Over Strand and Field

by Gustave Flaubert

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OVER STRAND AND FIELD

A RECORD OF TRAVEL THROUGH BRITTANY

BY

GUSTAVE FLAUBERT

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OVER STRAND AND FIELD[1]

A TRIP THROUGH BRITTANY

CHAPTER I.

CHÂTEAU DE CHAMBORD.

We walked through the empty galleries and deserted rooms where spiders spin their cobwebs over the salamanders of Francis the First. One is overcome by a feeling of distress at the sight of this poverty which has no grandeur. It is not absolute ruin, with the luxury of blackened and mouldy débris, the delicate embroidery of flowers, and the drapery of waving vines undulating in the breeze, like pieces of damask. It is a conscious poverty, for it brushes its threadbare coat and endeavours to appear respectable. The floor has been repaired in one room, while in the next it has been allowed to rot. It shows the futile effort to preserve that which is dying and to bring back that which has fled. Strange to say, it is all very melancholy, but not at all imposing.

And then it seems as if everything had contributed to injure poor Chambord, designed by Le Primatice and chiselled and sculptured by Germain Pilon and Jean Cousin. Upreared by Francis the First, on his return from Spain, after the humiliating treaty of Madrid (1526), it is the monument of a pride that sought to dazzle itself in order to forget defeat. It first harbours Gaston d'Orléans, a crushed pretender, who is exiled within its walls; then it is Louis XIV, who, out of one floor, builds three, thus ruining the beautiful double staircase which extended without interruption from the top to the bottom. Then one day, on the second floor, facing the front, under the magnificent ceiling covered with salamanders and painted ornaments which are now crumbling away, Molière produced for the first time Le Bourgeois gentilhomme.

Then it was given to the Maréchal de Saxe; then to the Polignacs, and finally to a plain soldier, Berthier. It was afterwards bought back by subscription and presented to the Duc de Bordeaux. It has been given to everybody, as if nobody cared to have it or desired to keep it. It looks as if it had hardly ever been used, and as if it had always been too spacious. It is like a deserted hostelry where transient guests have not left even their names on the walls.

When we walked through an outside gallery to the Orléans staircase, in order to examine the caryatids which are supposed to represent Francis the First, M. de Chateaubriand, and Madame d'Étampes, and turned around the celebrated lantern that terminates the big staircase, we stuck our heads several times through the railing to look down. In the courtyard was a little donkey nursing its mother, rubbing up against her, shaking its long ears and playfully jumping around. This is what we found in the court of honour of the Château de Chambord; these are its present hosts: a dog rolling in the grass, and a nursing, braying donkey frolicking on the threshold of kings!

CHÂTEAU D'AMBOISE.

The Château d'Amboise, which dominates the whole city that appears to be thrown at its feet like a mass of pebbles at the foot of a rock, looks like an imposing fortress, with its large towers pierced by long, narrow windows; its arched gallery that extends from the one to the other, and the brownish tint of its walls, darkened by the contrast of the flowers, which droop over them like a nodding plume on the bronzed forehead of an old soldier. We spent fully a quarter of an hour admiring the tower on the left; it is superb, imbrowned and yellowish in some places and coated with soot in others; it has charming charlocks hanging from its battlements, and is, in a word, one of those speaking monuments that seem to breathe and hold one spellbound and pensive under their gaze, like those paintings, the originals of which are unknown to us, but whom we love without knowing why.

The Château is reached by a slight incline which leads to a garden elevated like a terrace, from which the view extends on the whole surrounding country. It was of a delicate green; poplar trees lined the banks of the river; the meadows advanced to its edge, mingling their grey border with the bluish and vapourous horizon, vaguely enclosed by indistinct hills. The Loire flowed in the middle, bathing its islands, wetting the edge of the meadows, turning the wheels of the mills and letting the big boats glide peacefully, two by two, over its silvery surface, lulled to sleep by the creaking of the heavy rudders; and in the distance two big white sails gleamed in the sun.

Birds flew from the tops of the towers and the edge of the machicolations to some other spot, described circles in the air, chirped, and soon passed out of sight. About a hundred feet below us were the pointed roofs of the city, the empty courtyards of the old mansions, and the black holes of the smoky chimneys. Leaning in the niche of a battlement, we gazed and listened, and breathed it all in, enjoying the beautiful sunshine and balmy air impregnated with the pungent odour of the ruins. And there, without thinking of anything in particular, without even phrasing inwardly about something, I dreamed of coats of mail as pliable as gloves, of shields of buffalo hide soaked with sweat, of closed visors through which shot bloodthirsty glances, of wild and desperate night attacks with torches that set fire to the walls, and hatchets that mutilated the bodies; and of Louis XI, of the lover's war, of D'Aubigné and of the charlocks, the birds, the polished ivy, the denuded brambles, tasting in my pensive and idle occupation—what is greatest in men, their memory;—and what is most beautiful in nature, her ironical encroachments and eternal youth.

In the garden, among the lilac-bushes and the shrubs that droop over the alleys, rises the chapel, a work of the sixteenth century, chiselled at every angle, a perfect jewel, even more intricately decorated inside than out, cut out like the paper covering of a bonbonnière, and cunningly sculptured like the handle of a Chinese parasol. On the door is a bas-relief which is very amusing and ingenuous. It represents the meeting

of Saint Hubert with the mystic stag, which bears a cross between its antlers. The saint is on his knees; above him hovers an angel who is about to place a crown on his cap; near them stands the saint's horse, watching the scene with a surprised expression; the dogs are barking and on the mountain, the sides and facets of which are cut to represent crystals, creeps the serpent. You can see its flat head advancing toward some leafless trees that look like cauliflowers. They are the sort of trees one comes upon in old Bibles, spare of foliage, thick and clumsy, bearing blossoms and fruit but no leaves; the symbolical, theological, and devout trees that are almost fantastical on account of their impossible ugliness. A little further, Saint Christopher is carrying Jesus on his shoulders; Saint Antony is in his cell, which is built on a rock; a pig is retiring into its hole and shows only its hind-quarters and its corkscrew tail, while a rabbit is sticking its head out of its house.

Of course, it is all a little clumsy and the moulding is not faultless. But there is so much life and movement about the figure and the animals, so much charm in the details, that one would give a great deal to be able to carry it away and take it home.

Inside of the Château, the insipid Empire style is reproduced in every apartment. Almost every room is adorned with busts of Louis-Philippe and Madame Adélaïde. The present reigning family has a craze for being portrayed on canvas. It is the bad taste of a parvenu, the mania of a grocer who has accumulated money and who enjoys seeing himself in red, white, and yellow, with his watch-charms dangling over his stomach, his bewhiskered chin and his children gathered around him.

On one of the towers, and in spite of the most ordinary common sense, they have built a glass rotunda which is used for a dining-room. True, the view from it is magnificent. But the building presents so shocking an appearance from the outside, that one would, I should think, prefer to see nothing of the environs, or else to eat in the kitchen.

In order to go back to the city, we came down by a tower that was used by carriages

to approach the Château. The sloping gravelled walk turns around a stone axle like the steps of a staircase. The arch is dark and lighted only by the rays that creep through the loop-holes. The columns on which the interior end of the vault rests, are decorated with grotesque or vulgar subjects. A dogmatic intention seems to have presided over their composition. It would be well for travellers to begin the inspection at the bottom, with the Aristoteles equitatus (a subject which has already been treated on one of the choir statues in the Cathedral of Rouen) and reach by degrees a pair embracing in the manner which both Lucretius and l'Amour Conjugal have recommended. The greater part of the intermediary subjects have been removed, to the despair of seekers of comical things, like ourselves; they have been removed in cold blood, with deliberate intent, for the sake of decency, and because, as one of the servants of his Majesty informed us convincingly, "a great many were improper for the lady visitors to see."

CHÂTEAU DE CHENONCEAUX.

A something of infinite suavity and aristocratic serenity pervades the Château de Chenonceaux. It is situated outside of the village, which keeps at a respectful distance. It can be seen through a large avenue of trees, and is enclosed by woods and an extensive park with beautiful lawns. Built on the water, it proudly uprears its turrets and its square chimneys. The Cher flows below, and murmurs at the foot of its arches, the pointed corners of which form eddies in the tide. It is all very peaceful and charming, graceful yet robust. Its calm is not wearying and its melancholy has no tinge of bitterness.

One enters through the end of a long, arched hallway, which used to be a fencing-room. It is decorated with some armours, which, in spite of the obvious necessity of their presence, do not shock one's taste or appear out of place. The whole scheme of interior decoration is tastefully carried out; the furniture and hangings of the period have been preserved and cared for intelligently. The great,

venerable mantel-pieces of the sixteenth century do not shelter the hideous and economical German stoves, which might easily be hidden in some of them.

In the kitchen, situated in a wing of the castle, which we visited later, a maid was peeling vegetables and a scullion was washing dishes, while the cook was standing in front of the stove, superintending a reasonable number of shining saucepans. It was all very delightful, and bespoke the idle and intelligent home life of a gentleman. I like the owners of Chenonceaux.

In fact, have you not often seen charming old paintings that make you gaze at them indefinitely, because they portray the period in which their owners lived, the ballets in which the farthingales of all those beautiful pink ladies whirled around, and the sword-thrusts which those noblemen gave each other with their rapiers? Here are some temptations of history. One would like to know whether those people loved as we do, and what difference existed between their passions and our own. One would like them to open their lips and tell their history, tell us everything they used to do, no matter how futile, and what their cares and pleasures used to be. It is an irritating and seductive curiosity, a dreamy desire for knowledge, such as one feels regarding the past life of a mistress.... But they are deaf to the questions our eyes put to them, they remain dumb and motionless in their wooden frames, and we pass on. The moths attack their canvases, but the latter are revarnished; and the pictures will smile on when we are buried and forgotten. And others will come and gaze upon them, till the day they crumble to dust; then people will dream in the same old way before our own likenesses, and ask themselves what used to happen in our day, and whether life was not more alluring then.

I should not have spoken again of those handsome dames, if the large, full-length portrait of Madame Deshoulières, in an elaborate white dêshabille, (it was really a fine picture, and, like the much decried and seldom read efforts of the poetess, better at the second look than at the first), had not reminded me, by the expression of the

mouth, which is large, full, and sensual, of the peculiar coarseness of Madame de Staël's portrait by Gérard. When I saw it two years ago, at Coppet, in bright sunshine, I could not help being impressed by those red, vinous lips and the wide, aspiring nostrils. George Sand's face offers a similar peculiarity. In all those women who were half masculine, spirituality revealed itself only in the eyes. All the rest remained material.

In point of amusing incidents, there is still at Chenonceaux, in Diane de Poitiers's room, the wide canopy bedstead of the royal favourite, done in white and red. If it belonged to me, it would be very hard for me not to use it once in a while. To sleep in the bed of Diane de Poitiers, even though it be empty, is worth as much as sleeping in that of many more palpable realities. Moreover, has it not been said that all the pleasure in these things was only imagination? Then, can you conceive of the peculiar and historical voluptuousness, for one who possesses some imagination, to lay his head on the pillow that belonged to the mistress of Francis the First, and to stretch his limbs on her mattress? (Oh! how willingly I would give all the women in the world for the mummy of Cleopatra!) But I would not dare to touch, for fear of breaking them, the porcelains belonging to Catherine de Médicis, in the dining-room, nor place my foot in the stirrup of Francis the First, for fear it might remain there, nor put my lips to the mouth-piece of the huge trumpet in the fencing-room, for fear of rupturing my lungs.

CHAPTER II.

CHÂTEAU DE CLISSON.

On a hill at the foot of which two rivers mingle their waters, in a fresh landscape, brightened by the light colours of the inclined roofs, that are grouped like many sketches of Hubert, near a waterfall that turns the wheel of a mill hidden among the leaves, the Château de Clisson raises its battered roof above the tree-tops.

Everything around it is calm and peaceful. The little dwellings seem to smile as if they had been built under softer skies; the waters sing their song, and patches of moss cover a stream over which hang graceful clusters of foliage. The horizon extends on one side into a tapering perspective of meadows, while on the other it rises abruptly and is enclosed by a wooded valley, the trees of which crowd together and form a green ocean.

After one crosses the bridge and arrives at the steep path which leads to the Château, one sees, standing upreared and bold on the moat on which it is built, a formidable wall, crowned with battered machicolations and bedecked with trees and ivy, the luxuriant growth of which covers the grey stones and sways in the wind, like an immense green veil which the recumbent giant moves dreamily across his shoulders. The grass is tall and dark, the plants are strong and hardy; the trunks of the ivy are twisted, knotted, and rough, and lift up the walls as with levers or hold them in the network of their branches. In one spot, a tree has grown through the wall horizontally, and, suspended in the air, has let its branches radiate around it. The moats, the steep slope of which is broken by the earth which has detached itself from the embankments and the stones which have fallen from the battlements, have a wide, deep curve, like hatred and pride; and the portal, with its strong, slightly arched ogive, and its two bays that raise the drawbridge, looks like a great helmet with holes in its visor.

When one enters, he is surprised and astonished at the wonderful mixture of ruins and trees, the ruins accentuating the freshness of the trees, while the latter in turn, render more poignant the melancholy of the ruins. Here, indeed, is the beautiful, eternal, and brilliant laughter of nature over the skeleton of things; here is the insolence of her wealth and the deep grace of her encroachments, and the melodious invasions of her silence. A grave and pensive enthusiasm fills one's soul; one feels that the sap flows in the trees and that the grass grows with the same strength and the same rhythm, as the stones crumble and the walls cave in. A sublime art, in the

supreme accord of secondary discordances, has contrasted the unruly ivy with the sinuous sweep of the ruins, the brambles with the heaps of crumbling stones, the clearness of the atmosphere with the strong projections of the masses, the colour of the sky with the colour of the earth, reflecting each one in the other: that which was, and that which is. Thus history and nature always reveal, though they may accomplish it in a circumscribed spot of the world, the unceasing relation, the eternal hymen of dying humanity and the growing daisy; of the stars that glow, and the men who expire, of the heart that beats and the wave that rises. And this is so clearly indicated here, is so overwhelming, that one shudders inwardly, as if this dual life centred in one's own body; so brutal and immediate is the perception of these harmonies and developments. For the eye also has its orgies and the mind its delights.

At the foot of two large trees, the trunks of which are intersected, a stream of light floods the grass and seems like a luminous river, brightening the solitude. Overhead, a dome of leaves, through which one can see the sky presenting a vivid contrast of blue, reverberates a bright, greenish light, which illuminates the ruins, accentuating the deep furrows, intensifying the shadows, and disclosing all the hidden beauties. You advance and walk between those walls and under the trees, wander along the barbicans, pass under the falling arcades from which spring large, waving plants. The vaults, which contain corpses, echo under your footfalls; lizards run in the grass, beetles creep along the walls, the sky is blue, and the sleepy ruins pursue their dream.

With its triple enclosure, its dungeons, its interior court-yards, its machicolations, its underground passages, its ramparts piled one upon the other, like a bark on a bark and a shield on a shield, the ancient Château of the Clissons rises before your mind and is reconstructed. The memory of past existences exudes from its walls with the emanations of the nettles and the coolness of the ivy. In that castle, men altogether different from us were swayed by passions stronger than ours; their hands were

brawnier and their chests broader.

Long black streaks still mark the walls, as in the time when logs blazed in the eighteen-foot fireplaces. Symmetrical holes in the masonry indicate the floors to which one ascended by winding staircases now crumbling in ruins, while their empty doors open into space. Sometimes a bird, taking flight from its nest hanging in the branches, would pass with spread wings through the arch of a window, and fly far away into the country.

At the top of a high, bleak wall, several square bay-windows, of unequal length and position, let the pure sky shine through their crossed bars; and the bright blue, framed by the stone, attracted my eye with surprising persistency. The sparrows in the trees were chirping, and in the midst of it all a cow, thinking, no doubt, that it was a meadow, grazed peacefully, her horns sweeping over the grass.

There is a window, a large window that looks out into a meadow called la prairie des chevaliers. It was there, from a stone bench carved in the wall, that the high-born dames of the period watched the knights urge their iron-barbed steeds against one another, and the lances come down on the helmets and snap, and the men fall to the ground. On a fine summer day, like to-day, perhaps, when the mill that enlivens the whole landscape did not exist, when there were roofs on the walls, and Flemish hangings, and oil-cloths on the window-sills, when there was less grass, and when human voices and rumours filled the air, more than one heart beat with love and anguish under its red velvet bodice. Beautiful white hands twitched with fear on the stone, which is now covered with moss, and the embroidered veils of high caps fluttered in the wind that plays with my cravat and that swayed the plumes of the knights.

We went down into the vaults where Jean V was imprisoned. In the men's dungeon we saw the large double hook that was used for executions; and we touched curiously with our fingers the door of the women's prison. It is about four inches

thick and is plated with heavy iron bars. In the middle is a little grating that was used to throw in whatever was necessary to prevent the captive from starving. It was this grating which opened instead of the door, which, being the mouth of the most terrible confessions, was one of those that always closed but never opened. In those days there was real hatred. If you hated a person, and he had been kidnapped by surprise or traitorously trapped in an interview, and was in your power, you could torture him at your own sweet will. Every minute, every hour, you could delight in his anguish and drink his tears. You could go down into his cell and speak to him and bargain with him, laugh at his tortures, and discuss his ransom; you could live on and off him, through his slowly ebbing life and his plundered treasures. Your whole castle, from the top of the towers to the bottom of the trenches, weighed on him, crushing, and burying him; and thus family revenges were accomplished by the family itself, a fact which constituted their potency and symbolised the idea.

Sometimes, however, when the wretched prisoner was an aristocrat and a wealthy man, and he near death, and one was tired of him, and his tears had acted upon the hatred of his master like refreshing bleedings, there was talk of releasing him. The captive promised everything; he would return the fortified towns, hand over the keys to his best cities, give his daughter in marriage, endow churches and journey on foot to the Holy Sepulchre. And money! Money! Why, he would have more of it coined by the Jews! Then the treaty would be signed and dated and counter-signed; the relics would be brought forth to be sworn on, and the prisoner would be a free man once more. He would jump on his horse, gallop away, and when he reached home he would order the drawbridge hoisted, call his vassals together, and take down his sword from the wall. His hatred would find an outlet in terrific explosions of wrath. It was the time of frightful passions and victorious rages. The oath? The Pope would free him from it, and the ransom he simply ignored.

When Clisson was imprisoned in the Château de l'Hermine, he promised for his freedom a hundred thousand francs' worth of gold, the restitution of the towns

belonging to the duke of Penthièvre, and the cancelling of his daughter Marguerite's betrothal to the Duke of Penthièvre. But as soon as he was set free, he began by attacking Chateladren, Guingamp, Lamballe and St. Malo, which cities either were taken or they capitulated. But the people of Brittany paid for the fun.

