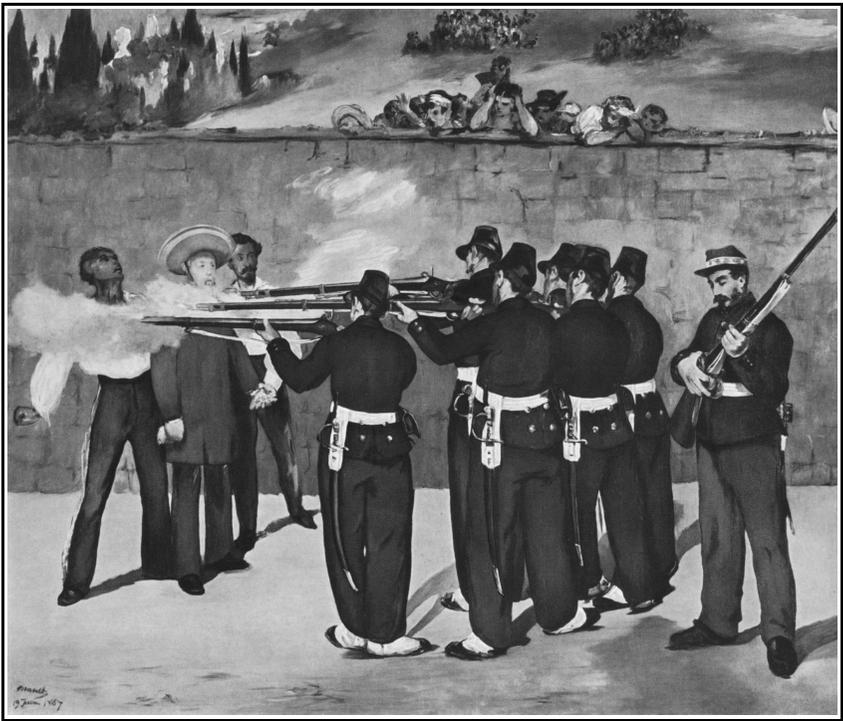

Liberté

*A Reader of French Culture & Society in the
19th Century*



Vol. III
1845-1870

Liberté: French Culture & Society in the 19th Century

Many thanks to Brian Counihan for advice on selections and all-around pedagogical apprenticeship; to the students of the CHS who Liberté class; and to Joseph Carter, Warren Fry, Robin Knapmeyer, Shelly Smith, and Emily Wampler for proofreading.

Cover by Tomislav Butkovic

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Compiled by Olchar Lindsann

for Community High School, Roanoke VA

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Translators

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Translators

Bergen Applegate (Verlaine)

Joseph Carter (Brot, O'Neddy)

Isabel Hapgood (Hugo)

John Howard (Huysmans)

Mrs. James M. Lancaster (Sand)

Agnes Lee (Gautier)

Olchar Lindsann (O'Neddy)

Eleanor Marx (Lissagaray)

Jonathan Mayne (Baudelaire)

Stuart Merrill (Banville, Mendés)

John Payne (Banville, Lisle)

William John Robertson (Banville, Coppée, Mendés, Rimbaud,
Verlaine, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam)

F.C. de Sumichrast (Gautier)

Introduction

Vol. III of *Liberté* traces the tumultuous rise and fall of the Second Republic, in which the developments covered in the previous volume achieve their long awaited triumph, only to see it quickly smashed apart and replaced by the twenty-year reign of Emperor Napoleon III. We trace the modernization of France, and the fracturing and re-envisioning of political and cultural opposition. Vol. IV will cover the fall of the Second Empire and carry us forward to the eve of the First World War. On this volume, the glaringly inadequate proof-reading of the Vol. II has been largely addressed by a team of volunteers, proofreading chapters literally as I finished assembling them during the final week of preparation. Not all chapters have received this treatment, and all remaining errors are, of course, my responsibility.

In its broad outline, this book continues the principles and form of the previous volume, though it has been considerably shortened for purposes of the CHS class, in order to allow a greater proportion of reading-time to be devoted to independent readings and research by students. In response to discussions with students, Vol. III incorporates a more even mix of literature, historical texts, and primary documents, and when thematically possible juxtaposes them in closer proximity. A large portion of the book has been devoted to France's colonial activities over the course of the century, though these enterprises were so immense that the 40 pages devoted to them barely scratches the surfaces. As in many areas of the course, the subject will be treated in greater detail through lecture, discussion, and student presentations. The proportion of verse has also been increased, in response to the dialogues created around poetry in the first semester of the course as

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well as the proliferation of multiple ways of approaching poetry that characterized the period.

As always, there are also frustrating gaps in the anthology, due to our restraint to public domain texts, the shorter length of Vol. III, and the continuing time constraints incumbent upon the assembling of an anthology for use in an ongoing class. In particular, popular entertainment has received short shift, due largely to its ephemeral nature and the continuing dominance of writers and tendencies already covered in Vol. II. The avant-garde has suffered considerably less, though I have often been forced to use second-rate examples of avant-garde work due to the preferences of early translators, or to the still-scandalous nature of much of the period's most challenging work. I have been surprised to find myself unable to track down enough public domain texts to adequately represent Dandyism, an exceedingly important current within the avant-garde. And while issues of race and anti-semitism are examined more closely here than in previous volumes, coverage of these areas (as well as feminism and other struggles for political equity) remain short of my goals, due to the time constraints imposed upon searching for and processing primary materials.

It is hoped that these shortcomings, as well as those of the other volumes, will be corrected in the eventual expanded edition of the series, which will begin to be edited after the end of the CHS course, now expected to run to five or six volumes. The preparation of this book has been a process of learning and discovery for me as I researched and assembled it, and can hopefully serve as the *start* of similar explorations for the reader.

Olchar E. Lindsann

Timeline of Selected Events 1836-1869

- 1836** Louis Napoleon Bonaparte attempts revolt, Banished to New York
- 1838** Daguerre-Niépce method of photography introduced
Daguerre-Niépce method of photography introduced
- 1848** **THE SECOND REPUBLIC (until 1852)**
The Communist Manifesto, by Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels
Louis Napoléon Bonaparte elected president
- 1849** Karl Marx is ordered out of Paris
French physicist Armand Fizeau measures speed of light
Edgar Allen Poe, American poet, dies.
- 1850** *Burial at Ornans* by Gustav Courbet
Neo-Gothic Architecture era begins
- 1851** *Rigoletto* by Verdi, based on *Le Roi s'amuse*, by Victor Hugo
- 1852** **THE SECOND EMPIRE (until 1870)**
Coup d'état by Louise Napoleon
- 1852** Au Bon March – World's first department store opens in Paris
- 1853** Louis-Napoleon is declared Emperor Napoleon III.
Haussmann tears down old Paris (until 1870)
The Inequity of Human Races by Joseph Gobineau
- 1854** The Crimean War (Until 1869)
“Le Figaro” Paris, begins publication
- 1855** The Worlds Fair in Pairs- 5 million attend
Ferdinand de Lesseps granted concession to construct Suez Canal
Florence Nightingale introduces hygienic standards in Crimean War
- 1856** Neanderthal skull found in Feldhofer cave

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- 1857** *Madame Bovary* by Gustave Flaubert is partially published
Les Fleurs de mal by Charles Baudelaire
Garibaldi forms Italian National Association to unify the country
- 1858** Second Opium War ends. Opium trade legalized.
- 1859** French take over Saigon in Vietnam
Origin of the Species by Darwin published after twenty-one years
- 1860** Minoan city “Akroitiiri” uncovered on Santorini
- 1861** US Civil War begins (until 1865)
- 1862** French invasion of Mexico, French defeat at Battle of Puebla May 5
Les Miserables by Victor Hugo published
- 1863** War of the Pacific: “Guano Wars”
International Committee for the Red cross founded by Dunant
First Salon des Refusés in Paris
Dejeuner sur l’herbe and *Olympia* by Édouard Manet
- 1866** Prussian victories against Saxony, Hanover and Austria.
- 1867** French troops leave Mexico
Execution of Maximilian
World’s Fair In Paris–15 million attend
- 1868** First recorded bicycle race: Parc de St. Cloud, Paris
Revolution in Spain, Queen Isabella II flees to France
- 1869** Suez Canal opens
“Execution of Emperor Maximilian” by Édouard Manet

PROLOGUE

from Victor Hugo, *Funeral of Napoleon: Notes Taken on the Spot*, 1840

In the four decades since the reign of Napoleon Bonaparte, his legacy had undergone many changes—from War Hero to Tyrant to Father of his Country. Since his death in 1820, his name had been invoked by the opposition to both the Bourbons and the Orleans regimes, and in 1840 the latter set out to associate themselves with what had become virtually a secular cult. The Emperor's body was brought back to France and carried to its grandiose new tomb amid a spectacular procession modeled after the Triumphal Processions of ancient Rome. Attended by millions of French citizens, the procession was a celebration of France's military and economic power, terminating in a massive, mobile 'mountain' reminiscent of that ascended by Robespierre at the Celebration of the World Spirit half a century earlier. The Orleans regime intended this unification of militarism, popular spectacle, and hero-worship to cement public opinion in the favor of their government; within a decade this same combination would prove the downfall of their government and the one that replaced it.

December 15.

I Have heard the drums beat to arms in the streets since half-past six o'clock in the morning. I go out at eleven. The streets are deserted, the shops shut; no passer-by is to be seen, save, perhaps, an old woman here and there. It is evident that all Paris has poured forth towards one side of the city like fluid in a slanting vessel. It is very cold; a bright sun, slight mists overhead. The gutters are frozen. As I reach the Louis-Philippe bridge a cloud descends, and a few snowflakes, driven by the northerly wind, lash me in the face. Passing near Notre-Dame I notice that the great bell does not ring.

In the Rue Saint-André-des-Aits the fevered commotion of the fete begins to manifest itself. Ay, it is a fete, the fete of an exiled coffin returning in triumph. Three men of the lower classes, of those poor workmen in rags who are cold and hungry the whole wintertime, walk in front of me rejoicing. One of them jumps about, dances, and goes through a thousand absurd antics, crying, "Vive l'Empereur!" Pretty grisettes, smartly dressed, pass by, led by their student companions. Hired carriages are making rapidly in the direction of the Invalides. In the Rue du Four the snow thickens. The sky becomes black. The snowflakes are interspersed with white teardrops.

Heaven itself seems to wish to hang out signs of mourning.

The storm, however, lasts but a short time. A pale streak of light illumines the angle of the Rue de Grenelle and the Rue du Bac, and there the Municipal Guards stop the vehicles. I pass by. Two great empty wagons conducted by artillerymen come from behind me, and return to their quarters at the end of the Rue de Grenelle just as I come out on the Place des Invalides. Here I fear at first that all is over, and

that the Emperor has passed by, so many are the passers-by coming towards me who appear to be returning. It is only the crowd flowing back, driven by a cordon of Municipal Guards on foot. I show my ticket for the first platform on the left, and pass the barrier.

These platforms are immense wooden structures, covering, from the quay to the dome-shaped building, all the grass-plots of the Esplanade. There are three of these on each side.

At the moment of my arrival the side of the platforms on the right as yet hides the square from my view. I hear a formidable and dismal noise. It seems like innumerable hammers beating time upon the boarding. It is the hundred thousand spectators crowded upon the platforms, who, being frozen by the northerly wind, are stamping to keep themselves warm until such time as the procession will arrive. I climb onto the platform. The spectacle is no less strange. The women, nearly all of them wearing heavy boots and veiled like the female ballad-singers of the Pont-Neuf, are hidden beneath great heaps of furs and cloaks; the men display neckerchiefs of extraordinary size.

The decoration of the square, good and bad. Shabbiness surmounting magnificence. On the two sides of the avenue two rows of figures, heroic, colossal, pale in this cold sunlight, producing rather a fine impression. They appear to be of white marble; but this marble is of plaster. At the extremity opposite the building, the statue of the Emperor in bronze; this bronze is also of plaster. In each gap between the statues a pillar of painted cloth, and gilded in rather bad taste, surmounted by a brazier, just now filled with snow. Behind the statues the platforms and the crowd; between the statues a straggling file of the National Guard; above the platforms masts, on top of which grandly fluttered sixty long tricoloured pennants.

It appears that there has been no time to finish the decoration of the principal entrance to the building. Above the railings has been roughly constructed a sort of funeral triumphal arch of painted cloth and crape, with which the wind plays as it would with old linen clothes hung out from the garret of a hovel. A row of poles, plain and bare, rise above the cannon, and a distance look like those small sticks which little children plant in the sand. Clothes and rags, which are supposed to be black drapery with silver spangles, flutter and flap together feebly between these poles. At the end the Dome, with its flag and mourning drapery, sparkling with a metallic lustre, subdued by the mist in a brilliant sky, has a sombre and splendid appearance.

It is midday.

The cannon at the building is fired at quarter-hour intervals. The crowd stamps its feet. Gendarmes disguised in plain clothes, but betraying themselves by their spurs and the stocks of their uniforms, walk hither and thither. In front of me a ray of light shows up vividly a rather poor statue of Joan of Arc, who holds in her hand a palm-branch, which she appears to use as a shade, as though the sun affected her eyes.

[. . .]

A hawker passes along the platform selling dirges at a half-penny each, and accounts of the ceremony. I buy two of these documents.

All eyes are fixed upon the corner of the Quai d'Orsay, whence the procession is to come out. The cold adds to the feeling of impatience. Black and white lines of vapour ascend here and there

through the thick mist of the Champs-Élysées, and detonations are heard in the distance.

Of a sudden the National Guards hasten to arms. An orderly officer crosses the avenue at a gallop. A line is formed. Workmen place ladders against the pillars and begin to light the braziers. A salvo of heavy artillery explodes loudly at the east corner of the Invalides; a dense yellow smoke, mingled with golden flashes, fills this whole corner. From the position in which I am placed the firing of the guns can be seen. They are two fine old engraved cannon of the seventeenth century, which one hears from the noise are of bronze. The procession approaches.

It is half-past twelve.

[. . .]

The procession, including generals and marshals, has an admirable effect. The Sun, striking the cuirasses of the carabineers, lights up the breast of each of them with a dazzling star. The three military schools pass by with erect and solemn bearing, then the artillery and infantry, as though going into action. The ammunition wagons have the spare wheel at the rear, the soldiers carry their knapsacks upon their backs. A short distance off, a great statue of Louis XIV, of ample dimensions and tolerably good design, gilded by the sun, seems to view with amazement all this splendour.

The mounted National Guard appears. Uproar in the crowd. It is sufficiently well disciplined notwithstanding but it is an inglorious regiment, and this detracts from the effect of a procession of this kind. People laugh. I hear this conversation: "Just look at that fat colonel!"

How strangely he holds his sword!" "Who is that fellow?" "That is Montalivet."

Interminable legions of the infantry of the National Guard now march past, with arms reversed, like the Line regiments, beneath the shadow of this grey sky. A mounted National Guard who lets fall his shako, and so gallops bareheaded for some time, although successful in catching it, causes much amusement to the gallery! that is to say, to a hundred thousand people.

[. . .]

Suddenly the cannon are discharged simultaneously from three different points on the horizon. This triple sound hems in the ear in a sort of triangle, formidable and superb. Drums beat a salute in the distance. The funeral carriage of the Emperor appears. The Sun, obscured until this moment, reappears at the same time. The effect is prodigious.

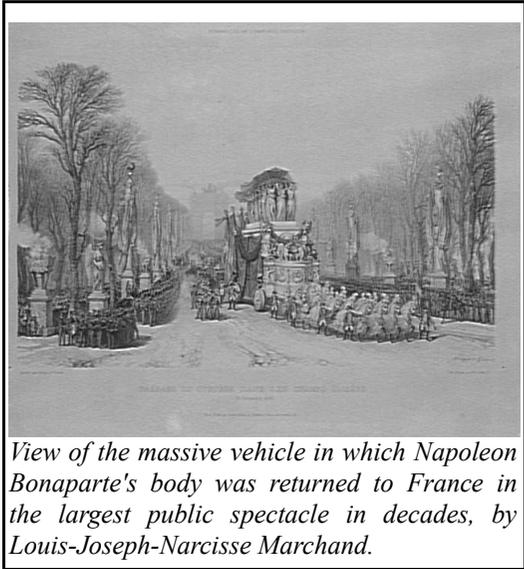
In the distance is seen, in the mist and sunlight, against the grey and russet background of the trees in the Champs-Élysées, beyond the great white phantom-like statues, a kind of golden mountain slowly moving. All that can be distinguished of it as yet is a sort of luminous glistening, which makes now stars, now lightning sparkle over the whole surface of the car. A mighty roar follows this apparition. It would seem as though this car draws after it the acclamation of the whole city, as a torch draws after it its smoke.

[. . .]

Arriving immediately in front of me, a slightly momentary interruption, I know not from what cause, takes place; the car halts. It remains

stationary for a few minutes between the statue of Joan of Arc and the statue of Charles V.

I can survey it at leisure. The effect, as a whole, is not wanting in grandeur. It is an enormous mass, gilt all over, of which the tiers rise pyramid-like above the four great gilt wheels which bear it under the violet pall, studded with bees, which covers it from top to bottom,



View of the massive vehicle in which Napoleon Bonaparte's body was returned to France in the largest public spectacle in decades, by Louis-Joseph-Narcisse Marchand.

some tolerably fine details may be observed; the wild-looking eagles of the base, the fourteen Victories of the top-piece bearing upon a golden support the representation of a coffin. The real coffin is invisible. It has been deposited inside the basement, which detracts from the sensational effect. That is the grave defect of this car. It conceals what one would wish to see, what France has demanded, what the people expect, what every eye seeks, the coffin of Napoleon.

Upon the sham sarcophagus have been deposited the insignia of the Emperor, the crown, the sword, the sceptre, and the robe. In the gilded orifice which divides the Victories on the summit from the eagles at the base can be distinctly seen, in spite of the gilding already partly chipped off, the joints in the deal planks. Another defect. This gold is merely imitation. Deal and pasteboard, that is the reality. I could

have wished for the Emperor's funeral car a splendour of a genuine character.

Nevertheless, the greater part of this sculptural composition has some boldness and artistic merit, although the conception of the design and the ornamentation hesitate between the Renaissance and the Rococo.

Two immense bundles of flags, conquered from all the nations of Europe, rise in glorious splendour from the front and rear of the car.

The car, with all its load, weighs twenty-six thousand pounds. The coffin alone weighs five thousand pounds.

Nothing more surprising and more superb could be imagined than the set of sixteen horses which draw the car. They are terrific creatures, adorned with white plumes flowing down to the haunches, and covered from head to foot with a splendid caparison of gold cloth, leaving only their eyes visible, which gives them an indescribable air of phantom steeds.

[. . .]

As I pass, the demolition is just being finished of the innumerable stands draped with black, and ornamented with rout seats, which have been erected by speculators at the entrance to the Avenue de Neuilly. Upon one of them, facing the Beaujon garden, I read this inscription: "Seats to let. Austerlitz grand stand. Apply to M. Berthellemot, confectioner."

On the other side of the Avenue, upon a showman's booth adorned with frightful pictorial signs representing, one of them the

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death of the Emperor, the other the encounter at Mazagran, I read another inscription: "Napoleon in his coffin. Three half-pence."

Men of the lower classes pass by and sing, "Long live my great Napoleon! Long live old Napoleon!" Hawkers make their way through the crowd, shouting tobacco and cigars! Others offer to the passers-by some kind of hot and steaming liquor out of a copper tea-urn covered with a black cloth. An old woman at a stall coolly puts on an undergarment in the midst of the hurly-burly.

* * *

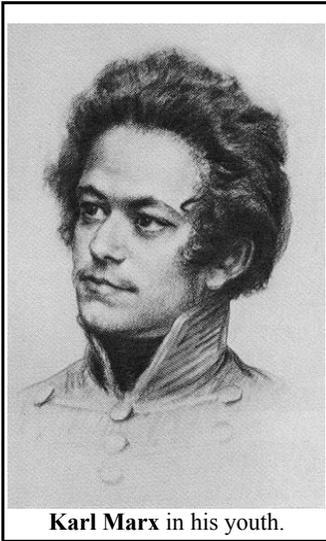
Section 1:

The Revolution of 1848



After nearly two decades of rule, by 1848 the Orléans Monarchy was becoming vulnerable for a variety of reasons: mounting discontent on the part of the lower classes, impatience in the upper classes with the slow rate of industrialization, economic stagnation and a continent-wide famine. While the Left was united in their opposition to the Monarchy, they diverged—much more than most realized—when it came to the vision of Democracy with which they would replace it.

Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, 1848



Karl Marx in his youth.

By the late 1840s, the working class had become increasingly aware of its social role, and of itself as an economic class distinct from the Bourgeoisie of what had once been the unified 'Third Estate'. In the course of this process, the Utopian Socialisms of Saint-Simon and Fourier were giving way to syndicalist models, developed by Louis Blanc, Auguste Blanqui, Joseph Proudhon, Karl Marx, and Joseph Engels, which advocated change from the top down by means of unionization and, usually, armed

revolt. Engels and Marx attempted to synthesize the emerging theories in the Communist Manifesto, drafted in 1848, the year that a wave of revolutions hit not only France but much of Western and Central Europe.

The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the State, i.e., of the proletariat organized as the ruling class; and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible.

Of course, in the beginning, this cannot be effected except by means of despotic inroads on the rights of property, and on the conditions of bourgeois production; by means of measures, therefore, which appear economically insufficient and untenable but which, in the course of the movement, outstrip themselves, necessitate further inroads upon the old social order, and are unavoidable as a means of entirely revolutionizing the mode of production.

These measures will of course be different in different countries.

Nevertheless in the most advanced countries, the following will be pretty generally applicable.

1. Abolition of property in land and application of all rents of land to public purposes.
2. A heavy progressive or graduated income tax.
3. Abolition of all right of inheritance.
4. Confiscation of the property of all emigrants and rebels.
5. Centralization of credit in the hands of the State, by means of a national bank with State capital and an exclusive monopoly.
6. Centralization of the means of communication and transport in the hands of the State.
7. Extension of factories and instruments of production owned by the State; the bringing into cultivation of wastelands, and the improvement of the soil generally in accordance with a common plan.

8. Equal liability of all to labour. Establishment of industrial armies, especially for agriculture.
9. Combination of agriculture with manufacturing industries; gradual abolition of the distinction between town and country, by a more equable distribution of the population over the country.
10. Free education for all children in public schools. Abolition of children's factory labour in its present form. Combination of education with industrial production, &c., &c.

* * *

from Charles Baudelaire, *Some French Caricaturists*

The 'Liberal Monarchy' of Louis-Philippe quickly made enemies of Republicans and Socialists, incensed that the July Revolution had been followed by yet another monarchy. After quelling a series of armed uprisings in Paris, Lyon, and elsewhere, the regime had solidified its position by the late 1830s, and stripped away the Press Freedoms which it had initially granted in the wake of the Revolution. The main vehicle for dissent then became cartooning and satire, and a series of Romanticist satirical journals waged a continuous battle with the censorship offices until the downfall of regime.

But now I want to speak about one of the most important men, I will not say only in caricature, but in the whole of modern art. I want to speak about a man who each morning keeps the population of our city amused, a man who supplies the daily needs of public gaiety and

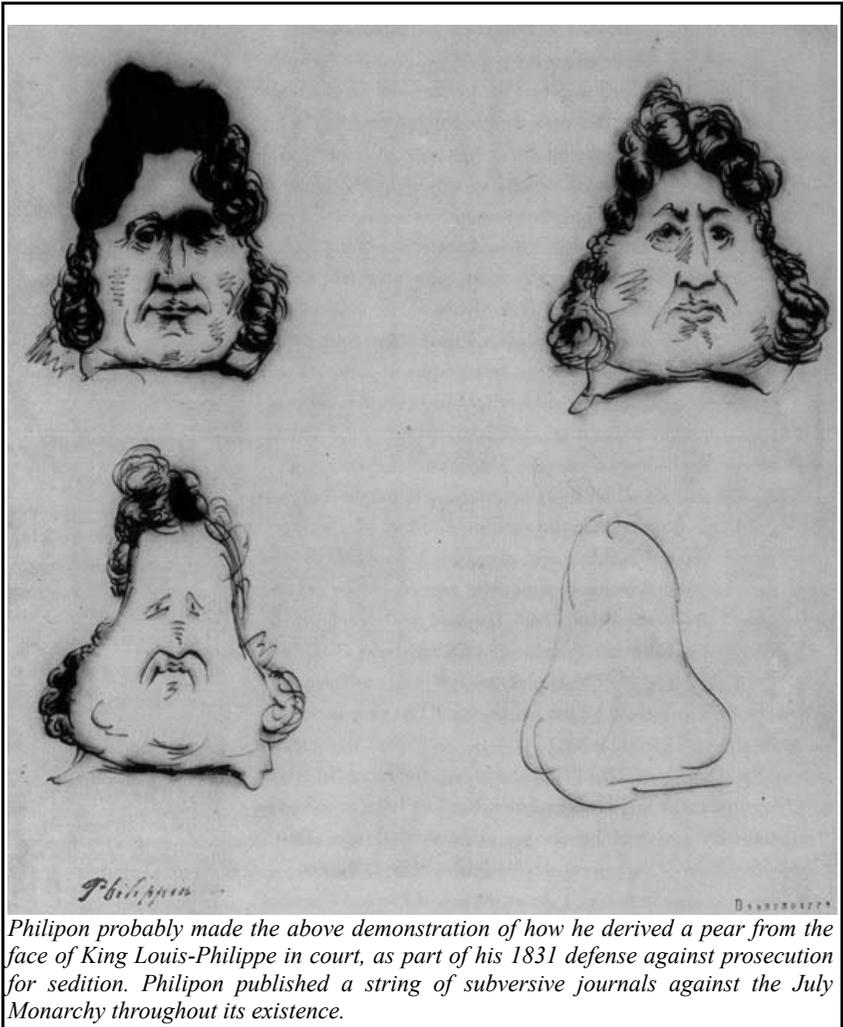
provides its sustenance. The bourgeois, the business-man, the urchin and the housewife all laugh and pass on their way, as often as not—what base ingratitude!—without even glancing at his name. Until now his fellow-artists have been alone in understanding all the serious qualities in his work, and in recognizing that it is really the proper subject for a study. You will have guessed that I am referring to Daumier.

There was nothing very spectacular about Honore Daumier's beginnings. He drew because he had to—it was his ineluctable vocation. First of all he placed a few sketches with a little paper [*La Silhouette* (1829-31)] edited by William Duckett; then Achille Ricourt, who was a print-dealer at that time, bought some more from him. The revolution of 1830, like all revolutions, occasioned a positive fever of caricature. For caricaturists, those were truly halcyon days. In that

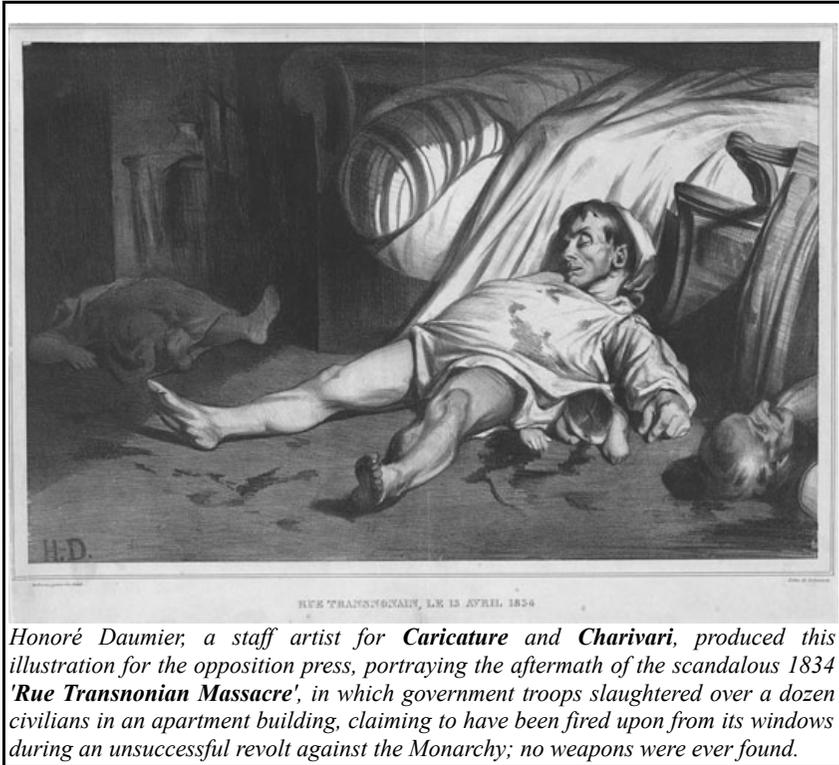
ruthless war against the government, and particularly against the king, men were all passion, all fire. It is a real curiosity today to look through that vast gallery of historical clowning which went by the name of *La Caricature*; that great series of comic archives to which every artist of any consequence brought his quota. It is a hurly-burly, a farrago, a prodigious satanic comedy, now farcical, now gory, through whose pages all the political elite march



1830 Advertising poster for the Romanticist satirical *Caricature*, edited by Charles Philipon. The journal was soon shut down by the government, but was replaced by others.



past, rigged out in motley and grotesque costumes. Among all those great men of the dawning monarchy, how many are there whose names are already forgotten! It is however the olympian and pyramidal Fear, of litigious memory, that dominates and crowns the whole fantastic epic. You will remember the time when Philippon (who was perpetually at cross purposes with His Majesty's justice) wanted to prove to the tribunal that nothing was more innocent than that prickly and provoking pear, and how, in the very presence of the court, he drew a



*Honoré Daumier, a staff artist for **Caricature and Charivari**, produced this illustration for the opposition press, portraying the aftermath of the scandalous 1834 'Rue Transnonian Massacre', in which government troops slaughtered over a dozen civilians in an apartment building, claiming to have been fired upon from its windows during an unsuccessful revolt against the Monarchy; no weapons were ever found.*

A moment ago, I think, I used the words 'a gory farce'; and indeed these drawings are often full of blood and passion. Massacres, imprisonments, arrests, trials, searches and beatings-up by the police—all those episodes of the first years of the government of 1830 keep on recurring.

Translated by Jonathan Mayne

* * *

From Alphonse de Lamartine, *History of the Revolution of 1848* (1849)

Like Victor Hugo, Alphonse de Lamartine achieved celebrity as a Romanticist poet, then became increasingly involved with Liberal politics. By 1848 he was among the most visible proponents of Republican opposition to the July

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Monarchy. As press restrictions continued and even satire became blunted and soft, activists began staging 'Fund-Raising Banquets' as a way of evading laws restricting freedom of assembly, where proclamations were read and strategies discussed. In February, 1848, these too were outlawed. The regime had miscalculated; as in 1830, they lost their last moderate supporters and barricades were once more erected in the streets. The royal family fled Paris and the Republic was declared. Lamartine was named head of the provisional government, and wielded great power for the three months during which elections were being organized.

The 12th arrondissement of Paris had arranged a banquet. The opposition had promised to verify the right by its presence, and the banquet was to take place on the 20th of February. The ministry did not oppose it by force. They merely proposed to certify the offense by a commissary of police, and to try the question by the courts of law. The opposition was unanimous for accepting the judicial debate on this ground. Everything was prepared for this peaceable demonstration.

On the eve of it, the ministry, disturbed by a summons addressed to the National Guards, without arms, by the impatient republicans, declared at the tribune that they retracted their concessions, and would disperse the manifestation by force.

M. Barrot summoned the constitutional opposition to his house to deliberate.

It was proposed to keep aloof from the extreme resolution of the government, and M. Barrot and his friends yielded to this counsel.

On the next day a second deliberation took place at a restorator's in the Place de la Madeleine, and M. de Lamartine, M.

Berryer, and M. de Laroche-jacquelein were invited to attend. They went thither.

About two hundred deputies of all complexions of moderate opposition were present. The course to be pursued was discussed. The discussion was long, varied and embarrassing, and no firm or worthy decision was reached in any quarter. If the opposition receded, it would destroy itself, dishonour its name, and lose its moral influence over the nation. It would pass under the Caudine yoke of the ministry. If it persisted, it would incur the risk of conquering too much, and giving victory to the party which desired—what it feared—a revolution. But revolution for revolution, the risk of an advanced revolution seemed more acceptable to certain minds than a backward revolution....

Night came without blood having been shed. It was silent as the day, disquieted as on the eve of a great event. However, the news of a probable change of ministry, which relaxed the danger, reassured the citizens. The troops bivouacked in the squares and streets. Some benches and chairs on the Champs-Élysées, set on fire by the children, lighted up the horizon with an irregular illumination. The government was everywhere master of Paris, except in that kind of citadel fortified by the nature of the construction and the narrow winding of the streets, near the convent Saint Méry, in the centre of Paris. There some indefatigable and intrepid republicans, who observed everything and despaired of nothing, were concentrated, either by a concerted plan of tactics or by the same spontaneous revolutionary instincts. Even their chiefs disapproved their obstinacy and rashness. They were estimated at four or five hundred in number, more or less. Another detachment of republicans, without chiefs, disarmed during the night the National Guards of the Batignolles, burned the station of the barrier, and

fortified themselves in a neighboring timber-yard to await the event. They did not attempt to dislodge them.

At dawn the routes which led to the gates of Paris were covered with columns of cavalry, infantry, and artillery, which the commands of government had collected. These troops were imposing, obedient, well-disciplined, but sad and silent. The sadness of civil war clouded their brows. They took successively their position on the principal streets branching off from the quarters which pour forth the population of Paris. The multitude did not fight en masse upon any point. Dispersed and floating bands disarmed only isolated stations, broke open the armorers' shops, and fired invisible shots upon the troops. The barricades, starting from the centre of the church Saint Méry, were raised, branching out and gradually multiplying almost under the feet of the army. Hardly were they reared when they were abandoned. The troops had only stones to contend with. It was a silent battle, whose progress was felt without hearing the noise.

The National Guard, assembled by a tardy call, collected legion by legion. It remained neutral, and confined itself to interposing between the troops and the people, and demanding with loud voice the dismissal of the ministers, and reform. It thus served as a shield to the revolution....

Such was the state of Paris on the morning of the twenty-fourth of February. The troops, fatigued from seeing no enemy yet feeling hostility on all sides, stood faithful but sad at their different posts. The generals and officers discussed with low voices the inexplicable indecision of events. Groups of cavalry were seen at the ends of the principal streets, enveloped in their grey thirty-six hours in the same

place, allowing their horses to sleep under them, trembling with cold and hunger. The officers of ordnance gallop by every moment, carrying from one part of Paris to another orders and counter-orders. There was heard in the distance, on the side of the Hotel de Ville [note: City Hall], and the deep and winding labyrinths of the adjacent streets, some firing from groups of people, which appeared to subside and become silent as the day advanced. The people were not numerous in the streets; they seemed to allow the invisible spirit of revolution to fight for them, and that small band of obstinate combatants who were dying for them in the heart of Paris. It is said there was a watch-word between the masses of the people and that group of republicans—a silent signal of intelligence, which said to some, "Resist a few hours longer," and to others, "You have no need of mingling in the contest, and shedding French blood. The genius of the revolution fights for all; the monarchy is falling; it is only necessary to push it; before the sun sets the republic will have triumphed."

[. . .]

The National Guards, called, in fact, on the morning of the 24th, to interpose between the people and the troops of the line, answered slowly and weakly to the appeal. They recognized, in the prolonged movement of the people, an anti-ministerial demonstration, an armed petition in favor of electoral reform, which they were far from disapproving. They smiled upon it in secret. They felt an antipathy to the name of M Guizot. His irritating and prolonged authority oppressed them. They loved his principles of government, perhaps; they did not love the man. They saw in him at one time a complaisance, at another an imprudent vexation, of England. They reproached him for a peace too dearly purchased by political servility in Portugal; they reproached



*Proclaiming the Republic on Feb. 25, Lamartine in Front of the Town Hall of Paris
Rejects the Red Flag of Socialism, by Henri-Félix-Emmanuel Philippoteau*

him for the war too rashly risked, for the aggrandizement of the Orleans family at Madrid. They rejoiced at the downfall and humiliation of this minister, equally unpopular in peace and war.

They were not too much alarmed by seeing the people vote with musket-shot against the system pursued by the king....

[. . .]

Towards ten o'clock in the evening, a small column of republicans of the young bourgeoisie passed through the rue Lepelletier; it formed a group in silence around the gate of the journal *Le National*, as if a rendezvous had been appointed. In all our revolutions, counsel is held, the word of command is given, the impulse comes, from the journal office. It is the comitia of public union, the ambulatory tribune of the people. We hear a long conference between the republicans within and the republicans without. Short and feverish words were exchanged through the low, closed window of the porter's lodge. The column, inspired with the enthusiasm which had just been communicated to it, advanced with cries of *Vive la reforme! à bas les*

ministres! [note: long live reform! Down with the ministers] towards the boulevards.

Hardly had it quitted the office of *Le National* when another column of workmen and men of the people presented itself, and halted there at the command of its chief. It seemed to have been expected. It was applauded by the clapping of hands from within the house....

A red flag floated amidst the smoke of torches over the foremost ranks of this multitude. Its numbers thickened as it continued to advance. A sinister curiosity became intent upon this cloud of men, which seemed to bear the mystery of the day.

In front of the Hotel of Foreign Affairs, a battalion of the line, drawn up in battle array, with loaded arms, its commander at the head, barred the boulevard. The column suddenly halts before this hedge of bayonets. The floating of the flag and the gleaming of torches frighten the horse of the commander. Rearing and whirling on its hind legs, the horse throws itself back towards the battalion, which opens to surround its leader. A discharge of fire-arms resounds in the confusion of this movement. Did it proceed, as has been said, from a concealed and perverse hand, fired upon the people by an agitator of the people, in order to revive by the sight of blood the cooling ardor of the struggle? Did it come from the hand of one of the insurgents upon the troop? In fine, what is more likely, did it come accidentally from the movement of some loaded weapon, or from the hand of some soldier who believed his commander was wounded when he saw the fright of his horse? No one knows. Crime or chance, that discharge of fire-arms rekindled a revolution.

