated in my mind with so many memories. At last you have decided to speak the important word. ‘Tis true that it is a month since you went away, and that in leaving you said you should return in six weeks; from which it follows that I ought to see you in two weeks. But you begin at once to reckon the six weeks in your own fashion, that is, from the day you write to me. This resembles somewhat the devil’s method of calculation, for, as you know,

he has a very different arrangement of figures from that used by good Christians. Appoint a day, then, and let it be the most distant that I can grant you, say the 15th of August.

The 14th of July passed very quietly, notwithstanding the sinister predictions made to us. The truth is, if one can succeed in discerning the truth in the government under which we have the good fortune to live, that the crisis is over and our chances of tranquillity are distinctly improved. It required several years for organisation and four months for arming the insurgents for the riots of the last week of June. A second exhibition of that bloody tragedy seems to me impossible, so long, at least, as present conditions are not materially changed. At the same time, an occasional conspiracy, an assassination now and then, even a few riots are likely still to occur. We may need a half century, perhaps, to perfect ourselves, the one side in constructing defences, and the other in the art of destroying them. Paris at this moment is being stored with shells and mortars, ammunition which is very portable and efficacious. This is a modern and a valuable argument, it is said. But let us stop war talk. You can form no idea of the pleasure you will give me by accepting my invitation to breakfast with Lady ——.

CXXX

Paris, Saturday, August 5, 1848.

There is renewed talk of fighting, but I pay no attention to it. This evening, however, my friend, M. Mignet, was strolling with Mademoiselle Dosne in the little garden which is in front of the home of M. Thiers. A shot, fired silently from some point above them, struck the house close by Madame Thiers' window; and as every shot carries its message, this had one for a corpulent person who was sitting just outside the garden railing, holding on her lap a little twelve-year-old girl. The shot was extracted skilfully, and, except a slight scar, she will suffer no ill effects from the

wound. But for whom was it designed? For Mignet? That seems impossible. For Mademoiselle Dosne? Even more so. Madame Thiers was not at home, nor M. Thiers either. The report was heard by no one; at the same time, the shot was of the sort used in war, and air-guns are of much weaker calibre. For my own part, I believe it was a Republican attempt at intimidation, about as imbecile as everything else done nowadays. To my mind, these are the only shot to fear.

General Cavaignac said: “They will kill me, and Lamoricière will succeed me, then will follow the duc d’Isly, who will sweep away all before him.” Do you not find in these words something prophetic? Very little confidence is expressed in Italian interference. The Republic will prove to be even more craven than the Monarchy. It may be, however, that some pretence will be made of an attempt at intervention, in the hope of obtaining thereby delays, a conference, treaties. A friend of mine who has just come from Italy was seized by Roman Volunteers, who find travellers of better fighting quality than Croatians. He insists that it is impossible to induce the Italians to fight, with the exception of the Piedmontese, who can not be everywhere at once.

I am telling you all this political news in the hope that it will cause no change in your plans. The Navy Bureau is making great preparations for the transportation of six hundred of the gentlemen taken prisoners in June; this will be the first convoy. I should not be unwilling to believe that on the day when the transport sails several thousand tearful widows will be on hand at the door of the Assembly; but of brand-new insurgents, do not believe it.

Have done with Romaic, in admiring which you are making a great mistake, for it will play you the same trick it did me. I found it impossible to learn, and now I have also forgotten classical Greek. I am astonished that you can understand anything at all of the jargon. Besides, it will fall into disuse before long. Already Greek is spoken in Athens, and if this custom continues, Romaic will soon be spoken only by

the rabble. Since 1841 not a single Turkish word, heard so frequently in the τραγήδιον of M. Fauriel, has been pronounced by the aristocracy of Greece.

Have I ever translated for you a very pretty ballad of a Greek who returns to his home after a long absence, and is not recognised by his wife? Like Penelope, she questions him for information about his family; he answers correctly, but she is not convinced. She examines him for other proofs, is convinced, and then recognises him. I leave all this for your divination.

Good-bye. I am waiting to hear from you.

CXXXI

Paris, August 12, 1848.

The warm weather will soon be over, and in a few days the cold season, which I dislike so heartily, will be upon us. I can not tell you how angry I am with you. Besides this, apricots and plums are almost gone, when I had anticipated the pleasure of eating some with you. I am perfectly sure that if you had really wished to come you would be already in Paris. I am horribly lonely, and have a great mind to go away without waiting to see you. The best I can do is to give you until the 25th, at three o'clock, not an hour more.

We are very peaceful. There is still some talk, it is true, that M. Ledru will stir up an insurrection as a means of protest against the investigation, but this is not to be taken seriously. The first condition of a fight is that both sides shall be armed with guns and ammunition. At present it is all in the possession of one side. Day before yesterday, at the Annual Prize Competition, a youngster named Leroy took a prize. The other youngsters all shouted: "Vive le roi!" General Cavaignac, who was present at the ceremony, I do not know why, laughed and took it with good grace. But when the same little rascal won another prize, the cries became so boisterous that the General lost his equanimity, and twisted his beard as if he would have

enjoyed tearing it out.

Good-bye. I am terribly cross with you! Write to me immediately.

CXXXII

Paris, August 20, 1848.

I begin to doubt if I shall see you this year. There is talk of a renewal of hostilities, and coming of the cholera will cause a complication of affairs. It is said to be already in London, and it is certainly in Berlin. For several days a fray has been expected. It is said that the discussions at the investigation will be settled by means of gun-shots. I am so obstinate in my opinions that I can not yet believe it, but I am alone in my judgment. The condition of affairs is extremely confused. It resembles the situation in Rome during the conspiracy of Catiline as closely as one drop of water resembles another. Only, here we have no Cicero.

As to the result of an insurrection, I have no doubt of the triumph of the cause of right. No one doubts this, and yet, where fools are concerned, it is useless to count on any rational move. I am wrong, it may be, to believe that the hopelessness of the cause will prevent the uprising from taking place. We shall see, however, next week. The investigation is to begin Wednesday. It seems to me to prove one thing at least, and that is the wide division existing among the Republicans. No two of them seem to be of the same mind. What is even more to be regretted is that Citizen Proudhon has an immense number of followers, and that his little sheets are sold in the slums by the thousand. All this is very sad; but, whatever may happen, the present state of affairs will continue for many days, and we must make the best of it.

Of paramount importance to me is to know if you will return the 25th. If there is to be a battle, it will be either lost or won on that day. Therefore, form no plans yet, or rather decide to come home and witness our victory, or our burial, on the 25th.

One other thing vexes me, which is that summer is passing, the warm days are

going, and when you return there will be no more peaches. Already the leaves are beginning to wither and to fall. I foresee all the dreariness of the cold and the rain, and this seems to me a matter much more serious and certain than the uprising. For several days I have been ill, and this, perhaps, is why I have the blues. I need not tell you that I should be terribly disappointed to die before our breakfast at Saint Germain. I am hoping still that it may take place.

Good-bye; write to me soon. You ought not to tease people so far away.

CXXXIII

Paris, August 23, 1848.

It was hardly kind of you to delay your reply so long. I suppose I wrote you too gloomy a letter the last time. If life to-day does not appear in rosy tints, it looks at least a pale gray, the gayest colour consistent with the Republic. In spite of myself, they made me believe there would be more fighting; now, however, I no longer think so, or, if it is to be, it will not occur at present.

I imagine you are perishing with cold at the seashore. I am still ill, and neither eat nor sleep; but the very worst of my troubles is the frightful loneliness to which I am a prey. Nevertheless, I am compelled to work, so that it is not from inactivity that I am yawning; yet, no matter in what situation the phenomenon manifests itself, it is exceedingly disagreeable.

I can not comprehend what you find to do at D., and I see no other explanation for your sojourn among the barbarians than that you have made some conquest there of which you are very proud. I am reserving a fine quarrel against your return. Is it to be Friday or Monday? I do not believe it would be prudent for you to wait much longer.

Good-bye. I am leaving you in order to go to hear your favourite, M. Mignet, who is to make an address at the Academy. You may be assured that the investigation will

be concluded without any shots; and as for the scandal, as times go now, it has been lost sight of.

CXXXIV

Paris, Saturday, November 5, 1848.

I have been excessively irritated with you, for I needed very much to see you. I have been, and am still, terribly ill, and, what is worse, frightfully despondent. An hour with you would have helped me wonderfully. You did not take the trouble even, as you did formerly, to say something kind to me when you had some mischief in your head. However justly deserved are the reproaches that I make you, I must always forgive you in the end; but I should be glad if you would do something to merit it. Will you make me some fineza, to compensate me for all the loneliness I have endured for the last fortnight? I leave it to you to decide on the form of adequate indemnity.

Did you hear the shooting, and were you afraid? At the first three shots I thought they intended to demolish the Republic. At the fourth, I understood what was the matter.

You still have one of my Greek books. I fear you will injure your Hellenism with this Romaic jargon. At the same time, I think there are some very pretty things in this volume. I am now at work on a new book, of equal historical interest.

CXXXV

London, June 1, 1850.

I have not written before for the reason that, having travelled thirty miles a day, I could not sit down at my desk without falling asleep on the spot. I shall not tell you many of my impressions of the journey, except that most decidedly the English

individually are dull, but collectively are an admirable people. All that can be accomplished with money, common sense, and patience, they do; but they have no more conception of the arts than my cat. You would fall in love with the Indian princes. They wear low turbans, bordered all around with immense emerald pendants, and their robes are a mass of satin, cashmere, pearls, and gold! Their complexion is a dark cream colour. They are stunning looking fellows, and are said to be intelligent.

I was interrupted yesterday by a visitor at this point of my letter, and to-day, June 2d, I have not been able to recover the thread of my thoughts. We are going to Hampton Court to avoid the temptations to suicide which the Lord's Day will not fail to suggest to us. I dined yesterday with a Bishop and a Dean, who made me almost become a Socialist. The Bishop belongs to the school which the Germans call Rationalistic, which means that he does not believe what he teaches, but, in consideration of his ecclesiastical apron of Neapolitan black, lives like a lord on his income of five or six thousand pounds, and spends his time reading Greek.

I have caught cold too, so that I am almost exhausted. Because it is June I am compelled to endure constant exposure to deadly draughts of air.

The women all seem to be made of wax. They wear such enormous bustles that there is room for only one woman to pass on the sidewalk of Regent Street. I spent yesterday morning in the new House of Commons, which is a frightful monstrosity. We had no idea before what could be done with an utter absence of taste and two million pounds sterling. Eating such inordinately good dinners from gold and silver plate, and meeting people who can win fourteen thousand pounds sterling at the Epsom races, I fear will make an out and out Socialist of me. There is, however, no probability of a revolution here. The servility of the lower classes seems strange to our democratic ideas. Every day we see some new evidence of their obsequiousness. The important question is whether they are not happier thus.

Write to me at Lincoln, general delivery. Lincoln is, I think, in Lincolnshire, but I would not swear to it.

CXXXVI

Salisbury, Saturday, June 15, 1850.

I am beginning to have enough of this country. I am exceedingly tired of their perpendicular style of architecture, and of the equally perpendicular manners of the natives. I spent two days at Cambridge and at Oxford with some reverends, and, taking everything into consideration, I prefer the Capucines. I am particularly incensed against Oxford, where a fellow had the insolence to invite me to dinner. There was a fish four inches long in a large silver platter, and a cutlet in another. All this, with potatoes in a carved wooden dish, was served in magnificent style. Meanwhile I was nearly starved. This is an indication of the hypocrisy of those people. They like to make a show to strangers of their temperance, and if they have luncheon they do not dine.

It is deuced windy and wretchedly cold. If it were not still bright daylight at eight o'clock at night one could readily believe it was December. This does not prevent all the women from carrying their parasols raised. I have just committed a blunder. I gave a half-crown to a person in black who showed me the Cathedral, and when I asked him for the address of a gentleman to whom the Dean had given me a letter of introduction, it turned out that it was to himself that the letter was addressed. He looked confused, and so did I, but he kept the money.

I expect to revisit Stonehenge to-morrow, and if the fog lifts I shall dine at night in London. Monday or Tuesday I am going to Canterbury, and hope to reach Paris Friday. I wish you were here in Salisbury. Stonehenge would astonish you greatly. Good-bye. I am going to return to the Cathedral. My letter will start, God knows when! I have just been told that on the Lord's Day the post-office is closed. I have

an abominable cold and cough, and can get nothing but port wine to drink.

The women here wear hoops under their gowns. It is impossible to find anything more ridiculous than an Englishwoman in a hoop-skirt. Who is Miss Jewsberry, who has carroty hair and writes novels? I met her the other evening, and she told me that all her life she had dreamed of a pleasure which she never expected to realise, and this was to see me (I quote). She has written a novel entitled Zoë. You, who read so much, must tell me all about this person, to whom I am a book. In the Zoological Garden there is a baby hippopotamus, which is fed on rice and milk. In Punch, of the 15th, there is a portrait of him, which is a speaking likeness.

Good-bye. Will you try to give me a good walk to make up for my three weeks' journey?

CXXXVII

Bâle, October 10, 1850.

I have wanted for a long time to write to you, and do not know how it happens that I have been so tardy. In the first place, I have been in places so wild and solitary that the post probably never penetrates them. In the next place, I have had so much gymnastics to do in order to visit the Gothic castles of the Vosges that when evening came I did not have the strength to hold a pen. The weather, which was horrible when I left, became fine for my Alsatian trip, and I have enjoyed thoroughly the mountains, the forests, and an atmosphere which has never been vitiated by coal-smoke, nor vibrated to the tones of the chorus of the Girondins. I experienced the most intense pleasure during my visit to these desolate spots, and wondered how one could be content to live elsewhere. The woods are still green, and are redolent of the delicious odours that recall our walks.

I am at last here in a model Republican country, where there are neither customs officers nor policemen, and where the beds are long enough to lie on, a comfort

unknown in Alsace. I am resting here for a day. To-morrow I shall visit the Cathedral of Freibourg, and I shall then go immediately to determine whether the statues there are as beautiful as those of Irwin de Steinbach at Strasburg. I shall leave Strasburg the 12th, and shall be in Paris on the 14th. I hope you will be there. ‘Tis needless to tell you how pleased I shall be to see you; but that will not deter you from going away if you feel inclined.

Good-bye. Indolent as you are, you must be pleased that I am writing to you so late, since you will not be put to the necessity of replying.

CXXXVIII

Paris, Monday, June 15, 1851.

My mother is better, and will, I think, be entirely well again in a few days. I was very anxious, and feared pneumonia. I appreciate the interest you have shown in her health.

I went out yesterday for the first time in a week to see the Spanish dancers, who are on exhibition at the Princess Mathilde’s. They impressed me as mediocre. The dance at the Jardin Mabille has ruined the popularity of the bolero. Moreover, those ladies wore such a quantity of crinoline behind and such a lot of cotton in front that it is easy to see civilisation is invading everything. I was amused especially in watching a little girl of about twelve years, accompanied by an aged duenna. They could not overcome their surprise to find themselves outside of holy ground, and were both as ill at ease and boorish as could be wished.

I have just received your cushion. You are, indeed, a skilled needle-woman, an accomplishment of which I should never have suspected you. Both the selection of colours and the embroidery are remarkably beautiful. My mother admires it extremely. As for the design, the hint which you were good enough to give me was sufficient to make me understand its meaning. I do not know how to thank you.

Saint Evremont joins me here. I lost him, and have had to exert my memory to its utmost ability in order to find him again. You must tell me what you think of Père Canaye. I find that after him it is impossible to read anything more of the nineteenth century.

Good-bye.

CXXXIX

London, Saturday, July 22, 1851.

I am disconsolate to hear that you have gone; I hoped on my return to find you in Paris, and can not realise that you will not be there. I have not even the consolation of scolding you. Try to return early in August. I shall not censure you, because you will do your very best, I am sure, to bid me farewell. Think how hard it is for me to spend several months away from you. In short, you know how eagerly I anticipate seeing you, and, if possible, you will give me that pleasure.

The Crystal Palace is a huge Noah’s Ark, marvellous for the singularity of the objects one sees there, but exceedingly commonplace from an artistic standpoint. To sum it up, one can spend a very entertaining day there.

I am so vexed with your letter that I have not the courage to write. Good-bye.

CXL

Paris, Thursday evening, December 2, 1851.

It seems to me that the final battle is being waged, but who shall win? If the President should lose, it looks as if the brave Deputies will have to yield their place to Ledru-Rollin. I have returned horribly fatigued, having met no one, apparently, but a lot of fools. The appearance of Paris reminds me of February 24, only now the soldiers strike terror into the hearts of the citizens. The military say they are

confident of success, but you know how much their predictions are worth. This means a postponement of our walk.

Good-bye. Write to me, and tell me if any of your family are engaged in the struggle.

CXLI

Paris, December 3, 1851.

What shall I say? I know no more about it than you do. It is certain that the soldiers have a grim, stern air, and this time frighten the citizens. However it may be, we have just passed a reef, and are sailing towards the unknown. Do not be uneasy, and tell me when I may see you.

CXLII

March 24, 1852.

... I have all sorts of annoyances, besides a great deal of work on hand. In short, I have undertaken, impulsively, a piece of chivalrous work, and you know that one should guard against yielding to impulses. I sometimes turn over a new leaf. The substance of the matter is that after reading the articles written for the defence of Libri, his innocence has been completely demonstrated to me, and I am now writing for the Revue a long dissertation concerning his trial, including all the infamous details connected with it. Pity me; one gains nothing from such work but vituperation; but there are times when one is so shocked by injustice that he makes a fool of himself.

When are we to visit the Museum? I am grieved to learn of the death of some one whom you loved; but this is one more reason for us to meet often, and to prove whether a friendship like ours is a balm for sorrow. I agree with you in thinking that

life is a foolish thing, but we must not make it worse than it is. After all, it contains some moments of happiness, and the satisfaction we enjoy in the remembrance of these exceeds the dejection we feel in the recollection of our moments of unhappiness. I experience more pleasure in recalling our friendly talks than I have of sorrow in thinking of our quarrels. We should make ample provision for happy recollections.

CXLIII

Paris, April 22, at night, 1852.

Your letter has done me much good. At this moment I am indulging in the nervousness which is sure to follow an impulsive action: impulses, as you know, are usually sincere. It is in such moments as this that base and sordid sentiments hold sway.

I am threatened with a suit for contempt of court and attack against the verdict. The case against me is strong, but everything is possible. Y siempre lo peor es cierto. Meanwhile, the École des Chartes is sharpening its claws to tear me to pieces. I shall be obliged, perhaps, to undergo an examination, and to offer an energetic defence. I hope I shall regain my energy when the moment of battle comes. At present I am bewildered and dejected. I thank you for what you tell me. I appreciate it sincerely. Try to keep well, so that, if the case should go against me, you can come to see me in prison.

CXLIV

Friday evening, May 1, 1852.

My dear mother is dead. I hope her sufferings were not great. Her features were calm, and she wore her usual sweet and gentle expression. I thank you for all the

interest you have shown in her.

Good-bye. Think of me, and write to me soon.

CXLV

Paris, May 19, 1852.

Has this lovely weather nothing to say to you? It gives me new life, seemingly. I waited for you almost all of yesterday. Why, I do not know; but it seemed to me that you must have known that I was expecting you. Come, then, as quickly as you can, for I have a great many things to say to you. I do not know whether they wish to hang me or not. I am told sometimes one thing, sometimes another. What makes me fidgety is the thought of a public ceremony[13] in the presence of the flower of the rabble, and three black-robed imbeciles, stiff as posts, and imagining that they are somebody. The worst of it is that one does not dare to express the utter contempt he feels for their robes, for themselves, and for their intelligence.

Good-bye; write me a word.

CXLVI

Paris, May 22, 1852.

Did our walk fatigue you? Tell me at once that it did not. I expected a word from you to-day. I am in the hands of my lawyer,[14] who pleases me very much. He seems to be a man of intelligence, not too talkative, and he understands the affair as clearly as I. This raises my hopes.

CXLVII

May, 1852, Wednesday, 5 P.M.

Two weeks of imprisonment and a fine of one thousand francs! My lawyer spoke

finely for me; the judges were very polite; I was not in the least nervous. In short, I am less dissatisfied than I might be. I shall not appeal.

CXLVIII

May 27, 1852, at night.

Upon my word, you are very sharp!

I went the other day to see the judges, and was imprudent enough to have in my pocket a thousand-franc note. I have not seen it since, yet it is incredible that, among persons of such high position, pickpockets should find their way. Therefore the note must have vanished of itself; so let us give the matter no more thought.

The same day I had the misfortune to touch a man supposed to have the plague, and it has been thought prudent to quarantine me for two weeks: a great calamity, truly! My friend, M. Bocher, is to go to prison the last of June, and we shall be there together. Meantime, I need very much to see you!

My revenge has begun already. My friend Saulcy was yesterday at a house where they were discussing the judgment against me, whereupon, without seeing how the land lay, my champion rushes heedlessly into the fray, using such severe words as imbecility, fatuity, stupidity, conceit of jackanapes, and the like, and appealing to a gentleman in evening dress, whom he knew by sight, but of whose profession he was ignorant. It happened to be M. ——, one of my judges, who would have preferred, at that moment, to be elsewhere. I imagine the state of mind of the hostess, the guests, and of Saulcy himself, who, informed too late, fell on a sofa, splitting his sides with laughter, and saying: “Indeed, I’ll not retract a word!”

CXLIX

Monday evening, June 1, 1852.

... I spend all my time reading the letters of Beyle. This makes me feel at least twenty years younger. It is as if I were making an autopsy of the thoughts of a man whom I knew intimately, and whose ideas of things and of men have had a singular influence on mine. This makes me alternately sad and cheerful twenty times an hour, and I regret having destroyed the letters that Beyle wrote to me....

CL

Marseilles, September 12, 1852.

... I went to Touraine, where I visited Chambord in a beating rain, and Saint Aignan in showers of rain. I returned to Paris in the rain the 7th, left the same day in a storm, and came down the Rhône through a fog which was thick enough to cut. Not until I reached Canebière did I see the sun once more, and for the last two days it has shone in all its glory. I found there (in Marseilles, not in the sun) my cousin and his wife. I went yesterday to see them off on the Leonidas upon a sea of heavenly blue, and in weather neither cold nor warm. You, who live in the dreary climate of the North, have no conception of such a temperature as this. These are my only living relatives, and are the owners of that salon which you condescended to honour with your approval.

When I saw the last curl of smoke from the Leonidas vanish behind the islands which the descriptions in Monte Cristo have made familiar to you, I was seized with a feeling of desolation and dejection, and felt as if I were an old fogy. I needed your presence, and thought how you would delight in this country which seems to me so dull. I would have you eat twenty different varieties of fruit that you have never tasted: for instance, yellow peaches, white and red melons, medlars, and ripe pistachio nuts. Moreover, you could spent an entire day in the Turkish bazaars and other curiosity shops, where there are many useless articles most fascinating to see and most disheartening to pay for.

I have asked myself often why you have never come to the south of France, and I can find no good reason. I am going to make a three days' excursion through the mountains, with no companion, and without meeting with a French-speaking biped. I am not sure if, after all, this is not preferable to intercourse with the provincial townspeople, who seem every year to become more intolerable.

Here the mayor and the prefects have lost their heads over the proposed visit of the President. The prefectures are all being scraped and scrubbed, and eagles are set up in every spot where they can perch. There is no absurdity of which they do not think. What amusing people they are! In the midst of all this, I fear the proofs of Démétrius will be lost: I ought to correct them while I am away, and they have not yet arrived....

CLI

Moulins, September 27, 1852.

... I have been very ill, and am still suffering from languor, which is intensified from the fact that the remedy which brought me around, that is to say, the north wind, has given me a cold. It is excessively enervating, and with my sleepless nights and constant running about, it is not likely to mend. For forty-five hours I have had such a tendency to congestion of the brain that I thought I was soon to see the land of the shades. I was entirely alone, and treated myself, or rather I did not treat myself at all, being in a condition of physical and moral prostration which rendered extremely painful the least exertion. I felt, of course, some disquietude at the thought of going to an unknown world, but to make any resistance seemed to be still more disquieting. It is, I think, through such stolid resignation that one makes his exit from this world, not because illness gains the victory, but because one has become indifferent to everything, and makes no defence.

I am waiting here until a monsignore with whom I have business comes out of

retreat. It is highly probable that I shall have to run around for two or three days to find him, after which I shall return to Paris. To-morrow will be my birthday, and I should like to spend it with you. It happens always that I am alone and horribly depressed on this day....

CLII

Carabanchel, September 11, 1853.

... Upon my arrival here I found every one occupied in preparations to celebrate the anniversary of the hostess. They were to play a comedy and to recite a Loa[15] in honour of herself and of her daughter. I was called upon to manufacture skies, mend decorations, design costumes, and so on, not to mention the rehearsals I conducted for five mythological divinities, only one of whom had ever taken part in private theatricals. My goddesses were very pretty yesterday, the eventful day, but they were dying with stage-fright; however, everything passed well. There was loud applause, although no one understood the absurd rigmarole of verses strung together by the poetic author of the Loa.

The comedy, which was a translation of Bonsoir, Monsieur Pantalon, was even better. I admire, indeed, the facility with which young society girls are transformed into fairly good actresses. At the close of the play there was a ball, followed by supper, during which a young ward of the countess improvised some graceful verses, which caused the heroine of the feast to shed tears, and all the guests to drink assiduously. This morning I have a sorry head, and the sun is deuced warm.

I am going to Madrid to see the bull-fights, and must leave my goddesses for two or three days in order to make my visits and work in the library. As there are nine ladies in the house, without a man, they call me in Madrid “Apollo.” Of the nine muses, there are, unfortunately, five who are the mothers or the aunts of the other four; but these four are Andalusians, with severe little airs, which become them

charmingly, especially when they wear their Olympian costume, with peplums, which they, from love of euphony, insist on calling peplo.

You have, doubtless, less beautiful weather than we are having here....

CLIII

L'Escurial, October 5, 1853.

I send you a little flower which I found on the mountain behind the ugly convent of the Escurial. I have not seen it since I was in Corsica; they call it there mucchiallo; here, no one knows its name. At night, when the wind passes over it, it has an odour which is to me delicious.

I found the Escurial as gloomy as when I left it twenty years ago, but it has been invaded by civilisation. There are now iron beds, and mutton chops, and all the bugs and monks have vanished. The latter I miss very much, and their absence seems to render all the more ridiculous the heavy style of Herrara's architecture. I am going to dine in Madrid to-night, for I can not endure another day in this place.

I shall, in all probability, remain in Madrid until the 15th of this month, when I shall go to Valladolid, Toro, Zamora, and Léon, providing the weather, which until now has been superb, does not become cold and rainy. This, however, is improbable. I have been to Toledo and to Madrid. I am going to Ségovia in order to escape the balls, which bore me to death. I went the other night to see the opening of the Grand Opera. Except for the very attractive and comfortable building, and the pretty women who were there in large numbers, it was a pitiable spectacle. The actors are oppressively commonplace.

Were you here, you would see the finest collection of fruits imaginable. There is a fair in Madrid, to which are sent fruits from distant points. Most of them you have probably never seen. It is a pity that they can not be sent to you. If there is anything here that you would like to have, you have but to mention it.

CLIV

Madrid, October 25, 1853.

... Our colony has broken up, the duchess having given birth to a daughter. Her mother has constituted herself the nurse, and the rest of us have come in a body to Madrid. I have caught an odious cold, and to make it worse there is a cursed sirocco blowing.

Notwithstanding this beastly weather, and my sneezing, I went yesterday to see Cucharis, the best matador since Montès. The bulls were so bad that they had to give one to the dogs and excite half of the others with streamers of fire. Two men were tossed into the air, and for a moment we thought they had been killed, which lent a momentary excitement to the fight. Otherwise it was abominable. The animals no longer have any spirit, and the men are little better.

As soon as the weather becomes settled, I wish to set out on my archæological journey. People keep predicting a Martinmas summer, which never comes. If you will send me your instructions, I shall receive your letter probably in time to fulfil them. Unfortunately, I do not know what is worth buying in this country. At all events, I have bought you some handkerchiefs of a very ugly design; but it seems to me that you enjoyed carrying off one of those handkerchiefs which came to me somehow, I do not know how.

One no longer sees any other than French costumes here. At the bull-fight yesterday the women wore hats. Would you like garters and studs? If they are still worn, tell me what kind you wish, but do not delay your reply.

I am reading, or rather I am re-reading, Wilhelm Meister. It is a strange book, in which the most beautiful things and the most ridiculous puerilities alternate. In all that Goethe has written, there is remarkable mingling of genius and German simplicity. Was he making game of himself or of others? Remind me when I return

to give you the Elective Affinities. Of all his writings, I consider this the most whimsical and anti-French.

I have had a letter from Paris, speaking in high terms of a book of Alexandre Dumas fils called Un Cas de Rupture, or something of the sort. In Madrid, no one reads. I have wondered how the ladies spend their time when they are not occupied in love-making, but I find no reasonable answer. All of them dream of being an empress. A young lady of Grenada was at the theatre, when some one in her box announced that the countess Teba was to marry the emperor. She rose impetuously, exclaiming: “In this country there is no future!”

Among my diversions, I forgot to mention an Academy of History, of which I am a member. It is almost as amusing as ours.

Good-bye.

CLV

Madrid, November 22, 1853.

When I think of the snow still covering the Guadarrama, my courage fails me. Nevertheless, the sun shines magnificently, but it shines in vain: it gives out no warmth. The nights are abominably cold, and the soldiers on sentry duty at the palace are required to stay out only a quarter of an hour each. Before leaving, I wish to attend several meetings of the Cortès, which opened day before yesterday very modestly, and without the formality of a royal speech, His Majesty now being so near his end that he is shielded from all excitement. I keep in touch with the political situation here, and know a good many of the adherents of all the parties, so that now, when we are deprived of seeing bull-fights, I find the Cortès interesting.

Since you do not care for buttons, I will bring you some garters. It was not without difficulty that I have found them. Civilisation is making such rapid strides that on almost all legs elastic has replaced the classic ligas of the past. When I asked the

chambermaids here to tell me where the shops could be found, they crossed themselves in indignation, saying that they did not wear such old-fashioned things, and that they were fit only for the common people. French fashions are making frightful progress. Mantillas are seldom seen. Hats, and such hats! replace them. You would be highly amused to see the masterpieces of the dressmakers in this capital.

Several years ago I spent a part of the day at Aranjuez, at the house of my friend, M. Salamanca, a stock-broker. He is a bachelor, and the wittiest and jolliest fellow I have met. He makes heaps of money, apparently, and spends it nobly. He finds time to engage both in business and politics, for he has been a minister, and will be again, if he wishes it. This man is a typical Andalusian: he is grace itself.

We had, on the 15th, at the French Embassy, a ball in honor of the fête-day of Saint Eugénie. Madame ——, the wife of the United States Minister, appeared in a costume which made every one choke with laughter—black velvet, edged with lace and tinsel, and a theatrical coronet. Her son, who has the appearance of a knave, made inquiries concerning the worth of the persons present, and after having obtained the desired information, sent a challenge to a duke who was very noble, very rich, exceedingly dull, and anxious to live a long time. The negotiations are still going on, but nobody will be killed. Good-bye.

CLVI

Madrid, November 28, 1853.

Your letter crossed with mine, which you must have received at the same time that yours reached me. In it I explained why I have remained here for several days longer than I intended. My friends are insisting that I shall wait until Christmas; but I shall be in France, and probably in Paris the 12th or 15th, if the weather is not too stormy. I shall write to you from Bayonne or from Tours, where I am compelled to stop....

There are a great many balls here, notwithstanding the court mourning. Out of respect, every one wears black gloves. The opening events at the Senate are causing considerable anxiety. People are wondering whether the Ministry will hold on, or whether there will be another coup d'État. The opposition is bitterly incensed, and proposes to give the comte de San-Luis a good cudgelling. The house where I am stopping is neutral ground, where the ministers and leaders of the opposition meet, which is very interesting for those who like to hear the news.

It is a fact, that what is known here as society is composed of such a small number of persons that if they were divided up, they would have no means of gaining a livelihood. Whatever one does in Madrid, provided one goes to a public place, he is sure of meeting the same three hundred persons. The result is a very amusing society, infinitely less hypocritical than elsewhere.

I must tell you a good story. It is the custom here to offer anything that is praised. At dinner, the other day, I was seated next to the Prime Minister's sweetheart: she is as stupid as a cabbage, and very big. Her beautiful shoulders were bare, and around them hung a garland with tassels of metal or glass. Not knowing what to say to her, I praised both shoulders and garland, to which she replied: "Both are at your service."

Good-bye. Write me longer letters. I might, in an extreme case, hear from you again here; but I shall hope certainly to find a letter from you at Bayonne. Why is it that I am so anxious to see you again? At the same time, it is excessively irritating to submit to your protocols, which, for contempt of logic and reason, are worthy of those of M. de Nesselrode.

CLVII

Paris, July 29, 1854.

I arrived here day before yesterday, and have not written before because I have been too sad. One of my boyhood friends has taken the cholera. To-day he is considered

out of danger. In crossing the Channel, there was an icy wind, which gave me a cold, or something like rheumatism. My chest feels as if it were clasped in an iron band, and every movement is accompanied by severe pain. I am obliged, however, to leave to-night for Normandy, where I am to make a speech to the idlers of Cayenne. This troublesome business finished, I shall hasten home as quickly as possible, and I expect to reach Paris on the evening of August 2d. After that, I have no settled plans. At one time I had formed some idea of spending a month in Venice, but the quarantine regulations, and other annoyances rendered necessary by the cholera, make a journey in that direction almost impossible.

My minister has offered to send me to Munich, as Commissioner of I know not what, in regard to a Bavarian exposition. I have given no definite answer, and shall wait until after my return to Paris to decide. You will probably spend several days in London, and a visit to the Crystal Palace is worth the voyage. With respect to artistic ideals, it is perfectly ridiculous, but in the design of the building and its execution there is something so great, and at the same time so simple, that to form any conception of it, one must go to England and see it for himself. ‘Tis a plaything costing twenty-five millions, a cage in which several large churches could waltz comfortably.

My last days in London were amusing and interesting. I met and associated with all the politicians. I was present at the debate on the subsidies in the House of Lords, and in the Commons, where all the famous orators spoke—very spitefully, it seemed to me. Finally, I had an excellent dinner. They serve such at the Crystal Palace, and I recommend them to you, who are an epicure.

I have brought back from London a pair of garters, which were made, so I am assured, at Borrin’s. I do not know what English women wear around their stockings, nor how they procure this indispensable article; but it must be, I fancy, a very difficult thing to get, and one that is singularly trying to their virtue. The clerk

who sold me those garters blushed to his ears.

You write me words of tenderness, which would rejoice my heart if experience had not made me incredulous. I dare not hope for that which I desire most ardently. You are perfectly aware that you have but to move a finger to bring me to you. I wish that in this period of great uncertainty, you would act as if we were in danger of meeting no more. Good-bye. I love you dearly, whatever you may do. Write to me at Cayenne, care of M. Mark, the captain of the steamer. I shall be overjoyed to hear from you.

CLVIII

Paris, August 2, at night, 1854.

I arrived here this morning, stiff, tired, ill, and blue. I am still suffering from this pain in the side and chest, which makes it impossible for me to sleep in a comfortable position. I reached Cayenne day before yesterday, the very day of the ceremony. I saw the Secretary at once, and contrived to escape all the official visits. At three o'clock I entered the hall of the Law School, and found eighteen or twenty women seated in the gallery, and about two hundred men, to all appearances exactly like those of any other city. There was absolute silence. I delivered my harangue without the slightest disturbance, and at the close was politely applauded. The meeting continued an hour and a half after I sat down, and ended with the reading of some verses by a hunchback, two and a half feet high. The poetry was not bad.

I was then conducted by the directors to the Hôtel de Ville, where a banquet, lasting two hours, was given in my honor. There was excellent fish, and the oysters were delicious. I was about to leave, when the President of the Antiquarian Society rose from his seat, all the other guests following his example. He began to speak, saying, that inasmuch as from three aspects I was a man of notable attainments, he wished to propose my health, as Senator, as man of letters, and as a scholar. There was only

the table between us, and I was strongly tempted to hurl a plate of Roman punch at his head.

While he was speaking, I racked my brains for a suitable response, but it was impossible to think of a word. When he had ceased, I knew that it was absolutely necessary for me to say something, so I began, without an idea of what I should say next. I rambled on in this way for several minutes, with plenty of assurance but without giving any thought to what I was talking about. I was congratulated for my eloquent response, but this was not to be the end.

Captured by the Mayor, I was conducted to a concert given by the ladies and gentlemen of the Philharmonic Society for the benefit of the poor. They put me in a conspicuous seat, facing a large gathering of well-dressed people, the ladies very pretty and very fair. Their gowns were Parisian in mode, except that there was visible less expanse of shoulders, and that with their ball-dresses they wore russet boots. Airs from some of the comic operas were sung abominably, and then an overdressed society woman took up the collection in a cut-glass dish. I gave her twenty francs, which won me a most gracious spreading curtsey. At midnight I was escorted to my rooms, where I slept very badly, or rather I did not sleep at all.

Next morning, at eight o'clock, they came to request me to preside at a business meeting, where I listened to the minutes of the proceedings of the night before, in which it was stated that I had delivered a most eloquent address. I made a speech, to urge that all the adverbs be omitted from the report, but my request was not granted. Finally, I got into the mail-coach, and here I am. Everything would be tiptop if I could spend a whole day with you; it would refresh me more than anything else.

I do not believe in your impossibilities. I reserve my doubts and my chagrin. My minister wishes me to go to the Exposition at Munich. It is a matter of indifference to me; but where shall I go this summer, if not to Germany? Good-bye. No matter what you do, I still love you, and I think you should be a little more touched by this

than you are. You may continue to write to this address.

CLIX

Innspruck, August 31, 1854.

I am very weary, and still feel inclined to write to you. My brain is tired, bewildered with the magnificent landscapes and panoramas on which I have gazed for four days. I went from Bâle to Schaffhausen, where we take the steamer for the Rhine journey. On both sides of the river rise mountains that are enchanting, of far greater beauty than those, so called, bordering the lower Rhine, between Mayence and Cologne, and so much admired by the English. From the Rhine we entered Lake Constance and landed at the town of the same name, where we ate some excellent trout, and heard the zither played by Tyroleans. We then crossed the Lake to Lindau, where a railway train awaited us, and from which we enjoyed a magnificent view of the loveliest forests, lakes, and mountains which the country can show. The railway carried us to Kempton, and by that time we were spent with fatigue, as if we had been for hours in a beautiful gallery of pictures. Instead of resting, however, we left Kempton the same night, and reached Innspruck yesterday, a few minutes before midnight. The country through which we travelled was even more enchanting—no, not that, but more sublime—than that which we had just visited. Our only annoyance was in settling our accounts and in changing horses at every post-house. There were a dozen of these, at least, between Kempton and Innspruck.

As an aid to recover my strength, I am eating delicious woodcock and soups of extraordinary concoction, which one learns to enjoy with the appetite that comes to him so many feet above the level of the sea. The drawback to this journey is my ignorance of the manners and thoughts of the people, and these things would interest me far more than all the scenery. The women of the Tyrol, it seems to me, are treated as they deserve. They are harnessed to carts, and succeed in drawing very

heavy loads. I considered them very homely, with enormous feet. The fine ladies whom I met on the railway trains or steamboats are not much better. They wear hats that are a desecration, and sky-blue half-shoes with apple-green gloves. It is such characteristics as these that make up what the natives call their gemüth, of which they are so vain.

After seeing the works of art which are the product of this country, it seems to me that the quality thereof is fundamentally destitute in imagination. At the same time, they pride themselves upon this very quality, and in their attempt to prove their claim, fall into the most pedantic extravagances. I have just been sight-seeing in the city. Everything there is new, except the tomb of Maximilian. The site of this is admirable. No Parisian costumes here! Everybody I meet is homely, and ordinary in appearance.

One can turn in no direction without seeing a mountain, and what a mountain! To-morrow we are to climb a glacier. The weather is superb, and promises to continue so. In short, I am glad I came. I should like to have you here with me, for I fancy you would find more to entertain you in this place than you do among your sea-lions.

When shall you return to Paris? Write to me at Vienna, and do not lose any time about it. Write a long, affectionate letter.

Wait; here is a flower from the Brenner.

CLX

Prague, September 11, 1854.

My companions left me this morning in order to return to France. I am ill and out of spirits, and the gloomiest thoughts come to my mind. If I feel better to-morrow morning, I shall leave for Vienna, where I shall arrive at night. I am beginning to be horribly tired. This city is quite picturesque, and the music is excellent. I visited

yesterday two or three public gardens and concerts, where I saw the national dances and waltzes, all of which were executed with the utmost propriety and composure. There can be no music, however, more captivating than that produced by a Bohemian orchestra.

The faces here are entirely unlike those I saw in Germany; very big heads, broad shoulders, small hips, and no legs at all, is my description of a Bohemian beauty.

We brought into play, to no purpose, yesterday, our knowledge of anatomy, to try to understand how these women walk. Aside from this, they have unusually beautiful eyes, and black hair that is often very long and silky, but hands and feet of a length, width, and coarseness that are a source of wonder to travellers best accustomed to the most extraordinary sights. Crinoline is unknown to them. In the evening, at the public gardens, they drink a jug of beer, and afterwards take a cup of coffee, which gives them an appetite to dispose of three veal cutlets with ham, so that there is room enough left only for several light pastries, somewhat like our tipsy cakes. Such are my observations on manners and customs.

My bed is made up with a spread of the most beautiful colors, about forty inches in length, and to this is buttoned a napkin, which serves as a sheet. When I have adjusted this over me, my servant spreads over the whole an eiderdown, which I spend my entire night in tumbling up and replacing in position. On the other hand, I eat all sorts of remarkable things; among others preserved mushrooms, which are delicious, and wild fowls, delicious also. All this does not prevent my longing for your presence.

Apparently, you are getting on amazingly at D., with no thought of the miserable people who are roaming in Bohemia. Your sublime indifference, whether sincere or assumed (I have never been able to discover which), is extremely irritating. With you, it is out of sight out of mind. I am in great uncertainty as to my future course. If I were absolutely sure of provoking you by remaining a long time in Vienna, I

should settle down here for goodness knows how many months; but you would not miss a single meal on my account, and besides, I fear I should become mortally bored with their gemüth. It is probable, therefore, that I shall remain in Vienna only long enough to enjoy its novelty; that is, until towards the end of the month. I may be in Berlin about the first of October, and by the 10th or 12th in Paris.

I suppose you have already sent me a letter here in Vienna, to tell me what you are doing and what you expect to do: all this will have its influence on my plans. I have just seen some autographs of Ziska and John Huss. Considering that they were heretics, they wrote very well indeed.

CLXI

Vienna, October 2, 1854.

Really and truly, this good city of Vienna is an agreeable stopping-place, and now that I have friends here, and have learned the joy of being an idler, it requires an unyielding strength of mind to tear myself away from it. Besides this, I have the advantage of hearing the news from the Crimea several minutes before you. Since day before yesterday we have suffered every stage of excitement.

Has Sebastopol fallen? When this letter reaches you, all doubt will be at an end. Here, it is believed, but in my opinion with a certain incredulity. Excepting a few of the old families, whose sympathies are with Russia, the Austrians are offering congratulations. I was congratulated day before yesterday by a cabman as I was leaving the Opera House. God grant that this is not some of the news that the electric telegraph sends out when it has nothing else to do. However that may be, I consider it admirable that our soldiers, six days after landing, should have given the Russians a vigorous drubbing.

Stopping in our house is Lady Westmoreland, sister of Lord Raglan and mother of his aide-de-camp. She has been in a terrible state. She received yesterday a line from

her son, written after the battle. We are amused at the countenances of the Russians in Vienna. Prince Gortchakof remarked that the battle was a mere incident, but that it did not alter the principle involved in the war. The Belgian Minister, a man of fine wit, retorted that Gortchakof was right to retrench himself behind his principles, since they could not be captured at the point of a bayonet. Speaking of wit, I am designated here as a lion, whether I will or not. You must pronounce this laïonne in English so that you may have no misconception of the rôle I am made to play.

A few days ago I visited Baden. It is charmingly situated in a valley, only a stone's throw from Vienna, but one would fancy himself a hundred miles from a large city.

My keeper has presented me to a number of beautiful ladies. Society here being so gemüthlich, everything that a Frenchman says is accepted as clever. They consider me uncommonly amiable. I have written sublime thoughts in their albums. I have made them drawings; in a word, I have made myself perfectly ridiculous, and it is on account of a sense of humiliation for having been up to such a trade that I am leaving to-day for Dresden. I shall stop there but one day, and then go on to Berlin. After visiting the Museum I shall start for Cologne, where there will be a letter from you.