When Jean V. was captured by the Count of Penthièvre at the bridge of Loroux, he promised a ransom of one million; he promised his eldest daughter, who was already betrothed to the King of Sicily. He promised Montcontour, Sesson and Jugan, etc., but he gave neither his daughter nor the money, nor the cities. He had promised to go to the Holy Sepulchre. He acquitted himself of this by proxy. He had taken an oath that he would no longer levy taxes and subsidies. The Pope freed him from this pledge. He had promised to give Nôtre-Dame de Nantes his weight in gold; but as he weighed nearly two hundred pounds, he remained greatly indebted. With all that he was able to pick up or snatch away, he quickly formed a league and compelled the house of Penthièvre to buy the peace which they had sold to him.

On the other side of the Sèvre, a forest covers the hill with its fresh, green maze of trees; it is La Garenne, a park that is beautiful in itself, in spite of the artificial embellishments that have been introduced. M. Semot, (the father of the present owner), was a painter of the Empire and a laureate, and he tried to reproduce to the best of his ability that cold Italian, republican, Roman style, which was so popular in the time of Canova and of Madame de Staël. In those days people were inclined to be pompous and noble. They used to place chiselled urns on graves and paint everybody in a flowing cloak, and with long hair; then Corinne sang to the accompaniment of her lyre beside Oswald, who wore Russian boots; and it was thought proper to have everybody's head adorned with a profusion of dishevelled locks and to have a multitude of ruins in every landscape.

This style of embellishment abounds throughout La Garenne. There is a temple erected to Vesta, and directly opposite it another erected to Friendship....

Inscriptions, artificial rocks, factitious ruins, are scattered lavishly, with artlessness and conviction.... But the poetical riches centre in the grotto of Héloïse, a sort of natural dolmen on the bank of the Sèvre.

Why have people made Héloïse, who was such a great and noble figure, appear commonplace and silly, the prototype of all crossed loves and the narrow ideal of sentimental schoolgirls? The unfortunate mistress of the great Abélard deserved a better fate, for she loved him with devoted admiration, although he was hard and taciturn at times and spared her neither bitterness nor blows. She dreaded offending him more than she dreaded offending God, and strove harder to please him. She did not wish him to marry her, because she thought that "it was wrong and deplorable that the one whom nature had created for all ... should be appropriated by one woman." She found, she said, "more happiness in the appellation of mistress or concubine, than in that of wife or empress," and by humiliating herself in him, she hoped to gain a stronger hold over his heart.

The park is really delightful. Alleys wind through the woods and clusters of trees bend over the meandering stream. You can hear the bubbling water and feel the coolness of the foliage. If we were irritated by the bad taste displayed here, it was because we had just left Clisson, which has a real, simple, and solid beauty, and after all, this bad taste is not that of our contemporaries. But what is, in fact, bad taste? Invariably it is the taste of the period which has preceded ours. Bad taste at the time of Ronsard was represented by Marot; at the time of Boileau, by Ronsard; at the time of Voltaire, by Corneille, and by Voltaire in the day of Chateaubriand, whom many people nowadays begin to think a trifle weak. O men of taste in future centuries, let me recommend you the men of taste of to-day! You will laugh at their cramps, their superb disdain, their preference for veal and milk, and the faces they make when underdone meat and too ardent poetry is served to them. Everything that is beautiful will then appear ugly; everything that is graceful, stupid; everything that is rich, poor; and oh! how our delightful boudoirs, our charming salons, our

exquisite costumes, our palpitating plays, our interesting novels, our serious books will all be consigned to the garret or be used for old paper and manure! O posterity, above all things do not forget our gothic salons, our Renaissance furniture, M. Pasquier's discourses, the shape of our hats, and the aesthetics of La Revue des Deux Mondes!

While we were pondering upon these lofty philosophical considerations, our wagon had hauled us over to Tiffanges. Seated side by side in a sort of tin tub, our weight crushed the tiny horse, which swayed to and fro between the shafts. It was like the twitching of an eel in the body of a musk-rat. Going down hill pushed him forward, going up hill pulled him backward, while uneven places in the road threw him from side to side, and the wind and the whip lashed him alternately. The poor brute! I cannot think of him now without a certain feeling of remorse.

The road down hill is curved and its edges are covered with clumps of sea-rushes or large patches of a certain reddish moss. To the right, on an eminence that starts from the bottom of the dale and swells in the middle like the carapace of a tortoise, one perceives high, unequal walls, the crumbling tops of which appear one above another.

One follows a hedge, climbs a path, and enters an open portal which has sunken into the ground to the depth of one third of its ogive. The men who used to pass through it on horseback would be obliged to bend over their saddles in order to enter it to-day. When the earth is tired of supporting a monument, it swells up underneath it, creeps up to it like a wave, and while the sky causes the top to crumble away, the ground obliterates the foundations. The courtyard was deserted and the calm water that filled the moats remained motionless and flat under the pond-lilies.

The sky was white and cloudless, but without sunshine. Its bleak curve extended far away, covering the country with a cold and cheerless monotony. Not a sound could be heard, the birds did not sing, even the horizon was mute, and from the empty

furrows came neither the scream of the crows as they soar heavenward, nor the soft creaking of plough-wheels. We climbed down through brambles and underbrush into a deep and dark trench, hidden at the foot of a large tower, which stands in the water surrounded by reeds. A lone window opens on one side: a dark square relieved by the grey line of its stone cross-bar. A capricious cluster of wild honeysuckle covers the sill, and its maze of perfumed blossoms creeps along the walls. When one looks up, the openings of the big machicolations reveal only a part of the sky, or some little, unknown flower which has nestled in the battlement, its seed having been wafted there on a stormy day and left to sprout in the cracks of the stones.

Presently, a long, balmy breeze swept over us like a sigh, and the trees in the moats, the moss on the stones, the reeds in the water, the plants among the ruins, and the ivy, which covered the tower from top to bottom with a layer of shining leaves, all trembled and shook their foliage; the corn in the fields rippled in endless waves that again and again bent the swaying tops of the ears; the pond wrinkled and welled up against the foot of the tower; the leaves of the ivy all quivered at once, and an apple-tree in bloom covered the ground with pink blossoms.

Nothing, nothing! The open sky, the growing grass, the passing wind. No ragged child tending a browsing cow; not even, as elsewhere, some solitary goat sticking its shaggy head through an aperture in the walls to turn at our approach and flee in terror through the bushes; not a song-bird, not a nest, not a sound! This castle is like a ghost: mute and cold, it stands abandoned in this deserted place, and looks accursed and replete with terrifying recollections. Still, this melancholy dwelling, which the owls now seem to avoid, was once inhabited. In the dungeon, between four walls as livid as the bottom of an old drinking-trough, we were able to discover the traces of five floors. A chimney, with its two round pillars and black top, has remained suspended in the air at a height of thirty feet. Earth has accumulated on it, and plants are growing there as if it were a jardinière.

Beyond the second enclosure, in a ploughed field, one can recognise the ruins of a chapel by the broken shafts of an ogive portal. Grass has grown around it, and trees have replaced the columns. Four hundred years ago, this chapel was filled with ornaments of gold cloth and silk, censers, chandeliers, chalices, crosses, precious stones, gold vessels and vases, a choir of thirty singers, chaplains, musicians, and children sang hymns to the accompaniment of an organ which they took along with them when they travelled. They were clad in scarlet garments lined with pearl grey and vair. There was one whom they called archdeacon, and another whom they called bishop, and the Pope was asked to allow them to wear mitres like canons, for this chapel was the chapel, and this castle one of the castles of Gilles de Laval, lord of Rouci, of Montmorency, of Retz and of Craon, lieutenant-general of the Duke of Brittany and field-marshal of France, who was burned at Nantes on the 25th of October, 1440, in the Prée de la Madéleine for being a counterfeiter, a murderer, a magician, an atheist and a Sodomite.

He possessed more than one hundred thousand crowns' worth of furniture; an income of thirty thousand pounds a year, the profits of his fiefs and his salary as field-marshal; fifty magnificently appointed horsemen escorted him. He kept open house, served the rarest viands and the oldest wines at his board, and gave representations of mysteries, as cities used to do when a king was within their gates. When his money gave out, he sold his estates; when those were gone, he looked around for more gold, and when he had destroyed his furnaces, he called on the devil. He wrote him that he would give him all that he possessed, excepting his life and his soul. He made sacrifices, gave alms and instituted ceremonies in his honour. At night, the bleak walls of the castle lighted up by the glare of the torches that flared amid bumpers of rare wines and gipsy jugglers, and blushed hotly under the unceasing breath of magical bellows. The inhabitants invoked the devil, joked with death, murdered children, enjoyed frightful and atrocious pleasures; blood flowed, instruments played, everything echoed with voluptuousness, horror, and madness.

When he expired, four or five damsels had his body removed from the stake, laid out, and taken to the Carmelites, who, after performing the customary services, buried him in state.

On one of the bridges of the Loire, relates Guépin, opposite the Hôtel de la Boule-d'Or, an expiatory monument was erected to his memory. It was a niche containing the statue of the Bonne Vierge de crée lait, who had the power of creating milk in nurses; the good people offered her butter and similar rustic products. The niche still exists, but the statue is gone; the same as at the town-house, where the casket which contained the heart of Queen Anne is also empty. But we did not care to see the casket; we did not even give it a thought. I should have preferred gazing upon the trousers of the marshal of Retz to looking at the heart of Madame Anne de Bretagne.

CHAPTER III.

CARNAC.

The field of Carnac is a large, open space where eleven rows of black stones are aligned at symmetrical intervals. They diminish in size as they recede from the ocean. Cambry asserts that there were four thousand of these rocks and Fréminville has counted twelve hundred of them. They are certainly very numerous.

What was their use? Was it a temple?

One day Saint Cornille, pursued along the shore by soldiers, was about to jump into the ocean, when he thought of changing them all into stone, and forthwith the men were petrified. But this explanation was good only for fools, little children, and poets. Other people looked for better reasons.

In the sixteenth century, Olaüs Magnus, archbishop of Upsal (who, banished to Rome, wrote a book on the antiquities of his country that met with widespread

success except in his native land, Sweden, where it was not translated), discovered that, when these stones form one long, straight row, they cover the bodies of warriors who died while fighting duels; that those arranged in squares are consecrated to heroes that perished in battle; that those disposed in a circle are family graves, while those that form corners or angular figures are the tombs of horsemen or foot-soldiers, and more especially of those fighters whose party had triumphed. All this is quite clear, but Olaüs Magnus has forgotten to tell us how two cousins who killed each other in a duel on horseback could have been buried. The fact of the duel required that the stones be straight; the relationship required that they be circular; but as the men were horsemen, it seems as if the stones ought to have been arranged squarely, though this rule, it is true, was not formal, as it was applied only to those whose party had triumphed. O good Olaüs Magnus! You must have liked Monte-Pulciano exceeding well! And how many draughts of it did it take for you to acquire all this wonderful knowledge?

According to a certain English doctor named Borlase, who had observed similar stones in Cornouailles, "they buried soldiers there, in the very place where they died." As if, usually, they were carted to the cemetery! And he builds his hypothesis on the following comparison: their graves are on a straight line, like the front of an army on plains that were the scene of some great action.

Then they tried to bring in the Greeks, the Egyptians, and the Cochin Chinese! There is a Karnac in Egypt, they said, and one on the coast of Brittany. Now, it is probable that this Karnac descends from the Egyptian one; it is quite certain! In Egypt they are sphinxes; here they are rocks; but in both instances they are of stone. So it would seem that the Egyptians (who never travelled), came to this coast (of the existence of which they were ignorant), founded a colony (they never founded any), and left these crude statues (they produced such beautiful ones), as a positive proof of their sojourn in this country (which nobody mentions).

People fond of mythology thought them the columns of Hercules; people fond of natural history thought them a representation of the python, because, according to Pausanias, a similar heap of stones, on the road from Thebes to Elissonte, was called "the serpent's head," and especially because the rows of stones at Carnac present the sinuosities of a serpent. People fond of cosmography discovered a zodiac, like M. de Cambry, who recognised in those eleven rows of stones the twelve signs of the zodiac, "for it must be stated," he adds, "that the ancient Gauls had only eleven signs to the zodiac."

Subsequently, a member of the Institute conjectured that it might perhaps be the cemetery of the Venetians, who inhabited Vannes, situated six miles from Carnac, and who founded Venice, as everybody knows. Another man wrote that these Venetians, conquered by Cæsar, erected all those rocks solely in a spirit of humility and in order to honour their victor. But people were getting tired of the cemetery theory, the serpent and the zodiac; they set out again and this time found a Druidic temple.

The few documents that we possess, scattered through Pliny and Dionysius Cassius, agree in stating that the Druids chose dark places for their ceremonies, like the depths of the woods with "their vast silence." And as Carnac is situated on the coast, and surrounded by a barren country, where nothing but these gentlemen's fancies has ever grown, the first grenadier of France, but not, in my estimation, the cleverest man, followed by Pelloutier and by M. Mahé, (canon of the cathedral of Vannes), concluded that it was "a Druidic temple in which political meetings must also have been held."

But all had not been said, and it still remained to be discovered of what use the empty spaces in the rows could have been. "Let us look for the reason, a thing nobody has ever thought of before," cried M. Mahé, and, quoting a sentence from Pomponius Mela: "The Druids teach the nobility many things and instruct them

secretly in caves and forests;" and this one from Tucain: "You dwell in tall forests," he reached the conclusion that the Druids not only officiated at the sanctuaries, but that they also lived and taught in them. "So the monument of Carnac being a sanctuary, like the Gallic forests," (O power of induction! where are you leading Father Mahé, canon of Vannes and correspondent of the Academy of Agriculture at Poitiers?), there is reason to believe that the intervals, which break up the rows of stones, held rows of houses where the Druids lived with their families and numerous pupils, and where the heads of the nation, who, on state days, betook themselves to the sanctuary, found comfortable lodgings. Good old Druids! Excellent ecclesiastics! How they have been calumnied! They lived there so righteously with their families and numerous pupils, and even were amiable enough to prepare lodgings for the principals of the nation!

But at last came a man imbued with the genius of ancient things and disdainful of trodden paths. He was able to recognize the rests of a Roman camp, and, strangely enough, the rests of one of the camps of Cæsar, who had had these stones upreared only to serve as support for the tents of his soldiers and prevent them from being blown away by the wind. What gales there must have been in those days, on the coasts of Armorica!

The honest writer who, to the glory of the great Julius, discovered this sublime precaution, (thus returning to Cæsar that which never belonged to Cæsar), was a former pupil of l'École Polytechnique, an engineer, a M. de la Sauvagère. The collection of all these data constitutes what is called Celtic Archæology, the mysteries of which we shall presently disclose.

A stone placed on another one is called a "dolmen," whether it be horizontal or perpendicular. A group of upright stones covered by succeeding flat stones, and forming a series of dolmens, is a "fairy grotto," a "fairy rock," a "devil's stable," or a "giant's palace"; for, like the people who serve the same wine under different labels,

the Celto-maniacs, who had almost nothing to offer, decorated the same things with various names. When these stones form an ellipse, and have no head-covering, one must say: There is a "cromlech"; when one perceives a stone laid horizontally upon two upright stones, one is confronted by a "lichaven" or a "trilithe." Often two enormous rocks are put one on top of the other, and touch only at one point, and we read that "they are balanced in such a way that the wind alone is sufficient to make the upper rock sway perceptibly," an assertion which I do not dispute, although I am rather suspicious of the Celtic wind, and although these swaying rocks have always remained unshaken in spite of the fierce kicks I was artless enough to give them; they are called "rolling or rolled stones," "turned or transported stones," "stones that dance or dancing stones," "stones that twist or twisting stones." You must still learn what a pierre fichade, a pierre fiche, a pierre fixée are, and what is meant by a haute borne, a pierre latte and a pierre lait; in what a pierre fonte differs from a pierre fiette, and what connection there is between a chaire à diable and a pierre droite; then you will be as wise as ever were Pelloutier, Déric, Latour d'Auvergne, Penhoet and others, not forgetting Mahé and Fréminville. Now, all this means a pulvan, also called a men-hir, and designates nothing more than a stone of greater or lesser size, placed by itself in an open field.

I was about to forget the tumuli! Those that are composed of silica and soil are called "barrows" in high-flown language, while the simple heaps of stones are "gals-gals."

People have pretended that when they were not tombs the "dolmens" and "trilithes" were altars, that the "fairy rocks" were assembling places or sepultures, and that the business meetings at the time of the Druids were held in the "cromlechs." M. de Cambry saw in the "swaying rocks" the emblems of the suspended world. The "barrows" and "gals-gals" have undoubtedly been tombs; and as for the "men-hirs," people went so far as to pretend that they had a form which led to the deduction that a certain cult reigned throughout lower Brittany. O chaste immodesty of science,

you respect nothing, not even a peulven!

A reverie, no matter how undefined, may lead up to splendid creations, when it starts from a fixed point. Then the imagination, like a soaring hippogriff, stamps the earth with all its might and journeys straightway towards infinite regions. But when it applies itself to a subject devoid of plastic art and history, and tries to extract a science from it, and to reconstruct a world, it remains even poorer and more barren than the rough stone to which the vanity of some praters has lent a shape and dignified with a history.

To return to the stones of Carnac (or rather, to leave them), if anyone should, after all these opinions, ask me mine, I would emit an irresistible, irrefutable, incontestable one, which would make the tents of M. de la Sauvagère stagger, blanch the face of the Egyptian Penhoët, break up the zodiac of Cambry and smash the python into a thousand bits. This is my opinion: the stones of Carnac are simply large stones!

So we returned to the inn and dined heartily, for our five hours' tramp had sharpened our appetites. We were served by the hostess, who had large blue eyes, delicate hands, and the sweet face of a nun. It was not yet bedtime, and it was too dark to work, so we went to the church.

This is small, although it has a nave and side-aisles like a city church. Short, thick stone pillars support its wooden roof, painted in blue, from which hang miniature vessels, votive offerings that were promised during raging storms. Spiders creep along their sails and the riggings are rotting under the dust. No service was being held, and the lamp in the choir burned dimly in its cup filled with yellow oil; overhead, through the open windows of the darkened vault, came broad rays of white light and the sound of the wind rustling in the tree-tops. A man came in to put the chairs in order, and placed two candles in an iron chandelier riveted to the stone pillar; then he pulled into the middle of the aisle a sort of stretcher with a pedestal,

its black wood stained with large white spots. Other people entered the church, and a priest clad in his surplice passed us. There was the intermittent tinkling of a bell and then the door of the church opened wide. The jangling sound of the little bell mingled with the tones of another and their sharp, clear tones swelled louder as they came nearer and nearer to us.

A cart drawn by oxen appeared and halted in front of the church. It held a corpse, whose dull white feet protruded from under the winding-sheet like bits of washed alabaster, while the body itself had the uncertain form peculiar to dressed corpses. The crowd around was silent. The men bared their heads; the priest shook his holy-water sprinkler and mumbled orisons, and the pair of oxen swung their heads to and fro under the heavy, creaking yoke. The church, in the background of which gleamed a star, formed one huge shadow in the greenish outdoor atmosphere of a rainy twilight, and the child who held a light on the threshold had to keep his hand in front of it to prevent the wind from blowing it out.