The Barricades

from Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables* (1862)

*While Hugo's epic novel **Les Misérables**—written during his exile—is set during the 1834 uprising against the July Monarchy (described by him in a newspaper article in Vol. II), his description of fighting on the barricades is drawn from his combined personal experiences during the 1830, 1833, 1848, and 1851 revolts. In the course of fifty years of both successful and failed street fighting, citizens of Paris possessed a working knowledge of the erection and defense of street barricades, passed down through urban folklore, revolutionary organizations, ex-National Guardsmen, and survivors of earlier revolutions.*

The rain had ceased. Recruits had arrived. Workmen had brought under their blouses a barrel of powder, a basket containing bottles of vitriol, two or three carnival torches, and a basket filled with fire-pots, "left over from the King's festival." This festival was very recent, having taken place on the 1st of May. It was said that these munitions came from a grocer in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine named

Pepin. They smashed the only street lantern in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, the lantern corresponding to one in the Rue Saint-Denis, and all the lanterns in the surrounding streets, de Mondetour, du Cygne, des Prêcheurs, and de la Grande and de la Petite-Truanderie.

Enjolras, Combeferre, and Courfeyrac directed everything. Two barricades were now in process of construction at once, both of them resting on the Corinthe house and forming a right angle; the larger shut off the Rue de la Chanvrerie, the other closed the Rue Mondetour, on the side of the Rue de Cygne. This last barricade, which was very narrow, was constructed only of casks and paving-stones. There were about fifty workers on it; thirty were armed with guns; for, on their way, they had effected a wholesale loan from an armorer's shop.

Nothing could be more bizarre and at the same time more motley than this troop. One had a round-jacket, a cavalry sabre, and two holster-pistols, another was in his shirt-sleeves, with a round hat, and a powder-horn slung at his side, a third wore a plastron of nine sheets of gray paper and was armed with a saddler's awl. There was one who was shouting: "Let us exterminate them to the last man and die at the point of our bayonet." This man had no bayonet. Another spread out over his coat the cross-belt and cartridge-box of a National Guardsman, the cover of the cartridge-box being ornamented with this inscription in red worsted: Public Order. There were a great many guns bearing the numbers of the legions, few hats, no cravats, many bare arms, some pikes. Add to this, all ages, all sorts of faces, small, pale young men, and bronzed longshoremen. All were in haste; and as they helped each other, they discussed the possible chances. That they would receive succor about three o'clock in the morning—that they were sure of one regiment, that Paris would rise. Terrible sayings with which was

mingled a sort of cordial joviality. One would have pronounced them brothers, but they did not know each other's names. Great perils have this fine characteristic, that they bring to light the fraternity of strangers. A fire had been lighted in the kitchen, and there they were engaged in moulding into bullets, pewter mugs, spoons, forks, and all the brass table-ware of the establishment. In the midst of it all, they drank. Caps and buckshot were mixed pell-mell on the tables with glasses of wine. In the billiard-hall, Mame Hucheloup, Matelote, and Gibelotte, variously modified by terror, which had stupefied one, rendered another breathless, and roused the third, were tearing up old dish-cloths and making lint; three insurgents were assisting them, three bushy-haired, jolly blades with beards and moustaches, who plucked away at the linen with the fingers of seamstresses and who made them tremble.

[. . .]

"Courage! More paving-stones! More casks! More machines! Where are you now? A hod of plaster for me to stop this hole with! Your barricade is very small. It must be carried up. Put everything on it, fling everything there, stick it all in. Break down the house. A barricade is Mother Gibou's tea. Hullo, here's a glass door."

This elicited an exclamation from the workers.

"A glass door? what do you expect us to do with a glass door, tubercle?"

"Hercules yourselves!" retorted Gavroche. "A glass door is an excellent thing in a barricade. It does not prevent an attack, but it prevents the enemy taking it. So you've never prigged apples over a wall where there were broken bottles? A glass door cuts the corns of the

National Guard when they try to mount on the barricade. Pardi! Glass is a treacherous thing. Well, you haven't a very wildly lively imagination, comrades."

[. . .]

The journals of the day which said that that nearly impregnable structure, of the barricade of the Rue de la Chanvrerie, as they call it, reached to the level of the first floor, were mistaken. The fact is, that it did not exceed an average height of six or seven feet. It was built in such a manner that the combatants could, at their will, either disappear behind it or dominate the barrier and even scale its crest by means of a quadruple row of paving-stones placed on top of each other and arranged as steps in the interior. On the outside, the front of the barricade, composed of piles of paving-stones and casks bound together by beams and planks, which were entangled in the wheels of Anceau's dray and of the overturned omnibus, had a bristling and inextricable aspect.

An aperture large enough to allow a man to pass through had been made between the wall of the houses and the extremity of the barricade which was furthest from the wine-shop, so that an exit was possible at this point. The pole of the omnibus was placed upright and held up with ropes, and a red flag, fastened to this pole, floated over the barricade.

The little Mondetour barricade, hidden behind the wine-shop building, was not visible. The two barricades united formed a veritable redoubt. Enjolras and Courfeyrac had not thought fit to barricade the other fragment of the Rue Mondetour which opens through the Rue des Prêcheurs, an issue into the Halles, wishing, no doubt, to preserve a

possible communication with the outside, and not entertaining much fear of an attack through the dangerous and difficult street of the Rue des Prêcheurs.

With the exception of this issue which was left free, and which constituted what Folard in his strategical style would have termed a branch, and taking into account, also, the narrow cutting arranged on the Rue de la Chanvrerie, the interior of the barricade, where the wine-shop formed a salient angle, presented an irregular square, closed on all sides. There existed an interval of twenty paces between the grand barrier and the lofty houses which formed the background of the street, so that one might say that the barricade rested on these houses, all inhabited, but closed from top to bottom.

All this work was performed without any hindrance, in less than an hour, and without this handful of bold men seeing a single bear-skin cap or a single bayonet make their appearance. The very bourgeois who still ventured at this hour of riot to enter the Rue Saint-Denis cast a glance at the Rue de la Chanvrerie, caught sight of the barricade, and redoubled their pace.

The two barricades being finished, and the flag run up, a table was dragged out of the wine-shop; and Courfeyrac mounted on the table. Enjolras brought the square coffer, and Courfeyrac opened it. This coffer was filled with cartridges. When the mob saw the cartridges, a tremor ran through the bravest, and a momentary silence ensued.

Courfeyrac distributed them with a smile.

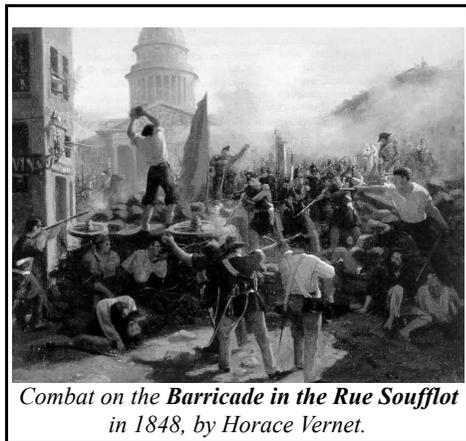
Each one received thirty cartridges. Many had powder, and set about making others with the bullets which they had run. As for the

barrel of powder, it stood on a table on one side, near the door, and was held in reserve.

The alarm beat which ran through all Paris, did not cease, but it had finally come to be nothing more than a monotonous noise to which they no longer paid any attention. This noise retreated at times, and again drew near, with melancholy undulations.

They loaded the guns and carbines, all together, without haste, with solemn gravity. Enjolras went and stationed three sentinels outside the barricades, one in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, the second in the Rue des Prêcheurs, the third at the corner of the Rue de la Petite Truanderie.

Then, the barricades having been built, the posts assigned, the guns loaded, the sentinels stationed, they waited, alone in those redoubtable streets through which no one passed any longer, surrounded by those dumb houses which seemed



Combat on the Barricade in the Rue Soufflot in 1848, by Horace Vernet.

dead and in which no human movement palpitated, enveloped in the deepening shades of twilight which was drawing on, in the midst of that silence through which something could be felt advancing, and which had about it something tragic and terrifying, isolated, armed, determined, and tranquil.

[. . .]

One thought one heard humming above this barricade as though there had been over their hive, enormous, dark bees of violent

progress. Was it a thicket? Was it a bacchanalia? Was it a fortress? Vertigo seemed to have constructed it with blows of its wings. There was something of the cess-pool in that redoubt and something Olympian in that confusion. One there beheld in a pell-mell full of despair, the rafters of roofs, bits of garret windows with their figured paper, window sashes with their glass planted there in the ruins awaiting the cannon, wrecks of chimneys, cupboards, tables, benches, howling topsyturveydom, and those thousand poverty-stricken things, the very refuse of the mendicant, which contain at the same time fury and nothingness. One would have said that it was the tatters of a people, rags of wood, of iron, of bronze, of stone, and that the Faubourg Saint Antoine had thrust it there at its door, with a colossal flourish of the broom making of its misery its barricade. Blocks resembling headsman's blocks, dislocated chains, pieces of woodwork with brackets having the form of gibbets, horizontal wheels projecting from the rubbish, amalgamated with this edifice of anarchy the sombre figure of the old tortures endured by the people. The barricade Saint Antoine converted everything into a weapon; everything that civil war could throw at the head of society proceeded thence; it was not combat, it was a paroxysm; the carbines which defended this redoubt, among which there were some blunderbusses, sent bits of earthenware bones, coat-buttons, even the casters from night-stands, dangerous projectiles on account of the brass. This barricade was furious; it hurled to the clouds an inexpressible clamor; at certain moments, when provoking the army, it was covered with throngs and tempest; a tumultuous crowd of flaming heads crowned it; a swarm filled it; it had a thorny crest of guns, of sabres, of cudgels, of axes, of pikes and of bayonets; a vast red flag flapped in the wind; shouts of command, songs of attack, the roll

of drums, the sobs of women and bursts of gloomy laughter from the starving were to be heard there. It was huge and living, and, like the back of an electric beast, there proceeded from it little flashes of lightning. The spirit of revolution covered with its cloud this summit where rumbled that voice of the people which resembles the voice of God; a strange majesty was emitted by this titanic basket of rubbish. It was a heap of filth and it was Sinai.

[. . .]

One thing which must be noted is, that the fire which was battering the barricade hardly disturbed the interior. Those who have never traversed the whirlwind of this sort of war can form no idea of the singular moments of tranquillity mingled with these convulsions. Men go and come, they talk, they jest, they lounge. Some one whom we know heard a combatant say to him in the midst of the grape-shot: "We are here as at a bachelor breakfast." The redoubt of the Rue de la Chanvrerie, we repeat, seemed very calm within. All mutations and all phases had been, or were about to be, exhausted. The position, from critical, had become menacing, and, from menacing, was probably about to become desperate. In proportion as the situation grew gloomy, the glow of heroism empurpled the barricade more and more. Enjolras, who was grave, dominated it, in the attitude of a young Spartan sacrificing his naked sword to the sombre genius, Epidotas.

Combeferre, wearing an apron, was dressing the wounds: Bossuet and Feuilly were making cartridges with the powder-flask picked up by Gavroche on the dead corporal, and Bossuet said to Feuilly: "We are soon to take the diligence for another planet"; Courfeyrac was disposing and arranging on some paving-stones which



Barricades in the Rue Saint-Maur, made mostly of paving-stones wrenched up from the street, used in the June, 1848 uprising.

he had reserved for himself near Enjolras, a complete arsenal, his sword-cane, his gun, two holster pistols, and a cudgel, with the care of a young girl setting a small dunkerque in order. Jean Valjean stared silently at the wall opposite him. An artisan was fastening

Mother Hucheloup's big straw hat on his head with a string, "for fear of sun-stroke," as he said. The young men from the Cougourde d'Aix were chatting merrily among themselves, as though eager to speak patois for the last time. Joly, who had taken Widow Hucheloup's mirror from the wall, was examining his tongue in it. Some combatants, having discovered a few crusts of rather mouldy bread, in a drawer, were eagerly devouring them. Marius was disturbed with regard to what his father was about to say to him.

[. . .]

The attack was a hurricane. On the evening before, in the darkness, the barricade had been approached silently, as by a boa. Now, in broad daylight, in that widening street, surprise was decidedly impossible, rude force had, moreover, been unmasked, the cannon had begun the roar, the army hurled itself on the barricade. Fury now became skill. A powerful detachment of infantry of the line, broken at regular intervals, by the National Guard and the Municipal Guard on foot, and supported by serried masses which could be heard though not seen, debauched (whoa!) into the street at a run, with drums beating,

trumpets braying, bayonets leveled, the sappers at their head, and, imperturbable under the projectiles, charged straight for the barricade with the weight of a brazen beam against a wall.

The wall held firm.

The insurgents fired impetuously. The barricade once scaled had a mane of lightning flashes. The assault was so furious, that for one moment, it was inundated with assailants; but it shook off the soldiers as the lion shakes off the dogs, and it was only covered with besiegers as the cliff is covered with foam, to re-appear, a moment later, beetling, black and formidable.

The column, forced to retreat, remained massed in the street, unprotected but terrible, and replied to the redoubt with a terrible discharge of musketry. Any one who has seen fireworks will recall the sheaf formed of interlacing lightnings which is called a bouquet. Let the reader picture to himself this bouquet, no longer vertical but horizontal, bearing a bullet, buck-shot or a biscaïen at the tip of each one of its jets of flame, and picking off dead men one after another from its clusters of lightning. The barricade was underneath it.

On both sides, the resolution was equal. The bravery exhibited there was almost barbarous and was complicated with a sort of heroic ferocity which began by the sacrifice of self.

This was the epoch when a National Guardsman fought like a Zouave. The troop wished to make an end of it, insurrection was desirous of fighting. The acceptance of the death agony in the flower of youth and in the flush of health turns intrepidity into frenzy. In this fray, each one underwent the broadening growth of the death hour. The street was strewn with corpses.

The barricade had Enjolras at one of its extremities and Marius at the other. Enjolras, who carried the whole barricade in his head, reserved and sheltered himself; three soldiers fell, one after the other, under his embrasure, without having even seen him; Marius fought unprotected. He made himself a target. He stood with more than half his body above the breastworks. There is no more violent prodigal than the avaricious man who takes the bit in his teeth; there is no man more terrible in action than a dreamer. Marius was formidable and pensive. In battle he was as in a dream. One would have pronounced him a phantom engaged in firing a gun.

The insurgents' cartridges were giving out; but not their sarcasms. In this whirlwind of the sepulchre in which they stood, they laughed.

Courfeyrac was bare-headed.

"What have you done with your hat?" Bossuet asked him.

Courfeyrac replied:

"They have finally taken it away from me with cannon-balls."

Or they uttered haughty comments.

"Can any one understand," exclaimed Feuilly bitterly, "those men,—(and he cited names, well-known names, even celebrated names, some belonging to the old army)—who had promised to join us, and taken an oath to aid us, and who had pledged their honor to it, and who are our generals, and who abandon us!"

And Combeferre restricted himself to replying with a grave smile.

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"There are people who observe the rules of honor as one observes the stars, from a great distance."

The interior of the barricade was so strewn with torn cartridges that one would have said that there had been a snowstorm.

The assailants had numbers in their favor; the insurgents had position. They were at the top of a wall, and they thundered point-blank upon the soldiers tripping over the dead and wounded and entangled in the escarpment. This barricade, constructed as it was and admirably buttressed, was really one of those situations where a handful of men hold a legion in check. Nevertheless, the attacking column, constantly recruited and enlarged under the shower of bullets, drew inexorably nearer, and now, little by little, step by step, but surely, the army closed in around the barricade as the vice grasps the wine-press.

One assault followed another. The horror of the situation kept increasing.

Then there burst forth on that heap of paving-stones, in that Rue de la Chanvrière, a battle worthy of a wall of Troy. These haggard, ragged, exhausted men, who had had nothing to eat for four and twenty hours, who had not slept, who had but a few more rounds to fire, who were fumbling in their pockets which had been emptied of cartridges, nearly all of whom were wounded, with head or arm bandaged with black and blood-stained linen, with holes in their clothes from which the blood trickled, and who were hardly armed with poor guns and notched swords, became Titans. The barricade was ten times attacked, approached, assailed, scaled, and never captured.

In order to form an idea of this struggle, it is necessary to imagine fire set to a throng of terrible courages, (huh?) and then to gaze

at the conflagration. It was not a combat, it was the interior of a furnace; there mouths breathed the flame; there countenances were extraordinary. The human form seemed impossible there, the combatants flamed forth there, and it was formidable to behold the going and coming in that red glow of those salamanders of the fray.

The successive and simultaneous scenes of this grand slaughter we renounce all attempts at depicting. The epic alone has the right to fill twelve thousand verses with a battle.

One would have pronounced this that hell of Brahmanism, the most redoubtable of the seventeen abysses, which the Veda calls the Forest of Swords.

They fought hand to hand, foot to foot, with pistol shots, with blows of the sword, with their fists, at a distance, close at hand, from above, from below, from everywhere, from the roofs of the houses, from the windows of the wine-shop, from the cellar windows, whither some had crawled. They were one against sixty.

The facade of Corinthe, half demolished, was hideous. The window, tattooed with grape-shot, had lost glass and frame and was nothing now but a shapeless hole, tumultuously blocked with paving-stones.

Translated by Isabel F. Hapgood

* * *

from Victor Hugo, *The Flight of Louis-Philippe*, 1848

Hugo does not name a source for this lively account of the King's flight from Paris, published in a newspaper shortly after the revolution. Early on in the regime, Hugo had become a personal friend of Louis-Philippe, and frequent guest at the palace; but by 1848 they had drifted apart, and Hugo was an ardent supporter of the revolutionary forces.

It was M. Crémieux who said to King Louis-Philippe these sad words: "Sire, you must leave Paris."

The king had already abdicated. The fatal signature had been written. He looked fixedly at M. Crémieux.

The sharp firing in the Palais Royal was audible, the Municipal Guards of the Chateau d'Eau were attacking the barricades in the Rue de Valois and the Rue Saint-Honoré.

Every moment wild shouts arose and drowned the reports of the musketry. It was evident that the populace was coming on the scene. From the Palais Royal to the Tuileries it is but a pace for the giant who is called Revolt.

M. Crémieux extended his hand in the direction of the ominous shouts which came from without, and repeated his warning: "Sire, you must leave."

The king, without saying a word in reply, and without taking his eyes off of M. Crémieux, took off his general's hat, which he handed to some one beside him at random, doffed his uniform bearing the heavy silver epaulets, and said, without rising from the great arm-chair in which he had reclined, as if exhausted, for several hours,

"A round hat, a frock-coat."

They brought them. In an instant he was nothing but an elderly tradesman.

Then he cried in a hasty tone, "My keys, my keys!"

The keys were not forthcoming.

Meanwhile the noise increased; the firing seemed to be approaching; the terrible uproar increased.

The king kept repeating, "My keys, my keys!"

At length the keys were found and brought to him. He locked a portfolio which he carried in his arms, and a still larger portfolio which his valet took charge of. He displayed a kind of feverish agitation. All was helter-skelter around him. The princes and the valets could be heard calling out, "Quick, quick!" The queen alone was cool and proud.

They started. They traversed the Tuileries. The king gave his arm to the queen, or, to speak more correctly, the queen gave her arm to the king. The Duchess of Montpensier was supported by M. Jules de Lasteyrie, the Duke of Montpensier by M. Crémieux.

The Duke of Montpensier said to M. Crémieux, "Remain with us, M. Crémieux; do not leave us. Your name may be useful to us."

In this manner they reached the Place de la Révolution. There the king turned pale.

He looked out for the four carriages, which he had commanded from his stables. They were not there.

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At the entrance to the stables the driver of the first carriage had been shot, and at the time the king was seeking them in the Place Louis XV the people were burning them in the Place du Palais Royal.

At the foot of the obelisk a small hackney carriage with one horse was stopped.

The king walked rapidly on, followed by the queen.

In the carriage were four women holding four children on their knees.

The four ladies were Mesdames de Nemours and de Joinville, and two ladies of the Court. The four children were the king's grandsons.

The king quickly opened the door, and said to the four ladies, "Get out, all of you, all of you."

He only spoke these words.

The firing became more and more alarming. They could hear the surging of the mob entering the Tuileries.

In the twinkling of an eye the four ladies were standing on the pavement, the same pavement whereon the scaffold of Louis XVI had been erected.

The king mounted or rather plunged into the empty carriage, the queen followed him; Mme. de



Despite his carefully cultivated image as a 'Bourgeois King', Louis-Philippe, photographed in 1842, required schooling from his cabinet to pass as a citizen during his flight from Paris.

Nemours mounted in front. The king still retained his portfolio under his arm. He caused the larger, a green one, to be placed within the cab. This was with some difficulty accomplished. M. Crémieux pushed it in with his fist

"Go on," said the king.

The cab started. They took the Neuilly road.

Thuret, the king's valet, mounted behind. But he could not hold to the bar which occupied the place of a bracket-seat, and he attempted to bestride the horse, but ended by running on foot. The carriage passed him.

Thuret ran as far as Saint-Cloud, thinking to find the king there; but he found that he had proceeded to Trianon.

At that moment the Princess Clementine and her husband, the Duke of Saxe-Coburg, arrived by railway.

"Quick, madame," said Thuret; "let us take the train and go to Trianon. The king is there."

It was in this manner that Thuret proceeded to rejoin the king.

Meanwhile, at Versailles, the king had succeeded in procuring a berline and a kind of omnibus. He occupied the carriage with the queen; his suite, the omnibus. They hired post-horses, and set out for Dreux.

As he continued his journey the king took off his false hair and put on a cap of black silk, which he pulled down to his eyes. His beard had not been trimmed since the previous day. He had had no sleep. He was unrecognizable. He turned to the queen, who said, "You look a hundred years old."

There are two roads to Dreux: that to the right is the better, well paved, and is the road generally taken; the other is full of ruts, and is the longer.

The king said, "Postilion, take the left road."

He did well; he was hated at Dreux. Some people were waiting on the high-road with hostile intentions. In this manner he escaped the danger.

The sous-prefect of Dreux, who had been notified of his approach, joined him, and handed him twelve thousand francs half in notes and half in silver in bags.

The berline left the omnibus behind to do the best it could, and proceeded towards Evreux, The king knew that about a league from the town there lived a faithful adherent, M. de ——.

It was dark night when the carriage reached the mansion.

Thuret descended, rang for a long time; at last some one appeared.

Thuret asked for M. de ——.

He was away. It was winter. M. de was in town.

His farmer, who had opened the door, explained this to Thuret.

"It does not matter," replied Thuret "I have here an old lady and gentleman, friends of his, who are very tired. Just open the doors for us."

"I have not got the keys," said Renard.

The king was worn out by fatigue, suffering, and hunger. Renard saw the old man, and had compassion on him.

"Monsieur et madame" he repeated, "pray come in. I cannot open the chateau for you, but I can open the farm-house. Come in. Meanwhile I will go search of my master at Evreux."

The king and queen alighted. Renard conducted them to the lower room in the farm. There was a fine fire in it. The king was chilled to the bones.

"I am very cold," he said. Then he continued, "I am very hungry."

Renard said, "Monsieur, would you like some onion-soup?"

"Very much," said the king.

They made some onion-soup, and produced the remains of the farm breakfast, some cold stew or other, and an omelet.

The king and queen seated themselves at table and every one with them Renard, the farmer, his sons from the plough, and Thuret the valet.

The king ate greedily what they gave him. The queen did not eat anything.

In the midst of the repast the door opened. The newcomer was M. de —, who had hurried out from Evreux.

He perceived Louis-Philippe, and exclaimed, "The king!"

"Silence!" cried the king.

But it was too late.

M. de reassured him. Renard was a worthy fellow. They might trust him. They were all people to be depended upon at the farm.

[. . .]

They passed through Evreux not without some trouble. At the end of the town, near St. Taurin's Church, there were some people collected, who stopped the carriage.

A man seized the bridle and said, "They say the king is escaping this way."

Another man held a lantern to the king's face.

At length a sort of officer of the National Guard, who for some moments had been handling the harness in a suspicious way, cried out, "Hold there! it is Père Benard; I know him, citizens."

He added, in a low voice, turning to Thuret, "I recognize your companion in the corner. Get away quickly."

Thuret has told me since, "He spoke just in time, for, as I fancied he was going to cut the traces, I was about to stab him. I had my knife open in my hand."

Benard whipped his horses, and they left Evreux behind them.

They kept on all night. From time to time they halted at the inns upon the road, and Benard baited his horses.

He said to Thuret, "Get down. Be as much at your ease as you can. Talk familiarly to me." He also "tutored" the king.

* * *

Liberals vs. Socialists



Beginning in the early 1830s, **Louis Blanc** was among the first activists to articulate the distinction between 'political' or Liberal Republicanism and 'Social Republicanism' or Socialism, which sought not only universal suffrage, but to re-organize how class, economics, and education functioned in modern society. In 1848, at the apparent pinnacle of success, he was caught like many Leftists between these two competing tendencies.

from Louis Blanc, 1848:

Historical Revelations (1858)

The celebrations over the Republic did not last long. Rifts soon appeared within the Left, between Liberals representing the majority of the bourgeoisie, and Socialists representing much of the urban working-class. Meanwhile, Monarchists elicited the support of the rural population, who felt alienated from the largely Parisian revolution, and the April elections returned a major victory for the Conservatives. Before the newly elected government took over, the provisional government under Lamartine struggled to establish a working system. Radical democratic socialists under Auguste

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Blanqui, François-Vincent Raspail, and Armand Barbès demanded the 'Right to Work', calling for government workshops to curb urban unemployment (somewhat analogous to the 'New Deal' programs in America during the 1930s). When the Liberal provisional government hesitated to back this and other demands, massive demonstrations were launched. On May 15, a workers' demonstration became out of hand: workers forced their way into the National Assembly, insisting upon the socialist Deputy Louis Blanc, who had originated the idea of the National Workshops, as their spokesman. Finally Lamartine called upon the National Guard to disperse the protesters—an act which for many on the Left positioned him as an enemy of the working class, and which ruined his political career. Blanc, who had been one of the most visible Republican theorists and activists in France since the July Revolution, also saw his reputation tarnished by both moderates and radicals due to his ambivalent role that day; the 15th of May soon became synonymous with the evolving consciousness of the urban proletariat as a distinct class with interests incompatible with the bourgeoisie. This account of the events of that day was written partly in an attempt to clear his name from charges of coordinating the invasion of the Assembly.

Thus it was that the Republic was established in France by universal, and, at that moment as I believe, sincere, consent.

But the old monarchical parties, willing enough then to submit to the Republic as a necessity, were not prepared to accept it in its socialist bearings. Now, unfortunately, in this disinclination they happened to be backed by that fraction of the Republican party whose views were merely political, and who, on this occasion, acted like a *corps d'armée*, which, from misconception or any other unlucky cause, should unexpectedly fall upon its own vanguard.

The result of this coalition, in which the Legitimists and the Orléanists cleverly kept themselves, at first, in the back-ground, was to set up everywhere in all offices, Political, to the exclusion of Social Republicans.

[. . .]

The day previous to their announcement, we [the provisional revolutionary government] had resigned our official position at the Luxembourg, and I had taken advantage of the opportunity to intimate my fixed resolution not to take office of any kind until the Constituent Assembly should be succeeded by the Legislative.

Having by this proved that I had no interested motive to serve, and taken away from the Assembly my pretext that might arise out of personal objections to myself, I felt at liberty to insist upon the institution of a public department especially devoted to the labour question, and which, if overlooked, I warned the Assembly, would bring about, not "the Revolution of [original text corrupt]" as in Louis Philippe's time, but one much more terrible, the "Revolution of Hunger!"

I did not then myself measure the full force of my own prophecy. Still less accurately was it measured by the Assembly, thanks to unfortunate prejudices both against the cause I advocated and myself—all of which I recall "more in sorrow than in anger."

The line the Assembly had drawn, was significant enough, nor did the people misinterpret it. Hence the first germs of division between them and the Assembly. In proportion as the latter deserted, the former clung to us. Every day making us more and more the symbols of their wants, they lost no opportunity of giving us proofs of their confidence

and support. The proposal I had made on the 10th having been passed by, the working classes were not long in showing the mischievous impression produced upon them. The Government had appointed a day for a festival called the 'Fete de la Concorde,' to commemorate the establishment of the Republic, to which the working classes were, of course, invited. Whereupon the acting committee of the delegates of the Luxembourg, without my knowledge, published an address which was placarded on all the walls of Paris. After quoting the decree concerning the "Right to Work," issued by that Provisional Government whose acts had certainly not been repudiated by the National Assembly, they said:

"The promises made on the barricades not having been accomplished, and the Assembly having refused on the 10th of May, to form a ministry of Labour and Progress, we working men, delegates of the Luxembourg, have unanimously decided not to take part in the Fete, so called, de la Concorde.

Lagarde, President;

Besnard, Godin, Lavoye, Vice-Presidents;

Lefaire, Delit, Petin, Secretaires."

It was when the popular irritation evinced by this document was at its height, that rumours spread through Paris of movements in Poland for the recovery of its independence. Sympathy with the sufferings or prosperity of other peoples being a prominent feature of French character—and, as a Frenchman, I take leave to say, a most honourable one—the news caused a general excitement, which was fanned into a flame by the action of certain of the clubs.

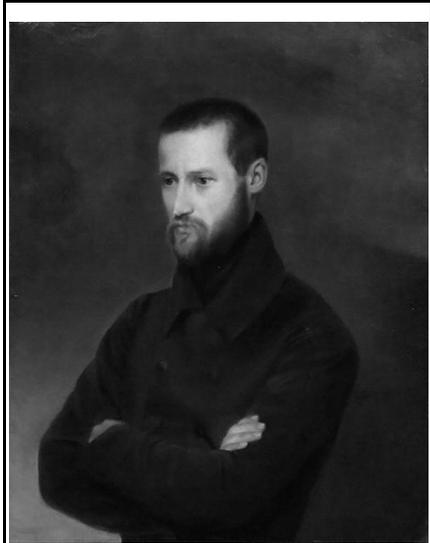
Such were the circumstances that led to the eventful and melancholy day which, by the invasion of the National Assembly inflicted such mortal wounds on the Republic.

[. . .]

On the 15th of May I went as usual to the National Assembly. Certain libelers have not been ashamed to circulate in print, that on the morning of this ill-omened day, I called at the Cafe Tortoni, and there concerted matters with Blanqui, Barbés, and other chiefs; a detestable fabrication, which I tread upon in passing.

For the purpose of hearing better, I took my seat on the benches of the right, close to the tribune, when suddenly the sound of shouts in the distance announced the approach of the crowd. There was a sudden rush of Representatives into the hall, and cries of "To your places!" I then went to my usual seat on the highest benches of the extreme left. The noise approached nearer and nearer, and the back galleries were presently filled with men of the people bearing banners. Shortly afterwards, the doors being burst open by the crowd, and those in the galleries at the back having come forward, the body of the Hall was soon completely filled. Clamours of all sorts contended with one another, until the tumult grew horrible. In the midst of this disorder I had nothing to do but follow the same course as my colleagues, and to remain like them in my place, a wonder-struck but powerless spectator of this invasion of a sanctuary which the triumph of universal suffrage should have for ever rendered as inviolable as the sovereignty of the people. But it was not long—there are not wanting numbers of persons capable of testifying to the perfect accuracy of these particulars—before I was approached by representatives, ushers, and attendants, coming to inform me that an immense crowd was pressing into the court close to the Rue de Bourgogne, calling for me with loud cries, and which, if I did not show myself to them, would increase to a dangerous degree the throng that had already invaded the Assembly.

What was to be done? Ought I not to keep my post in the midst of the Assembly of which I was a member? And yet not to go, when my doing so was required as a means of restoring tranquillity, would not this be to incur a grave responsibility? For some time I resisted the entreaties made me; but as they became more and more urgent, I determined to place myself at the disposal of the Assembly. I therefore went to the President's chair, and addressing myself to Citizen Buchez, who had already



Auguste Blanqui, proponent of 'Romanticist Socialism' and organizer of several large insurrectionary networks, had been repeatedly imprisoned for his attempts to overthrow a succession of French governments between 1824 and 1871. He is generally credited for leading the May 15 demonstration.

been apprised by an usher of what was going on, I asked him if, in case it were thought useful I should address the people, I should be authorised to do so by the body to which I belonged, and from which I did not wish in any way to separate myself?

Citizen Buchez reminded me, that at a moment when his voice was completely overpowered by the tumult it would be perfectly impossible for him to ascertain the will of the Chamber. "In that case," I replied, "do you, in the name of the Assembly, and in your capacity of Vice-president, authorise me to interfere?" He answered me in an affirmative way, in presence of one of the Vice-presidents Citizen Courbon. His precise answer was: "As President I have no orders to give you; as a man and a citizen I urge your going."

[. . .]

I went to one of the windows of the court which communicates with the Place de Bourgogne, and mounting on the window-sill, where Albert and Barbés were, I said to the closely-packed multitude, what I thought best adapted to pacify them. I told them in substance, that no one could deny the reasonableness of their desires for a more equitable partition of the fruits of toil, and the gradual extinction of poverty; but that the sacred interests of the working classes would not, they might rest assured of it, be neglected by the Assembly; that the eternal honour of the Republic would be the fact of its having laboured, without ceasing, at realising the right of all to prosperity; that if it were folly to allow our hopes to rise too high on this subject, it was, at all events, one of those sublime follies to which it is very excusable to devote one's existence; that, moreover, a most touching and most noble spectacle was that of a people suspending for a moment the thought of its own sufferings, in order to administer to the sufferings of a friendly people: that it was easy to recognise in this the essentially generous and cosmopolitan genius of France; but that the more the sentiments of the



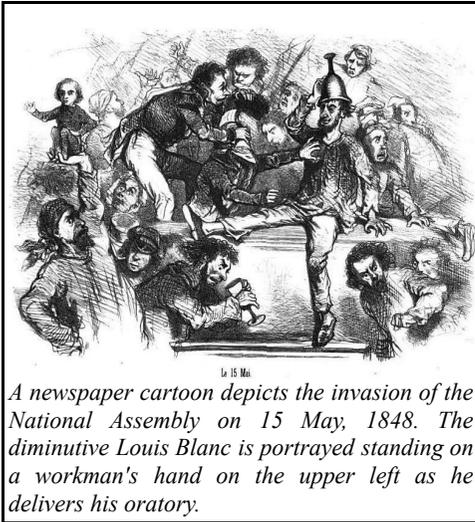
The Chamber of Deputies in the Palais Bourbon, as it appears today.

people were deserving of respect, the more indispensable was it they should be expressed in a legal and regular manner.

And I concluded by adjuring the crowd to leave the National Assembly in possession of its fullest liberty of deliberation. This fact was subsequently deposed to by a pupil of St. Cyr, of the name of Lucas, who declared he had heard my entreaties to the people to leave the Assembly, and that the language in which I implored them was so earnest and touching that, in spite of himself, he could not help bursting into tears. I was withdrawing for the purpose of resuming my seat, when, seized by a number of persons, who had closed in behind me, I was carried across the Salle des Pas Perdus. There was a general wish I should speak again; it was even imperiously required; and a circle being made, I was compelled to get upon a chair, and to make an address. It was then that, speaking of the invincible force of the Revolution of February, and at the same time of the absolute necessity of resting its claims to the admiration of the whole world on moderation and wisdom, as the only means of making it victorious over kings, I pronounced these words, since so cruelly distorted: "This revolution in fact was not one of those which make thrones tremble, but of those which make thrones fall;" and the conclusion, the summary of my discourse, was this exclamation, repeated with enthusiasm by the whole audience: "Vive la Republique Universe!"

Almost at the same instant I was hemmed in on every side by robust working men, who lifted me up in order to carry me into the Assembly. In vain did I struggle violently against them; in vain reply at different intervals to the passionate acclamations which resounded on every side of me, the only cry worthy of the people was, "Long live the Republic!" All my resistance was useless.

[. . .]



A newspaper cartoon depicts the invasion of the National Assembly on 15 May, 1848. The diminutive Louis Blanc is portrayed standing on a workman's hand on the upper left as he delivers his oratory.

There a workman came to me and said: "Your voice is gone, but if you will just write upon a bit of paper that you, for the last time, adjure the crowd to disperse, perhaps I shall be able to read it out loud enough to make myself heard." Taking up a pen, I was hastily writing these words:—"In

the name of our country, of the Republican party, of the sovereignty of the people, in the interest of us all, I beseech you to. . . ." When the fatal words, pronounced by a man now known to have been a traitor, were heard: "The National Assembly is dissolved!"

There was now a great rush, which swept me along with it, into the "Salle des Conférences." My name was called out in every direction, and I was surrounded by a dense and very excited crowd, crying out to me to go to the Hotel-de-Ville. I replied, in the deepest dismay, that to go to the Hotel de Ville, would be to risk the spilling of blood. I desired to know where several of my colleagues were; of Albert I could hear nothing, but some one said, that an attempt had been made to force Barbés to go to the Hotel-de-Ville, which he warmly resisted. Every one now rushing towards the doors, I was carried away by the stream, and got out in such a state of confusion, that I do not know to this moment, by what outlet and way I reached the parade ground of the 'Invalides'.