Did I tell you that I went to Hungary? I was in Pesth for three days, and imagined I was in Spain, or rather in Turkey. While there my modesty was excessively shocked, for I was taken to a public bath, where I saw the Hungarian men and women helter-skelter in a court-bouillon of hot mineral water. I noticed there a lovely Hungarian woman who concealed her face in her hands, not having, like Turkish women, a covering with which to veil her face. This spectacle cost me six kreutzer, namely, four half-pennies.

I went to the Hungarian theatre to see La Dame de Saint-Tropez, not having wit enough to recognise a French melodrama under the title Saint-Tropez à Unôz. I heard some Bohemian musicians play Hungarian melodies, which were strange

beyond measure. This music sets the natives mad. It begins with something intensely mournful, and ends in an allegro con spirito, which completely captivates the audience, who stamp on the floor, break their glasses, and dance on the tables. Foreigners, however, are not so affected by this marvellous music. Finally, and I have reserved the best for the last, I have seen a collection of very old Magyar jewels of exquisite workmanship. If I could have brought you one of these you would have come to meet me at Cologne in order to have it the sooner.

During my entire journey I have been unusually well. The weather is delightful, but cold at night. I have no dread of the cold during my travels, for I have bought an enormous pelisse that cost me seventy-five florins. You could find here magnificent furs for nothing. They are, I think, the only things in this country that are cheap. I have gone bankrupt on cabs and dinners down town. The custom is here to pay the servants for one’s dinner: upon leaving you pay the porter; indeed, you pay at every step, but only a trifle at a time.

Good-bye. I am not any too well pleased with your last letter, except when you tell me of your approaching return to Paris. Although I am bringing you no Magyar chains, I hope you will give me a welcome. I am beginning to long for my own hearthstone, and the evenings seem to me a little tedious. I expect to reach Cologne in less than a week, and to be in Paris from the 10th to the 15th.

CLXII

Paris, Sunday, November 27, 1854.

It is very sad to lose one’s friends, but it is a calamity which may be avoided only by a greater calamity, which is to love no one. Moreover, one must not forget the living for the dead. You should have come to see me instead of writing. The weather is magnificent. We could have conversed philosophically on the vanities of the world. I have remained all day by my fireside, in a despondent and misanthropic mood,

and, still worse, in great bodily suffering. I feel somewhat better to-night, but I shall be worse again if I do not see you to-morrow.

CLXIII

London, July 20, 1856.

I received your letter last evening, and it was very welcome. If I were not afraid that I was dreaming, I might say something affectionate at this time. I shall go in a few days to Edinburgh, where I am to consult a Scotch wizard. My friends wish to take me to see a real chieftain, who wears no breeches, and has never worn them. He has no stairway in his house, and he has his bard and his wizard. Is all this not worth the trouble of making the journey?

I have found people here so cordial, so friendly, so engrossingly interested in me that it is evident they are extremely tired of one another.

Yesterday I met again two of my old sweethearts: one has become a victim of asthma, and the other is a Methodist. I have also made the acquaintance of eight or ten poets, who impressed me as even more ridiculous than our own. It was a pleasure to visit once more the Sydenham Palace, although it has been entirely spoiled by a number of huge monuments erected in memory of the heroes of the Crimea. The heroes in question are to be seen on the street drunk every day.

London is still full of people, but everybody is preparing for flight. I am to go Monday for a visit to the Duke of Hamilton, where I shall stay until Wednesday, on which day I make my entry into Edinburgh. In two weeks probably I shall return to London, where I shall see you again. Try to be here by that time; you can not give me a greater proof of affection, and you know the happiness that I shall experience in seeing you.

Good-bye. You may write to me at the Douglas Hotel, Edinburgh, where I shall remain several days before venturing into the North.

CLXIV

Edinburgh, Douglas Hotel, July 26, 1856.

I hoped to have a letter from you either here or in Edinburgh, but none has come. To make it worse, I am to be buried in the North, and I know not where to tell you to address your letters. I am going with a Scotchman to see his castle far beyond the lakes, but am unable to tell you where we shall stop on the way. He promises to show me no end of castles, ruins, fine views, and so forth. As soon as I have made a halt I shall write again.

I spent three days with the Duke of Hamilton in an immense castle, situated in a very beautiful country. Near the castle, less than an hour's journey, in fact, there is a herd of wild bulls, the last that exists in Europe. They seemed to me as tame as the deer of Paris. In every part of this castle there are paintings by the great masters, Grecian and Chinese vases that are magnificent, and books with bindings by the most noted amateurs of the last century. No taste is shown in the arrangement of all these things, and it is evident that the owner derives but little enjoyment from them.

I understand now why a Frenchman is a welcome guest in foreign lands. It is because he takes the trouble to entertain himself, and in so doing he entertains others. I felt quite sure of being the most entertaining of any of the numerous guests of the house, and realised at the same time that it was an honour which I scarcely deserved.

I have found Edinburgh entirely to my taste, with the exception of the execrable architecture of the public monuments, which pretend to be Grecian, justifying their pretence just as an Englishwoman does her claim to appear Parisian, that is, by having her gowns made by Madame Vignon. The accent of the natives is odious. I ran away from the antiquaries after seeing their exposition, which is really beautiful.

The women are, as a rule, very homely. Short dresses are worn here, and the women

conform to the fashion and to the exigencies of the climate by lifting their gowns with both hands a foot higher than their skirts, leaving visible their muscular legs, clad in half-boots made of rhinoceros leather, with feet idem. I am amazed at the proportion of red-headed persons I meet.

The scenery is charming, and for two days we have enjoyed warm, clear weather. In short, I am tolerably well off, except that I should like to have you here. When I am bored, and the blue devils get the better of me, I think of our days of friendly and intimate merriment, and can think of nothing to compare to them. Upon reflection, write to me at the Douglas Hotel, Edinburgh. I shall have my letters forwarded, if I do not return soon.

CLXVI

Sunday, August 3, 1856.

From a country-house near Glasgow.

I am weary for you, as you used to say so gracefully. Nevertheless, I am leading a pleasant life, going from one castle to another, and welcomed everywhere with a hospitality which I can find no words to describe, and which would be impossible anywhere else than in this aristocratic land. I am getting into bad habits. Arriving at the home of these poor people, who have an income of hardly more than thirty thousand pounds, I scarcely recognised myself at dinner when I found there was no wind band and no bagpiper in Highland costume.

I spent three days at the Marquis of Breadalbane’s, driving in a barouche all over his park. There are nearly two thousand deer, besides eight to ten thousand more which he keeps in his forest at some distance from the castle of Taymouth. There is also, as something unusual, a thing to which every one here aspires, a herd of American bison. They are perfectly wild, and are kept on a peninsula, where they are seen through the gaps in the enclosure. Everybody there, Marquis and bison, looked as if

they were bored. Their only pleasure, I fancy, consists in making people envy them, and I doubt if that is a compensation for the drudgery of entertaining all the world and his wife.

From time to time, in the midst of all this luxury, I see evidences of petty stinginess which are extremely amusing. Yet, after all, I have met none but excellent people, who get along with me, with all my difference in temperament, without the least misunderstanding.

I have just heard a story which amused me, and which I wish to share with you. An Englishman is walking in front of a poultry-house in a castle in Scotland one Saturday night. He hears a great commotion inside and outcries among the cocks and hens. Thinking that a fox has found his way there, he gives warning, but is told that it is nothing, that they are only separating the cocks from the hens so they will not profane the Lord's Day.

Before my return you might write to me at 18 Arlington Street, care of the Honourable E. Ellice. Your letters will be forwarded from there, or else will be held until my arrival in London.

Good-bye. It is needless to tell you to write to me as often as possible.

CLXVII

Kinloch-Linchard, August 16, 1856.

I was not too well pleased with your letter, which I received just as I was leaving Glenquoich. You are aware that you have an impetuous way of looking at things, which makes you regard the simplest actions as impossibilities. Now, reconsider what I have said, and after mature reflection tell me yes or no. Send your reply to London, care of the Right Honourable E. Ellice, 18 Arlington Street....

I am beginning to be heartily sick of grouse and venison. The truly majestic scenery

which meets my eyes daily still has the power to charm, but I am tired of wonders. What I can never cease to admire is the seclusiveness of these people. They might be sent to penal servitude together, and they would continue to retain their unsociable habits. As Beyle says, this comes from their dread of being caught saying or doing something stupid, or else it is due to their temperament, which makes them prefer selfish pleasures. Solve it who can.

We reached here in company with two middle-aged men and a woman, all of high life and familiar with the world. At dinner the ice had to be broken. After dinner the husband buried himself in a newspaper, the wife in a book, and the other man began to write letters, while I played alone against the host and hostess. Observe, if you please, that the people who isolated themselves thus had not seen their hostess for even a longer time than I, and they had, necessarily, many more things than I to tell her. I am told, and from the little I have seen am inclined to believe it, that the Celtic race know how to talk. ‘Tis a fact that on a market day one hears an uninterrupted sound of animated voices, of laughing and shouting. The Gaelic tongue is very soft and smooth to the ear. In England and the Lowlands there is absolute silence.

It is not kind of you to have written to me but once. I have sent you two letters, at least, to one of yours. Still I have no desire to scold you from so far away. These are my plans: I shall leave here to-morrow to go to Inverness, where I shall remain one day; from there to Edinburgh, then to York, Durham, and possibly Derby. I expect to reach Paris the 23d.

CLXVIII

Carabanchel, Thursday, December, 1856. (I have forgotten the date.)

It is pouring rain. Yesterday was the loveliest day imaginable, and another like it is predicted to-morrow. I took advantage of this beautiful weather to sprain my wrist, and I am able to write to you only because I have been taught the American method,

in which the fingers are not moved. The accident happened through the fault of a horse, who insisted on choosing an inconvenient moment to speak to Lord A.'s mare, and then, indignant at my objections to his guilty passion, treacherously flung me over his head as I was lighting my cigar. This occurred in a pathway beside the sea, which was only a hundred feet below. Fortunately, I chose the path on which to fall. I was not hurt at all, except my hand, which to-day is very much inflamed.

I hope to go next week to Cannes, where you will kindly write to me, general delivery. To bring to a close the chapter on my health, I think I shall soon feel much better. Nevertheless, I have had another of those attacks of dizziness, which upset me a good deal, but not so much as in Paris. A physician here tells me that they are nervous convulsions, and that I must take much exercise. This I am doing, but am sleeping no better than I did in Paris, although I go to bed at eleven o'clock. I should have only to say the word to be a lion (in the English sense); every one here is bored. I have been besieged with English cards and Russian cards, and some one wished to present me to the grand duchess Hélène, an honour which I promptly declined.

To furnish us gossip, we have a countess Apraxine, who smokes, wears round hats, and keeps a goat in her drawing-room, which she has had covered with grass and weeds. But the most amusing person here is Lady Shelley, who commits some new absurdity every day. Yesterday she wrote to the French consul: "Lady S. informs Mr. P. that she will give to-day a charming English dinner, and that she will be delighted to see him afterwards, at five minutes after nine." She wrote to Madame Vigier, formerly Mademoiselle Cruvelli: "Lady Shelley would be charmed to see Madame Vigier, if she would kindly bring her music along." To which the ex-Cruvelli replied: "Madame Vigier would be charmed to see Lady Shelley if she would kindly come to her house, and conduct herself there like a well-bred woman."

And now, you—how are you spending your time? I am quite sure you seldom think

of Versailles, because you have no souvenirs to recall it to you. I hope we shall go there in March to see the first primroses. Was it all real, that wonderful evening and morning at Versailles?

Good-bye. Write to me soon at Cannes.

CLXIX

Lausanne, August 24, 1857.

I found your letter at Berne on the evening of the 22d, because my excursions in the Oberland have been prolonged far beyond the limit I had set. I am uncertain where to address this. You must ere this have left Geneva. I am going to send it to Venice, where you will probably stop longest.

You might, I think, have varied your enthusiastic effusions on the delights of travelling by one or two words of flattering commendation, by way of consolation for those who are not privileged to accompany you. I forgive you, however, on account of your inexperience in travelling. You anticipate being on your way three weeks only; this seems to me to be almost impossible, and I will give you a month. I beg you, however, to consider that September 28th is an inauspicious anniversary for me, because it dates from so far in the past. It was the 28th of September that I came into the world. It would be signally agreeable to me to spend that day in your company. A word to the wise is sufficient.

I have enjoyed my little excursion very much indeed. It has rained but one day. I did not escape a drop of it, to be sure, during the two hours I was making the descent of the Wengern Alp on a jade that slid over the rocks, and did not advance a step. I drank some champagne which we had brought over the Mer de Glace, and which I iced on the very glacier. My guide assured me that I was the first one to have that brilliant idea. I am at this moment in the presence of the Gemmi and the Valois range, which are lacking in the superb outlines of the Jungfrau and her associates.

We might have met at Geneva, I believe, and have made some excursion together. It is sad to think of this. I shall expect to find a letter from you in Paris, where I shall be the 28th.

Good-bye. Enjoy yourself, and do not over-fatigue yourself. Think sometimes of me. If you will give me your exact itinerary, I will write to you from Paris. It is deuced hard to write here. The pens of this country are what you see.

I send you a little leaf which grew six thousand feet above the level of the sea.

WORKS OF PROSPER MÉRIMÉE

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LETTERS TO AN UNKNOWN

CLXX

Paris, September 8, 1857.

WHILE you are devoting yourself to the cultivation of enthusiasm, I continue to cough, and am very ill with a frightful cold. I hope you will be touched by this. I do not understand why you should remain three days in Lucerne, unless you spend your time on the lake. But it is useless to give you advice which will reach you too late. My only word of admonition, and one, I trust, by which you will profit, is not to forget your friends in France, in the beautiful country you are now visiting.

There is positively not a soul in Paris, but I am not averse to the solitude. I am spending my evenings comfortably enough, doing nothing. If I were not feeling

really miserable, I should find this quiet extremely pleasant, and I should like it to continue the whole year. The surprises which you encounter in your travels must be amusing, and it is a source of regret to me that I am unable to witness them. If you had exercised a little strategy in arranging your plans, we might have met somewhere in the course of your journey and made an excursion or two together, and caught a glimpse of some chamois or, at any rate, some black squirrels.

Were I not so ill that it is impossible to form two consecutive ideas, I should take advantage of your absence in order to work. I have a promise to fulfil with the Revue des Deux Mondes, and a Life of Brantôme to write, in which I have quantities of rash things to say. It amuses me to arrange and rearrange the sentences in my mind, but when it comes to the point of leaving my easy-chair and of going to my desk to put them on paper, my courage fails me. I am sorry you did not take with you a volume of Beyle on Italy, for it would have entertained you on the way, and it would have given you, besides, some knowledge of social conditions there. Beyle was especially fond of Milan, because it was there he fell in love. I have never been there, but I have never cared for the Milanese whom I have met, for they have always reminded me of French provincials.

In Venice, if you should come across any old Latin book from the printing-house of Aldus, with a wide margin, if it does not cost too much, buy it for me. You will recognise it by the letters in italics, and by the trade-mark, which is a unicorn wrestling with a dolphin. Travelling with such a large party as you are, I fancy you will write to me very seldom. You might, however, grant me the delight of an occasional letter, and give me renewed patience, for, as you are aware, I do not possess your virtue.

Good-bye. Enjoy yourself, and see as many beautiful things as you can, but do not conceive the idea of seeing everything. You must say to yourself, “I shall return.” Your memory will always be stored with reminiscences enough to keep you from

being dull. I should like to ride in a gondola with you. Once more good-bye. Above all things, take care of yourself, and do not overtire.

CLXXI

Aix, January 6, 1858.

And so you imagine that tree-trunks grow like those in bracelets, and that the silversmiths will understand your comparisons! I purchased something that resembles a collection of mushrooms, but the price was somewhat disconcerting. Did you shop in Genoa? I doubt it, otherwise you would have bought something. But no matter. You did not know, perhaps, that there is a duty on filigree work of eleven francs a hectogram, for which reason it costs in France twice as much as in Genoa. Notwithstanding, I have resolved to pay nothing to the customs, and to leave to you the pleasure of sending on the duty money, which will be inserted in the Moniteur as a restitution to the Government.

It is freezing, snowing, and atrociously cold. I do not know whether it will be possible to go to Burgundy; at all events, I shall start for Paris to-morrow night. I hope that you will come in person to wish me a happy New Year.

Good-bye. I am tired out from the journey, and depressed from the weather. I met at Nice all sorts of smart people, among others the Duchesse de Sagan, who is perennially young, and as audacious as ever.

CLXXII

Paris, Monday evening, January 20, 1858.

It is a century since I saw you. ‘Tis true that many things have happened in the interval. I am consumed with the wish to know what you think of it all. My cold and influenza are somewhat improved, and the credit of my cure I attribute to our last

walk. It is not unlike the lance of Achilles.

Have you read Doctor Antonio? It is an English novel which has achieved no little success among English fashionable society, and which I read while at Cannes. It is the work of M. Orsini. There will be, no doubt, a new edition in London, and you must read it. To tell the truth, it is not very clever.

Write to me soon, I pray you, for I need to see you to make me forget all the miseries of this world.

CLXXIII

London, British Museum, Tuesday night, April 28, 1858.

Time flies so rapidly in this country, and the distances are so enormous, that one does not accomplish the half of what he wishes. I have just been through the Museum with the duc de Malakoff, and there are but a few minutes left to write to you. I must tell you in the first place, that for two days I was really very ill, an effect always produced on me by breathing coal smoke. Since then, however, I have felt entirely made over. I eat ravenously, and walk a great deal, but I do not sleep as much as I should like. I am in society constantly, which I do not enjoy any too well. Crinoline is not worn here as universally as it is with us; but so quickly do one's eyes become accustomed to fashions, that I am scandalised, and the women all look as if they were dressed up in chemises.

You can have no conception of the beauty of the British Museum on Sunday, when there is absolutely no one there but M. Panizzi and me. There is about it a marvellous atmosphere of devotion; only one fears that the statues may all descend from their pedestals and begin to dance the polka.

I discover here not the slightest feeling of animosity against us. The general sentiment is that Bernard[16] was sentenced by small tradesmen, and that it is not extraordinary that a tradesman should embrace every occasion to harass a prince.

The Maréchal[17] was cheered tremendously when he arrived.

Good-bye, dear friend.

CLXXIV

London, British Museum, May 3, 1858.

I shall be in Paris, I think, on Wednesday morning.

I fell, last Wednesday, into a pretty kettle of fish. I was invited to a dinner of the Literary Fund, presided over by Lord Palmerston, and just as I was starting, received notice that, inasmuch as my name had been placed opposite a toast on the literature of Continental Europe, I must be prepared to make a speech. I yielded, with the pleasure that you may imagine, and for a long quarter of an hour talked nonsense in bad English, to an assembly of three hundred men of letters, or so-called such, and more than a hundred women, admitted to the honor of observing us eat tough chicken and leathery tongue. I was never so surfeited with silliness, as M. de Pourceaugnac said.

I received a visit yesterday from a lady and her husband, who brought me some autograph letters from the emperor Napoleon to Josephine, which they wished to sell. They are very singular, for their entire subject is love. They are perfectly authentic, being written on stamped paper and bearing the post-marks. What I fail to understand is why Josephine did not burn them as soon as she had read them....

CLXXV

Paris, May 19, 1858.

We are compelled to lead a tiresome existence at the Luxembourg. I am worn out with it, and I am dismayed, also, at the weather; I am told that it is good for the pease. I congratulate you, therefore, but it seems to me that the rain should fall only

on the farms. I have been accusing you strongly of having taken one of my books—they are my sole possession—for which I have searched as if it were a needle. I discovered it finally, this morning, in a corner where I had hid it myself for safe-keeping; but it caused me more irritation than the book was worth.

I have been ill ever since my return—that is to say, I can neither eat nor sleep. Before you leave for so long a time, I must positively make a second portrait of you. For that, it is a question only of a half hour of patience, if patience is needed when one realises that one is giving people pleasure. I am to be in the party to go to Fontainebleau, and shall not return before the 29th. I wish we might have a long talk before I go. It seems a century since that has happened with us.

CLXXVI

Fontainebleau Palace, May 20, 1858.

... I am dreadfully cross, and half-poisoned from having taken an over-dose of laudanum. I have, besides, composed some verses for his Netherland Majesty, played charades, and made a fool of myself. This is why I am absolutely stupefied.

What shall I tell you of the life which we lead here? We went on a deer hunt yesterday, and ate our dinner on the grass. The other day we were drenched by the rain, and I took cold. Every day we eat too much, and I am half dead. Destiny did not intend me for a courtier.

I should love to walk with you in this beautiful forest and talk of fairy scenes. I have such a headache that I can not see a thing. I am going to take a nap before the fatal hour when I must get into my armour—that is to say, into skin-tight trousers....

CLXXVII

Paris, June 14, 1858—At Night.

I have just found your letter here on my return from the country, where I visited my cousin in order to tell him good-bye. I am more desolate to know that you are so far away than I was to leave you. The sight of the trees and the fields have recalled our walks. I felt sure, moreover, and had a presentiment that you would not go so soon, and that I should see you once more, so that the post-mark on your letter vexed me extremely.

I am irritated even more by your prudish ridicule, and by all you say concerning that book. It has the misfortune to be badly written—that is, in an emphatic style which Sainte-Beuve praises by calling poetic. So diverse are tastes! It contains sensible statements, and it is not flippant. When one has as much good taste as you, you should not exclaim that it is frightful, that it is immoral; you should realise that what is good in the book is very good. Never judge of things with your prejudices. Every day you become more prudish and more conformed to conventionality. I can forgive you for wearing crinoline, but I can not forgive you for prudishness. You must learn how to recognise the good where it exists.

Another cause of chagrin against you is that I do not possess your last portrait. It is your fault, for I have frequently asked you for it. You pretend that it does not resemble you, while I insist that it has that expression of countenance which I have seen on no woman but you, and which I have often recalled in my mind’s eye. The day of my departure is not certain, but I shall endeavour to be in Lucerne about the 20th, in which event I shall leave the 19th. ‘Tis needless to say that I shall expect to hear from you before that date. It is frightfully warm here, on account of which I am unable to eat or to sleep.

Good-bye. Before leaving, I shall inform you where you must write to me. I am in no mood to say pleasant things. I am very displeased with you, but, as usual, I must forgive you in the end. Try to keep well and do not catch cold in the cool of the evening.

Good-bye again, dear friend; it is a word which always saddens me.

CLXXVIII

Interlaken, July 3, 1858.

I have come out of the eternal snows, and upon my arrival here find your letter. You do not give your address at G...., and yet it seems to me that it is at that place I should write to you. I hope you will have the wit to go to the post-office, or that the post-office will have the wit to carry the letter to you. To the present time our travels have been favoured by the weather. We had rain nowhere but at the Grimsel, which compelled us to spend two nights in that magnificent funnel. The journey had its difficulties. There was a great deal of snow, and it continued to fall. I had a tumble into a hole with my horse; but we pulled ourselves out without other inconvenience than rather too much coolness for an hour or two. A Yankee lady whom we met made at the same spot a picturesque somersault. I am sun-blistered, and my skin is peeling from my forehead to my neck.

I have visited the glacier of the Rhone, which I do not advise you to do; nevertheless, it is the most beautiful place I have seen up to the present time. I have made a fairly accurate sketch of it, which I will show you. I shall hope to meet you in Vienna in October. It is an attractive city, containing some Roman ruins which I shall have the pleasure of explaining to you and of revisiting in your society.

Give me your commissions for Venice. I have not determined by which route I shall go to Innsbruck, whether by Lake Constance, or through Lindau, or perhaps Munich; but I shall certainly pass through Innsbruck, for I am to go to Venice by way of Trent, and not by vulgar Splugen. Write to me, therefore, at Innspruck without dilly-dallying too long about it....

CLXXIX

Innspruck, July 25, 1858.

I arrived here last night, where I found your letter of ancient date....

My itinerary has changed altogether. After having travelled entirely through the Oberland, I went to Zurich. There I was seized with the desire to see Salzburg, and I crossed over Lake Constance to Lindau, and thence to Munich, where I lingered several days visiting the museum.

Salzburg seems to me to deserve its reputation, by which I mean its German reputation. Happily, to most tourists it is an unknown country. Near by there is a mountain called the Gagsberg, standing in almost the same position as the Righi, from which one sees spread before him the same panorama of lakes and mountains. The lakes are poor affairs, to be sure, but the mountains are infinitely more splendid than those surrounding the Righi. Add to this the fact that there are no English tourists to bore you with their faces, and that you are in the midst of the most absolute solitude, knowing to a certainty—which is an important consideration—that at the end of a three hours' walk you will enjoy a good dinner at Salzburg.

I went yesterday into the Zitterthal, which is a charming valley, one end of which is inclosed by a great glacier. The mountains to the right and the left rise sharply before you, which is the same inconvenience that one suffers in Switzerland: there is no foreground, no means of determining the real height of surrounding objects.

In the Zitterthal, it is said, are the most beautiful women of the Tyrol. I saw, indeed, many very pretty ones there, but they were too well fed. Their legs, which they show to the garter (it is not as high as you might imagine), are of startling bigness. While I was dining at Fügen, our host entered the room, with his daughter, formed like a cask of Burgundy, his son, a guitar, and two stable-boys. All these people yodeled in a marvellous fashion. The cask, who was but twenty-two years old, has a contralto voice worth fifty thousand francs. For all that, the concert was free. Singing, with

these people, is a pleasure, which they do not include in the bill.

To-morrow I start for Verona by a round-about way in order to see Stelvio. I shall have to travel in a coach seven or eight thousand feet above sea level. If I do not fall into some hole, I shall be in Venice by the 5th or 6th of August, perhaps before then. I shall attend to your commission, which seems to me intricate. I shall choose for you the prettiest hair-net possible to find. I thank you for your information concerning Aldus. I should have preferred, however, that you should give me some about your travels. Good-bye.

CLXXX

Venice, August 18, 1858.

You have been roving over the mountains, making unseemly comparisons of Mont Blanc with a loaf of sugar, while I was working myself to death searching for gimcracks for you. I have never seen anything uglier than the things I am bringing you. It is probable that they will be seized by the custom-houses which I must encounter, or else that they will be smashed on the journey. I rejoice at this possibility, for never was such a commission given to a man of taste.

Venice had a most depressing effect on me, from which feeling I have been unable to rally for nearly two weeks. The architecture is convincing, but lacking in taste and imagination. It has made me indignant to recall the commonplaces written about some of the palaces. The canals bear a striking resemblance to the Bièvre River, and the gondolas to an incommodious hearse. The pictures of the Academy pleased me, although none were above the rank of second-rate works. There is not a Paul Veronese to be compared to The Marriage at Cana, not a Titian comparable to Caesar’s Coin, in Dresden, or even The Crown of Thorns in Paris. I searched for a Giorgione, but there was not one in Venice.

On the other hand, I found the faces of the people attractive. The streets swarm with

charming young girls, barefooted and bareheaded, who, if they were bathed and scrubbed, would be Venuses Anadyomenes. What I dislike above all else is the odor in the streets. On certain days the air was full of the smell of fritters frying, and it was insupportable.

I attended a funzione in honor of the Archduke, and found it very entertaining. He was given a serenade from the Piazzetta to the iron bridge. Six hundred gondolas followed the colossal boat containing the music. Every one carried lanterns, and many burned red or blue Bengal lights, which threw on the palaces of the Grand Canal tints of fairy-like hue. The passage of the Rialto was extremely amusing. No one could turn around or withdraw from his place, and the result was that for an hour and a quarter the entire space between the Loredan palace and the Rialto was an immovable bridge. The instant a crevice as wide as one's hand appeared between two sterns a prow slipped into it like a coin. Every instant was heard the cracking of planks, and now and then the cracking of an oar. It is most extraordinary that in all this throng, which, in France would be the occasion of a free-for-all scrimmage, not an oath was heard, not even a word of ill-humour. These people are a compound of milk and maize. I saw yesterday, in Saint-Mark's Place, a monk fall on his knees before an Austrian corporal who obstructed his way. I have never seen anything so distressing, and in full view of the Lion of Saint-Mark, too!

I am waiting here for Panizzi. I go in society sometimes. I visit the libraries and spend my time in a tolerably agreeable way. I saw yesterday the Armenians, and very handsome chaps they are, whom the mere sight of a senator transformed into Armenians from Constantinople. They presented me with an epic poem by one of their Fathers.

Good-bye. I shall reach Genoa, probably, the 1st of September, and Paris certainly in October. I shall go to Vienna as soon as I have heard from you. For the last few days I have been fairly well, but for more than a fortnight I was miserably ill.

Good-bye again.

CLXXXI

Genoa, September 10, 1858.

On my arrival here I found your letter of the 1st, which I acknowledge gratefully. You make no mention of one which I wrote you from Brescia about the first of this month. In it I said that I had left Venice with regret, and that I was thinking of you constantly.

Lake Como was charming. I stopped at Bellagio. In a little villa by the lake shore I found Madame Pasta, whom I had not seen since the days of her triumphs in the Italian Opera. She has increased singularly in width. She is now cultivating her cabbages, and says she is as happy as when we used to throw crowns and sonnets to her. We talked of music, the drama, and she said something that struck me as very true, which was that since Rossini no one had written an opera of any unity, of which all the parts held together. All that Verdi and his associates have done resembles a harlequin's costume.

The weather is magnificent, and this evening the boat leaves for Leghorn. I am tempted strongly to go to Florence for a week, returning by way of Genoa, and probably by the Corniche. If, however, I should receive any letters of importance, I might take the Turin route, and reach Paris in thirty hours. In any case, I shall expect to see you there October 1st. Be kind enough not to forget, or you will put me to the necessity of going to search for you along your sea-shore.

You say nothing about Grenoble spinach, or the fifty-three ways of serving it, customary in Dauphiny. Is any one left who used to know Beyle? I received some time ago a very witty letter, full of anecdotes about him, from a man whose name I have forgotten, but who, I believe, is registrar of the Imperial Court. Formerly, there was still some sense of humour in the provinces, as in the period of the president de

Brosses; now, however, not even an idea is to be found there. The railroads are hastening the process of mental paralysis, and I am confident that, in twenty years from now, reading will be a lost art....

CLXXXII

Cannes, October 8, 1858.

Your gimcracks have arrived here without accident. I shall be in Paris next Wednesday or Thursday. When you want your trinkets, you can come and get them. I returned from Florence by land, and am glad to have decided on that route. After leaving Spezzia the scenery is magnificent, as fine, if not finer, than that found from Genoa to Nice. I am bringing with me a lovely souvenir of Florence. It is a beautiful city. Venice is only pretty. As for works of art, there is no comparison possible. In Florence there are two unexcelled museums.

When you visit Pisa, I would advise you to stop at the Hôtel de la Grand Bretagne. It is the perfection of comfort. I committed the egregious folly, on the recommendation of a Nice newspaper, of going to see a cave of stalactites, which was discovered by a rabbit. It is in the suburbs of a town named Colle, in France, but only a step from the frontier. I was obliged to crawl over the ground for an hour, in order to see a few crystallisations more or less ridiculous, in the form of carrots or turnips, hanging from the roof.

I found here a complete desert; all the hotels are empty, not an Englishman in the street. It is just the time, however, to spend a few days here. The weather is superb, just warm enough to be comfortable in the shade, but the sun is no longer dangerous. In two months everything will be crowded, and there will be a north-wind of the most disagreeable kind. Travellers are stupid sheep.

Did I tell you of the quail served with rice, which I ate at Milan? It was the most remarkable thing I discovered in that city, and is worth the journey. I return to this

country with delight, after having visited so many others which are considered grander. The mountains of the Estérel impressed me as smaller than the Alps, but their outlines are as graceful as any that one can see. Enough said on the subject of my travels.

What are your intentions for this autumn? Do you intend to bury yourself in your Dauphiny mountains? Where you are concerned, one never knows what to expect. You look one way and row another. Good-bye....

CLXXXIII

Paris, October 21, 1858.

Here I am back in this city of Paris, where I am furious not to find you. It begins to be cold and dismal, and still no one has returned. I left Cannes in admirable weather, which became greyer and greyer with every step I took towards the North.

Pity me! While in Venice I bought a chandelier, which arrived yesterday broken in three places. The Jew who sold it to me promised to make good any damage, but what power have I to compel him to do so?

I have not yet become accustomed to sleeping in my own bed. I feel like a stranger here, and do not know what to do with my time. It would be altogether different if you were in Paris.

I bought in Cannes that strange animal, the prigadiou, whose portrait I have made for you. It is still alive, but I fear that you will find it no longer in this world. It lives on flies, and flies are beginning to be scarce. I have still a dozen which I am fattening. My friends think I am thinner. It seems to me that my health is a trifle better than before I went away....

CLXXXIV

Paris, Sunday night, November 15, 1858.

... I go to-morrow morning to Compiègne, until the 19th. Write to me until the 18th at the château. I am far from well, and the life I am to lead for the next week will not improve my health. Certain corridors must be crossed with neck and shoulders uncovered, which insure to those who frequent them a fine cold. I can not say what will be the fate of those who have a cold already developed. Pardon this hideous hiatus.

This morning I met Sandeau, in the excited condition of a man who has just made his first appearance in knee-breeches. He put to me a hundred questions of such simplicity that I was alarmed for him. There will be also a number of great men from Outre-Manche, who will, doubtless, contribute much to the animation and hilarity of the occasion. Good-bye.

CLXXXV

Château de Compiègne, Sunday, November 21, 1858.

Your letter drives me to despair....

We are to remain at Compiègne one day longer. Instead of Thursday, we shall return Friday, on account of a comedy of Octave Feuillet, which is to be played Thursday night. I hope this will be the last delay. Besides, I am thoroughly ill. It is impossible to sleep in this place. One is either freezing or roasting, and this has given me an irritation of the chest, which is extremely painful. It is, however, impossible to fancy a host more amiable and a hostess more gracious.

Most of the invited guests left yesterday, and the rest of us make a select little party; that is to say, there are but thirty or forty to sit at table. We took a long walk in the woods, which recalled our rambles of former times. Were it not for the cold, the forest would be as beautiful as in the beginning of the autumn. The leaves still hang on the trees, but of the most lovely yellow and orange tints you can imagine. Deer

crossed our path at every step.

To-day a fresh cargo of illustrious guests is to arrive. All the ministers, in the first place, then Russians and other foreigners. The heat in the salons will be intensified, of course. Good-bye.

When I think that I might have seen you in Paris to-day! I am tempted to run away and give them the slip....

CLXXXVI

Château de Compiègne, Wednesday, November 24, 1858.

Decidedly, the devil is taking a hand in affairs. I am to be here until the 2d or 3d of December. I feel like hanging myself when I see you in such a state of resignation. ‘Tis a virtue which I do not possess, and I am in a rage. In spite of obstacles, I had made up my mind to spend a few hours in Paris. Nothing is easier than not to appear at luncheon or a promenade. It is dinner which is the serious point, and when I spoke to the old courtiers of going to dine with Lady —— in the city, they made such a face, that I saw it was not to be thought of.

Our life here is most trying on the nerves and brain. We leave rooms heated to forty degrees, to ride through the woods in an uncovered wagonette. It freezes here at seven degrees. We then return to dress, and find ourselves again in a tropical climate. I do not understand how the women can stand it. I neither sleep nor eat, and spend my nights thinking of Saint-Cloud or of Versailles....

CLXXXVII

Marseilles, December 29, 1858.

I spent my last day in Paris with a crowd of people who did not leave me time to do up my packages and write to you. On my way to the station I left at your house your

two volumes unwrapped, sufficient proof of my unusual haste. I hope your concierge will have confined himself to looking at the pictures, and that he delivered them to you promptly.

I was terribly cold on the journey. At Dijon I met the snow, of which I saw the last only at Lyons. Here a slight mistral is blowing, but the sun shines gloriously. They write me from Cannes that the weather is magnificent, although cold for that climate—that is to say, a May temperature. I was shockingly ill in the train from Paris to Marseilles, and all night I thought I should suffocate. This morning I am greatly relieved. It is a pleasure to see the sun once more, and to feel its genuine warmth.

You have found nothing for me to give Sainte Eulalie, and I fancy that I may have forgotten to remind you of that important matter. No more handkerchiefs, no more boxes. I have been giving such things for twenty years. In an extreme case, I might return again to brooches; but if it were possible to select something newer, it would be desirable. I continue to rely on you to choose the books for the Misses Lagrénée. Think of all the responsibility you have taken on your shoulders! I have always found you worthy of my confidence. Your selection of books for young girls has always been exquisite.

When I pass through Marseilles again, I will attend to your commissions, if you have any, as to the purchase of cloaks or eastern stuffs. There is a Jew here, very dishonest, but with an excellent stock of goods, whom I honour with my patronage. I have just seen a recent arrival from Cannes who tells me the roads are atrocious. I feel my flesh beginning to creep from to-night, and think of twenty-four hours, at least, on the road! If you go to Florence next year you must tell me in time. It is my dream to return there with you. I will be your guide in seeing the city.

Good-bye. Let me hear from you soon, and tell me what people are saying in Paris.

CLXXXVIII

Cannes, January 7, 1859.

I am settled here in some sort of fashion. The weather is cold but magnificent. From ten o'clock until four the sun is warm; but hardly has it touched the summit of the mountains of the Estérel, when there arises a keen wind from the Alps which cuts you in two. Nevertheless, I feel much better than when I was in Paris. I have had no paroxysms of pain, and the cough I brought away with me is entirely cured from being in the open air; only I eat nothing at all, and sleep but so-so.

On account of my nervous temperament, I became the other day terribly irritated and was obliged to dismiss my servant, to turn him out on the spot. Persons of that class imagine themselves necessary to you and abuse your patience. I have found a fellow here to take care of my clothes, who is like a cat walking on ice with nut-shells on his feet. I should like to discover a treasure such as I have sometimes seen—some one who would understand my wishes without putting me to the necessity of speaking.

Englishmen are here in great numbers. I dined day before yesterday at Lord Brougham's, with I don't know how many misses, freshly arrived from Scotland, to whom the sight of the sun seemed to cause immense surprise. If I had the talent to describe costumes, I should amuse you with the description of theirs. You have never seen anything to equal them since the invention of crinoline.

I am reading the Memoirs of Catherine II. As a representation of manners and customs it is remarkable. This and the Memoirs of the Margrave of Bayruth give a singular idea of the people of the eighteenth century, and especially of the court-life of the period. When Catherine II married the grand duke, who became afterwards Peter III, she had a wealth of diamonds and beautiful brocade gowns, and yet her living apartment consisted of a single room, which served as a passageway to her women, who, twenty-six in number, all slept in one room beside that of the queen.

There is not a tradesman's wife to-day who does not live more comfortably than did empresses a hundred years ago.

The memoirs of Catherine stop, unfortunately, at the most interesting moment, before the death of Elisabeth. She says enough, however, to give the strongest reasons for believing that Paul I was the son of a Prince Soltykof. It is a singular thing that the manuscript in which all these choice incidents are related she dedicated to her son, this same Paul I.

I have learned that you executed conscientiously my commission for the purchase of books. I have even received Olga's acknowledgments. She seems enchanted with her portion. One book especially, something about Gems of Poetry (?), has produced a tremendous effect. I inclose her eulogies. I hope your fertile imagination will not rest with this success, and that it will find me something for my cousin, Sainte Eulalie.

Good-bye, dear friend. I should like to send you a little of my sunshine. Take care of yourself, and think of me. The prigadiou is remarkably well. After his fast of six weeks he has begun to eat again. He devoured three flies the day of his arrival in Cannes. At present, he has become so fastidious that he will eat nothing but the heads. Good-bye again....

CLXXXIX

Cannes, January 22, 1859, at night.

Marvellous moonlight, not a cloud, the sea as smooth as a mirror, and no breath of wind. From ten o'clock until five it was as warm as a June day. The longer I stay the more I am convinced that it is the light that does me good, more than the warmth and exercise. We had one rainy day, followed by one of gloom and threatening skies. I had horrible spasms of coughing, but as soon as the sun reappeared, Richard was himself again.

How are you, dear friend? Have the dinners of the Kings and of the Carnival fattened you much? As for me, I eat nothing at all. At the same time, a friend who came down from Paris expressly to see me considers my food excellent. We have nothing but some queer-looking fish, mutton, and woodcock. You may believe that Cannes is becoming too civilised, entirely too much so. They are now engaged in destroying one of my favourite walks, the rocks near Napoule, to build the railroad in that direction. When it is completed we can take advantage of it, as we did that of Bellevue; but Cannes will then become infested with the Marseillais, and all its picturesqueness will be lost.

Do you know a creature called the hermit-crab? It is a small lobster, the size of a locust, and has a tail without any scales. He finds a shell which fits his tail, crawls into it, and thus moves himself along the sea-shore. Yesterday I found one, and very carefully broke the shell without injuring the crab, which I then placed in a dish of sea-water. He made there the most piteous appearance. I then put an empty shell on the dish. The little creature approached it, moved around it, then raised one claw in the air, evidently to measure the height of the shell. After meditating a half minute, he thrust one of his claws into the shell to assure himself that it was really empty. Then, seizing it with his foreclaws, he took a somersault in such a way that his tail entered the shell. At once he began to walk about the dish, with the satisfied air of a man coming out of a furnishing shop with a new coat. I have seldom seen such evidences of reasoning in animals as this.

You will observe that I have given myself up entirely to the study of nature. Besides my researches on animals (I have also the story of a goat to tell you), I have painted some landscapes, of which the last one is always more beautiful than the others. Unfortunately, a friend of mine here has filched my two best works. My friend, who is far more of an artist than I, is in a perpetual state of admiration of this country. We spend our days sketching, returning at night utterly exhausted, when I have no courage for writing. Nevertheless, I have written an article on the Dictionary of

Personal Property, by Viollet-le-Duc, which I shall send with this letter. I should like you to read it. While it is short, it contains, I fancy, an idea or two.

Did I tell you that my friend Augier wishes to have a melodrama on The False Demetrius, and that I must work also on this? Finally, I have promised the Revue des Deux Mondes an article on Prescott's Philip II. Good-bye.

CXC

Cannes, February 5, 1859.

... For two days we have had bad weather, which has made me desperately ill. I have formed for my own case a medical theory which is as good as any other; it is, that sunlight is a necessity to me. When the sky is overcast, I suffer; when it rains, I am perfectly good-for-nothing; when the sun reappears at last, I am on my feet again.

It was during the bad weather that the new imperial highness[18] crossed the sea. With us it (the sea) was devilish boisterous, and as wild as the ocean. I thought of the sufferings of that poor princess, married but the night before, her first experience on the sea, and with the expectation of an harangue by the mayor as soon as she should land. Do you not think it preferable in Paris to belong to the bourgeois? I should like to do so in Cannes.

My house is situated in front of the Hôtel de la Poste. My windows face the sea, and from my bed I can see the islands. It is a delicious view. I have about thirty sketches, more or less poor, but which I have enjoyed making. You shall have several, if you make a wise choice; if not, I shall select them for you. The almond-trees are in bloom in every direction, but the winter has been so severe and the summer so dry that the jessamines are almost entirely blighted. If you wish to have any acacias, you have but to mention it.

Yesterday I corrected the proofs of the article of which I spoke to you. As for Demetrius, I have abandoned all thought of it; and it needed your letter to remind me

that I had ever thought of it.

A colleague is a useful person to have near one, in that he knows, in the first place, all the tricks of the trade, and, besides, that he can meet all the actors and other unsavory people whom my mightiness does not wish to see. I received a letter this morning from a M. Beyle, of Grasse, who is an admirer of mine, who is twenty-two years old, and who asks permission to read to me several works of his own composition. Can you comprehend such a sudden disaster, when one thinks himself safe from everything literary?

I have had another misfortune. My prigadiou died suddenly during the stormy weather. I am thinking of raising a monument to his memory on the rock where I found him. I continue my investigations of the habits of hermit-crabs. The study of instinct in dumb creatures is extremely interesting, I assure you. I have also a dog, who belongs ostensibly to my servant, but who has attached himself to me. He understands everything that is said to him, even in French, and since he has seen his master serving me he holds him in contempt.

I should be glad if you would read Caesar, by Ampère, which has just appeared. It is possible that I may be obliged to write a critique concerning it, and since it is written in Alexandrine metre, the possibility terrifies me. I should like to take your opinion of it cut and dried, for I never could criticise verse.

I am beginning to count the days. The month will not come to an end, I hope, without seeing you. I suspect that in Paris you feel no longing for mountain air or legs of mutton. I myself am living in the open air. I sleep no better than ever, but I have good legs, and I can climb without losing my breath.

Good-bye. Write once more and tell me the news and the novelties of Paris. I am so rusty that I have taken to reading Mormon leaflets; to reach this point one must come to Cannes.

CXCI

Paris, March 24, 1859.

Were you free to-day? To my distress, I supposed I was engaged for the whole day, which prevented me from writing and asking to see you. At the last moment I found myself perfectly free, with all the chagrin that you may imagine.

I am glad if my article on Prescott's work has pleased you. I am not too well satisfied with it myself, because I have not said half of what I wished to say, in accordance with the aphorism of Philip II, that one should speak only well of the dead. The work is really mediocre, and not even interesting. It seems to me that if the author had been less of a Yankee he might have done something better....