They lifted the body from the cart, and in doing so struck its head against the pole. They carried it into the church and placed it on the stretcher. A crowd of men and women followed. They knelt on the floor, the men near the corpse, and the women a little farther away, near the door; then the service began.

It did not last very long, at least it impressed us that way, for the low psalmodies were recited rapidly and drowned now and then by a stifled sob which came from under the black hoods near the door. A hand touched me and I drew aside to let a bent woman pass. With her clenched fists on her breast, and face averted, she advanced without appearing to move her feet, eager to see, yet trembling to behold, and reached the row of lights which burned beside the bier. Slowly, very slowly, lifting up her arm as if to hide herself under it, she turned her head on her shoulder and sank in a heap on a chair, as limp as her garments.

By the light of the candles, I could see her staring eyes, framed by lids that looked as

if they had been scalded, so red were they; her idiotic and contracted mouth, trembling with despair, and her whole pitiful face, which was drenched with tears.

The corpse was that of her husband, who had been lost at sea; he had been washed ashore and was now being laid to rest.

The cemetery adjoined the church. The mourners passed into it through a side-door, while the corpse was being nailed in its coffin, in the vestry. A fine rain moistened the atmosphere; we felt cold; the earth was slippery and the grave-diggers who had not completed their task, found it hard to raise the heavy soil, for it stuck to their shovels. In the background, the women kneeling in the grass, throwing back their hoods and their big white caps, the starched wings of which fluttered in the wind, appeared at a distance like an immense winding-sheet hovering over the earth.

When the corpse reappeared, the prayers began again, and the sobs broke out anew, and could be heard through the dropping rain.

Not far from us, issued, at regular intervals, a sort of subdued gurgle that sounded like laughter. In any other place, a person hearing it would have thought it the repressed explosion of some overwhelming joy or the paroxysm of a delirious happiness. It was the widow, weeping. Then she walked to the edge of the grave, as did the rest of the mourners, and little by little, the soil assumed its ordinary level and everybody went home.

As we walked down the cemetery steps, a young fellow passed us and said in French to a companion: "Heavens! didn't the fellow stink! He is almost completely mortified! It isn't surprising, though, after being in the water three weeks!"

One morning we started as on other mornings; we chose the same road, and passed the hedge of young elms and the sloping meadow where the day before we had seen a little girl chasing cattle to the drinking-trough; but it was the last day, and the last time perhaps, that we should pass that way.

A muddy stretch of land, into which we sank up to our ankles, extends from Carnac

to the village of Pô. A boat was waiting for us; we entered it, and they hoisted the sail and pushed off. Our sailor, an old man with a cheerful face, sat aft; he fastened a line to the gunwale and let his peaceful boat go its own way. There was hardly any wind; the blue sea was calm and the narrow track the rudder ploughed in the waters could be seen for a long time. The old fellow was talkative; he spoke of the priests, whom he disliked, of meat, which he thought was a good thing to eat even on fast days, of the work he had had when he was in the navy, and of the shots he had received when he was a customs officer.... The boat glided along slowly, the line followed us and the end of the tape-cul hung in the water.

The mile we had to walk in order to go from Saint-Pierre to Quiberon was quickly covered, in spite of a hilly and sandy road, and the sun, which made our shoulders smart beneath the straps of our bags, and a number of "men-hirs" that were scattered along the route.

CHAPTER IV.

QUIBERON.

In Quiberon, we breakfasted at old Rohan Belle-Isle's, who keeps the Hôtel Penthièvre. This gentleman had his bare feet stuck in old slippers, on account of the heat, and was drinking with a mason, a fact which does not prevent him from being the descendant of one of the first families of Europe; an aristocrat of the old stock! a real aristocrat! Vive Dieu! He immediately set to work to pound a steak and to cook us some lobsters. Our pride was flattered to its innermost fibre.

The past of Quiberon is concentrated in a massacre. Its greatest curiosity is a cemetery, which is filled to its utmost capacity and overflows into the street. The head-stones are crowded together and invade and submerge one another, as if the corpses were uncomfortable in their graves and had lifted up their shoulders to

escape from them. It suggests a petrified ocean, the tombs being the waves, and the crosses the masts of shipwrecked vessels.

In the middle, an open ossuary contains skeletons that have been exhumed in order to make room for other corpses. Who has said: "Life is a hostelry, and the grave is our home?" But these corpses do not remain in their graves, for they are only tenants and are ejected at the expiration of the lease. Around this charnel-house, where the heaps of bones resemble a mass of fagots, is arranged, breast-high, a series of little black boxes, six inches square, surmounted by a cross and cut out in the shape of a heart in front, so that one can see the skulls inside. Above the heart-shaped opening are the following words in painted letters: "This is the head of —— ——, deceased on such and such a day, in such and such a year." These heads belonged to persons of a certain standing, and one would be considered an ungrateful son if, after seven years, he did not give his parents' skulls the luxury of one of these little black boxes. The remainder of the bodies is thrown into the bone-house, and twenty-five years afterwards the heads are sent to join them. A few years ago they tried to abolish the custom; but a riot ensued and the practice continued.

Perhaps it is wicked to play with those round skulls which once contained a mind, with those empty circles in which passion throbbed. Those boxes surrounding the ossuary and scattered over the graves, over the wall and in the grass, without any attempt at order, may appear horrible to a few and ridiculous to many; but those black cases rotting even as the bones blanch and crumble to dust; those skulls, with noses eaten away and foreheads streaked by the slimy trails of snails, and hollow, staring eyes; those thigh-bones piled up as in the great charnel-houses mentioned in the Bible; those pieces of skulls lying around filled with earth, in which a flower springs up sometimes and grows through the holes of the eyes; even the vulgarity of those inscriptions, which are as similar as the corpses they identify—all this human rottenness appeared beautiful to us, and procured us a splendid sight.

If the post of Auray had arrived, we should have started at once for Belle-Isle; but they were waiting for it. Transient sailors with bare arms and open shirts sat in the kitchen of the inn, drinking to pass away the time.

"At what time is the post due here in Auray?"

"That depends; usually at ten o'clock," replied the innkeeper.

"No, at eleven," put in a man.

"At twelve," said M. de Rohan.

"At one."

"At half-past one."

"Sometimes it doesn't reach here until two o'clock."

"It isn't very regular!"

We were aware of that; it was already three. We could not start before the arrival of this ill-fated messenger, which brings Belle-Isle the despatches from terra firma, so we had to resign ourselves. Once in a while some one would get up, go to the door, look out, come back, and start up again. Oh! he will not come to-day.—He must have stopped on the way.—Let's go home.—No, let's wait for him.—If, however, you are tired of waiting gentlemen.... After all, there may not be any letters.... No, just wait a little longer.—Oh! here he comes!—But it was some one else, and the dialogue would begin all over again.

At last we heard the beating of tired hoofs on the cobblestones, the tinkling of bells, the cracking of a whip and a man's voice shouting: "Ho! Ho! Here's the post! Here's the post!"

The horse stopped in front of the door, hunched its back, stretched its neck, opened its mouth, disclosed its teeth, spread its hind legs and rose on its hocks.

The animal was lean and tall, and had a moth-eaten mane, rough hoofs and loose shoes; a seton bobbed up and down on its breast. Lost in a saddle that swallowed

him up, supported at the back by a valise and in front by the mail-bag, which was passed through the saddle-bow, its rider sat huddled on it like a monkey. His small face, adorned with straggling blond whiskers and as wrinkled and rough as a winter apple, was hidden by a large oil-cloth hat lined with felt; a sort of gray coutil coat was drawn up to his hips and bagged around his stomach, while his trousers stopped at the knees and disclosed his bare legs reddened by the rubbing of the stirrup-straps, and his blue hose, which hung over his shoes. The harness was held together with strings, the rider's clothes had been mended with threads of different colours; all sorts of patches and all kinds of spots, torn linen, greasy leather, dried mud, recent dust, hanging straps, bright rags, a dirty man and a mangy horse, the former sickly and perspiring, the latter consumptive and almost spent; the one with his whip and the other with its bells—all this formed but one object which had the same colour and movement and executed almost the same gestures, which served the same purpose, the conducting of the Auray post.

After another hour, when all the packages and commissions had been attended to and we had waited for several passengers who were to come, we finally left the inn and went aboard. At first there was nothing but a confused mass of people and luggage, oars that caused us to stumble, sails that dropped on our heads, men falling over each other and not knowing where to go; then everything quieted down, each one found his nook, the luggage was put in the bottom of the boat, the sailors got on the benches, and the passengers seated themselves as best they could.

There was no breeze and the sails clung limply to the masts. The heavy boat hardly moved over the almost motionless sea, which swelled and subsided with the gentle rhythm of a sleeping breast.

Leaning against one of the gunwales, we gazed at the water, which was as blue and calm as the sky, and listened to the splashing of the oars; sitting in the shadow of the sail, the six rowers lifted their oars regularly to make the forward stroke, and when

they dipped them into the water and brought them up again, drops of crystal clung to their paddles. Reclining on the straw, or sitting on the benches, with their legs dangling and their chins in their hands, or leaning against the sides of the boat, between the big jambs of the hull, the tar of which was melting in the heat, the silent passengers hung their heads and closed their eyes to shut out the glare of the sun, that shone on the flat ocean as on a mirror.

A white-haired man was sleeping at my feet, a gendarme was sweltering under his three-cornered hat, and two soldiers had unfastened their knapsacks and used them as pillows. Near the bowsprit stood a cabin-boy looking into the stay-sail and whistling for wind, while the skipper remained aft and managed the tiller. Still no wind arose. Orders were given to haul in the sails; slowly and gently they came down and fell in a heap on the benches; then each sailor took off his waistcoat, stowed it away under the bow of the boat, and the men began to row again with all their might.

Our departure had been so delayed that there was hardly any water left in the harbour and we had great difficulty in landing. Our boat grated on the pebbles, and in order to leave it, we were compelled to walk on an oar as if it were a tight-rope.

Ensconced between the citadel and its ramparts, and cut in two by an almost empty port, the Palay appeared to us a useless little town overcome with military ennui, and put me in mind, I do not know why, of a gaping sous-officier.

One fails to see the low-crowned, broad-brimmed black felt hats of Le Morbihan, that give protection to the shoulders as well as the head. The women do not affect the big, white caps that stand out from their faces, and reach down their backs like those worn by the nuns, so that when worn by little girls they cover half of their bodies. Their gowns are made without the wide stripe of velvet applied on each shoulder and rounding away under the arms. Nor do they wear the low shoes with square toes, high heels, and long black ribbon streamers. Here, as elsewhere, we

found faces that resemble other faces, costumes that really are no costumes at all, cobblestones, and even a sidewalk.

Was it worth while to expose ourselves to seasickness (which, by the way, we escaped, a fact that inclined us to leniency), only to see a citadel that we do not admire, a lighthouse that did not appeal to us in the least, and a rampart built by Vauban, of whom we were already heartily tired? But people had spoken to us of Belle-Isle's rocks. So we started at once, and taking a short cut across the fields, walked to the beach.

We saw one grotto, only one (the day was near its close), but it appeared so beautiful to us (it was draped with sea-weed and decorated with shells, and water dripped from the top), that we resolved to spend a day in Belle-Isle, in order to discover more of them, if there were any, and feast our eyes leisurely upon their beauties.

The following day, at dawn, having filled our flasks and put some sandwiches in our knapsacks, we decided to go where we pleased; so, without a guide or information of any sort (this is the best way), we set out to walk, having resolved that we would go anywhere, provided it were far, and would return home at any time, provided it were late.

We began by a path which led to the top of a cliff, then followed its asperities and valleys and continued around the whole island. When we reached places where landslips had obliterated it, we struck out into the country and let our eyes roam over the horizon of the sea, the deep blue line of which touched the sky; then we walked back to the edge of the rocks, which had suddenly reappeared at our side. The perpendicular cliff, the top of which we were treading, concealed the flank of the rocks, and we could only hear the roaring of the breakers below us.

Sometimes the rock was split in its entire length, disclosing its two almost straight sides, streaked with layers of silica, with tufts of yellow flowers scattered here and there. If we threw a stone, it appeared suspended in the air for a time, would then

strike the sides of the cliff, rebound from the one to the other, break into a thousand bits, scattering earth and pebbles in its course, and finally land at the bottom of the pit, where it frightened the cormorants, which shrieked and took flight.

Frequent storms and thaws have pushed a part of the upper grounds into these gorges, and so their steep slope has grown less abrupt, and one is able to climb down to the bottom. We attempted to do so by sliding down like children, holding ourselves back with our hands and feet, and finally we landed safely on the soft, wet sand.

The tide was going out, but in order to be able to pass, we had to wait until the breakers receded. We watched them approach us. They dashed against the rocks, swirled in the crevices, rose like scarfs on the wind, fell back in drops and sprays, and with one long, sweeping libration, gathered their green waters together and retreated. When one wave left the sand, its currents immediately joined, and sought lower levels. The sea-weed moved its slimy branches; the water bubbled between the pebbles, oozed through the cracks of the rocks and formed a thousand rivulets and fountains. The drenched sand absorbed it all, and soon its yellow tint grew white again through the drying action of the sun.

As soon as we could, we jumped over the rocks and continued on our way. Soon, however, they increased in numbers, their weird groups being crowded together, piled up and overturned on one another. We tried to hold on with our hands and feet, but we slid on their slippery asperities. The cliff was so very high that it quite frightened us to look up at it. Although it crushed us by its formidable placidity, still it fascinated us, for we could not help looking at it and it did not tire our eyes.

A swallow passed us and we watched its flight; it came from the sea; it ascended slowly through the air, cutting the luminous, fluid atmosphere with its sharp, outstretched wings that seemed to enjoy being absolutely untrammelled. The bird ascended higher and higher, rose above the cliff and finally disappeared.

Meanwhile we were creeping over the rocks, the perspective of which was renewed by each bend of the coast. Once in a while, when the rocks ended, we walked on square stones that were as flat as marble slabs and seamed by almost symmetrical furrows, which appeared like the tracks of some ancient road of another world.

In some places were great pools of water as calm as their greenish depths and as limpid and motionless as a woodland stream on its bed of cresses. Then the rocks would reappear closer than before and more numerous. On one side was the ocean with its breakers foaming around the lower rocks; on the other, the straight, unrelenting, impassive coast.

Tired and bewildered, we looked about us for some issue; but the cliff stretched out before us, and the rocks, infinitely multiplying their dark green forms, succeeded one another until their unequal crags seemed like so many tall, black phantoms rising out of the earth.

We stumbled around in this way until we suddenly perceived an undulating series of rough steps which enabled us to climb up to flat land again.

It is always a pleasure, even when the country is ugly, to walk with a friend, to feel the grass under one's feet, to jump over fences and ditches, to break thistles with one's stick, to pull leaves from the bushes and wheat from the fields, to go where one's fancy dictates, whistling, singing, talking, dreaming, without strange ears to listen to one's conversation, and the sound of strange footsteps behind one, as absolutely free as if one were in the desert!

Ah! Let us have air! air! And more space! Since our contracted souls suffocate and die on the window-sill, since our captive spirits, like the bear in its cage, turn around and around, and stagger against the walls of their prison, why not, at least, let our nostrils breathe the different perfumes of all the winds of the earth, why not let our eyes rove over every horizon?

No steeple shone in the distance, no hamlet with thatched roofs and square yards

framed by clusters of trees, appeared on the side of a hill; not a soul was to be seen, not even a peasant, a grazing sheep, or a stray dog.

All those cultivated fields look uninhabited; the peasants work in them, but they do not live there. One is led to believe that they benefit by them but do not care about them in the least.

We saw a farm and walked in; a ragged woman served us some ice-cold milk in earthen cups. The silence all around was peculiar. The woman watched us eagerly, and we soon took our departure.

We walked into a valley, the narrow gorge of which appeared to extend to the ocean. Tall grass with yellow flowers reached up to our waists, and we had to take long strides in order to advance. We could hear the murmur of flowing water near by, and we sank ankle-deep into the marshy soil. Presently the two hills parted; their barren sides were covered with short, stubby grass and here and there were big yellow patches of moss. At the foot of one hill a stream wends its way through the drooping boughs of the stunted shrubs that grow on its edges, and loses itself in a quiet pond where long-legged insects disport themselves on the leaves of the water-lilies. The sun beat down on us. The gnats rubbed their wings together and bent the slender ends of the reeds with the weight of their tiny bodies. We were alone in the tranquillity of this desert.

At this point, the valley curved and widened and formed a sharp bend. We climbed a little hill, in order to locate ourselves, but the horizon either ended abruptly, enclosed by another hill, or else stretched out over new plains. We did not lose courage, however, and continued to advance, while we thought of the travellers on desert islands who climb on promontories in the hope of sighting some vessel setting sail towards them.

The soil was growing less moist, and the grass less high; presently the ocean came in view, ensconced in a narrow bay, and soon the shore, strewn with débris of shells

and madrepores, crunched beneath our footsteps. We let ourselves drop to the ground and as we were exhausted, we soon fell asleep. An hour later the cold woke us up, and we started homeward without any fear of losing our way this time. We were on the coast facing France, and Palay was on our left. It was here, the day before, that we had discovered the grotto we admired so much. It did not take us long to find others, higher and deeper even than the first one.

They always opened through large, pointed arches which were either upright or inclined, their bold columns supporting enormous pieces of rock. Black, veined with purple, fiery red, or brown streaked with white, these beautiful grottoes displayed for their visitors the infinite variety of their shapes and colouring, their graces and their grand caprices. There was one all of silver veined with deep red; in another, tufts of flowers resembling periwinkles had grown on glazings of reddish granite, and drops of water fell from the ceiling on the fine sand with never-ceasing regularity. In the background of another grotto, beneath a long semi-circle, a bed of polished white gravel, which the tide no doubt turns and makes fresh every day, seemed to be waiting to receive the body of a mermaid; but the bed is empty and has lost her forever! Only the moist seaweed remains on which she used to stretch her delicate nude limbs when she was tired of swimming, and on which she reclined till daybreak, in the pale light of the moon.

The sun was setting, and the tide was coming in over the rocks that melted in the blue evening mist, which was blanched on the level of the ocean by the foam of the tumbling waves. In the other part of the horizon, the sky streaked with orange stripes looked as if it had been swept by a gale. Its light reflected on the waters and spread a gleaming sheen over them, and projected on the sand, giving it a brownish tinge and making it glitter like steel.

Half a mile to the south, the coast is covered by a line of rocks that extends to the sea. In order to reach them, we should have been compelled to tramp as we had

already done that morning. We were tired, and it was far; but a temptation seemed to push us forward. The breeze played in the cracks of the rocks and wrinkled the surface of the pools; the sea-weed, cleaving to the sides of the cliff, shook in the wind, and from the part of the sky where the moon was to rise, a pale light spread over the waters. It was the hour when the shadows lengthen. The rocks appeared larger, and the breakers a deeper green. The sky seemed to expand, and all nature assumed a different appearance.