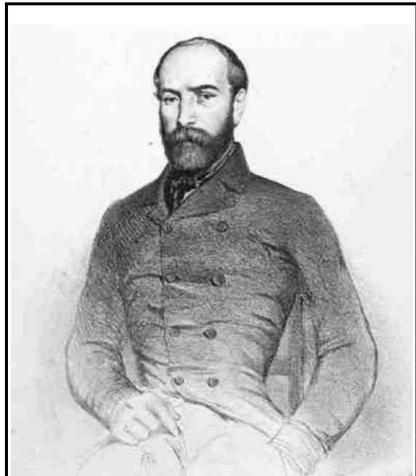
[. . .]

Hearing, on arriving at home, that the Assembly had again met, I hurried off instantly to my post.

On reaching the vestibule, I was recognized by some National Guards. They fell upon me in a state of incredible rage. "Impeach him!" said some; "Kill him, and so have done with it!" cried others. Fortunately for me several of their comrades—I mention it with pleasure—defended me with as much warmth as the others had attacked me.

[. . .]

My hair was torn out by handfuls; my coat rent in pieces; some of the wretches attempted to bayonet me from behind; and one, unable to reach me in any other way, seized my right hand, and violently twisted my fingers. When I got into the Assembly, I was really a heap of rags. After such treatment, I might, it seems to me, have expected to receive from every one of my colleagues, some of those attentions that are suggested by a feeling of



The Republican Deputy Armand Barbès was charged and imprisoned after May 15 on the charge that the speech he delivered that day aimed to incite a socialist coup d'etat, a charge against which Blanc attempted to defend him.

humanity. But such is the cruel effect of misconceptions inevitable in times of revolution, that I encountered from part of the Assembly nothing but the greatest hostility of feeling. My presence in the tribune,

to which I was summoned by the most imperious of duties, that of testifying in favor of my unfortunate friends, Albert and Barbés, was the signal for an outburst of the most violent murmurs.

[. . .]

As much as I deplore the acts of that day, and much as I have been injured by them, I think it right, in justice to the people of Paris, here to protest against the expressions, "sanguinary vengeance," "desperadoes," "men, only wanting a temporary triumph to select their victims," &c. &c., which were evidently intended by his lordship [conservative commentator Lord Normandy] to leave upon his readers an impression of savage ferocity on the part of the actors in that extraordinary scene. If anything is to be wondered at, it certainly is that in a dense, highly excited, and armed crowd, no acts of violence or wanton mischief should have been committed.

[. . .]

It would be difficult to exaggerate the evil consequences of the 14th of May. Then it was that the monarchical parties began to feel the possibility of sapping the Republic; then it was that the work of the reaction really began. The 'Executive Commission' was rapidly undermined. M. Ledru-Rollin found himself the subject of the most virulent attacks in every Orléanist or Legitimist paper. M. Caussidière was removed from the prefecture of police, in spite of, and partly, perhaps, on account of, the protection M. de Lamartine seemed to bestow upon him. As to M. de Lamartine himself, who had lost ground amongst the people by coquetting with the Monarchists, being now deserted by them, he saw his ascendancy vanished, as if by magic.

* * *

***From Alphonse de Lamartine, History of the Revolution of
1848 (1849)***

If Blanc's reputation was irreparably tarnished by the 15th of May, Lamartine's was virtually destroyed. Like many of his generation, he was surprised and saddened by the divisions that had developed within the Left—slowly and almost invisibly, due to censorship's eradication of public discourse—since the 1830 Revolution. In this text, written after his withdrawal from politics, Lamartine not only attempts to vindicate his own actions as President of the provisional government, but to assess the heteroclitic nature of the Revolution, which would soon mortally weaken the Republic. The 'Society of the Rights of Man' which he mentions was an insurrectionary network founded by Auguste Blanqui, leader of the Invasion of the Assembly, in the wake of the July Revolution, and continued—under various names—throughout the Orleans Monarchy.

A small number of combatants, concentrated in that quarter of Paris which forms by the crookedness and narrowness of its streets, the natural citadel of insurrections, preserved alone a hostile attitude and an inaccessible position. These men were nearly all veterans of the republic, formed by the voluntary discipline of sects in the secret societies of the two monarchies; trained to the struggle, and even to martyrdom, in all the battles which had made Paris bleed, and contested the establishment of the monarchy. Their invisible chief had no name nor rank. It was the invisible breath of revolution; the spirit of sect, the soul of the people, suffering from the present, aspiring to bring light from the future; the cool and disinterested enthusiasm which rejoices in death, if by its death posterity can find a germ of amelioration and life.

To these men were joined two other kinds of combatants, who always throw themselves into the tumultuous movements of seditions; the ferocious spirits whom blood allures and death delights, and the light natures whom the whirlwind attracts and draws in, the children of Paris. But this germ did not increase. It watched in silence, musket in hand. It contented itself with thus giving time for the general insurrection.

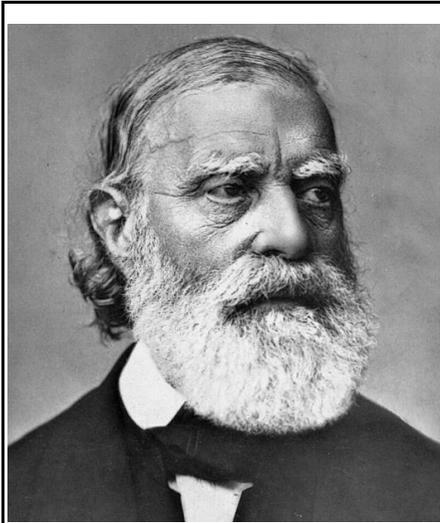
This insurrection was nowhere manifested. It needed a war-cry to excite it, a cry of horror to sow fury and vengeance in that mass of floating population, equally ready to retire to their homes, or to go forth to overthrow the government. Some silent groups collected here and there at the extremity of the faubourgs of the Temple and of St. Antoine. Other groups, few in number, appeared at the entrance of the streets which open from the Chaussée d'Antin upon the boulevards.

These two kinds of groups were different in costume and attitude. The one was composed of young men belonging to the rich and elegant classes of the bourgeoisie, to the schools, to commerce, to the National Guard, to literature, and above all to Journalism. These harangued the people, roused their anger against the king, the ministry, the Chambers, spoke of the humiliation of France to the foreigner, of the diplomatic treasons of the court, of the corruption and insolent servility of the deputies sold to the discretion of Louis Philippe. They discussed aloud the names of the popular ministers whom the insurrection must impose upon the Tuileries. The numerous loiterers and persons passing by, eager for news, stopped near the orators, and applauded their proposals.

The other groups were composed of men of the people, come from their workshops two days since at the sound of musketry; their working-clothes upon their shoulders, their blue shirts open at the breast, their hands yet black with the smoke of charcoal. These descended in silence, by small companies, grazing the walls of the streets which lead to Clichy, la Villette, and the Canal de l'Ourcq. One or two workmen, better clothed than the others, in cloth vests, or in surtouts with long skirts, marched before them, spoke to them in low tones, and appeared to give them the word of command. These were the chiefs of the sections of *The Rights of Man*, or of the *Families*.

The *Society of the Rights of Man*, and of the *Families*, was a kind of democratic masonry, instituted, since 1830, by some active republicans. These societies preserved, under different names, since the destruction of the first republic by Bonaparte, the rancor of betrayed liberty, as well as some traditions of Jacobinism, transmitted from Babeuf to Buonarotti, and from Buonarotti to the young republicans of this school. The members of these purely political societies were recruited almost entirely from among the chiefs of the mechanic workshops, locksmiths, cabinet-makers, printers, joiners, and carpenters of Paris.

Parallel to these permanent conspiracies against royalty, the keystone of the arch of privilege, philosophical societies were organized, composed of almost the same elements—some under the auspices of St. Simon, others under those of Fourier—the former comprising the followers of Cabet, the latter those of Raspail, of Pierre Leroux and of Louis Blanc. These conspiracies in open day were alone spread by means of eloquence, association and journalism. Sects so far



François-Vincent Raspail, shown here around 1860, was one of the leaders of radical, socialist Republican, and was imprisoned in 1849 for his support of workers during the May 15 incident and the 'June Days' uprising. A cellular biologist, he treated fellow inmates while in prison and developed a version of germ theory.

pacific, these societies discussed their opinions, and caused them to be discussed freely.

The difference between these two kinds of revolutionists is, that the first were inspired by the hatred of royalty, the second by the progress of humanity. The republic and equality was the aim of the one; social renovation and fraternity the aim of the other. They had nothing in common but

impatience against that which existed, and hope for that which they saw dawning in an approaching revolution.

* * *

From Prosper Lissagaray, *History of the Paris Commune of 1871* (1876)

A month after the invasion of the Assembly, the National Workshops were closed down, and the working class revolted throughout Paris. Barricades were once more put up in the streets, and the conservative government (called the Party of Order), supported by most of the Middle-Class, deployed the army against them. Around 120,000 soldiers and National Guards fought ferocious street battles for four days before the uprising of 'The June Days' was put down; political

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radicals would henceforth look at this as the end of cooperation between the Proletariat and the Bourgeoisie. The socialist journalist Prosper Lissagaray was a participant in, and historian of, the Paris Commune of 1871. His analysis of the progressive divergence between Republican Liberalism and Democratic Socialism represents the position of the far Left, in the wake its reorganization after the June Days, and underscores how the moderate Left was able to be seduced, less than three years later, to support the totalitarian coup d'etat of Napoleon III.

Since 1813 France had seen no such collapse of the governing classes. The ineffable dastardliness of the Hundred Days pales before this superior cowardice; for here Tartuffe is grafted upon Trimalcion.



*A propaganda cartoon by Adolphe Chenu from 1850 depicts **The Assassination of a National Guardsman on the Rue de Petit-Pont Barricade** by socialist workers killing a National Guardsman during the June Days uprising the previous year.*

Thirteen months later, at Versailles, I hear, amidst enthusiastic applause, the Empire apostrophized, 'Varus, give us back our legions.' Who speaks, who applauds thus? The same great bourgeoisie, which, for eighteen years mute and bowed to the dust, offered their legions to Varus. The bourgeoisie accepted the Second Empire from fear of Socialism, even as their fathers had submitted to the first to make an end of the Revolution. Napoleon I rendered the bourgeoisie two services not overpaid by his apotheosis. He gave them an iron

centralization and sent to their graves 15,000 wretches still kindled by the flame of the Revolution, who at any moment might have claimed the public lands granted to them. But he left the same bourgeoisie saddled for all masters. When they possessed themselves of the parliamentary government, to which Mirabeau wished to raise them at one bound, they were incapable of governing. Their mutiny of 1830, turned into a revolution by the people, made the belly master. The great bourgeois of 1830, like him of 1790, had but one thought—to gorge himself with privileges, to arm the bulwarks in defense of his domains, to perpetuate the proletariat. The fortune of his country is nothing to him, so that he fatten. To lead, to compromise France, the parliamentary king has as free license as Bonaparte. When by a new outburst of the people the bourgeoisie are compelled to seize the helm, after three years, in spite of massacre and proscription, it slips out of their palsied hands into those of the first comer.

From 1851 to 1869 they relapse into the same state as after the 18th Brumaire. Their privileges safe, they allow Napoleon III to plunder France, make her the vassal of Rome, dishonour her in Mexico, ruin her finances, vulgarize debauchery. All-powerful by their retainers and their wealth, they do not risk a man, dollar, for the sake of protesting. In 1869 the pressure from without raises them to the verge of power; a little strength of will and the government is theirs. They have but the desires of the eunuch. At the first sign of the impotent master they kiss the rod that smote them on 2nd December, making room for the plebiscite which re-baptizes the Empire.

Translated by Eleanor Marx

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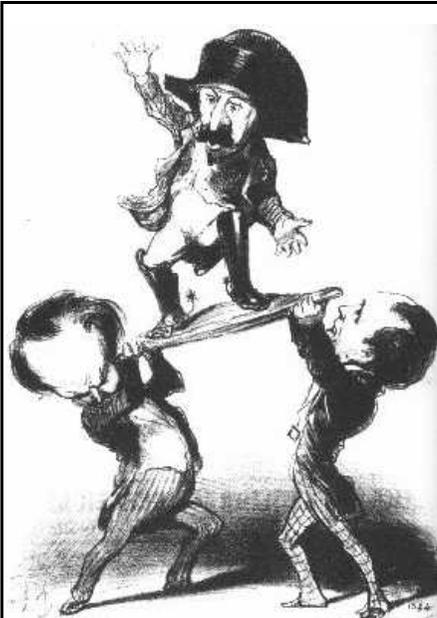
Section 1:

The Revolution of 1848



*After the 'Days of June', the Left became politically helpless. In this cartoon about the 1848 elections from the German newspaper **Illustrierte Zeitung**, only two of the several candidates are being debated: General Cavaignac, who had crushed the uprising, and the Imperialist Louis Bonaparte.*

From Victor Hugo, *History of a Crime*, 1877



*Dazzled by the Napoleonic myth, Victor Hugo was an early supporter of Louis Napoleon; in this cartoon from **Charivari**, Daumier shows Hugo and the newspaper magnate Émile Girardin raising him on a shield like a Roman emperor, with the tagline, 'Not too steady!' Both soon became Napoleon's mortal enemies when his ambitions became apparent.*

Louis Bonaparte, a nephew of Napoleon, had attempted—and badly bungled—coups d'état against the Orleans monarchy in 1836 and 1840, and had spent the intervening decade in England and the United States. In the wake of the 1848 Revolution, he returned to France and immediately launched what many Frenchmen during his reign referred to as an 'American-style' publicity campaign—playing up his connection with the Napoleonic myth and its connection with the perceived greatness, creating a media image of himself that would appeal, in various ways, to all classes, and keeping his policy

goals and political allegiances vague—and was elected President of the Republic. Suspicions of his motives began even before his election, and he met great resistance from the National Assembly, both the majority (who wanted to reinstate the Orleans or Bourbon monarchies) and the minority (who sensed his Imperial ambitions). Finally, in Dec. 1851, he illegally dissolved the National Assembly and concentrated power in his own hands.

On the 1st of December, 1851, Charras, who had been Under-Secretary of State in 1848, and Acting Secretary of War under the Provincial Government, shrugged his shoulders, and drew the charges of his pistols. In fact, all credence in the chance of a coup d'etat occurring had become too humiliating to be believed in for a moment. Indeed the idea that M. Louis Bonaparte would venture upon a deed of illegal violence was almost beyond the possibility of belief. The Devincq election was occupying every mind at the moment, and it was evident that the Government was entirely taken up with it. How could any one contemplate such an act as a conspiracy against the Republic or the people? Where was there a man capable of harbouring so wild a thought? To enact a tragedy an actor is required, and here the actor was conspicuous by his absence. To violate all right, suppress the Assembly, set aside the Constitution, destroy the Republic, confound the nation, sully the flag, dishonour the army, debase the clergy and the magistracy; succeed, triumph, govern, rule, exile, banish, transport, ruin, assassinate, and reign—with such accessories as these, the law was one mass of corruption.

And by whom were these atrocities to be committed? By a Colossus? No; by a dwarf. People ridiculed the idea, and ceased to exclaim "What a crime!" to add "What a farce!" They considered that, after all, a wide range was required for the committal of heavy offenses, and crimes of a particular nature are too vast for certain minds. To accomplish an eighteenth Brumaire, a man must date from an Areola in the past, and give promise of an Austerlitz. To be a great scoundrel is not the province of every new-comer. People thus reflected: "What kind of person is this Hortense's son, who has Strasbourg instead of Areola, and with whom Boulogne takes the place

of Austerlitz? He is a Frenchman, a Dutchman, a naturalized Swiss, a Bonaparte crossed by a Verhuell, chiefly remarkable by the simplicity of his imperial attitude; let him therefore beware, lest he who plucks the eagle's feather should find a goose's quill in his hand. The army will not give currency to this Bonaparte, for the effigy is far heavier weighted with lead than with gold. Surely, French soldiers in exchange for this false Napoleon's coin, will not take part in rebellion, enormities, massacres, crime, and treason. His villainous efforts would only prove futile, for not a regiment would rise. Then again, what can be his reason? His character has doubtless its dark side, but why pronounce him a thorough scoundrel. As he is incapable physically of great outrages, why give him credit for planning them? Is he not in honour bound? Has he not said: 'In Europe no one doubts my word! Let us calm our fears.'

[. . .]

Was not Louis Bonaparte the author of a work called *Pauperism*? [His ministers] Count Potochi, a Republican, and Count d'Orsay, a Liberal, formed part of the intimate circle frequenting the Elysée. Louis Bonaparte would say to Potochi: "I am one of the Democracy;" and to D'Orsay, "I am a man for Liberty."

[. . .]

A feeling of complete security pervaded all parties, with few exceptions. Some of us in the Assembly still had our doubts, and we continued to shake our heads; but we were looked upon as idiots.

* * *

Louis Bonaparte, *Proclamation of the President of the Republic*, Dec. 2, 1850

Bonaparte posted this proclamation all over Paris the night of the coup, attempting to forestall popular resistance. His appeals to the Napoleonic myth and to the pervading fear of further violence, combined with the mistrust of the working-class for the Liberal opposition in the wake of the June Days, combined to prevent a unified, city-wide Parisian uprising while laying the groundwork for his eventual declaration of the Second Empire.

Appeal to the People!

Frenchmen! the present situation can last no longer. Every day but increases the dangers of the country.

The Assembly, which should strongly uphold order, has become a focus for conspiracies. The patriotism of three hundred members has been unable to put a stop to its fatal tendencies. Instead of making laws for the general welfare, it creates arms for civil war; it attacks the power with which the People have invested me; it gives encouragement to all evil passions; it jeopardizes the peace of France. I have dissolved the Assembly, and I call upon the People to judge between it and me.

As you know, the main object for electing the Constitution was to weaken the power which you were then about to confer on me. Six millions of votes loudly protested against it, yet I have faithfully upheld it, and remained unmoved by provocations, calumnies, or insults. Now that the fundamental compact has ceased to be respected by the very men who constantly recall it, and those who have ruined two monarchies endeavour to keep my hands tied that they may overthrow the Republic, my duty is to frustrate such treacherous

schemes, to uphold the Republic, and save the country by appealing to the solemn judgment of the only sovereign I acknowledge in France—the People.

[. . .]

This mission consists in putting an end to the revolutionary era, by satisfying the legitimate wants of the People, and by protecting them against subversive interests, and to found institutions which will stand the test of time beyond the age of man, on which something durable can be based. I am convinced that the instability of power, and the preponderance of a single Assembly, are the real causes of trouble and discord. I submit to your suffrage the following fundamental base of a Constitution, which will afterwards be developed by the Assemblies.

1. A responsible Chief elected for ten years.
2. Ministers dependent alone on the Executive Power.
3. A Council of State, formed of the most celebrated men, who shall prepare laws and uphold them in debate before the Legislative Body.
4. A Legislative Body, elected by universal suffrage, which shall discuss and carry out the law without that publicity that corrupts the elections.
5. A second Assembly, composed of the most illustrious men in the country, with full power to protect the fundamental compact and public liberty. This system, created by the First Consul at the commencement of the century, has already given peace and prosperity to France, and it will still continue to do so.

Such is my deep conviction. If you are of the same mind, declare so by your votes. If, on the contrary, you prefer a Monarchical or Republican Government, borrowed from some unknown past, or some imaginary future, answer in the negative.

Thus, for the first time since 1804, your vote can be guided by circumstances, knowing exactly for whom and for what purpose it is given.

If I fail to obtain the majority of your suffrages, I shall convoke a new Assembly, and remit the commission I have received from you to them.

But if you believe that the same cause is yours, of which my name is the symbol—that is to say, France regenerated by the Revolution of 1849, organized by the Emperor—then proclaim it by confirming the power I ask of you.

France and Europe will be saved from anarchy, obstacles will be removed, rivalries will cease, for the People's decision will be respected by all as a decree of Providence.

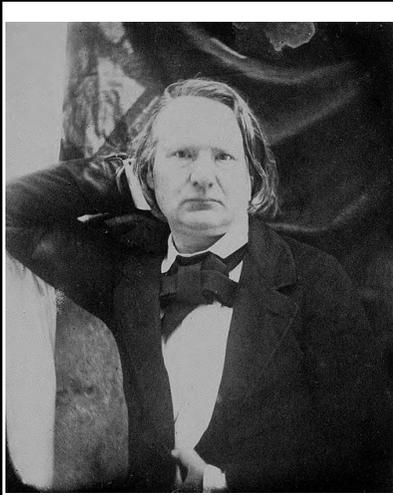
Given at the Elysée Palace, December 2, 1850.

Louis Napoleon Bonaparte.

* * *



*A mass-produced propaganda print from 1858 shows **Louis Napoleon**, family man, with the ghosts of his uncle and cousin, i.e. **Napoleon the First and Second**.*



Victor Hugo photographed in 1853, two years into his exile, by either his son Charles or his son-in-law, Auguste Vaquerie; the two of them remained in France publishing opposition journals, only spared from prison due to Hugo's continued celebrity.

from Victor Hugo, *History of a Crime*, 1877

Victor Hugo had been elected to the National Assembly in 1848, and after initial support, had become one of the most vocal figures in the Republican opposition to Louis Napoleon. As such, he was one of many Representatives marked for arrest in the purge that accompanied the coup d'etat. As members of the Assembly began to be hunted down and arrested the night of the coup, those who escaped attempted to warn their comrades, meet, and formulate a plan of resistance.

"Are you aware of what is taking place?" said he.

"[Representative] Baune is in prison," answered Michel.

"The Republic is the prisoner," said Pierre Lefranc.

"Have you not seen the placards?"

"No."

Pierre Lefranc then informed them that people were eagerly reading the bills posted on the walls at the corner of the street where he resided; it was then he learned that the blow had been struck.

"Blow indeed!" exclaimed Michel; "why not say crime?"

Pierre Lefranc further stated that two proclamations and one decree had been issued, all on white paper, following closely together, the decree being printed in larger type.

The news was strengthened by Laissac, an ex-Constituent, who lived at No. 4, Cité Gaillard, which was in Michel de Bourges' neighbourhood. Laissac added that other arrests had been made during the night. Moments were now precious.

They hastened to the Rue de Boursault to warn Yvan, Secretary to the Assembly, who had been elected by the Left. A meeting must at once be arranged of all the Republican representatives still at large.

"I will go in search of Victor Hugo," said Versigny.

It was now eight o'clock, and I was at work that morning in bed, when the servant, looking much startled, came in, saying, —

"Sir, a Representative of the people wishes to see you."

"What name?"

"Monsieur Versigny."

"Admit him."

Versigny told me at once what had taken place, including the meeting at ex-Constituent Laissac's. Rising hastily, I said to him on leaving me:—

"Go immediately and warn the other Representatives."

* * *

from Louis Bonaparte, *Proclamation of the President of the Republic to the Army, Dec. 2, 1850*

In previous uprisings, the decision of the Army, and especially the National Guard, to support either the revolutionaries or the ruling régime had been key to success or failure. Bonaparte not only played upon his uncle's military legacy, but on the role of the executive as general-in-chief of the army. As Hugo suggests in the following section, more tangible arguments were offered to key officers.

Soldiers! be proud of your appointment, for you will save the country. I rely on your not violating the laws; and you must ensure respect for the chief law of the country—National Sovereignty—of which I am the Legitimate Representative.

You have suffered, like myself, from obstacles, hindering both the good for which I have laboured and preventing all demonstrations of sympathy on your part in my favor These obstructive measures have been set aside.

The Assembly which attempted to overthrow the authority invested in me by the whole Nation has now ceased to rule.

I therefore appeal to the loyalty of the People and the Army in the following words: "Either give me the means of insuring your prosperity, or elect another man in my place."

Both in the years of 1830 and 1848 you were treated as vanquished men. After dishonouring your heroic disinterestedness, disdainful to consult your wishes, heedless of your sympathies—you, the very elite of the Nation—I am now determined, at this momentous time, that the Army shall make itself heard.

Vote, therefore, as free citizens, not forgetting that as soldiers you owe implicit obedience to the Chief of the State—a duty strongly imposed on the Army, from a general to a private soldier.

I am responsible both to the People and to posterity for my actions. I am, therefore, compelled to take measures which to me appear indispensable for public welfare.

[. . .]

Be ready to repress every attack made against the free exercise of the People's Sovereignty.

Soldiers! I will not dwell on the memories attached to my name; they are engraved on your hearts. The ties which unite us are indissoluble, for your history is also mine.

* * *

from Victor Hugo, *History of a Crime*

Though Hugo and other Republican leaders organized armed resistance in some neighborhoods and barricades were spontaneously thrown up in others, the resistance did not spread and the army supported the coup. On Dec. 4, troops were sent into neighborhoods that had not recognized the new regime with orders to terrorize the populace against any future uprising. 400 people were killed in what eyewitnesses, including Hugo, described as massacres. The coup's success quickly became clear; thousands of dissident writers, activists, and politicians were forcibly deported to the colonies, while thousands more—including many Republican leaders—fled the country to avoid imprisonment. Hugo himself ended up on the island of Guernsey, midway between England and France, where he remained in exile throughout the reign of Louis Bonaparte, soon to become Napoleon III. There he

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published many hundreds of pages of invective against the Emperor, which were smuggled into France, tens of thousands of copies of which were smuggled into France. Even after Napoleon publicly granted him amnesty, Hugo refused to step foot in France again until it was once again a Republic.

The following story is current in the army. A colonel whose name is known, hesitated to take the command of his regiment, when a messenger from the Elysée presented him with a sealed packet saying, "Colonel, it must be allowed that we run great risks. I have therefore been requested to hand you this envelope, in which you will find a hundred thousand francs in bank-notes to meet all contingencies." The packet was accepted and the regiment moved forward.

On the 2d of December this same colonel remarked to a lady that evening, "My general's epaulets were gained this morning, and a hundred thousand francs besides."

[. . .]

There were seventy-eight Democrats whose influence in their own immediate neighbourhood was dreaded at the Elysée. As these men were likely leaders of the barricades, they were to be arrested even within their own walls. A more daring outrage was even contemplated: sixteen Representatives of the people were like-wise to be seized in the same way. Those magistrates amongst the commissaries of police who favoured the ruffianly idea were selected for the latter work. Each man had a Representative allotted to him.

[. . .]

"They have recognized you," said Charamaule to me.

Near Chateau d'Eau the crowd surrounded me. Some young men shouted, "Vive Victor Hugo!" and one inquired, "Citizen Victor Hugo, what are we to do?"

"Tear down the coup d'etat's seditious placards, and cry, 'Vive la Constitution!'"

"If they fire on us?" said a young workman.

"Fly to arms."

"Bravo!" the crowd shouted.

"Louis Bonaparte is a rebel," I added. "He has now steeped himself in crime. We, the Representatives of the People, declare him to be outlawed. There is, however, no necessity for us to make the declaration, since his own act of treason has rendered him an outlaw. Citizens, you have two hands; take right in the one and your gun in the other, and run down Bonaparte!"

"Bravo! bravo!" the people shouted.

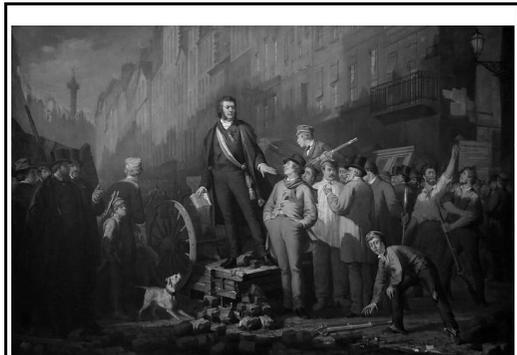
[. . .]

At two o'clock five brigades, commanded by Cotte, Bourgon, Canrobert, Dulac, and Eeybell, five batteries of artillery, sixteen thousand four hundred men—cavalry and infantry, lancers, cuirassiers, grenadiers, and gunners—were formed up, without any one knowing the reason, between the Rue de la Paix and the Faubourg Poissonnifere. Two guns were laid so as to command the entrance of all the streets. There were eleven in position on the Boulevard Poissonnifere alone. The infantry had their muskets at the ready and the cavalry had their sabres drawn. What could all this mean? It was a curious sight, and was worth the trouble of coming to see. From the pavement on each side of

the street, from the windows of the houses, the crowd gazed down full of confidence and trust.

Little by little, however, this confidence diminished, and curiosity gave place to surprise. Those who passed through this eventful time will never forget it. It was evident that there was something beneath the surface. But what could it be? It was all shrouded in the darkest gloom. Was it possible to imagine Paris let down into a cellar? A low roof seemed to weigh down men and crush them. We were, it appeared, walled in by the unknown and the unexpected. All seemed to be worked by the exercise of some mysterious will.

But, after all, we were strong; we were the Republic, we were Paris, we were France. What was there to fear? Nothing. And so the people continued to shout, "Down with Bonaparte!" The troops remained silent, but the shining sabres had been drawn from their scabbards and the lighted matches smoked at the corners of the streets. Blacker and blacker grew the crowd, whilst the silence was more complete and threatening.



*The Republican Representative **Alphonse Baudin** on the **Barricade du Faubourg Saint-Antoine**, shortly before he was killed by National Guards in two days of street battles and massacres securing Louis Napoleon's power.*

[. . .]

History has handed down to us the accounts of many terrible massacres, but there was some reason for each of them. Saint

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Bartholomew and the Dragonnades had their origin in religious differences. The Sicilian Vespers and the Butcheries of September were the offspring of patriotism. In each case they crushed the enemy or rooted out the foreigner; but the carnage of the Boulevard Montmartre was a useless crime for which no reason could be assigned. And yet a reason, and a very terrible one, did exist. Let us say what it was. There are two mighty powers in the State—the Law and the People. A man murders the law. He feels the hour of retribution draw near, and there is nothing left for him to do but to slay the people.

And he does so.

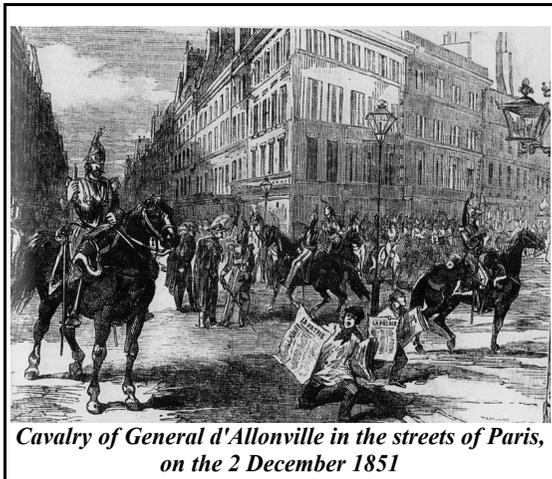
The 2d of December was the risk, the 4th was the method to make things secure.

Rising indignation had to be stifled by abject terror. The Eumenides of Justice halted terror-struck before the Fury that had risen up in its path. Before Erinnyes stood Medusa.

What a terrible triumph there was in overthrowing Nemesis.

Louis Bonaparte achieved that glory, and at the same time reached the pinnacle of his infamy. Let us tell how he did it, and recall what History did not see—the murder of a people by one man!

On a sudden, at a given signal, by a musket fired-it signifies not where or by whom—a deadly fire of grape was



Cavalry of General d'Allonville in the streets of Paris, on the 2 December 1851

opened on the crowd. Grape-shot is a crowd of itself; it is death in pellets. It knows not where it comes from or whither it is going; it slays, and passes on. And yet it has a species of soul—it acts with premeditation and executes a design. The movement was an unexpected one. It was like a handful of thunderbolts dashed upon the people. Nothing could be more simple. It had all the easiness of the solution of a riddle. The grape-shot annihilated the populace.

What are you doing there? Die. Are you passing through the street? It is a crime. Why do you oppose the Government? Government is a cut-throat. It has stated that it will do a certain thing: it has commenced it; it must be carried out. If society is to be saved, the people must be destroyed.

[. . .]

In an instant there was a series of murders extending for a quarter of a mile along the boulevard. Eleven pieces of cannon demolished the Hotel Sallandrouze. One shot pierced right through twenty-eight houses. The Baths of Jouvence were riddled. Tortoni's was destroyed. One whole quarter of Paris was a scene of terrified fright. The air was full of cries of anguish.

Death, sudden death, was on all sides. No one expected anything. People were falling on all sides. Whence did it come?

[. . .]

Xavier Durrieu came on the boulevard. He said afterwards, "I took sixty steps, and I stumbled against sixty corpses." Then he realized it was a heinous crime to be in the street. It was also a crime to be in your own house. The murderers entered the houses and slaughtered the inmates.

[. . .]

There were some gallant feats of arms. Colonel Rochefort, in the Eue de la Paix, charged at the head of his Lancers a number of nursemaids and children. He was afterwards made a general, no doubt for this distinguished service. All the men who took part in this unrelatable exploit had some hidden peril which urged them on. Herbillon had Zaatcha behind him; Saint Arnaud, Kabylia; Eenault, the affairs of the villages of Saint André and Saint Hippolyte; Espinasse, Eome and the attack of June 30th; Magnan, his debts. Must we go on? Dr. Piquet, a man of seventy years of age, was killed in his drawing-room by a shot in the stomach. Jollivart the painter was shot through the head before his easel; his brains bespattered the picture upon which he was engaged. William Jesse, an English captain, narrowly escaped a bullet, which struck the ceiling just above his head; in the reading-room of the Magasins de Prophète, a father, mother, and two daughters were cut down. Lefilleul, another bookseller, was shot in his shop on the Boulevard Poissonnifere. Boyer, a chemist, whilst standing behind his counter, was speared by the Lancers. A captain, killing every one he met, took by storm the house known as the Grand Balcon. A servant was killed in the Magasin de Bran dus. Eeybell in the midst of the discharge of grape, said to Sax, "And I also compose melodies."

[. . .]

No one escaped; muskets and pistols were used at point-blank range. The New Year was drawing near, and there were shops full of New Year's gifts. A child of thirteen years of age, flying before the fire of the soldiers, took refuge in a shop in the Arcade Sauveur, and hid himself under a heap of toys. He was seized and slaughtered, his murderers with a laugh enlarging the wounds with their sabres. A

woman told me, "You could hear the little creature's cries all through the arcade."

[. . .]

The carnage was terrible. Whilst the butchery under Carrelet's orders occupied the boulevard, the brigade under Bourgon's command pillaged the Temple; Marulaz's brigade pillaged the Rue Rambuteau; whilst Regnault's division employed itself on the left bank of the Seine. Regnault was the general who had given Charras his pistols at Mascara. In 1848 he had said to him, "We must organize a revolution throughout Europe," and Charras had replied to him, "Not so fast." Louis Bonaparte had gazetted him a general in July, 1851.

The Rue aux Ours was very much changed. Morny, speaking to Bonaparte that evening said, "There is one good mark for the 15th Light Infantry; they have swept the Rue aux Ours clean."

* * *

The Opposition Demoralized

from Victor Hugo, *Béranger*, 1847

Even before the Revolution of 1848, both political and cultural opposition were losing strength. An endless stream of press restrictions and prosecutions had put an end to any open opposition by 1840, while after the Revolution the events of May and June, followed by the police state quickly established by Napoleon III, likewise forced all political opposition either underground, into prison, or outside the borders of France. Simultaneously, the pairing of politics with literature and art which was championed by Romanticism began to come undone, as those in the avant-garde who had been politically motivated became disillusioned and disappeared due to poverty and depression, or else shifted their collective practice in other directions. Some mainstream Romantics such as Hugo, Lamartine, and Sue, continued to wield their celebrity to support progressive causes, but soon many of them, too, were succumbing to fatigue and doubt.

"You have done well," said Béranger to me, "to be content with the popularity which one can regulate. I have a great deal of trouble to withdraw myself from the popularity which carries you with it. What slave is there like the man who has the misfortune to be popular in this fashion? Look at their Reformist banquets. They kill me; and I have the

greatest difficulty in the world to avoid them. I make excuses; I am old, I have a bad digestion, I never dine out, I cannot alter my rule, etc. Bah!"

"You owe it to yourself; a man like you must pay this forfeit, and a hundred others in the same way. I am exaggerating, eh? Nevertheless, one must smile and put the best face on it. Ah, yes! but that is merely the part of a Court jester. To amuse the prince, to amuse the people the same thing. Where is the difference between the poet following the Court and the poet following the crowd? Marot in the sixteenth century, Béranger in the nineteenth; but, my friend, it may be the same man. I do not consent to it. I lend myself to it as little as possible. They make a mistake about me. I am a man of opinion, and not of party. Oh, I hate their popularity! I am very much afraid that our poor Lamartine is going in for this popularity. I pity him. He will see what it is. Hugo, I have some common-sense. I tell you, be content with the popularity you have; it is true, it is real. Now, I will give you another experience of mine. In 1829, when I was in La Force [Prison] on account of my songs, how popular I was! There was not a hosier, a pastry-cook, nor a reader of the *Constitutional* who did not think it right to come to console me in my cell. 'Let us go and see Béranger!' They came. And I, who was in the mood to muse upon the silliness of poets, or was seeking for a refrain or a rhyme between the bars of my window, was obliged, instead of finding my verse, to receive my hosier! Poor devil popularity! I was not left alone in my prison. Oh, if it were to happen again! How they did bore me!"

* * *

**from Orlo Williams, *Vie de Bohême: A Patch of Romantic
Paris, 1913***

The Revolution of 1830 was of the highest importance for France: it was the inevitable explosion of dissatisfaction, both political and artistic, with the powers that ruled. What I wish to make clear is that, whereas before this date Bohemia, if it existed, was but an unconsidered fringe on the ancient student life of the Quartier Latin, after 1830 it not only received a population but became a force. For a few years it was an integral part of the larger Paris, a considerable element in public opinion and, to some extent, in social life, a factor that could not be ignored. Disturbance, however, yielded to peace, and the interests of the public shifted. The living spirit of Bohemia gradually hardened into a dead tradition. By 1848 independence and individual liberty, the watchwords of Bohemia, were replaced in the mind of citizens by thoughts of social reform which culminated in the Republic of 1848. Art, for the time, fell from her place of glory, and Bohemia relapsed for ever into obscurity.