CXCII

Paris, April 23, 1859.

The news has made me ill, although I was not at all surprised. Everything now is given over to chance. I suppose your brother is ready to be off. I wish him all the good luck possible. The war,[19] I fancy, will be violent enough at first, but it will not last long. The financial condition of every one concerned will not allow its continuance. While strolling yesterday in the woods, where there were multitudes of birds, it seemed extraordinary that in such weather as this people should be amusing themselves fighting.

I hope you find the Memoirs of Catherine entertaining. There is a flavour of local colour which I find delightful. What a ridiculous creature was a great lady of that period, and how clear as day does it appear from this story that nothing but strangling could have had any effect on a beast like Peter III!

Some one gave me to read a novel by Lady Georgina Fullerton, written in French, with a request that I should note the passages that are imperfect. There is nothing in

the book but Béarnese peasants who eat bread and butter and poached eggs, and who sell peaches at thirty francs a basket. I might as well try to write a Chinese novel. You ought to take this book and correct it for me for the trouble I have taken to lend you so many books which you have never returned. I went to the Exposition yesterday, and it seemed to me shockingly commonplace. The tendency of art is to a low level which amounts to positive flatness.

CXCIII

Paris, Thursday, April 28, 1859.

I received your letter last night. You will stop at ——, I imagine. It would be folly on your part to attempt to go farther. I shall not repeat what you already know of the sympathy I feel for your anxieties. When one is the sister of a soldier, one must become accustomed to the sound of cannon. Since last night, moreover, the signs of peace are brighter than they were several days ago. It appears, even, that there is a probability of the acceptance by Austria of the proffered arbitration by England, and also by France. Nevertheless, many troops are departing, and two regiments have already landed at Genoa, beneath a deluge of flowers. I believe there will be war, but it will not continue long, and I hope that after the first conflict all Europe will interpose between the belligerent parties.

Austria, moreover, for lack of means, would be unable to maintain a long struggle, and it is thought by many persons that the principal object of her rash act is to offer a pretext for pleading bankruptcy. It seems to me that the feeling here is better than it was. The people are bellicose and over-confident, the soldiers in high spirits and full of assurance. The Zouaves departed, after being away from their barracks and sleeping under the stars for a week, saying that in time of war there was no such thing as home comforts. On the day of their departure not a man was missing.

There is in our army a gaiety and ardour absolutely lacking among the Austrians.

Although scarcely optimistic, I have firm confidence in our success. Our former reputation is so well and widely established, that those who fight against us do so with faint hearts. Do not use your imagination in creating tragic possibilities; remember that very few bullets strike, and that the war in which we are to engage will prove tremendously interesting to your brother. Do not intimate to your sister-in-law that the fascinating Italian ladies will throw themselves at the heads of our soldiers. You may rest assured that they will be petted, and will be fed on macaroni stupendi, while the Austrian soldiers are likely to find verdigris sometimes in their soup. If I were your brother's age, a campaign in Italy would give me the agreeable opportunity of observing one of the most splendid spectacles, the awakening of an oppressed people.

Good-bye, dear friend. Let me hear from you promptly, and keep me informed of your plans.

CXCIV

Paris, May 7, 1859.

I have not replied to your letter immediately, because I have been waiting to hear of your new address. I can not believe that you are still at ——; yet I am in hopes that this letter will overtake you somewhere, even in Turin, if you decided to go so far. Now that war is declared, remember that all bullets do not hit their mark, and that there is a great deal of space above and around a man. If you have read Tristram Shandy, you will have learned that every ball carries its message, most of which, luckily, are intended to fall on the ground.

Your brother will return with his epaulets, and will have taken part in the noblest campaign since the Revolution and General Bonaparte. I wish the latter could have been in the field in person; it would give us absolute certainty of success. In considering the pros and the cons, however, the appearances weigh rather in our

favour. If, as I imagine, we are victorious in the beginning, after the custom of the furia francese, it is probable that strenuous efforts will be made by all the European powers to arrest hostilities. Austria, who is already at the limit of her resources and ready to declare bankruptcy, will not need much persuasion, and on our side also, there will probably be moderation. If the war is prolonged, it will become a war of revolution, which will circle the globe, but this seems much more improbable than the other supposition.

If you care to know the news, every one is surprised at the announcement of the names of the new ministers; one tries to discover some reason for them, but without success. The English are becoming tranquil; the Germans quite the contrary. I fear the former far more than the latter. There is still talk of a Russian alliance, but I do not believe it will come to anything. The Russians have nothing to lose in the quarrel, and, no matter what the result, they will always contrive to work to their own advantage. Meanwhile they amuse themselves making Panslavic intrigues among the Austrian subjects, who regard the Emperor Alexander as their Pope.

General Klapka left Paris three weeks ago, to found a bank in Constantinople. Many other Hungarian officers have followed the same road, which seems to me a bad sign. A Hungarian revolution is not an impossibility, but it would, I think, do us more harm than good.

Nothing new from the seat of war. The Austrians appear to be somewhat shamefaced and bashful. It is expected that before the end of the month there will be an encounter. Our soldiers are in high spirits and splendidly enthusiastic. Here, the common people and small tradesmen are belligerent. The great mass of people take a keen interest in the crisis, and are praying for our success. The salons, particularly those of the Orleanists, are absolutely anti-French, and, moreover, stark-mad. They fancy that they will return on the tide, and that their burgraves will resume the thread of their discourses, interrupted in 1848. Poor creatures! they do not realise that

following this, there is nothing but the Republic, anarchy, and division of property.

I should like to know your plans. It seems to me that in Paris you would be at the centre of news, and in a time like this that is essential. For this reason I think I shall not go to Spain; I shall bite my nails to the quick, probably, waiting for despatches.

If you went as far as ——, which I think scarcely probable, I do not doubt that you will soon return. In the midst of all your tribulations, are you thinking of a retreat for several days in some oasis?

You and I, it seems to me, need very much to rest peacefully for a few days, as a preparation for the warlike emotions which we shall be obliged to suffer. Nothing at this time would be easier for you, if you wished to do a kind act. If you will warn me a little in advance, I shall be ready to bring you here, or somewhere else, wherever you will; I can easily manage to get away for a week. Be good enough to give the matter your careful consideration, and let me know your decision; I shall await it with the utmost impatience.

Good-bye, dear friend. Be of good courage. Do not create spectres, and have faith. I kiss you tenderly, as I love you.

CXCV

Paris, May 19, 1859.

It seems to me that in your place I should be in Paris, for it is here that all the news comes first. I run after it all day long. The loan has been negotiated, not for 500,000,000, but for 2,000,000,000 francs, besides several cities whose value I do not know. During the last three weeks, 54,000 volunteers have been enrolled. These figures are authentic. The Austrians are retiring, and the stakes are open on the question of whether they will give battle before abandoning Milan, or whether they will proceed at once to form an unbroken triangle bounded by Mantua, Verona, and Peschiera. Our officers speak in the highest praise of the reception accorded them.

The Germans are howling at us, just as they did in 1813. Some think it is due to their inveterate hatred of us; others, that beneath it all is a definite amount of red-hot liberalism, which to-day takes the Teutonic form.

The Russians are arming vigorously, which causes general food for thought. A certain grand duchess Catherine has just made a visit to the Empress; the significance of this is either auspicious or otherwise. Russia is a powerful ally, who could swallow Germany alive, but who would also procure for us the enmity, and, perhaps, the hostility of England. We have lived for so long a life of sybaritism that we have forgotten the sentiments of our fathers. We must return to their philosophy of life. We danced in Paris while we fought in Germany, and this continued for more than twenty years! In the present age wars can not drag on so long, because revolutions interfere, and because they are too costly. This is why, if I were young, I should be a soldier.

But let us have done with this hideous subject. The misfortune which is to come can not be avoided and the wisest plan is to think of it as little as possible; and it is for this reason that I wish so ardently to take a walk with you, far, far from the scene of war, where we shall think only of the leaves and the blooming flowers, and of other things no less agreeable. Whatever may happen, is not this course the most sensible? If you have read Boccaccio, you will have learned that after all crushing misfortunes one comes to that point. Is it not wiser to begin thus? Great truths and reasonable facts do not find ready access to your brain. I shall never forget your astonishment when I told you there were woods in the suburbs of Paris.

I took dinner at the home of a Chinese, who offered me an opium pipe. I was suffering from suffocation; at the third puff I was cured. A Russian who tried the pipe after me was completely transformed in less than ten minutes; from a very homely man, he became a truly handsome one. This continued fully a quarter of an hour. Is it not singular, the effect produced by a few drops of poppy juice?

Good-bye. Answer me quickly.

CXCVI

Paris, May 28, 1859.

You have a way of announcing bad news that is maddening to me. You take a great deal of pains in order, perhaps, to smooth them over; better to tell me all that you would have done, if ... It is like Roland's horse, who had every good quality, but who was dead. If he had not been dead, he would have run faster than the wind. I do not care at all for that kind of pleasantry, because, in the first place, you are suspicious of me; and, again, because it is exasperating enough to have you so far away, without being obliged to regret the hours I might have spent with you. The time of your return, probably, is not far distant. Meanwhile, keep me informed of your actions and your projects, for I can not imagine that you will not be up to all sorts of mad tricks.

Not a word of news. We are told not to expect any before twelve days or thereabouts. Germany is still in a tremendous state of fermentation, but the indications tend to show that there will be more beer drunk than blood shed. Prussia will resist to the utmost the pressure of the Franzosen-fresser. They say now that they must recover not only Alsace, but also the German provinces of Russia. This last bit of facetiousness seems to indicate that the Teutonic sentiment of enthusiasm is both inconsiderate and wanting in seriousness.

M. Ivan Tourguenieff, who has just arrived in Paris, direct from Moscow, says that we have the sympathy of all Russia, and that the army would be charmed to settle with Austria. The popes are preaching that God intends to punish them for the persecutions which they inflict on the Orthodox Greeks of Slavic race, and a subscription has been opened to send tracts and Slavonic Bibles to the Croatians, to save them from papist heresy. All this is somewhat like a political propaganda of

Panslavism.

At this moment a serious attack against the Derby ministry is being organised. Lord Palmerston and Lord John would become reconciled (a condition most improbable), or, what would seem even more so, would agree on the resignation of the present cabinet. The Radicals promise to lend their support to the movement. The Whigs claim to have 350 votes against 280. Whatever be the outcome of the affair, I think we have very little to gain by a change. Lord Palmerston, although the original promoter of the Italian agitation, will not support it any more than Lord Derby. At the same time, he will be scarcely likely to temporise with Austria, and he will not seek an opportunity to create embarrassing situations for us.

I have received a letter from Leghorn. We made our entry there beneath a flood of flowers and gold powder, which the ladies threw from the windows.

Good-bye. Write to me soon, sensibly, without any diplomacy. I am particularly anxious to know what you intend to do, for this will influence my own plans.

CXCVII

Paris, June 11, 1859.

I do not expect to stir from the city. If your brother is still at the head of a besieging battery, I fancy he will not leave Grenoble until the Austrians are driven back into their famous triangle or rectangle, whichever it is. According to the opinion of the soldiers, this will not occur until after another battle near Lodi, for it appears that there are certain places which have the privilege of attracting the armies. But no one seems yet to understand the meaning of war with the aid of railroads, telegraph lines, and rifled guns. I have lost faith in everything and am consumed with anxiety.

The great politicians, burgraves, and others, people as imbecile as the old military men, announce that all Europe is preparing to interfere, with entreaties and threats, between the Adda and the Mincio. This, indeed, is highly probable; yet I do not see

very well how it is going to mend matters. After the famous phrase, Sin all' Adriatico, how is it possible to abandon Italy half delivered? How can one expect that an emperor of twenty-four, obstinate and under Jesuit influence, beaten, moreover, will confess that he has acted like a fool, and plead for forgiveness? Is it not to be expected that the Italians also, who up to the present have acted with discretion, pending the negotiations, will commit every folly imaginable?

If we have all Europe at our heels, how shall we get out of it without having recourse to our last trump, which is a general revolution, supposing even that such a proposition would meet with approval? It appears that Austria intends to send her last soldier to Italy. Everything looks very gloomy, with little to reassure us, but it is one reason more why we should gather strength and courage for the misfortunes which may befall us....

I am thinking of this warm weather and of the green leaves. This time last year I was in Switzerland, far from imagining all that has happened and all that is still to happen.

Good-bye. You know that I am waiting impatiently for your letters. Do not fail to be precise and clear in explaining your intentions.

CXCVIII

Paris, July 3, 1859.

Why are you such an age sending me any news of yourself? Since it appears evident that you have no intention of leaving ——, I am extremely anxious to go there to see you. We might arrange with Lady —— for an excursion into the mountains of Dauphiny. Think over this proposition. You can not conceive of all the visions I have seen since the return of warm weather—visions sometimes of Abbeville, sometimes of Versailles....

I am considered a prophet here, for having announced three days ago that peace

would be made between the two emperors only at the expense of the neutrals. I confess that the last part of the prophecy seems to me somewhat difficult to realise. It is not, however, impossible, and it would be entirely reasonable for Solon said that the man who does not take part in civil war should be declared a public enemy.

My poor devil of a servant was shot in the leg and received a fracture, at the battle of Solferino. As he wrote me nine days after the battle, and the leg had not been amputated, I hope he will come out of it safely. Everybody at my house is in tears, and I do not know how I am to get anything to eat. I am, besides, far from well. I can not sleep, and have frequent spasms of choking. I am longing for you, to take care of me in your own way. Good-bye.

CXCIX

Paris, Tuesday night, July 20, 1859.

You alone give me resignation to accept peace. It may have been necessary; but we ought not to have commenced so bravely, only to end by getting things into a worse muddle than they were in the beginning. After all, why should we concern ourselves in the liberty of a pack of bricklayers and musicians?

To-night we listened to that which you will read in the Moniteur.[20] It was finely delivered, and its tenor was one of nobility, frankness, and sincerity. The address was full of good sense and truth. The returning officers say that the Italians are a set of brawlers and cowards, and that the Piedmontese alone can fight, but pretend that we interfere with them and that without us they would have been more successful.

The empress asked me, in Spanish, how I liked the address; from which I infer that she did not like it. I replied, in order to reconcile court-flattery and truth, “Muy necessario.” To tell the truth, it pleased me, for it takes a brave man to say, “Do you believe that it has not cost me?” etc.

When I make you a proposition I am always perfectly serious about it. All depends

on you. I am invited to visit in Scotland and England. If you return to Paris, I shall not budge a step. I shall be under an extraordinary obligation to you, and if you had any idea of the pleasure you would give me, I can not believe that you would hesitate. I shall await your decision.

I had a horrible fright this morning. There came to see me a man, dressed in black, with an abundance of white linen and an attractive manner. He had an unusually handsome and noble face. He said he was a lawyer. After taking a seat, he told me that he was inspired by God, whose unworthy instrument he was, and whom he obeyed in all things. He had been accused of attempting to kill his porter with a dagger, but he had only shown him a crucifix. This devil of a man rolled his eyes in the most terrible way, and held me truly spellbound. While speaking, he kept his hand constantly in the pocket of his coat, and I expected to see him draw out a dagger. Unluckily, he had only to select one on my table. I had no weapon but a Turkish pipe, and I was calculating the moment when prudence would indicate that I should break it over his head. At last he drew from his terrible pocket a rosary, and fell at my knees. I preserved a glacial composure, but I was afraid, for how can one protect himself against a madman?

He then left, making many apologies, and thanking me for the interest I had manifested in him. Notwithstanding my terror, inspired by the sight of the animal's brilliant eyes—frightful, I assure you, and penetrating—I made a curious observation. I asked him if he was quite certain that he was inspired, and if he had made any experiments which would give him assurance on this point. I reminded him that Gideon, when called of God, had taken the precaution to require a few trifling miracles as a test.

"Do you understand Russian?" I asked him.

"No."

"Very well. I am going to write two Russian sentences on these slips of paper. One

of these sentences contains an impious thought. From what you have told me, one of these papers will horrify you. Will you make the test?”

He accepted. I wrote the sentences. He kneeled down and prayed; then suddenly he exclaimed:

“My God is unwilling to accept a frivolous experiment. It would have to be something of serious importance.”

Do you not admire the prudence of this poor lunatic, who feared that, unknowingly, the experiment would not turn out favourably?

Good-bye. I await a prompt reply.

CC

Paris, July 21, 1859.

My letter of yesterday crossed with yours. That is to say, it was no letter that you sent me, but a most exasperating curl-paper. I can readily fancy the frivolous life you are leading, now that you are reassured as to your brother’s safety.

I am really ill, from the effects of the intense heat, and from the absolute lack of sleep and appetite. I doubt not that in both respects you have nothing of which to complain. It seems to me at times that I am making rapid strides towards the tomb. This thought is sometimes most persistent, and I should like to be diverted from it. This is one reason why I wish so eagerly to see you. You will receive both of my letters at the same time. I hope you will answer explicitly and literally.

I am reading the Letters of Madame du Deffand, which will amuse you tremendously. It gives a picture of a society which is agreeable, and not altogether frivolous, much less so, indeed, than is generally supposed. That which impresses me as entirely unlike the present time, is, in the first place, the universal desire to be agreeable, and the trouble that each one thinks himself obliged to take; in the second

place, it is the sincerity and fidelity of the affections. These people were much kinder than me, and than you, whom I love no longer.

Good-bye. I am in too bad a humour to write more. For several days I have been again troubled by palpitation, and I am horribly weak and nervous.

CCI

Paris, Saturday, July 30, 1859.

I shall remain in Paris until the 15th of August, after which I shall go, probably, to the Highlands for a few days. But it must be understood, of course, that you shall have the preference over everything else, and any day that you indicate you may expect me without fail. You will notice that I am definite; see if, in your letters, you can not be a little so yourself. It seems that you can no longer exist away from mountains and venerable forests. I imagine that you are browned by the sun and have gained in flesh. No matter how you look, I shall certainly be charmed to see you, and you may be sure of being treated with the most tender affection.

I see from your letters that you are spending your time merrily in promenades and amusements of all kinds. I try to imagine what may be the relative merit of an inhabitant of Pas-de-Calais compared to one from Grenoble. Everything considered, I have leanings toward the former, for the reasons that he is less noisy, and has never had any parliament to persuade him that he has a mind, and that he has a political importance. I knew, however, two intelligent men from Grenoble, but they had spent their life in Paris. I can not conceive of what the women can be like. It is not very long since I abandoned imaginary pictures of the human heart, so that I might cease to interest myself in the mental status of the present age....

I am still ill, and suspect sometimes that I am travelling on the grand railway which leads beyond the tomb. At times the idea is painful to me, at others I find in it the consolation which one feels in a railway train: the absence of responsibility before a

superior and irresistible power....

CCII

Paris, August 12, 1859.

I shall visit you before the end of the month. It is very probable that before going to Spain I shall make a short journey to Germany. I am not even sure that I shall go to Spain at all, for I hear the cholera has broken out there, and that will drive away the friends whom I wish to see. Tell me, therefore, when I may go to see you. When you wish to delay negotiations you are more clever than the Austrian diplomats in finding dilatory excuses. Send me a prompt answer. It is understood, of course, that I shall always accept good reasons, sensible objections, but they must be explained definitely and frankly. You are well aware that whenever it is a question of deciding between the greatest happiness for me and the least inconvenience for you, I shall never hesitate.

I told you—did I not?—that I was reading the Letters of Madame du Deffand,[21] that is, the last ones. They are most interesting, and give one a good idea of the social life of that period. There is, however, a great deal of tiresome repetition. You shall read them, if you wish.

CCIII

Paris, Saturday, September 3, 1859.

I fear very much that we shall meet no more this year on this side of the Acheron, and I am unwilling to leave without bidding you farewell, and telling you something of my peregrinations. I shall start Monday—that is, day after to-morrow—for Tarbes, where I shall remain, probably, until the 12th, when I shall return to Paris for several days, and leave again soon afterwards for Spain. If I believed in

presentiments, I should not cross the Pyrenees; but it is too late to change my mind, and I must make my visit, which will probably be the last, to Madrid. I am too old and too ill to undertake another such journey. If I did not feel in duty bound to go bidding good-bye to some of my best friends, I should not budge from my hole.

While I am not ill, I am so nervous that it is worse than illness. I neither eat nor sleep, and have, besides, the blue devils. My only consolation is the knowledge that you are enjoying yourself, and are rapidly gaining in flesh among your mountains and country-folk.

I have just received from London the Memoirs of the Princess Doschkoff, and am not yet entirely reconciled to the thirty francs which it cost me. I am promised on my return from Tarbes a novel written in Little-Russian dialect, and translated into Russian by M. Tourguenieff. It is said to be a masterpiece, superior to Uncle Tom. There are, besides, the Letters of the Princess of Ursins, which are highly spoken of; but I have a horror of that woman, and do not care for the book. As for interesting books, I know of nothing new; I have dipped into several, in order to beguile the lonely evenings, and I have found none worth the trouble of cutting the leaves.

I met M. About the other day. He is always delightful. He has promised me something. He lives in Saverne, and spends his time in the woods. A month ago he came across an extraordinary-looking animal walking on all-fours. He wore a black coat and patent leathers, but was minus socks. It was the professor of rhetoric at Angoulême, who, having had conjugal differences, went to Baden, where he promptly lost all he had, and returning to France through the woods, had got lost, and for a week had had nothing to eat. About carried, or rather dragged, him to a village, where he was provided with clothing and food, but he died, nevertheless, at the end of a week. It appears that after the animal-man has lived for a certain time in complete solitude, and has reached a certain condition of physical wretchedness, it seems, I repeat, that this noble creature walks on all-fours. About assures me that he

makes a hideous-looking animal.

Write to me in care of the Minister of State at Tarbes.

Good-bye. I hope the autumn opens more benignly for you than it has for me. It is cold and rainy, with much electricity in the air. Take care of yourself, eat and sleep, since you are able to do it.

CCIV

Paris, September 15, 1859.

I should have written to you from Tarbes immediately after receiving your letter, but I was out all the time and in a constant state of excitement. First came a letter from Saint Sauveur, where I was obliged to go to spend a day; and the following day my visit was returned at the home of M. Fould.[22] Consequently, there was a tremendous commotion, and Madame Fould had to contrive a dinner and breakfast, which, in a town like that I have just left, is no small undertaking. Besides, as lodgings had to be provided for eight persons, I, as well as M. Fould's son, was obliged to give up my room and go to the inn. In the midst of all this august upheaval, it would have been impossible to find paper and pens in the house.

I left the 13th, to spend the night at Bordeaux, and arrived here last night, without any other mishap than losing my keys, and among minor misfortunes this is one of the most serious. I am still hoping to come across them again, or else I must call in the locksmith. As for my visit to Spain, I am depending on a friend who is to go with me. He is a member of the Cortes, and his establishment is to open October 1st. We shall go, probably, the 25th; I do not know his final decision. We shall take the Marseilles route, in order to go by sea to Alicante....

This short trip to the Pyrenees has done me good. At Bagnères I took a bath, which had a wonderfully soothing effect on my nerves, quieting them for two days as I have not known for twenty years. The doctor there is an old friend of mine, who

urged me strongly to spend a season at the baths next year. He guarantees that I shall come away a perfectly well man. I am somewhat sceptical, but it is worth trying.

Their majesties were in good health and excellent spirits at Saint Sauveur. I admired the behaviour of the natives, who had the good taste not to follow them about, and wherever they went to leave them the most complete liberty. While there the emperor bought a dog of the ancient Pyrenean race. It is a little larger than a donkey, and is a beautiful animal, which climbs over the rocks like a chamois.

It had been a long time since I had associated with the provincials. At Tarbes they are an endurable class, and are exceedingly obliging. Nevertheless, it passes comprehension how any one can remain with them for a month. I had plenty of ortolans and quail pâtés to eat, which is, perhaps, a matter of more importance. You never mention your health. I suppose it is excellent.

Good-bye.

... I shall write again before leaving.

CCV

Paris, September 20, 1859.

There is certainly an evil genius who interferes in our affairs. I fear that I shall have to go without seeing you. I had planned to leave Paris the 30th, in order to be in Bayonne the 1st. It turns out that in the Madrid diligences and mail-coaches, every place is engaged until October 16th. There is nothing to do, therefore, but to go by sea—that is, to go by steam-boat from Marseilles to Alicante. If some new difficulty does not arise, I shall reach Marseilles the evening of the 28th (my birthday, parenthetically), and the 29th I shall be on the way.

Although you have kept me in a shocking rage this summer with your ifs and your noes, it makes me very miserable, I assure you, to go without bidding you good-bye.

After living such an age without seeing you, to enter again on another term of absence almost as long! Who knows if you will be in Paris when I return? I am starting with all sorts of dismal thoughts; I hope yours are more rose-coloured.

My little visit to Tarbes did me good, and I imagine the air of the suburbs of Madrid will complete my cure. As always happens when I am about to go on a journey, I have an inclination for work, which I should never feel, doubtless, if I had remained at home. I am taking paper with me in order to write in Madrid. Think of me the 29th of this month. I shall in all probability be ill, while you will be in consultation with your dressmaker on the subject of your fall gowns. The Gulf of Lyons is always abominable, and it will probably be worse than ever at this equinoctial season, which was created for my express annoyance.

To turn to the bright side of the prospect, I shall find, on my arrival in Alicante, a railroad which will take me to Madrid in one day, instead of being obliged to spend three days being jolted in the worst of coaches, over the roughest ruts that one can imagine. During my absence I shall probably have some commissions to give you. However, we have plenty of time to speak of them, for I do not like to form plans long in advance, especially with you, who, as you know, sometimes forget them.

You will find Paris entirely empty. I know of a good many persons who are leaving, but, except yourself, I know of none who are returning. The trees are parched, the peaches are all gone, and the grapes are good for nothing. If you have been eating ortolans in Dauphiny, you will not think much of the game which you will find in Paris. I am not guilty of the sin of gluttony and am never hungry any more, and pay no attention to what I have to eat.

I regret Paris; I should have seen you there. That is its only attraction for me. Good-bye. You might write me once more here, until the 27th. I fancy—think of the absurdity of it!—that you may surprise me by arriving the 26th.

CCVI

Madrid, October 21, 1859.

I received with great pleasure your little letter, and especially your amiable souvenir. I reached here exceedingly weary, not from the sea, which was perfectly calm, but on account of the multitude of small worries and annoyances which pile upon one just about to start on a journey. Through an excess of zeal on the part of my friends, your letter preceded me to Madrid. It was lost for several days, and it was only with difficulty that it was at last recovered, safe and sound.

I find all here greatly changed. The ladies, whom I left slender as spindles, have become elephantine, for the climate of Madrid is uncommonly fattening. You may expect to see me expanded by a third. Meanwhile, I eat hardly anything, and do not feel at all well. It is very cold, raining intermittently, and the sun seldom appears. I spend nearly every day at Carabanchel. At night we go to the Opera, which is all that is deplorable.

I came this morning to Madrid to attend an academic meeting, and return to-morrow to the country. Customs seem to have changed notably, and politics and parliamentary procedure are singularly lacking in their former picturesqueness. At this moment there is talk of nothing but war. It is a question of avenging the national honour, and there is a general atmosphere of enthusiasm that reminds one of the crusades. It is thought that England regards the African expedition with disapproval, even that she wishes to prevent it. This but adds fuel to their warlike ardour. The army wishes to lay siege to Gibraltar, after having first taken Tangiers. This state of affairs is no impediment to the speculation carried on on the Bourse. The mania for gain has made immense strides since my last visit—another French importation most disastrous for this country.

I went to a bull-fight Monday, and was not at all interested. I had the misfortune to learn too early the perfect type of beauty, and now, having seen Montès, I can no

longer endure his degenerate successors. Beasts, as well as men, have degenerated. The bulls have become oxen, and the spectacle is a little too suggestive of the slaughter-house. I took my servant along. He has suffered all the emotions of a novice, and for two days has been unable to eat meat.

What I have seen again with all the pleasure of former years is the Museum. As I looked at each familiar picture, it seemed to me that I was meeting an old friend! These, at least, do not change. Next week I expect to go to La Manche, to visit a venerable château belonging to the empress. From there I shall go to Toledo, in search of some old book advertised in a sale to be held there, and I shall then return to Madrid for the end of the month. I am trying to arrange my plans so that I may be in Paris about the 15th of November.

Good-bye.

CCVII

Cannes, January 3, 1860.

I wish you a prosperous and happy New Year. I should be glad if you had the weather that I am enjoying. As I write, all my windows are open, and yet a north wind is blowing, strong enough to make funny little waves on the sea. I thank you for getting the books. Evidently they gave satisfaction, for I received a complimentary letter from Olga. I suppose, in accordance with my wishes, you took special pains in your selection for her. The choice for next year will certainly be embarrassing, for you must have exhausted the catalogue of moral literature.

I am writing to you in a most inconvenient position. Three days ago, while sketching on the sea-shore, I was attacked by lumbago, which came on me like a flash, without so much as saying “By your leave.” Since that moment I have been all askew, although I rub with every sort of herb known to Saint John. The sun proving my best remedy, I roast myself in it all day.

We have stopping here baron Bunsen and his two daughters, both tired of waiting for some one to come along, and with shanks resembling Hercules' club, but one of whom sings very well. The baron is an intelligent man, and knows all that is going on, of which you keep me slightly informed. He told me of the discomfiture of the congress, which scarcely astonishes me.

I have read the brochure of the abbé. It impresses me as more unskilful than violent. He shows his hand so plainly, that he must certainly be considered an awful plague in Rome, where common-sense and shrewdness are not disregarded. The priests there are clever intriguers. Ours have the blustering instincts of the nation, and do all sorts of irrevelant things. The way he shelters himself behind his catacombs made me laugh, and also the martyr airs he assumes concerning the money which was offered him. You will see that he will ask for it in the end.

Here is a pretty story of this country. A farmer in the suburbs of Grasse was found dead in a ravine into which he had fallen, or had been thrown, in the night. Another farmer went to see one of his friends, and accused him of killing the man.

"How and why did you do it?"

"Because he cast a spell over my sheep. When he did this I went to my shepherd, and he gave me three needles, which I put to boil in a little pot, and repeated over the pot some words he taught me. The same night that I put the pot on the fire, the man died."

Do not be astonished that my books were burned at Grasse, on the square in front of the church.

I am going next Tuesday to this place for several days, in spite of its manners. I am promised monuments of all sorts, and some beautiful mountains. I shall bring you some acacia flowers, since you always enjoy their perfume.

Good-bye, dear friend. I am tired to death from having written you three pages, for I can lean on but one elbow, and my back suffers with every movement of the body.

Good-bye again. I thank you once more for the books....

CCVIII

Cannes, January 22, 1860.

I found your letter awaiting me on my return from the country, or rather, the village, where I have spent a week almost under the eternal snows. Although situated on an elevated plateau, I did not suffer from the cold. I have seen rocks, cascades, and precipices of wonderful beauty; a great cavern containing a subterranean lake, the extent of which is not known, and which one may easily suppose to be the dwelling-place of all the gnomes and imps of the Alps; another huge cavern, three kilometres in length, from the interior of which there was a display of fireworks for my benefit. In fine, I have spent my week in admiration of pure nature.

I returned from my trip with horrible pains, and for two days I have been laid up, without being able to eat or sleep. I see decidedly that the machine is out of order, and is no longer worth anything at all. I hope it is quite otherwise with you, and that you have suffered no return of the fever. As you did not mention it, I fancy you are entirely cured of this distress. I am trying to be patient under my sufferings, and succeed well enough during the day; but at night my patience deserts me, and I rage.

You have not told me what you paid for those moral books you bought for the Demoiselles de Lagrénée. It pleases me to believe that you remained within the limit of prudence which you observe in all your transactions. I shall have probably another debt to contract with you soon.

Some one lent me a pamphlet written by my confrère Villemain, which seems to be extraordinarily full of platitudes. When one has undertaken to write a book against the Jesuits, and has boasted of being the champion of liberty of the conscience against the omnipotence of the Church, it is amusing to see how he recants, and what poor arguments he employs. I believe everybody, except the emperor, has gone

mad. He resembles the shepherds of the middle ages, who, by the power of their magic flute, compelled the wolves to dance. I have received a letter from Paris, with the news that the Academy Française, which, a few years ago, was Voltairian, wishes to elect the abbé Lacordaire, as a protest against the indignities to which the Pope is subjected. However, ‘tis all the same to me. So long as I am not compelled to listen to their sermons, they may elect every member of the Sacred College to the Academy.

Good-bye.

CCIX

Cannes, February 4, 1860.

You cause me great perplexity of mind concerning Sainte Eulalie, whom I had forgotten entirely. I am sure it is either the 11th or 12th. I accept with much gratitude your kind offer, but I know very little about those Byzantine affairs, and fear that what you suggest is far too modern a trinket for my cousin. We must remember that she seldom goes anywhere, and dresses in harmony with her age and in an eminently respectable fashion. Perhaps you are thinking of some buckles, or oxidized silver clasps, such as come from the Caucasus and elsewhere.

Anyway, you have full liberty, bearing in mind the following instructions: 1st, That your selection must not be too conspicuous, too modern, or too frivolous; 2d, that it does not cost much more than a hundred francs, and that it has the appearance of being worth much more; 3d, and, finally, that it does not give too much trouble. I am sure you will attend to this commission with your usual promptness and good judgment, and I thank you most heartily in advance.

This reminds me of something else, and that is, that I have never sent you my good wishes on your fête-day. When does it come? and, in the first place, what sort of a name have you? It seems to me it is a Lutheran or an heretical name. Is your patron

saint the Evangelist, or the Baptist? And when is his fête-day? You may imagine that I wish to give you a surprise—a difficult thing to do.

I am at this moment lying on my couch in great distress. When I sit up it seems as if my chest were being scorched with hot iron. Doctor Maure advises me to apply some soothing lotion; but it does not in the least ease the pain.

I am expecting two of my friends who are coming to spend a week with me, and I am anxious lest the weather should be bad. Just now the sun shines magnificently, but this is an exceptional year, and one can not count on anything. The wind yesterday blew with such an icy blast that it seemed to come from Siberia.

Like you, I find politics very entertaining. To see certain people rage makes my heart rejoice. Good-bye. Next month I shall see you again. Meanwhile, I am ill, melancholy, and bored. My eyesight is failing, and I could no longer sketch, even if my health would permit it. How sad it is to grow old! Good-bye.

CCX

Cannes, February 21, 1860.

Two of my friends have been visiting me, and my duties of guide, which have dragged me into several long excursions, have left me no leisure to reply to you promptly. Besides, it was only day before yesterday that I heard from my cousin about the Byzantine clasps. I send you her literal opinion. She thinks they are charming, too charming for her, and much too young. Nevertheless, for fear that her criticism has been too severe, she adds that she has just ordered a new gown expressly to wear with the clasps. If you are not satisfied with your success, you are difficult to please.

I am still about the same—that is, very far from well. On the one hand, a cold; on the other, a pain in the heart, of rheumatic variety, which is extremely uncomfortable and strange, for it does not prevent me from walking, and causes me suffering only

when I sit down. This is what I endure when I draw after sunset on the sea-shore.

The weather just now is not fine. The sun shines, but the air is chilly, and the mornings and evenings are sometimes most unpleasant, on account of the wind blowing from the Alps. Never before have I seen them so covered with snow, from base to summit. Snow fell this morning on the Estérel mountain, and a few flakes even on the square in front of my windows. This is something unheard of in Cannes, which even the oldest inhabitants can not remember having seen before. My only consolation is the thought that you in the north are much worse off. The newspapers make my teeth chatter with their accounts of ten degrees below zero, three feet of snow in Lyons, in Valence, and so forth. Nevertheless, I must leave my oasis and go to shiver in Paris.

I am thinking of starting next week, and as I am obliged to stop on the way to examine some monuments, I shall not reach Paris in time for the Imperial Assembly, which no doubt will lose much of its interest on account of my absence. So far as I can now tell, I shall arrive the 3d or 4th of March, and shall hope to find you in good health. I shall welcome you once more with great joy, so you may expect it.

Write to me at Marseilles, to be called for. It is probable that I shall go to Nice for a day or two, to form an opinion of an annexation, and then return to pack my trunks. You have not sent me your account, which I fear is a formidable one. Whatever the material of the clasps, apparently they are not cheap. I hope, however, to bring back money enough to pay the bill without the necessity of selling my books.

By the way, have you not my copy of the Voyage en Asie, by M. de Gobineau? I looked for it here in vain the other day. If you have it, keep it for me.

I took my friends, day before yesterday, to the pont de Gardonne. It is a natural bridge uniting some of the rocks on a point of the Estérel. Through a small doorway you enter a grotto, from which you emerge by another door which opens directly on the sea. On this day the sea was wild and angry, and the grotto seemed to be a

boiling caldron. The sailors had not dared to venture within, and we had to content ourselves with going around the abyss. It was wonderfully beautiful with its color and movement.

Good-bye. Keep well, and do not go out too much at night.

CCXI

Paris, Sunday night, March 12, 1860.

... I find your Paris atmosphere extremely heavy, and I have a continual headache. I have as yet seen no one, and dare not go out at night. It seems to me extraordinary to make calls at ten o'clock at night.

No word about the book of my friend, M. de Gobineau; certainly it must hang heavy on your conscience. Suggest a novel for me to read; I am in deep need of one. While in Cannes I read a novel by Bulwer, What will He do with It? which seemed to me senile to the last degree. At the same time, it contains several pretty situations and an excellent sermon. As for the hero and heroine, they surpass in silliness all that is permissible by custom.

A book which has amused me uncommonly is the work of M. de Bunsen on the origin of Christianity, and about everything else in the universe, to speak more exactly. It is called, however, Christianity and Mankind, and is only seven volumes of from seven to eight hundred pages each. M. de Bunsen calls himself an orthodox Christian; but at the same time he treats the Old and New Testaments with contempt....

I learned yesterday, that at one of the most recent masked balls a woman had the courage to appear in a costume of 1806 without any crinoline, and produced a tremendous sensation.

CCXII

Paris, March 4, 1860.

We had yesterday the first suggestion of the return of spring. It did me a great deal of good, and I felt entirely made over. It seemed as if I were breathing the air of Cannes. To-day it is gray and gloomy. I need you very much, to take life patiently. Day by day it becomes more burdensome. People are so terribly stupid. The most inexplicable thing is the general ignorance one finds in this century of enlightenment, as it calls itself modestly. No one any longer knows a word of history.

You will have read Dupin's address, which amused me hugely....

I have never succeeded in finding Gobineau, and I know very well why; you also. I made myself a few presents two days ago, at Poitiers'. I bought several beautiful old books, and some others, modern ones, in excellent bindings. Have you read the Memoirs of Holland attributed to Madame de la Fayette? They were very entertaining. I will lend them to you, on good security, when you return. The binding is done by Bauzonnet.

I have had made a black Venetian domino, with a lace biretta, or something of the kind, after the sketch I had drawn in Venice, and which I showed you. Since my return, in this untoward season, I am taking an unusual interest in the weather....

CCXIII

Saturday, April 14, 1860.

... Since Easter I have been leading a very dissipated life. I have been to two balls, and have dined out every night. The ball where I was to appear for the first time in my domino with a Venetian biretta is postponed until the 24th, because the accomplices of Ortega, among whom are two relatives of the empress, are now on

trial in Spain. If they are shot, which is quite in accord with the custom of the country, I believe the ball will be entirely abandoned, and I shall be out for my domino. I have met Ortega frequently, and he is, by the way, a charming fellow, and the darling of the fine ladies of Madrid. I have grave fears that he will not be acquitted. However, they say that where a handsome young fellow is concerned there is always some means of release....

CCXIV

Tuesday night, May 1, 1860.

... The ball at Alba's was magnificent. The costumes were unusually beautiful, many of the women uncommonly pretty, and the audacity of the age conspicuously evident. First, the ladies were uncovered in a most outrageous fashion, both above and below. I saw in the waltz a great number of charming feet and not a few garters. Second, crinoline is on the decline. You may take my word that in two years gowns will be worn short, and those blessed with natural advantages may be distinguished from those who must resort to artificial charms. There were an incredible number of English present. The daughter of Lord ——, a charming girl, came as a dryad, nymph, or something mythological, in a gown which would have revealed her entire bosom if it had not been covered by tights. Her dress seemed to me almost as low as that of her mother, whose entire chest was perfectly visible. The ballet of the Elements was composed of sixteen women, all extremely pretty, wearing short skirts, and covered with diamonds.

The naiads were powdered with silver, which fell over their shoulders like drops of water. The Salamanders were sprinkled with gold powder. There was a Mademoiselle Errazu, who was marvellously beautiful. The Princess Mathilde came as a Nubian woman, painted a dark brown color, and with a costume altogether too realistic.

At the height of the ball a domino kissed Madame de S——, who shrieked aloud. The dining-room, with its gallery, the servants dressed as sixteenth century pages, and the brilliant lights, all combined to remind one of Belshazzar's feast, in Martin's painting.

The emperor changed his domino, but any one could have recognised him a league away. The empress wore a white burnoose and a black mask which did not in the least disguise her.

There were many dominoes, which were for the most part immensely ugly. The duke de S—— strutted about like a tree, and the imitation was really excellent. Considering the story told of his wife, the disguise was a little too conspicuous. If you have not heard the story, here it is, in a word. His wife, who was a demoiselle (whose mother, by the way, was to have been my godmother, so I have heard), went to Bapst and bought a tiara costing sixty thousand francs, saying that she would return it the following day if she decided not to take it. She returned nothing, neither money nor tiara. Bapst demanded his diamonds, and was told that they had departed for Portugal, and, to make the story short, they were found finally at the Mont-de-Piété, where the duchesse de —— reclaimed them for fifteen thousand francs. This is highly commendatory of the times and of women!

Another scandal. At M. d'Aligre's ball a woman was pinched black and blue by a husband who was not less muddled in his head than M. de ——, but who was more violent. The woman screamed and fainted. A general scene followed! They did not throw the jealous man out of the window, which would have been the only sensible thing to do. Good-bye.

CCXV

Saturday, May 12, 1860.

... I congratulate you on having beautiful weather and sunshine. Here it rains

incessantly, and when it is not raining, the heat is full of humidity. There is a storm in the air, and nervous people like myself are as comfortable as violin cords near the fire. To complete my miseries, I am obliged to stay here until the end of the season, which seems to be far from its close. Now you know all about my plans, and I should like to have some information about yours, of which I have not even a suspicion.

An amusing thing happened not long ago. M. Boitelle, prefect of police, supposed to be the best-informed man in Paris, learned through the report of his trusty agents that the Minister of State, M. Fould, had spent the night in the house which he had built in the faubourg Saint Honoré. Very early next morning he called to see the minister, shook hands with him warmly, and expressed his interest in what had just happened. M. Fould explained that the matter concerned one of his sons, who was carrying on foolishly in England. The blunder continued for some time, until the prefect of police inquired the name of his successor; when M. Fould explained that he had given a house-warming in his new house, and had not cared to take the trouble to return to the ministerial residence for the night.

The Carlists here are in despair at Montemolin's dulness. There is no doubt that he expected Ortega, before his execution, to be overcome by fear, and to renounce his claims. It would have been nobler on his part to have hastened his work, so that no one should be shot. There is a brother living in England who has not abdicated, and who has children. He is called ——, and married a daughter of the duke de ——. He stole his wife's diamonds, and with the proceeds supports a chambermaid of the aforesaid. This proves him a man of refined taste.

It seems that Lamoricière is already a little tired of all the worries to which he is subjected in papal territory. Cardinal Antonelli said not long ago to a foreign minister that he had never met a more distinguished man than Lamoricière. "I spoke to him of the present situation, and he suggested at once five or six remedies for the

difficulty; he is so eloquent that, in an hour's conversation, he expressed four different opinions on the same question, all of which were so reasonable that I should have found it embarrassing to make a choice."

Every one here is deeply interested in Garibaldi's expedition, and apprehension is felt that it will result in a general complication. M. de Cavour would not, I fancy, be greatly grieved if he should "kick the bucket" in Sicily; but in case he succeeds, he will become ten times more dangerous than at present.

You will be astonished, probably, to learn that I am working and writing as in my good days. When I see you, I shall tell you through what singular circumstance I have shaken off my traditional idleness. It is too long a story to write, but it has nothing to do with works for your perusal. You must read Granier de Cassagnac's book on the Girondins. It contains the most curious passages and the most horrible descriptions of revolutionary massacres and atrocities, all written with intense passion and fervour.

I received a call a few days ago from M. Feydeau, a very handsome fellow, but whose vanity seems to me to be too outspoken. He is going to Spain to complete the work roughly sketched out by Cervantes and Lesage. He has in view still about thirty novels, the scenes of which are laid in thirty different countries; this is why he travels.

Good-bye. I think of you constantly in spite of all your faults....

CCXVI

Château de Fontainebleau, June 12, 1860.