So we started, without giving a thought to the incoming tide or whether or not we should find later a way to get back to land. We wished to enjoy our pleasure to the fullest extent. We seemed lighter than in the morning, and ran and jumped without the slightest feeling of fatigue. An abundance of animal spirits impelled us onward and we felt a peculiarly robust twitching in our muscles. We shook our heads in the wind and touched the grasses with our fingers. We breathed the salt air of the ocean, and noted and assimilated every color, every sunbeam, every sound, the design of the seaweed, the softness of the sand, the hardness of the rocks that echoed under our footsteps, the height of the cliffs, the fringe of the waves, the accidents of the coast, and the voice of the horizon; and the breeze that passed over our faces like intangible kisses, the sky with its passing clouds, the rising moon, the peeping stars. Our souls bathed in all this splendour, and our eyes feasted on it; we opened our ears and nostrils wide; something of the very life of the elements, forced from them undoubtedly by the attraction of our eyes, reached us and was assimilated, so that we were able to comprehend them in a closer relation and feel them more keenly, thanks to this complex union.

By thus entering and penetrating into nature, we became a part of it, diffused ourselves in it, and were claimed by it once more; we felt that it was overpowering us, and we rejoiced; we desired to be lost in it, to be borne away, or to carry it away with us. As in the raptures of love, one wishes more hands with which to caress, more lips with which to kiss, more eyes with which to see, more soul with which to

worship; spreading ourselves out in nature, with a joyful and delirious abandon, we regretted that our eyes could not penetrate to the innermost parts of the rocks, to the bottom of the sea, to the end of the heavens, in order to see how the stones grow, how the breakers are made, how the stars are lighted; we regretted that our ears could not catch the rumour of the fermentation of the granite in the bowels of the earth, could not hear the sap circulate in the plants and the coral roll in the solitudes of the ocean. And while we were under the spell of that contemplative effusion, we wished that our souls, radiating everywhere, might live all these different lives, assume all these different forms, and, varying unceasingly, accomplish their metamorphoses under an eternal sun!

But man was made to enjoy each day only a small portion of food, colours, sounds, sentiments and ideas. Anything above the allotted quantity tires or intoxicates him; it becomes the idiocy of the drunkard or the ravings of the ecstatic. O, God! How small is our glass and how large is our thirst! What weak heads we have!

CHAPTER V.

RETURN.

In order to return to Quiberon, we were compelled, on the following day, to arise before seven o'clock, a feat which required some courage. While we were still stiff from fatigue and shivering with sleep, we got into a boat along with a white horse, two drummers, the same one-eyed gendarme and the same soldier who, this time, however, did not lecture anybody. As drunk as a lord, he kept slipping under the benches and had all he could do to keep his shako on his head and extricate his gun from between his feet. I could not say which was the sillier of the two. The gendarme was sober, but he was very stupid. He deplored the soldier's lack of manners, enumerated the punishments that would be dealt out to him, was scandalised by his hiccoughs and resented his demeanour. Viewed from the side of

the missing eye, with his three-cornered hat, his sabre and his yellow gloves, the gendarme presented one of the sorriest aspects of human life. Besides, there is something so essentially grotesque about gendarmes that I cannot help laughing at them; these upholders of the law always produce the same comic effect on me, and so do attorneys for the king, magistrates, and professors of literature.

Tipped to one side, the boat skimmed lightly through the foaming waves. The three sails were comfortably swelled; the masts creaked and the wind rattled the pulleys. A cabin-boy stood at the helm singing. We could not catch the words, but it was some slow, monotonous lay which neither rose nor fell and was repeated again and again, with long-drawn-out inflections and languid refrain. And it swept softly and sadly out over the ocean, as some confused memory sweeps through one's mind.

The horse stood as straight as it could on its four legs and pulled at a bundle of hay. The sailors, with folded arms, looked absently at the sails and smiled a far-away smile.

So we journeyed on without speaking a word and as best we could, without reaching the edge of the bay, where it looked as if Plouharnel might be. However, after a while we arrived there. But when we did, we were confronted by the ocean, for we had followed the right side of the coast instead of the left, and were forced to turn back and go over a part of the route.

A muffled sound was heard. A bell tinkled and a hat appeared. It was the Auray post. Again the same man, the same horse, the same mail-bag. He was ambling quietly towards Quiberon; he would be back directly and return again the next day. He is the guest of the coast; he passes in the morning and again at night. His life is spent going from one point to another; he is the only one who gives the coast some animation, something to look forward to, and, I was almost going to say, some charm.

He stopped and talked to us for a few minutes, then lifted his hat and was off again.

What an ensemble! What a horse, and what a rider! What a picture! Callot would probably have reproduced it, but it would take Cervantes to write it.

After passing over large pieces of rock that have been placed in the sea in order to shorten the route by cutting the back of the bay in two, we finally arrived at Plouharnel.

The village was quiet; chickens cackled and scratched in the streets, and in the gardens enclosed by stone walls, weeds and oats grew side by side.

While we were sitting in front of the host's door, an old beggar passed us. He was as red as a lobster, dirty and unkempt and covered with rags and vermin. The sun shone on his dilapidated garments and on his purple skin; it was almost black and seemed to transude blood. He kept bellowing in a terrible voice, while beating a tattoo on the door of a neighbouring house.

CHAPTER VI.

QUIMPER.

Quimper, although it is the centre of the real Brittany, is distinctly different from it. The elm-tree promenade that follows the winding river, which has quays and boats, renders the town very pretty and the big Hôtel de la Préfecture, which alone covers the little western delta, gives it a thoroughly administrative and French appearance. You are aware that you are in the chef-lieu of a department, a fact brought home to you by the latter's division in arrondissements, with their large, medium, and small parishes, its committee of primary instruction, its saving banks, its town council and other modern inventions, which rob the cities of local colour, dear to the heart of the innocent tourist.

With all due deference to the people who pronounce the name of Quimper-Corentin as the synonyme of all that is ridiculous and provincial, it is a most delightful place,

and well worth other more respected ones. You will not, it is true, find the charms and riotous wealth of colouring possessed by Quimperlé; still, I know of few things that can equal the charming appearance of that alley following the edge of the river and shaded by the escarpment of a neighbouring mountain, which casts the dark shadows of its luxuriant foliage over it.

It does not take long to go through cities of this kind, and to know their most intimate recesses, and sometimes one stumbles across places that stay one's steps and fill one's heart with gladness.

Small cities, like small apartments, seem warmer and cosier to live in. But keep this illusion! There are more draughts in such apartments than in a palace, and a city of this kind is more deadly monotonous than the desert.

Returning to the hotel by one of those paths we dearly love, that rises and falls and winds, sometimes through a field, sometimes through grass and brambles, sometimes along a wall, which are filled in turn with daisies, pebbles and thistles, a path made for light thoughts and bantering conversation,—returning, I said, to the city, we heard cries and plaintive wails issue from under the slated roof of a square building. It was the slaughter-house.

At that moment I thought of some terrible city, of some frightful and immense place like Babylon or Babel, filled with cannibals and slaughter-houses, where they butchered men instead of animals; and I tried to discover a likeness to human agonies in those bleating and sobbing voices. I thought of groups of slaves brought there with ropes around their necks, to be tied to iron rings, and killed in order to feed their masters, who would eat their flesh from tables of carved ivory and wipe their lips on fine linen. Would their attitudes be more dejected, their eyes sadder or their prayers more pitiful?

While we were in Quimper, we went out one day through one side of the town and came back through the other, after tramping about eight hours.

Our guide was waiting for us under the porch of the hotel. He started in front of us and we followed. He was a little white-haired man, with a linen cap and torn shoes, and he wore an old brown coat that was many sizes too large for him. He stuttered when he spoke, and when he walked he knocked his knees together; but in spite of all this, he managed to advance very quickly, with a sort of nervous, almost febrile perseverance. From time to time, he would pull a leaf off a tree and clap it over his mouth to cool his lips. His business consists in going from one place to another, attending to letters and errands. He goes to Douarnenez, Quimperlé, Brest and even to Rennes, which is forty miles away (a journey which he accomplished in four days, including going and coming). His whole ambition, he said, was to return to Rennes once more during his lifetime. And only for the purpose, mind you, of going back, of making the trip, and being able to boast of it afterwards. He knows every road and every commune that has a steeple; he takes short cuts across the fields, opens gates, and when he passes in front of a farm, he never fails to greet its owners. Having listened to the birds all his life, he has learned to imitate their chirpings, and when he walks along the roads, under the trees, he whistles as his feathered friends do, in order to charm his solitude.

Our first stop was at Loc-Maria, an ancient monastery, given in olden times by Conan III to the abbey of Fontevrault; it is situated a quarter of a mile from the town. This monastery has not been shamefully utilised like the abbey of poor Robert d'Arbrissel.[2] It is deserted, but has not been sullied. Its Gothic portal does not re-echo the voices of jailers, and though there may not be much of it, one experiences neither disgust nor rebellion. In that little chapel, of a rather severe Romance style, the only curious thing is a large granite holy-water basin which stands on the floor and is almost black. It is wide and deep and represents to perfection the real Catholic holy-water basin, made to receive the entire body of an infant, and not in the least like those narrow shells in our churches in which you can only dip your fingers. With its clear water rendered more limpid by the contrast of a

greenish bed, the vegetation which has grown all around it during the religious calm of centuries, its crumbling angles, and its great mass of bronzed stone, it looks like one of those hollowed rocks which contain salt water.

After we had inspected the chapel carefully, we walked to the river, crossed it in a boat, and plunged into the country.

It is absolutely deserted and strangely empty. Trees, bushes, sea-rushes, tamarisks, and heather grow on the edge of the ditches. We came to broad stretches of land, but we did not see a soul anywhere. The sky was bleak and a fine rain moistened the atmosphere and spread a grey veil over the country. The paths we chose were hollow and shaded by clusters of foliage, the branches of which, uniting, drooped over our heads and almost prevented us from walking erect. The light that filtered through the dome of leaves was greenish, and as dim as on a winter evening. But farther away, it was brilliant, and played around the edges of the leaves and accentuated their delicate pinking. Later we reached the top of a barren slope, which was flat and smooth, and without a blade of grass to relieve the monotony of its colour. Sometimes, however, we came upon a long avenue of beech-trees with moss growing around the foot of their thick, shining trunks. There were wagon-tracks in these avenues, as if to indicate the presence of a neighbouring castle that we might see at any moment; but they ended abruptly in a stretch of flat land that continued between two valleys, through which it would spread its green maze furrowed by the capricious meanderings of hedges, spotted here and there by a grove, brightened by clumps of sea-rushes, or by some field bordering the meadows which rose slowly to meet the hills and lost themselves in the horizon. Above these hills, far away in the mist, stretched the blue surface of the ocean.

The birds are either absent or they do not sing; the leaves are thick, the grass deadens one's footfalls, and the country gazes at you like some melancholy countenance. It looks as if it had been created expressly to harbour ruined lives and

shattered hopes, and to foster their bitterness beneath its weeping sky, to the low rustling of the trees and the heather. On winter nights, when the fox creeps stealthily over the dry leaves, when the tiles fall from the pigeon-house and the reeds bend in the marshes, when the beech-trees stoop in the wind, and the wolf ambles over the moonlit snow, while one is alone by the dying embers listening to the wind howl in the empty hallways, how charming it must be to let one's heart dwell on its most cherished despairs and long forgotten loves!

We spied a hovel with a Gothic portal; further on was an old wall with an ogive door; a leafless bush swayed there in the breeze. In the courtyard the ground is covered with heather, violets, and pebbles; you walk in, look around and go out again. This place is called "The temple of the false gods," and used to be, it is thought, a commandery of Templars.

Our guide started again and we followed him. Presently a steeple rose among the trees; we crossed a stubble-field, climbed to the top of a ditch and caught a glimpse of a few of dwellings: the village of Pomelin. A rough road constitutes the main street and the village consists of several houses separated by yards. What tranquillity! or rather what forlornness! The thresholds are deserted; the yards are empty.

Where are the inhabitants? One would think that they had all left the village to lie in wait behind the furze-bushes to catch a glimpse of the Blues who are about to pass through the ravine.

The church is poor and perfectly bare. No beautiful painted saints, no pictures on the walls or on the roof, no hanging lamp oscillating at the end of a long, straight cord. In a corner of the choir, a wick was burning in a glass filled with oil. Round wooden pillars hold up the roof, the blue paint of which has been freshened recently. The bright light of the fields, filtering through the green foliage which covers the roof of the church, shines through the white window-panes. The door, a little wooden door

that closes with a latch, was open; a flight of birds came in, chirping and beating their wings against the walls; they fluttered for awhile beneath the vault and around the altar, two or three alighted upon the holy-water basin, to moisten their beaks, and then all flew away as suddenly as they had come.

It is not an unusual thing to see birds in the Breton churches; many live there and fasten their nests to the stones of the nave; they are never disturbed. When it rains, they all gather in the church, but as soon as the sun pierces the clouds and the rain-spouts dry up, they repair to the trees again. So that during the storm two frail creatures often enter the blessed house of God together; man to pray and allay his fears, and the bird to wait until the rain stops and to warm the naked bodies of its frightened young.

A peculiar charm pervades these churches. It is not their poverty that moves us, because even when they are empty, they appear to be inhabited. Is it not, then, their modesty that appeals to us? For, with their unpretentious steeples, and their low roofs hiding under the trees, they seem to shrink and humiliate themselves in the sight of God. They have not been upreared through a spirit of pride, nor through the pious fancy of some mighty man on his death-bed. On the contrary, we feel that it is the simple impression of a need, the ingenuous cry of an appetite, and, like the shepherd's bed of dried leaves, it is the retreat the soul has built for itself where it comes to rest when it is tired. These village churches represent better than their city sisters the distinctive features of the places where they are built, and they seem to participate more directly in the life of the people who, from father to son, come to kneel at the same place and on the same stone slab. Every day, every Sunday, when they enter and when they leave, do they not see the graves of their parents, are these not near them while they pray, and does it not seem to them as if the church was only a larger family circle from which the loved ones have not altogether departed? These places of worship thus have a harmonious sense, and the life of these people is influenced by it from the baptismal font to the grave. It is not the same with us,

because we have relegated eternity to the outskirts of the city, have banished our dead to the faubourgs and laid them to rest in the carpenter's quarter, near the soda factories and night-soil magazines.

About three o'clock in the afternoon, we arrived at the chapel of Kerfeunteun, near the entrance to Quimper. At the upper end of the chapel is a fine glass window of the sixteenth century, representing the genealogical tree of the Holy Trinity. Jacob forms the trunk, and the top is figured by the Cross surmounted by the Eternal Father with a tiara on His head. On each side, the square steeple represents a quadrilateral pierced by a long straight window. This steeple does not rest squarely on the roof, but instead, by means of a slender basis, the narrow sides of which almost touch, it forms an obtuse angle near the ridge of the roof. In Brittany, almost every church has a steeple of this kind.

Before returning to the city, we made a détour in order to visit the chapel of La Mère-Dieu. As it is usually closed, our guide summoned the custodian, and the latter accompanied us with his little niece, who stopped along the road to pick flowers. The young man walked in front of us. His slender and flexible figure was encased in a jacket of light blue cloth, and the three velvet streamers of his black hat, which was carefully placed on the back of his head, over his knotted hair, hung down his back.

At the bottom of a valley, or rather a ravine, can be seen the church of La Mère-Dieu, veiled by thick foliage. In this place, amid the silence of all these trees and because of its little Gothic portal (which appears to be of the thirteenth century, but which, in reality, is of the sixteenth), the church reminds one of the discreet chapels mentioned in old novels and old melodies, where they knighted the page starting for the Holy Land, one morning when the stars were dim and the lark trilled, while the mistress of the castle slipped her white hand through the bars of the iron gate and wept when he kissed her goodbye.

We entered the church. The young custodian took off his hat and knelt on the floor. His thick, blond hair uncoiled and fell around his shoulders. It clung a moment to the coarse cloth of his jacket, and then, little by little, it separated and spread like the hair of a woman. It was parted in the middle and hung on both sides over his shoulders and neck. The golden mass rippled with light every time he moved his head bent in prayer.

The little girl kneeled beside him and let her flowers fall to the ground. For the first time in my life, I understood the beauty of a man's locks and the fascination they may have for bare and playful arms. A strange progress, indeed, is that which consists in curtailing everywhere the grand superfetations nature has bestowed upon us, so that whenever we discover them in all their virgin splendour, they are a revelation to us.

CHAPTER VII.

PONT-L'ABBÉ.

At five o'clock in the evening, we arrived at Pont-l'Abbé, covered with quite a respectable coating of mud and dust, which fell from our clothing upon the floor of the inn with such disastrous abundance, every time we moved, that we were almost mortified at the mess we made.

Pont-l'Abbé is a peaceful little town, cut in two in its entire length by a broad, paved street. Its modest inhabitants cannot possibly look any more stupid or insignificant than the place itself.

For those who must see something wherever they go, there are the unimportant remains of the castle and the church, an edifice that would be quite passable were it not for the thick coat of paint that covers it. The chapel of the Virgin was a bower of flowers; bunches of jonquils, pansies, roses, jessamine, and honeysuckle were

arranged in blue glasses or white china vases and spread their bright colours over the altar and upward between the two tall candlesticks framing the Virgin's face and her silver crown, from which fell a long veil caught on the gold star of the plaster Infant she held in her arms. One could smell the odour of the holy water and the flowers. It was a perfumed, mysterious little nook all by itself, a hidden retreat decorated by loving hands, and peculiarly adapted for the exhalation of mystical desires and long, heart-broken orisons. All his heart's sensuousness, compressed by the climate and numbed by misery, is brought here by man and laid at the feet of Mary, the Divine Mother, and he is thus able to satisfy his unquenchable longing for love and enjoyment. No matter if the roof leaks and there are no benches or chairs in the rest of the church, you will always find the chapel of the Virgin bright with flowers and lights, for it seems as if all the religious tenderness of Brittany has concentrated there; it is the softest spot of its heart; it is its weakness, its passion, its treasure. Though there are no flowers in these parts, there are flowers in the church; though the people are poor, the Virgin is always sumptuous and beautiful. She smiles at you, and despairing souls go to warm themselves at her knees as at a hearthstone that is never extinguished. One is astonished at the way these people cling to their belief; but does one know the pleasure and voluptuousness they derive from it? Is not asceticism superior epicureanism, fasting, refined gormandising? Religion can supply one with almost carnal sensations; prayer has its debauchery and mortification its raptures; and the men who come at night and kneel in front of this dressed statue, feel their hearts beat thickly and a sort of vague intoxication, while in the streets of the city, the children on their way home from school stop and gaze dreamily at the woman who smiles at them from the stained window of the church.