[. . .]

By 1830 Paris was a boiling cauldron of passionate enthusiasm. Revolution was aflame once more. Barricades—the mere word is a trumpet-call to Frenchmen—had been erected once more in the streets, and once more blood had flowed in their defense. Paris for years had smouldered with indignation, and now her young men glowed with triumph. The people should come to its own again, and they should be its champions. The eyes of France were on them, and they knew that their comrades in the provinces, intoxicated by the songs of Béranger, enraged by the petty vexations of Royalist officials, were envying them

their opportunity and eagerly looking for any chance that would bring them to the city that so nobly stood for liberty.

The Revolution of 1830 was not only political, it was also artistic, and the artistic results were really the more permanent. This artistic revolution is generally known as the Romantic movement, about which so much has been written that I need not refer to it at length.

[. . .]

So the year 1830 saw Paris harbouring in her garrets a host of enthusiasts, most of them very young, burning with ideals and flushed with apparently glorious victories. They felt themselves incorporated in one great brotherhood of defiance to established authority, so that those who mocked their poverty and lawlessness in the name "Bohemian" were unconsciously justified, for a corporate name is the sign of a corporate existence. *La bohème* in 1830 was not a haphazard collection of dilettanti and artistic eccentrics; it was a fellowship inspired by similar enthusiasms and bound together by the struggle against similar misfortunes.

Misfortunes, indeed, were not slow to come. Society is wonderfully quick to repair the breaches in its walls made by gallant assaulters, and the heroes who have been foremost in the attack find that their bravely made passage has closed behind them, and that they are left to be broken and starved into submission. So it was after 1830. Louis Philippe was at heart a Royalist who had little understanding of the Revolution. His great achievement was to keep on his throne for eighteen years by encouraging the moneyed middle class, thus laying the foundation of French industrial prosperity. *Enrichissez-vous* was the

order of the day, an order ironically unsuitable to the reformers of Bohemia. Those among them whose ideals were political rather than literary became uncompromising Republicans, formed secret societies, carried on a violent Press campaign of articles and caricatures against Louis Philippe and his ministers, and plotted further armed risings in Paris, the most serious of which was the ill-fated insurrection of the Cloitre Saint-Merri in 1832. They were to find that they had presumed too far upon their strength. In spite of the Legitimist risings in La Vendee, labour troubles at Lyons, and disaffection in Paris, Louis Philippe's government was powerful enough to meet all emergencies. Press laws were made doubly stringent, secret societies were prohibited, caricatures were exposed to a censorship, and the police was exceedingly vigilant. Above all, the bourgeoisie held firm. They were tasting prosperity and power, and had no desire to let political disturbance interfere with their enjoyment. Happy were those who could repent of youthful political excesses and return to comfortable homes and settled careers. Those who had no refuge but Bohemia came to know the chill of disappointment and repression. Their bright dreams faded away into grey reality; they found themselves suspects and outcasts, with the problem of subsistence, instead of being miraculously solved, only rendered more acute. They had no outlet for their energies, and those whom neither the barricades nor the cholera of 1832 carried off saw the fellowship of assault followed by the isolation of retreat. They drifted away in little bands to join the societies of social reformers like Saint-Simon, Fourier, or Père Enfantin. Consumption, starvation, and suicide were the ends of many of them, and their traces gradually faded from Bohemia, which became identified purely with the lives of its literary and artistic inhabitants.

* * *

George Sand, *Preface to Fadette*, 1851



George Sand—without her trademark male clothes—in an 1852 mass produced carte-de-visite photograph by Félix Nadar.

Throughout the 1840s, Sand wrote a stream of vastly popular novels questioning gender and class from a socialist perspective. Like many socialists, she was crushed by the implications of the June uprising, and began to devote much of her output to sentimental stories of rural life. Compounding the problem for Sand and other writers, artists, journalists, and intellectuals was strict censorship and the complete control of the media by the Bonapartist regime; theaters, exhibition spaces, and concert-halls were also highly centralized and funding placed directly or indirectly under state control.

After the terrible days of June, 1848 were at an end, I withdrew from the world agitated to the very depths of my soul by the scenes of violence through which we had passed, and hoping to regain in solitude, at least my faith, if not my peace of mind.

If I claimed to be a philosopher, I might believe or pretend to believe, that faith in ideas enables the mind to maintain its serenity in the midst of the deplorable events of contemporaneous history.

But I make no such pretensions. I humbly acknowledge that the conviction that Providence has a future in store for us, would have no power to sustain the soul of an artist through the trials of a present

fraught with gloom and convulsed by civil war. Men who enter the fray who take an active part in politics must, whatever may be the circumstances, be a prey to alternate hope and despair, rage and exultation, the elation of triumph or the exasperation of defeat.

But for the poor poet as for the woman who sits, an idle spectator of events, having no direct or personal part in them, there is whatever may be the outcome of the struggle a profound abhorrence of bloodshed on either side, grief and despair at beholding the hatred, the insults, the threats, the calumnies which ascend to heaven, like a foul holocaust, in the train of social upheavals.

At such moments as these, a genius like Dante's, impetuous and indomitable, writes with his tears, his nerves at their utmost tension, dipping his pen in gall a terrible poem, a drama filled with groans and torture. One's soul must, like his, have been tempered by fire and sword, before one's imagination could conceive the horrors of a symbolic Inferno, when the wretched Purgatory of actual earthly desolation is staring him in the face.

The artist of our less virile and more sensitive age who is the reflection and echo of his generation cannot resist the impulse to avert his gaze and distract his imagination by turning toward an ideal state of peace and calm contemplation. He need not blush for the weakness to which he yields, for it is also his duty. At a time when such evils arise from men's hatred of each other and lack of mutual understanding, the artist's mission is to extol moderation, mutual confidence, and friendship, and thereby to remind poor, callous, or disheartened humanity, that purity of morals, tender sentiments, and primitive justice still exist or can exist in this world.

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Direct allusions to present ills, appeals to excited passions these do not lead to salvation; a sweet song, an air on the rustic pipe, a tale with which to lull the little ones to sleep, secure and free from pain, is worth far more than the portrayal of real evils, whose colors are deepened and intensified by the power of fiction.

To preach peace and harmony to men engaged in cutting each other's throats, is like a voice crying in the wilderness. There are times when men's souls are so disturbed that they are deaf to any direct appeal. Since those June days, of which present events are the inevitable consequence, the author of the tale which you are about to read has assumed the task of being amiable, even if he should die of chagrin. He has allowed them to ridicule his pastoral sketches, just as they have ridiculed everything else, but has not troubled himself as to the decisions of dogmatic criticism. He knows that he has given pleasure to those who love that strain, and that to give pleasure to such as suffer from the same malady as himself a horror of hatred and the vengeance which follows in its footsteps is to do them all the good which they are capable of accepting. A brief enjoyment, it is true, a fleeting consolation, but more genuine than the tirades of passion and more impressive than a classic presentation of logical facts.

GEORGE SAND.

NOHANT, December 21, 1851.

Translated by Mrs. James M. Lancaster

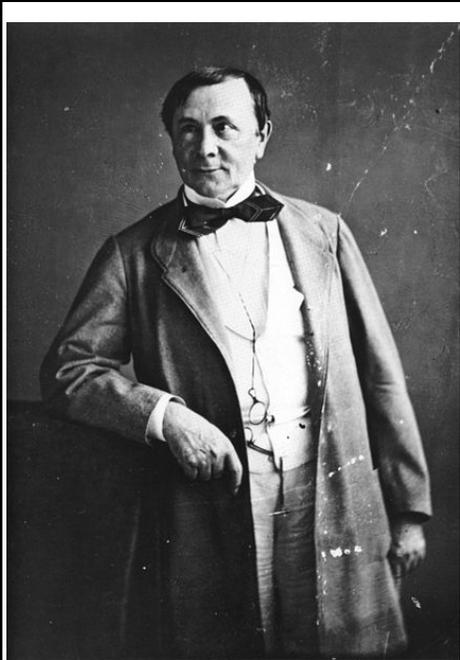
* * *

**from Orlo Williams, *Vie de Bohème: A Patch of Romantic
Paris, 1913***

By 1835, the original Romanticist avant-garde was disintegrating; many of its most prominent theorists and organizers had lost faith in their power to affect real change; out of favor with their more respectable—and influential—former comrades, they were unable to publish regularly and either descended into abject poverty, withdrew into regular jobs and gradually distanced themselves from the community, or moved into less marginal literary work such as journalism or ghost-writing. Others, such as Théophile Gautier and Gérard de Nerval, actively sought to continue the avant-garde project, acting as organizers and mentors of a new generation of avant-gardists. Younger generations entering into the Romanticism found themselves in a community that was numerically larger, but much less focused and rigorous, than it had been five or ten years earlier. What had been the Romanticist underground was changing: under the name of Bohemia it would become a new entity, with complex ties to the communities that had spawned it.

Bohemia was glorious for a few years after 1830 as it has never been since because it proclaimed a creed, the creed of Romanticism. It was glorious then because, with Romanticism, Bohemia was a living force. Given this connexion, there was some point in the bravado, the extravagances and conceits of Bohemian life. They were an irregular army, those young men, and they rejoiced in their irregularity. 'Epater le bourgeois' was a legitimate war-cry when the bourgeois stood for all that was reactionary in art. To scare the grocer with a slouch hat and a medieval oath was not only a youthful ebullition, it was a symbolic act. The sombrero defied artistic convention as typified in the top hat; the medieval oath, in its contrast with the paler expletives of modernity, symbolized the return to life and colour in art after a century of grey

abstraction. It was with the decline of Romanticism that Bohemia lost its living spirit. Unlike Republicanism, that gathered unseen strength in failure to blossom for a more worthy generation. Romanticism lost its vitality through its very success. It may be likened to some conflux of waters which to force from its way the inert mass of an obstacle rises to a mighty head: the obstacle is swept away, and the seething waters



*The media magnate **Émile de Girardin** was the first to introduce advertizing into the news, making his publications far cheaper than his competitors; he soon became an outspoken enemy of Napoleon III, publishing subversive journals from outside France. His wife—long since separated—was the Romanticist poet Delphine Gay, a member of the Cénacle group.*

resolve themselves into a workaday river humbly serving the sea. So the Romantic movement has served literature for many decades now, and it was quietly flowing between the banks before Louis Philippe lost his throne. Success, it might be said, came to it too soon, especially as success in that day meant money. The dangers of Republicanism were staved off for the moment by force; the dangers of Romanticism were for ever discounted by payment.

Authorship was made to serve a commercial end, and all was over. In 1836 Emile de Girardin founded *La Presse*, which was sold at a far lower price than any other paper. The inevitable followed. Circulation went up by leaps and bounds, contributors were paid respectable prices, expenses were defrayed by

the profits of advertisement, and journalism in France was at once on a commercial footing, for other papers were not slow to follow. Literature, from being purely an art, quickly became a trade. The struggle for a new artistic ideal gave way to the struggle for loaves and fishes, which is contemporary with mankind. A man's artistic creed went for nothing, when all the public asked was that he should make himself conspicuous before they gave him their countenance. Once artistic success became a matter of royalties it was an easy prey to bourgeois conditions, which were that art and literature should either be merely entertaining or point a respectable moral. Only a few Romantics were proof against this insidious influence. To those recalcitrants we owe the motto "Art for art's sake."

The effect of this change upon Bohemia is not difficult to imagine. *La vie de bohème* implies youth, so that its generations change as rapidly as those of a university. The generation of 1830 had either disappeared or become famous—that is, potentially rich—in a few years. The struggle which had convulsed all Paris was a thing of the past, and Romanticism was so far accepted, swallowed, and digested that by 1843 the necessity was felt for reverting to the classical tradition again, for a change, with the so-called “cult of good sense.” There was no longer any trumpet-call to which Bohemia could respond as a brotherhood, as Victor Hugo learned when, on wishing to enlist a fresh army to go into battle for "Les Burgraves," he was told [by Célestin Nanteuil] “Il n'y a plus de jeunes gens.” The swaggering heroes of 1830 were now writers of successful novels and comedies, or safely chained, as critics, to the careers of remunerative journals. Rebellion was impossible, for there was nothing to rebel against.

* * *

from Théodore de Banville, *The Romanticist Dawn*, 1866

*Théodore de Banville was initiated into the avant-garde by Théophile Gautier shortly after the dissolution of the original Romanticist cénacles, and began publishing in the journal l'Artiste, the mouthpiece of the Bohème Doyenné group. While seeking to curb the excesses and overt emotionalism of much Romanticist verse, he was nonetheless outspoken in decrying the degeneration of the movement that he saw occurring within his own generation, and many of his poem are, essentially, open letters to the avant-garde community. In **The Romanticist Dawn**, he expresses the sense of impotence felt by many Romanticists of his generation.*

Hail to thee eighteen-hundred
And Thirty! Dawn that sundered
The night of things unborn;
 O laughing morn!

Dawn bursting into sunlight!
Whose blended lights like one light
Renew, even in my dreams,
 Their rosy gleams.

With radiance amethystal,
Turning the clouds to crystal,
Thou breakest and the night
 Takes sudden flight.

Crowned with ambrosial garlands,
The exiled Muse from far lands
Returns with subtile art
 To touch the heart.

[. . .]

Alas, delusive Vision!
Where is thy light Elysian?
The days on which it shone
 Are dead and gone!

Where are they?—Singers, Sages,
That charmed the feast of ages,
Those heroes noble-souled,
 Those hearts of gold,

Brave hearts of honour zealous?
The most lie dead. Their fellows,
Grown gray in glory's quest,
 Now long for rest.

Their great and noble story
Is like a legend hoary
That by the hearth's pale light
 Is told at night.

A clown now wears the cluster
Of jewels rare whose lustre
Once showered from souls profound
 Their radiance round.

Translated by William John Robertson

Section 3: Divergences in the Avant-Garde



*In the course of the 1840s and '50s, the avant-garde developed beyond Romanticism, developing into a multitude of intersecting movements. In literature and painting, craft and detail were often developed to a point of almost mystical precision, as in one of Gustave Moreau's last major paintings, 1896's **Jupiter and Semele**. Some explored everyday life with a frankness and detail not seen since the Middle Ages, while others returned to Classical themes, infusing them with darkness, sexuality, and experimentation unimagined by Classicists in the 18th Century.*

f

**from Orlo Williams, *Vie de Bohème: A Patch of Romantic*
*Paris, 1913***

So the symbols of Romanticism became the realities of Bohemia after all that they symbolized was as lifeless as a cancelled bank-note. Further, the population of Bohemia lost that great asset in life, personal pride. Their predecessors of 1830 were arrogant, no doubt, but with the arrogance of an advance-guard [avant-garde] in a desperate venture. There was no desperate venture now toward, and advance meant, not progress, but prosperity. The poorer brethren of art who peopled Bohemia were now, inasmuch as they were not prosperous, failures. They had no sense of intellectual achievement to keep up their courage, when such achievement was measured in gold. It was inevitable that their moral should be affected; the recklessness, which was formerly that of bravado, became that of despair, and a less reputable atmosphere grew up round Bohemia which has never been dispelled from its tradition.

Nevertheless, dead as the spirit was, the tradition of 1830 remained very strong, being kept alive not only by oral transmission, as all traditions are, but also by the art of the sturdy few who remained faithful to the uncompromising standard of disinterestedness in art which it implied. Gautier, Flaubert, Baudelaire, the de Goncourts, and a few others stood out unflinchingly against commercialism on the one hand and prosy doctrinairism on the other. Their struggle was not wholly effectual, but, so far as Bohemia is concerned, was important. After 1848, when everything had to have a social 'purpose' and art for its own sake seemed dead, they sat down, like the Psalmist, by the rivers of Babylon and remembered Zion. From their regrets the legend of 'la sainte bohème' arose idealized and purified, and it was made immortal in pages of prose by Gautier and in de Banville's "Song of his Regrets for 1830."

* * *

from Théodore de Banville, *The Romanticist Dawn*, to Charles Asselineau, 1866

Banville worked closely with a group of young Romanticist historians and archivists who, by the 1860s, were struggling to rediscover and preserve the memory of the early years of the community, which had been rapidly forgotten or erased even within mainstream Romanticism. Leading this effort was the bibliographer and archivist Charles Asselineau, to whom this poem about Romanticist historiography, indicative of this generation's close and reciprocal relationship



*Romanticist archivist and historian **Charles Asselineau**, drawn by Léopold Flameng, an artist working in the Parnassian network.*

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between communal history and poetry, is dedicated. In particular these historians were concerned with representing the scope and diversity of that community, and Banville's poem is full of names of avant-gardists who, by the 1860s, were familiar only to a small, tightly-knit core of people.

Farewell, Romance star-crowned!
But not one link renowned
O' the antique chain forgo,
Asselineau!

As Homer's muse rehearses,
In skilled and sounding verses,
The galleys and their freight
Of kings in state,

With deeds of fame refresh us!
Those volumes quaint and precious
In Renduel's rubric rare
Rehearse with care;

Marshal them in their order
From border unto border,
Con page and picture well
Back to Borel:

For thou their annals gleanest
So close that scarce the meanest
Of many names obscure
Escapes thy lure.

So, since thy blazon names thee
Our herald and proclaims thee
Guardian of glorious rhyme
Unto all time,

Tell us of Eighteen-Hundred
and Thirty, year that thundered
With storm and stress of fight
And splendours bright,

A glorious revelation
On which the loud oblation
Of hoarse Theresa's lips
 Now casts eclipse!

Thine be the tongue that clamours,
In days whereon the glammers
Of gilded gauds prevail,
 'Ye Vanquished, Hail!'

The Cult of Art

from Théophile Gautier, *Daniel Jovard, or the Conversion of a Classicist*, 1833

When the performance was over, Daniel returned to the paternal shop, but he was no longer the same as when he had emerged from it. The poor fellow had gone out full of faith and sound principles; he was returning shaken in his beliefs, hesitating, and mistrusting his most serious convictions.

He did not sleep a wink the whole night; he turned and twisted like a carp on a gridiron. Everything he had till then worshipped, he had just heard turned into derision; he was exactly in the position of a very stupid and very devout seminarist who has been listening to an atheist discussing religion. Ferdinand's remarks had awakened in him the heretical germs of revolt and incredulity that slumber in the depths of every man's conscience.

[. . .]

It is horrible to reflect that a few days had sufficed for the destruction of convictions cherished for years. But how was it possible for him to go on believing in a religion that had been turned into ridicule, especially when the man who ran it down talked fast, loud, long, and cleverly, in a handsome room and in an incredible dress?

Translated by F.C. de Sumichrast

* * *

from Philothée O’Neddy:

Preface to *Fire and Flame* (1833)

Young literature has so little been in mortal danger, it has so well developed its vital principle, that not only has it managed to multiply tenfold its own strength, to put the finishing touches on its revolution, but that it has yet known being rich enough, powerful enough gloriously to prelude a metaphysical crusade against society. Yes, now that it has completed all its beautiful reforms in the disguise of art, it devotes itself exclusively to the ruin of that which it calls the social lie—as the philosophy of the eighteenth century devoted itself to the destruction of that which it called the christian lie.

Translated by Joseph Carter

***Letter to Charles Asselineau* (Sept. 23, 1862)**

We dreamed of the reign of Art, it is true. It seemed to us that the day of Religion had, in its conditions of *exteriority*, been replaced by the *Aesthetic*.

Translated by Olchar Lindsann

* * *

From Théophile Gautier, *Preface to Mlle. de Maupin*, 1835



Théophile Gautier photographed by Félix Nadar, in 1855 still devoted to his distinctly Romanticist, anti-bourgeois clothing.

One of the central projects of the Jeunes-France France group was the development of a 'Cult of Art' which would channel the energies currently devoted to organised religion into a creative practice that would allow those energies to operate in continually new ways, freed of dogma and ideology. Its main proponents were Philothée O'Neddy and Théophile Gautier. O'Neddy—an ardent socialist—saw this new conception of Poetry and Art as a non-violent vehicle for revolutionary change, but in the years following the July Revolution became disenchanted with the

apparent hopelessness of the political situation, and gradually withdrew from the avant-garde community as he struggled to support his family after his father's death in the cholera epidemic of 1833. Gautier, who was more dedicated than anyone to ensuring the continuity of the avant-garde as an underground community, thus became the idea's principle spokesman, and took the idea in other directions, which would determine the main trajectory of the avant-garde until its re-politicization in the early 20th Century under the influence of Futurism and Dada. As developed by Gautier and his initiates, the Cult of Art was conceived of in terms of Hermetic and Occult traditions: a community composed of those willing to devote themselves to understanding complex, semi-secret languages of images and verbal patterns. Language itself was sacralized, and the acts of writing and reading became a form of secular, pantheist, or atheist prayer. For this reason, Gautier argues that to

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*'use' Art or Literature for political goals is nearly akin to sacrilege; what allowed Art and Writing to transform individuals was its withdrawal from the emerging consumer society in which every social activity was assigned a pragmatic, ideological, or economic 'function'. The phrase 'Art pour art' (Art for Art) appeared in the manifesto, and after being picked out by the English critic Walter Pater in the 1840s became a byword for the idea. As the Jeunes-France group was dissolving, Gautier published the manifesto of this project—Never a 'movement' so much as a strong tendency within the avant-garde—as his long **Preface to Mlle. de Maupin**, which begins by defending Romanticist literature from each of the various moral, political, religious, and economic positions from which it was being attacked.*

Say what they will, the age is an immoral one (if this word signifies anything, of which we have strong doubts), and we wish for no other proof than the quantity of immoral books it produces and the success that attends them. Books follow morals, and not morals books. The Regency made Crébillon, and not Crébillon the Regency. Boucher's little shepherdesses had their faces painted and their bosoms bare, because the little marchionesses had the same. Pictures are made according to models, and not models according to pictures. Someone has said somewhere that literature and the arts influence morals. Whoever he was, he was undoubtedly a great fool. It was like saying green peas make the spring grow, whereas green peas grow because it is spring, and cherries because it is summer. Trees bear fruits; it is certainly not the fruits that bear the trees, and this law is eternal and invariable in its variety; the centuries follow one another, and each bears its own fruit, which is not that of the preceding century; books are the fruits of morals.

By the side of the moral journalists, under this rain of homilies as under summer rain in some park, there has sprung up between the planks of the Saint-Simonian stage a theory of little mushrooms, of a novel and somewhat curious species, whose natural history we are about to give.

These are the utilitarian critics. Poor fellows! Their noses are too short to admit of their wearing spectacles, and yet they cannot see the length of their noses.

If an author threw a volume of romance or poetry on their desk, these gentlemen would turn round carelessly in their easy chair, poise it on its hinder legs, and balancing themselves with a capable air, say loftily:

"What purpose does this book serve? How can it be applied for the moralisation and well-being of the poorest and most numerous class? What! not a word of the needs of society, nothing about civilisation and progress? How can a man, instead of making the great synthesis of humanity, and pursuing the regenerating and providential idea through the events of history, how can he write novels and poems which lead to nothing, and do not advance our generation on the path of the future? How can he busy himself with form, and style, and rhyme in the presence of such grave interests? What are style, and rhyme, and form to us? They are of no consequence (poor foxes! they are too sour). Society is suffering, it is a prey to great internal anguish (translate no one will subscribe to utilitarian journals). It is for the poet to seek the cause of this uneasiness and to cure it. He will find the means of doing so by sympathising from his heart and soul with humanity (philanthropic poets! they would be something uncommon and charming). This poet we await, and on him we call with all our vows.

When he appears, his will be the acclamations of the crowd, his the palm, his the crown, his the Prytaneum."

Well and good! But as we wish our reader to remain awake until the end of this blissful preface, we shall not continue this very faithful imitation of the utilitarian style, which is, in its nature, tolerably soporific, and might, with advantage, take the place of laudanum and Academic discourses.

No, fools, no, goitrous cretins that you are, a book does not make gelatine soup; a novel is not a pair of seamless boots; a sonnet, a syringe with a continuous jet; nor a drama, a railway; all things which are essentially civilising and adapted to advance humanity on its path of progress.

By the guts of all the popes past, present, and future, no, and two hundred thousand times no!

We cannot make a cotton cap out of a metonymy, or put on a comparison like a slipper; we cannot use an antithesis as an umbrella, and we cannot, unfortunately, lay a medley of rhymes on our body after the fashion of a waistcoat. I have an intimate conviction that an ode is too light a garment for winter, and that we should not be better clad in strophe, antistrophe, and epode than was the cynic's wife who contented herself with merely her virtue as chemise, and went about as naked as one's hand, so history relates.

[. . .]

A novel has two uses one material and the other spiritual if we may employ such an expression in reference to a novel. Its material use means first of all some thousands of francs which find their way into the author's pocket, and ballast him in such a fashion that neither devil

nor wind can carry him off; to the bookseller, it means a fine thoroughbred horse, pawing and prancing with its cabriolet of ebony and steel, as Figaro says; to the papermaker, another mill beside some stream or other, and often the means of spoiling a fine site; to the printers, some tons of logwood for the weekly staining of their throats; to the circulating library, some piles of pence covered with very proletarian verdigris, and a quantity of fat which, if it were properly collected and utilised, would render whale-fishing superfluous. Its spiritual use is that when reading novels we sleep, and do not read useful, virtuous, and progressive journals, or other similarly indigestible and stupefying drugs.

[. . .]

Let anyone say after this that novels do not contribute to civilisation. I say nothing of tobacco-sellers, grocers, and dealers in fried potatoes, who have a very great interest in this branch of literature, the paper employed in it being commonly of a superior quality to that of newspapers.

In truth, it is enough to make one burst with laughing to hear the dissertations of these Republican or Saint-Simonian utilitarian gentlemen. I should, first of all, very much like to know the precise meaning of this great lanky substantive with which the void in their columns is daily truffled, and which serves them as a Shibboleth and sacramental term utility. What is this word, and to what is it applicable?

There are two sorts of utility, and the meaning of the vocable is always a relative one. What is useful for one is not useful for another. You are a cobbler, I am a poet. It is useful to me to have my first verse rhyme with my second. A rhyming dictionary is of great utility to me;

you do not want it to cobble an old pair of boots, and it is only right to say that a shoe-knife would not be of great service to me in making an ode. To this you will object that a cobbler is far above a poet, and that people can do without the one better than without the other. Without affecting to disparage the illustrious profession of cobbler, which I honour equally with that of constitutional monarch, I humbly confess that I would rather have my shoe unstitched than my verse badly rhymed, and that I should be more willing to go without boots than without poems. Scarcely ever going out, and walking more skillfully with my head than with my feet, I wear out fewer shoes than a virtuous Republican, who is always hastening from one minister to another in the hope of having some place flung to him.

I know that there are some who prefer mills to churches, and bread for the body to that for the soul. To such I have nothing to say. They deserve to be economists in this world and also in the next.

Is there anything absolutely useful on this earth and in this life of ours? To begin with, it is not very useful that we are on the earth and alive. I defy the most learned of the band to tell us of what use we are, unless it be to not subscribe to the *Constitutionnel*, nor any other species of journal whatsoever.

Next, the utility of our existence being admitted *a priori*, what are the things really useful for supporting it? Some soup and a piece of meat twice a day is all that is necessary to fill the stomach in the strict acceptation of the word. Man who finds a coffin six feet long by two wide more than sufficient after his death does not need much more room during his life. A hollow cube measuring seven or eight feet every way, with a hole to breathe through, a single cell in the hive, nothing more is wanted to lodge him and keep the rain off his back. A blanket

properly rolled around his body will protect him as well and better against the cold than the most elegant and best cut dress coat by Staub.

With this he will be able, literally, to subsist. It is truly said that it is possible to live on a shilling a day. But to prevent one's-self from dying is not living; and I do not see in what respect a town organised after the utilitarian fashion would be more agreeable to dwell in than the cemetery of Pere-la-Chaise.

Nothing that is beautiful is indispensable to life. You might suppress flowers, and the world would not suffer materially; yet who would wish that there were no more flowers? I would rather give up potatoes than roses, and I think that there is none but an utilitarian in the world capable of pulling up a bed of tulips in order to plant cabbages therein.

[. . .]

Well, then, what is the use of speaking of progress? I am quite aware that you will tell me that we have an Upper and a Lower Chamber, that we hope that everybody will soon be an elector, and the number of representatives doubled or tripled. Do you think that there are not enough mistakes in French made as it is on the national tribune, and that there are too few for the evil work they have to plot? I can scarcely understand the utility which consists in penning two or three hundred provincials in a wooden hut, with a ceiling painted by Monsieur Fragonard, to have them jumble and blunder any number of petty laws which are either atrocious or absurd. What matter whether it be a sabre, an aspergill, or an umbrella that governs you? It is always a stick, and I am astonished that men of progress should dispute about the choice of a cudgel to tickle their shoulders, when it would be much

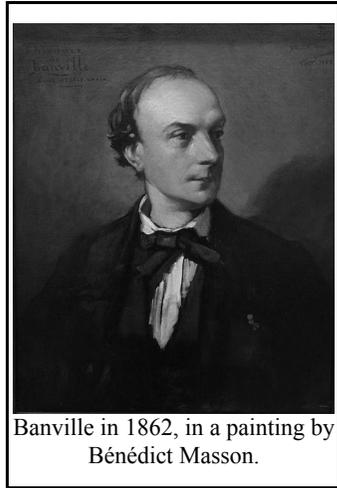
more progressive and less expensive to break it and throw the pieces to all the devils.

Translated by F.C. de Sumichrast

* * *

Théodore de Banville, *Roses & Lilies*

*Banville, like his mentor Gautier, approached the act of writing verse with a reverence that resulted in work of great refinement and complexity. Like Baudelaire, Catulle Mendès, and others, he was fascinated by Aloysius Bertrand's **Treasurer of Night** (see Vol. 2), which introduced the new poetic form of the Prose-Poems when it was posthumously published in 1842, and further developed the genre. Here the prose poem merges with an ironic manifesto about the inviolability of Poetry.*



Banville in 1862, in a painting by Bénédicte Masson.

A great corbel of Roses and a great corbel of Lilies both burst into flower at the same time in the garden of the poet. The Lilies and the roses are intoxicated with joy. The soft summer wind caresses them and the sun kisses them, and makes the clear colors of their corals sparkle like the fires of precious stones. With a voice that makes no sound, and yet that can be heard, with the mysterious voice that emanates from things believed to be inanimate, they say, swaying in the light:

“We, the Flowers, are happy, because we live in the garden of the good poet, where we perform our proper functions, and where we

exist purely and simply as Flowers, without fear of furnishing a pretext for classical tropes and of being used as terms of comparison. And as no philistine and no sayer of commonplaces will enter the garden, nobody will pretend that we have any relations with the winged butterflies—which is as absurd as to suppose any love between doves and crocodiles. And we, the Lilies with the straight petals and green chalices—we will gloriously uplift our golden pistols; and we, the blushing Roses with ecstatic hearts—we will bloom for no reason at all, for the simple pleasure of it, without being constrained to affirm the pretended whiteness or red or green women, and without the humiliation of being compared to any young lady.

Translated by Stuart Merrill

* * *

by Théophile Gautier:

Gautier and his followers emphasized the importance of discipline in poetic craft: by requiring difficult linguistic puzzles and unusual leaps of thought, the writing and reading of verse were forms of mental discipline with the power to change consciousness. Poems were continually and meticulously revised, often over the course of years; Gautier, and later his disciple Mallarmé, each spent over 40 years working on less than 200 pages of verse a piece. The resulting texts often abounded with complex or paradoxical images, complex grammatical detours, and intricate patterns of sound and rhythm; unfortunately, these qualities can be extremely difficult to carry over into translation.

Art

More fair the work, more strong,
Stamped in resistance long—
Enamel, marble, song.

Poet, no shackles bear,
Yet bid thy Muse to wear
The buskin bound with care.

A fashion loose forsake—
A shoe of sloven make,
That any foot may take.

Sculptor, the clay withstand,
That yieldeth to the hand,
Though listless heart command.

Contend till thou have wrought,
Till the hard stone have caught
The beauty of thy thought.

With Paros match thy might,
And with Carrara bright,
That guard the line of light.

Borrow from Syracuse
The bronze's stubborn use,
Wherein thy form to choose.

And with a delicate grace
In the veined onyx trace
Apollo's perfect face.

Painter, put thou aside
The transient. Be thy pride
The colour furnace-tried.

Limn thou, fantastic, free
Blue sirens of the sea,
And beasts of heraldry.

Before a nimbus gold
Transcendently uphold
The Child, the Cross foretold.

Things perish. Gods have passed.
But song sublimely cast
Shall citadels outlast.

And the forgotten seal
Turned by the plowman's steel
An emperor may reveal.

For Art alone is great:
The bust survives the state,
The crown, the potentate.

Carve, burnish, build thy theme—
But fix thy wavering dream
In the stern rock supreme.

Translated by Agnes Lee

[. . .]

The Chimera

In classical mythology, the Chimera was a monstrous fire-breathing beast slain by Bellerophon and Pegasus. In the course of the 19th Century, poets would re-invent the Chimera (interpreting the original quite loosely) as a symbol for the sacredness of Poetry—a creature which arises during mystical or intoxicated hallucination, is dangerous and cunning but capable of carrying the disciplined Poet



*Gustave Moreau portrays the new conception of **The Chimera** in 1867.*

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capable of handling her into unknown realms of personal and social myth, but just as apt to dissolve unexpectedly into nothingness.

A young chimera at my goblet's brim
Gave sweetest kiss amid the orgy's spell.
Emerald her eyes, and to her haunches slim
The golden torrents of her tresses fell.

Her shoulders fluttering pinions did bedeck.
I sprang upon her back, for travel fain,
And toward me bending firm her lovely neck,
I plunged my tightening fingers in her mane.

She struggled madly; but I clung, austere,
With iron knees I crushed her flanks to me.
Then softly came her voice, and silver-clear:
“Whither, then, master, shall I carry thee?”

*To the farthest edge of all eternal things,
Beyond the sun, beyond the bounds of space.
But weary ere the end shall be thy wings—
For I would see my vision face to face!*

Translated by Agnes Lee

* * *

from Joris-Karl Huysmans, *A rebours*, 1884

While some visual artists in the avant-garde, such as Daumier and Courbet, became concerned with using art to explore and effect modern life and current events, others followed directions indicated by the Cult of Art. Gustave Moreau created an elaborate, syncretic visual language from elements of every possible Eastern and Western tradition, embodied in complex paintings using a dizzying array of unusual techniques impossible to reproduce photographically. His work would become—almost literally—iconic among this

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strain of the *avant-garde* in the following generation, as described in the Decadent writer Huysmans' 1884 novel about the Decadent community, *A rebours* (*Against Nature*).

However this may be, an irresistible fascination emanated from this painting; but the water-color entitled *The Apparition* was perhaps even more disturbing.

There, the palace of Herod arose like an Alhambra on slender, iridescent columns with moorish tile, joined with silver baton and gold cement. Arabesques proceeded from lozenges of lapis lazuli, wove their patterns on the cupolas where, on nacreous marquetry, crept rainbow gleams and prismatic flames.

The murder was accomplished. The executioner stood impassive, his hands on the hilt of his long, blood-stained sword.

The severed head of the saint stared lividly on the charger resting on the slabs; the mouth was discolored and open, the neck crimson, and tears fell from the eyes. The face was encircled by an aureole worked in mosaic, which shot rays of light under the porticos and illuminated the horrible ascension of the head, brightening the glassy orbs of the contracted eyes which were fixed with a ghastly stare upon the dancer.

With a gesture of terror, Salomé thrusts from her the horrible vision which transfixes her, motionless, to the ground. Her eyes dilate, her hands clasp her neck in a convulsive clutch.



*Huysmans' description of Gustave Moreau's 1876 watercolour **The Apparition**, owned by his fictional avant-garde protagonist, became a hallmark of French art criticism. The founder of no school, Moreau's approach to painting remained unique throughout the century.*

She is almost nude. In the ardor of the dance, her veils had become loosened. She is garbed only in gold-wrought stuffs and limpid stones; a neck-piece clasps her as a corselet does the body and, like a superb buckle, a marvelous jewel sparkles on the hollow between her breasts. A girdle encircles her hips, concealing the upper part of her thighs, against which beats a gigantic pendant streaming with carbuncles and emeralds.

All the facets of the jewels kindle under the ardent shafts of light escaping from the head of the Baptist. The stones grow warm, outlining the woman's body with incandescent rays, striking her neck, feet and arms with tongues of fire,—vermilions like coals, violets like jets of gas, blues like flames of alcohol, and whites like star light.

The horrible head blazes, bleeding constantly, clots of somber purple on the ends of the beard and hair. Visible for Salomé alone, it does not, with its fixed gaze, attract Herodias, musing on her finally consummated revenge, nor the Tetrarch who, bent slightly forward, his hands on his knees, still pants, maddened by the nudity of the woman saturated with animal odors, steeped in balms, exuding incense and myrrh.

Like the old king, Des Esseintes remained dumbfounded, overwhelmed and seized with giddiness, in the presence of this dancer who was less majestic, less haughty but more disquieting than the Salomé of the oil painting.

In this insensate and pitiless image, in this innocent and dangerous idol, the eroticism and terror of mankind were depicted. The tall lotus had disappeared, the goddess had vanished; a frightful

nightmare now stifled the woman, dizzied by the whirlwind of the dance, hypnotized and petrified by terror.

It was here that she was indeed Woman, for here she gave rein to her ardent and cruel temperament. She was living, more refined and savage, more execrable and exquisite. She more energetically awakened the dulled senses of man, more surely bewitched and subdued his power of will, with the charm of a tall venereal flower, cultivated in sacrilegious beds, in impious hothouses.