Why have you not written to me? For many reasons you should have done so. I have been held here all this week. I shall hope certainly to find you in Paris on my return, for, if the weather has used you as ill as it has us, you will have postponed, doubtless, your visit to the country. Nevertheless, between the showers we have

made several pleasant excursions to the woods; everything is of a uniform spinach-green colour, and when the sun does not shine, it is not bad. There are rocks and heaths which would have some attraction for me if you and I were to walk there together chatting of many things, as we know how to do. But we travel in a long line of waggonettes, in which people are not always paired off for mutual amusement.

On the other hand, in no republic on earth could one enjoy more freedom, nor could host and hostess be more kind to their guests. At the same time, the days have twenty-four hours, four of which at least must be spent in tight pantaloons, which seems a little hard in such muddy, disagreeable weather.

I had a horrible cold when I first came, but, since “God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb,” my other pains ceased as soon as I began to cough.

I shall not admit for an instant that you will not wait for me. It would be absurd to go to the sea-shore before the weather becomes settled, and, above all, warm. Advise your friends to be patient. I have to do the same thing, and, among others, I say this a hundred times to a person who will listen to nothing.... Good-bye....

CCXVII

Paris, Sunday night, July 2, 1860.

I received your letter this morning. The rough sea of which you speak diminishes somewhat my regret for remaining in Paris. It is incredible, however, that this deuced weather should last forever, notwithstanding the sunspots mentioned in the newspapers.

Our session drags out indefinitely, which makes me furious. I have tried to find an excuse to escape, but owing to my supreme importance, which holds me tied here, it is extremely difficult to accomplish. This does not mean that I am not ready at any moment to travel a hundred leagues to dine with you, if I should receive such an invitation, and if some one cared to wait for me. This is a humble suggestion which I

take the liberty to make you.

By leaving town so early you will lose a wonderful spectacle, that of observing me pass in fiocchi, and black gloves, down the rue de Rivoli, in the midst of the admiring populace.[23] I do not know how many vacancies this ceremonial will cause in our ranks, but I have grave fears that it will prove advantageous to the undertakers. Thirty thousand persons came yesterday to sprinkle themselves with holy water, and more came to-day; a good demonstration of the simplicity of this magnanimous nation! It is more stupid, even, than is supposed, which is saying a great deal.

The Orleanists pretend that M. Brénier was murdered by an angry husband, which, considering the amplitude of his abdomen, seems to me scarcely probable. It is more reasonable to suppose that the lazzaroni took this means of avenging their ill-used king. The Liberals, in retaliation, have assassinated the police commissioners, which, of course, has been of great advantage to M. Brénier.

The Italians of the north have none of the emotionalism of the Neapolitans. They have common-sense and theological minds, as Stendhal said, while the Neapolitans are only ill-trained, twelve-year-old children. We shall see, probably, some fine examples of this in the fall, for it looks as if I should go there, instead of to Africa.

I am waiting to hear that your salon is full of country curiosities, and that you yourself are wearing a flowered morning-gown and Turkish slippers. You will think longingly of the muddy streets of Paris. However, I do not care to refer again to your expedition. Many things may occur to cause you to change your plans. You are acquainted with mine. I shall remain at the British Museum until the end of July, after which I shall spend a few days at Bath, and then go to Scotland, where I shall stay the month of September awaiting an invitation from you. Good-bye.

CCXVIII

Paris, Thursday, July 12, 1860.

Fine weather has at last come to stay. From all indications, I shall leave the beginning of next week. If you have any idea of visiting Lady —— at the sea-shore early in August, I hope that you will let me know of it. Rural England must be very lovely, I fancy, just at this time, and you would enjoy spending a few days with your friend, doing nothing at all, watching the sea and drinking tea beside the open windows. I am still feeling ill. Yesterday especially, I was very uncomfortable. I have my new friend, however, to entertain me. It is an owl I am raising, and which has taken a fancy to me. After dinner I open his cage door and he flies about in my room. For want of small birds, he has learned to catch flies very skilfully. His physiognomy is extremely comical, and reminds me of self-important people, with his ultra-serious manner and expression.

The funeral was a terrible ordeal. It took us an hour and three-quarters to go from the Palais-Royal to the Invalides. Then there was mass, followed by an oration by the Abbé Cœur, who lauded the principles of ‘89, saying at the same time that our soldiers were ready to sacrifice their lives in the defence of the pope. He went so far as to say that the first Napoleon did not love war, and was always forced into it for self-defence. The most imposing part of the ceremony was a De Profundis, sung in the vaults that you know, and which came to us through a drapery of black crêpe separating us from the tomb. It seems to me that if I were a musician I should profit by the admirable effect produced on tone quality by the use of crêpe, for a grand spectacular opera.

No one is left in Paris. We go at night to the Champs-Élysées to hear Musard’s music, and to see the fine ladies and the lorettes, all there together and difficult to distinguish. We go also to the circus to see the trained dogs roll a ball on an inclined plane, jumping up after it. This age is losing all sort of taste for intellectual amusements.

Have you read the book I lent you, and was it interesting? The History of Madame de la Guette pleased me more than The Holland Jewess, in which there were things that would have shocked you.

I have been asked to suggest an English novel for a sick man who can read nothing else. Perhaps you may be able to tell me of one. I have just completed a lengthy report on the Library of Paris. It is this, I imagine, that has made me so ill. I waste my time bothering with things in which I am not interested, and business which belongs to others is piled on my shoulders. I have at times wished to write a novel before my death, but sometimes my courage fails me, and again, when I am in the mood, some stupid administrative affairs are given me to attend to. I shall write to you before leaving.... Good-bye....

CCXIX

London, British Museum, July 20, 1860.

It is certainly very kind of you not to have given me an intimation of life, or a word of farewell before my departure. I shall not forgive you until the next time we meet. I was delayed by all sorts of hindrances, and not until yesterday morning was I able to leave, and in diabolical weather. However, I behaved with heroism during the passage, and was almost the only passenger who did not deliver up his soul to the angry waves.

I found the weather here eclipses that of Paris. It always takes me some time to become accustomed to the singular light in London. It has the appearance of passing through a brown gauze. This light, and the absence of curtains at the windows, will annoy me for several days. On the other hand, I am feasted with every sort of good thing, and dined and breakfasted like an ogre, which has not happened in a long, long time. My sole regret is that my little owl is not with me, for it plays about the floor at night like the cat you used to know. ‘Tis a pretty creature, I assure you, and

has an intelligence out of all proportion to her size, for she is no longer than my hand.

It is distinctly important for me to know definitely, before the end of July, what time you intend to come to Paris, how long you expect to remain, and when you propose to go to Algiers. I must know your plans before forming my own. I need not tell you that you will be the determining motive for me, whether to leave the Highlands earlier, or even whether to go there at all. Do not imagine, and do not even pretend to imagine, that this would be a sacrifice. I should return to-morrow, if you were to send me word that you were in Paris. You may write to me here until the 30th.

Good-bye. I am very cross, indeed, with you.

CCXX

Bath, Wednesday night, August 9, 1860.

I bought you a blue veil before leaving London. I intended to write to you, but had so many commissions to do for my minister, that it would have been on your part an act of charity to come to help me attend to them. I have selected gowns, hats, and ribbons, all of the most fantastic styles I could find. I fear the dogs on the streets of Paris will run after the unfortunate creatures who wear these beautiful objects of my choice.

I am sorry to see you so opposed to a trip to England while I am here. The idea does not strike you. You may be sure that there are no heaths and mountains I should not abandon with delight to see you before your departure. Let us have at least one happy memory ere we leave each other for so long.

The life I have led for a week would make a thorough-bred horse short-winded, running around all day, shopping and visiting; dining out at night with the nabobs, where I always found the same dishes and almost the same faces. I scarcely knew the names of my hosts, and when they are in white cravats and evening clothes, all

Englishmen resemble one another.

We are cordially detested here, and feared even more. Nothing is more amusing than their mistrust of us, which they do not take the trouble to conceal. The volunteers are more stupid even than our National Guard in 1830, because everything in this country is taken with a seriousness found nowhere else. I know a gallant man seventy-five who exercises every day in Zouave costume.

The Ministry is weak and does not know what it wants, and the opposition is no better off; but all, great and small, agree in their belief that we desire to take all we can get. At the same time, every one believes that war will be impossible so long as there is no question of annexing the three kingdoms. I was not specially pleased with the letter of the emperor to M. de Persigny. It would have been better, it seems to me, to say nothing at all, or else to have said merely what I repeat every day, that they are fools.

I advise you to write to me immediately, for I am full of melancholy, and in need of consolation. I shall return to London next Monday. Write to me: 18 Arlington Street, care of Mr. Ellice. I shall remain but a short time, and shall go with him probably to Glenquoich.

This city is very pretty; there is little smoke, and one sees in every direction hills covered with grass and trees. It is not too cold. The friends with whom I am stopping are people of intelligence, and the baths are doing me good. Good-bye....

CCXXI

London, August 8, 1860.

I received your letter just as I was leaving for Glenquoich. It is unnecessary to tell you that it gave me no pleasure; but I shall not reproach you. At this moment I am preoccupied with something else, and that is, to find some means of bidding you farewell. You also must try to manage it so as to gain a little time; and I have no

doubt that if we both set our wits to work we shall succeed in meeting and spending a few hours together.

The more I reflect on your expedition to Algeria the more foolish it seems to me. It is evident that with affairs in the Orient complicated as they are, and becoming every moment still more complicated, your brother may be obliged to leave at a moment's notice, and you would find it embarrassing to remain alone among your Arabs. It seems to me highly probable that the landing of the French troops in Syria will be followed by a general outbreak of robberies and massacres throughout the Orient. It is equally reasonable to suppose that the Turkish provinces of Greece—that is, Thessaly, Macedonia, and Christian Albania—will make some movement in retaliation. Everything in the Orient will be on fire this winter. To go to Algiers at such a time, I repeat, seems to me the height of folly. Still, you might find during this journey some special attraction! Yet you seem now to hesitate about going....

The weather is atrocious. The sun shone yesterday for the first time since I arrived in England, but this morning, on awakening, I heard the beating of the rain upon my window. The barometer indicates a heavy rain, and I can not see a hundred feet away. With all this wind and rain and cold, I do not understand what will become of the wheat. The Times says four feet of snow has fallen at Inverness, where I am to spend next Monday night. Do you suppose there will be coal enough and tartans heavy enough to remedy all these miseries?

In spite of the gloomy, cold weather in Bath and its suburbs, I liked the country immensely. I saw hills standing out in clear outlines against the sky, magnificent trees, and a richness of verdure unequalled elsewhere, unless it is in the valleys of Switzerland. But all this is not to be compared with Saint-Cloud or Versailles in fine weather.

Good-bye, dear friend. I am very sad, and I should like to be angry, but I have no

energy, so I shall not accuse you....

I send my Glenquoich address, but I shall not be there for several days: In care of the Right Honourable E. Ellice, Glenquoich, Fort Augustus.

CCXXII

Glenquoich, August 22, 1860.

I am without any news of you....

It is no easy matter to leave this place. Besides the people who detain you, there are certain other difficulties, such as special days for the steam-boats, which carry you over the lakes to the railroad stations. The weather here is almost always abominable, but it does not keep people indoors. They are so accustomed to rain, that if it is not pouring cats and dogs they think they must take a walk. The paths are sometimes torrents; you can not see the mountains a hundred feet away, but you always return, saying, “Beautiful walk!”

The worst thing in this country is a small fly called a midge, which is extremely poisonous. They are very partial to my blood, and devour my face and hands. Stopping here also are two young girls, one a blonde and the other auburn-haired, both with skins like satin, and yet the horrible midges prefer to attack me! Our principal amusement is fishing, which has this advantage, that the midges fear the water and do not venture upon the lake.

There are fourteen persons here. During the day each one goes his own way, and at night, after dinner, we each take a book or write letters. To talk, and to try to entertain one another, are things unknown to the English.

I should be glad to know something of your plans. Write to me in London as soon as you receive this letter. Tell me when you expect to leave, and whether I shall be able to bid you good-bye. I take it for granted that you will do your best that we may

spend a few hours together before your long journey.

The Highland air is doing me good. It seems to me that my breathing is better than it was before I came. I can not reconcile myself to eating, which is the principal amusement in this rainy, foggy weather. Our hunters kill mountain deer, and sometimes grouse, for us, and every day we have choice birds. I am pining for a thin soup, or to dine at home alone, or at Saint Chéron with you; the last wish will not be realised, I fear.

I forget whether I told you that I have a blue veil for you. I have had the courage not to wear it, in order to bring it to you fresh; and if you knew what mountains the midges raise on my face, you would appreciate the strength of mind of which I have given signal proof. Good-bye.

CCXXIII

Paris, September 14, 1860.

I received your letter, dear friend, and confess that I think you might have remained one day less at Lestaque and spent it in Paris....

For nearly two weeks Panizzi has been here with me. I am acting as his guide, and showing him everything worth seeing, from the cedar unto the hyssop. There is not a living creature in Paris, which pleases me mightily; however, the evenings begin to lengthen.

I should like to tell you something of the huge muddle that has just begun, but I know and understand nothing about it. My guest believes the pope and the Austrians will be driven out. So far as the first is concerned, the chances look very gloomy; as for the Austrians, if Garibaldi interferes with them I fear he will repent of it. Some one in Naples wrote me of a philosophical remark of the king, who was receiving every five minutes the resignation of a general or an admiral: “To-day there are too many Italians to fight against Garibaldi; in a month there will be too many Royalists

to fight against the Austrians."

It is impossible to picture the rage of the Carlists and the Orleanists. A very sensible Italian tells me that M. de Cavour entered the Papal States with the Sardinian army because Mazzini was preparing to organise a revolution there. To my mind, this has a semblance of probability.

You have seen, perhaps, the fête at Marseilles. It was, I am told, unusually beautiful, and the enthusiasm was both circumspect and tumultuous. I hear also that, notwithstanding an immense multitude of people excited to the highest degree, and of hot Southern temperament, perfect order prevailed. To find something to eat seemed to be the greatest problem, and somewhere to sleep almost as difficult. The spectacle of the Marseillais in their ordinary condition always amuses me; to see them in a state of enthusiasm must be still more entertaining. On this account, and for another reason which you may guess, I regret not having been in Marseilles or in the neighbourhood.

Panizzi, who is an ardent traveller, is thinking of going to Turin for a week, and urges me to accompany him. It is a great temptation, but I dare not yield. It seems to me a delicate matter to make a visit to M. de Cavour, and, perhaps, Garibaldi, and in the uncertainty I shall decide wisely to decline.

I shall give you a great many commissions to do for me at Algiers, when you have settled down there. You know the sort of things that suit me, and whenever you come across any such things do not lose the chance of a bargain. I suggest, especially, that you find me a characteristic dressing-gown. I should like, also, for you to make the acquaintance of the women of the country, and tell me frankly all you have seen and heard.

My owlet is still very friendly, but, to my sorrow, most untidy. When put in her cage, she becomes despondent, but she abuses her liberty. I do not know what to do about it. She does not wish to escape and fly away.

I am going with Panizzi to-morrow to Disdér's to have my photograph taken. I will send you one of my pictures. They tried it at Glenquoich, but there is so little light in that land that the result was nothing but a shadowy something surmounted by a well-outlined cap. I am not specially pleased with your photograph.

Good-bye, dear friend. For a week we have had lovely weather, but chilly. From noon, however, until four o'clock the sun shows his face, which is such a rare spectacle this year that we consider ourselves fortunate.

Good-bye. Keep well, take care of yourself, and think sometimes of me.

CCXXIV

September 17, 1860.

I write at once to tell you that I have just received your letter of the 13th of this month. I notice that you complain of not receiving any letters from me, and this I do not understand at all. There is something mysterious in the matter, which I am unable to explain.

I congratulate you on having had a successful voyage. Mine was not so good, because it was shorter, I suppose, but this applies only to the letters from Marseilles. Everybody lost his head, I fancy, during the emperor's visit, and service of all kind was suspended. A Marseilles merchant, to whom I wrote for a very pressing order, replied yesterday, that on account of the fêtes he had not had time to attend to my consignment. No one, apparently, went to his business house.

For several days the weather has been delightful. I should have taken advantage of it, probably, to say farewell to the country, but for the fact that my friend Panizzi has been with me. I packed him off yesterday to Turin, where he will remain only a few days. He will return by the end of the week.

Since my visit to Scotland I have been in better health, only I sleep badly. I envy

you the spectacle you will see—the Arabian excursion which will have a certain element of strangeness. You must give me a minute description of it.

Good-bye, dear friend. Will you kindly write to me as soon as you have received my letter? Tell me what you think of those lost or retarded letters, and give me your orders in regard to the small package I have to send you. I have refrained from trying to find a way of sending it, because I felt confident that you would suggest one. Good-bye. Take good care of yourself....

CCXXV

Paris, October 7, 1860.

Dear Friend: Your letters have arrived finally, and reassure me concerning the fate of mine. You are right to accuse the Marseillais of losing their heads during the emperor's visit. They lost also two small casks of Spanish wine which had been sent to me, and which have remained in the warehouse, goodness knows how long! The Marseillais wine-merchant who was to receive them wrote me naïvely that he had been too busily engaged with the celebration to think of my wine, and that he could not attend to it until he had taken a little rest.

I understand perfectly the fascination and interest with which you are inspired by a first view of oriental life. You say very truly that at every step you discover some things that are comical and others that are admirable. There is, indeed, something comical always in the Orientals, as there is in certain strange and pompous animals in the Jardin des Plantes. Descamps has seized exactly this grotesqueness of the oriental, but he has failed to catch the noble and beautiful side of their character.

I thank you very much for your descriptions, only they are rather incomplete. You have enjoyed the rare privilege of seeing Mussulman women, and you do not tell me that which I should like to know. Do they make in Algeria, as in Turkey, a generous exhibition of their charms? I remember to have seen the bust of the present Sultan's

mother as plainly as I have seen your face. I should like to know, also, the character of the dances which you saw, if they were modest, and, if not, explain why not.

If you will suggest a way of sending the package I have for you, I will despatch it at once; if you have not received it by the time you return to Marseilles I will send it off by the first steam-boat to leave. I should be glad if you would buy something for my use. You know what I like, and I leave the choice, therefore, to your powers of divination.

I have been to Saintonge for a few days, and returned only yesterday. The weather was uninterruptedly abominable, and I brought back an extinguished voice and a frightful cold. I found the people there profoundly distressed, and weeping their eyes out over the misfortunes of the Holy Father and General Lamoricière. General Changarnier has given a description of his colleague's campaign, in which, I am told, after praising him to the skies, he shows him to have been guilty of huge blunders. In my opinion the only one of the martyr heroes who is not ridiculous is Pimodan, who died like a brave soldier. Those who pose as martyrs because they were taken prisoner are rascals on whom I waste no pity. The present times, moreover, are perfectly absurd, and it does me good to read my newspaper every morning to learn of some new catastrophe, to read the remarks of Cavour or the encyclicals. I see that Walker was shot in America, which caused me some surprise, for his case is similar to that of Garibaldi, whom we all admire.

Did you think my photograph a good resemblance? I enclose a better one, or, at least, one with a less lugubrious expression. I should be glad to give you some news of Paris, but no one is here. I envy you for being in the sunshine.

If you have any commissions for me, I shall be in Paris still a month or more. You do not mention the cooking of the country. Do you have anything good to eat? If so, get the recipe.

Good-bye, dear friend.

CCXXVI

Paris, October 16, 1860.

Dear Friend: I received yours of the 5th by slow transportation. I imagine there was one of those wind-storms of which the newspaper tells every morning. The Mediterranean is playing tricks, it seems, this year. I envy you the sunshine and warmth which you enjoy. Here there is constant rain or fog; sometimes it is warm and humid, more frequently cold and humid, but always as disagreeable as possible.

Paris is still completely empty of people. I spend my evenings reading, and sometimes sleeping. Night before last, wishing to hear some music, I went to the Italian opera. They gave The Barber of Seville. This music, which is the gayest ever written, was sung by people who acted as if they were returning from a funeral. Mademoiselle Alboni, who was Rosine, sang admirably, with the notes of a bird. Gardoni sang like a gentleman who was afraid of being mistaken for an actor. If I had been Rossini, it seems to me I should have shaken them all. The Basile was the only one (I can not remember his name) who sang as if he had any appreciation of the words.

You have promised to give me a minute and circumstantial description of quantities of interesting things which I am unable to see. Thanks to the privileges of your sex, you have access to the harems and may converse with the women. I should like to know how they are dressed, what they do, what they say, what they think of you. You have mentioned, also, the dances. I fancy they are immensely more interesting than those one sees in Paris ball-rooms, but you will be obliged to describe them with the utmost exactness. Do you understand the significance of what you see? You are aware that everything which bears on the history of mankind is full of interest to me. Why will you not put on paper all you see and hear?

I do not know whether we are to go to Compiègne this year. They tell me the empress, whom I have not seen, is still in the depths of woe. She sent me a charming

photograph of the duchess of Alba, taken more than twenty-four hours after her death. She appears to be sleeping tranquilly. Her death was very peaceful. She laughed at the Valencian dialect of her waiting-women five minutes before she died. I have heard no direct news from Madame de Montijo since her departure, but I have grave fears that the poor woman will not recover from this blow.

I am deep in a great academic intrigue. It has nothing to do with the French Academy, but with the Academy of Fine Arts. A friend of mine is a preferred candidate, but his Majesty has compelled him to decline, to give place to M. Haussmann, the prefect. The Academy is indignant, and wishes to nominate my friend, notwithstanding his withdrawal. I am giving it all the encouragement in my power, and should like to be able to tell the emperor the harm he is doing in meddling in affairs that do not concern him. I hope I shall succeed in the end, and that the big colossus will be black-balled in good fashion.

Italian affairs are most amusing, and what is said among the few honest folk in Paris is still more diverting. We are beginning to see the arrival of a few of the martyrs of Castilfidardo. As a general thing they do not speak too enthusiastically of Lamoricière, who could not have been as great a hero as he was advertised.

I saw, a few days ago, the aunt of a young eighteen-year-old martyr who had been made prisoner. She told me that the Piedmontese had treated her nephew abominably. I waited to hear her relate something horrible.

“Only fancy, monsieur, five minutes after being made a prisoner the poor boy had his watch taken from him—a gold hunting-case watch, too, that I had given him!”

Good-bye, dear friend. Write to me often. Tell me what you are doing, and many details.

CCXXVII

Paris, October 24, 1860.

Dear Friend: I received your letter of the 15th. I have delayed a reply because I have been in the country, at my cousin's, where I walked during the day and played backgammon at night. In fact, I have been very lazy. I thank you for the descriptions you gave me, but they need a running commentary and illustrations, especially what you say concerning the native dances; from what you tell me, they must resemble somewhat the dances of the gitanas of Grenada. The idea is probably the same as that represented by the Moors. I have no doubt that if an Arab of the Sahara should see a waltz in Paris, he would conclude, very reasonably, that the French also use pantomime. When one goes to the bottom of things one discovers always the same original ideas. You have observed this when you studied mythology with me.

I do not at all acknowledge the timidity of your explanations. You have at your disposal euphemisms enough to tell me everything, and you act as you do only that I may plead and insist. Come, be more communicative in your next letter.

I am becoming worse and worse every day. I begin to be resigned to my fate, but it is a lamentable thing to see one's self growing old and dying by inches.

You ask me to explain the present disorders. Are you not sick of it? Unfortunately, no one understands anything of it. Read the Constitutionnel of to-day. There is an interesting and inspired article by Guéronnière. He says, in substance: "I can not approve the attack made on innocent people; yet, on the other hand, I have no interest in those who are being skinned, and do not desire to see them aided in any way save in advice."

I went yesterday to Saint Cloud, where I had lunch most informally with the emperor, the empress, and "Monsieur fils," as they say in Lyons. Everybody was in good health and high spirits. I had a long conversation with the emperor, particularly on ancient history and Cæsar. The facility with which he grasps the meaning of erudite subjects, for which he has found a taste only recently, is most astonishing.

The empress related several curious incidents connected with her trip to Corsica.

The bishop had told her of a bandit named Bosio, whose history might have been copied from Colomba. He is a worthy fellow, who has been persuaded by the advice of a woman to commit two or three trifling crimes. For several months they have been trying to capture him, but in vain; women and children suspected of furnishing him food have been imprisoned, but it is impossible to lay hands on him. No one knows where he is. Her Majesty, who has read the novel that you know, had become interested in this man, and said she would be delighted if some one should give him the wherewithal to leave the island and go to Africa or elsewhere, where he might become a good soldier and an honest man. “Ah! Madame,” said the bishop, “will you permit me to send this message to him?”

“Then, monseigneur, you know where he is?” As a general rule, the very worst scamps in Corsica are always connected in some way with the most respectable men. They were greatly surprised to find that, while they were besought to grant a prodigious number of favours, no one asked for a sou. The empress has returned full of enthusiasm.

The meeting at Warsaw is a fiasco. The Austrian emperor went uninvited, and discovered an example of the kind of courtesy shown presumptuous persons. He pretended to demonstrate that if Austria was in danger from Hungary, Russia also had an enemy in Poland; to which Gortchakoff replied: “You have eleven millions of Hungarians, and you are three million Germans. We are forty million Russians, and need no help to bring to reason six millions of Poles. Consequently there is no mutual confidence.”

It seems to me that, so far as Germany is concerned, things look peaceable, and it is possible, nay, even probable, that she might make us overtures to pursue the same course in respect to Italy. If this should occur, war, I think, would be impossible, unless, however, Garibaldi should make an attack upon Venice; yet the Italians are more prudent than is supposed.

I hear from Naples that the turmoil there is at its climax, and that the Piedmontese are expected with the same impatience that we experienced in 1848, when we were looking for the arrival of the regular troops in Paris. It is for order that they sigh, and which they will not realise except under Victor Emmanuel. Garibaldi and Alexander Dumas have prepared the way for it, just as a journey in the cold and rain prepares one to enjoy a warm dinner.

Good-bye, dear friend. I am thinking of starting soon to Cannes. Upon reaching Marseilles, about the middle of November, I shall intrust your package to the office of the steamship company. Give me details of the customs, and have no fear of shocking me. Take good care of yourself, and do not forget me.

CCXXVIII

November 1, 1860, at night.

I have received yours, No. 7, dear friend, and it is evident that the country and the climate still please you. I dread the time when the sight of a man in a burnoose will seem to you such a matter of course that you will pay no attention to it. The French colony, of which you make mention, must be as interesting as that one which went out from France during the first Under-Prefecture. Do they wear much crinoline at the Government Palace? or is it going out of fashion, as in Paris? It seems to me that I can foretell your reply.

You have given me only sketches of Algerian customs, when I desire the most exact details. I can not conceive why you will not enter into all the explanations for which I ask. There is nothing you need hesitate to tell me, and, besides, you are justly celebrated for your use of euphemism. Your style is truly academic. I shall understand your allusions, only I should like to have details; otherwise I shall be no wiser than the rest of the world. I wish to know all that you have acquired, for this, I am sure, is well worth the trouble of telling. If you really learn Arabic, I congratulate

you on your courage; it requires a vast amount of it. I stuck my nose once in M. de Sacy's Grammar, and withdrew in dismay. There were, I recollect, lunar letters and solar letters, and verbs of I know not how many conjugations. Besides, it is a dull language, which one can pronounce just as well gagged. My cousin, who is one of the most learned of Arabists, and who has spent twenty-five years in Egypt, told me that he never opened a book without learning a new word, and that there were, for instance, five hundred words signifying lion.

A week ago I sent you a lengthy dissertation on the political situation. It seems that no change in conditions has occurred. To date, the facts in the case are: First, that the conference at Warsaw was a complete fiasco; second, that Austria feels herself in no condition to assume the offensive, in spite of the fact that her enemy is making fine sport of her.

Everything is complicated by the situation in the East. It is so bad that our ambassador at Constantinople believes the old machine may crack any day at all from top to bottom. The Sultan is selling his valuables; he does not know whether he shall be able to buy his dinner next month. Have you heard what were the first words of emperor Francis Joseph to the emperor Alexander? "I bring you my sinful head!" This is the formula used by the Russian serf who approaches his master expecting and dreading a beating. He said the words in good Russian, for he speaks all the European languages. His humility was not eminently successful; he received from Alexander only the most unpromising coldness, and, following the latter's example, the Prince Regent of Prussia also carried his head high. After the departure of the emperor Alexander, the Austrian emperor remained in Warsaw alone for four hours, and not a single great Russian or Polish lord came to pay their respects to him. The conservative Russians are immensely pleased at all this, for they detest the Austrians even more than they do the English or ourselves.

You will hear of our victory over those poor Chinese. How ridiculous it seems to go

so far away to kill people who have done nothing to us! ‘Tis true, however, that the Chinese, being a variety of the orang-outang, there is none but the Grammont law which may be invoked in their favour.

I am preparing for our conquests in China by reading a new novel, which has just been translated by Stanislas Julien, the Chinese patentee of our government. It is the story of two young ladies, Mademoiselle Cân and Mademoiselle Ting, who are very clever, for they make verses and rhymes about everything. They meet two students who write with the same facility, and there follows an endless combat of quatrains. In all these quatrains there is nothing but white swallows and blue lotus flowers. It is impossible to find anything more whimsical and more destitute of passion. Evidently people who enjoy that style of literature are abominable pedants, who deserve to be thoroughly conquered and whipped by us, who take precedence over the beautiful Greek literature.

We had several summer days—Saint Martin’s summer, I think they call it—then cold weather set in. I am beginning to dream of Provence, where, according to the local astrologers, we are promised a beautiful winter. I shall soon inform you of my change of residence. For three days I have been unable to breathe.

You have told me nothing of the cooking of the country. How do you like couscousson? Do you find in the bazaars any unusual curiosities, and are the prices reasonable? I dined yesterday at Prince Napoleon’s. Princess Clotilde admired my cuff-buttons, and asked the jeweller’s address. I told her “rue d’Alger, No. 10.” Is that right? Good-bye, dear friend.

CCXXIX

Marseilles, November 17, 1860.

Dear Friend: I have just arrived at Marseilles, and find that a boat for Algiers leaves in an hour. I shall confide to it the little package for you. I have only time to say

good-morning. My cold is giving me horrible distress. In a few days I shall be in Cannes, and shall make a visit in the suburbs. Write to me at Cannes when you have received the little package.

I am too hurried to tell you any news. The visit of the empress[24] is giving rise to a great deal of gossip, and no one understands its significance. The outlook is for peace, which is highly probable, until we find out which is the stronger, Garibaldi or Cavour.

Marseilles, November 18, 1860.

Unfortunately, it was too late! The boats are advertised to leave at four o'clock, and they leave at noon. My small package will leave without fail next Tuesday, and my letter will leave, probably, by the same steamer.

And now that this important business is terminated, I resume my questions. Have you been to see the Moorish baths? What kind of women did you see there? I imagine their habit of sitting with crossed legs must give them horrible knees. If you do not approve of their fashions in dress, I suppose that you will adopt their kohl for the eyes. Besides being very pretty, its use is also said to be an excellent preventive of ophthalmia, a disease which is frequent and dangerous for European eyes in warm climates. I give you, therefore, my authority to use this article.

I am sorry to hear of the death of poor Lady M——, who was a good woman notwithstanding her opinions on people and things. Is it a fact that she has written a book, a volume of travels, or a novel? I do not know which, but I heard it well spoken of in England.

My Glenquoich friend, Mr. Ellice, is to be my neighbour this winter. He has just bought for one hundred and twenty thousand pounds sterling, an estate in Scotland adjoining his own, or, rather, it consists of leagues of lakes, rocks, and heaths. I can not imagine what he expects to gain by the purchase, except grouse and deer in the hunting season. It seems to me, if I had three millions to put in land, I should prefer

to spend them in the south rather than the north.

I am bringing with me a new edition of Pushkin's works, of which I have promised to write a review. I have begun to read his lyric poems, and find in them many superb things, quite after my own heart—that is to say, in their sincerity and simplicity they are modelled after the Greek. Several of them are deeply passionate, and I should like to translate them, for in these, as in many others, in precision and clearness, the work seems to me of a very high order. Something in the style of Sappho's ode, Δέδυχε μέυ ἀ σελάνα, reminds me that I am writing at night, in an inn chamber, and my mind is full of reminiscences of the good old days. Of all the petty miseries of the present, the worst for me is insomnia. All my thoughts grow pessimistic, and I become absolutely disgusted with myself.

Good-bye, dear friend. Try to keep well and to sleep. You have much finer weather than we, and much more cheerful companions. Do you eat any bananas in Algiers? To my mind, it is the best fruit in the world, but I should like to eat it with you. With this thought, dear friend, I bid you good-night. I shall reach Cannes about the 25th of this month.

CCXXX

Cannes, December 13, 1860.

You write with a conciseness quite Lacedemonian, and you use, moreover, a paper manufactured, doubtless, expressly for you. At the same time, there are many interesting things, for you to tell me. You are living among barbarians, where there is always something worth observing; and you have the best kind of a chance to see them, because of the woman's skirts you wear, which are a valuable passport. In spite of this, you have told me but one thing in detail, and that I had already suspected, but you have not said what you thought of it and whether you considered it worthy of imitation. You must have seen in the bazaars a tremendous number of

trinkets, and you might have examined them and have given me some idea of what you thought would suit me. In fact, you are not acquitting yourself at all well in your rôle of traveller.

I am living in my hole, and have nothing to tell you except that we had, in the beginning of the month, the most diabolical weather. The Siagne, a small stream flowing between the Estérel Mountain and Cannes, overflowed its banks and covered the adjacent fields, which gave them the most curious and picturesque aspect. The sea, too, driven by the south wind, beat against my balcony, and my house during the night was transformed into an island. All these disasters were effaced by one day of sunshine. I am warm, and am tolerably well, but I sleep badly, and have lost entirely the habit of eating. All the same, I take more exercise than I did in Paris.

The political disturbance early in the month gave me some apprehension, notwithstanding my indifference to the questions involved. You are aware of my intimacy with the principal victim. I know nothing positively as yet concerning the reasons for his disgrace. It is evident, however, that a fair lady figures in the case, and that she persisted in remaining in his apartment, which she had occupied for a long time. He took the thing less philosophically than I believed he would, and than I should have done in his place. I fancy, though, that he was cut up by some of the proceedings.

As for the measures of the Liberals, I have not made up my mind what to think; we must wait, and see the result. I do not believe they were necessary; but, on principle, it is better to grant a favour unsolicited than to give only what is asked, and after delaying so long that everybody concerned grows impatient. It may be, on the other hand, that the emperor[25] is seeking support in the Chambers in order that we may abandon our false position with Italy, defending a pope who excommunicates us in petto, and on the point of becoming embroiled with our friends, that we may flatter

the vanity of a youngster who has never wished us any good. It is clear that, if the Chambers recommend the doctrine of non-intervention, it would be ground sufficient to recall General de Goyon from Rome, and to leave the Piedmontese to fight their own battles as they like and as they are able to do.

Here, meaning throughout France, people who dress well and consider themselves somebody are loyal to the pope and the king of Naples, as if they had not been at the bottom of the Revolution in France. At the same time, their love of the papacy and of legitimacy does not reach to the extent of contributing an écu in their behalf. If a positive explanation were demanded, I do not doubt that the doctrine of intervention would be extolled in enthusiastic terms. But what will be the effect of the recrudescence of eloquence which the recent concessions will bring on us? I can not guess the result; but the old parliamentarians are beginning to prick their ears. M. Thiers, I am told, will stand for election to a seat in the Senate from Valenciennes, and his example, I think, will be followed by many others. I can not conceive what will become of the deposed ministers, who were appointed by the oratorical party in the legislative body of the Senate, but it will be amusing to see orators like M. Magne and M. Billault on the side of the Jules Favre and tutti quanti.

Good-bye, dear friend. Let me hear from you often, and send me longer letters. Do not forget the details of Algerian customs, about which I am exceedingly curious. Tell me what sort of weather you have, and how you are.

CCXXXI

Cannes, December 28, 1860.

Dear Friend: I wish you a happy ending of the old and a happier beginning of the new year. I thank you for the pretty purse which you sent me. Did I say purse? I do not know exactly what it is, or what it is to be used for; but it is very pretty, and the gold embroidery, in different colours, is in exquisite taste. It takes the barbarians to

make such things. Our artificers have too much acquired skill and too little sentiment to make anything equal to them.

I thank you for the offer of the dates and bananas. If I were in Paris, I should not refuse, but you can not conceive of the carelessness of our transportation. I waited a whole week for a pair of trousers, begging your pardon, which went from Marseilles to Nice, and from there God knows where, before they finally reached me. Things to eat would be still more uncertain. When you return you may bring them with you, and we shall eat them together, which will be much nicer.

You have not told me if you saw M. Feydeau in Algiers. I met him in the railway train coming from Africa, where he had gone, he told me, to write a novel. Although I have said no more about it, you promised me to collect data for me, and to gather a multitude of facts for my use in the future.

You have confined yourself to giving me the most superficial information, without telling me even your own opinion of things. Have you seen in Algiers a sort of pouch which comes from Constantine, I think, something like the sabretache worn by our hussars, and embroidered in a marvellous fashion? About how much do they cost? I mean the most beautiful ones.

Cannes is filled with English and Russians, all of whom are exceedingly ordinary specimens. My friend Mr. Ellice is in Nice, and comes to see me from time to time. He complains of having no intellectual associates.

I see that you have had a visit from Mr. Cobden. He is an intelligent man and very interesting, not like an Englishman, in that he is never heard talking commonplaces and has not many prejudices. It seems that Paris is entirely absorbed in M. Poinsot. They say that he himself is responsible for his misfortune.

I should be glad to give you some political news, but my correspondents tell me nothing, except that affairs are quiet. It is the characteristic of our age to set in motion a turmoil, and to amuse one’s self while it is in progress.

Good-bye. Keep in good health, and enjoy your sunshine.

CCXXXII

Nice, January 20, 1861.

I am here on a visit to my friend Mr. Ellice, who is a cruel sufferer from gout, and whom I have come to cheer. I experienced a feeling of involuntary satisfaction when I crossed the Pont du Var, and found neither customs officer nor gendarme, nor a demand for passports. This annexation is a fine thing, and makes one feel several millimetres taller.

You confuse me terribly with the beautiful things which you describe. It is evident that I must fall back on you and on your judgment to decide on the purchases; but I beg you to consider that as these things are for my personal use, and not for gifts, I shall be much more difficult to please than usual. I urge you, therefore, to proceed with great circumspection. Primo, you are authorised to purchase a gebira at any price you care to pay, provided that it has gold not on the outside, but on the inside, like some of those I have seen.

If you find some pretty silk stuff which may be washed, and does not look like a woman’s gown, make me a dressing-gown, as long as possible, and buttoned on the left side in the oriental fashion. Bring these with you when you return. I have no desire to wear silk gowns while the ice in the Seine is two feet thick. What they write me from Paris makes my hair stand on end—ten degrees of cold during the day, and twelve or fourteen degrees at night. Nevertheless, I am summoned there day after to-morrow. Do not be frightened if you read in the papers that I am ill. It would be, however, only the truth, for I have been not at all well for some time.

If I were to return to Paris at this season I am sure I should be done for in a few days. I am thinking, however, of going about the middle of February. Besides my usual alacrity in attending the functions of the Luxembourg, I have a speech to

deliver. A petition is presented for the revision of M. Libri's trial, and you may be sure that I can not refrain from speaking my mind upon this subject which lies so near my heart.

I have had at Cannes—I might say I am still having—a visit from M. Fould, for I shall find him still there on my return day after to-morrow. He told me many curious things of the men and women who were interested in his affair. I found him much more philosophical than I expected. I doubt, however, if he has the courage to sulk much longer; it is contrary to his habit. It seems that when one has for a long time carried a red portfolio under his arm, one finds himself, on losing it, in exactly the same condition as an Englishman with no umbrella.

Good-bye. I shall leave Cannes, probably, February 8th. Let me hear from you, and tell me something of your plans for returning, if you have made any. We are having fine weather, but it might be warmer. You seem to have weather both clear and warm, for which I congratulate you. Good-bye, dear friend....

CCXXXIII

Cannes, February 16, 1861.

Dear Friend: I am writing you in the blues, and in the midst of my preparations for departure. I am to start to-morrow morning, and, if I succeed in reaching Toulon in time for the train, expect to be in Paris the following night. I had hoped to prolong my stay here until the conclusion of the inquiry; but, on the one hand, I have had conferred on me an honour which I could very well have done without, and which compels me to be punctual. Besides this, I am told that the Senate is papist and legitimist, and that my voice will not be out of place when the vote is taken. This sort of thing is repugnant to me, and if it can be done, I shall keep out of it as long as possible.

These last days I have had quantities of visitors, which has prevented me from

writing to you. I have had friends from Paris, and Mr. Ellice, who came to spend several days with me, so that it became necessary to play the cicerone, to take them everywhere in the suburbs, and to hold a plenary court. Contrary to my custom, therefore, I am bringing back with me very few drawings.

Your absence from Paris has been the cause of two misfortunes. The first is, that I forgot entirely the gift of books for Madame de Lagréné's daughters. In the next place, I forgot also Sainte-Eulalie. There is nothing in this country which could have been sent to Paris, except flowers, and God only knows in what condition they would have reached there. Do advise me what to do. I am as embarrassed as usual, and this time I have not the resource of throwing my trouble on your shoulders.

I am grateful to you for all the trouble you are taking about the gebira. I should like it a little large, because I expect to wear it in my journeys as a night-robe.

The poor duchesse de Malakof is an excellent woman, but not over-clever, especially in French. She seems to be altogether dominated by her frightful beast of a husband, who is boorish from habit, and, perhaps, from choice. They say, however, that she adapts herself to him remarkably well. If you see her, mention me, and our dramatic entertainments in Spain. I was told that her brother, who is a very pleasant fellow, good-looking, and a poet in the bargain, was to spend some time with her in Algiers. Good-bye, dear friend. Keep well, and take care of yourself.

CCXXXIV

Paris, March 21.

Dear Friend: I thank you for your letter. Since my return to Paris, I have been completely besotted. There was, in the first place, our exhibition in the Senate, where like M. Jourdain, I may say that never have I been so satiated with silliness. Everybody had in reserve a discourse to which he had to give utterance. So strong is the contagion of example, that I delivered my speech in a free-and-easy way,

without the slightest preparation, like M. Robert Houdin. I was terribly frightened, but succeeded in overcoming it by saying to myself that I was in the presence of two hundred imbeciles, and that there was no occasion to be nervous. The joke was that M. Walewski, to whom I wished to give a fine budget, took offence because I praised his predecessor, and declared openly that he had voted against my proposition.

M. Troplong, beside whom I was seated in my position as secretary, whispered to me his condolences; to which I replied that a minister who is not thirsty can not be compelled to drink. This was repeated immediately to M. Walewski, who took it for an epigram, and who since then has scowled on me, which has not prevented me from going my own gait.

The second vexation of the present time is to dine out, officially or otherwise, on the same fish, the same filet, the same lobster, and so on, and even the same persons, all as tiresome as they were the last time.

But the climax of vexations is Catholicism. You can not conceive of the degree of exasperation which the Catholics have reached. For nothing at all they jump on you—for instance, if you do not, at the mention of the holy martyr, show all the whites of your eyes, and if you ask quite innocently, as I did, who had suffered martyrdom.

I brought on myself another unfortunate affair in expressing surprise that the queen of Naples had had her photograph taken in boots. It is an exaggeration and an absurdity which surpasses anything which you may imagine.

A lady asked me the other evening if I had ever seen the empress of Austria. I said I considered her very pretty. “Ah, she is an ideal beauty!” “No; she has irregular features, which are more pleasing, perhaps, than if they mere more regular.” “Ah, monsieur, she is beauty personified. Tears of admiration come to your eyes!” This is the society of the present day. I flee from it, therefore, as I should the plague. What

has become of the French society of the past!

A final vexation, but a colossal one, was Tannhäuser. Some say the performance was one of the secret conditions of the Treaty of Villafranca; others, that Wagner was sent to us in order to force us to admire Berlioz. The fact is that it is monstrous. It seems to me I might compose something just as good to-morrow, inspired by my cat walking over the piano board.

The performance was very strange. The Princess Metternich got herself terribly worked up to make the impression that she understood it, and to create applause, which came not. Everybody yawned, but at the same time, everybody wished to appear to understand this unanswerable enigma. The people who sat beneath Madame de Metternich's loge said that the Austrians were taking their revenge for Solferino. It was said also that people were tired of the récitatifs, and that on se tanne aux airs.[26] Try to understand the joke. I fancy your Arabic music is an excellent preparation for this infernal noise. It is an immense fiasco! Auber says that it is Berlioz without melody.

The weather here is frightful—wind, rain, snow, and hail, varied by flashes of sunshine which do not last ten minutes. The sea is still raging, it seems, and I am glad you are not returning immediately.

Did I tell you that I had made the acquaintance of M. Blanchard, who is going to move into the rue de Grenelle? He showed me some charming water-colours, Russian and Asiatic scenes, which seemed to show a great deal of temperament, and which were done with talent and fire.