But you must attend a fête in order to gain an insight into the gloomy character of these people. They don't dance; they merely turn; they don't sing; they only whistle. That very evening we went to a neighbouring village to be present at the inauguration of a threshing-floor. Two biniou players were stationed on top of the

wall surrounding the yard, and played continuously while two long lines of men and women, following in one anothers' footsteps, trotted around the place and described several figures. The lines would turn, break up and form again at irregular intervals. The heavy feet of the dancers struck the ground without the slightest attempt at rhythm, while the shrill notes of the music succeeded one another rapidly and with desperate monotony. The dancers who tired withdrew without interrupting the dance, and when they had rested, they re-entered it. During the whole time we watched this peculiar performance, the crowd stopped only once, while the musicians drank some cider; then, when they had finished, the lines formed anew and the dance began again. At the entrance of the yard was a table covered with nuts; beside it stood a pitcher of brandy and on the ground was a keg of cider; near by stood a citizen in a green frock coat and a leather cap; a little farther away was a man wearing a jacket and a sword suspended from a white shoulder-belt; they were the commissaire de police, of Pont-l'Abbé and his garde-champêtre. Suddenly, M. le commissaire pulled out his watch and motioned to the garde. The latter drew several peasants aside, spoke to them in a low tone, and presently the assembly broke up.

All four of us returned to the city together, which afforded us the opportunity of again admiring mother of the harmonious combinations of Providence which had created this commissaire de police for this garde-champêtre and this garde-champêtre for his commissaire de police. They were made for each other. The same fact would give rise in both of them to the same reflections; from the same idea both would draw parallel conclusions. When the commissaire laughed, the garde grinned; when he assumed a serious expression, his shadow grew gloomy; if the frock-coat said, "This must be done," the jacket replied, "I think so, too;" if the coat added, "It is necessary;" the waistcoat affirmed: "It is indispensable." Notwithstanding this inward comprehension, their outward relations of rank and authority remained unchanged. For the garde spoke in a lower tone than the commissaire, and was a trifle shorter and walked behind him. The commissaire was

polished, important, fluent; he consulted himself, ruminated, talked to himself, and smacked his tongue; the garde was deferential, attentive, pensive and observing, and would utter an exclamation from time to time and scratch his nose. On the way, he inquired about the news, asked the commissaire's advice, and solicited his orders, while his superior questioned, meditated, and issued commands.

We had just come in sight of the first houses of the city, when we heard shrieks issue from one of them. The street was blocked by an excited crowd, and several persons rushed up to the commissaire and exclaimed: "Come, come quickly, Monsieur, they're having a fight! Two women are being killed!"

"By whom?"

"We don't know."

"Why?"

"They are bleeding."

"But with what?"

"With a rake."

"Where's the murderer?"

"One on the head and the other on the arm. Go in, they're waiting for you; the women are there."

So the commissaire went in and we followed. We heard sobs, screams, and excited conversation and saw a jostling, curious mob. People stepped on one another's toes, dug one another's ribs, cursed, and caused general confusion.

The commissaire got angry; but as he could not speak Breton, the garde got angry for him and chased the crowd out, taking each individual by his shoulders and shoving him through the door into the street.

When the room had been cleared of all except a dozen persons, we managed to discover in a corner, a piece of flesh hanging from an arm and a mass of black hair

dripping with blood. An old woman and a young girl had been hurt in the fight. The old woman was tall and angular and had skin as yellow and wrinkled as parchment; she was standing up, groaning and holding her left arm with her right hand; she did not seem to be suffering much, but the girl was crying. She was sitting on a chair with her hands spread out on her knees and her head bent low; she was trembling convulsively and shaking with low sobs. As they replied by complaints to all our questions, and as the testimony of the witnesses was conflicting, we could not ascertain who had started the fight or what it was about. Some said that a husband had surprised his wife; others, that the women had started the row and that the owner of the house had tried to kill them in order to make them stop. But no one knew anything definite. M. le commissaire was greatly perplexed and the garde perfectly nonplussed.

As the doctor was away, and as it might be that the good people did not wish his services, because it meant expense, we had the audacity to offer the help of our limited knowledge and rushed off for our satchels, a piece of cerecloth, and some linen and lint which we had brought with us in anticipation of possible accidents.

It would really have been an amusing sight for our friends, had they been able to see us spread out our bistoury, our pincers, and three pairs of scissors, one with gold branches, on the table of this hut. The commissaire praised our philanthropy, the women watched us in awed silence, and the tallow candle melted and ran down the iron candle-stick in spite of the efforts of the garde, who kept trimming the wick with his fingers. We attended to the old woman first. The cut had been given conscientiously; the bare arm showed the bone, and a triangle of flesh about four inches long hung over it like a cuff. We tried to put this back in its place by adjusting it carefully over the edge of the gaping wound and bandaging the arm. It is quite possible that the violent compression the member was subjected to caused mortification to set in, and that the patient may have died.

We did not know exactly what ailed the girl. The blood trickled through her hair, but we could not see whence it came; it formed oily blotches all over it and ran down into her neck. The garde, our interpreter, bade her remove the cotton band she wore on her head, and her tresses tumbled down in a dull, dark mass and uncoiled like a cascade full of bloody threads. We parted the thick, soft, abundant locks, and found a swelling as large as a nut and pierced by an oval hole on the back of her head. We shaved the surrounding parts; and after we had washed and stanched the wound, we melted some tallow and spread it over some lint, which we adapted to the swelling with strips of diachylum. Over this we placed first a bandage, then the cotton band, and then the cap. While this was taking place, the justice of the peace arrived. The first thing he did was to ask for the rake, and the only thing he seemed to care about was to examine it. He took hold of the handle, counted the teeth, waved it in the air, tested the iron and bent the wood.

"Is this," he demanded, "the instrument with which the assault was committed? Jérôme, are you sure it is?"

"They say so, Monsieur."

"You were not present, Monsieur le commissaire?"

"No, Monsieur le juge de paix."

"I would like to know whether the blows were really dealt with a rake or whether they were given with a blunt instrument. Who is the assailant? And did the rake belong to him or to some one else? Was it really with this that these women were hurt? Or was it, I repeat, with a blunt instrument? Do they wish to lodge a complaint? What do you think about it, Monsieur le commissaire?"

The victims said little, remarking only that they suffered great pain; so they were given over night to decide whether or not they wished to seek redress by law. The young girl could hardly speak, and the old woman's ideas were muddled, seeing that she was drunk, according to what the neighbours intimated,—a fact which explained

her insensibility when we had endeavoured to relieve her suffering.

After they had looked at us as keenly as they could in order to ascertain who we were, the authorities of Pont-l'Abbé bade us good night and thanked us for the services we had rendered the community. We put our things back into our satchel, and the commissaire departed with the garde, the garde with his sword, and the justice of the peace with the rake.

CHAPTER VIII.

ROAMING.

En route! the sky is blue, the sun is shining, and our feet are eager to tread on the grass. From Crozon to Leudevenec the country is quite flat, and there is not a house nor a tree to be seen. As far as the eye can reach, reddish moss spreads over the ground. Sometimes fields of ripe wheat rise above the little stunted sea-rushes. The latter are flowerless now, and look as they did before the springtime. Deep wagon-tracks, edged by rolls of dried mud, make their appearance and continue for a long time; then they suddenly describe a bend and are lost to the eye. Grass grows in large patches between these sunken furrows. The wind whistles over the flats; we walk on; a welcome breeze dries the beads of perspiration on our cheeks, and when we halted we were able to hear, above the sound of our beating arteries, the rustling of the wind in the grass.

From time to time, a mill with rapidly revolving wheels would rise up and point the way. The creaking wooden fans descended, grazed the ground and then rose. Standing erect in the open garret-window, the miller watched us pass.

We walked on; coming to a hedge of elm-trees which probably concealed a village, we caught sight of a man standing in a tree, at the foot of which was a woman with her blue apron spread out to catch the plums he was throwing to her. I recollect a

crop of dark hair falling in masses over her shoulders, two uplifted arms, the movement of the supple neck and the sonorous laughter that floated over the hedge to me.

The path we were following grew narrower. Presently the plain disappeared and we found ourselves on the crest of a promontory dominating the ocean. Looking towards Brest, it seemed to extend indefinitely; but on the other side, it projected its sinuosities into the land, between short hills covered with underwood. Each gulf is ensconced between two mountains; each mountain is flanked by two gulfs, and nothing can equal the beauty of those vast green slopes rising almost in a straight line out of the sea. The hills have rounded tops and flattened bases, and describe a wide, curved chain which joins the plateaux with the graceful sweep of a Moorish arch; following so closely upon one another, the colour of their foliage and their formation are almost exactly alike. Propelled by the sea-breeze, the breakers dashed up against the foot of these hills, and the sun, falling on them, made them gleam; the whole surface of the ocean was blue and glittering with silver, and we could not get enough of its beauty. Then we watched the sunbeams glide over the hills. One of the latter had already been deserted by them, and appeared more indistinct than the rest, while a broad black shadow was rapidly gathering over another. As we approached the level of the shore the mountains that faced us a moment ago seemed to grow loftier; the gulfs deepened and the ocean expanded. We walked on, oblivious to everything, and let our eyes roam at will, and the pebbles that our feet dislodged rolled down the hill quickly and disappeared in the bushes edging the road.

The roads followed hedges that were as compact and thick as walls; we climbed up and we climbed down; meanwhile, it was growing dark, and the country was settling into the deep silence characteristic of midsummer evenings.

As we failed to meet anybody who could show us the way, the few peasants we had questioned having responded by unintelligible cries, we produced our map and our

compass, and, locating ourselves by the setting sun, we resolved to head straight for Daoulas. Instantly our vigour returned, and we started across the fields, vaulting fences and ditches, and uprooting, tearing and breaking everything in our way, without giving a thought to the stiles we left open or the damaged crops.

At the top of a slope, we discovered the village of l'Hôpital lying in a meadow watered by a stream. A bridge spans the latter and on this bridge is a mill; beyond the meadow is a hill, which we started to climb nimbly, when suddenly we saw, by a ray of light, a beautiful yellow and black salamander creeping along the edge of a ditch with its slender tail dragging in the dust and undulating with every motion of its speckled body. It had come from its retreat under a big stone covered with moss, and was hunting insects in the rotten trunks of old oak-trees.

A pavement of uneven cobblestones echoed beneath our feet, and a street stretched out before us. We had arrived in Daoulas. There was light enough to enable us to distinguish a square sign swinging on an iron rod on one of the houses. We should have recognised the inn even without the sign, as houses, like men, have their professions stamped on their faces. So we entered, for we were ravenous, and told the host above all things not to keep us waiting.

While we were sitting in front of the door, waiting for our dinner, a little girl in rags came along with a basket of strawberries on her head. She entered the inn and came out again after a short while, holding a big loaf of bread in both hands. Uttering shrill cries, she scampered off with the alertness of a kitten. Her dusty hair fluttered in the wind and stood out straight from her wizened face, and her bare legs, which she lifted high in the air when running, disappeared under the rags that covered her form.

After our meal, which comprised, besides the unavoidable omelet and the fatal veal, the strawberries the little girl had brought, we went up to our rooms.

The winding staircase with its worm-eaten steps groaned beneath our weight, like a

sensitive woman under a new disillusion. At the top was a room with a door that closed on the outside with a hook. We slept there. The plaster on the once yellow walls was crumbling away; the beams of the ceiling bent beneath the weight of the slated roof, and on the window-panes was a layer of dust that softened the light like a piece of unpolished glass. The beds, four walnut boards carelessly put together, had big, round, worm-eaten knobs, and the wood was split by the dryness. On each bed was a mattress and a matting, covered with a ragged green spread. A piece of mirror in a varnished frame, an old game-bag on a nail, and a worn silk cravat which showed the crease of its folds, indicated that the room belonged to some one who probably slept there every night.

Under one of the red cotton pillows I discovered a hideous object, a cap of the same color as the coverlet, but coated with a greasy glazing which prevented its texture from being recognisable; a worn, shapeless, clammy, oily thing. I am sure that its owner prizes it highly and that he finds it warmer than any other cap. A man's life, the perspiration of an entire existence, is secreted in this layer of mouldy cerate. How many nights it must have taken to make it so thick! How many nightmares have galloped under this cap? How many dreams have been dreamed beneath it? And charming ones, too, perhaps,—why not?

If you are neither an engineer, nor a blacksmith, nor a builder, Brest will not interest you very much. The port is magnificent, I admit; beautiful, if you say so; gigantic, if you wish. It is imposing, you know, and gives the impression of a powerful nation. But those piles of cannons and anchors and cannon-balls, the infinite extension of those quays, which enclose a calm, flat sea that appears to be chained down, and those big workshops filled with grinding machinery, the never-ceasing clanking of galley chains, the convicts who pass by in regular gangs and work in silence,—this entire, pitiless, frightful, forced mechanism, this organized defiance, quickly disgusts the soul and tires the eye. The latter can rest only on cobblestones, shells, piles of iron, madriers, dry docks containing the naked hulls of vessels, and the grey

walls of the prison, where a man leans out of the windows and tests the iron bars with a hammer.

Nature is absent and more completely banished from this place, than from any other spot on the face of the earth; everywhere can be seen denial and hatred of it, as much in the crowbar which demolishes the rocks, as in the sabre of the garde-chiourme who watches over the convicts.

Outside of the arsenal and the penitentiary, there is nothing but barracks, corps-de-garde, fortifications, ditches, uniforms, bayonets, sabres and drums. From morning until night, military music sounds under your windows, soldiers pass through the streets, come, go, and drill; the bugle sounds incessantly and the troops file past. You understand at once that the arsenal constitutes the real city and that the other is completely swallowed up by it. Everywhere and in every form reappear discipline, administration, ruled paper. Factitious symmetry and idiotic cleanliness are much admired. In the navy hospital for instance, the floors are so highly polished that a convalescent trying to walk on his mended leg would probably fall and break the other. But it looks nice. Between each ward is a yard, but the sun never shines in it, and the grass is carefully kept out. The kitchens are beautiful, but are situated so far from the main building that in winter the food must be cold before it reaches the patients. But who cares about them? Aren't the saucepans like polished suns? We saw a man who had broken his skull in falling from a vessel, and who for eighteen hours had received no medical assistance whatsoever; but his sheets were immaculate, for the linen department is very well kept.

In the prison ward I was moved like a child by the sight of a litter of kittens playing on a convict's bed. He made them little paper balls, and they would chase them all over the bed-spread, and cling to its edges with their claws. Then he would turn them over, stroke them, kiss them and cuddle them to his heart. More than once, when he is put back to work and sits tired and depressed on his bench, he will dream

of the quiet hours he spent alone with the little animals, and of the softness of their fur on his rough hands and the warmth of their little bodies against his breast. I believe, though, that the rules forbid this kind of recreation and that probably he had them through the kindness of the sister in charge.

But here, as well as elsewhere, rules have their exceptions, for, in the first place, the distinction of caste does not disappear (equality being a lie, even in the penitentiary). Delicately scented locks sometimes show beneath the numbered caps, just as the sleeve of the red blouse often reveals a cuff surrounding a well-kept hand. Moreover, special favours are shown toward certain professions, certain men. How have they been able, in spite of the law and the jealousy of their fellow-prisoners, to attain this eccentric position which makes them almost amateur convicts, and keep it without anybody trying to wrest it from them? At the entrance to the workshop, where boats are built, you will find a dentist's table filled with instruments. In a pretty frame on the wall, rows of plates are exhibited, and when you pass, the artist utters a little speech to advertise his ability. He stays in his place all day, polishing his instruments and stringing teeth; he can talk to visitors without feeling the restraint of being watched, be informed of what is going on in the medical world, and practise his profession like a licensed dentist. At the present time, I daresay, he must use ether. More than that, he may have pupils and give lectures. But the man who has the most enviable position of all is the curé Delacollonge.[3] He is the mediator between the convicts and the ban; the authorities use his ascendency over the prisoners, and they, in turn, address themselves to him when they want to obtain any favours.

He lives apart from the rest of them in a neat little room, has a man to wait on him, eats big bowls of Plougastel strawberries, takes his coffee and reads the newspapers.

If Delacollonge is the head of the penitentiary, Ambroise is its arm. Ambroise is a superb negro almost six feet tall, who would have made a fine servant for a sixteenth

century man of quality. Heliogobalus must have kept some such fellow to furnish amusement for himself and his guests by strangling lions and fighting gladiators single-handed. His polished skin is quite black, with steely reflections; his body is well knit and as vigorous as a tiger's, and his teeth are so white that they almost frighten one.

King of the penitentiary by right of strength, all the convicts fear and admire him; his athletic reputation compels him to test every newcomer, and up to the present time, all these contests have turned out in his favour. He can bend iron rods over his knee, carry three men with one hand, and knock down eight by opening his arms; he eats three times as much as an ordinary man, for he has an enormous appetite and a heroic constitution.

When we saw him, he was watering the plants in the botanical garden. He is always hanging around the hot-house behind the plants and the palm-trees, digging the soil and cleansing the wood-work.

On Thursday, when the public is admitted, Ambroise receives his mistresses behind the boxed orange-trees; he has several of them, in fact, more than he wishes. He knows how to procure them, whether by his charms, his strength or his money, which he always carries in quantities about his person and spends lavishly whenever he wishes to enjoy himself. So he is very popular among a certain class of women, and the people who have put him where he is, have never perhaps been loved as much as Ambroise.

In the middle of the garden, in a little lake shaded by a willow-tree and bordered by plants, is a swan. With one stroke of its leg it can swim from one side of the pond to the other, and although it crosses it a hundred times a day and catches gold fishes to while away the time, it never thinks of wandering away.

Further on, in a line against the wall, are some cages for rare animals from foreign lands destined for the Museum of Paris. Most of the cages, however, were empty. In

front of one, in a narrow grated yard, a convict was teaching a young wild-cat to obey commands like a dog. Hasn't this man had enough of slavery himself? Why does he torment this poor little beast? The lashes with which he is threatened he gives the wild-cat, which, some day, will probably take its revenge by jumping over the iron railing and killing the swan.

One moonlit evening, we decided to take a stroll through the streets known to be frequented by filles de joie. They are very numerous. The navy, the artillery, the infantry, each has its own particular streets, without mentioning the penitentiary, which covers a whole district of the city. Seven parallel streets ending at its walls, compose what is called Keravel, and are filled by the mistresses of jailers and convicts. They are old frame houses, crowded together, with every door and window closed tight. No sound issues from them, nobody is seen coming out, and there are no lights in the windows; at the end of each street is a lamp-post which the wind sways from side to side, thus making its long yellow rays oscillate on the sidewalk. The rest of the quarter is in absolute darkness. In the moonlight, these silent houses with their uneven roofs projected fantastic glimmerings.

When do they open? At unknown hours, at the most silent time of the darkest nights. Then comes the jailer who has slipped away from his watch, or the convict who has managed to escape from the prison, though sometimes they arrive together, aiding and abetting each other; then, when daylight dawns, the jailer turns his head away and nobody is the wiser.