Des Esseintes thought that never before had a water color attained such magnificent coloring; never before had the poverty of colors been able to force jeweled coruscations from paper, gleams like stained glass windows touched by rays of sunlight, splendors of tissue and flesh so fabulous and dazzling. Lost in contemplation, he sought to discover the origins of this great artist and mystic pagan, this visionary who succeeded in removing himself from the world sufficiently to behold, here in Paris, the splendor of these cruel visions and the enchanting sublimation of past ages.

Des Esseintes could not trace the genesis of this artist. Here and there were vague suggestions of Mantegna and of Jacopo de Barbari; here and there were confused hints of Vinci and of the feverish colors of Delacroix. But the influences of such masters remained negligible. The fact was that Gustave Moreau derived from no one else. He remained unique in contemporary art, without ancestors and without possible descendants. He went to ethnographic sources, to the origins of myths, and he compared and elucidated their intricate enigmas. He reunited the legends of the Far East into a whole, the myths which had been altered by the superstitions of other peoples; thus justifying his architectonic fusions, his luxurious and outlandish fabrics, his hieratic

and sinister allegories sharpened by the restless perceptions of a pruriently modern neurosis. And he remained saddened, haunted by the symbols of perversities and superhuman loves, of divine suppurations brought to end without abandonment and without hope.

His depressing and erudite productions possessed a strange enchantment, an incantation that stirred one to the depths, just as do certain poems of Baudelaire, caused one to pause disconcerted, amazed, brooding on the spell of an art which leaped beyond the confines of painting, borrowing its most subtle effects from the art of writing, its most marvelous stokes from the art of Limosin, its most exquisite refinements from the art of the lapidary and the engraver.

Translated by John Howard

* * *

from Théophile Gautier, *Les Club des Haschischins*, 1846

Another form that the Cult of Art explored—though it did not become an integral element—was the use of narcotics. While there was a definite tradition of drug use in intellectual circles in the late 18th and early 19th Centuries, it was sporadic. In 1844, the scientist Jacques-Joseph Moreau (no relation to the painter Gustave Moreau) was conducting research into the physical and psychological effects of hashish. He approached a number of people in the Romanticist community to participate in monthly ‘séances’ in which the drug was be administered, and the experiences of the group—known as the Club des Haschischins, which can be translated as ‘The Hashish Club’ or ‘The Assassins’ Club’—were observed and recorded. It seems that few attended every meeting, and often attended sober only to watch or, like piano player mentioned here, participate in the proceedings. Attendees included Gautier, Baudelaire, Nerval, Delacroix, Hugo, Dumas, and Balzac. All involved eventually lost interest in the experiments, for the reason given when

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Gautier discussed the experiments in an essay on his friend Baudelaire: "After trying it some ten times or so, I gave up the seductive drug for ever, not that it hurt me physically, but because a real writer needs no other than his own natural dreams, and does not care to have his thought controlled by the influence of any agency whatever."

I rang; it was opened with the usual precautions and I found myself in a huge room lit at the end by several lamps. To enter here was to step backwards two centuries. Time, Which passes so quickly, seemed not to have flown in this house and, as a forgotten clock left unwound, its hands pointed always to the same place....

I moved into the luminous portion of the room where several human shapes were stirring about a table, and as soon as the light reached me and I was recognized, a vigorous shout shook the sonorous depths of the ancient edifice.

"It's he! It's he!" cried some voices together; "let's give him his due!"

MUSTARD WITH DINNER

The doctor stood by the side of a buffet on which lay a platter filled with small Japanese saucers. He spooned a morsel of paste or greenish jam about as large as the thumb from a crystal vase, and placed it next to the silver spoon on each saucer.



In 1845 Dr. Jacques-Joseph Moreau published the first scientific study of the effects of narcotics on the central nervous system.

The doctor's face radiated enthusiasm; his eyes glittered, his purple cheeks were aglow, the veins in his temples stood out strongly, and he breathed heavily through dilated nostrils.

"This will be deducted from your share in Paradise," he said as he handed me my portion.

After each had eaten his due, coffee was served in the Arab manner, that is to say, with the coffee grounds and no sugar. Then we sat down at the table....

THE BANQUET

The meal was served in singular fashion and in all sorts of elaborate and picturesque dishes.

Large Venetian goblets, cut in milky spirals, German steins embellished with coats of arms and legends, Flemish jugs of enamel, and slender-necked bottles twisted in their reed encasements replaced the ordinary glasses, pitchers and carafes.

The opaque porcelain of Louis Lebeuf and the flowered English crockery, customary ornaments of bourgeois settings, were conspicuous in their absence. No plate was identical, but each had its own particular virtue. From China, Saxony and Japan were examples of the loveliest sort and richest color, all a trifle cracked or broken, but in exquisite taste.

The plates were, for the most part, enamel of Bernard de Palissy or china from Limoges, and occasionally under the meat, the carver's knife met a reptile, frog or bird in bas-relief. The cooked eel mixed his coils with those of the patterned serpent below.

An honest Philistine would have experienced some trepidation at the sight of such table companions, hirsute, bearded, mustached, or

shorn in singular fashion, brandishing daggers from the sixteenth century, Malayan daggers or machetes, and bent over their food to which the flickering lamps gave a disquieting aspect.

The meal drew to an end; already some of the more fervent members felt the effects of the green jam: for my part, I had experienced a complete transformation in taste. The water I drank seemed the most exquisite wine, the meat, once in my mouth, became strawberries, the strawberries, meat. I could not have distinguished a fish from a cutlet.

My neighbors began to appear somewhat strange. Their pupils became big as a screech owl's; their noses stretched into elongated proboscises; their mouths expanded like bell bottoms. Faces were shaded in supernatural light. One among them, a pale countenance in a black beard, laughed aloud at an invisible spectacle; another made incredible efforts to raise his glass to his lips and the resulting contortions aroused deafening hoots from his companions; a man, shaken with nervous convulsions, turned his thumbs with remarkable agility; another, fallen against the back of his chair, his eyes unseeing and his arms inert, let himself drift voluptuously in the bottomless sea of nothingness.

My elbows on the table, I considered all this with clarity and a vestige of reason which came and went by intervals, like the light of a lantern about to flicker and die. A deadening warmth pervaded my limbs, and dementia, like a wave which breaks foaming onto a rock, then withdraws to break again, invaded and left my brain, finally enveloping it altogether. That strange visitor, hallucination, had come to dwell within me.

"To the salon, to the salon!" cried one of the guests; "can't you hear those heavenly choirs? The musicians have been gathered for a long time."

And indeed, a delectable harmony reached us in whiffs across the tumult of the conversation.

AN UNINVITED GUEST

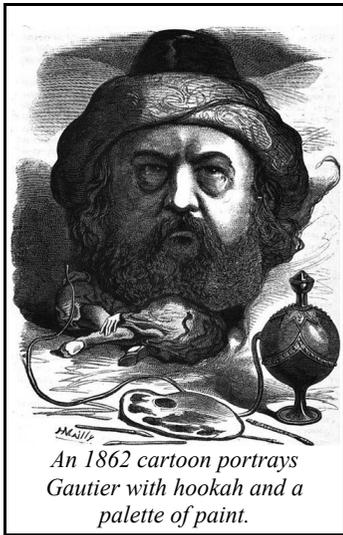
The salon was an enormous room of carved and gilded paneling, a painted ceiling whose friezes depicted satyrs chasing nymphs through the grasses, a monumental fireplace of colored marble and abundant brocade curtains. Here one inhaled the luxurious airs of times gone by. Embroidered chairs, canapés, settees and bergères, large enough for the skirts of duchesses and marquisas to spread with ease, seated the haschischins and welcomed them with soft and open arms. A warmth from the corner of the chimney invited me, and I settled there, abandoning myself without resistance to the fantastic effects of the drug.

After several moments, my companions disappeared... Quiet reigned in the salon, and a few vague, flickering lamps; then, suddenly a flash of red under my eyelids, as though countless candles had lit themselves, and I felt bathed in a pale and tepid glow. The room in which I sat was indeed the same, but, like a rough sketch for a painting, everything seemed larger, richer, more splendid. In the opulence of hallucination, reality appears only at the point of departure.



The Hôtel Pimodan, where monthly meetings of the Club des Haschischins took place for five years.

I still saw no one, yet imagined the presence of a multitude. I heard the sounds of rustling fabrics, the clicking of heels, voices whispering, murmuring, lisping and stammering, peals of smothered laughter and the scrape of chair and table legs. Porcelain clattered and doors were opened and shut; something unaccustomed was happening.



An 1862 cartoon portrays Gautier with hookah and a palette of paint.

An enigmatic personage suddenly appeared before me. From whence did he come? I do not know. But his aspect caused me no alarm; his nose was bent like the beak of a bird, his green eyes, which he wiped frequently with a large handkerchief, were encircled with three brown rings, and caught in the knot of a high white starched collar was a visiting card which read: *Daucus-Carota, du Pot d'or*. The collar choked his thin neck so

that the skin of his cheeks overflowed in reddish creases; a black frockcoat, from which hung a chain with a grape cluster, imprisoned his body, which bulged like the breast of a capon. As for his legs, I must avow that they were like mandrake roots, bisected, black, rough, knotty and full of warts, as if torn from the ground with pieces of earth still clinging to the ends. These legs wriggled and twisted with extraordinary activity, and when the small torso which they held stood before me, the strange creature, bursting with sobs, and wiping his eyes first with one arm, then with the other, addressed me in the most pitiful voice: "Today is the day that we must die laughing." And large, weighty tears rolled down the flanks of his nose. "To laugh ... To laugh ..." repeated an echoing chorus of discordant and snuffling voices.

PHANTASMA

...Little by little the salon was filled with extraordinary figures, such as are found only in the etchings of Callot or the aquatints of Goya; a pell-mell of rags and tatters, bestial and human shapes; at any other time I should have been uneasy in such company, but there was nothing menacing in these monstrosities. It was cunning, not malice, which sparkled in the eye. Only in a grin of good humor could one discover the uneven fangs and pointed teeth.

[. . .]

One of the club members, who had not taken part in the voluptuous intoxications, in order to survey the phantasma and prevent those of us who believed we possessed wings from leaping out the windows, got up, opened the piano, and sat down. His two hands plunged together into the ivories of the clavier and a glorious chord, resounding forcefully, silenced the clamor and changed the direction of the drunkenness.

KIEF

The melody thus assaulted was, I believe, Agatha's air from Die Freischutz; this celestial tune soon scattered the outlandish visions which obsessed me as a wind brushes away misshapen clouds. The grimacing phantoms withdrew, sliding onto the chairs or hiding in the folds of curtains, emitting small, smothered sighs, and again it seemed that I was alone in the salon.

...soon the tune seemed to come out of myself; my fingers fluttered on a non-existent clavier; the sounds gushed forth in blues and reds, in electric flashes; Weber's soul was embodied in mine. When the piece was finished, I continued, in the style of a German master, with

my own improvisations which caused me ineffable raptures; what a pity that a magic stenographer could not have recorded these inspired rhapsodies, heard by me alone, and which, in all modesty, I do not hesitate to place before the masterpieces of Rossini, Meyerbeer, Felicien David....

[. . .]

Suddenly I felt a chill wind in my ear and a voice, whose accent was known to me though I could not have determined to whom it belonged, said: "This miserable Daucus-Carota, who has sold his legs in order to drink, has pilfered your head and put in its place, not the head of a donkey as Puck did to Bottom, but the head of an elephant!"

Singularly intrigued, I went straightway to the mirror and saw that the admonition was not false. One would have taken me for a Javanese or Hindu idol: my forehead was high, my nose, lengthened into a trunk, curved onto my chest, my ears brushed my shoulders, and to make matters more discomforting still, I was the color of indigo, like Shiva, the blue deity.

Exasperated with fury, I began to pursue Daucus-Carota, who leapt and screeched and gave all the signs of extreme fright; I succeeded in catching him and knocked him so violently against the edge of the table that he ended up by returning my head, which he had had wrapped in his handkerchief.

Pleased with this victory, I returned to my place on the canapé but the same small, unknown voice said to me: "Take care, for you are surrounded by enemies; invisible forces are trying to lure and hold you. You are a prisoner here: Try to escape and you shall see."

A veil was torn away from my mind's eye, and it became apparent to me that the club's members were none other than Cabalists and sorcerers who wished to sweep me to my doom.

[. . .]

"Come now," said the voyant. "I can see that it is necessary to exorcise the evil spirits. The thing has gone sour. Let's have a little music. David's Harp will be replaced by the clavichord of Érard."

And, seating himself upon the stool, he played melodies lively and gay... This appeared to vex greatly the mandrake man, who diminished, flattened, discolored, and shuddered inarticulately; finally he lost all human form and rolled upon the floor in the shape of a two-rooted salsify. The charm was broken.

"Hallelujah! Time is reborn," cried childish, joyous voices. "Go look at the clock now."

The hand pointed to eleven.

"Monsieur's carriage is waiting below," said a servant.

The dream had ended. The haschischins each escaped separately to their houses, like the officers after Malbrouck's funeral.

As for myself, I went down that stairway which had caused me such tortures with a light step, and several minutes later was in my own room, in full reality; the last, lingering mists of the hashish had disappeared. My reason had returned, or at least that which I call reason, for want of a better term. My lucidity would have been just sufficient to grasp a pantomime or vaudeville, or to make verses rhyming in three letters.

* * *

Le Parnasse Contemporain

from **Alphonse Brot**, *Preface to Songs of Love and Diverse Poems*, 1829

The term ‘Parnasse Contemporain’ was first used in an 1829 Preface by Alphonse Brot (see Vol. 2), where it was used synonymously with ‘avant-garde’ in the first known use of that term to describe extremist Romanticism. In that Preface Brot, like the Parnassians of the 1860s, advocated a merging of Classicist and Romanticist poetics—an unpopular idea within the avant-garde at the time. By the second half of the century however, a younger generation of poets had grown up without the hegemony of Classicist rules, and were prepared for such an experiment. By this time Brot, one of the founders of the Petit-Cénacle group, seems to have given up verse, and was writing



By the 1860s he was a successful novelist and playwright, **Brot** appears not to have been involved with the Parnassian network—unless under a pseudonym—despite his apparent influence on it.

melodramas bearing leftist political messages for popular audiences; despite his friendship with Gautier, a member of both groups, there was no known

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collaboration between Brot (who has virtually disappeared from histories of literature) and the Parnassian network.

Some honest critics will without question have much trouble deciding whether we belong to the old legions of the old fashioned system, or have taken place amongst the tumultuous ranks of the army of innovators; we will let them discuss at their leisure a question of such high importance; as for us, it must be this way, we would be thoroughly embarrassed were we obliged to resolve it. Nourished from the readings of all that is truly beautiful, truly ennobled with posterity's adoration, as much for the circumspect writers of the old school as the enthusiast children of the new one; furthermore, tormented by our own inspirations, and by the quite recent memory of the joys of early youth, we have obeyed the temptation to reproduce in the language of the Muses our pleasures, our dreams, our regrets, without worrying if our manner was yielding to the stuffy rules of antique form, or dashing forward, capricious and brilliant, in the steps of the creators of modern genre. Thus to these two cries: are you romanticist, are you classicist; which will perhaps be addressed to us at the same time by the two rival camps, we will not have to give any decisive response. May caution be taken however, not to think that there be in this profession of faith, desire to please everybody and to make friends everywhere. At the risk of getting into trouble with the veterans of classicism, we will frankly say that our literary conscience proves to have a lively fondness for the demigods of the contemporary Parnasse, of whom Victor Hugo could well become the absolute monarch; though at the same time, we know to appreciate the ingenious and moderate reaction of our men of letters still loyal to sound doctrines, and who endeavour to keep at bay

the imprudence and temerity of the avant garde of romanticism; in a word, in literature, as in politics, the representing regime [of Romanticism] is in our opinion the better one.

Translated by Joseph Carter

* * *

from William J. Robertson, *A Century of French Verse*, 1895

By the 1860s, the avant-garde had evolved from an intimate circle of Parisian radicals into a subculture of hundreds of writers, artists, and musicians—an increasing number of them living in the provinces and not in daily contact with others in the community. While many Bohemians still lived collectively, for many others books and journals become the most important vehicles for communal activity and discourse. For the same reasons, the ‘cénacle’ structure gave way to a diffused network of collaborations, in which many avant-gardists explored multiple directions in their work and participated simultaneously in many groups, tendencies or traditions. Beginning in 1866, the anthology ‘Le Parnasse Contemporain’ (The Contemporary Parnassus) gathered together hundreds of poems by ninety-nine avant-gardists. Three volumes were published over the course of the decade, each with different teams of editors; the core of the group lived in Paris, but maintained touch with a community spread throughout France and Belgium through correspondence circles and trading publications.

The modern Parnassian group of poets, so notable in number and talent, began to gather round Catulle Mendès about 1860, when he founded his cénacle in rue de Douai and established the *Revue fantaisiste*. Among the contributors were Alphonse Daudet, Philoxène Boyer, Léon Cladel, Jules Claretie, Albert Glatigny, Charles Monselet and Jules Noriac (Cairon). Several of them conquered a considerable

place in French literature. According to Émile Zola they spent their evenings in admiring each other. The *Revue fantaisiste* came to a sudden and violent end by the condemnation of Catulle Mendés to a fine of 500 francs and one month's imprisonment in Saint-Pélagie for the publication of his reckless libertine comedy in verse, *Le Roman d'une Nuit*. A few years after his return to liberty Catulle Mendés reorganised his Parnassus under the aegis of Leconte de Lisle. Thenceforth Albert Mérat, Léon Valade (the translator of Heine's *Intermezzo*) and François Coppée, with a new swarm of aspiring poets, frequented his poorly-furnished chamber in the Hôtel du Dragon Bleu in Rue Dauphiné (quartier latin). The charming conversation of Catulle Mendés, the amiable discourse of Anatole France, the whimsical sallies of Paul Verlaine and the impassible philosophy of Louis-Xavier de Ricard gave an ever-changing delight to their symposium. The men of this interesting set differed from those of the Bohemia of Nerval and of Mürger inasmuch as most of them had some steady employment (in the government offices or elsewhere) which helped discipline, discouraged idleness and debauch, and enabled them to live independently until they could afford to give their undivided attention to literature.

* * *

by Catulle Mendés:

*Catulle Mendés was one of the most active organizers and publishers of his generation, through his Paris salon and his journal **Le Revue Fantaisiste** (The Fantastist Review). In 1866 he edited the first volume of the*



The poet, publisher and organizer **Catulle Mendés** was instrumental in catalyzing the Parnassian network through journals, correspondence, conversation and his weekly Paris salon.

Parnasse Contemporain anthology; in the same year he married Théophile Gautier's daughter Judith, a scholar and translator of Chinese and Japanese literature, though they soon separated. Her influence can be seen in **The Disciple**; the Parnassians tended to advocate a return to mythological subjects, as a way to counteract the lyrical egotism which had come to dominate much Romanticist verse; but rather than a strict return to Classicist themes, the Parnassians also explored and integrated Eastern religious traditions which had only begun to be accessible to Westerners in the previous generation.

The Disciple.

With hands that touched his toes the Buddha dreamed.

Said Poorna: Like the winds are souls redeemed,
Free as north winds in sky no clouds bedim;
Therefore, o'er rocks I'll climb, through rivers swim
To furthest tribes beneath the furthest heaven;
That souls be comforted and sins forgiven,
Master, thy helpful creed I'll bear abroad.

—But if these tribes, answered the Son of God,
Insult thee, child beloved, what wilt thou say?

—That with a virtuous soul endowed are they,
Since they have blinded not these lids with sand,
Nor raised, to smite me, either stone or hand.

—But if they smite thee, then, with hand or stone?

—These folk, I'll say, to gentleness are prone,
Because their hands, thus filled with stones to fling
Against me, stave nor sword are brandishing.

—But if their steel doth reach thee?

—I will say,
How soft their blows, that wound and do not slay.

—But if thou die?

—Happy who cease to live!

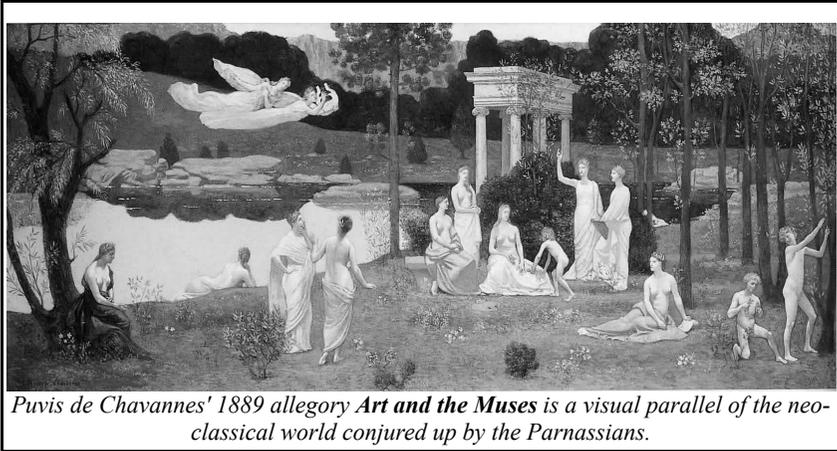
—Go forth, said Buddha, comfort and forgive.

translated by William John Robertson

[. . .]

The Swans

In contrast to the explosive, dramatic self-representations found in Romanticist poetry, the Parnassians favoured a calm melancholy, in which the poet's function was to serve as a passive, attentive vehicle through which the world intangibly revealed itself. Swans became important symbols for the poetic vocation—silent and calm while floating on the water, graceful in flight, clumsy and awkward when forced to walk on solid earth. In this poem Mendès develops the Prose-Poem using devices introduced by Aloysius Bertrand a generation earlier, introducing a poetic logic into the prose through use of repetition, carefully balanced rhythms, and a dreamlike vagueness and indirectness.



Under the pale October sun I was wandering by the lake of Enghien. The swans floated slowly, in white and mysterious bands, upon the great surface of the lake, amid the autumnal landscape, grave, pompous, and solitary.

The trees, from which the dry leaves had not yet fallen, looked like trees of gold, such as are seen in the pantomimes of the Châtelet Theatre; the wind moaned melodiously in the branches; under the pale October sun I was wandering by the Lake of Enghien.

I wandered til evening, and when the pale gloom had fallen I saw the little stars appear, the little stars that are compassionate to nocturnal melancholy; and the swans floated slowly, in white and mysterious bands.

But soon they swam away, and in the vague darkness they seemed a sheet of snow rapidly melting. One only, motionless and ecstatic, remained on the great surface of the lake amid the the autumnal sunset.

And in spite of myself I thought of my soul, which so many dreams and so many loves haunted of yore. Where are the roses of the

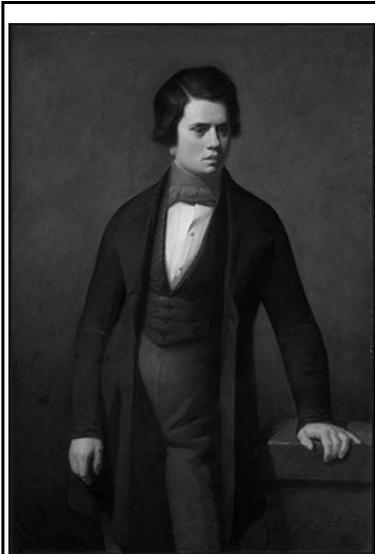
faded April? In my soul, which night oppresses, a single love has remained, pompous, and solitary,

Under the pale October sun.

translated by Stuart Merrill

* * *

by Leconte de Lisle:



Portrait of Leconte de Lisle early in his career, painted by Jean-François Millet, member of the Barbizon school and fore-runner of Realism.

Leconte de Lisle was born in the French colony of Réunion, and spent some time in his youth traveling in the East Indies before moving to Paris in 1846. A translator of ancient Greek, he was among the first in the avant-garde to call for a return to Classical themes, retaining the lessons learned from Romanticism: de-personalizing and disciplining Romanticist excess, but retaining and developing the Romantic experimentation with poetic form. Like many people associated with the Parnassian network and the Cult of Art, Lisle was deeply contemptuous of

Europe's emerging consumer society, which he saw as devoid of any values other than financial gain, and conceived of the avant-garde as a social refuge in which other priorities could still be understood and pursued.

To the Moderns:

Ye live on coward-wise, without dream or design,
Older, decrepiter than is the infecund earth.
By the assassin age castrated from your birth
Of every passion deep and every thought divine.
Void is your brain, as void as is your heart, in fine,
And eke you have befouled this world of little worth
With such corrupted blood and such a breath of dearth
That death alone may germ from out its mud and brine.
God-murderers, men, the times undistant are, when, rolled
Together in some coin, upon a heap of gold,
Having the fostering earth even to the granite piled,
Unknowing what to do with days, nights, life or dream,
Drowned in the boundless blank of weariness supreme,
You'll drop and die like brutes, with all your pockets filled.

[. . .]

NOX

(Latin for 'Night')

Along the mountain-slopes the dying airs diffuse
The balms of coming sleep upon the murmuring trees;
The birds are fallen mute and slumber in the dews;
The starlight pricks with gold the azure of the seas.

About the long ravines, around the wilding height,
The mists of early dusk have made the ways unclear;
The moon the tree-tops steeps in melancholy light;
All human sounds have died upon the hearkening ear.

But on the distant sands soft sings the sea divine;
From the high forests breathe the voices of the trees;
The sonorous air bears up to heaven, with night ashine,
The murmurs of the wood, the carol of the seas.

Mount, mount, o holy sounds, o superhuman strains,
O converse grave and mild between the earth and sky!
Mount and the stars serene ask in the heavenly plains
If an eternal way there is to them on high.
O seas, o dreaming woods, kind voices of the earth,
My cry, when on my soul the evil days were sore.
You answered; you consoled my sadness and my dearth
And in my grateful breast you sing for evermore.

translated by John Payne

* * *

by François Coppée:



François Coppée

While the Parnassian network tended to be characterized by mythological themes, emotional distance, political withdrawal, and complex rhythms, there was no dogma to which all of the poets subscribed. Though initially obscure, François Coppée became much more popularly successful than many of his comrades with sentimental and patriotic poems about love, poverty, war, and country; Arthur Rimbaud, who hated him, sarcastically called his work, “the delight of the enlightened bourgeois of the day.” in later life he became increasingly conservative and anti-Democratic, becoming an ultra-Nationalist and taking a leading role in the anti-semitic movement during the Dreyfus Affair at century’s end.

An October Morning

It is the dim delicious hour
That blushes with a sudden dawn;
Athwart the autumnal haze in shower
The leaves fall withered on the lawn.

Slow dropping, one by one, they pass,
Distinct to the discerning eye,
The oak-leaf, bright as burnished brass,
The maple-leaf of sanguine dye.

Anon, the serest leaves of all
Last from the naked branches fall,
Though yet no winter winds do blow.

A white light, sprinkled everywhere,

Swathes the earth, and the rosy air
Is tremulous with a golden snow.

[. . .]

On a Tomb in Spring-Time

The lone cross moulders in the graveyard hoary,
But April weaves again her leafy bower;
The redwing nestles there, and with sweet flower
A rosebush hides the sign of grief in glory.

No tear, no prayer, breathes such memento mori
As sobbing nightingale and dewy shower.
These scents, these songs, these splendours are the dower
Of Earth that thrills with Love's immortal story.

Dead and forgotten one! whose human pride
Dreamed, doubtless, dreams of life's eternal tide
In Paradise, where the freed spirit reposes;

Hast thou not here to-day a lovelier doom
If now thy soul, diffused about this tomb,
Sings with the birds, and blossoms in the roses?

translated by William John Robertson

* * *

by Théodore de Banville:

*Balancing his enthusiasm for Romanticism as expressed in **Romanticist Dawn**, Banville was among the first poets, along with Leconte de Lisle, to advocate a re-appraisal of Classicism. Like many of the Parnassians, his use of mythology was often unconventional, in **The Goddess** creating his own allegorical goddess who seems closer to Frenetic Romanticism than to the serene, marble figures of Lisle. **Medea**, though more typical of Parnassian verse, also reflects Banville's Romantic interest in violence and moral ambiguity.*



Poet, theorist, and historian of the avant-garde **Théodore de Banville**, drawn by the Romantic satirist Paul Gavarni.

The Goddess

She has opened an immense hole in the soft ground, which she quickly digs up with her skeleton fingers, and bending her ribs and inclining her white smooth skull, she heaps together in the abyss old men and youths, women and children, cold, pale, and stiff, whose lids she silently closes.

“Ah!” sighs the dreamer, who sadly and with heavy heart sees her accomplish her work, “accursed, accursed be thou, destroyer of beings, detestable and cruel Death, and mayest thou be dominated and desolated by the ever-renewed floods of immortal Life!”

The grave-digger has arisen.
She turns her face; she is now made of
pink and charming flesh; her friendly
brow is crowned with rosy corals. She
bears in her arms fair naked children
who laugh to the sky, and she says
softly to the dreamer, while gazing at
him with eyes full of joy:

“I am she who accomplishes
without cease and without end the
transformation of all. Beneath my
fingers the flowers that have become
cinders bloom once more, and I am
both She whom thou namest Death,
and She whom thou namest Life!”

translated by Stuart Merrill



[...]

Medea

(1865)

Medea, in whose heart love swells at height,
Sings with the wave obscure; and the swift river,
In which her long look sees the starlight shiver,
Dimly reflects her naked beauty white.

Her wan charms spell the Phasis in its flight,
And, as she sings, the wandering winds deliver
Her voice, blent with the sound of lyres that quiver,
And spread her tresses like a stream of light.

Fixing her gaze on gloomy skies, aglimmer
With sanguine flame, she sings. Her white limbs shimmer
Like snowy gleams athwart the dusky swards.

On sombre mountain-slopes she culls the tender
And mystic herb whose sap fell poison hoards,
And on her bosom shines the moon's pale splendor.

Translated by William John Robertson

* * *

Théophile Gautier, *Touch Not the Marble*

One thing distinguishing the Contemporary Parnassus from previous avant-garde groupings was its inclusion, on an equal footing, of every living generation. Members included pre-Hernani founders of Romanticism such as Armand Barbier and the Deschamps brothers (see Vol. 2), and beginning poets such as Stéphane Mallarmé and Charles Cros who would not become influential in the community for another twenty-five years. Gautier was by the 1860s the most loved and respected figure in the avant-garde, and had mentored many of the group's most active organizers and participants, who were deeply inspired by his theories regarding 'Art for Art's Sake'; the active support and involvement of this arch-Romanticist in the classically-infused community cemented the continuity from the early Romanticist avant-garde to a broader community exploring radical conceptions of writing that strove beyond its original conceptions to constantly evolve and re-invent itself.

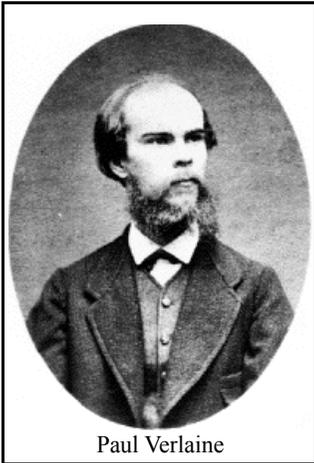
Yea, one may love a statue, so it be
Some subtle dream of Phideas. Tall and still,
From her bright self to man there may distil
An intimacy—for he comes, and she,
The goddess waits his coming secretly.
And he forgetteth that her form is chill,
That her white glances fascinate and kill,
Bound fast before her fair divinity.

She seems to smile, and he, grown bolder, cries:
“Immortal one, a woman, then, art thou?”
A fiery touch is on the marble wan;
Straightway it trembles; thunder shakes the skies—
Well knoweth all-indulgent Venus how
A god’s desire may flame the heart of man!

Translated by Agnes Lee

* * *

by Paul Verlaine:



Over the course of the 1860s and '70s, Paul Verlaine became the most influential poet in the avant-garde, though he remained nearly unknown outside until near the end of his life, when he had already been physically and psychologically ravaged. His reputation was based equally on his Bohemian lifestyle and his constantly evolving, experimental play with verse forms. (Many of his more experimental poems were not translated in the 19th Century, making them out of public domain and thus impossible to include here.) In his Parnassian poetry, Verlaine—an open bisexual—used Classical imagery to explore sexuality with an explicitness rare at the time, and impossible in prose; many of the Parnassians, including Mendés and Banville, did the same. Like many of his generation, his output was extremely diverse, ranging from pastoral odes to confessions of vice to religious poetry to erotica to essays in verse to humor

The Art of Poetry, 1884

*Though not written until 1884, this poem encapsulated some of the most important concerns of Parnassian poetics—avoidance of melodrama, exploration of forms of language not used in everyday conversation, and in particular the relationship of verse to music. Most of the Parnassians advocated an approach to poetry in which literal meaning was secondary to the subtle music of rhythm, meter, and sound, the interplay of vowels and consonants in which the reader and listener of the poem could take an abstract pleasure related more to that of a song than to storytelling or personal expression. Thus, Verlaine argues for constant experiment in how rhythm and rhyme are structured and modulated—a project that would culminate in 'free verse' by the end of the century, and later into the radical play with language that would characterize Dada and subsequent avant-garde poetry. The final line of the poem—which contrasts the living, evolving, transformatory challenge of avant-garde writing to the comfort of mere 'literature'—became a by-word in the community, and the first Paris Dada journal was named **Littérature** in honour of this poem.*

Oh music above everything!
And therefore take for choice the Uneven;
Nothing that clogs or chains the wing
In vague and vaporous flight to Heaven!

Yet choose your words from the vocal throng
Not too easily apprehended:
Nothing more dear than the gray song
In which the Cloudy and Clear lie blended.

Such is the tremulous flush of noon,
So through the veil bright eyes shoot lustre,
Such is the autumn sky aswoon
With stars that swim in a hazy cluster!

Tone we must have and all else scorn;
Only shade, no colour, no splendour:
O tone! the tender sole love-blender
Of dream with dream and flute with horn!

Far from the murderous Epigram fly,
From cruel Wit and unclean Laughter,
That bring the tears to Heaven's blue eye . . . ,
Stale garlic from the kitchen-rafter!

Take Eloquence and wring his neck!
Right it is, when the Muses revel,
To keep these frolicsome jades in check,
Lest unawares they run to the devil!

Oh who can tell the wrongs of Rhyme?
What deaf child was the first to chink it,
Tinsel that rings, to the true-gold-chime,
Hollow and false as a twopenny trinket?

Oh music ever and evermore!
So let your verse take wings and follow
The soul that seeks, on a sunnier shore,
Fresh climes, fresh loves, like the flying swallow.

So let your verse disperse and climb
The morn's crisp wind to grand adventure
Flowered with scents of mint and thyme...
And all the rest is literature.

[. . .]

A Song at Sunrise

(1870)

Before the flood of day prevails,
O pale star of morning prime!
—A thousand quails
Are singing, singing in the thyme.—

Turn on me thy lingering spark,
Me whose eyes are filled with love;
—Lo! the lark
Flutters in the heavens above.—

Turn thy look, bathed in the bright
Blue splendour of the shimmering morn;
—What delight
Dwells in fields of yellow corn!—

Till my thought shines through and through
Sweetest dreams... so far, so far!
—O the dew
On every blade of grass a star!

Sweetest dreams that dower the chaste
Slumbers of my dearest one...
—Haste, oh haste,
For yonder comes the golden sun!



Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, Sleep (1867)

[. . .]

Allegory

(1866)

An ancient temple crumbling like a dream
On the dim summit of a yellow hill,
Like some old throneless king, weeping at will.
Is vaguely mirrored on a sluggish stream.

With stupid mien and sleepy listless air,
A withered Naiad with her drowsy wiles.
Plagues with a willow wand a faun that smiles,
Like some old gallant rustic sitting there.

Stale and insipid theme that saddens me!
What bard among the singers can there be
Like me? Who moves me, in a sullen rage?

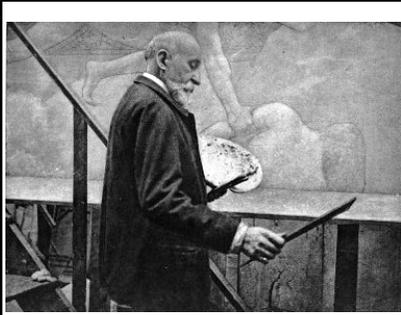
What worn out, frayed and dusty tapestry.
Trite as the settings of an opera stage.
As false, alas, as is my destiny?

Translated by William John Robertson

* * *

from Arsène Alexandre, *Puvis de Chavannes*

The Parnasse Contemporain anthologies contained only verse, but the writers involved worked side by side with artists and musicians, with whom they shared and adapted theories, techniques, and themes. While Classicist painting remained a strong mainstream throughout the Second Empire, most visual artists within the avant-garde tended toward Realism; one exception was the painter and muralist Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, who joined the Parnassians in exploring Classical themes through the lens of a muted



Puvis de Chavannes at work on a mural in Paris' Hotel de Ville (City Hall) toward the end of his life, in 1894.

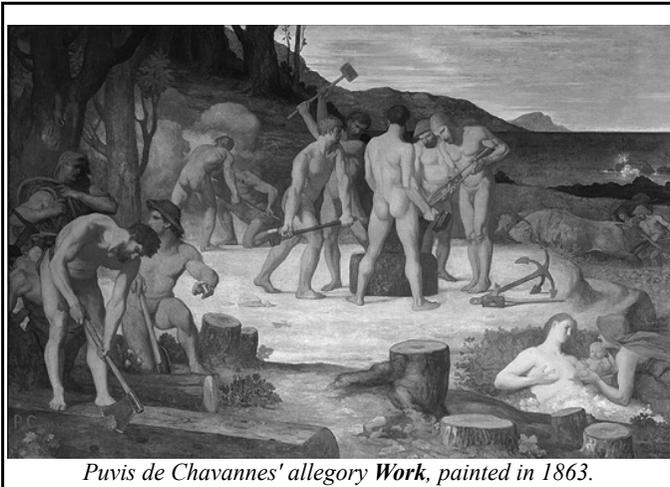
Romanticism. Like the Parnassian poets, he explored the use of Allegory while rejecting the clear-cut, moral imperatives that Classicism demanded of it; his paintings were often set in highly idealized Classical landscapes, or maintained a sense of timeless otherworldliness despite his figures' modern trappings. Partly in response

to his work on huge murals designed for particular architectural spaces, he substituted the violent colours of Romanticism for subtle pastels, and departed from their chaotic compositions to create static landscapes in which his figures posed in the middle-ground, scattered in oddly-spaced groups equally foreign to Classicist or Romanticist pictures. Misunderstood and mocked outside of the avant-garde for most of his life, his work reached wider recognition in the 1880s, and he executed a number of important murals in Europe and the United States at the end of his life.