I should like to send you some news, but know of nothing worth sending across the sea. I am persuaded that the pope will leave before the end of two months, or else that we shall settle him where he can come to terms with the Piedmontese; but affairs can not endure as they are. The devout are making a horrible outcry; but the French people and the bourgeois are anti-papists. I hope and believe that Isidore

shares my sentiments on this point.

I shall make a short journey, probably, in the south, in the company of my ex-minister, to spend the dreary Easter season. You tell me nothing about your health, about your complexion. Your health, I trust, is good; as to the other, I fear you have not sunburned at all.

Good-bye, dear friend. I thank you for the gebira. Return well and strong; stout or slender, I promise to recognise you. I embrace you most tenderly.

CCXXXV

Paris, April 2, 1861.

Dear Friend: I have just returned from my holy-week excursion, tired out, after a sleepless and bitter cold night. I find your letter here, and am delighted to learn that you are on this side of the sea....

I have been in better health for two weeks. Some one recommended a very agreeable remedy for my pains in the stomach. It is called pearls of ether. They are small capsules made of I don’t know what, which are transparent, and contain the liquid ether. You swallow them, and an instant after reaching the stomach they break, and let the ether escape. The effect is a queer, agreeable sensation. If you should ever need a sedative, I recommend them to you.

You must have been sadly struck with the wintry aspect of southern France, coming as you did from Africa. Whenever I return from Cannes I am always shocked at the appearance of the bare trees and the moist, dead earth. I am awaiting your gebira with the keenest interest. If the embroidery is as marvellous as that on the tobacco pouch which you sent me, it must be admirable indeed. I hope you have brought back some gowns for yourself, and quantities of pretty things which you will show me.

I do not know whether there are as many good Catholics at —— as there are in Paris. The fact is, our drawing-rooms are no longer inhabitable. Not only have those who were always devout become bitter as verjuice, but all the ex-Voltairians of the political opposition have turned papists. I find consolation in the thought that some of them feel obliged to attend mass, which must be somewhat of a bore to them. My former professor, M. Cousin, who used never to speak of the pope other than as the bishop of Rome, has been converted and does not miss a mass. It is said, even, that M. Thiers is becoming pious, but it is difficult for me to believe this, because I have always been partial to him.

I can understand that you may not be able now to tell me, even indefinitely, when you intend to return to Paris, but let me hear as soon as you know anything to tell. I shall be tied here as long as the session continues....

Tell me, dear friend, how you are after so many fatigues and tribulations on land and sea. Good-bye. Take good care of yourself, and write to me promptly and often....

CCXXXVI

Paris, Wednesday, April 24, 1861.

I am writing the history of a bandit Cossack of the seventeenth century, named Stenka Razine, who was killed in Moscow with horrible tortures, after he had hanged and drowned a great number of boyards, and had maltreated their women in true Cossack fashion. I will let you read it when it is finished, if I ever reach the end of it. Good-bye, dear friend. Give me news of yourself....

I am leading a most disquieting and uncomfortable life, thanks to the Institute affairs and the petition of Madame Libri....

CCXXXVII

Paris, May 15, 1861 (The Senate).

Dear Friend: For several days I have been so busy that I have delayed writing to you. I wished to ask you to return my visit. I am a prey at the present moment of the herrings which the seals of Boulogne have stirred up to torment us, and I am expecting the Maronites to finish us. This means that we, in this establishment,[27] are in the midst of a bitter discussion about herrings, and that we are threatened with daily sessions. However, it can not last much longer, I hope.

I am working every night, and am happy to have reached the tortures which my hero was made to suffer, so you see I am near the end. It is a long work, not very interesting, and most horrible. I will let you read it when it is published. What do you think of Macaulay? Is he as interesting as in the beginning?

Is it true that all the herring fishermen of Boulogne are thieves, who buy herrings caught by the English and pretend to have caught them themselves? Is it true, also, that the herrings have been seduced by the English, and that they no longer pass near our coasts?

CCXXXVIII

Château de Fontainebleau, Thursday, June 13, 1861.

Dear Friend: For two days I have been here, recuperating, with great enjoyment, among the trees, after my tribulations of the last week.[28] I suppose you read of the affair in the Moniteur. I have never in my life seen people so wild, so senseless as magistrates. For my consolation, I say to myself that twenty years from now, when some antiquarian shall poke his nose into the Moniteur of this week, he will say that he has discovered in 1861, in an assembly of young fools, a philosopher full of moderation and calmness. This philosopher is myself, and I say it without vanity.

In this country, where magistrates are recruited from the ranks of men too stupid to earn their living as lawyers, they are ill-paid, and to get on with them they are

privileged to be insolent and quarrelsome. Happily, it is all ended at last. I have done what I ought to do, and if it were possible, I should reopen the case for the petition of Madame Libri.

I was cordially received here, and have not been laughed at on account of my defeat. I expressed my opinion of the affair very plainly, and have had no intimation of any disapproval of my judgment. After all the excitement of these last days, I feel as if an enormous weight had rolled off my back. The weather is superb, and the air of the woods delicious. There are few people here. My hosts are, as usual, extremely kind and friendly.

We have with us the Princess Metternich, who is very vivacious, after the German fashion—that is to say, she has created for herself a kind of originality composed of two parts of rapid woman and one of great lady. I fancy she has not wit enough to sustain the rôle she has adopted. To-day we are going hunting. The evenings are a little tedious, but they do not last forever. I expect to be here a week longer; my official duties hold me here, however, only until Sunday. If I remain beyond that time I shall let you know.

Good-bye, dear friend. Some one has come for me.

CCXXXIX

Château de Fontainebleau, Monday, June 24, 1861.

Dear Friend: I have not budged from here, and shall remain until the end of the month, thanks, no doubt, to Cæsar. I told you that I had a sunstroke, and for twenty-four hours was in a very dangerous condition. I have entirely recovered now, but am suffering from lumbago, which I caught rowing on the lake....

I am waiting impatiently for news from you, but fear that I am somewhat to blame. I promised to write to you if I left Fontainebleau, but what can I do? One does nothing here, and yet one is never free. Sometimes we are called on to walk in the woods,

sometimes to make a translation. Most of the time is spent in waiting. The great accomplishment of the country is to know how to wait—a part of my education which I find it difficult to acquire.

At this moment our chief expectation is centred in the Siamese ambassadors, who will arrive Thursday. Some say that they will present themselves on all-fours, after the custom of their country, crawling on their knees and elbows; others add that they will lick the floor, sprinkled with candy in view of this performance. Our ladies imagine that they are to receive wonderful gifts. I believe they will bring nothing at all, and that they will expect to carry away many beautiful things.

I went last Wednesday to Alise with the emperor, who has become an accomplished archæologist. He spent three and a half hours on the mountain, under the most terrific sun in the world, examining the remains of the siege of Cæsar, and reading the Commentaries. We lost all the skin from our ears, and came back looking like chimney-sweeps. We spend our evenings upon the lake, or under the trees, looking at the moon and wishing for rain. I suppose you have the same weather at N——. Good-bye, dear friend. Take care of yourself; do not expose yourself to the sun, and let me hear from you.

CCXL

Château de Fontainebleau, June 29, 1861.

Dear Friend: I received the cigar-case, which is charming even to my eyes, which have just seen the gifts of the Siamese ambassadors. Our letters crossed. I am so busy here doing nothing that I have had no time to write. At last we are all leaving to-night, and I shall be in Paris when you receive this letter.

We had, on Tuesday, a passably good ceremony, quite like that in the Bourgeois Gentilhomme. It is impossible to conceive of a more singular spectacle than that of a score of black men, with a strong resemblance to monkeys, dressed in gold brocade,

and wearing white stockings and patent-leather shoes, with sword at their sides, all flat on their stomachs, crawling on knees and elbows along the Henri II gallery, carrying their noses as high as the backs of those who preceded. If you have ever seen the advertisement on the Pont Neuf, “The Dog’s Good-morning,” you may form some idea of the scene.

The first ambassador had the hardest time. He wore a felt hat embroidered in gold, which danced on his head at every movement, and, besides, carried in his hands a bowl of gold filigree, containing two boxes, in each of which was a letter from their Siamese majesties. The letters were in silk and gold purses, and the whole thing extremely rich.

After having delivered the letters, when they tried to turn around, confusion reigned in the embassy. There were kicks from behind into faces, swords thrust into the eyes of those on the second row, who in turn were putting out the eyes of the third row. The spectacle resembled a troop of cockchafers on a carpet.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs had invented this charming ceremony, and had required the ambassadors to crawl. The Asiatics are supposed to be more guileless than they are, and I am confident that they would have found no fault had they been permitted to walk. The whole effect of the crawling was lost, however, because the emperor became impatient at last, rose, made the cockchafers rise, and conversed in English with one of them. The empress kissed a little monkey which they had brought with them, and which is said to be the son of one of the ambassadors; he ran on all-fours like a little rat, and had an intelligent expression.

The temporal king of Siam sent his portrait to the emperor, and that of his wife, who is hideously ugly. But you would have delighted in the variety and beauty of the stuffs which they brought. They are of gold and silver, woven so delicately that they are perfectly transparent, and resemble the light clouds of a beautiful sunset. They presented the emperor with trousers, the legs of which are embroidered with small

designs in enamel, gold, and green; and a waistcoat of gold brocade as soft as a silk handkerchief, the patterns of which, gold worked on gold, are marvellous. The buttons are of gold filigree, with small diamonds and emeralds. They have a red gold and a white gold, which when used together produce an admirable effect.

In short, I have never seen anything more stylish, and at the same time more elegant. What strikes one as singular in the taste of these savages is that, while they use only dazzling silks, gold and silver thread, there is nothing conspicuous in their stuffs. The materials are combined in marvellous taste, producing a quiet, harmonious effect.

Good-bye, dear friend. I expect to make a visit to London, where I have business connected with the Exposition. This will be about July 8th or 10th.

CCXLI

London, British Museum, July 16, 1861.

I see by your last letter, dear friend, that you are as busy as a commander-in-chief on the eve of a battle. I have read in Tristram Shandy that in a house where a woman is in child-birth, all the women assume the privilege of ill-treating the men; this is the reason I have not written to you sooner. I was afraid you would treat me in a manner befitting your lofty grandeur. I hope, however, that your sister is safely delivered, and that you are relieved of all anxiety. Still, I should be glad to have your official opinion, but this does not mean that you are to send me a bulletin of printed information.

People here are talking of nothing but the affair of M. de Vidil. I have known him slightly in London and in France, and considered him a great bore. Here, where they are just as gullible as in Paris, there has been a furious outburst of resentment against him. He is known to have killed his wife, and probably many other persons. Now that he has been acquitted, sentiment has changed completely, and if he has a good

lawyer he will clear himself, and we shall weave crowns for him.

You may or may not know that there is a new chancellor, lord B——, who is old, but whose morals are not. A lawyer named Stevens sends his clerk with a card to the chancellor. The clerk inquires for him; he is informed that my lord has no house in London, but that he comes often from the country to a house in Oxford Terrace, where he has a lodging. The clerk goes to the house, and asks for my lord. “He is not here.” “Do you think he will return for dinner?” “No, but to sleep, certainly; he comes here every Monday night to sleep.” The clerk leaves the letter, and Mr. Stevens is now greatly astonished because the chancellor glowers at him. The truth of the matter is, that my lord has there a clandestine establishment.

I have been in London since Thursday, and have not yet had a moment of rest. I am running about from morning until night. Every day I am invited out to dinner, and in the evening there are concerts and balls. I went to a concert yesterday at the marquis of Lansdowne’s. There was not a pretty woman present, which is unusual here, but, on the other hand, they were dressed, all of them, as if the chief dispenser of styles at Brioude had made their gowns. I never saw anything to equal their head-dress. One old woman had a crown of diamonds composed of small stars, with a huge sun in front, precisely like the wax figures at a fair! I think of remaining here until early in August. Good-bye, dear friend....

CCXLII

London, British Museum, July 25, 1861.

... I pass my time here monotonously enough, although I dine out every day at a different house, and see people and things I have not seen before. I dined yesterday at Greenwich with some great personages, who tried to make themselves lively, not, like the Germans, by throwing themselves out of the window, but by making a vast amount of noise. The dinner was abominably long, but the whitebait was excellent.

We have unpacked here twenty-two cases of antiquities from Cyrenaica. There are two statues and several busts which are truly remarkable, belonging to a good period and thoroughly Greek; one Bacchus especially, although a little delicate, is fascinating. The head is in an extraordinary state of preservation.

M. de Vidil is properly and duly committed, and will be tried at the next assizes. He will not be allowed to give bail. It seems, however, that the worst that may happen to him is to be sentenced to two years' imprisonment, for the English law recognises murder only in the event of the victim's death; and, as Lord Lyndhurst said to me, a man must be a great bungler in England to allow himself to be hanged.

I went, the other evening, to the House of Commons and heard the debate on Sardinia. It is impossible to be more verbose, more flat, and more insignificant that most of the orators, notably lord John Russell, now simply lord Russell. Mr. Gladstone pleased me. I hope to return to Paris the 8th or 10th of August, and to find you quietly resting in some sort of solitude. I think my health is better than in Paris; nevertheless, the weather is atrocious.

I was interrupted in my letter to visit the Bank of England. I held in my hand four small packages which contained four million pounds sterling, but I was not permitted to carry them away. That would have occasioned the writing of two volumes. I was shown a pretty machine, which counts and weighs daily three million sovereigns. The machine hesitates an instant, and after a brief deliberation throws the genuine sovereigns to the right and the counterfeit to the left. There is one that looks like a little ape. A bank-bill is presented to him, he bends his head and kisses it twice, leaving on the bill certain marks which the counterfeiters have not yet succeeded in imitating.

Finally, I was taken into the vaults, where I fancied myself in one of those grottoes described in the Thousand and One Nights. They were lined with bags of gold and bullion, which sparkled in the gas-light. Good-bye, dear friend....

CCXLIII

Paris, August 24, 1861.

Dear Friend: I have arrived at last, in not too good a state of preservation. I do not know whether it is from eating too heartily of turtle-soup, or from running about too much in the sun, but I have had a return of those pains in the stomach, which for some time had left me in peace. I am taken in the morning about five o'clock, and they continue an hour and a half. I suppose one suffers in somewhat the same way when one is hanged. This does not inspire in me any desire to be suspended!

I found awaiting my return more work than I like. Our imperial commission for the Universal Exposition is in travail; we are exhausting all our eloquence in persuading those who have pictures to lend them to us to send to London. Besides the obvious indiscretion of the proposition, it happens that most owners of private collections are Carlists or Orleanists, who think they are doing a pious act in refusing us. I fear we shall cut a poor figure in London next year, and all the more since we shall exhibit only works done during the last ten years, while the English will exhibit the products of their school since 1762.

How did you find the heat of the tropics? It is a consolation to read, in the papers which I receive, that in Madrid it was forty-four degrees, which is the temperature of the hot season in Senegal. There is no one in Paris, which suits me perfectly. I spent six weeks dining out, and it is a relief now not to be obliged to put on a white cravat for dinner. I visited the duke of Suffolk for a week, however, in a charming castle in almost absolute solitude. The country is level, but is covered with immense trees; and there is an abundance of water, so that the sailing is excellent. The place is quite near some fens, and is the region from which Cromwell sprang. There is an enormous quantity of game, and one can not take a step without running the risk of treading on pheasants or partridges.

I have no plans for the autumn, except that, if Madame de Montijo should go to

Biarritz, I shall visit her there and spend a few days. She is still in sorrow, and I find her more desolate than she was last year at the time of her daughter's death.

It seems to me you have acquired a great fondness for that host of children. I can not understand this. I suppose you allow yourself to assume all the care of them, according to your habit of submitting to oppression, so long as it does not come from me. Good-bye, dear friend....

CCXLIV

Paris, August 31, 1861.

Dear Friend: I have received your letter, which seems to indicate that you are happier than you have been in a long time. I am rejoiced at it. There is in me little disposition to be fond of children; still, I can understand how one should be attached to a little girl as to a young cat, an animal with which your sex has many points of resemblance.

I am still ill and suffering, and am awakened every morning in a state of suffocation, which soon passes. The solitude here is still complete. I happened in at the Imperial Club yesterday and found there but three persons, and they were asleep. The weather is insupportably warm and sultry; as a change, they write me from Scotland that for forty days it has rained in torrents, in consequence of which the potatoes are ruined and the grain killed.

I am taking advantage of my solitude to work on something which I promised my master, and which I should like to take to him at Biarritz, but I am making slow progress. I have the greatest difficulty in doing anything at all, as the least excitement causes me intense suffering. I hope, however, to finish before the end of next week....

I have for you a copy of Stenka Razine. Remind me to give it to you when I see you, and also to show you the portrait of a gorilla which I drew in London, and with

whom I was on terms of intimacy; ‘tis true, he was stuffed.

I am reading little but Roman history; nevertheless, I have read with great pleasure the nineteenth volume of M. Thiers. It seems to me to be more carelessly written than the preceding volumes, but it is full of curious things. In spite of his desire to say ill of his hero, he is continually carried away by his involuntary affection for him. He tells me that he will finish the twentieth volume in December, and that he will then make a trip around the world, or else go to Italy.

There are stories of Montrond which interested me immensely; only I regretted that he could not have heard them told while he was in this world. It seems to me that M. Thiers describes him fairly enough, as an adventurer in love with his trade, and honest in his dealings with his principals so long as he was in their employ—quite like Dalgetty in the Legend of Montrose.

Judging by what I can see, our artists accept kindly the little rule which we have outlined for the Exposition in London; but when they shall see the position given them, I am not sure but they will throw baked apples at us. I have succeeded in extracting from M. Duchâtel the promise to lend us The Spring of M. Ingres. Good-bye, dear friend.

CCXLV

Biarritz, September 20, 1861.

Dear Friend: I am still here, like the bird on the branch. It is not the custom to form plans in advance; on the contrary, never until the last moment does one make a resolution. Nothing has been said as to the time of our departure, yet the days are growing shorter. The most tedious time of the day is the evening; it is cold after dinner, and with the arrangement of doors and windows invented here it is impossible to keep warm. All this makes me think that we shall not stay here much longer.

I am thinking of making a visit to M. Fould, at Tarbes, so that I may profit by these last beautiful days; after that I shall return to Paris, where I shall hope to find you settled. The sea air is doing me good. My breathing is better, but I sleep badly. ‘Tis true, I am immediately on the sea-shore, where the slightest wind makes a terrible uproar.

As in all imperial residences, the time is spent here in doing nothing, while waiting for something to happen. I work a little; I sketch from my window, and walk a great deal. There are few people stopping at the Eugénie Villa, and they are people whom I like well enough. While the days here have twenty-four hours, as they have in Paris, I find that the time passes without much difficulty....

We took a charming walk yesterday along the Pyrenees, near enough to see the mountains in all their glory, yet not near enough to suffer from the incessant inconvenience of climbing and descending them. We lost our way, and met no one who understood our beautiful French language. This always happens as soon as one passes beyond the outskirts of Bayonne.

The Prince Imperial yesterday gave a dinner to a flock of children. The emperor himself made champagne for them out of seltzer-water, which had the same effect as if they had drunk real wine. In a quarter of an hour they were all tipsy, and my ears still ache from the racket they made.

Good-bye, dear friend. I have had the temerity to promise to translate for his Majesty a Spanish memoir on the site of Munda, and I have just made the discovery that it is terribly difficult to translate.

You may write here until the 23d or 24th. Send your letters after that to M. Fould, at Tarbes. Good-bye.

CCXLVI

Paris, November 2, 1861.

My eyes are so bad that I did not recognise you at once the other day. Why do you come into my quarters without forewarning me? The person who was with me asked who the lady was with such beautiful eyes.

I spend all my time working like a negro slave for my master, whom I shall go to see in a week. The prospect of eight days in knee-breeches is somewhat terrifying. I should prefer to spend them out in the sunshine, and I begin to long for that time. On the other hand, the session with which we are threatened is maddening to me. I can not understand why Government business is not transacted in summer....

I have for you a book which is not altogether stupid. My memory is failing, and I have had a volume bound, when I already had a copy. You see what you will gain by it.

I have recovered almost entirely from my stiff neck, but for several nights I have been up so late that I am extremely nervous and exhausted. When we meet we will converse on metaphysics. ‘Tis a subject for which I cherish a great fondness because it is inexhaustible. Good-bye, dear friend.

CCXLVII

Compiégne, November 17, 1861.

Dear Friend: We are to remain here until the 24th. It is the fault of his Majesty, the king of Portugal, that the fêtes, for which we have been making ready, were not given. They were postponed, and we have been kept here in consequence. We are comfortable enough, inasmuch as we are all well acquainted, and as independent of one another as it is possible to be in such a place.

For lions we have four Highlanders in kilts, the duke of Athol, lord James Murray, and the son and nephew of the duke. It is most amusing to see these eight bare-knees in a salon where all the rest of the men are in knee-breeches or tight trousers. Yesterday, his grace’s piper was brought in, and all four danced in such a way as to

cause general alarm when they turned around. But there are ladies whose crinoline is still more alarming when they enter a carriage. As ladies invited as guests are not permitted to wear mourning, one sees legs of all colours. Red stockings I think very stylish.

Notwithstanding walks in damp, icy woods, and drawing-rooms heated red-hot, to the present time I have not caught cold; but I suffer from suffocation, and do not sleep. I was present at the great ministerial comedy, where one or two victims more were expected. The faces were interesting to observe, the addresses still more so; so that M. Walewski, the Excellency on trial, directed his grievances without any discrimination against friends and foes alike. There is nothing like an intense preoccupation to make people say stupid things, especially when they are accustomed to saying them. Oh, the dulness of mankind!

The woman, on the contrary, was perfectly calm and self-possessed, and the lawyers' speeches and other proceedings excellent. The battle, it seems to me, is only postponed, and at the slightest provocation is inevitable.

What is said of the emperor's letter? I approve of it thoroughly. He has a way of his own of saying things, and when he speaks as a sovereign, he has the art of showing that he is not made of the same common dough as others. I think this is exactly what is needed by this noble nation, which does not like the commonplace.

Yesterday the princess of ——, who was drinking tea, ordered the footman to bring her ti sel bour le bain.[29] After half an hour the footman returned, with twelve kilogrammes of coarse salt, supposing that she wished to take a salt bath.

Some one presented to the empress a picture by Müller representing queen Marie Antoinette in prison. The Prince Imperial inquired who this lady was, and why she was not in a palace. It was explained to him that she was a queen of France, and what a prison was. Then he ran to the emperor and asked him please to pardon the queen whom he was keeping in prison.

He is a strange, sometimes a terrible, child. He says that he bows to the people always, because they deposed Louis Philippe, whom he did not like. He is a charming child. Good-bye, dear friend.

CCXLVIII

Cannes, January 6, 1862. (I no longer remember dates.)

Dear Friend: I shall not tell you of the sunshine of Cannes, for fear of causing you too great distress amidst the snows in which you must be at this moment. What is written to me from Paris makes me cold just to read. I suppose you must be still at R——, or on the journey therefrom; so that I shall take my chances in addressing this to your official residence, as the surest place for you to be found.

I have here, as companion and neighbour, M. Cousin, who came to be cured of laryngitis, and who talks like a one-eyed magpie, eats like an ogre, and is astonished not to recover under this beautiful sky, which he now sees for the first time. He is, moreover, very interesting, for he possesses the gift of being witty to everybody. When alone with his servant, I fancy that he talks to him as he would to the most coquettish Orleanist or Legitimist duchess. The native Cannais are fascinated by him, and you may imagine how they will stare when they are informed that this man, who talks well on any subject, has translated Plato, and is the lover of Madame de Longueville. The only inconvenience is that he does not know when to stop talking. For a philosopher of the Eclectic school, it is a pity not to have adopted the good features of the Peripatetics.

I am not doing much of anything here. I am studying botany in a book and with the plants which fall under my hand, but every instant I bewail my bad sight. It is a study which I should have begun twenty years ago, when I had my eyes. It is, however, very amusing, although supremely immoral, since for one lady there are always at least six or eight gentlemen, all eager to offer her what she accepts with

much indifference from the right and the left. I regret exceedingly not to have brought my microscope; still, with my spectacles I have seen stamens making love to a pistil without showing any embarrassment at my presence.

I am sketching also, and am reading in a Russian book the history of another Cossack, a much better soldier than Stenka Razine, named, unfortunately, Bogdan Chmielnicki. With a name so difficult to pronounce, it is not astonishing that he has remained unknown to us Occidentals, who remember only names of Latin or Greek derivation.

How has the winter treated you? and how do you manage the little children who absorb so much of your time? Apparently you find the bringing up of children an amusing occupation. I have had experience only in raising cats, who have given me scant satisfaction, excepting the last one who had the honour to know you. The intolerable thing about children, it seems to me, is that you must wait so long to know what they have in their brains, and to hear them reason. It is a great pity that the trouble taken in cultivating the youngsters' intelligence can not be undertaken by the chits themselves, and that new ideas come to them almost unconsciously. The principal question is, to know whether they should be taught silly things, as we were, or whether we should talk to them reasonably. There is something to be said for and against both systems.

Some day, when you pass Stassin's, kindly look in his catalogue for a book by Max Müller, a professor in Oxford, on linguistics; unfortunately I do not recollect the title of the book. You must tell me if it costs very much, and if I shall be obliged to forego my fancy to possess it. I am told it is an admirable analysis of language.

I have made the acquaintance of a poor cat who lives in a hut back in the woods. I take him bread and meat, and as soon as he spies me coming he runs a quarter of a mile to meet me. I regret that I can not take him away with me, for he has marvellous powers of instinct.

Good-bye, dear friend. I hope this letter will find you in as good health and as flourishing condition as last year. I wish you a prosperous and happy New Year....

CCXLIX

Cannes, March 1, 1862.

... You are very good to think of my book in the midst of all your cares. If you can have it for me by the time I return I shall esteem it a great favour, but do not give yourself much trouble about it.

My cousin's fête-day went completely out of my head, and I recalled it the other day only when it was too late. When I return we will talk the matter over, if you please. Every year it becomes more embarrassing, and I have exhausted the possibility of rings, pins, handkerchiefs, and buttons. It is deuced hard to invent something new!

As for novels, the difficulty is equally great. In this class of books I have just read a few rhapsodies that deserve nothing less than corporal punishment. I am going to spend three days in the mountains, at Saint Césaire, beyond Cannes, at the home of my doctor, who is a man of the kindest impulses. Upon my return I shall begin to think seriously of starting for Paris.

I do not regret in the least having been absent from all the hubbub that has gone on in the Luxembourg, and which was worthy of fourth-form schoolboys. Even less do I regret that I took no share in the elections or, rather, the preliminary elections, which were held at the Academy the other day.

We are at this time in subjection to the clericals, and soon, in order to be recognised as a candidate, it will be necessary to produce a certificate of confession. M. de Montalembert gave such a certificate of Catholicism to a friend of mine, who, to be sure, is from Marseilles, but who had the good sense to offer no objection. Up to the present these gentlemen are not troublesome, but with time and success they are in danger of becoming so.

You can imagine nothing prettier than our country in fine weather. This is not the case to-day, however, for something extraordinary, it has been raining since morning. All the fields are covered with violets and anemones, and with quantities of other flowers whose names I do not know.

Good-bye, dear friend. Soon I shall see you, I hope. I wish to find you again in the same excellent condition in which I left you two months ago. Do not grow thin or stout, do not worry too much, and think of me now and then. Good-bye.

CCL

London, British Museum, May 12, 1862.

... So far as the Exposition is concerned, frankly, it cannot compare to the first: to the present time it is much of a fiasco. It is true that all the goods are not yet unpacked, but the building is horrible. Although of vast size, it does not appear so. One must walk about and lose himself in it before he realises its extent. Every one says there are many beautiful things to be seen. As yet I have examined only Class 30, to which I belong and of which I am the reporter.

I find that the English have made great progress in taste and in the art of decoration. We make much better furniture and wall-paper than they, but we are in a deplorable position, and if it continues we shall soon be outdistanced. Our jury is presided over by a German who thinks he can speak English, and whom it is well-nigh impossible to understand.

Nothing is more absurd than our meetings; no one has an idea of the subject under discussion; nevertheless, we vote. The worst is, that in our department we have several English manufacturers, and we shall be compelled to give these gentlemen medals which they do not deserve.

I am besieged by invitations to addresses and receptions. I dined day before yesterday with Lord Granville. There were three small tables in a long gallery,

which arrangement was intended to make the conversation general; but as the guests were scarcely acquainted with one another, there was very little talking.

At night I went to Lord Palmerston's, where were present the Japanese embassy, who got caught on all the women with the immense sabres which they wore at their belts. I saw some very beautiful women, and some very abominable ones; all of them made a complete exhibition of their shoulders and bosoms, some admirable, others extremely hideous, but both shown with the same impudence. I think the English are no judges of such things. Good-bye, dear friend....

CCLI

London, British Museum, June 6, 1862.

Dear Friend: I begin to catch a glimpse of the end of my troubles. My report to the International Jury, written in the purest Anglo-Saxon, without a single word derived from the French, was read by me yesterday, and the matter is concluded in that quarter. There remains another report for me to make to my own Government. I think I shall be free in a few days, and I may be able, probably, to leave for Paris from the 15th to the 20th of this month. It will be well for you to write to me before the 15th, where you will be then and what your plans are.

I think, decidedly, that the Exhibition is a fiasco. In vain do the Commissioners advertise extensively and sound the trumpet; they cannot succeed in attracting a crowd. To pay expenses, they need fifty thousand visitors a day, and they are far from realising their expectations. Fashionable people do not attend since the admission has been reduced to a shilling, and common people do not seem to feel any interest in it. The restaurant is detestable. The American restaurant is the only one that is interesting. There you may order drinks more or less diabolical, which are taken with straws: mint julep, or "corpse reviver." All these drinks are made of gin, more or less disguised.

I have invitations to dinner for every day until the 14th. After that I shall make a visit to Oxford, in order to see Mr. Max Müller, and to examine some old manuscripts in the Bodleian Library. I shall then leave. I am tired to death with British hospitality and with its dinners, all of which seem to have been prepared by the same inexperienced cook. You cannot imagine how eagerly I long to eat my own plain soup. By the way, I do not remember if I told you that my old cook was to leave me, to go to live on her property. She has been with me for thirty-five years. This is exasperating to the last degree, for nothing is so disagreeable to me as new faces.

I do not know which of two important events of the last few days has produced the greater effect: one, the defeat of two favourites at the Derby by an unknown horse; the other, the over-throw of the Tories in the House of Commons. These have overspread London with gloomy countenances, all extremely unpleasant to behold. A young lady in a box swooned away on learning that Marquis was beaten a head's length by a rustic horse minus a pedigree. M. Disraeli puts on a better countenance, for he shows himself at all the balls. Good-bye, dear friend.

CCLII

Paris, July 17, 1862.

I shall not try to express all the regrets I feel. I wish that you might have shared them. If you had had half as much as I, you would have found a means of making others wait for me.

Since your departure I have endured some painful experiences. My poor old Caroline died at my home, after great suffering; so now I am without a cook, and do not know exactly what I shall do. After her death her nieces came to dispute her estate. One of them, however, took her cat, which I intended to keep. She left, it seems, an income of twelve or fifteen hundred francs. It has been demonstrated to

me that she could not have saved that amount from the wages which she earned with me, and yet I do not believe she ever robbed me. If she did, I would agree willingly to be robbed in that way always. I have had a strong desire to have a cat like the late Matifas, who approved of you so heartily, but I am going soon on a journey to the Pyrenees, and I shall have no time to train him.

They tell me the waters of Bagnères-de-Bigorre will do me the most good. I have no faith in their curative powers, but the surrounding mountains are beautiful, and I have friends in the vicinity. M. Panizzi will come for me the 5th of August, and we shall return together by way of Nîmes, Avignon, and Lyons. I shall hope to reach Paris the same time that you do.

Madame de Montijo arrived last week: she is greatly changed, and distressing to see. Nothing consoles her for the death of her daughter, and she seems to me less resigned than when the shock came. I dined last Thursday at Saint Cloud, with a few intimate friends, and enjoyed it not a little. They are less popish, I fancy, than is generally supposed. They allowed me to be as critical as I pleased, without calling me to order. The little prince is charming. He has grown two inches, and is the prettiest child I have ever seen.

To-morrow our work on the Campana Museum will be finished. The sympathisers of the purchasers are enraged, and hurl abuse at us in the papers. We should have a long story to tell if we wished to bring to light all the absurdities they have committed and the rubbish which has been palmed off on them for genuine antiques.

It is horribly warm here, but I do not find it uncomfortable. They say it is good for the grain. Good-bye, dear friend....

CCLIII

Bagnères-de-Bigorre, Villa Laquens, Hautes-Pyrénées, Saturday, August 16, 1862.

Dear Friend: I have been here for three days with M. Panizzi, after a most fatiguing

journey under a frightful sun. He left us (it is the sun of which I speak) day before yesterday, and we are now having weather worthy of London, with fog, and an imperceptible, drizzling rain, which soaks through to your very bones.

I have met here one of my friends, who is the resident physician. He has made a thorough examination of me, punched me in the back and chest, and discovered that I have two mortal diseases, of which he has undertaken to cure me, provided that I drink every day two glasses of warm water, the taste of which is not bad, and which does not give me palpitation of the heart, as ordinary water does. I am to bathe, moreover, in a certain spring of which the water is hot, but which is very agreeable to the skin. It seems to me that the treatment is doing me much good. I have rather disagreeable palpitation in the morning, and I sleep badly, but have a good appetite. According to your manner of reasoning, you will conclude that I am going to have a marvellous cure.

There are few people here, and almost no one of my acquaintance, which pleases me to excess. The crops of Englishmen and prunes have been this year a complete failure.

As for beauties, we have Mademoiselle A. D——, who made at one time a tremendous impression on Prince ——, and on the swells. I do not know what disease she has, I have seen only her back, and she has the most immense crinoline in all the place.

There are two balls given every week, to which I have no intention of going, and amateur concerts, of which I have heard and shall hear but one. Yesterday, I had to undergo high mass, which I attended accompanied by a body-guard; but I declined the invitation of the under-prefect at night, so as not to suffer too great an accumulation of catastrophes in one day.

The country is very lovely, but I have as yet had only a glimpse of it. I shall paint as soon as there is a ray of sunshine. What has become of you? Write to me. I should

love to show you the incomparable verdure of this country, and especially the beauty of the waters, with which crystal would not be a worthy comparison. It would be pleasant to talk with you in the shade of the great beech-trees. Are you still under the charm of the sea and the sea-monsters? Good-bye, dear friend.

CCLIV

Bagnères-de-Bigorre, September 1, 1862.

Dear Friend: I thank you for your letter. I shall send this to N——, since you do not intend to stop in Paris, and I fancy that you have already arrived there.

Speaking of the quarrels of the fisher folk, you have experienced that which happens inevitably to a resident of Paris. The little disputes and the little interests of the provinces seem so petty and so pitiable, that one deplores the condition of people who live there. It is certain, however, that after a few months in the country one does as the natives do: one becomes interested in local affairs, and finally completely provincial. This is sad for human intelligence, but it accepts the nourishment offered, and makes the best of it.

Last week I made an excursion into the mountains to visit a farm belonging to M. Fould. Situated on the border of a small lake, before it lies the most superb panorama imaginable, and immediately surrounding it is a forest of noble trees, something rarely seen in France. One can live there in admirable comfort. M. Fould owns a great many superb horses and cattle, all cared for in the English fashion. I was shown, besides, a jack used for the breeding of mules. He is an enormous beast, as tall as a gigantic stallion, black, and wicked-looking, as if he were enraged. It seems that it is with the greatest difficulty that he can be prevailed upon to show any attention to the mares. A jenny is brought near him, and when his imagination has become fired, the mare is then produced. What do you think of human ingenuity, which has invented all these fine industries? You will be furious with my stories,

and I can see your expression from here.

Society becomes every day more stupid. In this connection, have you read Les Misérables, and heard what is said of it? This is another instance in which I find the human race inferior to that of the gorilla.

The waters are doing me good. I sleep better and have some appetite, although I do not take much exercise, because my companion is not very active. I expect to remain here almost a week still; I may then go to Biarritz, or else into Provence. We have abandoned the plan of making a visit to Lake Majeur, since the house where we were going cannot entertain us at this time. I shall be in Paris, at the very latest, by October 1st.

Good-bye, dear friend; good-bye, and write to me.

CCLV

Biarritz, Villa Eugénie, September 27, 1862.

Dear Friend: I am writing to you still at ——, although I know nothing at all of your movements, but it seems to me that you were not to return so soon to Paris. If, as I hope, you have such weather as ours, you should take advantage of it, and not be in too great a hurry to return to the odours of the asphalt streets of Paris.

I am here beside the sea, and breathing more freely than I have in a long while. The waters of Bagnères were beginning to make me very ill. I was told that this was all the better, as it proved them to be taking effect. The fact is that as soon as I had left Bagnères I felt made over. The sea air, and perhaps also the royal food which I eat here, have finished my cure. It must be admitted that the cooking in the Hotel de —— at Bagnères is the most abominable I have ever seen, and I believe verily that Panizzi and I were undergoing slow poisoning.

There are few people at the villa, and those only agreeable people whom I have

known for a long time. In the city there is no crowd, very few French especially; the Spanish and the Americans predominate. On Thursday, when we receive, it is necessary to put the Americans from the North on one side and the Americans from the South on the other, for fear that they will devour each other.

On this day we dress. The rest of the time we make no attempt at a toilette; the ladies come to dinner in high-necked gowns, and we of the ugly sex in frock-coats. There is not a château in France or England where there is such freedom and absence of etiquette, nor a hostess so gracious and so kind to her guests.

We take charming walks in the valleys that skirt the Pyrenees, and return from them with prodigious appetites. The sea, which ordinarily is extremely rough here, has been for a week surprisingly calm; but it is nothing compared to the Mediterranean, and especially to the sea at Cannes. The bathers appear in the strangest of costumes. There is a Madame ——, who is the colour of a turnip, and she dresses in blue and powders her hair. It is pretended that she puts ashes on her head because of the misfortunes of her country.

In spite of the walks and the food, I manage to work a little. I have written, while at Biarritz and in the Pyrenees, more than half a volume. It is the history of a Cossack hero, which is destined for the Journal des Savants. Speaking of literature, have you read Victor Hugo’s speech at a dinner of Belgian booksellers and other swindlers in Brussels? What a pity that this fellow, who has at his command such beautiful fancies, has not the shadow of good judgment, nor the decency to restrain himself from uttering platitudes unworthy of an honest man! In his comparison of a tunnel with a railway, there is more poetry than I have seen in any book I have read in five or six years; but, for all that, it is all merely fancy. There is no depth, no solidity, no common-sense; he is a man who becomes intoxicated with his own words, and who no longer takes the trouble to think.

The twentieth volume of Thiers pleases me, as it does you. There was, to my mind, a

tremendous difficulty to be met in extracting anything tangible from the immense medley of conversations of Sainte Helena reported by Las Casas, and in this Thiers has succeeded marvellously. I like, also, his views of Napoleon and his comparison of him with other great men. He is a little severe on Alexander and on Caesar; yet there is much truth in what he says of the absence of virtue on the part of Caesar. Here, everybody is intensely interested in the book, and I fear there is far too much affection for the hero; for instance, they are unwilling to admit the truth of the anecdote of Nicomedes; nor you either, I fancy.

Good-bye, dear friend. Take good care of yourself, and do not sacrifice yourself too much for others, because it will become a habit with you, and that which you do to-day with pleasure you may be obliged some day to do with pain. Good-bye again.

CCLVI

Paris, October 23, 1862.

Dear Friend: I have had an exciting time since the beginning of the month; this is the reason for my delay in answering your letter. I returned from Biarritz with the sovereigns. We were all in a doleful state, having been poisoned, I think, with verdigris. The cooks swear that they scoured their utensils, but I do not believe in their protestations. The fact is that fourteen persons at the villa were seized with vomiting and cramps. I have been poisoned before with verdigris, so that I know the symptoms of it, and persist in my opinion.

I remained in Paris a few days, running about and attending to business matters, and then went to Marseilles, to the christening of the China steam-packets. You understand that this ceremony required my presence. These boats are so beautiful, and have such comfortable little state-rooms, that they give you the desire to go to China. I resisted, however, and contented myself by taking a sun-bath at Marseilles.

You have divined, perhaps, the meaning of my reference to the turmoil in which I

was engaged on my return from Biarritz—political affairs, if you please. I was divided between my wish to see M. Fould remain in the ministry, in the interest of the Master, and my wish to see him resign, in the interest of his dignity, and in his own interest. The result has been concessions which have benefited no one, and which seem to me to have been degrading to everybody concerned.

The most absurd part of the business has been that Persigny, whom none of the ministers, with the exception of the papists, can endure, has become their standard-bearer, and his retention has been made a condition of holding their portfolios. Thus, Thouvenel, an excellent and intelligent fellow, has been dismissed, and Persigny, who is a fool and who has no understanding of affairs, retained. Now we are in the clutches of the clericals for no one knows how long, and you know how they treat their friends.

You seem to me to be too much affected by Victor Hugo's speech. It is words without ideas; somewhat in prose like Les Orientales. To attune yourself to good prose, I commend you to read one of Madame de Sévigné's letters, and, if you still have a taste for common-sense and ideas, read the twentieth volume of Thiers, which is the best of all. I have read it twice, the second time with more pleasure than the first, and I do not say that I shall not read it once more.

I should like to know something of your plans. I will tell you my own. I expect to go to Compiègne towards the 8th of next month, and remain there until after the Empress's fête—that is, until the 18th or 20th. Before or after that time, may I not see you? It seems to me that the country must be very cold and damp at this season, and that you should think of returning....

Good-bye, dear friend. I hope you are still in good appetite and health.

CCLVII

Paris, November 5, 1862.

Dear Friend: I am invited to Compiègne until the 18th. I shall be in Paris the 10th, until three o'clock, and hope to see you. Write to me and tell me a great deal about yourself. I disapprove strongly of your new literary taste. I am now reading a book which might, however, interest you; it is the history of the revolt of the Netherlands, by Motley. I will send it to you, if you wish. There are no less than five thick volumes; and while not specially well written, it reads easily, and interests me no little. He has much anticatholic and antimonarchical partiality; but his researches have been extensive, and although an American, he is a man of talent.

I have taken cold, and have pain in my lungs. You will hear some day that I have ceased to breathe for lack of this organ. This should make you treat me with great kindness, before the arrival of such a misfortune. Good-bye, dear friend....

CCLVIII

Cannes, December 5, 1862.

Dear Friend: I arrived here between two deluges, and for four days I thought there was no longer any sun even at Cannes. When it once begins to rain in this land, it is no joke. The fields between Cannes and the Estérel were transformed into a lake, and it was impossible to stick one's head out of doors. Still, in the midst of this down-pour the air was mild and agreeable to breathe. Since I became asthmatic, I have been as sensitive in the matter of air as the Romans are respecting water.

That condition of affairs, fortunately, did not last long. The sun reappeared radiant three days ago, and since then, I have kept my windows open all the time, and am almost too warm. It is only the flies which remind me of the vexations of life.

Before leaving Paris, I consulted a celebrated doctor, for since my return from Compiègne I believed myself to be in a very serious state, and I wanted to know how soon I should have to arrange for my funeral. I am pleased enough with having consulted him, in the first place, because he assured me that this ceremony would

not take place as soon as I had feared; in the second place, because he explained to me, anatomically, and with perfect clearness, the cause of my illness. I supposed my heart was affected; not so at all; it is my lung. It is true that I shall never be cured, but there are means by which I may be spared suffering; which is a great deal, if not the principal consideration.

You can form no idea of the beauty of the country after all these rains. May roses are in bloom everywhere; jasmines are beginning to bloom, as also quantities of wild flowers, each more beautiful than the others. I should like to take a course in botany with you in the neighbouring woods; you would see whether they are not equal to those at Bellevue.

I have received, I know not from whom, the last book of M. Gustave Flaubert, the author of Madame Bovary, which you have read, I fancy, although you will not admit that you have. I suppose he had talent, which he was squandering under the pretext of realism. He has just perpetrated a new novel, called Salammbô. In any other place than Cannes, particularly, where there was nothing to read but La Cuisinière Bourgeoise, I should not have opened this volume. It is a story of Carthage several years before the Second Punic War. By reading Bouillet and some other works of the same class, the author has acquired a sort of false erudition, and he accompanies this with a lyricism imitated from the very worst of Victor Hugo’s. There are passages which will please you, doubtless, since, like all persons of your sex, you like magniloquence. As for me, I detest it, and it has made me furious.

Since I have been here, and especially since the rain, I have continued my Cossack article. It will take long, I fear, to finish. I shall send soon to Paris a second instalment, and there will be more to follow. I discover that I forgot to bring with me a map of Poland, and I am embarrassed in writing Polish names, of which I have only the Russian translation. If you have within your reach some means of ascertaining it, will you endeavour to find out if a city which in Russian is called

Lwow, is not perhaps the same as Lemberg in Galicia? You will be doing me a great service.