In the sailor's district, on the contrary, everything is open and above-board. The disreputable houses are full of noise and light; there is dancing and shouting and fighting. On the ground floors, in the low rooms, women in filmy attire sit on the benches that line the white-washed walls lighted by an oil lamp; others, in the doorway, beckon to you, and their animated faces stand out in relief on the background of the lighted resort, from which issues the sound of clinking glasses

and coarse caresses. You can hear the kisses which fall on the opulent shoulders of the women and the laughter of the girl who is sitting on some tanned sailor's lap, her unruly locks slipping from under her cap and her bare shoulders issuing from her chemise. The street is thronged, the place is packed, the door is wide open, anybody who wishes may go in. Men come and peep through the windows or talk in an undertone to some half-clad creature, who bends eagerly over their faces. Groups stand around and wait their turn. It is all quite informal and unrestrained.

Being conscientious travellers, and desiring to see and study everything at close range, we entered.

In a room papered in red, three or four girls were sitting at a round table, and a man with a cap on his head and a pipe in his mouth was reclining on the sofa; he bowed politely when we entered. The women wore Parisian dresses and were modest in their demeanour. The mahogany furniture was covered with red plush, the floor was polished and engravings of battles decorated the walls. O Virtue! you are beautiful, for very stupid is vice. The woman who was sitting by my side had hands which were sufficient in themselves to make a man forget her sex, and not knowing how to spend our time we treated the whole company to drinks. Then I lighted a cigar, stretched out on the divan, and, sad and depressed, while the voices of the women rose shrilly and the glasses were being drained, I said to myself:

Where is she? Where can she be? Is she dead to the world, and will men never see her again?

She was beautiful, in olden times, when she walked up the steps leading to the temple, when on her shell-like feet fell the golden fringe of her tunic, or when she lounged among Persian cushions, twirling her collar of cameos and chatting with the wise men and the philosophers.

She was beautiful when she stood naked on the threshold of her cella in the street of Suburra, under the rosin torchlight that blazed in the night, slowly chanting her

Campanian lay, while from the Tiber came the refrains of the orgies.

She was beautiful, too, in her old house of the Cité behind the Gothic windows, among the noisy students and dissipated monks, when, without fear of the sergeants, they struck the oaken tables with their pewter mugs, and the worm-eaten beds creaked beneath the weight of their bodies.

She was beautiful when she leaned over the green cloth and coveted the gold of the provincials; then she wore high heels and had a small waist and a large wig which shed its perfumed powder on her shoulders, a rose over her ear and a patch on her cheek.

She was beautiful also among the goat-skins of the Cossacks and the English uniforms, pushing her way through the throngs of men and letting her bare shoulders dazzle them on the steps of the gambling houses, under the jewellers' windows, beneath the lights of the cafés, between starvation and wealth.

What are you regretting? I am regretting the fille de joie.

On the boulevard, one evening, I caught a glimpse of her as she passed under the gaslight, with watchful and eager eyes, dragging her feet over the sidewalk. I saw her pale face on the street-corner, while the rain wet the flowers in her hair, and heard her soft voice calling to the men, while her flesh shivered in her low-necked bodice.

It was her last day; after that she disappeared.

Fear not that she will ever return, for she is dead, quite dead! Her dress is made high, she has morals, objects to coarse language, and puts the sous she earns in a savings bank.

Cleared of her presence, the street has lost the only poetry it still retained; they have filtered the gutter and sorted the garbage.

In a little while, the mountebanks will also have disappeared, in order to make room

for magnetic séances and reform banquets, and the rope-dancer with her spangled skirt and long balancing-pole will be as remote from us as the bayadère of the Ganges.

Of all that beautiful, glittering world as flighty as fancy itself, so melancholy and sonorous, so bitter and yet so gay, full of inward pathos and glaring sarcasms, where misery was warm and grace was sad, the last vestige of a lost age, a distant race, which, we are told, came from the other end of the earth and brought us in the tinkling of its bells the echo and vague memory of idolised joys; some covered wagon moving slowly along the road, with rolled tents on its roof and muddy dogs beneath it, a man in a yellow jacket, selling muscade in tin cups, the poor marionnettes in the Champs-Elysées, and the mandolin players who visit the cafés in the outskirts of the city, are all that is left.

Since then, it is true, we have had a number of farces of a higher class of humour. But is the new as good as the old? Do you prefer Tom Thumb or the Museum of Versailles?

On a wooden stand that formed a balcony around a square tent of grey canvas, a man in a blouse was beating a drum; behind him was a big painted sign representing a sheep and a cow, and some ladies, gentlemen, and soldiers. The animals were the two young phenomena from Guérande, with one arm and four shoulders. Their exhibitor, or editor, was shouting himself hoarse and announcing that besides these two beautiful things, battles between wild beasts would take place at once. Under the wooden stand stood a donkey and three bears, and the barking of the dogs, which proceeded from the interior of the tent, mingled with the beating of the drum, the shouts of the owner of the two phenomena and the cries of another fellow who was not as jovial and fat as the former, but tall and lanky, with a funereal expression and ragged clothes. This was the partner; they had met on the road and had combined their shows. The lean one contributed his bears, his dogs and his donkey, while the

fat man brought his two phenomena and a grey felt hat which was used in their performance.

The theatre was roofless and its walls were of grey canvas; they fluttered in the wind and would have blown down had it not been for the poles which held them. Along the sides of the ring was a railing, behind which was the audience, and in a reserved corner we perceived the two phenomena nibbling at a bundle of hay half concealed by a gorgeous blanket. In the middle of the ring a high post was sunk in the ground, and here and there, attached to smaller posts, were dogs, barking and tugging at their chains. The men continued to shout and beat the drum, the bears growled, and the crowd began to file in.

First they brought out a poor, half-paralyzed bear, which seemed considerably bored. It wore a muzzle and had a big collar with an iron chain around its neck, a rope in its nose, to make it obey commands promptly, and a sort of leather hood over its ears. They tied bruin to the centre post, and the barks grew louder and fiercer. The dogs stood up, a bristling, scratching crew, their hind-quarters elevated, their snouts near the ground, their legs spread, while their masters stood in opposite corners of the ring and yelled at them in order to increase their ferocity. They let three bull-dogs go and the brutes rushed at the bear, which began to dodge around the post. The dogs followed, crowding and barking; sometimes the bear would upset them and trample them with its huge paws, but they would immediately scramble to their feet and make a dash for its head, clinging to its neck so that it was unable to shake off their wriggling bodies. With watchful eye, the two masters waited the moment when it looked as if the bear would be strangled; then they rushed at the dogs, tore them away, pulled their necks and bit their tails to make them unlock their jaws. The brutes whined with pain, but they would not let go. The bear struggled to free itself from the dogs, the dogs bit the bear, and the men bit the dogs. One young bull-dog especially, was remarkable for its ferocity; it clung to the bear's back and would not let go, though they chewed and bent its tail, and lacerated its ears. The

men were compelled to get a mattock to loosen its jaws. When they had all been disentangled, everyone took a rest; the bear lay down on the ground, the gasping dogs hung their tongues out, and the perspiring men pulled the hairs from between their teeth, while the dust that had arisen during the fight scattered in the atmosphere and settled on the heads of the spectators.

Two more bears were led into the ring, and one acted the gardener of the fable, went on a hunting trip, waltzed, took off its hat, and played dead. After this performance came the donkey. But it defended itself well; its kicks sent the dogs flying through the air like balloons; with its tail between its legs and its ears back, it ran around the ring trying to get its foes under its forelegs while they endeavoured to run around it and fasten their teeth in its throat. When the men finally rescued it, it was completely winded and shaking with fright; it was covered with drops of blood which trickled down its legs (on which repeated wounds had left scars), and, mingling with sweat, moistened its worn hoofs.

But the best of the performance was the general fight between the dogs; all took part in it, the big and the little ones, the bull-dogs, the sheep-dogs, the white ones, the black ones, the spotted ones, and the russet variety. Fully fifteen minutes were spent in bringing them to the proper pitch of excitement. The owners held them between their legs and pointing their heads in the direction of their adversaries, would knock them together violently. The thin man, especially, worked with great gusto. With much effort he succeeded in producing a ferocious, hoarse chest-note that maddened the whole irritated pack. As serious as an orchestra leader, he would absorb the discordant harmony, and direct and strengthen its emission; but when the brutes were let loose and the howling band tore one another to pieces, he would be in a frenzy of enthusiasm and delight. He would applaud and bark and stamp his feet and imitate all the motions of the dogs; he would have enjoyed biting and being bitten, would gladly have been a dog himself with a snout, so that he could wallow in the dust and blood, and sink his teeth in the hairy skins and warm flesh, and enjoy the

fray to his heart's content.

There was a critical moment when all the dogs, one on top of another, formed a wriggling mass of legs, backs, tails and ears, which oscillated to and fro in the ring without separating, and in another instant had torn down the railing and threatened to harm the two young phenomena. The owner's face paled and he hastily sprang forward, while his partner rushed to his side. Then tails were bitten, and kicks and blows were distributed right and left! They grabbed the dogs everywhere, pulled them away and flung them over their shoulders like bundles of hay. It was all over in a second, but I had seen the moment when the two young phenomena were near being reduced to chopped meat, and I trembled for the safety of the arm which grows on their back.

Flustered, no doubt, by their narrow escape, they did not care to be shown off. The cow backed and the sheep bucked; but finally the green blanket with yellow fringe was removed and their appendage was exhibited to the public, and then the performance ended....

CHAPTER IX.

BREST.

At the light-house of Brest. Here the Old World ends. This is its most advanced point; its farthest limit. Behind you spread Europe and Asia; before you lies the entire ocean. As great as space appears to our eye, does it not always seem limited as soon as we know that it has a boundary? Can you not see from our shores, across the Channel, the streets of Brighton and the fortresses of Provence; do you not always think of the Mediterranean as an immense blue lake ensconced in rocks, with promontories covered with falling monuments, yellow sands, swaying palm-trees and curved bays? But here nothing stops your eye. Thought can fly as rapidly as the

winds, spread out, divagate, and lose itself, without finding anything but water, or perhaps vague America, nameless islands, or some country with red fruits, humming-birds and savages; or the silent twilight of the pole, with its spouting whales; or the great cities lighted by coloured glass, Japan with its porcelain roofs, and China with its sculptured staircases and its pagodas decorated with golden bells.

Thus does the mind people and animate this infinity, of which it tires so soon, in order that it may appear less vast. One cannot think of the desert without its caravans, of the ocean without its ships, of the bowels of the earth without evoking the treasures that they are supposed to conceal.

We returned to Conquet by way of the cliff. The breakers were dashing against its foot. Driven by a sea-breeze, they would come rushing in, strike the rocks and cover them with rippling sheets of water. Half an hour later, in a char-à-banc drawn by two sturdy little horses, we reached Brest, which we left with pleasure two days afterwards. When you leave the coast and approach the Channel, the country undergoes a marked change; it becomes less wild, less Celtic; the dolmens become scarcer, the flats diminish as the wheat fields grow more numerous, and, little by little, one reaches the fertile land of Léon, which is, as M. Pitre-Chevalier has gracefully put it, "the Attica of Brittany."

Landerneau is a place where there is an elm-tree promenade, and where we saw a frightened dog running through the streets with a pan attached to its tail.

In order to go to the Château de la Joyeuse-Garde, one must first follow the banks of the Eilorn and then walk through a forest, in a hollow where few persons go. Sometimes, when the underwood thins out and meadows appear between the branches, one catches sight of a boat sailing up the river.

Our guide preceded us at quite a distance. Alone together we trod the good old earth, flecked with bunches of purple heather and fallen leaves. The air was perfumed with the breath of violets and strawberries; slender ferns spread over the trunks of the

trees. It was warm; even the moss was hot. A cuckoo, hidden in the foliage, now and then gave out its long cry, and gnats buzzed in the glades. We walked on with a feeling of inward peace, and let our conversation touch on many subjects; we spoke of sounds and colours, of the masters and their works, and of the joys of the mind; we thought of different writings, of familiar pictures and poses; we recited aloud some wonderful verses, the beauty of which thrilled us so that we repeated the rhythm again and again, accentuating the words and cadencing them so that they were almost sung. Foreign landscapes and splendid figures rose before our mind's eye, and we dwelt with rapture on soft Asiatic nights with the moon shining on the cupolas; or our admiration was aroused by some sonorous name; or we delighted in the artlessness of some sentence standing out in relief in an ancient book.

Stretched out in the courtyard of Joyeuse-Garde, near the filled-up subterranean vaults, beneath the semi-circle of its unique ivy-covered arcade, we talked of Shakespeare and wondered whether the stars were inhabited.

Then we started off again, having given but a hasty glance at the crumbling home of good old Lancelot, the one a fairy stole from his mother and kept in a shining palace at the bottom of a lake. The dwarfs have disappeared, the drawbridge has flown away, and lizards now crawl where formerly the entrancing Geneviève dreamed of her lover gone to fight the giants in Trébizonde.

We went back through the same paths to the forest; the shadows were lengthening, the flowers and shrubs were hardly visible, and the blue peaks of the low mountains opposite seemed to grow taller against the fading sky. The river, which is bordered by artificial quays for half a mile outside the city, now becomes free to spread its waters at will over the meadow; its wide curve stretched far away into the distance, and the pools of water coloured by the setting sun looked like immense golden platters forgotten on the grass.

Till it reaches Roche-Maurice, the Eilorn follows the road, which winds around the

foot of the rocky hills, the uneven eminences of which extend into the valley. We were riding in a gig driven by a boy who sat on one of the shafts. His hat had no strings and consequently blew off occasionally, and during his efforts to catch it, we had plenty of time to admire the landscape.

The Château de la Roche-Maurice is a real burgrave's castle, a vulture's nest on the top of a mountain. It is reached by an almost perpendicular slope along which great blocks of stone are strewn in place Of steps. At the top is a wall built of huge stones laid one above another, and in the wall are large windows, through which the whole surrounding country can be viewed; the woods, the fields, the river, the long, white road, the mountains with their uneven peaks, and the great meadow, which separates them through the middle.

A crumbling flight of steps leads to a dilapidated tower. Here and there stones crop out among the grass, and the rock shows amid the stones. Sometimes it seems as if this rock assumed artificial shapes, and as if the ruins, on the contrary, by crumbling more and more, had taken on a natural appearance and gone back to original matter.

A whole side of the wall is covered with ivy; it begins at the bottom and spreads out in an inverted pyramid, the color of which grows darker towards the top. Through an aperture, the edges of which are concealed by the foliage, one can see a section of the blue sky.

It was in these parts that the famous dragon lived, which was killed in olden times by knight Derrien, who was returning from the Holy Land with his friend, Neventer. Derrien attacked it as soon as he had rescued the unfortunate Eilorn who, after giving over his slaves, his vassals and his servants (he had no one left but his wife and son), had thrown himself headlong from the top of the tower into the river; but the monster, mortally wounded, and bound by the sash of its conqueror, soon drowned itself in the sea, at Poulbeunzual,[4] like the crocodile of Batz island, which obeyed the behest of Saint Pol de Léon and drowned itself with the stole of

the Breton saint wound around it. The gargoyle of Rouen met a similar fate with the stole of Saint Romain.

How beautiful those terrific old dragons were, with their gaping, fire-spitting jaws, their scales, their serpent-tails, their bat-wings, their lion-claws, their equine bodies and fantastic heads! And the knight who overpowered them was a wonderfully fine specimen of manhood! First, his horse grew frightened and reared, and his lance broke on the scales of the monster, whose fiery breath blinded him. Finally he alighted, and after a day's battle, succeeded in sinking his sword up to the hilt in the beasts belly. Black blood flowed in streams from the wound, the audience escorted the knight home in triumph, and he became king and married a fair maiden.

But where did the dragons come from? Are they a confused recollection of the monsters that existed before the flood? Were they conceived from the contemplation of the carcasses of the ichthyosaurus and pteropod, and did the terror of men hear the sound of their feet in the tall grass and the wind howl when their voices filled the caves? Are we not, moreover, in the land of fairies, in the home of the Knights of the Round Table and of Merlin, in the mythological birthplace of vanished epopees? These, no doubt, revealed something of the old worlds which have become mythical, and told something of the cities that were swallowed up, of Is and Herbadilla, splendid and barbaric places, filled with the loves of their bewitching queens, but now doubly wiped out, first, by the ocean which has obliterated them and then by religion, which has cursed their memory.

There is much to be said on this subject. And, indeed, what is there on which much cannot be said? It might perhaps be Landivisian, for even the most prolix man is obliged to be concise in his remarks, when there is a lack of matter. I have noticed that good places are usually the ugliest ones. They are like virtuous women; one respects them, but one passes on in search of others. Here, surely, is the most productive spot of all Brittany; the peasants are not as poor as elsewhere, the fields

are properly cultivated, the colza is superb, the roads are in good condition, and it is frightfully dreary.

Cabbages, turnips, beets and an enormous quantity of potatoes, all enclosed by ditches, cover the entire country from Saint Pol de Léon to Roscoff. They are forwarded to Brest, Rennes, and even to Havre; it is the industry of the place, and a large business is done with them.

Roscoff has a slimy beach and a narrow bay, and the surrounding sea is sprinkled with tiny black islands that rise like the backs of so many turtles.

The environs of Saint Pol are dreary and cheerless. The bleak tint of the flats mingles without transition with the paleness of the sky, and the short perspective has no large lines in its proportions, nor change of colour on the edges. Here and there, while strolling through the fields, you may come across some silent farm behind a grey stone wall, an abandoned manor deserted by its owners. In the yard the pigs are sleeping on the manure heap and the chickens are pecking at the grass that grows among the loose stones; the sculptured shield above the door has worn away under the action of rain and atmosphere. The rooms are empty and are used for storage purposes; the plaster on the ceiling is peeling off, and so are the remaining decorations, which, besides, have been tarnished by the cobwebs of the spiders one sees crawling around the joists. Wild mignonette has grown on the door of Kersa-lion; near the turret is a pointed window flanked by a lion and a Hercules, which stand out in bold relief on the wall like two gargoyles. At Kerland, I stumbled against a wolf-trap while I was ascending the large winding staircase. Ploughshares, rusted shovels, and jars filled with dried grain were scattered around the rooms or on the wide stone window-seats.

Kerouséré has retained its three turrets with machicolations; in the courtyard can still be seen the deep furrows of the trenches that have been filled up little by little, and are now on level with the ground; they are like the track of a bark, which spreads

and spreads over the water till it finally disappears. From the platform of one of the towers (the others have pointed roofs), one can see the ocean between two low, wooded hills. The windows on the first floor are half stopped up, so as to keep the rain out; they look out into a garden enclosed by a high wall. The grass is covered with thistles and wheat grows in the flower-beds surrounded by rose-bushes.