Puvis de Chavannes died in full possession of a fame that has reached all countries, and with the good fortune of being represented by monumental work at the greatest possible distance from the centre of his reputation. One of his very last paintings covers the wall of the Boston Library.

It seems strange, in view of the very general recognition of his importance, that for many years he was especially not recognized in his native France, except of course by that class of people who, however slowly, determine the probable intellectual value of an artist or a writer. Those of us here in the United States, in 1861, who thought of him as we do today, were not aware of the objections made to his method of

art, nor of the various indignities heaped upon him by the enterprising critics who found it convenient to choose him especially as an immovable object of attack. He was accused of bad drawing, weak intentions, want of clearness in his allegories. There was, for instance, no such logic in his ideal figures as would allow a literary man to recognize at once what they were meant for; owing to his failure to copy certain conventional attributes which are the trademarks of ideas, according to the discipline of certain schools. Nor did his allegories refer exactly to the wants of the moment. The fashion in allegory, or in meaning, might come in or go out, and the figures of Chavannes stood as much removed from these conventionalities as the Greek figures whom we are obliged to label with their names by a process of elimination. Nothing could be farther from literary ideas than his simple types of meaning. They were all rebuilt from an inner consciousness and appreciation of what is purely plastic, and an intention as general as the very words which we use to designate general ideas.



*Puvis de Chavannes' allegory **Work**, painted in 1863.*

[...]

He dreams, if I may so say, with a determined sequence, unwilling to wake and disturb the plausibility of the image that he has been constructing for himself. Just as children may go to bed with a firm intention of dreaming in the same way that they did before, and of continuing a secret life known to themselves, quite logical in its improbability. And Puvis de Chavannes inherits the racial tendency to logic on one side—the so-called Latin—as he inherits through his Burgundian ancestors the healthy tendency to rejoice in outside nature and its delineation. So when he worked, as he has said, he "made no studies from nature for his landscapes." He looked much; he recorded, and then everything was a matter of logic: "When one knows the logic of a being (*la logique d'un être*), one knows how that being must behave in every way. So when one knows the nature, the habits, and the make, let us say, of a given tree—a poplar—one can never forget its pictured anatomy (*anatomie figurée*)"



[...]

Some have thought that they saw in Puvis de Chavannes a recurrence to ancient Italian tradition; but I should suppose that they are wrong, and have mistaken analogy for derivation. Of course a character so sensitive as his absorbed a great deal of what he saw. So, although

he only tried Delacroix's studio (for Delacroix at that time had just given up teaching), and although he only tried occasionally the studio of Couture, yet this slight experience has left a distinct trace in his very method of painting. Some of the characters in that beautiful vision of "Peace" at Amiens are distinct reminiscences of these two men, from whom, however, he separated for most different reasons.

* * *

Arthur Rimbaud, *The Vowels*

*Though never published in the Contemporary Parnassus anthologies, Arthur Rimbaud was accepted and supported by many members of the network until he alienated himself from them through his often aggressive and adolescent behavior. Something of a child prodigy, by seventeen he had absorbed Parnassian ideas regarding the musicality of verse, and **The Vowels** was hailed as a brilliant development of that theme, exploring the physiological effects of each of the vowel sounds as deployed within poetry. Though he wrote for less than a decade, and much of his work was not published until much later, he composed some of the most formally intricate verse of the century. Much of his verse dealt with Realist themes in language bordering on obscenity; unfortunately public-domain translations of these poems could not be found for inclusion here.*

Black A, white E, red I, green U, blue O,
Vowels that echo like remote carillions:
A, sheen of black-haired corselet on winged millions
Round cruel stenchés buzzing to and fro;

Gulfs of gloom. E, clear vapours and pavilions,
White kings, thrilled blossoms, spears of frozen snow;
I, purples, blood-dews, crimson lips aglow
With shame of rosy limbs on languorous pillions:

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U, spheres, divine vibrations of green surges,
Calm of meads sown with beeves, ethereal verges,
Calm wreathed on furrowed foreheads of the wise;

O, supreme clarion shrilling forth strange clamours.
Silences cloven of worlds and angels, glammers;
Omega, O the beam of Her blue eyes!

translated by William John Robertson

Realism

From Gustave Courbet (w/Jules Champfleury?), *Preface to Exhibition Catalog, 1855*

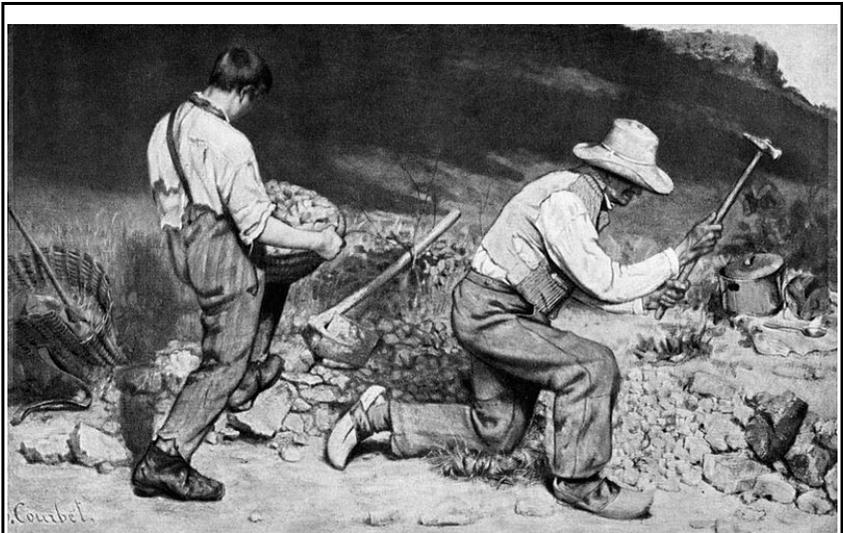


Gustave Courbet, by the photographer Félix Nadar.

The painter Gustave Courbet was raised in the provinces, and upon moving to the capital to train, quickly grew skeptical of many aspects of the Parisian intellectual culture in which he found himself. He soon rebelled against both the heroic epics of mainstream art and the de-politicized aloofness that pervaded much of the avant-garde at the time. Along with Daumier and several other cartoonists he began painting monumental, relatively unidealized pictures of peasants and workers. An ardent socialist, Courbet moved in the underground opposition communities of the time and befriended many writers applying similar ideas to literature; the emerging movement came to be known as Realism. One of the most active writers and theorists was Champfleury, a novelist, critic, and historian of the avant-garde, who is thought to have collaborated on his Preface.

I have studied, with a complete disregard for any system, the art of the ancients and the art of the moderns. I have neither tried to imitate the first nor to copy the latter; nor have I come to the blind alley of 'Art for Art's Sake.' No! I have tried only in a full knowledge of tradition to discover a reasoned and independent consciousness of my own individuality. My only aim has been to find power in knowledge. It has been my aim to transcribe the manners, ideas, aspect of my own generation, as fully and as closely as I can, to be not only a painter but also a man, in a word, my aim is to create a living art.

* * *



*Courbet's 1848 **The Stone-breakers** was among the first large-scale paintings to focus on manual laborers without pastoral sentimentality.*

from Léonce Bénédite, *Courbet*, 1913

In the world of art there has never been a personality so clamorously imposed upon the minds of its contemporaries as that of Courbet. He was anathema to his generation and he forced himself upon its judgment with all the weight of his loud voice, self-importance and his intolerable and overweening vanity. If we are to understand his

career we must find an explanation for this feeling and some excuse for it. He exasperated the public and exhausted the patience of his best friends. So much did he irritate public and critics that in the unhappy closing years of his life he paid dearly for the misunderstanding that lay between them. He was a harmless braggart but he was in the end regarded as a dangerous m. He was taken at his word, and after 1870, when, in the midst of harassing political events, he threw in his lot with the revolutionaries and shouted and roared louder than any of them, he was so compromised that he could find none to defend him save a few of his more enlightened colleagues who had understood him, and had a great admiration for him as a painter. He was cruelly treated and the end of his life was sad and embittered.

* * *



*In the 20-foot long **Burial at Ornans** (1850), Courbet used the scale of a history painting to depict a provincial funeral—his grandfather's—without grandeur, drama, or idealization; he was accused of 'pursuing ugliness'.*

Théodore de Banville, *Good Day, Monsieur Courbet!*

Romanticism had been born from the bitter conflict with the Classicists; but while fighting battles—in the press, in the courts, and occasionally in the streets—remained an integral part of intellectual life, within the avant-garde

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of the 1840s-'60s the proliferating avant-garde movements overlapped and supported each other despite their many differences, as evidenced by this poem from an arch-Parnassian to an arch-Realist, with asides to other collaborators—cartoonists and comedians.

When, in October last, afield I chanced to stray,
I'd have you judge th'effect the country had on me.

Like an old negress, with her waistcloth girt, that day.
Nature, the truth to tell, was horrible to see.

In vain the myrtle flowered, the jacinth and the rose;
For, shouldering in the sky the shrunken stars away.
Old Grassot's twisted phiz and Hyacinth's great nose
Stood out on every side against the cloud-rack grey.

Like monstrous fabled beasts of old, the caverns gaped;
Ay, and the willows showed such gibbous spinal bones,
Such paunches and such wens, fantastically shaped,
That I mistook them all for worn-out baritones.

The blossoms in the meads, hope of the herbalist,
(For but to buy and sell this faithless age is fain)
Like pictures by a too, too zealous colourist.
Crude hues, like sealing-wax or wafers else, had ta'en.

And like a landscape made and planted for a Kurd,
The elms in Tartar caps flaunted on every lawn;
The tunes the brooklets sang were patently absurd
And one would say the rocks by Nadar had been drawn.

Grief-stricken at this sight, I cried: "O Cybele,
Thou that for our behoof producest corn and wine,
Thou that I yesterday so strong and fair did see.
Who on this fashion hath awried thee, Nurse divine?"

"And thou, o puissant Night, the floods that dost refresh.
Daybreaks, clear rays, pure stars, whose course of old,"
I said, "Did vivify her heart and fertilize her flesh,
Planets and moon and sun, o hasten to my aid!"

The Goddess, hearing me aloud for succour cry,
Was touched and on this wise did, answ'ring, to me say,
"If, friend, thou me thus sad and ugly dost espy,
"Tis Monsieur Courbet's fault, who hath just passed this way."

Withal the leafage dark, arched like a tiger's tail.
The grass, the boughs, which fruit big-bellied down did weigh,
"Good day, Monsieur Courbet!" sang out, "Arch-painter, hail!
"Hail, Monsieur Courbet, hail! Monsieur Courbet, good day!"

And the squat willow-trees, more solemn and more glum
Than ever was the staff of Buloz's Review,
With burgrave-gestures sang in chorus, all and some,
"Good day. Monsieur Courbet! Good day! How do you do!"

A voice all full of pride and joy and ravishment,
That startled up the stag from out his native dell,
Responded from afar and with the breezes blent,
"Good day to you again! Yes, thanks; I'm pretty well."

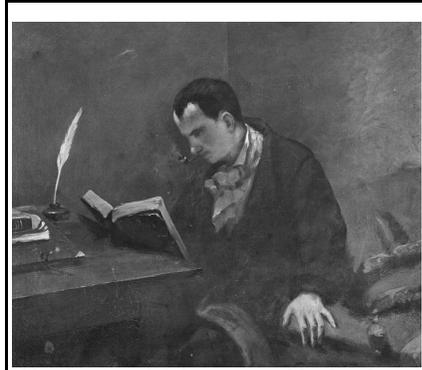
On hearing this, I turned in haste and was in time
This group to see, outlined against the sky-line pale.
Monsieur Courbet in act the diligence to climb.
With pointed beard, that seemed the frightened heav'ns to scale.

Translated by John Payne

* * *

**Charles Baudelaire, from
*The Flowers of Evil, 1857:***

Mentored by Théophile Gautier in the 1840s, Charles Baudelaire became the most influential avant-garde poet, theorist, critic, and translator of his generation. Like most people working within that community during the Second Empire, he engaged to varying



Charles Baudelaire, painted by his friend Courbet in 1848, when both were virtually unknown beyond the avant-garde.

*degrees with many of the different tendencies within it; Baudelaire was among the most versatile. His principle aim was to calibrate poetic practice to the conditions of modern urban life. This project resulted in a wide range of work, including the gritty depiction of hitherto taboo subject-matter and dealing with issues of class; one of his first avant-garde collectives included the Realist writer and critic Champfleury. In **To A Red-Haired Beggar Girl**, this Realist strain merges with another of Baudelaire's controversial innovations, the introduction of stark, undisguised sexuality into verse, often in uncomfortable forms.*

To A Red-Haired Beggar Girl

Pale girl with russet hair,
Tatters in what you wear
Show us your poverty
And your beauty,

For me, poor poet, in
The frail and freckled skin
Of your young flesh
Is a sweetness.

You move in shoes of wood
More gallantly than could
A velvet-buskined Queen
Playing a scene;

In place of rags for clothes
Let a majestic robe
Trail in its bustling pleats
Down to your feet;

Behind the holes in seams
Let a gold dagger gleam
Laid for the roue's eye
Along your thigh;

Let loosened ribbons, then,
Unveil us for our sins
Two breasts as undisguised
And bright as eyes;

As for your other charms,
Let your resistant arms
Frustrate with saucy blows
The groping rogues;

Pearls of a lustrous glow,
Sonnets penned by Belleau,
Suitors at your command
Constantly send,

Menial rhymsters, too,
Dedicate works to you;
Seeing your slipper there
Under the stair,

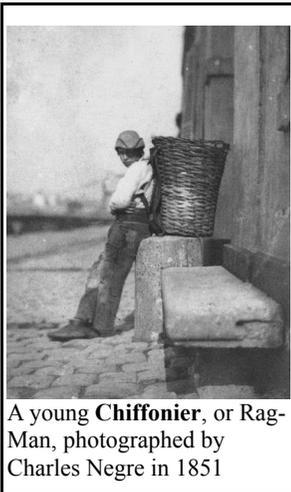
Pages and noble lords,
Would-be Ronsards galore,
Spy for the secret sweets
Of your retreat!

Lilies, in your alcove,
Count less than making love
You'd hold to lovers' law
Several Valois'
- Meanwhile, you beg to eat
Stale bread and tainted meat
Thrown from an alley door
Backstreet Velour
And covet secretly
The cheapest jewelry
Which I (forgive me!) can't
Place in your hand.

Go then, a starveling girl
With no perfume or pearls,
Only your nudity
O my beauty!

[. . .]

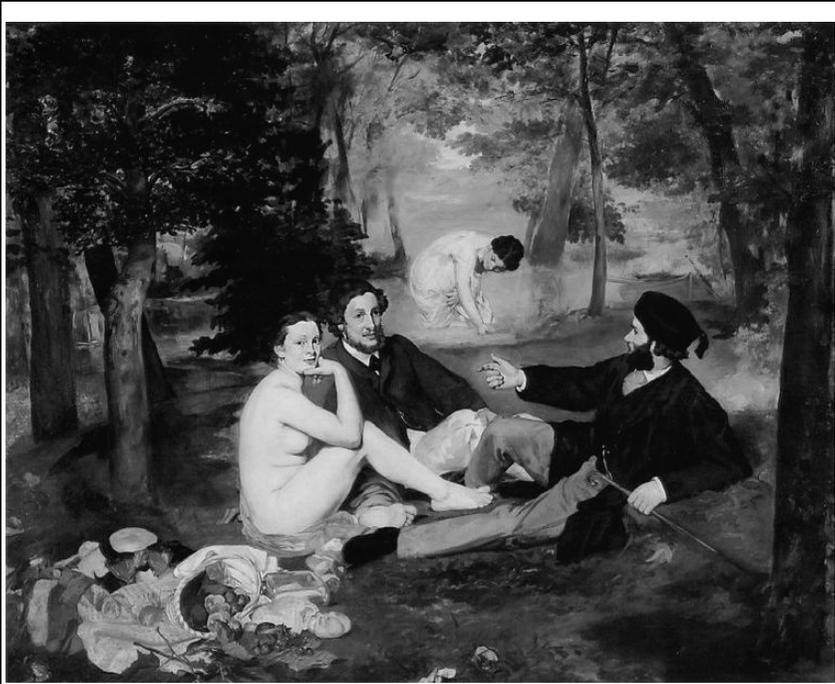
The Ragman's Wine



A young **Chiffonier**, or Rag-Man, photographed by Charles Negre in 1851

Throughout the 19th Century, Paris swarmed with Rag-Pickers, or Chiffoniers Among the poorest people in modern society, the Chiffoniers survived from salvaging anything possible from refuse piles and reselling them on the streets in lower-class neighborhoods. They were so numerous that in 1833 they had united to stage city-wide demonstrations against government mandates for the swift removal of refuse to combat the cholera epidemic, depriving the Chiffoniers of their livelihood. They were

favorite subjects of Realist painters and writers.



*In his 1863 **Luncheon in the Grass**, Manet recreates a Renaissance allegory by Rubens as an outing of well-to-do Frenchmen with a nude who, without Classicist trappings, must be read as a prostitute.*

Often, beneath a street lamp's reddish light,
Where wind torments the glass and flame by night,
Where mankind swarms in stormy turbulence
Within a suburb's muddy labyrinth,

One comes upon a shaking ragman, who
Staggers against the walls, as poets do,
And disregardful of policemen's spies,
Pours from his heart some glorious enterprise.

Swearing his oaths, he dictates laws he's made
To vanquish evil, bring the victims aid,
And there beneath the sky, a canopy,
Grows drunk upon his own sublimity.

Yes, and these men harassed by household strife,
Tortured by age, bruised by the blows of life,
Under their heaps of rubbish burdened down,
The dregs, the vomit of this teeming town,

Appear again, redolent of the jar,
With their companions, bleached and battle-scarred,
Moustaches like the rags of bannerets.
Arches of triumph rise before their steps,

A solemn magic! flags and flowers too!
And in this orgy, dazzling to the view,
Of cheers, of bugles, drums, the sun above,
They glorify a people drunk with love!

And so it is, like Pactolus of old,
For fickle Humankind, wine rolls with gold;
By human throat wine finds a voice to sing,
And reigns by all its gifts, a proper king.

To drown the spite and dull the lethargy
Of damned old men who die in secrecy,
Remorseful God gave sleep to every one;
Man added wine, true scion of the Sun!

* * *

from Louis Hourticq, *Manet*, 1912

Eduard Manet was among the first painters to be influenced by Courbet's work. Pressing forward the elements of formal abstraction found in Courbet's pictures, Manet proceeded to increasingly flatten his images, eliminating modeling in order to emphasize the materials of the painting itself. With a few exceptions, he eschewed any outspoken political involvement, making his work more respectable, and profitable to him, in the long run.



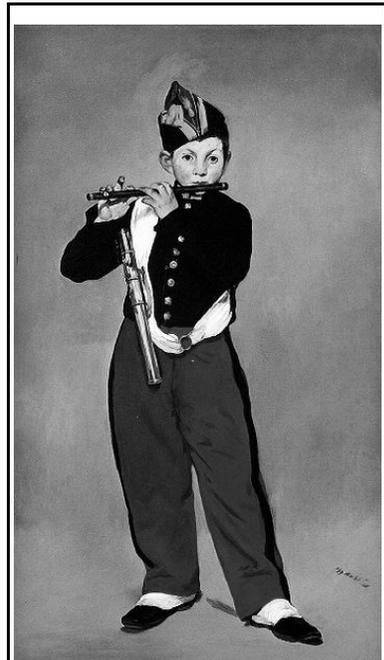
The public of the nineteenth century was subjected to the torment of constant uncertainty. Hardly had it recovered from the hubbub about the romantics, when Courbet set Paris by the ears with his aggressively vulgar peasants. Hardly had the uproar over Courbet died down than Manet brought confusion worse confounded. Since then there have been so many scandals and squabbles one after another that the surfeited public has refused to be indignant any longer. One can no more rouse it from its lethargy. But Manet was producing his work at a time when not one of his audacities could be met with indifference. His pictures met with practically nothing but laughter and derision. He encountered even more violent disapproval than even Courbet had done. Courbet had shocked by the affected ugliness of his models and his noisy glib charlatanism; but even the most hostile of his detractors were forced to admire his magnificent craftsmanship. It was objected of Courbet, "There are such men and such things, but why paint them?" Of Manet it was said: "No, things are not like that. You're laughing at us." And for thirty years Manet stuck to his guns and went on obstinately showing his work to an indifferent and incredulous public. Did Manet know exactly the new kind of painting that he was trying to substitute for the old? That is not so certain. The study of his pictures in chronological order reveals clearly a certain indecision in his mind. Every one of his paintings is a bold attempt to set down on canvas some aspect of things that had not hitherto been revealed; once he had

gained his effect—successfully or unsuccessfully—he passed on to some new audacity. It is this bold inconstancy of his that accounts in a great measure for his long continued quarrel with the public. He was for ever mercilessly disconcerting it; the visitors to the Salon were not prepared by the old outrage for the new.

[. . .]

Take it for all in all, Manet's work seems essentially to be an endeavour to substitute in painting the changing light of day for the artificial, manipulated light of the study. Naturalistic painting had of its essence to face this difficulty. It is in Manet's work that we see clearly how the radiant light of day did little by little dissolve the bold shadows

of naturalistic painting. The naturalistic painters of all time, from Paolo Uccello to Courbet, not to mention Tintoretto, Caravaggio, the Spaniards, and Gericault, and all the men who have tried to render solid bodies and things in paint, have been prodigal in their use of dark coloring with sudden lights; bold, contrasts of light and shade are the only methods by which a painter can show up the objects on his canvas in bold relief. There are ingenuous visionaries, like Fra Angelico, or the fantastic decorators, like Rubens or Boucher, who paint in light only; Courbet, and following him, Manet, painted in



*While Romanticist painters had attacked illusionism through distortion, raw brushwork, and heightened color, Manet did so through a graphic flattening of his figures, as in **The Fifer** of 1866..*

shade, like the Spaniards. But in 1850, when landscape painters had taken to painting out of doors, it became impossible for figure-painters to stay shut up within the four walls of the studio. Courbet endeavoured therefore to set his figures in the full light of day. But though he had been magnificent when he painted in shade, he became dull when he tried to paint in light.

Manet saw that it was not enough to transpose the sombre painting of the naturalistic painters into a lighter tonality, and therefore he resolved on sacrifices to which the precise draughtsmen of the schools would never have. He was bold enough to eliminate the nice and exact science of modeling, which had been handed down as a tradition ever since it had been established by the Italians of the Renaissance. That science presupposes an attentive vision, an intellectual interpretation of the model rather than a direct transcription of impressions received.

* * *

Bohemia

By 1840, the rowdy ultra-Romanticist subculture from which the original avant-garde groups had emerged was evolving into something else. Larger but less focused, what had been social and psychological experiments were giving way to an inherited lifestyle often lacking the personal and political challenge of its models. As what was becoming known as 'Bohemia' spread, much of the avant-garde distanced themselves from what they saw as a degenerating, and often unhealthy, subculture. Bohemia gradually became a distinct phenomenon from the avant-garde, but one in which elements of the avant-garde, political dissidents, mainstream artists and writers, criminals, eccentrics, alcoholics, and publicists mingled—sometimes as a first step to commercial success, sometimes as an ethical choice or a vehicle of self-transformation, sometimes as a final stage of personal dissolution.

from Henry Murger, Preface to *Bohemians of the Latin Quarter*, 1849

In the 1830s the aggressive, flamboyant public face of the Bouzingo had caused scandal and fear (along with derision) when reported in the mainstream press; by the 1840s most Frenchmen looked on Bohemian subculture as a largely harmless phenomenon—at best an accepted stage in the development of writers and artists destined for respectability, at worst an alluring subculture of irresponsibility from which sons and daughters ought to



Though it was not until 1896 that Giacomo Puccini wrote his famous opera based on Murger's book, it had already been made into a blockbuster play decades earlier.

be steered away. This shift was due mostly to the writings of Henri Murger, who in 1847 began writing a series of sentimental stories about Bohemian life. Like Gautier's earlier fictionalized accounts of life in the *Jeunes-France* / *Bouzingo* group, the *Scenes of Bohemian Life*—serialized in popular newspapers and then published in book form—presented a heightened version of the goals, mindsets, and lifestyle of the subculture; but whereas Gautier had emphasized the radicalism, intellectualism, and absurdity of avant-garde life, Murger portrayed Bohemia as a kind of

playground, emphasizing its sense of freedom and adventure but downplaying its more threatening aspects and ignoring any intellectual or ethical impetus that existed for some of its participants. And while Gautier had portrayed the avant-garde as a subculture with its own goals, fundamentally at odds with mainstream society, Murger portrayed Bohemia as one stage in a respectable career, an ultimately compatible and even necessary part of mainstream Bourgeois society—though, he admitted, it was possible to become stuck in Bohemia, leading most often to alcoholism, illness, and early death. Some Bohemians—including the Realist theorist Jules Champfleury, who had co-founded a Bohemian club with Murger in the 1840s—vocally criticized Murger's de-politicization of Bohemia. Note Murger's direct attack on Gautier's *Preface to Mlle. de Maupin*, the Parnassians, and their concept of 'Art for Art's Sake', which Murger associates with anti-commercialism. Ironically, the name 'Bohemia' stems in part from the 'Bohème Doyenné' group that Gautier had founded around the time that *Maupin* was published.

Today, as of old, every man who enters on an artistic career, without any other means of livelihood than his art itself, will be forced to walk in the paths of Bohemia. The greater number of our contemporaries who display the noblest blazonry of art have been Bohemians, and amidst their calm and prosperous glory they often recall, perhaps with regret, the time when, climbing the verdant slope of youth, they had no other fortune in the sunshine of their twenty years than courage, which is the virtue of the young, and hope, which is the wealth of the poor.

For the uneasy reader, for the timorous citizen, for all those for whom an "i" can never be too plainly dotted in definition, we repeat as an axiom: "Bohemia is a stage in artistic life; it is the preface to the Academy, the Hotel Dieu, or the Morgue."

We will add that Bohemia only exists and is only possible in Paris.

We will begin with unknown Bohemians, the largest class. It is made up of the great family of poor artists, fatally condemned to the law of incognito, because they cannot or do not know how to obtain a scrap of publicity, to attest their existence in art, and by showing what they are already prove what they may someday become. They are the race of obstinate dreamers for whom art has remained a faith and not a profession; enthusiastic folk of strong convictions, whom the sight of a masterpiece is enough to throw into a fever, and whose loyal heart beats high in presence of all that is beautiful, without asking the name of the master and the school. This Bohemian is recruited from amongst those young fellows of whom it is said that they give great hopes, and

from amongst those who realize the hopes given, but who, from carelessness, timidity, or ignorance of practical life, imagine that everything is done that can be when the work is completed, and wait for public admiration and fortune to break in on them by escalade and burglary. They live, so to say, on the outskirts of life, in isolation and inertia. Petrified in art, they accept to the very letter the symbolism of the academical dithyrambic, which places an aureola about the heads of poets, and, persuaded that they are gleaming in their obscurity, wait for others to come and seek them out. We used to know a small school composed of men of this type, so strange, that one finds it hard to believe in their existence; they styled themselves the disciples of art for art's sake. According to these simpletons, art for art's sake consisted of deifying one another, in abstaining from helping chance, who did not even know their address, and in waiting for pedestals to come of their own accord and place themselves under them.

It is, as one sees, the ridiculousness of stoicism. Well, then we again affirm, there exist in the heart of unknown Bohemia, similar beings whose poverty excites a sympathetic pity which common sense obliges you to go back on, for if you quietly remark to them that we live in the nineteenth century, that the five-franc piece is the empress of humanity, and that boots do not drop already blacked from heaven, they turn their backs on you and call you a tradesman.

For the rest, they are logical in their mad heroism, they utter neither cries nor complainings, and passively undergo the obscure and rigorous fate they make for themselves. They die for the most part, decimated by that disease to which science does not dare give its real name, want. If they would, however, many could escape from this fatal *denouement* which suddenly terminates their life at an age when

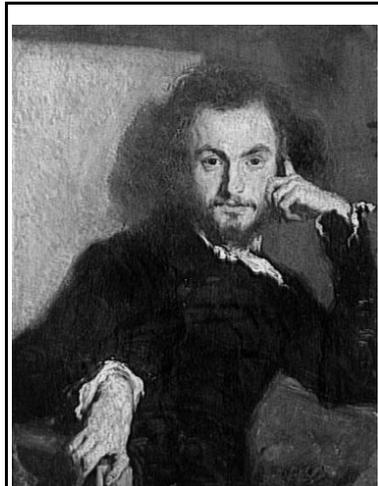
few lines in a dispatch. As to the soldiers struck down in battle, they are buried where they fall, and one epitaph serves for twenty thousand dead.

So, too, the crowd, which always has its eyes fixed on the rising sun, never lowers its glance towards that underground world where the obscure workers are struggling; their existence finishes unknown and without sometimes even having had the consolation of smiling at an accomplished task, they depart from this life, enwrapped in a shroud of indifference.

* * *

from Théophile Gautier, *Charles Baudelaire*

Baudelaire and Verlaine, the most influential avant-gardists of their generation, both had connections with Bohemia. Baudelaire's involvement was highly ambivalent: his interest in urban life, especially lower-class life, drew him inevitably toward Bohemia, and he found it a useful milieu for discovering unexpected realizations and extreme experience; but he deplored the lack of discipline that it encouraged, the sometimes sloppy theatricality of its public display, and its encouragement of alcoholism and other destructive habits. His mentor Gautier, who had helped to pioneer the merging of Bohemianism with Dandyism, a subculture devoted to the pursuit of stoic and absolute self-control, outwardly personified by extreme attention to details of dress, hygiene, and speech but whose ultimate aims were the development of techniques to break down inherited personalities



Baudelaire at the beginning of his career, painted by his friend Émile Deroy in 1844.

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and consciously construct new ways to inhabit the Self, based on artistic or literary principles. None of the definitive writings on Dandyism—by Barbey d'Aurevilly and Baudelaire himself—could be found in public domain translations for inclusion in this book. Here Gautier describes Baudelaire's embodiment of these two contradictory impulses—Dandyism and Bohemia.

Contrary to the free and easy ways of artists, Baudelaire piqued himself on his careful observance of conventionalities, and he was so polite as to appear mannered. He weighed his words, used only the choicest expressions, and pronounced some words in a particular way, as if he wished to underline them and to give them a mysterious importance. He had italics and capital letters in the tones of his voice. Caricature, which was held in high honour at Pimodan House, was condemned by him as being art-student and coarse, but he did not refuse to indulge in paradoxes and utterances. In the simplest, most natural, and perfectly easy air, exactly as if he were proclaiming a commonplace on the beauty or unpleasantness of the weather, he would put forward a satanically monstrous axiom or maintain with icy coolness a mathematically extravagant theory, for he was rigorously methodical in the development of his absurdities. His wit did not show in happy hits or flashes, but he looked at everything from a personal point of view that altered lines in the same way as looking at things from far above or far below, and he perceived relations between them that were concealed from others and which struck one by their logical oddity. His gestures were slow, few, and quiet, and never wide-armed, for he had a horror of the Southerner's way of gesticulating. He also disliked volubility of speech, and English reserve was to him a proof of good taste. He may be said to have been a dandy who had strayed into

Bohemia, but who while there preserved his rank, his manners, and that self-respect characteristic of a man imbued with Brummel's principles.

Translated by F.C. de Sumichrast

* * *

Charles Baudelaire, The Soul of Wine

One night, from bottles, sang the soul of wine:
'O misfit man, I send you for your good
Out of the glass and wax where I'm confined,
A melody of light and brotherhood!

I know you must, out on the blazing hill,
Suffer and sweat beneath the piercing rays
To grow my life in me, my soul and will;
I'm grateful to you, and I will not play

You false, since I feel joy when I can fall
Into the throat of some old working man,
And his warm belly suits me overall
As resting place more than cold cellars can.

And do you hear the songs that hope believes,
The Sunday music, throbbing from my breast?
Elbows on table, rolling up your sleeves
You praise me, and I'll put your cares to rest;

I'll fire the eyes of your enraptured wife;
I'll grant a force and colour to your son,
And will for this frail athlete of life
Be oil that makes the straining muscles run.

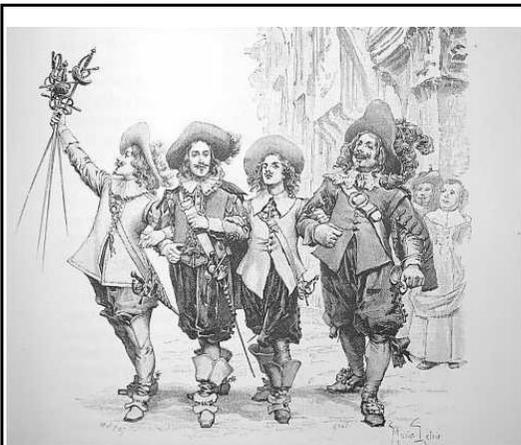
My nectar falls in your fertility,
A precious seed whose Sower is divine,
So from our love is born rare poetry,
Thrusting towards God the blossom on its vine!

* * *

from Henry Murger, *Bohemians of the Latin Quarter*, 1849

Bohemia included scores of groups modeled on Romanticist cénacles, which constantly merged, split, and changed names. While many lived collectively—if only for financial reasons—they rarely did so with the rigorous utopian mentality of the Jeunes-France, and their apartments did not act as de-naturalizing psychological spaces or as centers of communal activity. Instead, a group's collective life tended to center upon a particular café or tavern in which they would spend all of their free time, treating it as a kind of communal living-room, sometimes to the annoyance of proprietors and other customers.

At that time, Gustave Colline, the great philosopher, Marcel, the great painter, Schaunard, the great musician, and Rodolphe, the great poet (as they called one another), regularly frequented the Momus Cafe, where they were surnamed "the Four Musketeers," because they were always seen together. In fact, they came together, went away together, played together, and sometimes didn't pay their shot together,



*It has been speculated that the **Three Musketeers'** ethos of 'One for all, All for one' was a conscious portrayal of Romanticist 'camaraderie' by one of the book's two co-authors, the Bouzingo member **Auguste Maquet**.*

with a unison worthy of the best orchestra.

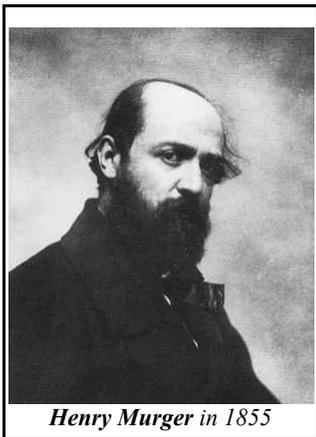
They chose to meet in a room where forty people might have been accommodated, but they were usually there alone, inasmuch as they had rendered the place uninhabitable by its ordinary frequenters.

The chance customer who risked himself in this den, became, from the moment of his entrance, the victim of the terrible four; and, in most cases, made his escape without finishing his newspaper and cup of coffee, seasoned as they were by unheard-of maxims on art, sentiment, and political economy. The conversation of the four comrades was of such a nature that the waiter who served them had become an idiot in the prime of his life.

At length things reached such a point that the landlord lost all patience and came up one night to make a formal statement of his grievances:

"Firstly. Monsieur Rodolphe comes early in the morning to breakfast, and carries off to his room all the papers of the establishment, going so far as to complain if he finds that they have been opened. Consequently, the other customers, cut off from the usual channels of public opinion and intelligence, remain until dinner in utter ignorance of political affairs. The Bosquet party hardly knows the names of the last cabinet."

"Monsieur Rodolphe has even obliged the cafe to subscribe to 'The Beaver,' of which he is chief editor. The master of the



Henry Murger in 1855

establishment at first refused; but as Monsieur Rodolphe and his party kept calling the waiter every half hour, and crying, 'The Beaver! Bring us 'The Beaver' some other customers, whose curiosity was excited by these obstinate demands, also asked for 'The Beaver.' So 'The Beaver' was subscribed to—a hatter's journal, which appeared every month,

ornamented with a vignette and an article on 'The Philosophy of Hats and other things in general,' by Gustave Colline."

"Secondly. The aforesaid Monsieur Colline, and his friend Monsieur Rodolphe, repose themselves from their intellectual labors by playing backgammon from ten in the morning till midnight and as the establishment possess but one backgammon board, they monopolize that, to the detriment of the other amateurs of the game; and when asked for the board, they only answer, 'Someone is reading it, call tomorrow.' Thus the Bosquet party find themselves reduced to playing piquet, or talking about their old love affairs."

"Thirdly. Monsieur Marcel, forgetting that a café is a public place, brings thither his easel, box of colors, and, in short, all the instruments of his art. He even disregards the usages of society as far as to send for models of different sexes; which might shock the morals of the Bosquet party."