Good-bye, dear friend, I hope winter is not using you too severely, and that you are taking care to avoid colds. Is your little niece still amiable? Do not spoil her, so that she will store up future unhappiness for herself.

I wish you would go to see the comedy of my friend M. Augier, and that you would give me your candid opinion of it. Good-bye once more.

CCLIX

Cannes, January 3, 1863.

Dear Friend: I began the year badly enough, in my bed, with a very painful attack of lumbago, which did not allow me even the privilege of turning over. This is what you get in these beautiful climates, where, so long as the sun is above the horizon, you imagine that it is summer, but where immediately after sunset comes a quarter of an hour of damp chilliness that penetrates to the very marrow of your bones. It is precisely as in Rome, with the difference that here it is rheumatism, and there fever, against which one must guard. To-day my back has regained some of its elasticity, and I have begun to walk.

I have had a visit from my old friend M. Ellice, who spent twenty-four hours with me and renewed my stock of news, and my ideas, which had become strikingly shrivelled by my sojourn in Provence. Everything considered, this is the only inconvenience of living away from Paris. One soon comes to be a log when one does not share the tastes of my friend, M. de Laprade, who would like to be an oak. This transformation has in it nothing agreeable.

If I continue to improve I think of returning to Paris on the 18th or 20th, to hear the discussion of the address, which they tell me will be warm and interesting. After having paid my respects, I shall come back to the sunshine; for if I had to endure the

sleets and winds and mud of Paris in February, I should assuredly kick the bucket....

You are wrong not to read Salammbô. It is perfectly mad, it is true, and it contains even more of anguish and more of abominations than the Vie de Chmielnicki; but, after all, it has talent, and one gains an amusing idea of the author, and one even more droll of his admirers, the bourgeois, who wish to discuss affairs with honest folk. It is these same bourgeois whom my friend, M. Augier, has ridiculed so well. I am assured that no one with any self-respect will confess that he has been to see Le Fils de Giboyer. For all that, the cash-box of the theatre, and the purse of the author are filled to overflowing.

I recommend you to read in the Revue des Deux Mondes of the 15th, a novel by M. de Tourguenieff, the proofs of which I am expecting here, and which I have read in Russian. It is called Fathers and Sons, and its theme is the contrast of the past generation with that of the present. The hero of the story is the representative of the rising generation, a socialist, materialist, and realist, but a man, nevertheless, who is intelligent and interesting. He is a singular character, and would please you, I hope. This novel has produced a tremendous sensation in Russia, and there has been a strong outcry against the author, who has been accused of impiety and immorality. When a work excites thus the furious invective of the public, it is, in my opinion, a sufficient proof of its success.

I think I shall have to make you read again the second part of Chmielnicki, the proofs of which I corrected while I was ill on my back. You will see in the book an enormous quantity of Cossacks impaled, and Jews burned alive.

I shall be in Paris, not to hear the address of the crown, but only the discussion of the address—that is, I suppose, about the 20th or the 21st; still, if it were more convenient for your personal plans, I might hasten my arrival.

Good-bye, dear friend. I wish you health and happiness, and no lumbago. Good-bye. Do not forget me.

CCLX

Cannes, January 28, 1863.

Dear Friend: I was preparing to start for Paris, and expected to be there the 20th, when I was seized with another attack of my spasms of the stomach. I had a terrible cold, with most distressing choking, and kept my bed for a week. The physician told me that if I were to return to Paris before being entirely cured I should certainly have a relapse, which would be more serious than my present illness, so I shall remain where I am for another fortnight. I understand, besides, that the discussion of the address will be uninteresting, and that everything will pass quietly and quickly.

At present I am pretty well, a little weakly still, but I am beginning to go out again and to lead my usual life. The weather is admirable: this climate, however, is somewhat treacherous, and less than any one else I should allow myself to be deceived by it. So long as the sun is above the horizon one would suppose it was June; five minutes after sunset, however, arises a penetrating dampness. It is from admiring the beautiful sunsets too long that I have been ill.

They tell me that you have had no severe cold, but fog and rain. Around about us an incredible amount of snow has fallen, and nothing is lovelier at this time than the sight of the mountains all white with snow, surrounding our little green oasis.

How have you spent your time? Have you escaped catching cold and what sort of a life are you leading? I devote my evenings to writing for the Journal des Savants. That beast of a Chmielnicki is not yet dead, and will cost me, I fear, two more articles still before I can write his funeral oration. I have already written two as long as the one you read, and as abundant in impalements, flayings, and other pleasantries of the kind. I am apprehensive lest it is too much like Salammbô. You must tell me your candid opinion, if you come across this rare Journal des Savants, which the ignorant persist in neglecting to read in spite of its worth.

We have had a tragedy in our neighbourhood. A pretty English girl was burned fatally at a ball. Her mother, in trying to rescue her, was burned also. Both died in three or four days. The husband, who was burned also, is still ill. This is the eighteenth woman of my acquaintance to whom this has happened. Why do you wear crinoline? You should set an example. It is only necessary to turn around before the chimney-place, or to look at one's self in the mirror (there is one always above the fireplace), to be roasted alive. It is true that one dies but once, and that it is a great source of satisfaction to exhibit a monstrous bustle, as if any one could be deceived by a balloon full of air! Why do you not have a metallic curtain before your chimney-place?

It seems that they are becoming more religious in Paris. I receive sermons from people from whom I should have expected something quite different. I am told that M. de Persigny came out as an ultra-papist in the committee of the Address to the Senate. Well and good, I do not believe there has ever been a period in the history of the world when it was more stupid than it is in this age. All this will last while it may, but the end is a little terrifying. Good-bye, dear friend.

CCLXI

Paris, April 26, 1863.

Dear Friend: As I was not counting on your travelling tortoise fashion, I did not write to you at Genoa. I am addressing this letter to Florence, where I hope that you will stop for a time. Of all the cities of Italy that I know, it has best retained its characteristics of the Middle Ages. Only be careful not to catch cold, if you stay on the Lung' Arno, as all respectable people do.

As for Rome, it has been so long since I was there that I am unable to advise you about it. I shall offer you suggestions only on the two following points: first, do not be out in the air at twilight, because you might easily catch the fever. A quarter of an

hour before the Angelus you should go to Saint Peter's, and wait there until the peculiar dampness which arises just at that time should have passed. There is nothing, moreover, more beautiful as a place of reverie than this great church at the fall of day. In the dimness, when all is seen indistinctly, it is truly sublime. Think of me there.

My second suggestion is, if you should have a rainy day, employ it by visiting the Catacombs. While you are there, go into one of the small corridors opening on the subterranean streets, extinguish your candle, and remain alone there three or four minutes. You must tell me the sensations which you felt. It would be a pleasure to me to make the experiment with you, but then you would not feel, perhaps, the same emotions.

It has never happened to me to see in Rome what I had intended to see, because one is attracted on every street-corner by something unexpected, and it is a great pleasure to yield one's self to that sensation. I advise you, also, not to devote too much time to visiting palaces, which are for the most part overestimated.

Pay special attention to the frescos, regarding them from an artistic standpoint, and to views of nature blended with art. I commend to you the view of Rome and of its surroundings seen from Saint Peter's in Montorio. You will see there, also, a very beautiful fresco of the Vatican. Be sure to see at the Capitol the Wolf of the Republic, which bears the trace of the lightning which struck it in the time of Cicero. It is not a thing of yesterday.

Make up your mind that you will not be able to see the hundredth part of what you wish to see, in the short time that you can devote to your journey, but you need have few regrets on that score. There will remain with you a memory of the whole, which is far better than a lot of petty memories of details.

I am feeling infinitely better, and regret your departure. I will say to you, however, and to your sister, that you have done well to take advantage of the opportunity to

see Rome. There remains only the question of damages due me, which I pray you to keep in mind; I hope you will sometimes think of this.

There is not a beautiful place which I have seen, where I have not regretted my inability to associate you with it in my memory.

Good-bye, dear friend. Let me hear from you often, a few lines only; enjoy yourself, and come back in good condition. When I know that you are in Rome I shall give you some commissions. Good-bye again.

CCLXII

Paris, May 20, 1863.

Dear Friend: I am writing to you with an abominable grippe. For two weeks I have coughed instead of sleeping, and I have frequent attacks of choking. The only remedy is to take laudanum, and this gives me headache and stomach-ache, which are as distressing as the cough and the choking. In short, I feel weak and avvilito, and I am going to the dogs, my health and myself.

I hope it is not the same with you. I believe I have cautioned you to guard against the dampness accompanying the sunset in the country where you are now. Take care never to get cold, even if you should be too warm. I envy you for being in that beautiful land, where one feels a melancholy that is sweet and agreeable, which he recalls afterwards with an emotion of pleasure: but to make the comparison better, I wish you would go to Naples for a week. Of all transitions, it is the most abrupt and the most amusing that I know. It has, moreover, the advantage of comedy after tragedy; one falls asleep with his head full of comical thoughts.

I do not know whether the science of cooking has made any advancement in the states of the Holy Father. In my time it was the abomination of desolation, while in Naples one managed to subsist. It is possible that the political revolutions have laid equally low the cookery of both Rome and Naples, and that, epicure as you are, you

will find them both bad.

We are thriving here on the experiences which have happened, or have been ascribed to Madame de ——. What is certain is that she is crazy enough to be bound. She beats her servants, she slaps and strikes people, and makes love to several fast fellows at the same time. She pushes her Anglomania to the point of drinking brandy and water—that is to say, a great deal more of the former than the latter.

The other evening she introduced her foppish lover to President Troplong, by saying, “Monsieur le President, I present to you my darling.” M. Troplong replied that he was happy to make the acquaintance of M. Darling. If what I hear of the reigning society women of this year is true, it is to be feared that the end of the world is at hand. I dare not tell you all that is done in Paris among the young representatives of the rising generation!

I hoped that you would relate some incidents of your journey, or at least that you would share your impressions with me. It is always a pleasure for me to know how things appear to you. Do not forget to look at the statue of Pompey, which is probably the one at the base of which Caesar was assassinated; and if you discover the shop of a man named Cades, who sells imitation antiques and pottery, buy me an intaglio of some beautiful stone. If you should go through Civita Vecchia, go to a curio merchant named Bucci, give him my regards, and thank him for the plaster cast of Beyle which he sent me. You can purchase from him for a song black Etruscan vases, engraved gems, and other things of the kind. You can decorate your mantel charmingly with those black vases.

Good-bye, dear friend. Keep well, and think sometimes of me.

CCLXIII

Paris, Friday, June 12, 1863.

Dear Friend: I learn with great pleasure of your return to France, and with even greater pleasure of your intention to be in Paris soon. It seems to me that the trouble you took to be coquettish in order to work that unfortunate Bucci was truly extraordinary. If I had given you a letter of introduction to him, according to my intention, you might have carried away his whole shop, without the necessity of resorting to the process of wheedling so habitual to you. Indeed, he is a fine man to have retained an affection for Beyle, whose only resource he was during his exile at Civita Vecchia. It would have been better to have induced him to speak of the pontifical government. If he had been as sincere as he was gallant, he would have given you more information on that subject than all the ambassadors in Rome. The long and the short of that information would be, to tell you what you already know, I hope....

I leave the 21st for Fontainebleau, which will prevent me, it may be, from going to Germany, as I had planned, the end of this month. I shall be there until July 5th—that is to say, until the end of the sojourn. I think you will have returned next week, and that I shall see you before my departure. I hope this will decide you to come a little earlier, if need be.

You do not refer to your health. I suppose that, in spite of the wretched papal cooking, you are returning in good condition. I have had influenza constantly, more or less, and have been wheezy as usual, in the bargain. The stay at Fontainebleau will certainly finish me up, according to all the indications. I will tell you why I did not endeavour to escape this honour.

I am thinking of taking a short trip to Germany this summer, in order to see the propylons of my friend, M. Klenze, in Munich, and also to take the waters which have been advised for me, but in which I have no great faith. As I am unaccustomed to being ill, I persevere tenaciously in trying to get well, and if I do not succeed, I do not wish it to be from any fault of mine.

You have not dared, probably, to read Mademoiselle de la Quintinie, while you were on holy ground. It is mediocre. The book has but one pretty scene. In novels I know of nothing new that is worthy of your wrath. Chmielnicki is in its fifth article, which I am now correcting, and it is not the final one. I will give you the proofs, if you like, if you can read them not corrected.

Good-bye, dear friend. I should be glad if you would decide to hasten your return.

CCLXIV

Palace of Fontainebleau, Thursday, July 2, 1863.

Dear Friend: I should have liked to reply sooner to your letter, which gave me much pleasure; but here one has no time for anything, and the days pass with an astonishing rapidity without knowing how. The important and principal occupations are eating, drinking, and sleeping. I am successful in respect to the first two, but not as to the last. It is a very poor preparation for sleep to spend three or four hours in tight trousers, rowing on the lake, and catching a terrible cold. There are a number of people here, well selected, it seems to me, and much less official than usual; which contributes to the cordial relations between the guests. Now and then we take walks in the woods, after dining on the grass like the milliners of the rue Saint Denis.

Several immense chests were brought here day before yesterday from his Majesty Tu-Duc, the Emperor of Cochin-China. They were opened in one of the court-yards. Within the large chest were smaller ones painted red and gold, and covered with roaches. The first which was opened contained two very yellow elephant tusks, and two rhinoceros horns, plus a package of mouldy cinnamon. From all this there arose inconceivable odours, something between rancid butter and spoiled fish. In the other chest were quantities of rolls of very narrow stuffs resembling gauze, in all sorts of hideous colours, all more or less soiled, and, moreover, mouldy. They had promised to send some gold medallions, but they did not come, and have remained, probably,

in China. The inference is that this great Emperor of Cochin-China is a fraud.

We went yesterday to see the manœuvres of two regiments of cavalry, and were horribly roasted. All the ladies are sun-burned. To-day we are going to have a Spanish dinner in the forest, and I am charged with the gaspacho—that is, to make the ladies eat raw onions. The mere mention of this vegetable would cause them to faint. I have given orders that they are not to be warned, and after they have eaten the onions I reserve to myself the privilege of making a confession, in the manner of that of Atræus.

I am delighted that my Cossack[30] has not bored you to death. For my own part I am beginning to be very tired of him. It is absolutely necessary to bury him the first of next month, and I do not know how to bring it about. Although I brought my notes and books with me, I can not succeed in accomplishing any work here.

Good-bye, dear friend. I expect to be here until Monday, or Tuesday at the latest. At the same time, they pretend that on account of our extreme amiability, they wish to hold us here several days still. I hope to find you in Paris when I come. Again good-bye.

CCLXV

London, August 12, 1863.

Dear Friend: I thank you for your letter, which I was expecting impatiently. I thought I should find London empty, and, indeed, that was the first impression which I received. But after two days I perceived that the great ant-hill was still inhabited, and especially, alas! that they ate as much and as long as they did last year. Is not the slowness with which people dine in this country inhuman? It even takes away my appetite. One is never less than two hours and a half at table, and if we add the half hour in which the men leave the women to speak ill of them, it is always eleven o’clock when we return to the drawing-room. It would be only half

bad if we were eating all the time; but with the exception of roast mutton, I find nothing to my taste.

The great men seem to me to have aged a little since my last visit. Lord Palmerston has renounced his false teeth, which make an immense change in his appearance. He has retained his whiskers, and looks like a gorilla that is slightly tipsy. Lord Russell has a less good-humoured expression than formerly. The great beauties of the season have departed, but they were not praised as anything extraordinary. The toilets seem to me, as usual, very common and shabby; but nothing can resist the air of this country. My throat is an evidence of it. I am as hoarse as a wolf, and breathe very badly.

I fancy that you must be having cooler weather than we, and that the sea-baths will give you an appetite. I am beginning to be bored with London and the English, and shall be in Paris before the 25th. And you? I have read a rather amusing book, The History of George III, by a Mr. Phillimore, who makes out this prince to be a rascal and a fool. It is very witty, and convincing enough. I paid twenty francs for the last work of Borrow, The Wild Wales. If you want to pay fifteen francs for it, I shall be charmed to turn it over to you. But you will not want it at any price. The fellow has altogether deteriorated. Good-bye, dear friend.

CCLXVI

Paris, August 30, 1863.

I go to-morrow to Biarritz with Panizzi, who joined me here yesterday. We are invited by our gracious sovereign, who will entertain us at the sea-shore for I know not how long. I shall settle in Cannes during October, returning to Paris for the discussion of the address, and remaining here, probably, all the month of November. In spite of presidents and sea-monsters, I hope to see you at that time.

I have an extremely curious book, which I will lend you if you are good and kind to

me. It is an account of a trial of the Seventeenth Century, related by an imbecile. A nun belonging to his Majesty's family was in love with a Milanese gentleman, and as there were other nuns to whom this was displeasing, they killed her, aided by her lover. It is highly edifying, and, as an exponent of the morals of the time, very interesting.

Read Une Saison à Paris, by Madame de ——. She is a person abounding in candour, who felt a keen desire to make herself agreeable to his majesty, and said so to him at a ball in terms so categoric and so definite, that nobody in the world, except yourself, would have failed to understand her. He was so astounded that he found nothing to say in reply, and it was only after three days, so they say, that he repulsed her. I can imagine you making the sign of the cross and that horrified face with which I am so familiar.

Have you read Renan's Life of Jesus? Probably not. It is a small book, but full of import. 'Tis like a great blow of an axe on the edifice of Catholicism. The author is so terrified by his own audacity in denying the divinity of Christ, that he loses himself in hymns of praise and adoration, until he has no longer the philosophic understanding which enables him to decide on questions of doctrine. It is interesting, however, and if you have not already done so, you will read it with pleasure.

I have my packing to do, and so I must leave you. My address until the new order is established will be Villa Eugénie, Biarritz (Basses-Pyrénées). Write to me quickly. Good-bye.

CCLXVII

Cannes, October 19, 1863.

Dear Friend: I have been here a week, resting in the desert from the fatigues of the court. The weather is magnificent. I see in the paper that your Loire is overflowing its banks; from which I conclude that you are having frightful storms, and I pity you

from the bottom of my heart.

I shall enjoy Provence but a fortnight longer, as I must return for the opening of the session. I am not sanguine over it. The death of M. Billault makes it an unpropitious beginning. For some time past I have talked assiduously, preached and persuaded M. Thiers to preach likewise, but I do not know what will be the result. It seems to me that we are drawing nearer and nearer our former parliamentary course, and that we are about to repeat once more the cycle of the same mistakes, and perhaps the same catastrophes. See, in addition, the strenuous efforts on the part of the clericals to make themselves detested, and to stretch the cord until it snaps. All this is enough to make one pessimistic concerning the future.

You have heard that on our journey here we were derailed near Saint Chamas. I was not at all affected, not even by fear, for I did not realise the danger until it was past. The only persons injured were the mail-clerks, who were thrown in a heap among their tables and chests. They came out of it with severe bruises, but no broken limbs.

Have you read the charge of the Bishop of Tulle, who orders all the pious ones of his diocese to recite Aves in honour of M. Renan, or, rather, to prevent the devil from carrying off everybody, because of this same M. Renan’s book?

Since you are reading the letters of Cicero, you must see that in his age people had more wit than in ours. I am overwhelmed with shame every time I think of our nineteenth century, which I find in every respect so inferior to its predecessors.

I believe I made you read the Lettres de la Duchesse de Choiseul. I wish some one to-day would try to publish those of our most beautiful society woman. I leave you to go fishing, or, rather, to see other people fish, for I have never succeeded in landing a fish. The best part of it is that on the sea-shore they make an excellent soup for those who like oil and garlic. I suppose you are among this class.

Shall I find you in Paris early in November? I am expecting to be able to remain there all the month, except a few days, perhaps, at Compiègne, if my sovereign

invites me there for his fête-day. Good-bye, dear friend.

CCLXVIII

Château de Compiègne, November 16, 1863. At night.

Dear Friend: Since my arrival here I have led the exciting life of an impresario. I have been author, actor, and stage director. We have played, with success, a piece which is somewhat immoral, the theme of which I will tell you on my return. We have had beautiful fireworks, although a woman who wished to see them too closely was killed outright. We take long walks, and until the present I have succeeded in escaping from all these diversions without catching cold.

I shall be held here for another week. I shall remain in Paris, probably, until early in December, and shall then return to Cannes, which I left with nature abloom. It is impossible to imagine anything more beautiful than those fields of jasmines and tuberoses. I am not feeling very well, and the last few days especially I have been good for nothing and despondent.

You write to me so laconically, that you never reply to my questions. You have a way of acting in accordance with your caprices which perplexes me always; you jest, you make promises; when I read your letters I fancy I hear your voice speaking. I am disarmed, but in reality furious.

You tell me nothing about that charming child in whom you are so interested. Bring her up, I pray you, so that she will not become as silly as most of the women of our time. Never, I think, has anything like it been seen. You will tell me what they are in the provinces. If they are worse than in Paris, I can not imagine in what desert one may escape them.

We have stopping here Mademoiselle ——, who is a lovely slip of a girl five feet four inches in height, with all the gracefulness of a grisette, and a blending of easy manners with sincere timidity which is sometimes most amusing. Some one

expressed apprehension that the second part of a charade would not equal the introduction (of which I was the author).

“That is all right,” she said; “we will show our legs in the ballet, and that will compensate them for everything else.”

N. B.—Her legs are like two pipe-stems, and her feet not exactly aristocratic.

Good-bye, dear friend....

CCLXIX

Paris, Friday, December 12, 1863.

Dear Friend: I was about to write to you when I received your letter. You complain of having a cold, but you do not know what it means to have one. At this moment, but one person in Paris has a cold, and that person is myself. I spend my time coughing and choking, and if it continues, you will soon have to deliver my funeral oration. I am longing anxiously for Cannes, for it is only under its sun that I shall get well. Before going, however, I must vote on that tedious and involved discourse which our president, so worthy of his name,[31] has composed for our edification.

Do you know Aristophanes? Last night, being troubled with insomnia, I took up a volume and read it through. It was highly amusing. I have made a translation of it, none too good a one, but it is subject to your orders. There are things which will be shocking to your prudery, but they will interest you, especially now that you have learned from Cicero something of the morals of the ancients. Good-bye....

CCLXX

Cannes, January 12, 1864.

Dear Friend: I was seriously ill on my arrival here. I brought from Paris an abominable cold, and it is only during the last two days that I have begun to feel like

myself. I do not know what would have become of me if I had remained in Paris, for I see by the papers that you are having snow. The weather here is admirable, with seldom a cloud, and a temperature which is usually at least 14 degrees. Occasionally, the east wind brings us a touch of snow caught from the Alps, but we are in a favoured oasis. They tell us that all the surrounding country is under snow. At Marseilles, at Toulon, and even at Hyères, it is said the ground is covered. I imagine a citizen of Marseilles in the snow as something like a cat walking on ice with nut-shells on his paws. It is a long time, even at Cannes, since such a lovely, mild winter has been known.

I am charmed that Aristophanes had the honour of pleasing you. You ask me if the Athenian ladies were present at the theatrical representations? There are men of learning who say Yes, and others who say No. If you had gone to see Karagueuz when you visited the Orient, you would have found, no doubt, many women there. In Eastern countries to-day, and formerly in antiquity, there is not and there never has been any of the false modesty which you have. One saw at every glance men in bathing costumes, and on every public square were statues of gods which gave ladies an exaggerated idea of the human form.

What is the name of that comedy in which Euripides is dressed as a woman? Do you understand the stage setting, and the part of the Scythian gendarme? What is more extraordinary than anything else is the unceremonious fashion in which Aristophanes speaks of the gods, even on their festival days, for it was at the Dionysia that the play of The Frogs was given, wherein Bacchus takes a singular rôle.

The same thing occurred during the early period of Christianity. Comedy was played in the churches. There was a Mass of the Fools and a Mass of the Ass, the text of which is still extant in a very curious manuscript. The wicked have spoiled everything by doubting. When faith was universal, all was permissible.

Besides the absurdities which Aristophanes throws, like lumps of salt, into his plays, there are choruses of the most exquisite poetry. My revered teacher, M. Boissonade, used to say that no other Greek writer had written better poetry. If you have not read it already, I recommend to you The Clouds. It is, to my mind, the best of his plays that have been preserved. In it there occurs a dialogue between the Just and the Unjust, which is in the most elevated style. I think there is some truth in the reproaches which he addresses to Socrates. Even after having heard him in Plato, one is tempted to forgive him the hemlock. A man who proves to every one, as Socrates did, that he is a fool, is a plague.

I have just read that the conspiracies are beginning again. I have no doubt that those Italian devils, and those no less Polish devils, would like to set the world on fire; and the world, unhappily, is so stupid that it will allow it to be done. I have had letters from Italy which cause me to fear that Garibaldi and his volunteers will in the spring undertake some movement against Venice. It needs but some calamity of that sort to finish us up entirely.

Good-bye, dear friend. I try to think as little as possible of the future. Keep well, and think of me now and then. Have you any suggestion for the 14th of February, Sainte-Eulalie’s fête-day? Again good-bye.

CCLXXI

Cannes, February 17, 1864.

Dear Friend: Since you have been willing to take the trouble to read Aristophanes, I will forgive your affectations and your prudishness in reading him. Admit, however, that he is very witty, and that it would be a great pleasure to see one of his comedies played. I do not know what the opinion of erudites of our day is on the presence of women at the theatre. It is probable that there were in the same country periods of tolerance and of intolerance, but women never appeared on the stage. Their parts

were played by men, which was all the easier, since the actors invariably wore masks....

I am desperately ill, dear friend, and realise that I am on the way to a better world, through a path which is not the most agreeable. From time to time, the intervals of which are much more frequent than formerly, I have convulsions, and attacks of severe pain. I scarcely ever sleep; I have no appetite, and suffer from weakness, which is most exasperating. The least exercise exhausts me.

What will become of me when, instead of a magnificent sky, I shall have the leaden skies of Paris, and constant rain and fog! I am thinking, nevertheless, of returning by the end of this month, if I have the strength, for I am somewhat ashamed of doing none of my official duties. It is necessary to sacrifice one's self, and I reconcile myself to it, whatever may befall.

Since I have already waited so long, I will wait longer for Sainte-Eulalie's gift. So far as pins and rings are concerned, I fancy the embarrassment is the same as of old. Her bureau-drawers have been overcrowded with them ever since I first began to remember my cousin's fête-day. I have exhausted every variety of trinkets possible to imagine. If you have discovered anything out of the ordinary, which is not ruinous, you will have solved a tremendous problem.

There is another and still more interesting one on which I shall be obliged to consult you. It is how I shall manage, in a legitimate way or otherwise, to have some clothes sent me from London. Among your sea-dogs, it is not impossible that there is some one by whom Mr. Poole might send my clothes. Think about this, and you will render me a great service.

Good-bye, dear friend. I have had a wretched night, and coughed enough to split my cranium. I hope you have escaped all the forms of cold which are so prevalent. In Paris it seems that every one is afflicted, and that some people even are stupid enough to die of it. Good-bye again.

CCLXXII

Friday, March 18, 1864.

I am writing to you in the Luxembourg, while the Archbishop of Rouen is thundering away at impiety. I have been very ill; I never have two good days successively, but frequently several bad ones. I am not yet sure that I shall be in any condition to go to Germany, as I had planned. It will depend on the weather and on my lungs.

I am still tied in the Luxembourg, but we shall finish the engagement, I hope, next week, and I shall then be freer. If you have not yet seen in the Louvre the new hall where the collection of vases and terra-cottas are placed, you would do well to go there. I offer you the light of my knowledge to accompany you there. You will see some things which are very beautiful, and others which will interest you, although they may shock your prudery. Appoint your day and hour.

CCLXXIII

Wednesday, April 13, 1864.

Dear Friend: I regretted keenly your departure. You ought to have bidden me one more farewell. You would have found me decidedly blue. In spite of arsenic and the rest, I suffer constantly from exhaustion. After the cold abated, I was beginning to feel better, but I have taken a cold which casts me down lower than ever.

I seldom go out; still I was anxious to see my sovereigns, whom I found in excellent health. This visit gave me an opportunity of seeing the new fashions, which I do not altogether admire, especially the basques worn by the women. This is a sign that I am growing old. I can not endure the hair-dressing. There is not a single woman who dresses her hair to suit her face; they all follow the style of wigged heads. I met one of my friends who presented me to his wife. She is a young and pretty woman,

but she had a foot of rouge, pencilled eyelashes, and was powdered. She disgusted me.

Have you read About's book? I have it, and it is at your service. I do not know whether it is a success; nevertheless it is very witty. The clericals, perhaps, had good sense enough not to anathematise it, which is the most positive way of insuring the popularity of a book. It is in this way that the success of Renan, pecuniarily speaking, was achieved. I am told that he made a hundred and seventy thousand francs by his idyl.

I have still, subject to your orders, three immense volumes of Taine on the history of English literature. It is both witty and sensible. The style is somewhat affected, but it is delightful reading. I have also two volumes of Mézières on an analogous subject, the contemporaries and successors of Shakespeare. It is Taine warmed over, or, rather, cooled down. As for novels, I no longer read them.

We nominate to-morrow in the Academy either the Marseillais Autran or Jules Janin. Apparently, it will be the former. My candidate will be defeated. I have promised myself to go to the Academy no more, except to collect my allowance, eighty-three francs, twenty-three centimes, every month. During the next two years the mortality among the members will be frightful. I examined yesterday the faces of my colleagues; not to mention my own, one would suppose them to be people awaiting the coming of the grave-digger. I can not imagine who will be elected to replace them.

When shall you return? You spoke of remaining a fortnight only at ——; but I suppose that you will, as usual, string out that fortnight into a long month. I desire earnestly to see you soon and take a walk, as we used to do, admiring radiant nature. It would be for me a rare occasion to enjoy a little poetry.

Farewell, dear friend. Write to me. If you have at your disposal none but the town library, you would do well to read Lucian, in the translation of Pierrot d'Ablancourt,

or some one else; it would amuse you, and indulge your Hellenic tastes.

I am deep in a history of Peter the Great, which I mean to share with the public. He was an abominable man, surrounded by abominable scamps. His history amuses me no little.

Write to me as soon as you have received my letter.

CCLXXIV

London, British Museum, July 21, 1864.

Dear Friend: You have guessed my retreat. I have been here since the last time we met, or, to speak more exactly, since the following day. I spend my time, from eight at night until midnight, in dining out, and the morning in examining books and statues, or else in writing my long article on the son of Peter the Great, to which I am tempted to give the title: On the Danger of Being Stupid, for the moral to be drawn from my work is the necessity of being clever.

I think you will find, here and there, in a score of pages, some things which would interest you, notably how Peter the Great was deceived by his wife. I have translated with great care and pains the letters of his wife to her lover, who was impaled for his trouble. They are really better than one would expect of the time and country in which she wrote, but love works miracles. It was a misfortune that she did not know how to spell, which makes it extremely difficult for grammarians like myself to guess what she means.

These are my plans: I am to go, Monday, to Chevenings, to visit Lord Stanhope, where I shall stay three days. Thursday I shall dine here with a large company, leaving immediately afterwards for Paris.

They talk of nothing here but the marriage of Lady Florence Paget, the London beauty of two seasons ago. It is impossible to see a prettier face or a more graceful

figure, but too small and delicate to suit my own taste. She was notorious for her flirtations. M. Ellice's nephew, Chaplin, of whom you have often heard me speak, a tall fellow of twenty-five, with an income of twenty-five thousands pounds sterling, fell in love with her. She trifled with him a long time, then engaged herself, and it is said, accepted jewels and six thousand pounds to pay her debts with the dressmaker. The day for the marriage was appointed. Last Friday, they went together to the park and to the opera. Saturday morning she went out alone, proceeded to the Church of Saint George, and there was married to Lord Hastings, a young man of her own age, very homely, and with two petty vices, gambling and drink. After the religious ceremony they went to the country to consummate other ceremonies.

At the first stop she wrote to her father as follows:

"Dear Pa: As I knew you would never consent to my marriage with Lord Hastings, I was wedded to him to-day. I remain yours, etc."

She wrote also to Chaplin:

"Dear Harry: When you receive this, I shall be the wife of Lord Hastings. Forget yours, very truly,

Florence."

This poor Chaplin, who is six feet tall, and has yellow hair, is in despair.

Good-bye, dear friend. Write to me quickly.

CCLXXV

Paris, October 1, 1864.

Dear Friend: I am still here, but like a bird on the limb. I have been delayed by my proofs, and you may well understand that they need the most careful correction.

I shall start without fail on the 8th, stopping to spend the night at Bayonne, and reaching Madrid the 11th. I do not yet know how long I shall be there. From Madrid

I shall go to Cannes, perhaps without passing through Paris. Winter is already making itself felt disagreeably for my lungs, in the mornings and evenings. The days are magnificent, but the evenings devilish chilly. Take care not to catch cold in the damp country in which you are staying. I enjoy myself well enough at this season in Paris, where there are no social duties, and where one may live like a hermit. From time to time I go out to get the news, but I obtain very little.

The Pope has forbidden the painting of signs in French in Rome. They must all be in Italian. On the Corso there is a Madame Bernard, who sells gloves and garters. They have forced her to call herself henceforth Signora Bernardi. If I were the Government I should never have permitted this, even if it were necessary to hang some sign-painter in front of the first shop which they wished to change. When our army shall have departed, you will see then what those people will do....

Here the sharks—that is to say, the money-lenders—are scowling on the nomination of M. —— to the Bank; but it is not known that when one is supposed to be good for nothing, it is then that they select him. It is the custom. M. —— went to the Bank, his night-cap in his pocket, expecting to sleep there the night succeeding his nomination. He was told that every preparation had been made to receive him, except the accomplishment of one small formality, which was, to purchase a hundred shares of stock of the said Bank. M. —— was completely ignorant of this little article in the charter of the establishment of which he is to be a director. A great nuisance it is, inasmuch as a hundred shares are not to be easily found, and, besides the money it will require several weeks at least to procure them. You see how much he understands about business.

There is still another big scandal here, which amuses perverse people, but I shall not tell you about it for fear of making you angry. Good-bye, dear friend.

CCLXXVI

Madrid, October 24, 1864.

DEAR FRIEND: I came here by chance, for I am stopping in the country, and shall remain there until Saturday. It is abominably cold and damp, and in consequence Madame de M.'s niece has taken erysipelas. Half of the household are ill, and I have a severe cold. You are aware that colds are serious matters to me, who find it difficult enough to breathe even when I am well. The bad weather has continued a week, with shocking violence, in harmony with the fashion of this country, where transitions, of whatever sort are unknown.

Can you imagine the misery of people living on an elevated plateau, exposed to every wind that blows, and having no means of keeping warm excepting braseros, a primitive article of furniture which gives one the choice of freezing or suffocating? I find that civilisation here has made great progress, which, in my eyes, is no improvement. The women have adopted your absurd hats, and wear them in the most grotesque fashion. The bulls, also, have lost much of their merit, and the men who kill them are nowadays ignorant, cowardly fellows.

This is the delightful story which now absorbs the minds of the respectable public. Lady C., the wife of the minister of ——, she young and pretty, he old and ugly, sued for divorce, on the grounds that her husband was unjust towards her. The trial took place in London, and it was decreed gallantly that he was a good-for-nothing. There are, however, women in Madrid who assume to know that it was a calumny. However that may be, the woman obtained her divorce, and almost immediately afterwards married the duke of ——, who had for some time paid court to her in Madrid. It seems that she has not the same grounds of complaint towards her new husband as she had to the former, but here is the devil of an affair. The duke of —— has sued his half-sister, the duchess of ——, on account of certain deeds, estates, etc. She has just discovered that her brother, who was born in France, in order to succeed to his inheritance, had presented a certificate of baptism signed by a curé, an

act which in France is illegal. It is found, moreover, that this certificate is a counterfeit, and is contradicted by the certificate of birth at the office of the Registry of State, which proves that the present duke was born in Paris several years previously, of an unknown mother. This mother is the third wife of the duke of ——, married at that time to a fourth, for in that family the marriages are always out of the ordinary.

This is going to make a pretty lawsuit, as you will see, and it is quite possible that ex-lady C. will find herself some fine morning with no peerage and no fortune. Meanwhile, she will soon arrive in Madrid with her husband, and sir J. C. has requested a change of residence.

I have taken steps to find the Nipi handkerchiefs, but I have not yet succeeded in discovering any. Apparently they are no longer fashionable. However, I am promised some the first of next month. I hope they will keep their word.

Everything, it seems, is quiet enough, politically speaking. Besides, at this moment it is too cold to fear a pronunciamiento. I think of remaining here until the 10th or 12th of November, if I do not die of my cold before then.

Where are you? What are you doing? Write to me soon.

CCLXXVII

Cannes, December 4, 1864.

Dear Friend: I have arrived here, and find no letter from you, which grieves me very much....

I pass on to another source of grievance against you. You have given me no end of trouble with your handkerchiefs. After many fruitless journeys, I discovered finally a half dozen Nipi handkerchiefs, hideously ugly. I took them, although everybody said they had been out of fashion for a long time; but I was following my orders. I

hope you have received those six handkerchiefs, or that you will receive them in a few days. I sent them by one of my friends, whom I charged to have them delivered at your house. You asked to have them embroidered. There were none in Madrid except the six that were sent you. The plain ones seemed to me even uglier; they had red stripes, like the handkerchiefs carried by college students.

I left Madrid in deuced cold weather, and shivered the whole of the journey. I did nothing else during the entire time of my stay there. On this side of the Bidassoa the temperature is enchantingly mild, and I find the atmosphere usually so in this country. We are having superb weather, and no wind.

I think I wrote you from Madrid everything worth telling about my acquaintances, notably the adventures of the duchess of ——, which must have shocked you. Did I mention also the young Andalusian girl in love with a young man who is discovered to be the grandson of the hangman of Havana? There are threats of suicide on the part of the mother, the daughter, and the future husband, by which I mean that all three threaten to kill themselves unless they are allowed to have their way. When I left Madrid, no deaths had occurred, and the respectable public was strongly in sympathy with the lovers.

Good-bye, dear friend. Send me some word of yourself, and tell me your plans for this winter.

CCLXXVIII

Cannes, December 30, 1864.

Dear Friend: I wish you a happy New Year. I have written to Madrid about the unlucky handkerchiefs, and, as I have received no response, I take it for granted that my commissioner is in Paris, and that you have the handkerchiefs, or will have them soon. I sent them by a Spaniard who was to leave Madrid the same time as I, in consequence of which you would receive them more promptly. One should never

have too high expectations. What I now desire is that you should be satisfied with those handkerchiefs, which are awfully ugly.

What think you of the Pope's Encyclical? We have a bishop here, a man of intelligence and good sense, who hides his face. Indeed, it is humiliating to belong to an army whose general exposes you to defeat.

I have no news from my editor. When I left he was printing my Cossacks of the Past, which I think must have appeared. As you know the story I hope you will wait until I return to procure a volume.

Do you know that from all sides have arrived congratulations on my successorship to M. Mocquard? I thought nothing of the matter; but after seeing my name in the Belgian Independence, in the London Times, and in the Augsburg Gazette, I had come to be a little uneasy. Knowing my temperament as you do, you may imagine how the place suited me, and how I suited the place. I have breathed more easily, however, for several days.

Are there any new novels for Christmas? English novels, I mean, for this is the period for them to bloom! I have almost no books here, and I am anxious to send for some. When at night I have an attack of coughing, and can not sleep, I am as wretched as it is possible to be. Only fancy, I have read Lamartine's Meditations. I have come across a Life of Aristotle, in which it is said that the retreat of the Ten Thousand took place after the death of Alexander. Really, would it not be preferable to peddle steel pens at the door of the Tuileries than to say such enormities?

Good-bye, dear friend. I have thirty-five letters to write, and I wanted to begin with you. I wish you all the prosperity in the world.

CCLXXIX

Cannes, January 20, 1865.

Dear Friend: Have you at last received your execrable Nipi handkerchiefs? I have learned that the person to whom I intrusted them, having been elected a member of the Cortes, remained in Madrid, and gave the handkerchiefs to Madame de Montijo, who did not understand what they were, for a Spaniard is not conspicuously clear in making an explanation. I have written to the countess Montijo, begging her to give the package to our ambassador, who will send it to you by the French mail. I hope you will have the thing before receiving my letter; but I do not wish ever again to assume the responsibility of your purchases, which force me to take more trouble and to write more prose than they are worth. The best thing for you to do is to throw the handkerchiefs into the fire.

I have suffered severely the last week from exhaustion. We are having a detestable winter, not cold, but rainy and windy. I have never experienced anything like it. For a week nearly, in spite of M. Mathieu (of the Drôme), we have had delightful, warm days, which are the greatest benefit to me, for my lungs are better, or worse, according to the height of the barometer.

I find amusement in reading the letters of the bishops. There are few lawyers more subtle than these gentlemen; but the best of them is M. D——, who interprets the Pope's Encyclical as exactly the reverse of what he really said, and it is not impossible that he may be excommunicated at Rome. Is it possible that they are hoping for a miracle to return to them Marche, the Legations, and the county of Avignon? The worst of it is, that society in this age is so stupid, that, in order to escape the Jesuits, it will probably throw itself into the arms of the Bousingots.[32]

I know nothing of my works, and, if you have learned anything about them, I should be obliged if you would tell me. I corrected my proofs for the Journal des Savants, and for Michel Levy, and I have had no word from either of them.

The number of English here becomes daily more frightful. A new hatch has been built on the sea-shore, which is almost as large as the Louvre, and it is always full.

You can not take a walk without meeting young misses in Garibaldi jackets, with impossible feather-trimmed hats, making a pretence at sketching. They have croquet and archery parties, to which come a hundred and twenty persons. I regret keenly the good old times when not a soul came here.

I have made the acquaintance of a tame seagull, which I feed with fish. He catches them in the air, always head first, and swallows some which are larger than my neck. Do you recollect an ostrich at the Jardin des Plantes, which you came near strangling with rye bread in the time when you used to adorn the place with your presence?

Good-bye, dear friend. I expect to return soon to Paris, and to have the great happiness of seeing you there. Again good-bye....

CCLXXX

Cannes, April 14, 1865.

Dear Friend: I have delayed writing to you until I should be well, or, at least less ill; but notwithstanding the lovely weather, notwithstanding every possible attention, I am still the same—that is to say, very bad. I can not accustom myself to this life of suffering, and I have neither courage nor resignation to endure it. I am waiting until the weather becomes a little warmer before returning to Paris, and it will probably be the first of May before I arrive. Here, for the last fortnight, we have had the most glorious skies, and a sea to correspond, but it does not keep me from coughing as if it were still freezing weather.

What has become of you this spring? Shall I find you in Paris, or are you going to ——, to watch the budding of the first leaves?

So your friend Paradol becomes an Academician by the will of the burgraves, who, in fact, have compelled the poor duc de Broglie to return to Paris, in spite of his gout and his eighty years. It will be a curious session. Ampère has written a wretchedly poor history of Caesar, and in verse, in the bargain. You may imagine all the

allusions which M. Paradol will find occasion to make to this work, forgotten to-day by everybody except the burgraves. Jules Janin remained without, and also my friend Autran, who being from Marseilles, for no other reason than to be elected to the Academy, became a clerical, and was after all deserted by his religious friends.

You knew, perhaps, that Mr. William Brougham, brother of lord Brougham, and next in line to the peerage, has just been caught in the act of a very ugly piece of cheating. It is creating a tremendous scandal here among the English colony. Lord Brougham shows a bold front; he is, besides, perfectly innocent in all this villainy.

I am reading, to keep me patient and to put me to sleep, a book by a M. Charles Lambert, which demolishes the holy king David and the Bible. It seems to me quite ingenious, and tolerably amusing. The clericals have succeeded in having read and bringing into popularity serious and pedantic books, which fifteen years ago would have attracted the attention of no one. Renan has gone to Palestine to make new researches into the scenery. Peyrat and this Charles Lambert are at work on books more erudite and more serious, which sell like hot cakes, so my bookseller tells me. Good-bye, dear friend.

CCLXXXI

Paris, July 5, 1865.

I was beginning to fear that you had been struck by lightning, like Madame Arbuthnot, or that that you had been devoured by some bear. I thought you certainly in the heart of the Tyrol, when your letter arrived from ——. In my opinion it is preferable to travel in the long days rather than in autumn; but let nothing prevent you from seeing Munich in September. You must be careful only to provide yourself with warm clothing, because the weather changes very suddenly in that broad, ugly, high plain of Munich.

Nothing is easier than to make this journey. You may go to Munich by way of

Strasburg, or, if you prefer, by Basel. I think that there is now a railway as far as Constance. You can, in any case, reach there by steamboat. At Constance you take the lake boat for Lindau, which is a pretty little town; and from there to Kempten you will see a succession of admirable views. You may go to Munich direct by train, or you may stop on the route between Lindau and Kempten. From Kempten to Munich there is nothing but flat, unattractive scenery.