A narrow path wends its way between a field where the ripe wheat sways in the breeze and a line of elm-trees growing on the edge of a ditch. Poppies gleamed here and there amongst the wheat; the ditch was edged with flowers, brambles, nettles, sweet-brier, long prickly stems, broad shining leaves, blackberries and purple digitalis, all of which mingled their colours and various foliage and uneven branches, and crossed their shadows on the grey dust like the meshes of a net.

When you have crossed a meadow where an old mill reluctantly turns its clogged wheel, you follow the wall by stepping on large stones placed in the water for a bridge; you soon come to the road that leads to Saint-Pol, at the end of which rises the slashed steeple of Kreisker; tall and slender, it dominates a tower decorated with a balustrade and produces a fine effect at a distance; but the nearer one gets to it, the smaller and uglier it becomes, till finally one finds that it is nothing more than an ordinary church with a portal devoid of statues. The cathedral also is built in a rather clumsy Gothic style, and is overloaded with ornaments and embroideries: but there is one notable thing, at least, in Saint-Pol, and that is the table d'hôte of the inn.

The girl who waits on it has gold earrings dangling against her white neck and a cap with turned up wings, like Molière's soubrettes, and her sparkling blue eyes would incline anyone to ask her for something more than mere plates. But the guests! What guests! All habitués! At the upper end sat a creature in a velvet jacket and a cashmere waistcoat. He tied his napkin around the bottles that had been uncorked, in order to be able to distinguish them. He ladled the soup. On his left, sat a man in a light grey frock-coat, with the cuffs and collar trimmed with a sort of curly material

representing fur; he ate with his hat on and was the professor of music at the local college. But he has grown tired of his profession and is anxious to find some place that would bring him from eight to twelve hundred francs at the most. He does not care so much about the salary, what he desires is the consideration that attaches to such a place. As he was always late, he requested that the courses be brought up again from the kitchen, and if he did not like them, he would send them back untouched; he sneezed and expectorated and rocked his chair and hummed and leaned his elbows on the table and picked his teeth.

Everybody respects him, the waitress admires everything he says, and is, I am sure, in love with him. The high opinion he has of himself shows in his smile, his speech, his gestures, his silence, and in his way of wearing his hair; it emanates from his entire obnoxious personality.

Opposite to us sat a grey-haired, plump man with red hands and thick, moist lips, who looked at us so persistently and annoyingly, while he masticated his food, that we felt like throwing the carafes at him. The other guests were insignificant and only contributed to the picture.

One evening the conversation fell upon a woman of the environs who had left her husband and gone to America with her lover, and who, the previous week, and passed through Saint-Pol on her way home, and had stopped at the inn. Everybody wondered at her audacity, and her name was accompanied by all sorts of unflattering epithets. Her whole life was passed in review by these people, and they all laughed contemptuously and insulted her and grew quite hot over the argument. They would have liked to have her there to tell her what they thought of her and see what she would say. Tirades against luxury, virtuous horror, moral maxims, hatred of wealth, words with a double meaning, shrugs, everything, in fact, was used to crush this woman, who, judging by the ferocity these ruffians displayed in their attacks, must have been pretty, refined, and charming. Our hearts beat indignantly in our breasts,

and if we had taken another meal in Saint-Pol, I am sure that something would have happened.

CHAPTER X.

SAINT-MALO.

Saint-Malo, which is built right on the ocean and is enclosed by ramparts, looks like a crown of stones, the gems of which are the machicolations. The breakers dash against its walls, and when the tide is low they gently unfurl on the sand. Little rocks covered with sea-weed dot the beach and look like black spots on its light surface. The larger ones, which are upright and smooth, support the fortifications, thus making them appear higher than they really are.

Above this straight line of walls, broken here and there by a tower or the pointed ogive of a door, rise the roofs of the houses with their open garret-windows, their gyrating weather-cocks, and their red chimneys from which issue spirals of bluish smoke that vanishes in the air.

Around Saint-Malo are a number of little barren islands that have not a tree nor a blade of grass, but only some old crumbling walls, great pieces of which are hurled into the sea by each succeeding storm.

On the other side of the bay, opposite the city and connected with dry land by a long pier, which separates the port from the ocean, is Saint-Servan, a large, empty, almost deserted locality, which lies peacefully in a marshy meadow. At the entrance to Saint-Servan rise the four towers of the Château de Solidor, which are connected by curtains and are perfectly black from top to bottom. These alone are sufficient compensation for having made that extended circuit on the beach, under the broiling July sun, among the dock-yards and tar-pots and fires.

A walk around the city, over the ramparts, is one of the finest that can be taken.

Nobody goes there. You can sit down in the embrasures of the cannons and dangle your feet over the abyss. In front of you lies the mouth of the Rance, which flows between two green hills, the coast, the islands, the rocks, and the ocean. The sentinel marches up and down behind you, and his even footsteps echo on the sonorous stones.

One evening we remained out for a long time. The night was beautiful, a true summer night, without a moon, but brilliant with stars and perfumed by the sea-breeze. The city was sleeping. One by one the lights went out in the windows, and the lighthouses shone red in the darkness, which was quite blue above us and glittering with myriads of twinkling stars. We could not see the ocean, but we could hear and smell it, and the breakers that lashed the walls flung drops of foam over us through the big apertures of the machicolations.

In one place, between the wall and the city houses, a quantity of cannon-balls are piled up in a ditch. From that point you can see these words written on the second floor of one of the dwellings: "Chateaubriand was born here."

Further on, the wall ends at the foot of a tower called Quiquengrogne; like its sister, La Générale, it is high, broad, and imposing, and is swelled in the middle like a hyperbola.

Though they are as good as new and absolutely intact, these towers would no doubt be improved if they lost some of their battlements in the sea and if ivy spread its kindly leaves over their tops. Indeed, do not monuments grow greater through recollection, like men and like passions? And are they not completed by death?

We entered the castle. The empty courtyard planted with a few sickly lime-trees was as silent as the courtyard of a monastery. The janitress went and obtained the keys from the commander. When she returned, she was accompanied by a pretty little girl who wished to see the strangers. Her arms were bare and she carried a large bunch of flowers. Her black curls escaped from beneath her dainty little cap, and the lace

on her pantalettes rubbed against her kid shoes tied around the ankles with black laces. She ran up stairs in front of us beckoning and calling.

The staircase is long, for the tower is high. The bright daylight passes through the loop-holes like an arrow. When you put your head through one of these openings, you can see the ocean, which seems to grow wider and wider, and the crude colour of the sky, which seems to grow larger and larger, till you are afraid you will lose yourself in it. Vessels look like launches and their masts like walking-sticks. Eagles must think we look like ants. I wonder whether they really see us. Do they know that we have cities and steeples and triumphal arches?

When we arrived on the platform, and although the battlement reached to our chest, we could not help experiencing the sensation one always feels at a great height from the earth. It is a sort of voluptuous uneasiness mingled with fear and delight, pride and terror, a battle between one's mind and one's nerves. You feel strangely happy; you would like to jump, fly, spread out in the air and be supported by the wind; but your knees tremble and you dare not go too near the edge.

Still, one night, in olden times, men climbed this tower with ropes. But then, it is not astonishing for those times, for that wonderful sixteenth century, the epoch of fierce convictions and frantic loves! How the human instrument vibrated then in all its chords! How liberal-minded, productive, and active men were! Does not this phrase of Fénelon apply wonderfully well to that period: "A sight well calculated to delight the eye?" For, without making any reference to the foreground of the picture,—beliefs crumbling at their foundation like tottering mountains, newly discovered worlds, lost worlds brought to light again, Michael-Angelo beneath his dome, laughing Rabelais, observant Shakespeare, pensive Montaigne,—where can be found a greater development in passions, a greater violence in courage, a greater determination in willpower, in fine, a more complete expansion of liberty struggling against all native fatalities? And with what a bold relief the episode stands out in

history, and still, how wonderfully well it fits in, thereby giving a glimpse of the dazzling brightness and broad horizons of the period. Faces, living faces, pass before your eyes. You meet them only once; but you think of them long afterwards, and endeavour to contemplate them in order that they may be impressed more deeply upon your mind. Was not the type of the old soldiers whose race disappeared around 1598, at the taking of Vervins, fine and terrible? It was a type represented by men like Lamouche, Heurtand de Saint-Offange, and La Tremblaye, who came back holding the heads of his enemies in his hand; also La Fontenelle, of whom so much has been said. They were men of iron, whose hearts were no softer than their swords, and who, attracting hundreds of energies which they directed with their own, entered towns at night, galloping madly at the heads of their companies, equipped corsairs, burned villages, and were dealt with like kings! Who has thought of depicting those violent governors of the provinces, who slaughtered the people recklessly, committed rapes and swept in gold, like D'Epernon, an atrocious tyrant in Provence and a perfumed courtier at the Louvre; like Montluc, who strangled Huguenots with his own hands, or Baligui, the king of Cambrai, who read Machiavel in order to copy the Valentinois, and whose wife went to war on horseback, wearing a helmet and a cuirass.

One of the forgotten men of the period, or at least one of those whom most historians mention only slightly, is the Duke of Mercœur, the intrepid enemy of Henri IV, who defied him longer than Mayenne, the Ligue, and Philip II. Finally he was disarmed, that is, won over and appeased (by terms that were such that twenty-three articles of the treaty were not disclosed); then, not knowing what to do, he enlisted in the Hungarian army and fought the Turks. One day, with five thousand men, he attacked a whole army, and, beaten again, returned to France and died of the fever in Nuremberg, at the age of forty-four.

Saint-Malo put me in mind of him. He always tried to get it, but he never could succeed in making it his subject or his ally. They wished to fight on their own

account, and to do business through their own resources, and although they were really ligueurs, they spurned the duke as well as the Béarnais.

When De Fontaines, the governor of the city, informed them of the death of Henri III, they refused to recognize the King of Navarre. They armed themselves and erected barricades; De Fontaines intrenched himself in the castle and everybody kept upon the defensive. Little by little, the people encroached upon him; first, they requested him to declare that he was willing to maintain their franchises. De Fontaines complied in the hope of gaining time. The following year (1589), they chose four generals who were independent of the governor. A year later, they obtained permission to stretch chains. De Fontaines acceded to everything. The king was at Laval and he was waiting for him. The time was close at hand when he would be able to take revenge for all the humiliations he had suffered, and all the concessions he had been forced to make. But he precipitated matters and was discovered. When the people of Saint-Malo reminded him of his promises, he replied that if the king presented himself, he (De Fontaines) would let him enter the city. When they learned this, they decided to act.

The castle had four towers. It was the highest one, La Générale, the one on which De Fontaines relied the most, which they climbed. These bold attempts were not infrequent, as proved by the ascension of the cliffs of Fécamp by Bois-Rosé, and the attack of the Château de Blein, by Guebriant.

The rebels connived and assembled during several evenings at the place of a certain man named Frotet, sieur de La Lanbelle; they entered into an understanding with a Scotch gunner, and one dark night they armed themselves, went out to the rampart, let themselves down with ropes and approached the foot of La Générale.

There they waited. Soon a rustling sound was heard on the wall, and a ball of thread was lowered, to which they fastened their rope ladder. The ladder was then hoisted to the top of the tower and attached to the end of a culverin which was levelled in an

embrasure of the battlement.

Michel Frotet was the first to ascend, and after him came Charles Anselin, La Blissais and the others. The night was dark and the wind whistled; they had to climb slowly, to hold their daggers between their teeth and feel for the rungs of the ladder with their hands and feet. Suddenly (they were midway between the ground and the top), they felt themselves going down; the rope had slipped. But they did not utter a sound; they remained motionless. Their weight had caused the culverin to tip forward; it stopped on the edge of the embrasure and they slowly resumed their ascension and arrived one after another on the platform of the tower.

The sleepy sentinels did not have time to give the alarm. The garrison was either asleep or playing dice on the drums. A panic seized the soldiers and they fled to the dungeon. The conspirators pursued them and attacked them in the hallways, on the staircase, and in the rooms, crushing them between the doors and slaughtering them mercilessly. Meanwhile the townspeople arrived to lend assistance; some put up ladders, and entered the tower without encountering any resistance and plundered it. La Pérandière, lieutenant of the castle, perceiving La Blissais, said to him: "This, sir, is a most miserable night." But La Blissais impressed upon him that this was not the time for conversation. The Count of Fontaines had not made his appearance. They went in search of him, and found him lying dead across the threshold of his chamber, pierced by a shot from an arquebuse that one of the townspeople had fired at him, as he was about to go out, escorted by a servant bearing a light. "Instead of rushing to face the danger," says the author of this account,[5] "he had dressed as leisurely as if he were going to a wedding, without leaving one shoulder-knot untied."

This outbreak in Saint-Malo, which so greatly harmed the king, did not in the least benefit the Duke de Mercœur. He had hoped that the people would accept a governor from his hands, his son, for example, a mere child, for that would have

meant himself, but they obstinately refused to listen to it. He sent troops to protect them, but they refused to let them enter, and the soldiers were compelled to take lodgings outside of the city.

Still, in spite of all this, they had not become more royalist, for some time later, having arrested the Marquis of La Noussaie and the Viscount of Denoual, it cost the former twelve thousand crowns to get out of prison and the latter two thousand.

Then, fearing that Pont-Brient would interrupt commercial relations with Dinan and the other cities in the Ligue, they attacked and subjected it.

Presuming that their bishop, who was the temporal master of the city, might be likely to deprive them of the freedom they had just acquired, they put him in prison and kept him there for a year.

The conditions at which they finally accepted Henri IV are well-known: they were to take care of themselves, not be obliged to receive any garrison, be exempt from taxes for six years, etc.

Situated between Brittany and Normandy, this little people seems to have the tenacity and granite-like resistance of the former and the impulses and dash of the latter. Whether they are sailors, writers, or travellers on foreign seas, their predominant trait is audacity; they have violent natures which are almost poetical in their brutality, and often narrow in their obstinacy. There is this resemblance between these two sons of Saint-Malo, Lamennais and Broussais: they were always equally extreme in their systems and employed their latter years in fighting what they had upheld in the earlier part of their life.

In the city itself are little tortuous streets edged with high houses and dirty fishmongers' shops. There are no carriages or luxuries of any description; everything is as black and reeking as the hold of a ship. A sort of musty smell, reminiscent of Newfoundland, salt meat, and long sea voyages pervades the air.

"The watch and the round are made every night with big English dogs, which are let

loose outside of the city by the man who is in charge of them, and it is better not to be in their vicinity at that time. But when morning comes, they are led back to a place in the city where they shed all their ferocity which, at night, is so great."[6]

Barring the disappearance of this four-legged police which at one time devoured M. du Mollet, the existence of which is confirmed by a contemporaneous text, the exterior of things has changed but little, no doubt, and even the civilized people living in Saint-Malo admit that it is very much behind the times.

The only picture we noticed in the church is a large canvas that represents the battle of Lepante and is dedicated to Nôtre-Dame des Victoires, who can be seen floating above the clouds. In the foreground, all Christianity, together with crowned kings and princesses, is kneeling. The two armies can be seen in the background. The Turks are being hurled into the sea and the Christians stretch their arms towards heaven.

The church is ugly, has no ornamentation, and looks almost like a Protestant house of worship. I noticed very few votive offerings, a fact that struck me as being rather peculiar in this place of sea perils. There are no flowers nor candles in the chapels, no bleeding hearts nor bedecked Virgin, nothing, in fact, of all that which causes M. Michelet to wax indignant.

Opposite the ramparts, at a stone's throw from the city, rises the little island of Grand-Bay. There, can be found the tomb of Chateaubriand; that white spot cut in the rock is the place he has designated for his body.

We went there one evening when the tide was low and the sun setting in the west. The water was still trickling over the sand. At the foot of the island, the dripping sea-weed spread out like the hair of antique women over a tomb.

The island is deserted; sparse grass grows in spots, mingled here and there with tufts of purple flowers and nettles. On the summit is a dilapidated casemate, with a courtyard enclosed by crumbling walls. Beneath this ruin, and half-way up the hill,

is a space about ten feet square, in the middle of which rises a granite slab surmounted by a Latin cross. The tomb comprises three pieces: one for the socle, one for the slab, and another for the cross.

Chateaubriand will rest beneath it, with his head turned towards the sea; in this grave, built on a rock, his immortality will be like his life—deserted and surrounded by tempests. The centuries and the breakers will murmur a long time around his great memory; the breakers will dash against his tomb during storms, or on summer mornings, when the white sails unfold and the swallow arrives from across the seas; they will bring him the melancholy voluptuousness of far-away horizons and the caressing touch of the sea-breeze. And while time passes and the waves of his native strand swing back and forth between his cradle and his grave, the great heart of René, grown cold, will slowly crumble to dust to the eternal rhythm of this never-ceasing music.

We walked around the tomb and touched it, and looked at it as if it contained its future host, and sat down beside it on the ground.

The sky was pink, the sea was calm, and there was a lull in the breeze. Not a ripple broke the motionless surface of ocean on which the setting sun shed its golden light. Blue near the coast and mingled with the evening mist, the sea was scarlet everywhere else and deepened into a dark red line on the horizon. The sun had no rays left; they had fallen from its face and drowned their brilliancy in the water, on which they seemed to float. The red disc set slowly, robbing the sky of the pink tinge it had diffused over it, and while both the sun and the delicate color were wearing away, the pale blue shades of night crept over the heavens. Soon the sun touched the ocean and sank into it to the middle. For a moment it appeared cut in two by the horizon; the upper half remained firm, while the under one vacillated and lengthened; then it finally disappeared; and when the reflection died away from the place where the fiery ball had gone down, it seemed as if a sudden gloom had spread

over the sea.

The shore was dark. The light in one of the windows in a city house, which a moment before was bright, presently went out. The silence grew deeper, though sounds could be heard. The breakers dashed against the rocks and fell back with a roar; long-legged gnats sang in our ears and disappeared with a buzzing of their transparent wings, and the indistinct voices of the children bathing at the foot of the ramparts reached us, mingled with their laughter and screams.

Young boys came out of the water, and, stepping gingerly on the pebbles, ran up the beach to dress. When they attempted to put on their shirts, the moist linen clung to their wet shoulders and we could see their white torsos wriggling with impatience, while their heads and arms remained concealed and the sleeves flapped in the wind like flags.

A man with his wet hair falling straight around his neck, passed in front of us. His dripping body shone. Drops trickled from his dark, curly beard, and he shook his head so as to let the water run out of his locks. His broad chest was parted by a stubby growth of hair that extended between his powerful muscles. It heaved with the exertion of swimming and imparted an even motion to his flat abdomen, which was as smooth as ivory where it joined the hips. His muscular thighs were set above slender knees and fine legs ending in arched feet, with short heels and spread toes. He walked slowly over the beach.