"Fourthly. Following the example of his friend, Monsieur Schaunard talks of bringing his piano to the café and he has not scrupled to get up a chorus on a motive from his symphony, 'The Influence of Blue in Art.' Monsieur Schaunard has gone farther: he has inserted in the lantern which serves the establishment for sign, a transparency with this inscription:

'COURSE OF MUSIC, VOCAL AND INSTRUMENTAL,
FOR BOTH SEXES,
GRATIS.
APPLY AT THE COUNTER.'

In consequence of this, the counter aforesaid is besieged every night by a number of badly dressed individuals, wanting to know where you go in."

"Moreover, Monsieur Schaunard gives meetings to a lady calling herself Mademoiselle Phemie, who always forgets to bring her bonnet. Wherefore, Monsieur Bosquet, Jr., has declared that he will never more put foot in an establishment where the laws of nature are thus outraged."

"Fifthly. Not content with being very poor customers, these gentlemen have tried to be still more economical. Under pretense of having caught the mocha of the establishment in improper intercourse with chicory, they have brought a lamp with spirits-of-wine, and make their own coffee, sweetening it with their own sugar; all of which is an insult to the establishment."

"Sixthly. Corrupted by the discourse of these gentlemen, the waiter Bergami (so called from his whiskers), forgetting his humble origin and defying all control, has dared to address to the mistress of the house a piece of poetry suggestive of the most improper sentiments; by the irregularity of its style, this letter is recognized as a direct emanation from the pernicious influence of Monsieur Rodolphe and his literature."

"Consequently, in spite of the regret which he feels, the proprietor of the establishment finds himself obliged to request the Colline party to choose some other place for their revolutionary meetings."

Gustave Colline, who was the Cicero of the set, took the floor and demonstrated to the landlord that his complaints were frivolous and

unfounded; that they did him great honor in making his establishment a home of intellect; that their departure and that of their friends would be the ruin of his house, which their presence elevated to the rank of a literary and artistic club.

"But," objected the other, "you and those who come to see you call for so little."

"This temperance to which you object," replied Colline, "is an argument in favor of our morals. Moreover, it depends on yourself whether we spend more or not. You have only to open an account with us."

The landlord pretended not to hear this, and demanded some explanation of the incendiary letter addressed by Bergami to his wife. Rodolphe, accused of acting as secretary to the waiter, strenuously asserted his innocence—

"For," said he, "the lady's virtue was a sure barrier—"

The landlord would not repress a smile of pride. Finally, Colline entangled him completely in the folds of his insidious oratory, and everything was arranged, on the conditions that the party should cease making their own coffee, that the establishment should receive "The Beaver" gratis, that Phemie should come in a bonnet, that the backgammon board should be given up to the Bosquets every Sunday from twelve to two, and above all, that no one should ask for tick.

On this basis, everything went well for some time.

* * *

Paul Verlaine, *Poem Saturnine*, 1885

A lifelong resident of Bohemia, during the 1870s Verlaine gradually fell victim to alcoholism and chronic depression, becoming an iconic example of a fate extremely common in the subculture; while the smaller, more intimate avant-garde community had offered mutual solidarity and support during the psychological experiments of the 1830s, Bohemia was comprised of a large number of people constantly entering and leaving the community, and idealized substance abuse. As a result, for the last two decades of his life Verlaine's addiction, depression, and poverty were actively encouraged by his Bohemian milieu while his friends in the avant-garde (themselves, for the most part, living near poverty) strove constantly to keep him emotionally and financially afloat.

T'was bizarre and Satan ought to laugh.
This summer day had made me drunk and rude.
What foolish singer this, with all her chaff,
And the disgusting things that she has spewed!

And this piano set in too much smoke.
Beneath the swinging lamp with red flame, blurred;
It seemed—my ever growing anger spoke—
It seemed as though to mock my very word.

I think—my senses being all awry—
My bile seethed like fermenting wine in casks.
Oh! The café concerts and refrains that fly.
Made false by heavy plaster of the masks.

In this vile hamlet where I wandered late.
Sucking with relish some refreshing ice,
Three rowdies with their eyes degenerate
Ogled continually at my grimace.

That I was hooted at was very plain
By those young toughs near where one takes the car;
And the abuse I threw them, though in vain,
Was such I nearly choked on my cigar.

Now I return: I hear a voice—the light
Step of a ghost. Someone, or no one near?
Yet, surely someone passed—Ah, what a night!
The hour of droll awakening soundeth clear.

Translated by Bergen Applegate

* * *

From Robert Harborough Sherard, *Twenty Years in Paris*, 1905

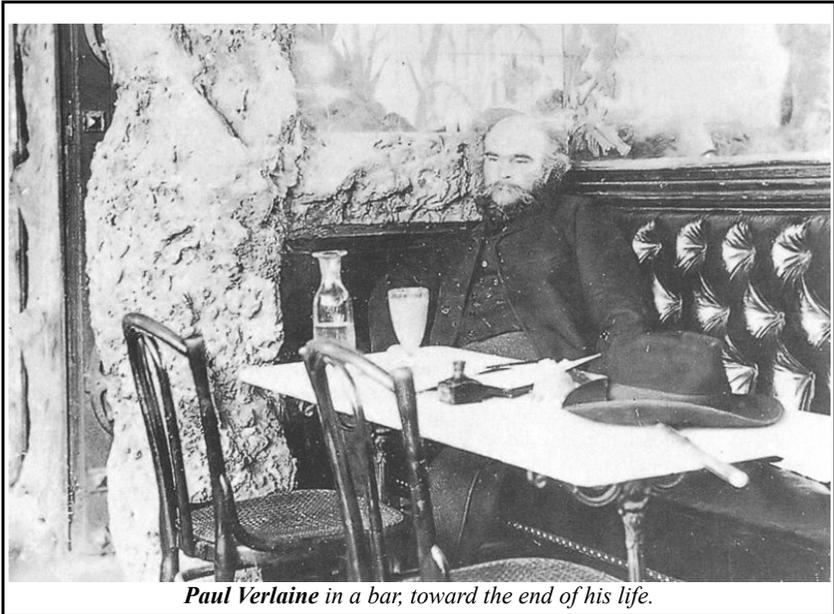
Robert Sherard was an active member of the emerging British avant-garde, and a friend and staunch defender of Oscar Wilde (Sherard would be his first biographer) during his persecution for Sodomy. In 1882 Sherard moved to Paris, where he acted as an unofficial ambassador of the British Aestheticist community.

I am sorry that I ever met Paul Verlaine, for the remembrance of the devastation which had been wrought in the perishable body of that immortal genius must always be a poignant sorrow. My first sight of this great, simple, beautiful poet and child was in the basement of a café on the Place St. Michel, where there used to be singing, and where the poets gathered. Verlaine was drunk that night, and, as usual, was dressed in rags. He had a false nose on his face (for it was carnival time), and he was piping on a little tin whistle. The spectacle had the terrible comic touch of Aristophanes. It was tragedy made grotesque. The man had the head and face of Socrates, and here we saw Socrates

playing the buffoon. It was "the glory that was Greece" swathed in the mire of the Paris gutter. I could not bear the sight, and hurried home.

The next occasion on which I saw him was at a dinner given in his honour by the readers of the literary paper, *La Plume*, then edited by the late Leon Deschamps, a man who rendered great services to the young *littérateurs* of Paris. Verlaine was childishly delighted with the honour shown him. Many of the greatest writers in France sat down to that mediocre feast, in proof of their esteem. Long, however, before the meal was over, Verlaine had sunk into a state of morose apathy. He grimaced, he wrinkled his lofty brows, and screwed up his eyes; and when any one spoke to him he pointed a finger. But he said nothing, and did not recover until, when the dinner was over, the strong waters were placed upon the table.

The circumstances of his death were a disgrace to Paris. He died in utter neglect and abandonment, amidst the most sordid surroundings. There were with him in his last days of suffering two



Paul Verlaine in a bar, toward the end of his life.

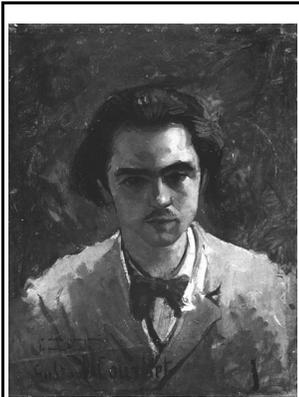
outcast women and one outcast man. The outcast man begged for him, stole for him. Of the two women, as he used to say, one robbed him, the other loved him. He used to beat the one who loved him as long as he had the strength to do so. The greatest men in France followed his hearse to the grave; but his chiefest mourner was Bibi-la-Puree the outcast man, who had closed his wistful and wondering eyes.

To think back upon those twenty years of observation of the Latin Quarter is to evoke little but tragic memories. And not a month passes almost but the papers bring to the quiet of my retreat news of the horrid way in which some fresh victim has fallen.

* * *

The Poètes Maudits

by Paul Verlaine:



Paul Verlaine, painted by the Realist Gustave Courbet around 1871.

*For decades, Verlaine was revered within the avant-garde but virtually unknown in the broader literary world, and the gradual, quite public dissolution of his personal life made him a living icon of the Poet destroyed by a society that condemns him through its silence. In 1884—just as he was beginning to establish a broader (though controversial) reputation—he published **Le Poètes maudits** (The Cursed Poets), a slim but influential book of criticism dedicated to poets who had shared his fate. The*

book included work by, Arthur Rimbaud, Stéphane Mallarmé (whose work will be featured in Vol. 4), Marceline Debordes-Valmore (see Vol. 2), Villiers de l'Isle-Adam and Tristan Corbière (for whom no public domain translations could be found), and Verlaine himself; but the term was quickly adopted to designate many other writers in the avant-garde who explored the incompatibility of the poetic frame of mind with commercial civilization.

Anguish

(1866)

Nature, you move me not at all, nor fields
That nurse mankind, nor rosy echoes tender
Of Southern pastorals, nor auroral splendour,
Nor saddening calm that solemn sunset yields.

I laugh at Art, I hold man in derision,
Verse, song, Greek temples, towers whose spirals rise
Wreathed in the void of vast cathedral skies;
And good and ill to me are one vain vision.

I have no faith in God. Thought I despise
And spurn, and as for that old tale of lies,
Love, let them speak of it to me no more!

Life-wearied, fearing death; like a lost vessel,
Light plaything tossed betwixt wild surge and shore,
My soul with fate's last storm prepares to wrestle.

Translated by William John Robertson

[. . .]

Pierrot, To Léon Valade.(1884)

Throughout the second half of the century, poets played with the characters of Pierrot, Harlequin, and Colombine from the French folk tradition. The modern poet, they implied, found themselves in a mythically untenable position: wracked by storms of love, violence, guilt and fear, they were nonetheless forced to play the clown to an uncomprehending public in an endless tragic farce. This poem is dedicated to Verlaine's friend Léon Valade, a member of the Contemporary Parnassus who would later co-found the Symbolist satirical Hydropaths group.

No, this is not the moon-struck dreamer here.
That used to rail his forbears, o'er the door.
His joy, quite like his candle, is no more—
Today his specter haunts us, thin and clear.

And now where flashing lightning takes its flight,
His pale blouse has the air as of a shroud;
With mouth agape, he seems to shriek aloud
Against the gnawing worm that holds him quite.

And with the flapping of some bird of night,
He makes with sleeves that flutter long and white.
The foolish signs none answer from the earth.

His eyes are holes that burn with sulfurous flame.
And frightful are the powdered cheeks that frame
The bloodless face and pointed nose of death.



The mime **Paul Legrand** as **Pierrot**, shown in costume by Charles Geoffroy in 1855, was largely responsible for re-creating the character of Pierrot as a comi-tragic figure rather than straightforward burlesque clown. Affiliated with the Realists, especially Jules Champfleury, he portrayed the character as alternately prosaic, melancholy, devious, absurd, or frenetically violent.

* * *

by Charles Baudelaire:

*Though not included in the **Poètes maudits** anthology—by the time it was published he had been dead for nearly twenty years, and his work was well known though still controversial—Baudelaire seemed to many to be the perfect example of the Cursed Poet: in constant poverty, driven by his literary and financial despair to excesses which eventually killed him, consciously taking upon himself the role of social pariah. Many of Baudelaire's writings explored this phenomenon, not only in regards to himself but to the American Edgar Allen Poe, who Baudelaire had introduced to the French avant-garde through many translations and essays while Poe was still virtually unknown or despised in the United States.*

The Albatross

Often, to amuse themselves, the crew of the ship
Would fell an albatross, the largest of sea birds,
Indolent companions of their trip
As they slide across the deep sea's bitters.

Scarcely had they dropped to the plank
Than these blue kings, maladroit and ashamed
Let their great white wings sink
Like an oar dragging under the water's plane.

The winged visitor, so awkward and weak!
So recently beautiful, now comic and ugly!
One sailor grinds a pipe into his beak,
Another, limping, mimics the infirm bird that once could fly.

The poet is like the prince of the clouds
Who haunts the storm and laughs at lightning.
He's exiled to the ground and its hooting crowds;
His giant wings prevent him from walking.

[. . .]

Heautontimoroumenos

for J.G.F.

I'll strike you without rage or hate
The way a butcher strikes his block,
The way that Moses smote the rock!
So that your eyes may irrigate

My dry Sahara, I'll allow
The tears to flow of your distress.
Desire, that hope embellishes,
Will swim along the overflow

As ships set out for voyaging,
And like a drum that beats the charge
In my infatuated heart
The echoes of your sobs will ring!

But am I not a false accord
Within the holy symphony,
Thanks to voracious Irony
Who gnaws on me and shakes me hard?

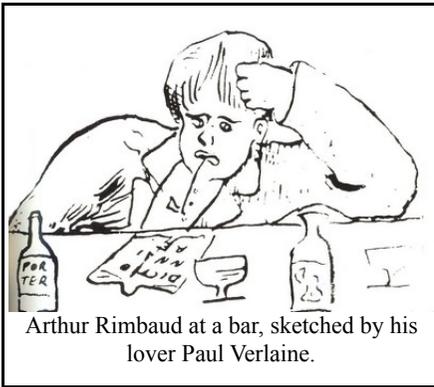
She's in my voice, in all I do!
Her poison flows in all my veins!
I am the looking-glass of pain
Where she regards herself, the shrew!

I am the wound, and rapier!
I am the cheek, I am the slap!
I am the limbs, I am the rack,
The prisoner, the torturer!

I am my own blood's epicure
- One of those great abandoned men
Who are eternally condemned
To laugh, but who can smile no more!

* * *

Arthur Rimbaud, *Wasted Youth*, 1874



Arthur Rimbaud at a bar, sketched by his lover Paul Verlaine.

Rimbaud left behind him an enduring legacy of bohemianism and chaos that would seem out of proportion to his short but spectacular flirtation with poetry. After moving to Paris, he was welcomed into the avant-garde community, where he pursued a Bohemian lifestyle, progressively

alienating his would-be friends, and became involved in a stormy sexual relationship with Paul Verlaine, culminating in Verlaine shooting him in the arm in a hotel in Brussels. In 1875 Rimbaud gave up writing and left France, traveling throughout Africa and the near east, including stints in the Dutch colonial army and as an arms dealer in Ethiopia. In the meantime, Verlaine's marriage—already unhealthy—had been destroyed, and the dissolution of his relationship with Rimbaud had precipitated his final descent into alcoholism and depression, also probably inevitable.

Far from the birds and the herds and the meadows,
Kneeling I drank in the heather, aswoon
With a tender caress of the hazel-tree shadows
In the haze of a genial and green afternoon.

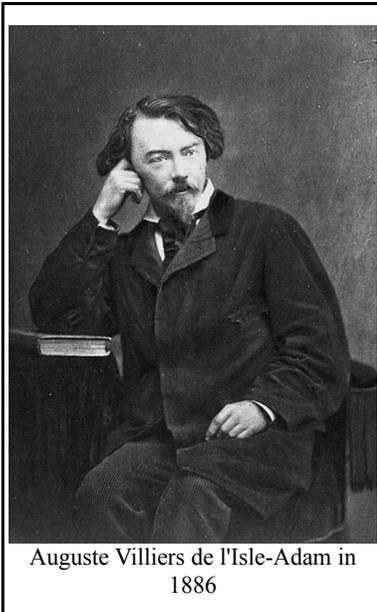
What could I drink from this young river welling —
Voiceless elms, flowerless swards, skies cloud-accurst! —
Drink in these green gourds, so far from my dwelling?
But some golden liquor that kindles the thirst.

Sinister signboard to swing on a tavern!
Storm in the welkin changed noon into night;
Then were black islands, dark creek and dull cavern,
Stark poles and bare columns athwart the blue light.

The wave from the woodland the virgin sands swallowed,
God's wind paved the pools with ice to the brink;
'Twas gold-diver's, pearl-fisher's luck I had followed
For, fancy, I never bethought me to drink!

translated by William John Robertson

* * *



Auguste Villiers de l'Isle-Adam in
1886

**Auguste Villiers de l'Isle-Adam,
Discouragement, 1859**

Though highly respected within the avant-garde for his elegantly written yet bitterly satirical verse, and also for his play Axel, which was never produced despite continual attempts on the part of other writers and artists over the course of several decades, Auguste Villiers de l'Isle-Adam lived in abject poverty for most of his adult life.

Athwart the unclean ages whirled
To solitary woods sublime,
Oh! had I first beheld this world
Alone and free in Nature's prime!

When on its loveliness first seen
Eve cast her pure blue eyes abroad;
When ail the earth was fresh and green,
And simple Man believed in God!

When sacred accents, vibrating
Beneath the naked sun and sky,
Rose from each new-created thing
To hail the Lord of Life on high;

I would have learned and lived in hope
And loved! For, in those vanished days,
Faith wandered on the mountain-slope . . .
But now the world has changed her ways.

Our feet, less free, less fugitive,
Tread beaten tracks from shore to shore . . .
Alas! what is the life we live?
—A dream of days that are no more!

translated by William John Robertson

Section 4: The Second Empire



*The regime of Napoleon III combined the trappings of democratic populism and mass spectacle with the harsh imperatives of a totalitarian police state, resulting in two decades of economic expansion and prosperity for the Middle Class at the expense of civil liberties and the lives of the working class. Louis Napoleon is gloriously portrayed in Guillaume-Alphonse Harang Cabasson's 1854 commission, **The Apotheosis of Napoleon III.***

Modernism and Centralization

Following the massacres that had accompanied his seizure of power, Napoleon III quickly established his regime as a highly centralized police state, with complete control over the press for the first decade of his rule, by which time his power had been fully consolidated. This consolidation had been brought about his close interaction with the caste of wealthy industrialists, who helped to design state policy and therefore benefited greatly from his administration, in a foreshadowing of Fascist



Napoleon III, painted by Jean Hyppolite Flandrin in 1863.

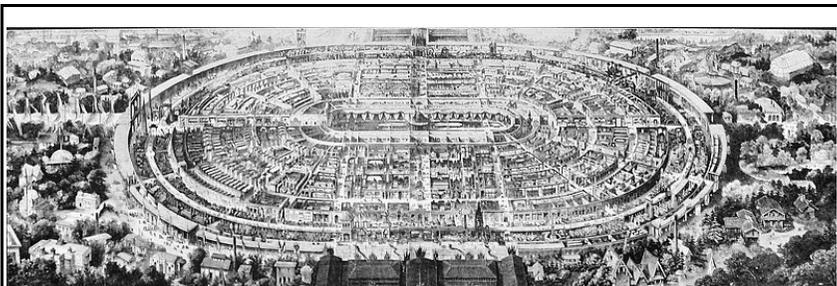
Liberté: French Culture & Society in the 19th Century: Vol. III

economics in the next century. As part of this system, the Empire poured funding into the encouragement of scientific research and technological development, much of which was in turn put to use by the state or its industrial supporters. Following his namesake's strategy for maintaining power, Louis Napoleon engaged in almost constant colonial warfare (in Algeria, China, Mexico, Vietnam, Korea, the Crimea, and Italy) expanding France's colonial holdings and consolidating control in existing colonies. All combined to bring about a long economic boom for the upper and middle classes, who therefore continued to support the regime. France, and especially Paris, came to represent the capital of European modernity.

* * *

from Théophile Gautier, *Paris Under Siege*, 1870

In 1867, Napoleon III was able to promote his regime's power and modernity when Paris hosted the International Exposition, or World's Fair. There were over 50,000 exhibitors with displays showcasing new technologies, anthropological collections, contemporary art, and including elaborate pavilions erected by 42 countries around the world—many under direct or indirect French colonial control—devoted to sharing their national culture. Visited by over 9 million people, the Exposition served paradoxically as both a statement of European, and especially French, hegemony and at the same time as an unprecedented opportunity for Europeans to expose themselves to non-Western cultures.



Perspective drawing of the 1867 International Exposition



A popular print in which Napoleon III Receives Sovereigns and Illustrious People Visiting the Universal Exposition.

had endeavoured to exhibit its very best. To walk under the lofty arches of that cathedral of labour was to pass from wonder to wonder, and as one beheld the innumerable prodigies one felt pride in being a man. So lofty was the vaulting

that an engine was needed to enable one to ascend to it, and the roof, with its red arcading framing in the blue heaven, impressed one with the same sense of immensity as does the Coliseum at Rome.

Round the monstrous edifice were scattered in lovely flower gardens, that had sprung up from the ground like fairy settings at the whistle of the scene-setter, Egyptian temples, their pylons covered with hieroglyphs, mosques, okkels, konaks, palaces like unto those of *The Thousand and One Nights* in the purest Arab style, Swiss chalets, Russian isbas, Norwegian fishermen's huts, Chinese pagodas, Japanese houses, shops for the sale of Protestant Bibles, and even a facsimile reproduction of the Roman catacombs. I need not recall the beer-gardens in which Vienna and Munich poured out their inexhaustible stores of beer, the Algerian cafes with their droning, nasal music, the bewitching strains of the Hungarian gipsies, the Aissouas who ate fire and snakes; it was the great world's fair alongside the Universal Exposition, the smaller drama by the greater. There was nothing lacking, not even the equestrian statue of King William, which we were

polite enough not to consider too ridiculous; not even the famous Krupp gun with which we are threatened and which we did not greatly admire, for those were the days of the fine, peaceful contests that do honour to the human mind, and no one supposed that that frightful engine of war was ever to be put to use.

Emperors, kings, sultans, and princes came with jealous politeness to visit the fair city, the object of their secret envy, and Paris gave them splendid entries and welcomed them with its brightest smile, never dreaming of the rancour excited by its splendour.

Translated by F.C. de Sumichrast

* * *

from James Clerk Maxwell, *Theory of Compound Colours*, 1856



James Clerk Maxwell, photographed holding his color wheel around the time this article was written.

Among many advances made in the understanding of biology during the Third Empire were discoveries in the field of optics, encouraged by the development of finer instruments for magnifying and measuring small units of time or matter. Under the harsh social conditions of the Empire, visual artists such as Manet and, later, the Impressionists, the political concerns that had informed much art earlier in the century gave way to the integration of scientific principles based on the study of optics, a line of investigation that would culminate in Cubism early in the 20th Century. Much of the Impressionists' and Pointillists' theory—involving the mixture of colours not on the palette but in the eye of the observer of closely juxtaposed marks of colour—was based on the work of Maxwell, who made several pioneering studies of colour, electromagnetism, and other subjects, and in 1861 produced the first permanent colour photograph.

When we mix together blue and yellow paint, we obtain green paint. This fact is well known to all who have handled colours; and it is universally admitted that blue and yellow make green. Red, yellow, and blue, being the primary colours among painters, green is regarded as a secondary colour, arising from the mixture of blue and yellow. Newton, however, found that the green of the spectrum was not the same thing as the mixture of two colours of the spectrum, for such a mixture could be separated by the prism, while the green of the spectrum resisted further decomposition. But still it was believed that yellow and blue would make a green, though not that of the spectrum. As far as I am aware, the first experiment on the subject is that of M. Plateau, who, before 1819, made a disc with alternate sectors of prussian blue and gamboge, and observed that, when spinning, the resultant tint was not green, but a neutral gray, inclining sometimes to yellow or blue, but never to green. Prof. J. D. Forbes of Edinburgh made similar experiments in 1849, with the same result. Prof. Helmholtz of Königsberg, to whom we owe the most complete investigation on visible colour, has given the true explanation of this phenomenon. The result of mixing two coloured powders is not by any means the same as mixing the beams of light which flow from each separately. In the latter case we receive all the light which comes either from the one powder or the other. In the former, much of the light coming from one powder falls on particles of the other, and we receive only that portion which has escaped absorption by one or other. Thus the light coming from a mixture of blue and yellow powder, consists partly of light coming directly from blue particles or yellow particles, and partly of light acted on by both blue and yellow particles. This latter light is green, since the blue stops the red, yellow, and orange, and the yellow stops the blue

and violet. I have made experiments on the mixture of blue and yellow light—by rapid rotation, by combined reflexion and transmission, by viewing them out of focus, in stripes, at a great distance, by throwing the colours of the spectrum on a screen, and by receiving them into the eye directly; and I have arranged a portable apparatus by which any one may see the result of this or any other mixture of the colours of the spectrum. In all these cases blue and yellow do not make green. I have also made experiments on the mixture of coloured powders. Those which I used principally were "mineral blue" (from copper) and "chrome-yellow." Other blue and yellow pigments gave curious results, but it was more difficult to make the mixtures, and the greens were less uniform in tint.

[. . .]

It may be necessary to remark, in conclusion, with reference to the mode of registering visible colours in terms of three arbitrary standard colours, that it proceeds upon that theory of three primary elements in the sensation of colour, which treats the investigation of the laws of visible colour as a branch of human physiology, incapable of being deduced from the laws of light itself, as set forth in physical optics. It takes advantage of the methods of optics to study vision itself; and its appeal is not to physical principles, but to our consciousness of our own sensations.

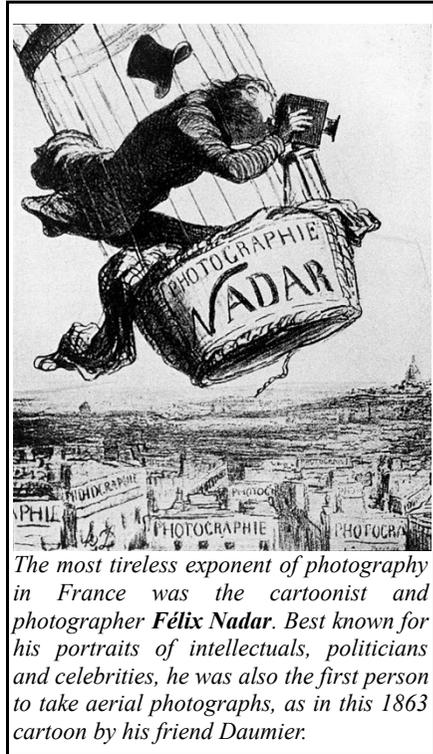
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from Robert Hunt, *Photography: A Treatise on the Chemical Changes Produced by Solar Radiation*, 1852

Though first developed in the 1820s, photographic processes were refined and developed only gradually, through the efforts of dozens of scientists, inventors, painters and chemists trading information about each others' work; one of

these investigators was the British mineralogist, photographer, and folklorist Robert Hunt. By the 1850s, the process had finally been brought to a point where they could be cheaply produced on a mass scale.

A statement has been made by the French, to the effect that M. Charles was in possession of a process by which portraits could be obtained by the agency of sunlight, producing a dark impression upon a prepared surface. This is, however, exceedingly doubtful, and even the Abbé Moyno in his *Repertoire* states, that M. Charles never disclosed any fact connected with his hypothetical discovery, and that he left no evidence behind him of ever



The most tireless exponent of photography in France was the cartoonist and photographer Félix Nadar. Best known for his portraits of intellectuals, politicians and celebrities, he was also the first person to take aerial photographs, as in this 1863 cartoon by his friend Daumier.

being in possession of such a secret process: we may therefore fairly infer that this is a vain boast. The earliest recorded attempts at fixing images by the chemical influence of light, are those of Wedgwood and Davy, published in the *Journal of the Royal Institution of Great Britain*, in June, 1802. Neither of these eminent philosophers succeeded in producing a preparation of sufficient sensitiveness to receive any impression from the subdued light of the camera obscura. By the solar microscope, when the prepared paper was placed very near the lens, Sir H. Davy procured a faint image of the object therein; but being

unacquainted with any method of preventing the further action of light on the picture, which is, of course, necessary to secure the impression, the pursuit of the subject was abandoned. From this period no attempt was made to overcome the difficulties which stopped the progress of Davy, until 1814, when M. Niépce, of Chalons, on the Saone, appears to have first directed his attention to the production of pictures by light.

It does not seem his early attempts were very successful ones; and after pursuing the subject alone for ten years, he, from an accidental disclosure, became acquainted with M. Daguerre, who had been for some time endeavouring, by various chemical processes, to fix the images obtained with the camera obscura. In December, 1829, a

deed of copartnery was executed between M. Niépce and M. Daguerre, for mutually investigating the subject.

M. Niépce had named his discovery Heliography. In 1827, he presented a paper to the Royal Society of London, on the subject; but as he kept his process a secret, it could not, agreeably with one of their laws, be received by that body. This memoir was accompanied with several designs on metal, which



*Félix Nadar began his career as a political cartoonist working on Romanticist satirical journals with Philipon and Daumier; developing a keen sense for artistic activity, entertainment, and publicity. In this 1854 piece he posed his fellow photographer Charles Deburau as **Pierrot the Photographer**.*

were afterwards distributed in the collections of the curious, some of them still existing in the possession of Mr. Robert Brown, of the British Museum. They prove M. Niépce to have been then acquainted with a

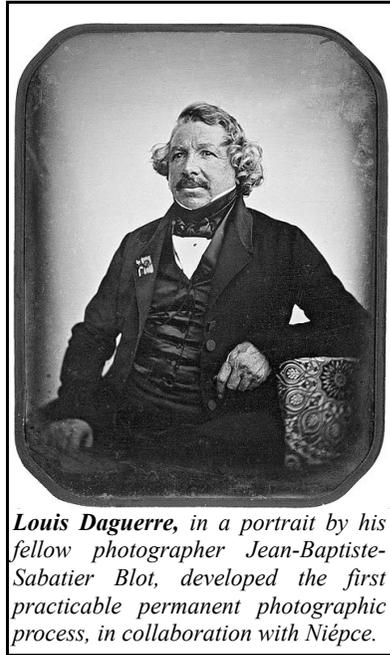


Joseph-Nicéphore Niépce took this heliograph of the View from the Window at Le Gras in 1827, making it the oldest first known photograph in existence.

method of forming pictures, by which the lights, semi-tints, and shadows, were represented as in nature; and he had also succeeded in rendering his Heliographs, when once formed, impervious to the further effects of the solar rays. Some of these specimens

appear in the state of advanced etchings; but this was accomplished by a process similar to that pursued in common etchings, to be hereafter explained. Glass, copper plated with silver, and well planished tin plate, were the substances on which M. Niépce spread his sensitive preparations. Paper impregnated with the chloride or the nitrate of silver was the material first selected by M. Daguerre. Heliography does not appear at any time to have produced very delicate effects. The want of sensibility in the preparation—the resin of some essential oils, particularly the oil of Lavender, or asphaltum dissolved in spirit—rendered it necessary that the prepared plate should be exposed to luminous influence from seven to twelve hours. During so protracted an interval, the shadows passed from the left to the right of objects, and consequently all the fine effects arising from the contrasts of light and shade are destroyed. The first attempts of Daguerre appear to have been little more successful than those of Wedgwood.

The discovery of Daguerre was reported to the world early in January, 1839; but the process by which his beautiful pictures were produced was not made known until the July following, after a bill was passed, securing to himself a pension for life of 6,000 francs, and to M. Isidore Niépce, the son of M. Niépce above mentioned, a pension for life of 4,000 francs, with one half in reversion to their widows. It is to be regretted, that after the French



Louis Daguerre, in a portrait by his fellow photographer Jean-Baptiste-Sabatier Blot, developed the first practicable permanent photographic process, in collaboration with Niépce.

Government had thus liberally purchased the secret of the process of the Daguerreotype, for "the glory of endowing the world of science and of art with one of the most surprising discoveries that honour their native land" on the argument that "the invention did not admit of being secured by patent, for as soon as published all might avail themselves of its advantages" that it should have been guarded by a patent right in England.

* * *

from Théophile Gautier, *Paul de Kock*, 1870

Soon after seizing power, Louis Napoleon began the most massive urban renewal project ever undertaken. Since 1789, Parisians had barricaded the streets and taken up arms against the ruling regime dozens of times, and the Imperial government was determined to ensure that such revolutions would not be possible again. Under the supervision of Baron Georges-Eugène

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Haussmann, the winding, narrow Medieval streets of Paris that had proved so conducive to guerilla warfare were sliced across with wide, straight 'boulevards', allowing for swift troops movements and optimal angles for counter-insurgency fire in case of uprisings. The Boulevards also served to create wider, open spaces in an increasingly crowded city, and became a favourite recreation spot for Parisians. Other major urban projects undertaken by



Baron Haussmann in 1860,
painted by Henri Lehmann

Haussmann included the modernization of the sewer and water systems, the construction of more modern prisons, expansion of the rail system, and more parks and commissioned monuments. Twenty years into these developments, Gautier turned a newspaper obituary for Paul de Kock, a best-selling novelist for whom he had no great esteem as a writer, into a eulogy for the Paris that had been erased by Haussmann.

Now Paul de Kock has become an historical author. His works contain the description of manners in a civilisation differing as greatly from our own as does that the traces of which are found in Pompeii; his novels, which people read formerly for amusement's sake, will henceforth be consulted by erudites desirous of recreating life in that old Paris which I knew in my youth and of which the vestiges will soon have vanished.

Those who were born after the Revolution of February 24, 1848, or shortly before that date, cannot understand the Paris in which the heroes and heroines of Paul de Kock moved, lived, and had their being. It was so utterly unlike the present Paris that sometimes I ask myself, as I gaze upon the broad streets, the long boulevards, the vast

squares, the endless lines of monumental houses, the splendid quarters which have been built upon old market-gardens, if that is indeed the city in which my childhood was passed.

Paris, which is becoming the metropolis of the world, was then only the capital of France. Frenchmen, and even Parisians, were to be met on its streets.

Of course, foreigners came to it, as they have always done, for pleasure or instruction, but means of communication were difficult, the ideal of rapidity did not go beyond the classical stage-coach, and the locomotive steam-engine was not even visible as a chimera within the mists of the future; so that the general appearance of the population was not markedly modified.



The Avenue de la Grande Armée, one of the broad avenues cut through the city from center to periphery under Haussmann's supervision.

[. . .]

The city was, relatively speaking, very small—that is, business was restricted within certain limits beyond which people rarely went. The plaster elephant, in which Gavroche used to take refuge, then rose gigantic behind the Place de la Bastille, and seemed to forbid people to walk farther. The Champs-Élysées became, as soon as night fell, as dangerous as the plain of Marathon; the boldest would stop at the Place de la Concorde. The quarter of Notre-Dame-de-Lorette then consisted merely of waste ground and fenced-in spaces. The church itself was not

built, and from the Boulevard could be seen the Hill of Montmartre, with its wind-mills and the long arms of the semaphore on the top of the old tower. The Faubourg Saint-Germain went to bed early, and only on rare occasions did a student riot, provoked by a play at the *Odéon*, disturb its tranquil solitude. Trips from one quarter to another were less frequent. Omnibuses were not in existence, and there were marked differences in aspect, dress, and accent between the inhabitants of the Rue du Temple and those of the Rue Montmartre. The sewer in the Vieille Rue du Temple was only half covered in; the walls of the boulevard remained along almost its entire length, with streets lower down leading out on the site of the old moats. Great woodyards, the piles of lumber in which formed symmetrical designs, lay at the end of the Rue des Filles-du-Calvaire, and farther away, through the blue haze in the distance, showed the hill of Menilmontant.

[. . .]

At that time, there were to be found all around Paris, numberless pastoral places—at least, which appeared pastoral to poor devils who had worked all the week in the darkness of a shop; little groves of trees, admirably fitted to shade a tavern, fishers' huts laved by the stream, in which a stew of small fry passed muster as gudgeon; arbours of Virginia creeper and hops, which at need served an amorous couple, as the cave served Aeneas and Dido; Romainville, the Park of Saint- Fargeau, the Pres-Saint-Gervais, with their clumps of lilac and their fountain, the water of which filled up a small stone basin which was reached by a few steps.

[. . .]

I the more willingly pay this late tribute to Paul de Kock that, when formerly bearing a pennant in the Romanticist army, I did not perhaps

read his novels with the attention they deserved. Besides, the things he depicted were then present to us and their meaning did not stand out clearly. Nevertheless, I felt there was in him a sort of comic power which others lacked. Now he appears to me in a more serious light, I will even say a melancholy light, if such a word is applicable to Paul de Kock. Some of his novels have the same effect upon me as Fenimore Cooper's *Last of the Mohicans*; I seem to read in them the story of the last of the Parisians, invaded and submerged by American civilisation.

Translated by F.C. de Sumichrast

* * *

Charles Baudelaire, The Swan

A central element of Baudelaire's poetic practice was the wandering of Paris streets—opening himself to the unexpected chance encounters that offered glimpses of the nature of urban life. As such, he was particularly sensitive to the implications of Haussmann's attempt to eradicate the unique labyrinthine nature of the city.

I

Andromache, I think of you! The stream,
The poor, sad mirror where in bygone days
Shone all the majesty of your widowed grief,
The lying Simois flooded by your tears,
Made all my fertile memory blossom forth
As I passed by the new-built Carrousel.
Old Paris is no more (a town, alas,
Changes more quickly than man's heart may change);
Yet in my mind I still can see the booths;
The heaps of brick and rough-hewn capitals;
The grass; the stones all over-green with moss;
The débris, and the square-set heaps of tiles.