You must go to the Hotel Bavaria, and not to Maullich's, where I was robbed of my boots. A valet or an official guide will show you everything worthy of attention. The paintings at the palace, taken from scenes of the Nibelungen, are rather interesting, but you will need to obtain special permission to see them. All the rest is open to the public. Examine carefully, that you may tell me about them, the new propylons of my late friend Klenze. In the Museum of Antiquities you will see the pediments of the temple of Egina, and the marble group of which I have told you. The Grecian vases are extremely curious, and the paintings of Pinacothèque equally so. The frescoes of Cornelius and other imitations of originals will cause you to shrug your shoulders.

Go and drink some beer in the public gardens, where, for a few sous, you may enjoy excellent music. If you have the time, it will be worth your while to make a few trips into the Bavarian Tyrol, to Tegernsee, and elsewhere. When you go to Salzburg (on which I congratulate you) you may go to see, if you like, the salt-mine of Hallein. At Innsbruck there is nothing to see but the landscape and the bronze statues of the cathedral. In all this country you may stop at any of the smallest villages, sure of finding a bed and a tolerable dinner. I should be glad to share the pleasures of the journey with you.

Here there are stories afloat of the most scandalous nature possible to imagine....

This is all highly edifying, and gives rise to fear that the end of the world is at hand. Buy yourself some green stockings at Salzburg or at Innsbruck, if you find any that

fit you. Bavarian legs are as big as my body.

Good-bye, dear friend. Take good care of yourself and enjoy yourself. Do not forget to let me hear from you.

CCLXXXII

London, British Museum, August 23, 1865.

Dear Friend: After awaiting your letter a long time, in Paris, it finally arrived, written while you were in the heart of the Tyrol. I have been here for about six weeks. I was here during the concluding days of the season. I went to some terrible dinners, and two or three of the last balls.

It seems to me that lord Palmerston has aged perceptibly, notwithstanding his success at the elections, and I feel that it is more than doubtful whether he will be in any condition to engage in the next campaign. At his retirement, there will be, doubtless, a fine crisis.

I have just spent three days at the home of his probable successor, Mr. Gladstone, who did not amuse me, but who interested me, for it is always a pleasure for me to observe the varieties of human nature. Here they are so unlike ours, that it is inexplicable how, in a ten hours' journey, one finds the featherless bipeds to be so utterly different from those in Paris.

Mr. Gladstone seemed to me to be in some respects a man of genius, in others a child. In him are the elements of the child, the statesman, and the lunatic. Staying at his house were five or six curates or deans, and every morning the guests of the castle were entertained with a short prayer in common. I was not present on a Sunday, which must be something extraordinary.

What seemed to me preferable to all the rest was a sort of badly baked roll which is removed from the oven at breakfast-time, and which one finds it difficult to digest

during the rest of the day. Besides this there is the hard civrn, that is the ale of Wales, which is celebrated.

You know, of course, that red hair is the only kind fashionable at the moment. It appears that nothing is easier to have in this country, and I doubt whether it is dyed.

For a month no one has been in town. There is not a single horse in Rotten Row, but I am contented enough to be in a great city in this state of lethargy. I have taken advantage of it to see the lions. Yesterday I went to the Crystal Palace, and spent an hour looking at a chimpanzee almost as tall as a ten-year-old child, and in his actions so like a child that I felt humiliated by his unquestionable relationship. Among other peculiarities, I observed the calculation of the animal in setting in motion a heavy swing, and in waiting to leap upon it until it had attained its greatest speed. I doubt whether all children would have exhibited as much talent for observation.

While here I have written a long article on the History of Caesar, which does not entirely displease me; in it there is mental pabulum, as they say in academic style, and next week I shall return to Paris to read it to the Journal des Savants. It is not quite impossible that I may find you there. I am beginning to have enough of London.

At one time I had an idea of going to Scotland, but there I should have fallen among the hunters, a race which I abhor.

A newspaper had in its telegraphic items the news that Ponsard was dying. Since then I have seen no mention of him, and my letters, even academic ones, make no reference to him. I am quite interested in the matter; it may be, however, only a false report.

Good-bye, dear friend. Write to me in Paris, where I shall be soon, and keep me informed of your movements. Come back from the Tyrol, I pray you, with green stockings, but I defy you to bring back legs the size of those of the mountaineers.

CCLXXXIII

Paris, September 12, 1865, at night.

Dear Friend: I have been here for several days. I came by way of Boulogne, and while our boat was being moored at the quay there was such a crowd that I asked myself what could be so interesting in the arrival of a steam-boat. The English ladies will have to be warned that in walking at low tide along the edge of the wharf they make a great exhibition of legs, and even more. My modesty received a shock.

Paris this year is more empty than ever, but I enjoy it in that state. I rise and go to bed late. I read a great deal, and scarcely ever get out of my dressing-gown. I have a Japanese one, with flowers on a jonquil-yellow background, more brilliant than the electric light.

My stay in England was not, after all, very tiresome. Besides a number of pleasant excursions which I made, I wrote for the Journal des Savants that article on the Life of Julius Caesar, of which I have already made mention to you. As it was the editors in person who imposed this task on me, I was obliged to acquiesce. You know how much I value the author and his book; but you may understand the difficulties of my position, not wishing to be considered as a flatterer, nor to say unbecoming things. I think I managed to get out of the difficulty fairly well.

I took for a text the fact that the Republic had reached its limit, and that the Roman people were going to the devil, if Caesar had not delivered them. As the thesis is true and easily supported, I wrote variations on this air. I will save one of the proofs for you.

Manners are still progressing. A son of prince de C. has just died in Rome. He left a brother and sisters in straitened circumstances. He was an ecclesiastic, a monseigneur, and had an income of two hundred thousand pounds, and every penny of it he has left to a little abbé of a secretary that he had. It is precisely as if

Nicomedes had bequeathed his kingdom to Caesar. I wager that you do not see the point at all.

I, too, was anxious to go to Germany, and might have surprised you, perhaps, in Munich, but my plan came to naught. I was going to see my friend, Kaullo, that excellent Jew whom I have mentioned to you more than once. But he himself is coming to France, therefore I have given up my idea of Germany. One of my friends returning from Switzerland is not enthusiastic over the weather there; which softens my disappointment.

It seems to me that Boulogne is becoming more beautiful in its buildings no less than in its citizens. I saw fish-women stylishly dressed, and very pretty modern dwellings; but what English women there were, and what pork-pie hats!

Yesterday I called to see the princess Murat, who has almost recovered from her terrible fall. The only signs still remaining are a bruised eye and a cheek slightly discoloured. She gave a vivid account of the accident. She has lost entire consciousness of her fall, and of the following three or four hours. She remembers seeing her coachman, who was a Swiss colonel, thrown up in the air, high above her head; then, four hours later, she found herself in her own bed, with her head big as a gourd. In the interval she walked and talked, but has no recollection of anything. I hope, and think it probable, that during the last moments before death comes, there is also a loss of consciousness.

I found the countess de Montijo entirely recovered from her two operations. She is enthusiastic in praise of her oculist, Liebreich, who seems to be a wonderful man. Try never to require his services.

Good-bye, dear friend. I am going early next week, for three days, to Trouville. I shall then remain here until winter drives me away. Keep me informed of all you do, and of your intentions.

CCLXXXIV

Paris, October 13, 1865.

Dear Friend: I found your letter yesterday, on my return from Biarritz, whence their Majesties brought me back in a fair state of preservation. The first welcome which my native land accorded me, however, was anything but cordial. Last night I suffered one of the most prolonged attacks of choking that I had experienced for weeks. It is the result, I suppose, of the change of temperature, or it may be the effect of thirteen or fourteen hours of jolting over a very rough railroad. It seemed as if I was in a winnowing-basket. This morning I am feeling better.

I have not as yet seen a soul, and think no one has returned to Paris, but I have received some lugubrious letters from persons who speak of nothing but cholera, and who beg me to fly from Paris. Here no one pays any attention to it, so I am told, and the fact is, I believe that, with the exception of several old topers, there have been no serious cases. If the cholera had made its first appearance in Paris, probably we should have thought no more about it. It took the cowardice of the Marseillais to give us the warning. I have informed you of my theory on the subject of cholera; no one dies of it unless he really wishes to die, and it is a visitor so polite, that it never makes a call upon you without sending its visiting-card in advance, as the Chinese do.

I spent my time most agreeably at Biarritz. We had a visit from the king and queen of Portugal. The king is a very shrinking German student. The queen is charming. She bears a strong resemblance to the princess Clotilde, but she is more beautiful. She is a revised edition. Her complexion is that of a lily and of a rose, rare even in England. Her hair is red, to be sure, but it is the dark red so fashionable just now. She is extremely engaging and polite. They brought along with them a certain number of male and female caricatures, who seemed to have been gathered up from some curiosity-shop. My friend, the Portuguese minister, took the queen aside and

gave her a little tirade about me, which her Majesty immediately repeated to me with much graciousness. The emperor presented me to the king, who shook hands with me, and looked at me with two big, round, startled eyes, that made me almost fail in my duties.

Another person, M. de Bismarck, pleased me more. He is a large German, very polite, and not at all unsophisticated. His manner is absolutely lacking in gemüth, but is full of intelligence. He conquered me completely. He brought with him a wife, who has the biggest feet beyond the Rhine, and a daughter who walks in her mother's footsteps.

I have said nothing of don Enrique or of the duke of Mecklenburg, I know not why. The Legitimist party is in a terrible state since the death of General Lamoricière. I met yesterday an Orleanist of the old school, who was also disconsolate. How cheaply, nowadays, one becomes a great man!

Please tell me what I may read of the good things written since I ceased to live among the cleverest people of the universe. I should like, indeed, to see you.

Good-bye. I am going to take care of my health until the fêtes at Compiègne make me ill again.

CCLXXXV

Paris, November 8, 1865.

Dear Friend: I have delayed writing to you, because I have been like a bird upon a bough, yet attached by the claw. After bidding adieu to my hostess at Biarritz, I had intended going to my usual wintering-place, and thus to avoid the first effects of the cold; but I was urged to remain for the opening of the season at Compiègne, and the request was asked so graciously, that I could not very well decline. Then followed the questions relating to cholera: to go or not to go to Compiègne. Yesterday only the matter was decided. I am to go, and shall leave here the 14th, to return the 20th.

Tell me now if between the 14th and after the 20th, there will be any chance of seeing you.

I returned from Biarritz in an excellent state of preservation, but after three days I experienced all the rigours incident to a change of climate. The fact is, I have been almost constantly desperately ill, not from cholera, but from my usual trouble, inability to breathe, from which may God preserve you! For several days, I have been better. I think that Compiègne will make me much worse, but I shall hasten to take my flight to the South and count on the sunshine to live through the winter, which the successors of M. Mathieu (de la Drôme) predict will be a severe one. You, I suppose, expect to be in a mild climate on the borders of the Loire. I hope, at any rate, that you have neither cold nor rheumatism. Would that I were able to say as much!

You can not imagine the scandalous gossip concerning the princess Anna's marriage, nor the ridiculous anger and rage of the faubourg Saint Germain. There is not a family with a daughter who did not count on the duc de Mouchy. The burning question at present is, "If they make calls, shall we leave cards for them?"

On the other hand, there is in the marriage market at this moment a young girl with several millions in her pocket, and about fifty others to come to her. She is a pretty girl, somewhat mysterious, the daughter of M. Heine, who died this year; an adopted daughter, of course, whose origin no one knows. But in consideration of the millions, the greatest names of France, Italy, and Germany are ready to overlook all the dulness and stupidity. Adopted children of this sort are very pleasing to the goddess Fortune. The Greeks of to-day call them children of the soul; is it not a pretty name?

Have you read the Chansons des Rues et des Bois, of Victor Hugo? They will read them, I fancy, at ——. Will you tell me if you find a marked difference between his former poetry and that of to-day? Has he become suddenly mad, or has he always

been so? For my part, I incline to the latter.

There is living at present only one man of genius: that is M. Ponson du Terrail. Have you read any of his feuilletons? No one equals him in dealing with crime and assassination. I revel in it.

If you were here, I should endeavour to shake your orthodoxy by making you read a curious book on Moses, David, and Saint Paul. It is not an idyl such as Renan writes, but a dissertation, a little too larded with Greek, and even Hebrew. Still, the book is worth the trouble of reading; and, turning to the text, the story of that Yankee who, wishing to write a novel, has written a religious book, and a successful one, is but a rehash. Nothing is more common than to catch a carp when one thinks he is fishing for gudgeon. But you do not enjoy conversation like this, and you are right; there are other things to talk of.

Good-bye, dear friend. I am anxious to see you once more in the flesh.

CCLXXXVI

Cannes, January 2, 1866.

Dear Friend: I did not know where to write to you, and this is why I have not written before. You lead such a wandering life, that no one knows where to catch you. I regretted exceedingly that I did not overtake you between Paris and ——, your two customary lairs. You have fallen into the habit of subordinating yourself, in the phraseology of the Saint Simonians of my youth. Now you are the victim of the fisher-folk at ——; again, and more often, you are the victim of that child whom you adore, so that there is no longer any opportunity to see you as in the good old days, when it made me so happy to walk with you. Do you remember them?

I arrived here ill enough in health, after a week at Compiègne spent in tight-fitting trousers, with all the patience possible. They tried to hold me with M. de Massa's piece, but I resisted strenuously and fled to this place, where the sun has produced

its usual effect. Of three days, I have had two good ones; the third even has not been very bad; a slight attack of suffocation not to be compared to the sensation of strangling which a Paris winter brings on.

Why is it that, fond of travelling as you are, and having, moreover, souls in your charge, you do not spend your winters in Pisa or in any place where the great arbiter of the health of humanity, my lord, the Sun, is to be seen? I believe that but for him I should have lain for a long time under several feet of earth.

All my friends are hastening to precede me there. Last year was rough on my little circle of comrades. Several years ago we used to dine together once a month; I think I am now the sole survivor. This is the solemn reproach which I address to the Great Engineer: Why do not men fall like leaves, all in one season? Your Father Hyacinthe will not fail to say absurd things to me on this subject: “O man, what are ten years? What is a century?” and so on. The question for me is, What is eternity? To me the all-important thing is the small number of days. Why must mine be so bitter?

At Cannes this year are only a quarter of the foreigners who come usually. There was a story of a Parisian who ate three lobsters, and died of cholera. The country was at once placed under suspicion, and the mayors of Nice and of Cannes conceived the mistaken idea of denying in the newspapers the appearance of cholera, consequently everybody believed that it had come. A few of my friends have been as heroic as I, and we form a little colony which is quite able to dispense with the crowd.

I fear I shall be obliged to return to Paris a little after the opening of the Senate, to thunder forth all my eloquence on the bird-organ law, of which I am the advocate. I have written to M. Rouher to offer him peace, and to give him the opportunity to escape my eloquence. Will he accept it? If he is reckless enough to desire war, will you wait until the end of January to see me, and will you grant me a kind reception on New Year’s day? In the event that the affair turns towards peace, I shall ask you

this in February. Good-bye, dear friend. In the meantime, I send you my best and tenderest wishes.

CCLXXXVII

Cannes, February 20, 1866.

Dear Friend: You charge me with indolence, you, who are its personification! You, who live in Paris and discuss affairs with civilised folk, should keep me informed of what is done and said in the great city. You never tell me enough.

Is it true that crinoline is no longer in fashion, and that between the gown and the skin nothing is worn but the chemise? If this is so, shall I recognise you when I arrive in Paris? I recollect an old man who said to me when I was young, that on entering a drawing-room where there were some women without hoop-skirts and without powder, he supposed they were chamber-maids assembled in the absence of their mistresses. I am not sure that one can be a woman without crinoline.

I have allowed the address to go to vote without my presence, and it was not lost; but I shall be compelled to return soon on account of my bird-organs.[33] The question is not yet concluded, and it will be necessary a second time to display my eloquence, which exasperates me excessively.

Notwithstanding the loveliest weather in the world, I have by some means succeeded in catching cold, and when I have a cold I am always dangerously ill. Breathing with difficulty ordinarily, now I do not breathe at all. Except for this I am better than I was last year. To be sure, I do absolutely nothing, which is a prime factor in being well. I brought a lot of work with me, but have not even unpacked it.

You have not mentioned Ponsard’s play.[34] He has retained the tradition of the Corneille versification, somewhat emphatic, but broad, generous, and sincere. I fancy that fashionable society will go into ecstasies over this, as they go into ecstasies over the knowledge of M. Babinet and the sermons of the abbé Lacordaire,

buying a cat in a bag, just as soon as they are persuaded that it is the proper thing. I fear that persons in skin-tight trousers, with dog-ears, and reciting verse, do not excite me to raptures of admiration.

I have just read a little book by my friend, M. de Gobineau, on the religions of Asia. You shall judge of it on my return, if you do not prefer to read it before then. It is a very strange and curious book. In Persia it seems that there are scarcely any Mussulmans left, new religions are being made, and, as elsewhere, they are mere imitations of ancient superstitions which were believed to be a thousand times dead, and which suddenly reappear. You will be interested in a sort of prophetess, very pretty and eloquent, who was burned several years ago.

My lord, the bishop of Orleans, passed through Cannes the other day, and called to see M. Cousin, whose interest he asked in behalf of M. de Champagny. I supposed that my president, Troplong, would try to succeed M. Dupin, but he stands in awe, apparently, of our burgraves, who, indeed, would be delighted to play him a mean trick. I hear mention of Henri Martin and Amédée Thierry, both of whom are as capable of extolling M. Dupin as I of playing the double-bass. If I am in Paris, I will vote as you advise me. I expect to be in Paris early next month. What is now said and done seems to me daily to be more stupid. We are more ridiculous than they were in the middle ages. Good-bye, dear friend.

CCLXXXVIII

Paris, April 9, 1866.

Dear Friend: Is it not a fatality that you should be leaving just as I arrive! Fortunately, you will return soon. I have been here since Saturday night, painfully ill. When I left I could scarcely breathe, and the journey made me still more wheezy. We had a terrible storm last night, which I hope will do me a little good. I shiver at your description of that damp town of ——, and at the thought of those chilly

corridors of which you give such a dismal picture. Try to wrap yourself in all your furs, and to leave the chimney-corner as seldom as possible, and then only on sunny days. I have become so sensitive to the cold, or, rather, the cold does me so much harm, that I can fancy hell in no other aspect than as the compartment of the Bolge in Dante.

Happily, I am told crinoline is no longer fashionable, which allows your legs and the rest of your body to have a little protection. I went out yesterday for an hour, and saw a woman without any crinoline, but with such extraordinary skirts that I was horrified. It seemed to me that she wore a flounced pasteboard skirt under a gown which she held up. It made a great deal of noise on the asphalt.

It is consistent with your habits to act the reverse of common mortals, and as the country will soon be charming, I presume you will return to Paris. Be kind enough, therefore, to advise me of your movements.

I am pondering and asking myself if I shall go to the Academy Thursday to be an aid or a hindrance, after the fashion of an Immortal. Between M. Henri Martin, M. Cuvillier-Fleury, and M. de Champagny, one does not know exactly what to do. The latter, however, is a little too clerical for me, and I bear him a grudge, moreover, for having written on Roman history in journalistic style. M. Guizot, apparently, is the reigning star. He wishes to make us swallow the entire Journal des Savants: M. Paradol, then M. de Sacy and M. Saint-Marc. At any rate, they have humour, and a great deal of intelligence. Have you read anything of Cuvillier-Fleury? If so, tell me your opinion of him. If you will give me a genuine reward besides, I will vote for whomsoever you may designate.

English novels, meaning modern ones, are beginning to bore me to death. They were our great resource at Cannes, where M. Murray, the well-known bookseller, sends boxes of books twice a week. Do you know of anything which will while away the time for a poor devil who dares not show his face out of doors after sunset?

Good-bye, dear friend. Think of me sometimes, and send me some news of yourself.

CCLXXXIX

Paris, June 24, 1866.

What has become of you? The cholera, it seems, is very bad at Amiens. I do not know what is in store for us at the Luxembourg, and it may be that the Senate-Council, with which we are threatened, will oblige me to return here until the middle of the month.

To console myself, I have bought the twenty-seven volumes of the Mémoires du XVIIIe Siècle, which I shall have bound. Is there in them anything which you would like? Your Klincksieck has nothing that one asks for; I shall inquire of Vieweg, who may have, perhaps, what I want. Unfortunately, the edition of the Mémoires de F. Auguste, which was published in Leipzig, is in the hands of M. de Bismarck.

I was surprised to receive the book you returned to me. I was afraid that you had added it to those which you have already taken from me. When will you come and choose another? In spite of the heat, I am far from well.

You asked me, the other day, where I formed my acquaintance with the dialects of the Bohemians. I had so many things to say to you that I forgot to answer. I obtained it from M. Borrow; his book is one of the most curious that I have ever read. What he retails of the Bohemians is perfectly true, and his personal observations agree entirely with mine, except on one point. In his quality as a clergyman he might well have been mistaken, where, in my quality as a Frenchman and a layman I could make conclusive experiments. What is most singular is that this man, who has a gift for languages to the degree that he speaks the Cali dialects, has so little perspicacity that he is unable to see at the outset that in this dialect have remained many words foreign to the Spanish. He pretends that the roots only of Sanskrit words have been retained....

I like the odour of that perfume, but I like it less since I have known that the friend who gave it to you sees you so often.

CCXC

Palace of Saint-Cloud, August 20, 1866.

Dear Friend: I received your letter last night. I thank you for your congratulations.[35] The thing astonished me as much as you. I say to myself, like the Cocu imaginaire: Does one's leg become more crooked, after all, or one's shape less beautiful?

I beg your pardon for quoting lines from a play which you have not read because of its title.

You take a singular route to go to your friends in the land of the sea-monsters, but if you can have a little sunshine you will experience much pleasure in seeing the banks of the Loire. There is nothing in all France more typically French, and what is seen there, besides, can be found nowhere else. I recommend to you especially the Château of Blois, which has been well restored in the last few years. See, for my sake, the new church of Tours, restored. It is on the Rue Royale, on the right side coming from the station; I have forgotten the name of it. See also, in Tours, a house which is called, improperly, the House of the Executioner, and which is attributed to Tristan the Hermit, because of a sculptured girdle, the emblem of a widow, and which the ignorant take for a hangman's rope. It is on the street of the Three Virgins, another distressing name.

We are having deplorable weather. Yesterday I took a long drive, and we were surprised by a terrific storm, which soaked me to the bones and gave me new cold. The water accumulated on the cushions, so that it was like being in a bath-tub. I think I shall be in Paris the last few days of this month, and set out again for Biarritz the beginning of September. Will you not come there when you leave the banks of

the Loire?...

The emperor has entirely recovered and has resumed his usual occupations. We spend the days comfortably enough, considering the horrible weather, and without any formality. We dine in frock-coats, and every one does pretty much as he pleases.

I have received from Russia an enormous history of Peter the Great, compiled from a quantity of official documents, hitherto unpublished. I read and I paint whenever we are not walking or eating.

It seems to me that everything tends in the direction of peace. It is very evident that M. de Bismarck is a great man, and he is too well prepared for any one to quarrel with him. We shall have, perhaps, many bitter pills to swallow, and these we shall digest until we have needle-guns. It remains to be seen what the German parliament will do, and, if the follies which they commit will not cause them to lose their advantage. As for Italy, it is never even mentioned. Good-bye dear friend.

CCXCI

Biarritz, September 24.

I hope you may be enjoying better weather than we. Four days of the week we have rain; the others are stifling hot, accompanied by a horrible sirocco. Still, the sea is far more beautiful here than at Boulogne, and the figs and ortolans make it possible to sustain the burden of life.

I made, the other day, an interesting excursion into the mountains, and saw one of the most remarkable grottoes in existence. You pass beneath a great natural bridge, made of a single arch, as long as the Pont Royal; on one side you see a wall of rocks, and on the other a tunnel, natural also, and very long. For nature, less clever than the engineers, contrived to make her bridge lengthwise, and the tunnel is the extension of this. Under the tunnel, and perpendicular to the bridge, flows a limpid stream. The proportions of all this are gigantic. The air within is very cool, and one feels as if he

were a thousand leagues from humanity. I will show you a sketch of it, made on horseback. This enchanting place, which is called simply Sagarramedo, is in Spain, and if it were in the suburbs of Paris some one would make a show place of it, charge fifty centimes admission and make his fortune.

In another cavern, a league's distance from the first, but in France, we found about twenty smugglers, who sang some Basque airs in chorus, to the accompaniment of the galoubet. This is a small, shrill flageolet, which has in its tones something exceedingly wild and agreeable. The music is full of character, but mournful enough to drive the devil into the ground, like all the mountaineers' music. As for the words, I understood only viva emperatrica! of the last couplet.

We were guided to the place by a singular man, who has made a large fortune smuggling. He is the king of these mountains, and everybody is subject to his commands. Nothing could have been finer than to see the way he galloped among the rocks beside our column, which had great difficulty in following the beaten paths. He dashed over every obstacle, calling to his men in Basque, in French, and in Spanish, and never once making a false step. The empress had charged him to watch over the prince imperial, whom he made pass, him and his pony, over the most impossible routes that you may imagine, and watching over him as carefully as if he had been a bale of contraband goods. We rested for an hour in his home at San, where we were received by his daughters, who are well-bred persons, stylishly dressed, not in the least provincial, and differing from Parisians only in their pronunciation of the r, which for the Basques is always r-r-r-h.

We are expecting the armoured fleet; but the sea is so rough, that if it came we could not communicate with it. There are not many people at Biarritz, some startling costumes, and few pretty faces. Nothing could be uglier than the bathers with their black costumes and caps of oil-cloth.

I have been presented to the duc de Leuchtenberg, who is quite friendly. I

discovered that he read Schopenhauer, believed in positive philosophy, and had a leaning towards socialism.

I expect to be in Paris early in October. Shall you not be there? I should be glad to see you before I go into winter quarters. I am growing scandalously stout, and my breathing is much better than in Paris.

Good-bye, dear friend. I have written a droll little thing, which may amuse you, if you should condescend to listen.

CCXCII

Paris, October 5, 1866.

We are to be, then, like Castor and Pollux, who can never appear upon the same horizon! I returned several days ago. I have made a trip to the post-office, and return to pack my trunk for departure. I am obliged to go, for the first touch of frost is very disagreeable to feel, and I have begun to cough and strangle.

Besides the pleasure which would have been mine in seeing you, I had been promising myself that of reading you something which I had translated from the Russian. At Biarritz they were discussing, one day, the difficult situations in which one might find one’s self, as, for example Rodrigue between his papa and Chimène, Mademoiselle Camille between her brother and her Curiace. That night, having drunk tea which was too strong, I wrote about fifteen pages on a situation of this sort. The thing is very moral in reality, yet there are some details of which Monseigneur Dupanloup might disapprove. There is, also, a begging the question necessary for the development of the plot: two persons of different sex go to an inn; this has never been known, but it was necessary for my story, and while there they have a remarkable experience. Although written in great haste, it is not, I think, the worst thing I have ever done. I read it to the lady of the house.

At the same time there was also at Biarritz the grand duchess Marie, daughter of

Nicolas, to whom I had been presented several years ago. We renewed our acquaintance. Shortly after my reading I received a visit from a policeman, saying he had been sent by the grand duchess. “What may I do for you?” “I have come from her imperial highness, to beg you to come to her house to-night with your novel.” “What novel?” “The one you read, the other day, to her Majesty.” I replied that I had the honour to be her Majesty’s jester, and that I could not work for any one else without her permission. I hastened at once to relate the thing to her. I expected the result would be, at the very least, a war with Russia, and I was no little mortified not only to receive permission to go, but even to go that evening to the grand duchess, to whom had been given the policeman as factotum. Nevertheless, to console myself, I wrote the grand duchess a pretty energetic letter, and announced my visit. I was on the way to carry my letter to her house; there was a high wind, and in a secluded by-street I met a woman who was in danger of being blown into the sea by her skirts, into which the wind had entered. She was in the greatest bewilderment, blinded and dazed by the noise made by her crinoline, and all the other tumult. I rushed to her assistance. It was with the greatest difficulty that I succeeded in giving her any effective aid, and then only recognized the grand duchess. The windstorm saved her from a number of little epigrams. She was, moreover, quite friendly with me, and gave me some excellent tea and cigarettes; for she smokes, as nearly all Russian ladies do. Her son, the duke of Leuchtenberg, is a handsome fellow, with the manner of a German student. He seemed to me, as I mentioned before, a good-natured chap, affable, with a tendency slightly Republican and Socialistic, and a Nihilist in the bargain, like the Bazarof of Tourguenieff; for in these days princes do not consider the Republic a form of government progressive enough for their tastes.

Good-bye, dear friend. Write to me here, but do so immediately. I do not release you from sending me news of yourself. What say you to the spectacle of a flood? You have had the experience, with all its variations. One of my friends scarcely touched

food for two days, in the anxiety of seeing his house dissolve beneath him, like a lump of sugar. Again good-bye.

CCXCIII

Cannes, January 3, 1867.

I received your letter with great remorse. For a long time I have wanted to write to you, but, in the first place, an uncertainty as to your abode is a great vexation. You are always on the wing, and no one knows where to catch you. In the second place, you have never replied to a long letter, written with great care, which I sent to you. Moreover, you can not imagine how the time passes in a place like this, where it never rains, and where the principal thing to do is to warm one’s self in the sun, or to paint trees and rocks.

I brought with me books for work, but as yet I have done nothing but read and take notes from a history of Peter the Great, about which I should like some day to write an article for the Journal des Savants. The great man was a downright savage, who used to get horribly tipsy, and committed an error against good taste, concerning which I found you very severe when you used to study Greek literature. For all that, he was without question a man in advance of his age. I should like to say all this some day to persons as full of prejudice as yourself.

As for the story about which I told you, I have said that I would read it to you when I have the pleasure of seeing you once more. I am not thinking of having it published. As there is in this work nothing favourable to the temporal power of the Pope, I suspect that it might not meet with a cordial reception. Are you not touched and humiliated by the profound stupidity of the present time? Everything that is said both for and against the temporal power is so silly and absurd, that I blush for my century....

Another thing that enrages me is the manner in which the proposition for the

reorganization of the army has been received. All well-born young persons are dying of terror at the thought of being called upon at a moment's notice to fight for their country, and say that these vulgar occupations should be left to the Prussians. Try to imagine what will remain of the French nation if she should come to lose her military courage!

I am reading the novel of my friend Madame de Boigne.[36] It is pitiful. She is a woman of much intelligence, who lays bare her own defects, and criticises them with excessive bitterness, but who still persists in them. She passed more than thirty years without saying a word to me of this novel, and in her will she ordered its publication. It was as great a surprise to me as if I had learned that you had just published a treatise on geometry.

Although the subject is not an agreeable one, I must tell you something of my health. I am becoming more and more short-breathed. Sometimes I feel as robust as a Turk. I take long walks, and it seems to me that I am as well as when we used to tramp through our woods together. The sun goes down, my chest becomes inflated, I suffocate and the slightest exertion is very painful. The singular thing is, that I am no worse. I am even better in a horizontal position than when standing or sitting.

Good-bye, dear friend. I wish you health and prosperity.

CCXCIV

Paris, Thursday, April 4, 1867.

Dear Friend: Here I am, at last, in Paris, but more dead than alive. I have not written, because I was too melancholy, and had only doleful things to tell you of myself and of this sublunary world. You will find me very miserable, but happy to see you again.

Friday morning, if the weather be fine, we might walk together to the Museum of the Louvre. I dare hardly go out, I have such a dread of the cold, but I am ordered to

take exercise.

I send you the eighth volume of Guizot, which will entertain you. The dull weather depresses me, and makes me much worse. I hope you are still in great prosperity.

My house is undergoing improvements, and I am reduced to living in my salon, which is as gloomy as a prison. Come and cheer me up. You shall carry away all the books you like, and I shall not require you to leave me anything as security.

Good-bye, I shall see you soon, I hope.

CCXCV

Paris, Friday, April 30, 1867.

Dear Friend: I am very sorry to know that you are surrounded by sick persons. This makes me fear that you have no thought of me, who am worse than ever in this bad weather. Will you not come and take care of me one of these days?

I went, nevertheless, to the Exposition, and was not at all carried away with it. It is true that it was pouring rain, and impossible to see the amusements, which I am told are in the garden. I saw some exquisite Chinese articles, too dear for my purse; and some Russian rugs, all sold.

You will have to take me there one of these fine mornings, and guide me in my acquisitions. You seem to be enchanted with this bazaar; perhaps your enthusiasm will kindle mine.

The dull, rainy weather is very injurious to me. I dare not go out, and I live like a bear. I am dying to go to see you some evening, but I am convinced that I should be compelled to spend the night on the first step of your stairway.

Do you know of any amusing book to read at night? While waiting for something better, I am writing for the Journal des Savants an article on the princess Sophie, sister of Peter the Great. I do not know if it would interest you. I will read it to you

next time I see you.

CCXCVI

Wednesday, June 26, 1867.

Dear Friend: Would it not have been better to bring me your flowers yourself? You have pained me greatly in sending them. I am still very ill; but how can I get well in such weather?

Read Sainte-Beuve's speech;[37] it will amuse you. It is impossible for one to be more witty. But if he really wishes what he asked for, he has taken the best means of being refused. I do not know what will be the result of his interchange of epigrams with M. Lacaze, but I fear it will end in a duel. It is impossible to conceive of the expression of hatred and profound scorn on his face as he read, for he read his speech, which was somewhat detrimental to its effect.

I have sent you my condolences on the loss of your purse at the Exposition. Return the compliment, for I have left mine in a carriage. I am inquiring everywhere for tickets for the ceremony of July 1st. I am unwilling to take any but the best places for you, and I can find none.

CCXCVII

Paris, Sunday, June 30, 1867.

Dear Friend: Here are two tickets for to-morrow's ceremony.[38] They deserve a rare tip, for I had a great deal of trouble in procuring them. I send them to you in haste. Try not to be ill. It will be terribly hot!

CCXCVIII

Friday, July 5, 1867.

Dear Friend: I am delighted that you enjoyed yourself. I was afraid of the heat, and of the weight of my harness. You looked for me in vain. I did not go. Come soon, and tell me the beautiful things you saw, and give me your opinion of the sultan and the princes, who had the privilege of gazing on you for three hours.

I think that this fusillade[39] will injure our affairs, which were progressing well. It is a great pity.

CCXCIX

Paris, July 27, 1867.

Dear Friend: Thanks for your letter. I continue so ill, that I did not write to you at once, hoping to give you more hopeful news of myself; but no matter what I do and what I swallow, I still have this horrible cold. I shall not give you the details of my ills, but you may be sure that I am overcome by them. I hope you will sympathise with me. I neither sleep nor eat. I envy you these two faculties, which you possess with many others.

I congratulate you on having met the sultan for so long a time. Did he exhibit more amiability towards your sex than he did in Paris? They tell me that he gave great dissatisfaction at the opera. The pasha of Egypt was much more gracious. He made two visits to Mademoiselle ——, which I dare not describe to you, although they were curious. He has become reconciled (I am speaking of the pasha) with his cousin Mustapha, but it has been impossible to have them drink coffee together, each one being persuaded that it would be too dangerous on account of the rapid progress of the science of chemistry.

If you had been in Paris you would have seen something very beautiful which was presented to me. It is a brooch in the form of a fleur-de-lis shield, containing a miniature portrait of Marie Antoinette, painted in Vienna, probably, before her marriage, and given by her to the princess de Lamballe. There was once in the back

of the brooch a lock of hair, but it has been removed. After a fine show of resistance to the temptation, I yielded, and sent it promptly to her Majesty, who is making a collection of objects which belonged to Marie Antoinette. This will be, assuredly, one of her prettiest souvenirs; besides which, it is said to be absolutely authentic, and was worn for a long time by Madame de Lamballe. These sad antiquities fill me with horror, but it is vain to dispute about tastes.

Madame —— is still making a great scandal, and openly. I am sorry that I am not at liberty to write you all that she says and does. It is asserted that in Italy are two other wives of ministers more extravagantly wild than she....

I think you might have been a little more polite, and borrowed my proofs from me. Nothing is more painful to an author than neglect of this sort. August 1st, a second article appeared, and you will be compelled to fortify yourself against three or four others. If you could invent some euphemism to explain to the reader the secret of Mentchikof's influence with Peter the Great, it would be an immense favour to me.

Read also, in the Revue des Deux Mondes, M. Collin's article on trades unions (it is by M. Libri), and a letter of M. d'Haussonville to prince Napoleon, which is highly calculated to spoil his taste for newspaper polemical articles.

Sainte-Beuve continues quite ill. He is surrounded by numbers of women, like the sultan Saladin. You shall not persuade me that you are having at —— any better weather than here—that is to say, continuous gusts of rain and wind.

When are you coming back? I need you very much, to tell me what is going on, and to help me bear my misfortunes in patience—something very difficult to do. The other night, when it was almost impossible for me to breathe, I read Luther's Table-Talk. This big man pleases me, with all his prejudices and his hatred of the devil. Good-bye, dear friend.

CCC

Paris, September 6, 1867.

Dear Friend: I received your letter, which gave me much pleasure. The dampness of the climate where you are must be greatly ameliorated, I fancy, by this excessive heat. As for me, I find myself much better for it, and I am breathing, not with full lung-power, but more easily than I have done in a long time. However, I had the courage to refuse the gracious invitation which the empress renewed as she was leaving.[40] I do not feel sure enough of myself to stand any exposure to the danger of illness, and although I was assured of the best of care, I thought it prudent and discreet to take no risks. Perhaps, if the warm weather continues, I may experiment with my strength by spending a few days in the country at my cousin's. It may be that the change of air will be good for me, and there is every indication that the crowds of foreigners who are thronging Paris are injuring our atmosphere.

I visited the Exposition the other day, and saw the Japanese women, who pleased me uncommonly. They have a complexion of cream-colour, of an agreeable shade. So far as I could judge by the drapery of their gowns, they have legs as slender as the sticks of a chair, which is too bad. As I observed them, along with the crowd of loungers surrounding them, I thought to myself that European women would not make so good an impression before a Japanese audience. Imagine yourself on exhibition thus at Yeddo, and a grocer of prince Satsuma saying: "I should like to know whether that hump on the back of this lady's gown is really growing there." Speaking of humps, they are no longer worn at all, which proves that they did not grow there; for all women found themselves at the same instant in the fashion.

I am reading an abominable book by Madame —— aimed against M. S., whom she calls M. T.; it is the very limit of all that is indecent. For all that, it shows evidence of ability of a certain sort....

I have written for the Moniteur an article remarkable for the amenity of its style, on the subject of an amusing Spanish chronicle. I will lend it to you one of these days,

provided that you will return it. You will see therein how people lived in Spain and France in the fifteenth century.

Good-bye. Keep well; do not take cold, and write me some word of yourself.

CCCI

Paris, September 27, 1867.

Dear Friend: What has become of you? It is an age since I heard from you. I have just done something reckless: I spent three days at my cousin's home in the country, near Arpajon, and I feel very little the worse for it, although the country seemed to me cold and damp. I do not believe, however, that it is warm anywhere, nowadays. I suppose that at —— you are enveloped in constant fogs.

I spend my time as well as I can, in absolute solitude. I am seized sometimes with the desire to travel, but the impulse does not last long enough to amount to anything. Moreover, I am terribly depressed. I believe something serious is the matter with my eyes. I wish, and at the same time I dread, going to consult Liebreich; yet, if I should lose my sight, what would become of me?

In society there is a certain prince Augustine Galitzin, who has become a convert to Catholicism, and who is not very proficient in Russian. He has translated a novel by Tourguenieff, the title of which is Smoke. It is now coming out in Le Correspondent, a clerical newspaper, some of the capital of which is furnished by the prince. Tourguenieff has asked me to review the proofs. Now, in this novel are some rather lively situations, which are the despair of prince Galitzin; for instance, something unheard-of: A Russian princess is in love, which is made worse by adultery. He skips the passages which shock him too deeply, and I reinstate them in the text. He is sometimes over-sensitive, as you shall see. The great lady condescends to visit her lover in a hotel, at Baden. She enters the room, and the chapter concludes. The story is resumed in the Russian original as follows: "Two

hours later, Litvinof was alone on his divan." The neo-Catholic has translated it thus: "An hour later, Litvinof was in his room." You see it is much more moral, because to suppress an hour is to diminish the sin by half. Then, room, instead of divan, is much more virtuous, a divan being associated with criminal acts. I, inflexible in carrying out my orders, have reinstated the two hours and the divan, but the chapters in which they occur have not been published in Le Correspondent of this month. I suppose the respectable people who edit it have exercised a strict censorship. I am greatly amused by it. As the story continues, there is a delightful scene, in which the heroine tears up some point lace, which is a much more serious matter than the divan. I am waiting to see what they will do with this.

Good-bye, dear friend. Let me hear from you. I am terrified by the rapidity with which winter is approaching.

CCCII

Paris, Monday night, October 28, 1867.

You speak of vegetating. Indeed, that is the sort of life one would wish to lead nowadays, but the age is one of movement. Human vegetables are as unfortunate as those which live at the foot of Etna. From time to time upon them falls a deluge of fire, which usually annihilates them by its sulphurous vapours.

Do you not consider it calamitous that Pius IX and Garibaldi, both fanatics, should, by their obstinacy, turn everything into confusion? As an evidence of the morals of the age is the reply of those who disapprove the sending of our troops to Rome, when they are reminded of the treaty of September 15th: "What matters a treaty? M. de Bismarck does not observe them." I should like to steal a watch from one of them, and then say that there have been precedents of watches being stolen. The most deplorable feature of the whole matter is, that we are pledging ourselves anew, for I know not how long a time, to protect the Pope, who shows not the slightest

gratitude towards us....

Le Correspondent has yielded, and is publishing the continuation of Tourguenieff's novel, without, however, permitting the interview between Litvinof and Irène to last more than one hour. I think I told you about it. Are you reading it? Le Correspondent certainly goes to ——, where you are. Anyway, I will give you the novel on your return.

I am still ill, breathing painfully, and at night not breathing at all. This sudden death of M. Fould has grieved me very much. It was, however, as easy as one could wish; but why so sudden? He wrote eighteen letters the same morning of his death, and two hours before retiring seemed perfectly well. He had not made the least movement after lying down, and his features bore no evidences of contraction. His death was precisely the same as that of Mr. Ellice; "a visitation of God" is what the English call it.

I am expecting to start early in November. I am urged to go, in order to escape colds, which are so difficult to avoid in Paris. I am finishing an article for the Moniteur, on a Greek manuscript, and shall depart just as soon as it is completed.

Good-bye, dear friend. I hope you will come back before I go. Abandon those hideous fogs, and take care of your health. Again, good-bye....

CCCIII

Paris, November 8, 1867.

Dear Friend: I send you a word in haste, written in the midst of the errand which I am compelled to do. I leave to-morrow for Cannes, seriously ill; but there I hope to live in sunlight and warmth. Here we have it cold and almost frosty. I no longer go out at night, and never put my nose out of doors except when the temperature becomes a little milder.

I do not know how long I shall be able to stay away; it depends somewhat on the Pope, on Garibaldi, and on M. de Bismarck. Like every one else, I am more or less in the hands of these gentlemen. I know nothing more shameful than this affair of Garibaldi. If ever a man was under obligation to commit suicide, it is he, assuredly. What is even more lamentable is the fact that the Pope is quite convinced that he is under no obligation to us, and that it was Heaven which managed everything for his sake. Good-bye, dear friend....

CCCIV

Cannes, December 16, 1867.

Dear Friend: I was very anxious about you, when I was relieved by the arrival of your letter. You have guessed that these many changes of weather through which we have passed, have done me no good. In the last twenty-four hours we have even had snow, to the enormous astonishment of the urchins and curs of the place. Such a thing is unprecedented in twenty years. Nothing could be more amusing than the amazement depicted on the faces which had never seen this phenomenon from a nearer range than the Alps. Everybody expected to see the flowers, orange-trees, and even the olive-trees, destroyed; but they all stood it remarkably well, and only the flies have been killed.

For several days we have had a return of fine weather, and my breathing begins to be somewhat less difficult. I am always at the mercy of every change of temperature, and there is no barometer to which I am not superior in the accuracy of my predictions.

I am greatly alarmed by the political situation; in the general tone of the journals and of the orators, I find something suggestive of 1848. There are strange freaks of anger, without any apparent causes. All nerves are tense. After spending his whole life amid political struggles, M. Thiers is seized with nervous excitement because a

lawyer of Marseilles repeats platitudes deserving of nothing more than a smile. The most unfortunate feature has been the attitude of M. Rouher, who wishes to out-Herod Herod, and who has given utterance to sentiments obnoxious to politics—a thing from which all ministers ought to abstain.

I am discontented with everybody, beginning with Garibaldi, who does not understand his trade. To go to Caprera, after having murdered several hundred simpletons, seems to me the very limit of mortification for the advocates of revolution, and the English noblemen who took this creature for something more than a mountebank.