How beautiful is the human form when it appears in its original freedom, as it was created in the first day of the world! But where are we to find it, masked as it is and condemned never to reappear. That great word, Nature, which humanity has repeated sometimes with idolatry and sometimes with fear, which philosophers have sounded and poets have sung, how it is being lost and forgotten! If there are still here and there in the world, far from the pushing crowd, some hearts which are tormented by the constant search of beauty, and forever feeling the hopeless need of

expressing what cannot be expressed and doing what can only be dreamed, it is to Nature, as to the home of the ideal, that they must turn. But how can they? By what magic will they be able to do so? Man has cut down the forests, has conquered the seas, and the clouds that hover over the cities are produced by the smoke that rises from the chimneys. But, say others, do not his mission and his glory consist in going forward and attacking the work of God, and encroaching upon it? Man denies His work, he ruins it, crushes it, even in his own body, of which he is ashamed and which he conceals like a crime.

Man having thus become the rarest and most difficult thing in the world to know (I am not speaking of his heart, O moralists!), it follows that the artist ignores his shape as well as the qualities that render it beautiful. Where is the poet, nowadays, even amongst the most brilliant, who knows what a woman is like? Where could the poor fellow ever have seen any? What has he ever been able to learn about them in the salons; could he see through the corset and the crinoline?

Better than all the rhetoric in the world, the plastic art teaches those who study it the gradation of proportions, the fusion of planes, in a word, harmony. The ancient races, through the very fact of their existence, left the mark of their noble attitudes and pure blood on the works of the masters. In Juvenal, I can hear confusedly the death-rattles of the gladiators; Tacitus has sentences that resemble the drapery of a laticlave, and some of Horace's verses are like the body of a Greek slave, with supple undulations, and short and long syllables that sound like crotala.

But why bother about these things? Let us not go so far back, and let us be satisfied with what is manufactured. What is wanted nowadays is rather the opposite of nudity, simplicity and truth? Fortune and success will fall to the lot of those who know how to dress and clothe facts! The tailor is the king of the century and the fig-leaf is its symbol; laws, art, politics, all things, appear in tights! Lying freedom, plated furniture, water-colour pictures, why! the public loves this sort of thing! So

let us give it all it wants and gorge the fool!

CHAPTER XI.

MONT SAINT-MICHEL.

The road from Pontorson to the Mont Saint-Michel is wearying on account of the sand. Our post-chaise (for we also travel by post-chaise), was disturbed every now and then by a number of carts filled with the grey soil which is found in these parts and which is transported to some place and utilised as manure. They became more numerous as we approached the sea, and defiled for several miles until we finally saw the deserted strand whence they came. On this white surface, with its conical heaps of earth resembling huts, the fluctuating line of carts reminded us of an emigration of barbarians deserting their native heath.

The empty horizon stretches out, spreads, and finally mingles its greyish flats with the yellow sand of the beach. The ground becomes firmer and a salt breeze fans your cheeks; it looks like a vast desert from which the waters have receded. Long, flat strips of sand, superposed indefinitely in indistinct planes, ripple like shadows, and the wind playfully designs huge arabesques on their surfaces. The sea lies far away, so far, in fact, that its roar cannot be heard, though we could distinguish a sort of vague, aërial, imperceptible murmur, like the voice of the solitude, which perhaps was only the effect produced by the intense silence.

Opposite us rose a large round rock with embattled walls and a church on its top; enormous counterparts resting on a steep slope support the sides of the edifice. Rocks and wild shrubs are strewn over the incline. Half-way up the slope are a few houses, which show above the white line of the wall and are dominated by the brown church; thus some bright colours are interspersed between the two plain tints.

The post-chaise drove ahead of us and we followed it, guiding ourselves by the

tracks of the wheels; finally it disappeared in the distance, and we could distinguish only its hood, which looked like some big crab crawling over the sand.

Here and there a swift current of water compelled us to move farther up the beach. Or we would suddenly come upon pools of slime with ragged edges framed in sand.

Beside us walked two priests who were also going to the Mont Saint-Michel. As they were afraid of soiling their new cassocks, they gathered them up around their legs when they jumped over the little streams. Their silver buckles were grey with mud, and their wet shoes gaped and threw water at every step they took.

Meantime the Mount was growing larger. With one sweep of the eye we were able to take in the whole panorama, and could see distinctly the tiles on the roofs, the bunches of nettles on the rocks, and, a little higher, the green shutters of a small window that looks out into the governor's garden.

The first door, which is narrow and pointed, opens on a sort of pebble road leading to the ocean; on the worn shield over the second door, undulating lines carved in the stone seem to represent water; on both sides of the doors are enormous cannons composed of iron bars connected by similar circular bands. One of them has retained a cannon-ball in its mouth; they were taken from the English in 1423, by Louis d'Estouteville, and have remained here four hundred years.

Five or six houses built opposite one another compose the street; then the line breaks, and they continue down the slopes and stairs leading to the castle, in a sort of haphazard fashion.

In order to reach the castle, you first go up to the curtain, the wall of which shuts out the view of the ocean from the houses below. Grass grows between the cracked stones and the battlements. The rampart continues around the whole island and is elevated by successive platforms. When you have passed the watch-house, which is situated between the two towers, you see a little straight flight of steps; when you climb them, the roofs of the houses, with their dilapidated chimneys, gradually grow

lower and lower. You can see the washing hung out to dry on poles fastened to the garret-windows, or a tiny garden baking in the sun between the roof of one house and the ground-floor of another, with its parched leeks drooping their leaves over the grey soil; but the other side of the rock, the side that faces the ocean, is barren and deserted, and so steep that the shrubs that grow there have a hard time to remain where they are and look as if they were about to topple over every minute.

When you are standing up there, enjoying as much space as the human eye can possibly encompass and looking at the ocean and the horizon of the coast, which forms an immense bluish curve, or at the wall of La Merveille with its thirty-six huge counterparts upreared on a perpendicular cliff, a laugh of admiration parts your lips, and you suddenly hear the sharp noise of the weaving-looms. The people manufacture linen, and the shrill sound of the shuttles produces a very lively racket.

Between two slender towers, which represent the uplifted barrels of two cannons, is the entrance to the castle, a long, arched hallway, at the end of which is a flight of stone steps. The middle of the hall is always dark, being insufficiently lighted by two skylights one of which is at the bottom of the hall and the other at the top, between the interval of the drawbridge; it is like a subterranean vault.

The guard-room is at the head of the stairs as you enter. The voice of the sergeants and the clicking of the guns re-echoed along the walls. They were beating a drum.

Meanwhile a garde-chiourme returned with our passports, which M. le gouverneur had wished to see; then he motioned us to follow him; he opened doors, drew bolts, and led us through a maze of halls, vaults and staircases. Really, one can lose oneself in this labyrinth, for a single visit does not enable you to understand the complicated plan of these combined buildings, where a fortress, a church, an abbey, a prison and a dungeon, are mingled, and where you can find every style of architecture, from the Romance of the eleventh century to the bewildering Gothic of the sixteenth. We could catch only a glimpse of the knights' hall, which has been

converted into a loom-room and is for this reason barred to the public. We saw only four rows of columns supporting a ceiling ornamented with salient mouldings; they were decorated with clover leaves. The monastery is built over this hall, at an altitude of two hundred feet above the sea level. It is composed of a quadrangular gallery formed by a triple line of small granite, tufa, or stucco columns. Acanthus, thistles, ivy, and oak-leaves wind around their caps; between each mitred ogive is a cut-out rose; this gallery is the place where the prisoners take the air.

The cap of the garde-chiourme now passes along these walls where, in olden times, passed the shaved heads of industrious friars; and the wooden shoes of the prisoners click on the slabs that used to be swept by the trailing robes of monks and trodden by their heavy leather sandals.

The church has a Gothic choir and a Romance nave, and the two architectures seem to vie with each other in majesty and elegance. In the choir, the arches of the windows are pointed, and are as lofty as the aspirations of love; in the nave, the arcades open their semi-circles roundly, and columns as straight as the trunk of a palm-tree mount along the walls. They rest on square pedestals, are crowned with acanthus leaves, and continue in powerful mouldings that curve beneath the ceiling and help support it.

It was noon. The bright daylight poured in through the open door and rippled over the dark sides of the building.

The nave, which is separated from the choir by a green curtain, is filled with tables and benches, for it is used also as a dining-hall. When mass is celebrated, the curtain is drawn and the condemned men may be present at divine service without removing their elbows from the table. It is a novel idea.

In order to enlarge the platform by twelve yards on the western side of the church, the latter itself has been curtailed; but as it was necessary to reconstruct some sort of entrance, one architect closed the nave by a façade in Greek style; then, perhaps,

feeling remorseful, or desiring (a presumption which will be accepted more readily), to embellish his work still further, he afterwards added some columns "which imitate fairly well the architecture of the eleventh century," says the notice. Let us be silent and bow our heads. Each of the arts has its own particular leprosy, its mortal ignominy that eats its face away. Painting has the family group, music the ballad, literature the criticism, and architecture the architect.

The prisoners were walking around the platform, one after another, silent, with folded arms, and in the beautiful order we had the opportunity to admire at Fontevrault. They were the patients of the hospital ward taking the air.

Tottering along with the file was one who lifted his feet higher than the rest and clung to the coat of the man ahead of him. He was blind. Poor, miserable wretch! God prevents him from seeing and his fellow-men forbid him to speak!

The following day, when the tide had again receded from the beach, we left the Mount under a broiling sun which heated the hood of the carriage and made the horses sweat. They only walked; the harness creaked and the wheels sank deep into the sand. At the end of the beach, when grass appeared again, I put my eye to the little window that is in the back of every carriage, and bade goodbye to Mont Saint-Michel.

CHAPTER XII.

COMBOURG.

A letter from the Viscount Vésin was to gain us entrance to the castle. So as soon as we arrived, we called on the steward, M. Corvesier. They ushered us into a large kitchen where a young lady in black, marked by smallpox and wearing horn spectacles over her prominent eyes, was stemming currants. The kettle was on the fire and they were crushing sugar with bottles. It was evident that we were intruding.

After several minutes had elapsed, we were informed that M. Corvesier was confined to his bed with a fever and was very sorry that he could not be of any service to us, but sent us his regards. In the meantime, his clerk, who had just come in from an errand, and who was lunching on a glass of cider and a piece of buttered bread, offered to show us the castle. He put his napkin down, sucked his teeth, lighted his pipe, took a bunch of keys from the wall and started ahead of us through the village.

After following a long wall, we entered through an old door into a silent farm-yard. Silica here and there shows through the beaten ground, on which grows a little grass soiled by manure. There was nobody around and the stable was empty. In the barns some chickens were roosting on the poles of the wagons, with their heads under their wings. Around the buildings, the sound of our footsteps was deadened by the dust accumulated from the straw in the lofts.

Four large towers connected by curtains showed battlements beneath their pointed roofs; the openings in the towers, like those in the main part of the castle, are small, irregular windows, which form uneven black squares on the grey stones. A broad stoop, comprising about thirty steps, reaches to the first floor, which has become the ground-floor of the interior apartments, since the trenches have been filled up.

The yellow wall-flower does not grow here, but instead, one finds nettles and lentisks, greenish moss and lichens. To the left, next to the turret, is a cluster of chestnut-trees reaching up to the roof and shading it.

After the key had been turned in the lock and the door pushed open with kicks, we entered a dark hallway filled with boards and ladders and wheelbarrows.

This passage led into a little yard enclosed by the thick interior walls of the castle. It was lighted from the top like a prison yard. In the corners, drops of humidity dripped from the stones. We opened another door. It led into a large, empty, sonorous hall; the floor was cracked in a hundred places, but there was fresh paint on the

wainscoting.

The green forest opposite sheds a vivid reflection on the white walls, through the large windows of the castle. There is a lake and underneath the windows were clusters of lilacs, petunia-blossoms and acacias, which have grown pell-mell in the former parterre, and cover the hill that slopes gradually to the road, following the banks of the lake and then continuing through the woods.

The great, deserted hall, where the child who afterwards wrote René, used to sit and gaze out of the windows, was silent. The clerk smoked his pipe and expectorated on the floor. His dog, which had followed him, hunted for mice, and its nails clicked on the pavement.

We walked up the winding stairs. Moss covers the worn stone steps. Sometimes a ray of light, passing through a crack in the walls, strikes a green blade and makes it gleam in the dark like a star.

We wandered through the halls, through the towers, and over the narrow curtain with its gaping machicolations, which attract the eye irresistibly to the abyss below.

On the second floor is a small room which looks out into the inside courtyard and has a massive oak door that closes with a latch. The beams of the ceiling (you can touch them), are rotten from age; the whitewashed walls show their lattice-work and are covered with big spots; the window-panes are obscured by cobwebs and their frames are buried in dust. This used to be Chateaubriand's room. It faces the West, towards the setting sun.

We continued; when we passed in front of a window or a loop-hole, we warmed ourselves in the warm air coming from without, and this sudden transition rendered the ruins all the more melancholy and cheerless. The floors of the apartments are rotting away, and daylight enters through the fireplaces along the blackened slab where rain has left long green streaks. The golden flowers on the drawing-room ceiling are falling off, and the shield that surmounts the mantelpiece is broken into

bits. While we were looking around, a flight of birds entered, flew around for a few minutes and passed out through the chimney.

In the evening, we went to the lake. The meadow has encroached upon it and will soon cover it entirely, and wheat will grow in the place of pond-lilies. Night was falling. The castle, flanked by its four turrets and framed by masses of green foliage, cast a dark shadow over the village. The setting sun made the great mass appear black; the dying rays touched the surface of the lake and then melted in the mist on the purplish top of the silent forest.

We sat down at the foot of an oak and opened René. We faced the lake where he had often watched the nimble swallow on the bending reeds; we sat in the shadow of the forest where he had often pursued rainbows over the dripping hills; we harkened to the rustling of the leaves and the whisperings of the water that had added their murmur to the sad melody of his youth. As the darkness gathered on the pages of the book, the bitterness of its words went to our hearts, and we experienced a sensation of mingled melancholy and sweetness.

A wagon passed in the road, and the wheels sank in the deep tracks. A smell of new-mown hay pervaded the air. The frogs were croaking in the marshes. We went back.

The sky was heavy and a storm raged all night. The front of a neighbouring house was illumined and flared like a bonfire at every flash of lightning. Gasping, and tired of tossing on my bed, I arose, lighted a candle, opened the window and leaned out.

The night was dark, and as silent as slumber. The lighted candle threw my huge shadow on the opposite wall. From time to time a flash of lightning blinded me.

I thought of the man whose early life was spent here and who filled half a century with the clamouring of his grief.

I thought of him first in these quiet streets, playing with the village boys and looking for nests in the church-steeple and in the woods. I imagined him in his little room,

leaning his elbows on the table, and watching the rain beating on the window-panes and the clouds passing above the curtain, while his dreams flew away. I thought of the bitter loneliness of youth, with its intoxications, its nausea, and its bursts of love that sicken the heart. Is it not here that our own grief was nourished, is this not the very Golgotha where the genius that fed us suffered its anguish?

Nothing can express the gestation of the mind or the thrills which future great works impart to those who carry them; but we love to see the spot where we know they were conceived and lived, as if it had retained something of the unknown ideal which once vibrated there.

His room! his room! his childhood's poor little room! It was here that he was tormented by vague phantoms which beckoned to him and clamoured for birth: Attala shaking the magnolias out of her hair in the soft breeze of Florida, Velléda running through the woods in the moonlight, Cymodocée protecting her white bosom from the claws of the leopards, and frail Amélie and pale René!

One day, however, he tears himself away from the old feudal homestead, never to return. Now he is lost in the whirl of Paris and mingles with his fellow-men; and then he feels an impulse to travel and he starts off.

I can see him leaning over the side of the ship, I can see him looking for a new world and weeping over the country he has left. He lands; he listens to the waterfalls and the songs of the Natchez; he watches the flowing rivers and the bright scales of the snakes and the eyes of the savages. He allows his soul to be fascinated by the languor of the Savannah. They tell each other of their native melancholy and he exhausts its pleasures as he exhausted those of love. He returns, writes, and everyone is carried away by the charm of his magnificent style with its royal sweep and its supple, coloured, undulating phrase, as stormy as the winds that sweep over virgin forests, as brilliant as the neck of a humming-bird, and as soft as the light of the moon shining through the windows of a chapel.

He travels again; this time he goes to ancient shores; he sits down at Thermopylæ and cries: Leonidas! Leonidas! visits the tomb of Achilles, Lacedæmon, and Carthage, and, like the sleepy shepherd who raises his head to watch the passing caravans, all those great places awake when he passes through them.

Banished, exiled, laden with honours, this man who had starved in the streets will dine at the table of kings; he will be an ambassador and a minister, will try to save the tottering monarchy, and after seeing the ruin of all his beliefs, he will witness his own glorification as if he were already counted among the dead.

Born during the decline of one period and at the dawn of another, he was to be its transition and the guardian of its memories and hopes. He was the embalmer of Catholicism and the proclaimer of liberty. Although he was a man of old traditions and illusions, he was constitutional in politics and revolutionary in literature. Religious by instinct and education, it is he, who, in advance of everyone else, in advance of Byron, gave vent to the most savage pride and frightful despair.

He was an artist, and had this in common with the artists of the eighteenth century: he was always hampered by narrow laws which, however, were always broken by the power of his genius. As a man, he shared the misery of his fellow-men of the nineteenth century. He had the same turbulent preoccupations and futile gravity. Not satisfied with being great, he wished to appear grandiose, and it seems that this conceited mania did not in the least efface his real grandeur. He certainly does not belong to the race of dreamers who have made no incursion into life, masters with calm brows who have had neither period, nor country nor family. But this man cannot be separated from the passions of his time; they made him what he was, and he in turn created a number of them. Perhaps the future will not give him credit for his heroic stubbornness and no doubt it will be the episodes of his books that will immortalise their titles with the names of the causes they upheld.

I stayed at the window enjoying the night and feeling with delight the cold morning

air on my lids. Little by little the day dawned; the wick of the candle grew longer and longer and its flame slowly faded away. The roof of the market appeared in the distance and a cock crowed; the storm had passed; a few drops of water remained in the dust of the road and made large round spots on it. As I was very tired, I went back to bed and slept.

We felt very sad on leaving Combourg, and besides, the end of our journey was at hand. Soon this delightful trip which we had enjoyed for three months would be over. The return, like the leave-taking, produces an anticipated sadness, which gives one a proof of the insipid life we lead.

Footnotes

[1] Gustave Flaubert was twenty-six years old when he started on this journey. He travelled on foot and was accompanied by M. Maxime Ducamp. When they returned, they wrote an account of their journey. It is by far the most important of the unpublished writings, for in it the author gives his personal genius full sway and it abounds in picturesque descriptions and historical reflections.

[2] Founder of the abbey of Fontevrault, in 1099.

[3] He strangled his mistress whose mutilated body was found floating in a sack on a pond. (See Causes Célèbres.)]

[4] A contraction of Poulbeuzanneval, the swamp where the beast was drowned.

[5] Josselin Frotet, sieur de La Lanbelle, at whose place the rebels congregated before the escalade. (Note on the manuscript of G.F.)

[6] D'Argentré, Hist. de Bretagne. p. 62.

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