What shall I say to you of the politics of M. Ollivier and tutti quanti? It is useless for them to express themselves in elegantly turned phraseology, and to assert that they are profoundly convinced; they impress me as second-rate actors who imitate the rôles of their betters, in such a fashion as to deceive no one. We become smaller day by day. It is only M. de Bismarck who is a really great man.

By the way, could it be true that he has spent his private fortune? I consider the purchase of the journals as highly probable. But, as M. de Bismarck will not send his receipts to M. de Kerveguen, I fancy these gentlemen will come out of the affair honourably.

I see nothing worth reading but the Histoire de Pierre le Grand, by M. Oustisalef. I have just sent to the Journal des Savants a long article, full of tormenting details, etc. It is on the destruction of the Muscovite guards. Good-bye....

CCCV

Cannes, January 5, 1868.

Dear Friend: Pardon my delay in replying to your letter. I have been, and am still, extremely ill. The cold, which has penetrated even so far as this, is very harmful to me. It is said that in Paris it is much more severe, and that you have no cause to envy

Siberia. I am sometimes, the greater part of the day, unable to breathe. There is no sharp pain in this, but a discomfort of the most wearisome kind, which reacts severely on the nerves. You know me well enough to understand how well I endure all this.

Moreover, I am suffering great anxiety on account of my poor friend Panizzi, who is dangerously ill in London. The latest news was somewhat comforting, but there is still little ground for reassurance: He is discouraged about himself, which is always a bad symptom in sick people.

Amidst all my sorrows, I am killing time as I may. I send to-day to the Journal des Savants the end of the first part of Pierre le Grand—for there are first and second parts in this, as in the novels of Ponson de Terrail—and to the Moniteur, a long critique on Poushkin. All this you will see in its proper time and place.

I am now reading a book which is too long, and badly written, but the author of which seems to be honest, and describes what he has seen and heard. One must pass over his reflections, for in these he is a little silly. The book is Dixon's New America. He has seen the Mormons, and, what is still more curious, the Republic of Mount Lebanon. This and Fenianism give one an idea of America. Decidedly Talleyrand's epigram defines it exactly.

Good-bye, dear friend, I wish you health and happiness.

CCCVI

Cannes, February 10, 1868.

Dear Friend: I am distressed to learn of the death of M. D. I saw him at ——, I do not know how many years ago. He was devotedly fond of you, and while the death of friends of eighty years should be expected at any moment, still it always comes as a thunder-clap. One of the greatest sorrows of those who live to be aged is to lose our friends day by day, and to realise that we are more and more alone in the

world....

For my own part, my thoughts are melancholy, and my mood gloomy. I have not yet succeeded in accustoming myself to suffering, and it irritates me, which gives me two ills instead of one. I think I shall stay here at least until the end of this month, in which case I have some hope of finding you in Paris. I am delighted that my essay on Poushkin did not bore you. The best thing about it is that I wrote it without having the works of Poushkin by me. The quotations I gave are verses that I committed to memory in the time of my fervour for all things Russian.

There are many Russians here, and I had charged one of my friends to borrow a volume of miscellaneous poems, if there was one in the Muscovite colony. He inquired of an uncommonly pretty woman, who, instead of poems, sent me a big piece of fish from the Volga, and two birds from the same country, all cooked a few metres from the north pole. It was rather good. Judging from the slice sent to me, the fish must have been a jolly fellow from five to six feet in length. This lady, who is called Madame Voronine, has a charming head. Her husband has the appearance of a veritable Calmuc. At first he refused the hand of the lady. He shot himself, the ball missed, and for his trouble he was made to marry her.

As for English, men and women, never have there been such a lot of them, with impossible hair and toilettes, with red hair and overcoats lined with grebe skins, and with parasols. During the last two weeks the parasols have been more serviceable than the furs, for the weather is magnificent, and the sun hot as in June. Among other extraordinary Englishmen is the duke of Buccleugh, who has a horn in the middle of his forehead. His son shows a disposition to follow his example. Do not imagine that I am speaking metaphorically; it is a real horn growing on the cranium, and it will end, I fear, by playing them a bad trick.

I told you that I had Smoke, bound in a volume expressly for you. I might send it to you if you wished it; but I believe that I recall your having taken home the numbers

of the Correspondent in which it is found. It is one of the best things that M. Tourguenieff has ever done.

The discussion on the press is disgusting to me. Every one tells too many lies, and not an idea is heard that has not been already expressed twenty times in better terms. It seems to me that the level of intelligence is rapidly sinking lower, like that of honesty. It is indeed sad.

Yesterday I met one of my friends returning from Mentana. He told me that the Garibaldians were thoroughly whipped; that they were a singular mixture of abominable riff-raff and of the flower of the aristocracy.

Good-bye, dear friend. Take good care of yourself, and do not forget me.

CCCVII

Montpellier, April 20, 1868.

Dear Friend: Before coming here I was so ill that I lost all courage; it was impossible for me to think, and yet I was under the strongest necessity to write. I learned by chance that in Montpellier there was a physician who treated asthma by a new method, and I resolved to try it. During the five days since I began the treatment it seems to me that my condition has improved, and the physician encourages me to be hopeful.

Every morning I am placed in an iron cylinder, which, I must confess, looks like one of those monuments of M. de Rambuteau. Within is a comfortable easy-chair, and apertures with windows, which admit light enough to read. An iron door is closed, and the air in the cylinder is them compressed by means of a steam-engine. After a few seconds you feel as if needles were sticking in your ears, but, gradually, you become accustomed to the sensation. What is more important is that you begin to breathe with marvellous ease. At the end of a half hour I fall asleep, notwithstanding the fact that I have brought with me the Revue des Deux Mondes. I have already

taken four of these compressed-air baths, and feel that I am perceptibly better. The physician who treats me, and who has none of the characteristics of a charlatan, assures me that my case is not hopeless, and promises to cure me with about fifteen baths or so.

I hope I may see you soon in Paris. I regret my absence from the discussion which will take place on the subject of the medical theses. Have you read the letter of abbé Dupanloup? The soul of Torquemada has taken refuge in his body, and if we do not look out, he will burn us all at the stake. I fear that the Senate on this occasion will say and do everything possible to make itself ridiculous and odious. You can have no idea of how afraid of the devil, nowadays, are those old warriors who have been through such a multitude of dangers. I do not know if Sainte-Beuve will be in a condition to speak, as the papers announce; I doubt it, and, besides, I am uncertain whether he will attack the question from the proper position;—I mean, in such a way as to avert the bombshell. His business is to speak out his mind, without regard to consequences, as he has already done on the occasion of Renan’s book. All these things irritate and torment me.

We are having admirable weather, but the natives are bewailing it bitterly, for they have had no rain for a year. The dry weather, however, does not hinder the leaves from growing, and the country is magnificent.

Unfortunately, I am detained indoors all the morning, and seldom have a chance to walk. There is a fair in progress under my windows. Opposite me they are exhibiting a giantess, in a satin gown which she raises to show her legs. Their diameter is almost that of your waist.

I will bring you the translation of Smoke. I have begun an essay on Tourguenieff, but do not know if I shall have the strength to finish it here. Nothing is more difficult than to work on a hotel diet. Good-bye, dear friend.

CCCVIII

Paris, June 16, 1868.

... I suppose you are having about the same weather that we are enjoying—that is to say, perfectly lovely, and that you are no longer suffering from excessive dampness, which is the unfortunate feature of P. Here, the early summer is ravishing. I went, day before yesterday, to the Bois de Boulogne, where I saw the most stunning costumes. I met one very beautiful woman, dressed in an extraordinary fashion, and whose hair was a lovely gold-colour. I could have sworn that she was a young woman from the rue de Breda, but I came to recognise her as the wife of a general. Her hair formerly was a dark chestnut. Customs are making singular progress.

A well-known society man was living in marital relations with the wife of another man. Returning to his apartment one day, he found her there with a third man. Upon this, he went to the husband, and said to him: “I know that you wish to have proofs of criminal intercourse, in order that you may obtain a divorce from your wife. I bring you these proofs.” He left with him a package of letters, and they separated, with expressions of mutual esteem. It does not appear that he has been expelled from his club, or excluded from any salon to which he has had access.

M. Tourguenieff has just sent me a very short, but very pretty novel, entitled The Brigadier. It is now being translated, and if the proofs are sent to me, I will share them with you. English novels are getting to be so horribly dull that I can not take to them. Here, it seems that there is no one but M. Penson de Terrail, but his stories are too short.

I expect to go to London by the end of the month. I hope to see you in Hastings and in Paris, towards the end of July. Good-bye, dear friend.

CCCIX

Château de Fontainebleau, August 4, 1868.

Dear Friend: I have been here about a fortnight, feeling tolerably well, and finding absolute idleness good for body and mind. Our last walk left me a sweet memory. Is it so with you? Here, I walk a little, read less, and breathe fairly well. It is a pleasure to look at the sky and the trees.

There is no one at the château, or, rather, not more than thirty persons, of whom the only outsiders, besides myself, are several cousins of the empress, both ladies and gentlemen, and very agreeable people, whom I met in Madrid.

I kept for you a copy of the second edition of Smoke. On my return to Paris, in a week, I think, I will leave it at your house, or, if you prefer, I will send it.

I brought with me my materials for work; but as one is never certain of having an hour to himself, I have accomplished nothing at all. I made a copy of a portrait of Diana of Poitiers, by Primatice. She is represented as Diana holding a quiver, and it is evident that she has posed, for from head to foot everything shows the portrait. If I dare say so, there results even from an examination of the legs, that she wore her garters above the knee, after the fashion of the time. It is no longer the fashion now (so I have been told). I will show it to you, for this portrait has an historical value.

Good-bye. It is now the hour for dining. I envy you the little fish that you are eating, perhaps, at this very moment. Be so good as to tell me what is that high rock at Boulogne, near the quay. It seemed to me a monstrosity.

CCCX

Paris, September 2, 1868.

While I was at Fontainebleau a strange incident happened to me. I had the idea of writing a novel for my hostess, whose hospitality I wished to repay in blarney. I did not have time to finish it; but on my return here I placed the word End on it, and I

fear it will be considered too long deferred. The strange part of it, however, is, that no sooner had I finished, than I began another novel. The recrudescence of this malady of my youth alarms me, because it so resembles a second childhood. Nothing of all this, be it understood, is for the public.

While I was in the château we read some marvellous modern novels, the authors of which were utterly unknown to me. It is in imitation of these gentlemen that this last novel is written. The scene occurs in Lithuania, a country perfectly familiar to you. Pure Sanskrit is spoken there. A great lady of the land, having gone to hunt, had the misfortune to be captured and carried away by a bear destitute of feeling. She became insane, but gave birth to a well-formed boy, who grows up and becomes charming, only he is subject to gloomy moods and inexplicable whimsicalities. He is married, and on his wedding-night eats his wife alive. You, who know all the tricks, since I disclose them to you, will guess immediately why. Yes, this gentleman is the illegitimate son of that unlicked cub. Che invenzione prelibata.[41] Please tell me, I pray you, what you think of it.

I am not doing any too well, and am urged to renew the compressed-air baths at Montpellier. If you do not return to Paris before the 1st of October, you will probably not find me there. I will leave you the novel Smoke, which I have had waiting for you for ages. I do not know what has become of the author. He was in Moscow recently, with gout, and a historical novel in the bargain.

I regret greatly not having visited the aquarium of which you tell me, when I passed through Boulogne. Nothing diverts me more than fish and sea flora.

I dined yesterday with Sainte-Beuve, who was very interesting. Although a great sufferer, he has a charming wit, and is, without doubt, one of the most agreeable conversationalists that I have ever heard. He is deeply alarmed at the progress made by the clericals, and takes the thing to heart. I think the danger does not come from that direction....

Good-bye, dear friend. Write to me, but do not write so loosely as to put but three words on a line. Tell me candidly your opinion on my invention of the bear.

CCCXI

Paris, Tuesday, September 29, 1868.

Dear Friend: The important thing is that the reading did not tire you. Is it possible that you did not guess at once how ill-bred that bear was? As I read, I saw plainly on your face that you did not admit my conception of the plot. I must then submit to yours. Do you believe the reader, who is less timorous than you, will accept this good-woman version, that it was a glancé? So, it was a mere glance of the bear which made this poor woman insane, and imparted to her son his sanguinary instincts? It shall be done as you wish. I have always been the better for your advice; but this time you have abused your privilege.

I shall leave for Montpellier next Saturday. I hope to say good-bye to you two or three times before then.

CCCXII

Cannes, November 16, 1868.

Dear Friend: I have been, and am still, very ill. The compressed-air baths, which were so beneficial to me last spring, were powerless to cure a bronchial trouble which has succeeded my asthma, and is as harassing as the latter. For six weeks I have been coughing and choking; while the numerous drugs, which I take with much docility and resignation, do not produce sufficient effect to permit me to resume my ordinary course of life. I go out only on very warm days. I sleep badly, and spend my time entertaining the blue devils.... It is at night especially that I suffer and fret the most. If I am so poorly before the winter, what will become of me when the

weather is really cold? This thought preoccupies me unpleasantly. For three or four days, however, I have felt a little less miserable.

During my nights of insomnia I made a careful copy of the Trouveur de Miel,[42] with the changes which you suggested, and which seem to me to improve the story. That the bear pushed his attacks to the point of marring an illustrious genealogy, remains doubtful. At the same time, intelligent persons like yourself will understand that a very serious accident must have occurred. I sent this new edition to M. Tourguenieff, that he might revise the local colour, concerning which I am in some perplexity, but the deuce of the thing is that neither he nor I have been able to find a single Lithuanian who knows his own language and country. I had some intention of sending this tale as a fête-day gift to the empress, but I have resisted the temptation, and have done wisely. God only knows what that bear would have become amidst the society at Compiègne.

The weather is only so-so—neither cold nor windy, but with very few really beautiful days. I have been here a fortnight. The rest of the time I have been at Montpellier, where I was horribly bored....

So poor Rossini is dead. They pretended that he had done a great deal of work, although he wished to publish nothing. Pecuniary considerations, which always had great weight with him, would have been reason enough for him to publish his work, if he had really composed anything. He was one of the wittiest men I have ever seen, and nothing more marvellous has ever been heard than the air from the Barber of Seville, as sung by him. No actor could compare with him.

The last year appears to have been a fatal one for great men. They say that Lamartine and Berryer are both seriously ill.

Good-bye, dear friend. Write to me, and lose no time in leaving the damp country where you are at present. There is no such thing as a warm house in the country.

If you know some amusing book, tell me what it is, I pray you.

CCCXIII

Cannes, January 2, 1869.

Dear Friend: You have not, then, received a letter I sent to you last month at P. I fear that it has gone astray. I do not pretend, however, to justify myself altogether. If you only realised what a wretched and monotonous life I am leading, you would understand that it is hard enough to endure it without giving an account of it. The fact is, I am doing very badly. Not the least improvement! On the contrary, they have not even succeeded in giving me relief from the painful attacks which occur from time to time. The sky and sea are magnificent, and their influence, which formerly restored me to health, no longer has any effect. What must I do? I have no idea, but often I feel a great desire that it would end.

Your journey seems to me delightful, but I do not approve of your return through the Tyrol in the season you describe. You will meet with much snow; you will lose the skin from your cheeks, and you will see nothing remarkably beautiful. You had better take some other route, no matter which. Innspruck, or, rather, Innsbruck, is an exceedingly picturesque little town; but for one who has been to Switzerland, it is not worth the trouble of going out of one’s way; neither are the bronze statues in the cathedral. Trent alone, of all the places on your route, seems to me worthy of your interest.

Why should you not go to Sicily to see Etna, which is said to be at his pranks again? You are never sea-sick, and it is probable that boats leave Naples especially to view the spectacle. In about a week’s journey you will have been able to see Etna, Palermo, and Syracuse.

I have again revised The Bear, whom you know, and I have polished him up with some care. Many things in the story are changed for the better, I think. The title and the names are changed also. For persons with as little intelligence as you, the manners of that bear will always seem to be mysterious. But no matter how

perspicacious one may be, one will never be able to decide anything to his disadvantage. An infinity of things remain unexplained in the story. Physicians tell me that plantigrades, more than any other beasts, are capable of intercourse with human beings; but such examples are rare, naturally, bears being not exactly attractive....

Where is the point of that discourse of M. de Nieuwerkerke mentioned in all the papers, and contradicted later? How stupid we are getting to be! Our progress in this is rapid. Did you have the curiosity to go to hear the discussion in the Hall of the Pré-aux-Clercs on marriage and heredity? They say that part of it was most amusing, and, on reflection, terrifying, when one considers the number of imbeciles and mad dogs running the streets. I am told that there are women who make speeches, and who are neither the least mad, or the least stupid. Such symptoms as these make me shudder. The people of this land are voluntarily blind.

Good-bye, dear friend. I wish you a happy New Year.

CCCXIV

Cannes, February 23, 1869.

Do not be offended with me, dear friend, if I do not write to you. I have no encouraging news to give you of myself, and what is the advantage of sending you bad reports? The fact is, I am still dangerously ill, and I now realise that my malady is incurable. I have tried I know not how many infallible remedies; I have been in the hands of three or four physicians of great skill, not one of whom has given me the slightest relief. I am mistaken. Some time ago, in Nice, I came across an unusually intelligent man, somewhat of a charlatan, perhaps, who gave me, without pay, some capsules, which relieved me from a very painful feeling of suffocation which caused me great distress every night. Now, I suffer from it in the morning, but with less violence, and the attacks do not last so long. As for the bronchitis, which is

the obstinate feature of my disease, it is well established.

Suffering and sad as I am, I have not the strength to read, and I have, besides, hardly any books. These past days I have read with interest the Mémoires d'un Paysan Écossais, who by dint of intelligence and application became a man of letters, a professor of geology, and a celebrated man. Unfortunately, he cut his throat not long ago, hard work having, without doubt, affected his mind. Hugh Miller is his name.

I think you will find my Bear more presentable under his new form. Whenever I am able to paint I make illustrations for the story, so that when I return to Paris I may present it to the empress. Do not imagine that I am representing all the scenes—that one, for example, in which the bear forgets himself.

Good-bye, dear friend. I regret for your sake that you will not return to Rome this year. Everything, it seems to me, is going wrong. There is no longer any Spain; soon there will be no Holy See. The loss will be more or less serious according to one's point of view. But it is something which should be seen once (like many other things), in order that one may suffer no temptations nor regrets. Good-bye....

CCCXV

Cannes, March 19, 1869.

Dear Friend: I have been very ill. I am now convalescent, very weak still, but out of all danger, so they tell me. It was an acute attack of bronchitis which aggravated my chronic bronchitis. For four or five days my life was in danger, but now I am up. I walk about in my room, and will be allowed soon to walk in the sunshine.

Good-bye, dear friend. Health and prosperity.

CCCXVI

Cannes, April 23, 1869.

Dear Friend: I shall leave here day after to-morrow. I am in pretty poor plight, but I am obliged to leave this place. My cousin, in whose home I live, is dead, and his poor widow has no one with her. I am still very weak, but think I am able to endure the trip. I shall notify you as soon as I arrive, and hope to find you in good health. Good-bye, dear friend.

CCCXVII

Paris, Sunday, May 2, 1869.

Dear Friend: I have been in Paris several days, but I was so exhausted from the journey, and so ill, that I had not the courage to write to you. Come to see me, and console me. Good-bye.

CCCXVIII

Paris, May 4, 1869.

I am distressed that you did not wait two minutes. You did not allow them to tell me, and contented yourself by returning my book, and this you call a visit to a sick man! Your charity was easily satisfied. But it does not count; besides, I am a little better, and need you to go to the Exposition with me, where I have no desire to see daubs and nudities.

You shall be my guide. Do you remember the time when I was yours? Tell me what day will suit you. Good-bye, dear friend.

CCCXIX

Paris, Saturday, June 12, 1869.

Dear Friend: This dull weather, with its alternations of heat and cold, worries me and does me great harm; besides, I am in a beastly humour. The uproar that takes

place every night on the boulevards, which reminds me of the fine times of 1848, contributes no little to my melancholy, and makes me feel, with Hamlet, that “man delights me not, nor woman neither.”

What afflicts me the most in all this sad business, is its profound stupidity. This people, which calls itself, and believes that it is, the most intellectual on earth, expresses its desire to enjoy a Republican form of government by demolishing the stands where poor people sell newspapers. They shriek, Vive la Lanterne! and break the street-lamps. It is enough to make one hide his face. The danger is that there is for stupidity a sort of emulation, as for everything else, and between the Chambers and the Government, God only knows what the result will be.

I spend my time deciphering letters of the duke of Alba and of Philip II, which the empress gave me. Both of them wrote like cats. I am beginning to read Philip II, easily enough; but his captain-general is still very troublesome. I have just read one of his letters to his august master, written a few days after the death of count Egmont, in which he pities the fate of the countess, who has not a loaf of bread left, after having had a dowry of ten thousand florins. Philip II has an intricate and tedious way of saying the simplest things. It is very difficult to divine his meaning, and it seems to me that his constant intention is to confuse his reader and leave him to his own powers of initiation. The two make the most detestable pair of men that ever existed, and neither of them, unfortunately, was hanged, which is nothing to the credit of Providence.

I have also received from England a curious book, in which it is claimed that Jeanne la Folle was not mad, but heretical, and that, on this account, papa, mamma, her husband, and her son all concerted to keep her in prison, and from time to time, to have her suffer a taste of torture. You shall read it, if you like; the book is at your service.

I have nothing encouraging to tell you of my health, which is not flourishing; a little

better, it may be, than before I came. Nevertheless, I cough constantly, and can neither eat nor sleep.

Good-bye, dear friend. Write to me soon.

CCCXX

Paris, June 29, 1869.

Thanks for your letter, dear friend. I am furious with poets and their pretended temperate climates. There is no spring, there is not even any summer. To-day, I ventured out of doors, and came back shivering. When I think that there are people who go to the woods, and even talk of love in this bitter weather, I am tempted to exclaim at the miracle. I say to myself that it is done every day. I am mistaken; it is impossible; it has never been done, even in the past.

I have finished the history of Princess Tarakanof, who was a saucy baggage, but she had a lover whose letters will amuse you. He suffered the fate of many mortals. I hope the Journal des Savants penetrates as far as ——; if not, I will try to send it to you.

I am going, Thursday, to Saint Cloud, where I shall remain, probably, about a fortnight. I am not sure how I shall endure the life there, although I am, they tell me, almost the only guest invited. Besides, if I become ill I can in an hour be reinstated at my own fireside. I have told you something of the tribulations that I suffer here in my home, so that I will confess to you, it is not without joy that I am going away. Since your departure I have had two or three most tiresome scenes.

I am reading, with the greatest difficulty, Renan’s Saint Paul. Decidedly, he is a monomaniac as to scenery. Instead of sticking to his subject, he describes the woods and the meadows. If I were an abbé I should delight in writing an article for him to review. Have you read the harangue of our holy father, the Pope?...

I am confident that both in word and in deed we are about to be guilty of enormities for which there will not be enough baked apples in the world. Alas! this may end in harder projectiles! What a misfortune that the modern mind is so dull! Do you think it has ever been so before? There have been ages, doubtless, in which there were more ignorance, more barbarism, more absurdity, but now and then some brilliant genius appeared to make compensation; while to-day, it seems to me that all intellectuality is on a plane which is miserably low.

As I scarcely ever go out, I read a great deal. I have had sent me the works of Baudelaire, which have made me furious. Baudelaire was crazy! He died in a hospital, after having written some verses which attracted the good opinion of Victor Hugo, and which possessed no other merit than that of being immoral. Now they are making him out to be a man of genius, who was misunderstood!

I saw yesterday an exquisite drawing of a marvellous fresco discovered in Pompeii. It appears to be a procession in honour of Cybele, to whom Hercules is making a visit. Standing before Cybele is a gentleman divested of modesty; some others are bearing a serpent with much pomp—a serpent coiled around a tree. I understand nothing of the subject. You saw in Pompeii the little temple of Isis; it was near this that the fresco in question was found.

Good-bye, dear friend. Write to me, in order that I may see you in passing. From now on for several days, you may address me at the Palace of Saint Cloud.

CCCXXI

Paris, Wednesday night, August 5, 1869.

... I spent a month at Saint Cloud, in a passable condition of health. I was never perfectly well mornings and nights, but the days were not bad. The open-air life did me good, I think, and gave me a little strength. On my return, Sunday, I had a most distressing attack of exhaustion, which continued two days. Then my physician at

Cannes arrived, with a new remedy of his own invention, which cured me. They are eucalyptus tablets, and the eucalyptus is a tree native to Australia, which has been naturalized in Cannes. I am doing well, provided it lasts, as the man said while he was falling from a fourth-story window.

At Saint Cloud I read The Bear before a very select audience, among whom were several young ladies who understood nothing, it seemed to me; and, since it caused no offence, I have a desire to present the story to the Revue. Tell me your way of thinking thereon, and try to point out very clearly the pros and cons. You must not overlook the progress in hypocrisy which the age has made in late years. What will your friends say about it? Besides, one may as well write his stories for himself, for those that are written by others are not exactly interesting.... Are you not grieved for your holy mother, the Church, by the accident at Cracow? If one were to observe attentively, I am sure one would find that such things are occurring elsewhere. You must read the account of the affair in the Times....

I dined, a few days ago, with the guileless Isabelle. I found her better than I had expected. The husband, who is quite small, is a very polite gentleman, who made me many compliments, nor were they badly turned either. The prince of the Asturias is most affable, and has an intelligent expression.... He resembles ——, and also the children of Velasquez' time.

I am dreadfully bored. It is excessively hot at the Luxembourg, and all this matter of the Senate Council is anything but agreeable. They are going to open the establishment to the public, of which I disapprove strongly.[43]

Good-bye, dear friend. Write me something cheerful, for I am full of sadness. I have great need of your mirthsomeness and of your real presence.

CCCXXII

Paris, September 7, 1869.

Dear Friend: Do you expect to remain much longer at ——? Shall you not return here soon? While I have not as yet felt any sign of the approach of winter, I am beginning to look towards the South, for I have promised myself not to allow myself to be surprised by the cold. For several days I have been a little better, or, to speak more exactly, less ill. I have taken compressed-air baths, which have done me a little good, and I follow a new treatment which is tolerably successful. I am still solitary. I never go out at night, and see almost no one. By the help of all these precautions I am alive, or nearly so. Bülow succeeded in enticing me off.

At Saint Cloud the empress had me read The Bear (it is called Lokis now, which is bear in Jmoude) before some young girls, who, as I think I told you, understood nothing at all. This encourages me, and on the 15th of this month the thing will appear in the Revue. I have made several changes besides the names, and I wished to make still others, but my courage failed me. You will tell me what you think of it.

Yesterday we concluded our little matter.[44] I am uncertain as to the result. The respectable public is so hopelessly stupid, that what it formerly desired, now inspires it with fear. I have a suspicion that the bourgeois, who voted for M. Ferry a few months ago, now think that before some days in June, more or less remote, he will find himself disarmed. His distinguishing characteristic is never to be satisfied, with his own achievements especially.

The emperor’s illness is not serious, but it may be tedious, and there may be a return of it. It is said, and I am inclined to believe it, that the great journey to the Orient will be countermanded; possibly the strained relations existing between the sultan and the viceroy are considered of sufficient importance to wreck the plans for the proposed excursion.

Have you read, in the Journal des Savants, the history of the princess Tarakanof? This is not new, however, and I believe I have shown you the proofs.

I have in mind to write, this winter, a Life of Cervantes, to serve as a preface to a

new edition of Don Quixote. Has it been a long time since you have read Don Quixote? Does it still amuse you? Have you ever tried to explain why? I find it amusing, and yet I can give no valid reason; on the contrary, I can think of many things about the book which should prove that it is worthless; nevertheless, it is excellent. I should like to know your ideas on the subject. Do me the kindness to read over several chapters, and ask yourself these questions. I depend on you to do me this favour.

Good-bye. I hope the month will not pass without seeing you.

CCCXXIII

Cannes, November 11, 1869.

Dear Friend: I am here in the most glorious weather imaginable, and the most persistently such; to the despair of the gardeners, who can not make their cabbages grow. I regret to see that I am hardly better than if the weather were bad. Mornings and evenings I have always very painful attacks of exhaustion. I can not walk without becoming tired and losing my breath; in fact, I am still good for nothing and miserable.

Besides, I have had some serious worries. P., whom I brought with me, became suddenly so sullen and impertinent, that I was compelled to discharge her. You may imagine that to lose a servant who has been with you for forty years is not an agreeable thing. Fortunately, she soon repented, and begged my pardon with such persistence that I had a sufficiently good excuse to yield, and keep her. It is so difficult nowadays to find a reliable servant, and P. has many excellent qualities, which it would have been impossible for me to replace. I hope the anger and firmness which I showed, and of which, between ourselves, I scarcely thought myself capable, will have a salutary effect in the future, and prevent any return of such episodes.

I dined yesterday in Nice with M. Thiers, who is much changed physically since the death of Madame Dosne, but not at all mentally, it seemed to me. His mother-in-law was the soul of his home. She it was who made a salon for him, attracted to it desirable people, and understood how to be agreeable both to political and other guests. In short, she reigned in a court composed of heterogeneous elements, and had the skill to turn them all to the profit of M. Thiers. A life of solitude has now begun for him; his wife will take part in nothing.

Politically, I found Thiers even more changed. Seeing the unbounded folly that has taken possession of this land, he has once more become reasonable, and is preparing to combat it, as he did in 1849. I fear that he overestimates his strength. It is much easier to burst the goat-skin bottles of Æolus than to mend them again and make them air-tight. It seems to me probable that we shall have a struggle; the chassepot rifle is invincible, and will give the populace of Paris a historic lesson, as general Changarnier said. Still, is there any assurance that it will serve its purpose? and, if it should serve its purpose, what will happen? The officials of the government have become impossible; and the parliamentary government, insincere, dishonest, and devoid of capable men, seems to me no less impossible. In fact, to me the future, and I might say the present, is as gloomy as it is possible to be.

Good-bye, dear friend. Take good care of yourself, and write to me.

CCCXXIV

Cannes, January 6, 1870.

Dear Friend: I thank you for your letter, and for your good wishes. I did not reply at once, because I did not have the physical strength. The cold weather, which has come upon us suddenly, is very severe, and has done me a great deal of harm. I feel a little better to-day, and take advantage of it to write to you. I am deeply discouraged; nothing does me any good. I try all the remedies, and find myself again

back at the point from which I started; after a few days of relief, the disease manifests itself again as forcibly as ever. I sleep wretchedly, and with the greatest difficulty.

Not only do I not eat, but all kinds of nourishment inspire in me a feeling of disgust. Nearly all day I suffer frightfully, sometimes accompanied with spasms of pain. I read with great difficulty, and frequently do not understand the words under my eyes. I have an idea of something which I should like to put into a work, but how is it possible to write in the midst of these troubles! So you see, dear friend, the situation in which I find myself. I have the certainty that a slow and painful death is to be my fate. I must become reconciled to it.

The political situation, of which I understand nothing at all, is not calculated to offer me an agreeable distraction. It seems to me that we are marching on to a revolution, which will be more disastrous than the one through which we passed so blithesomely twenty years ago. I should like the performance to be delayed a little while, so that I may not attend it.

It froze here at six degrees, a phenomenon which has not occurred since 1821, so say the oldest inhabitants; all the gardens have been ruined. The cold snap came just when one might have supposed it to be midsummer; the season was advanced, and everything in bloom. It was lamentable to see great, beautiful plants, full of blossoms, from seven to eight feet tall in the evening, in one night reduced to the consistency of spinach.

Good-bye, dear friend. Keep well, and let me sometimes hear from you. I wish you a happy New Year....

CCCXXV

Cannes, February 10, 1870.

Dear Friend: If I have not written to you for a long time, it is because I have had

nothing but sad things to tell you of myself. I am more and more ailing, and the life I lead is truly miserable. I sleep hardly at all, and suffer nearly all the time I am awake. Besides, the winter has been a frightful one. All the lovely flowers which made the glory of the country have been destroyed, many of the orange-trees have been frozen, and not enough flowers are left to make you any pomade. Imagine the effect produced on a being nervous as I, by rain, hail, and cold. One suffers here ten times more from all these than he would in Paris.

So, then, you have had an insurrection, which was as silly as the hero[45] who was its instigator. We present a melancholy spectacle of ourselves, by the fashion in which we make use of our liberty and of parliamentary government. It is impossible not to be struck by the really laughable audacity with which propositions of the most monstrous kind are presented and maintained in the Chambers, which no one would dare to utter in a salon. This representative government is a comedy which one can hardly call amusing. Everybody in it lies with effrontery, and nevertheless, every one lets himself be taken in by the most skilful liar. There are persons who consider Crémieux eloquent, and think that Rochefort is a worthy citizen. We were certainly stupid enough in 1848, but we are even more so to-day.

I am making the experiment of using a paper of English manufacture, and do not know whether you will be able to read what I write. I have just translated for the Revue a novel by Tourguenieff, which will appear next month. I am writing for myself, and perhaps for you, a little story in which the situation is largely one of love.

Good-bye. I wish you health and prosperity.

CCCXXVI

Cannes, April 7, 1870.

I have not written before, because I had only bad news to give you. I have been

constantly, if not ill, at any rate in pain. I am still so. I am distressingly weak, and I am unable to walk a hundred steps from my home without sitting down several times to rest. Frequently, especially in the night, I have attacks of excruciating pain, which last a long time. “Nerves!” they tell me. Now, medicine, as you know, is almost ineffectual when it is a question of nerves.

Last Monday, wishing to make an experiment and find out if I could stand the journey to Paris, I went to Nice, and made a few calls. I thought at one time that I should be guilty of the indiscretion of dying in the home of a person whom I did not know intimately enough to take that liberty with. I returned here in a bad condition, and spent twenty-four hours in a state of suffocation.

Yesterday I was a little better. I went out and walked along the sea-shore, followed by a folding-chair on which I sat down every ten steps. Such is my life. I hope by the end of the month to be able to start for Paris. Will it be possible? I often wonder if I shall be strong enough to climb my stairway. You, who know so many things, do you know of some apartment in which I might put away my books and myself, without climbing many steps? I should not care to be too far away from the Institute.

I received a letter, very well turned, from M. Émile Ollivier, soliciting my vote.[46] I replied to him that I was no longer of this world. I think he will be elected without opposition.

How right you are in your judgment that we have gone mad! The clumsy assertion that to consult the people concerning the constitution is to create a despotism, is proof sufficient of what false metal it is cast! But the saddest of all is that no one is revolted by such absurdity. In reality, we are living in a period when there is no longer such a thing as ridicule or absurdity. Anything is said and anything is printed without shame.

I do not know when the review of Cervantes will appear; it will precede a splendid and beautiful edition of Don Quixote, which I will make you read one of these days.

As for the story which I mentioned to you I shall reserve it to come out with my posthumous works. Still, if you wish to read it in manuscript, you may have this pleasure, which will take a quarter of an hour.

Good-bye, dear friend. Take good care of yourself. Health is the best of possessions. I shall not stir from here before the end of April. I expect to find you in Paris. Again good-bye.

CCCXXVII

Cannes, May 15, 1870.

Dear Friend: I have been very ill, and am still. I have been allowed only the last few days to venture out of doors. I am horribly weak, yet am encouraged to hope that by the end of next week I may start on my journey. I shall return, probably, by easy stages, for I could not endure twenty-four hours of steady railroad travel.

My health is irrevocably ruined. I can not yet accustom myself to this life of privation and suffering, but whether I am resigned or not, I am condemned to it. I wish I might at least find distraction in occupation; but, in order to work, I need to have an amount of strength which is lacking. I envy greatly some of my friends who have been enabled to depart this life suddenly, with no suffering, and with none of the vexatious warnings that come to me day by day.

The political turmoil of which you speak has penetrated also to this little corner of the earth. I have seen here plainly instances of the ignorance and stupidity of men. I am convinced that very few voters have any conception of what they are doing. The Reds, who are in the majority here, have persuaded the imbeciles, who are even more numerous, that the matter at stake is the establishment of new taxes. Anyway, the result was fortunate.[47] “It is well cut out; now it is a question of sewing,” as Catherine de Medici said to Henry III. Unfortunately, I can see in this land of ours, just now, scarcely any one who is skilful in the use of the needle.

What do you think of my friend M. Thiers, who, after the experience of the banquets of 1848, has resumed the same tactics? It is said that magpies are never caught, twice running, with the same snare; but men, and men of intelligence, are more easily snared.

I am thinking of giving up my lodging, and I should like to find one nearer the ground, and in your quarter. Can you give me any information and any suggestions on this subject?...

Nothing could be more beautiful than the country about here at this season. Flowers abound everywhere in such profusion, and of such beauty, that verdure in the landscape is exceptional. Good-bye.

CCCXXVIII

Paris, June 26, 1870.

Dear Friend: I have been ill for a month. It is impossible for me to do anything, even read. I am a great sufferer, and have little hope. This may endure, perhaps, a long time.

I have put one of the shelves of my library in order, and am keeping for you the Lettres de Madame de Sévigné, in twelve volumes, and a small Shakespeare. When you return to Paris I will send them to you. I thank you for thinking of me.

CCCXXIX

Paris, July 18, 1870.

Dear Friend: I have been, and am still, very ill. For six weeks I have been unable to leave my room, and almost my bed. This is the third or fourth attack of bronchitis I have had since the beginning of the year. This promises nothing good for the approaching winter. When the heat of summer offers me no protection against colds,

how will it be when winter comes?

I think that one must needs be admirably well, and have nerves of singular vigour, not to be too deeply affected by the events of to-day. I need not tell you how I feel. I am among those who believe that the thing could not be avoided.[48] The explosion might have been retarded, perhaps, but it was impossible to avert it altogether. Here, war is more popular than it has ever been, even among the bourgeois. There is a great deal of mouthing, which is assuredly unfortunate; but men are volunteering, and money is being subscribed, which is the essential point. Military men are full of confidence, but when one considers that the whole future hangs on the chance of a bullet or a ball, it is difficult to share that confidence.

Good-bye for the present, dear friend. I am already fatigued from writing you these two little pages. I am ailing to the last degree; still my physicians say that I am better, but I can not perceive it. I have not sent the books to your house, fearing there might be no one there to receive them.

Good-bye once more. I kiss you from my heart.

CCCXXX

Paris, Tuesday, August 9, 1870.

Dear Friend: I think it would be well for you not to come to Paris just now. I fear that in a little while there will be some lamentable scenes here. The streets are full of downcast, discouraged people, and drunken men singing the “Marseillaise.” Great disorder prevails. The army has been, and is, admirable, but is seems that we have no generals. All may still be repaired; but, for that, a miracle would be necessary.

I am no worse, only overwhelmed by the situation. I am writing to you from the Luxembourg, where we do nothing but exchange hopes and fears. Give me some news of yourself. Good-bye.

CCCXXXI

Paris, August 29, 1870.

Dear Friend: I thank you for your letter. I am still very ill and nervous. One would be so with less cause. The situation looks black to me. For a few days, however, it has mended slightly. The military men manifest confidence. The soldiers and the militia are fighting perfectly together; it appears that the army of Maréchal Bazaine has accomplished prodigies of valour, although it has always fought one against three. Now, to-morrow, perhaps to-day, another great battle is looked for. These last engagements have been frightful. The Prussians conduct war by hand-to-hand fighting. Until the present, this method has been successful for them, but it seems that near Metz the carnage was such as to give them cause for reflection. It is said that the young ladies of Berlin have lost all their partners in the dance. If we could escort the rest back to the frontier,—or bury them here, which would be better—we should not have reached the limit of our troubles. This terrible butchery, we must not deceive ourselves, is but the prologue to a tragedy of which the devil alone knows the catastrophe. A nation is not shaken like ours has been without suffering for it. It is inconceivable that from our victory, as from our defeat, a revolution will not come. All the blood which has been shed, or which will be shed, is to the profit of the Republic—that is, of organised disorder.

Good-bye, dear friend. Remain at P.; there you are safe. We are still very calm here, awaiting with great composure the arrival of the Prussians; but the devil will not be the loser thereby. Again good-bye....

CCCXXXII

Cannes, September 23, 1870.[49]

Dear Friend: I am very ill—so ill, that it is a difficult matter to write. There is a

slight improvement. I will write to you soon, I hope, more in detail. Send to my house in Paris, for the Lettres de Madame de Sévigné, and a Shakespeare. I should have had them taken to you, but I went away. Good-bye. I embrace you.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] One would suppose that in Saint Clair, a character in The Etruscan Vase, he has drawn himself: “He was naturally tender-hearted and affectionate, but at an age when lasting impressions are too easily formed, his over-transparent sensitiveness subjected him to the derision of his companions.... From that time he made it his business to conceal all appearances of what he regarded as a contemptible weakness.... In society he gained the unfortunate reputation of being unfeeling and indifferent.... He had travelled widely, and read much, yet he spoke of his travels and reading only when it was absolutely necessary.” Darcy, in The Double Mistake, is another character resembling his own.

[2] The following is one of his generous and delicate actions; Béranger, in a similar experience, did the same: “When I went to Spain, I was on the point of falling in love. It was one of the beautiful acts of my life. The woman who was the cause of my voyage never suspected it. Had I remained, I might have committed, possibly, a great blunder—that of offering a woman worthy of enjoying every happiness that one may have on earth, in exchange for the loss of all that was dear to her, an affection which I realized was far inferior to the sacrifice that she would probably have made.”

[3] The Résident in The Spaniards in Denmark, the Count and other gentlemen in The Conspirators, Kermouton and the Butter Merchant in The Two Heirs. But on the other hand, what true analyses are the characters of Clémence, of Sévin, and of Miss Jackson!

[4] Letters to an Unknown, Vol. II, p. 294.

[5] Letters to an Unknown, I, p. 7. “Abandon your optimistic ideas and realise that we are in this world to struggle and contend with our fellows.... Learn, also, that nothing is more common than to do wrong merely for the pleasure of doing it.”

[6]

No man knows the gods so well, That he may be sure of living until to-morrow.

[7] Mr. Sutton Sharpe, a highly distinguished English advocate.

[8] Upon the occasion of his nomination to membership in the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres.

[9] His election to the French Academy occurred the 14th, two days after this letter was written.

[10] His election to membership in the French Academy.

[11] The occasion of his reception at the French Academy.

[12] This letter was written originally in English. It is given unchanged.—Translator.

[13] The trial of the suit relating to Libri.

[14] M. Nogent Saint-Laurens.

[15] Loa, a sort of conversational dithyramb, in honour of the person for whom the celebration is given.

[16] Implicated in the Orsini affair. The French Government requested his extradition, which England refused to grant.

[17] Marshal Pélissier, the duc de Malakoff.

[18] The Princess Clotilde had just married Prince Napoleon.

[19] The war in Italy.

[20] The address of the emperor, on his return from Italy.

[21] The last Letters of Madame du Deffand, which had just been published.

[22] The visit of the emperor and empress.

[23] On the occasion of the burial of Prince Jerome.

[24] To Scotland.

[25] The emperor of Austria.

[26] They were bored with the melodies. It is impossible to translate the pun into English.—Translator.

[27] The Senate.

[28] The Libri matter, and the sessions of the Senate.

[29] Le sel pour le pain: Salt for the bread.

[30] Bogdan Chmielnicki, published in the volume entitled The Cossacks of the Past.

[31] Troplong—Too long.—Translator.

[32] Bousingots. Slang expression: wineshop, “lush-crib.” Also, a Republican or Literary Bohemian of the first years of Louis Philippe’s reign.—Translator.

[33] Report on musical copyright, which he was appointed to present to the Senate.

[34] Le Lion Amoureux.

[35] On his nomination as Grand Officer in the Legion of Honour.

[36] Une Passion dans le Grand Monde.

[37] On popular libraries, at the session of the Senate, June 25, 1867.

[38] Distribution of prizes to the exhibitors.

[39] The death of Maximilian.

[40] For Biarritz.

[41] This is the novel which was afterwards published under the title of Lokis.

[42] Lokis.

[43] The sessions of the Senate were going to be public.

[44] Adoption of the plan of the Senate Council, session of September 6, 1869.

[45] Victor Noir.

[46] For the French Academy.

[47] The vote of the plebiscite.

[48] The war with Prussia.

[49] Last letter, written two hours before his death.

Typographical errors corrected by the etext transcriber: vol. I kiss your hands must humbly=> kiss your hands most humbly {pg 55} a heard of American bison=> a herd of American bison {pg 313} vol. II beautiful Greeek literature=> beautiful Greek literature {pg 117} I can not concieve=> I can not conceive {pg 124} Bagnéres-de-Bigorre=> Bagnères-de-Bigorre {pg 172} his views of Napoleon and and his comparison=> his views of Napoleon and his comparison {pg 177} I have even seen=> I have ever seen {pg 169} Saturady=> Saturday {pg 170} Antionette=> Antoinette {pg 272} I am begining=> I am beginning {pg 305}

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