There a menagerie was once outspread;
And there I saw, one morning at the hour
When toil awakes beneath the cold, clear sky,
And the road roars upon the silent air,
A swan who had escaped his cage, and walked
On the dry pavement with his webby feet,
And trailed his spotless plumage on the ground.
And near a waterless stream the piteous swan
Opened his beak, and bathing in the dust
His nervous wings, he cried (his heart the while
Filled with a vision of his own fair lake):
"O water, when then wilt thou come in rain?
Lightning, when wilt thou glitter?"

Sometimes yet
I see the hapless bird — strange, fatal myth—
Like him that Ovid writes of, lifting up
Unto the cruelly blue, ironic heavens,
With stretched, convulsive neck a thirsty face,
As though he sent reproaches up to God!

II.

Paris may change; my melancholy is fixed.
New palaces, and scaffoldings, and blocks,
And suburbs old, are symbols all to me
Whose memories are as heavy as a stone.
And so, before the Louvre, to vex my soul,
The image came of my majestic swan
With his mad gestures, foolish and sublime,
As of an exile whom one great desire
Gnaws with no truce. And then I thought of you,
Andromache! torn from your hero's arms;
Beneath the hand of Pyrrhus in his pride;
Bent o'er an empty tomb in ecstasy;
Widow of Hector—wife of Helenus!
And of the negress, wan and phthisical,
Tramping the mud, and with her haggard eyes

Seeking beyond the mighty walls of fog
The absent palm-trees of proud Africa;
Of all who lose that which they never find;
Of all who drink of tears; all whom grey grief
Gives suck to as the kindly wolf gave suck;
Of meagre orphans who like blossoms fade.
And one old Memory like a crying horn
Sounds through the forest where my soul is lost . . .
I think of sailors on some isle forgotten;
Of captives; vanquished . . . and of many more.

* * *

Colonization and Race

From Friedrich Engels & Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*, 1848

The Third Empire legitimized its power through constant economic expansion. But this proliferating industry and the spread of consumer culture required greater numbers and varieties of raw materials than it was possible for France produce. The result was a new push of colonial expansion, which served the additional purpose of impressing citizens with the progress of French military power, in wars conducted (with the exception of the Austrian war in Italy) in places very distant from France itself, among people easy for them to classify as 'other'.

The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connexions everywhere.

The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world-market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. To the great chagrin of Reactionists, it has drawn from under the feet of industry the national ground on which it stood. All old-established national industries have been destroyed or are daily

being destroyed. They are dislodged by new industries, whose introduction becomes a life and death question for all civilised nations, by industries that no longer work up indigenous raw material, but raw material drawn from the remotest zones; industries whose products are consumed, not only at home, but in every quarter of the globe. In place of the old wants, satisfied by the productions of the country, we find new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the products of distant lands and climes. In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal interdependence of nations. And as in material, so also in intellectual production. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures, there arises a world literature.

The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilisation. The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls, with which it forces the barbarians' intensely obstinate hatred of foreigners to capitulate. It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilisation into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image.

The bourgeoisie has subjected the country to the rule of the towns. It has created enormous cities, has greatly increased the urban population as compared with the rural, and has thus rescued a considerable part of the population from the idiocy of rural life. Just as

it has made the country dependent on the towns, so it has made barbarian and semi-barbarian countries dependent on the civilised ones, nations of peasants on nations of bourgeois, the East on the West.

* * *

from Gen. Edward Hamley, *The War in the Crimea, 1891*

In 1854, a dispute between Napoleon III and Russia's Nicholas I over political dominance in the ailing Ottoman Empire snowballed into a major war ranging French and British forces against Russian and Ottoman armies, in which 95,000 French soldiers died (two-thirds of them through disease), alongside 20,000 British and 130,000 Russian troops. It was the first major war to incorporate the major technological developments of the past 60 years: telegraph communication, rail transportation, steam navies, anesthetics, land mines, hand grenades, long-range mortars, and rifled muskets with three times the range of previous armies. Due to the last two developments in particular, the Crimean War also saw the return of trench warfare, on a scale beyond anything known in the 18th Century. The year-long siege of Sevastopol by French and British forces was keenly studied a few years later by commanders in the American Civil War, who applied its lessons on a massive scale. Hamley had served as a staff officer in the British army during the war.

It has been generally assumed that the circumstances under which the French Empire had recently come into existence demanded that its chief should make war on somebody, in order to divert attention from the origin of his power, and to give employment to an army which might otherwise become dangerous. It may be readily granted that it was most expedient, both for him and his people, to make his influence immediately felt. But that, in allying himself with England on the Eastern question, he was seizing on an opportunity for war is only a

surmise for which it would be difficult to adduce proof. It was inevitable that he should throw his weight into the question, and he could hardly hesitate in his choice of a side. It was scarcely possible for the champion of the Latin Church in the East, who had just stood forth in defense of its claim, to abet the Czar in his demand for the protectorate of the Christian subjects of the Porte. Moreover, Nicholas, in his arrogant way, had given just offense both to Louis Napoleon and the French people by refusing to address him, as all other reigning potentates did, as "Mon Frère;" as if he, the choice of the French people, were not entitled to be admitted to the brotherhood of sovereigns; which was one of those gratuitous and unprofitable affronts which wise men are careful not to offer. On the other hand, the advantage was obvious of arraying himself by the side of, instead of against, the great Sea-Power his neighbour; while as for individual predilections he had acquired, in his long residence in England, a hearty esteem for our institutions and our people, and the kindnesses which he had received as an exile were always cordially acknowledged by him as a sovereign. But the evidence points altogether to the view that at first his design in associating himself with England was, while gaining the benefit of the alliance, to make use of it for peace, and not for war. Martin, in his *Life of the Prince Consort* says, "Amity with England, and a close political alliance, had been uniformly declared to be the Emperor's dearest wish." On ascending the throne he had said, "Certain persons say the Empire is only war. But I say the Empire is peace, for France desires it." At the time of the Vienna Note, the Prince Consort, discussing the parties to it, said, "Louis Napoleon wishes for peace, enjoyment, and cheap corn." On the 8th August 1853 the Queen's speech said, "The Emperor of the French has united with Her Majesty



French colonial troops, known as Zouaves, wore distinctive uniforms incorporating elements from the cultures under their dominion.

in earnest endeavours to reconcile differences the continuation of which would involve Europe in war." And after the fleets were in the Bosphorus, the Prince Consort wrote: "Louis Napoleon shows by far the greatest statesmanship, which is easier for the individual than the many; he is moderate, but firm; gives way to us even when his plan is better than ours, and

revels in the advantages he derives from the alliance with us." No conjectures can hold their ground against this testimony, and it may be taken for certain that the Emperor faithfully co-operated with our Government throughout in its endeavours to settle the quarrel by diplomatic pressure, backed by the display of force.

[. . .]

[On the Bombardment of Sevastopol]

When the sun should have appeared next morning, a dense mist covered the plains. It lifted a little, and at half-past six our guns, as they caught sight of the opposing batteries, opened fire, and the French soon followed. The Russians were so completely unprepared that it was twenty minutes before they began to reply, A strong wind swept volumes of the smoke from the Allied trenches over the Russian works, and must have added greatly to the difficulties of the men who worked the guns there. They were slack in replying; the guns in the redoubted Mamelon fired slowly, so did those of the Malakoff, as if insufficiently manned, though really owing to dearth of powder; and a face of the



Redan was silenced. On the other hand, the French breached the salient of the Central Bastion, and inflicted immense damage and loss of men on the Flagstaff Bastion. When the sun went down, the fire of the Allied guns ceased. Not so those of their mortars, which did not depend on keeping sight of their object, and all night the great shells climbed the sky, and descended on their prey. Nevertheless, the works were again in a condition of defense next morning.

On this second day the White Works were reduced to silence and ruin. On the 11th the English and French batteries directed on the Mamelon extinguished its fire, and the Malakoff scarcely fired at all, while the Flagstaff Bastion had been again and again reduced to the direst extremity. Therefore, in momentary expectation of an assault, the Russian troops were kept at hand in, or close to, the lines of defense, and as a consequence suffered heavily. They were subjected to terrible trials, from which the Allies were exempt, for the hurricane of iron which besides ruining works dismounting guns, and exploding magazines, swept without intermission through the whole interior space of the fortress, where it had already razed the barracks and public buildings of the suburb to the ground, and choked the streets of the city with destroyed masonry, could not but tell heavily on uncovered troops.

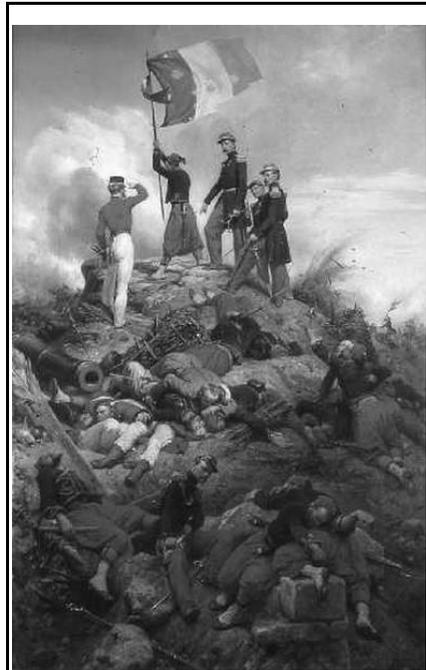
A remarkable incident occurred at this time. In the trenches on the furthest point of our Left Attack, on the verge of the ravine, two

batteries had been constructed, but not armed. On the night of the 11th guns were conveyed to one of them, across the open ground, and these on the following day were placed on their platforms. These batteries were on much lower ground than the Redan and the Barrack Battery on the one side, and the Garden Batteries and Flagstaff Bastion on the other. Nevertheless, this battery of four guns opened fire on the 13th on its formidable opponents. From their commanding heights, they very soon concentrated on it the overwhelming fire of about twenty heavy guns. The contest was hopeless, but it was maintained. For five hours the English guns, gradually reduced to one that remained in a condition to fire, replied, not without effect. Then, this last gun disabled, nearly all the gunners struck down, the parapets swept away, the remnant of men were at length withdrawn. Out of forty-seven men, forty-four had been killed or wounded.

In the night the damage was repaired, and the four guns were put once more in fighting condition. And the battery no longer fought singly in the front line; its neighbour was armed with six guns. On the 14th they opened and brought on themselves a terrible stress of fire. All day (with one relief), and even into the night, they maintained the fight, when, with many guns disabled, many men killed and wounded, and the parapets once more knocked into shapeless heaps, they were withdrawn from the works, which were not again manned. This episode, while it did little (that little, perhaps, in the way of attracting shot from the enemy which would otherwise have been directed on other points) towards a general result, enabled Todleben to score a substantial and indisputable success in the midst of his calamities elsewhere. Yet these English gunners had not fought quite in vain; they are still remembered as having set a rare example of valorous devotion.

Ten days did the terrific storm of iron hail endure; ten days did the Russian reliefs, holding themselves ready to repel attack, meet wounds and death with a constancy which was of necessity altogether passive. On the 19th they saw the fire of the Allies decline, and settle into its more ordinary rate; they saw, too, that the sappers were again at work with their approaches, and reading in this the signs of a resumption of the siege, and the abandonment of the policy of assault, they once more withdrew their sorely harassed infantry to places of shelter and repose. Then they began to reckon their losses, which amounted for the ten days, in killed and wounded, to more than 6000 men. The French lost, in killed and disabled, 1585 men; the English, 265.

During these days and nights the great ballroom of the assembly rooms in Sebastopol was crowded with the wounded incessantly arriving on stretchers. The floor was half-an-inch deep in coagulated blood. In an adjoining room, set apart for operations, the blood ran from three tables where the wounded were laid, and the severed limbs lay heaped in tubs. Outside, fresh arrivals thronged the square, on their blood-steeped stretchers, their cries and lamentations mingling with the roar of shells bursting close by. Many more



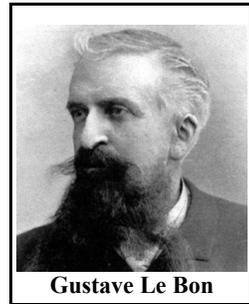
*Horace Vernet portrays **The Taking of the Malakoff Redoubt** in front of Sevastopol, in an 1858 painting.*

were borne to the cellars of the sea-forts; and those capable of removal to the north side were conveyed thither to permanent hospitals. In a church near the harbour the mournful chant of the office for the dead resounded continually through the open doors of the building. It was there that the funeral service was celebrated of officers dead on the field of honour. Such is the picture drawn by eye-witnesses of what was seen of the results of the conflict in the more remote parts of the city. Nor was the change to the country outside the fortress much for the better. A Russian, "passing from thence to St Petersburg, there testified that the route from Sebastopol to Simpheropol was so encumbered with dead bodies dead horses, and dead cattle, that the whole line was infected with pestilential vapours, and, being impassable for vehicles, could only be traversed on horseback.

* * *

**from Gustave Le Bon, *Algeria and Ideas Prevailing in France*
Concerning Colonization, 1887**

The invasion of Algeria had been practically the last act of the Bourbon Monarchy, on the eve of the 1830 Revolution; the French colony in Algeria was inherited by the July Monarchy, the Second Republic, and the Second Empire in succession. The problem was not one of conquest, but of subjugation and administration. Though France's largest and one of



its most valuable colonies, Algerian colonization had always remained at a trickle, and its control of the population weak in the face of an almost constant stream of uprisings against their rule; this situation would continue until the French were finally ejected in 1962. Here Gustave Le Bon addresses the failure of the French colonial system—stemming in large part from its blatant exploitation of its subjugated people. Le Bon himself was a psychologist, and

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one of the first to advance a coherent theory of the unconscious. An active proponent of theories of racial inequality—as his anti-semitic remarks here indicate—his work on crowd psychology was a major influence on the French Boulangistes of the Third Republic and the 20th Century Fascists. The 'M. Vignon' whom he quotes has not yet been identified.

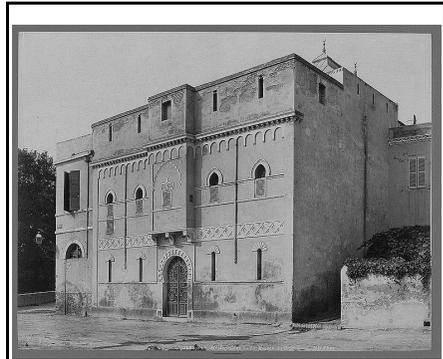
When one closely examines the administration of the colonies established by diverse European peoples, one sees that it is based on a small number of very plain principles. These principles, necessarily engendered by experience, and which consequently ought to be the same everywhere, vary on the contrary in a considerable manner from one people to another. "From one people to another" is perhaps too much to say because, with regard to the ideas concerning colonization, one can distinguish among the European nations two classes—one made up by we French alone, and the other comprising all the other nations. This latter—the other European nations—established colonies in order to keep them and to draw profit. Superior to these shabby preoccupations, and not unmindful that divine Providence has given us the role to convey to different peoples of the world the benefits of our civilization and the institutions that the world envies us for, we try to govern them with our institutions and ideas. Institutions and ideas are unfortunately rejected with complete unanimity. Certain of our good duty, we nevertheless have kept persisting in our doctrines, with the result being that up to this day a sufficient number of disastrous operations have occurred that convincingly prove that, with respect to colonies, our grand principles are, as much from the theoretical point of view as from the practical point of view, lamentable errors.

[. . .]

Our administrative system of repression in Algeria has been very well documented by Monsieur Vignon:

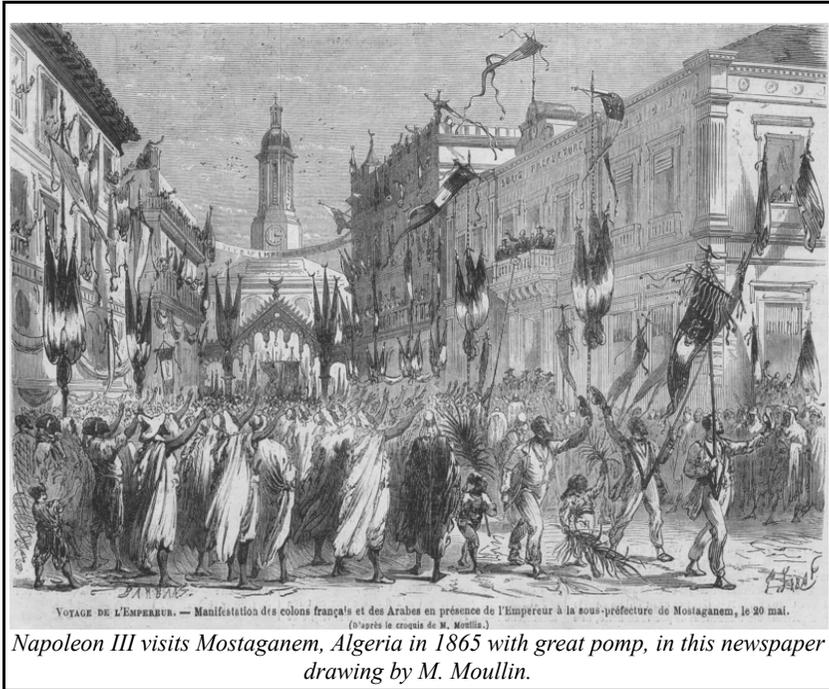
"The administration," he points out, "seeing the military commanders confiscate part of the lands of the tribes after each insurrection, thinks that it can rightfully award the best properties to the colonists and expel the native inhabitants. As the European element expands, the indigenous people are sent away from the heritage of their forefathers, with entire tribes often being transported far from the region that is in some way their native land. The results of such a policy implemented for

over 30 years cannot be ambiguous: here, the Arab is incessantly repressed, always quite uncertain of reaping the fruit of his labor, neither dreaming to successfully cultivate



Colonial Administration building in Mostaganem, Algeria, c. 1860-90

nor to improve the soil; deprived of the arable lands of his tribe and even of the enjoyment to access to streams, he is unable to harvest sufficient grain for his sustenance and sees his herds diminish or disappear; everywhere, finally, these thousand sufferances feed the hatred of the indigene against the colonist and digs deeper, instead of filling, the already vast chasm which separates the two races.



"The Senate decree of 1863 which declared the tribes owners of the territories that they had possessed has not put an end to the system of 'resettlement,' but it has changed in form and in name. Today it is called the 'expropriation for the cause of public benefit' plan. Two essential traits characterize this plan: firstly, it procures land for the colonists by only taking it away from the indigenes, forming in the process exclusively European zones where the indigenes are carefully set aside as owners; secondly, it condemns to misery the dispossessed indigene. The original owner of the soil receives an indemnity in silver that is determined by the courts; it generally varies from 50 to 60 francs per hectare. The indigene therefore finds himself exchanging the 30 or 40

hectares on which he comfortably lived for a sum of 1500 to 2000 francs, that is to say, instead of an estate of land sufficient to meet his needs for his entire life, he now has nothing more than capital that he will exhaust in one or two years.

"One may well ask whether given these conditions, the expropriation is not more like a spoliation, whether this system is, in fact, exactly the reverse of what ought to be followed. Now, a policy of condensing the indigenes on territory that they own whenever it is disproportionate for their number, offering for free to the colonists broad fields and thus favoring the establishment of European groups, will bring to the tribes in the midst of where they are settled the material benefits of civilization, water, roads, the conduct of European culture, and at the same time European ideas and customs. Instead of implementing this humane policy, beneficial to the fusion of the races as well as so favorable to the conquered people's being able to forget their hatred and resentments, the Algerian administration seems to prefer a system which under the appearance of justice 'expels' the indigenes, chasing them from their homes, making them exiles or vagabonds unless they agree to remain as hirelings on the soil of which formerly they were masters.

"This especially grievous system is unceasingly enforced! The ministries, Parliament, Governor General, elected Algerian councils, and the colonists themselves

do not seem to see the danger! Every year both Chambers of Parliament pass a bill providing a credit for the 'expenses of colonization' and often Parliament helps in part pay the indemnities for expropriation; each year the Governor General announces in the General Situation Report on Algeria the opening of new centers to European people, that is to say, the 'expropriation of new indigenous families'"

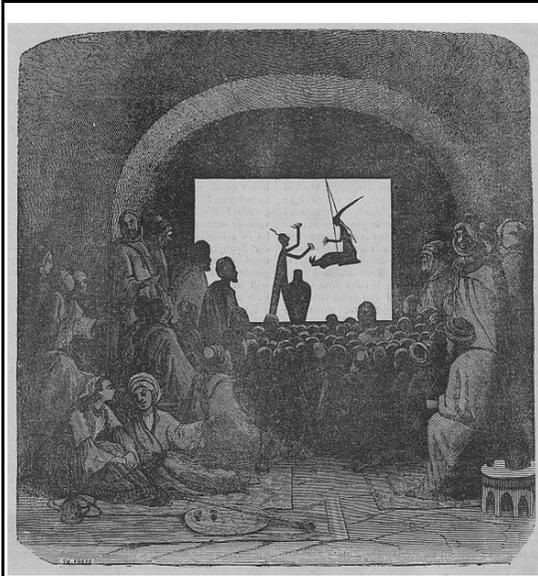
Can one be astonished that with such an unintelligently ferocious system in place, it is necessary for us, in order to maintain the peace among 3 million Moslems, to station an army equal in size to the one which suffices the British in India for restraining 250 [million] people, among which there are 50 million Moslems?

In spite of his official position, Monsieur Vignon does not hesitate to lay bare the disastrous manner in which we govern Algeria; he does so with moderation, but also with firmness. True patriotism does not consist of hiding the evils of the country that one loves, but rather in trying to cleanse them. Monsieur Vignon does not conceal these evils, and no current prejudice prevents him from disclosing them. It is thus that he does not hesitate, notwithstanding our egalitarian theories and the present-day power of the sons of Israel, to point out the most stupid mistake we have committed by naturalizing en bloc the Jews of Algeria, a population of usurers who are treated with the heaviest contempt as much by the Arabs as by the Berbers and who are regarded as evil, and whose naturalization has not at all made the Arabs and Berbers our allies. "How do you maintain under your obedience 250 million men?" I asked one day in India an English general. "Solely

by our moral prestige," he replied to me. It is not otherwise that one can retain a colony. This prestige, one need not live for a long time in our colonies to see that we hardly suspect its importance, and no other measure has made us lose more of it in the eyes of the Arabs in Algeria than the naturalization of the Jews.

[. . .]

Since the conquest of Algeria two fundamental principles, ones which have alternated in accordance with changes in opinion, seem to have exclusively directed our policy in Algeria. The



A Chinese shadow play presented in French Algeria in 1850, in a print by Théodore Frère. Not only was French culture being introduced for the first time to an array of different cultures through its colonial activity, but people in the various French colonies were first being exposed to each other as well.

first consists of expropriating land from, and then trying to drive into the desert, the Arabs; the second is to Frenchify indigenous Algerians and impose on them our institutions. As one might surmise, the Arabs do not permit themselves to be expelled to the desert, this being so for the excellent reason that

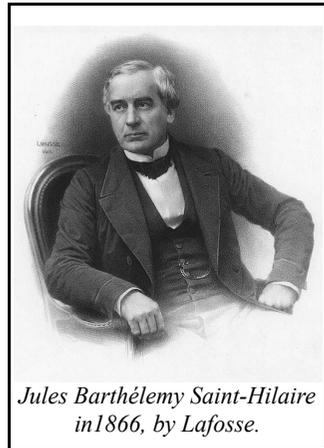
the desert isn't able to feed and sustain anybody; not surprisingly, before consenting to allow themselves to die from hunger, the three million Moslem people in Algeria began vigorously opposing and resisting the resettlement-to-the-desert policy. The Algerian Arabs, in

addition, are no more inclined to allow themselves to be Frenchified as resettled, for there has never been up to now a people who has changed its mental constitution in order to adopt one of another people. The two schemes—resettlement and Frenchification—are therefore equally detestable to the Arabs, and it is only by successively fading from one to the other that we shall have opportunities of rendering them less detestable. Now, by waiting for opinion to become well established on this point we will undoubtedly continue running our ruinous experiments in Algeria, doing so until the day arrives when we finally understand that leaving to a conquered people its institutions, customs, its way of life and beliefs, as all the other colonizing peoples have done (notably the English and Dutch), is the simplest, least costly, and wisest of solutions.

* * *

from Barthélémy Saint-Hilaire, *Egypt and the Great Suez Canal*, 1857

A canal connecting the Mediterranean and Red Seas had been a dream for millennia, and had been in the air in France since Napoleon first arrived in Egypt. In the 1830s, the construction of such a canal was a central tenant of the Saint-Simonists, and after the closure of their communes in Paris a group led by Enfantin spent several years in Egypt attempting to bring it to fruition. In 1854, the French administrator and diplomat Ferdinand de Lesseps obtained permission from the Egyptian government to form a coalition of European engineers and industrialists to undertake the project. Its construction took ten years, and involved widespread use of forced labour;



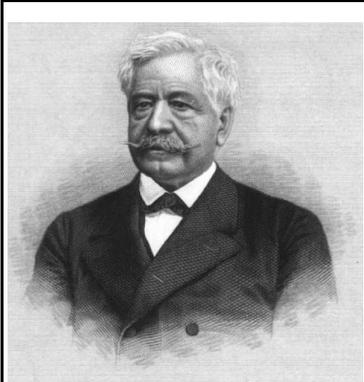
*Jules Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire
in 1866, by Lafosse.*

Liberté: French Culture & Society in the 19th Century: Vol. III

thousands of workers died in the course of its construction. The canal opened in 1869. Saint-Hilaire was a Liberal Republican, forced into temporary retirement from political life after Napoleon III's coup. In 1855 he was a member of the international commission sent to Egypt to determine the plausibility of building the canal; upon his return to France he became an unofficial spokesman for popularizing the project in France. Saint-Hilaire was also a respected translator of ancient Greek, and wrote several books on Eastern religion.

It is superfluous, at the present day, to enlarge upon the incalculable advantages which would result to the commerce of the world from the opening of the Isthmus of Suez—a question which is considered by every intelligent and impartial mind as settled. The attention which has recently been drawn to this subject, and the consequent discussion of its merits, have placed it in its true light; and a glance at the map will suffice to convince any one, that such a communication would lessen the distance between Europe and the East Indies three thousand leagues, or one half. This shortening of the route would be equivalent, in point of financial economy, to a saving of thousands of million francs, or, which is the same thing, to an increase of revenue to that amount; whilst, in another and most important view, such a step would incalculably promote the progress of civilization, extending its benefits and influence to a vast portion of the inhabitants of the globe, who are at present very imperfectly within the reach of its blessings, or wholly excluded from its pale. Thus the interests of humanity, no less than those of commerce, conspire to render the opening of the Isthmus of Suez one of the most useful and honourable enterprises of the nineteenth century. With a view to exhibit the present

exact state of this grand question in a clear and intelligible light, I shall divest my remarks of any needless technicality.



*Prior to forming the Universal Corporation for the Maritime Canal of Suez, **Ferdinand de Lesseps** had a long career in the colonial army, civil service, and diplomatic corps.*

The project in question consists in opening a sea-canal from Suez to Pelusium, that is to say, from the Red Sea in a direct line to the Mediterranean, affording a passage to ships of the largest size and burden, from 250 to 300 feet wide and twenty-five to thirty feet deep. The project is entirely novel, and could neither have been conceived nor carried into execution in any previous age.

[. . .]

On the morning of December 21st we set out on our expedition into the Desert, having a distance of thirty leagues to travel from Suez to Pelusium, without reckoning circuitous ways. In a subsequent letter I shall give an account of our caravan, and shall limit my remarks here to the International Commission and its labours.

Mounted on dromedaries and asses, and sometimes on foot, we followed the line of the canal through the Desert; and ten entire days were spent by the engineers in making a careful ocidar inspection, which had not before been attempted, and the advantages of which nothing else could supply.

[. . .]

The roadstead of Suez is visited by forty or fifty English ships annually, which arrive as regularly as the long passage permits. To

these must be added five or six other ships, which, doubling the Cape of Good Hope, bring the supply of coal for the Peninsular Company. The East India Company bring their coal by way of Alexandria; and from Cairo to Suez by land. In 1855 the transport of this fuel required above 25,000 camels, and assuredly the Government of India will not find the opening of the Isthmus a useless enterprise.

In 1855 the exact number of English vessels was fifty-two: of these, twenty-three came from Calcutta, and twenty-two from Bombay. Two sailed from Aden, and five arrived direct from England. The number increases from year to year.

As soon as the Indian steamer is in sight in the roadstead of Suez, it is signaled by the telegraph to Alexandria, and all preparations are made to expedite the journey of the English passengers. During their passage across Egypt a perfect hurricane prevails: the country seems to belong to them, to be given up to their convenience. All the means of transport, from Suez to Cairo, and from Cairo to the port of Alexandria, are at their exclusive command. On our arrival in Egypt we had to wait three days, until the only line of rail was free, lest our train should interfere with that of the English travelers, hourly expected. Now that the railroad is open as far as Cairo, the public service will naturally have precedence over this special service, to which hitherto everything has been made subordinate.

[. . .]

When the sea-canal opens a passage for merchandise from Suez to Pelusium, without transshipment, an incalculable saving of time and needless expense, as well as the prevention of these losses by fraud, will be effected. In this country indeed the advantages of these

reforms are little appreciated, especially as regards the value of time. This, which is regarded in Europe as one of the most precious commodities, is here prized the least, and squandered with an indifference which no motives even of self-interest or cupidity can stimulate.

[. . .]

Under the anarchical violence of the Mamelukes, commerce languished, almost to extinction. During the first years of the reign of Mehemet Ali, little was done to revive it; and the avaricious but unwise monopoly, in nine years, from 1830 to 1839, reduced the imports of coffee alone from 44,000 lbs. to 11,000 lbs. After the abolition of the monopoly, the trade revived: in ten years it has certainly more than tripled. I may add that, in the year 1855, the importation of coffee alone will amount to above 78,000 lbs.

I may be excused for dwelling at such length on these statistical and commercial details: on the eve of an event from which will date a new era in commerce, I wish to show what is the present state of things. This will, I hope, undergo a rapid change; and what I have yet to say, respecting the Isthmus and Pelusium, will prove that the enterprise to which I refer, ought to be regarded as practicable, since after a careful local investigation, it has been sanctioned and approved by scientific men.

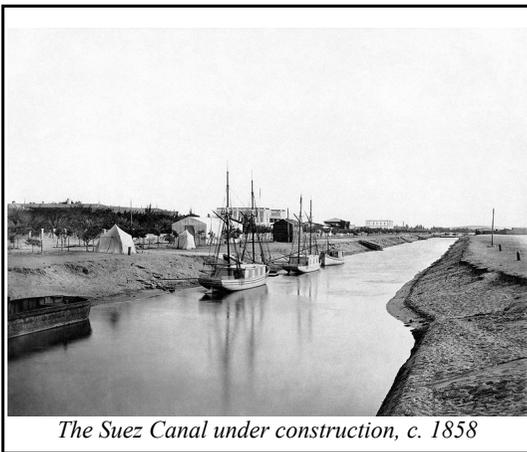
[. . .]

At five o'clock in the afternoon, M. Larousse, engineer and hydrographer of the French navy, arrived at the camp, with the welcome tidings of the unhoped-for results obtained in his soundings,

which gave us all the greatest joy: this was a worthy termination of our Expedition.

At Suez, the other extremity of the Isthmus, he had found the depth of twenty-six feet required for the Sea Canal, at 2000 yards from the shore, instead of 4400. At Pelusium, and over an extent of four or five leagues, the same depth was found at 2500 yards from the shore, instead of 6000 or 7000; and what is perhaps still more important, there was a depth of sixteen feet at 820 yards from the shore. Thus the piers, both at Pelusium and at Suez, will not require to be one-half the length at first supposed.

On the morning of December 31st we embarked on board the Egyptian frigate. We proceeded to verify some soundings at the Ghemileh Mouth, where we took on board several of the men left on shore for the works. We hastened back to Alexandria, where, on the morning of the 1st of January, 1856, we brought these grand tidings as a happy augury for the New Year.



The Suez Canal under construction, c. 1858

Our travels were terminated, and the question relating to the Isthmus of Suez was scientifically solved. The fact should be distinctly and loudly proclaimed to all civilized nations, that

there exists no natural obstacle to prevent the commerce of Asia with the rest of the world taking a shorter, easier, and safer route.

In concluding these Letters, I must express the satisfaction I shall feel if they have contributed to interest my readers in one of the noblest enterprises of the age.

* * *

from Sara Yorke Stevenson, *Maximilian in Mexico, 1897*

In 1861 the new Liberal government of Mexico, under the indigenous President, Benito Juárez, declared the suspension of Mexico's foreign debts; calling themselves the defenders of Free Trade, Napoleon III formed a coalition with England and Spain to invade and replace the Republican government with a European Monarchy, under an Austrian prince. The US protested this incursion into its own sphere of influence, but was immersed in its own Civil War. In 1862, the French suffered a major defeat at the battle of Puebla. Nonetheless the French gradually gained control of the country, taking control of Mexico City the following year.



Charge of the Mexican Cavalry at the Battle of Puebla, in which the French army suffered a painful defeat. French newspapers were forbidden by the government to report on the battle.

General Forey made his triumphant entrance on June 10. It was a magnificent sight, and one not easily forgotten. As the victorious veteran troops—many of whom had seen the Crimea, Syria, and Italy—in their battered though scrupulously neat uniforms, marched through the Calle de San Francisco, laden with their cumbersome campaign outfit, the whole population turned out to see

them, and the balconies and windows on the line of march were lined with eager and interested faces.

This was no ordinary pageant. It was serious work, and full of the deepest meaning. These survivors of an army of thirty thousand men had arduously fought their way to this triumph for sixteen months. No one will probably ever know how many of their comrades had dropped on the roadside; and the weather-beaten faces, bronzed by long exposure to the tropical sun, the patched clothes, the long line of ambulances following in the rear, told a story in which little room was left for the imagination. The sight kindled genuine interest and aroused the sympathy of the crowd, and something very like spontaneous enthusiasm thrilled through the air on their passage.

The keys of the city had been solemnly offered to General Forey by General Salas, amid the acclamations of the people. The next day M. de Saligny presented a list of thirty-five citizens destined to form a junta. These were to select three men to act as regents pending the final decision of the people with regard to a permanent form of government. The junta was empowered to add to its numbers two hundred and fifteen citizens, supposed to be taken from all classes, who, with the thirty-five appointed by the French, would compose the assembly of notables upon whom must devolve the carrying out of the farce which it was intended must take the place of a popular expression of the will of the country.

Don Theodosio Lares was elected its president. This junta, in a secret meeting at which two hundred and thirty-one members were present, deliberated upon the form of government to be chosen for the Mexican nation and on July 10, at a public meeting, presented a report in which the republican system was denounced as the cause of the

greatest evils which had of late years been the scourge of the country, and monarchy was advocated as the only remedy.

Four articles were voted upon, with only two dissenting voices: (1) The nation adopts as a form of government a constitutional monarchy, hereditary under a Catholic prince. (2) The sovereign will take the title of Emperor of Mexico. (3) The imperial crown of Mexico is offered to his Royal Highness Prince Ferdinand Maximilian, Archduke of Austria, for himself and his descendants. (4) In the case where, owing to unforeseen circumstances, the Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian should not take possession of the throne offered him, the Mexican government trusts in the good will of his Majesty Emperor Napoleon III to designate another Catholic prince to whom the crown shall be offered. A regency, composed of General Almonte, General Salas, and Archbishop Labastida, was forthwith established, under the protection of the French.

It was obvious to all that the performance was enacted for the "benefit of the gallery." Gossip even told how the French had paid for the very clothes worn by some of the so-called "notables" upon that occasion. Nevertheless, the monarchy, by the will of the people, was voted in, and a commission was appointed, consisting of the most distinguished among the reactionary leaders, to wait upon Maximilian of Austria, and to offer him the throne on behalf of the Mexican nation.

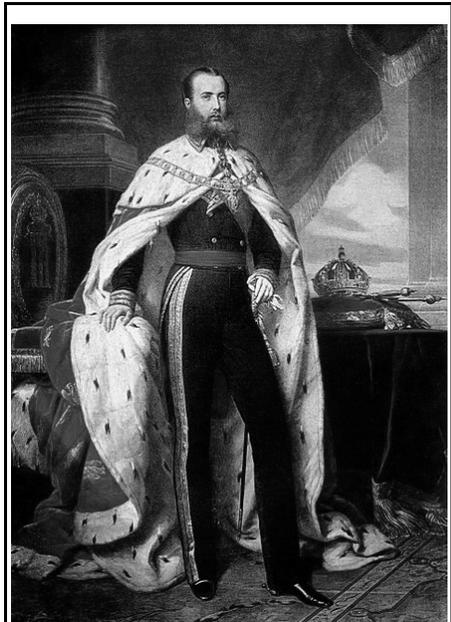
[. . .]

General Bazaine did all in his power to inaugurate brilliantly the advent of the empire. A splendid ball was given to the young sovereigns at the quartier-general—such a ball as is seldom seen outside the great European capitals. The general's aides-de-camp had

been put in charge, and all that unlimited funds and a large experience of such matters could accomplish was done to make the occasion the memorable feature of a memorable historic event.

The great patio of the palace of San Cosme was floored and roofed over to serve as a ball-room. At the back of the great arcade surrounding it, the arches and pillars of which were draped with French and Mexican flags, was banked a profusion of plants and flowers, upon which was cast the light of myriads of candles and colored lanterns. In the middle of the huge improvised ball-room the great fountain played, and its sparkling waters were seen through masses of tropical vegetation. Here and there enormous warlike trophies reminded the spectator that he was the guest of a great army. The artillery had supplied groups of heavy cannon, stacked on end, and huge piles of cannon-balls, while at intervals trophies of flags and drums, of guns and bayonets, tastefully grouped about the French and the Mexican coats of arms, broke with striking effect the expanse of wall above the arcades.

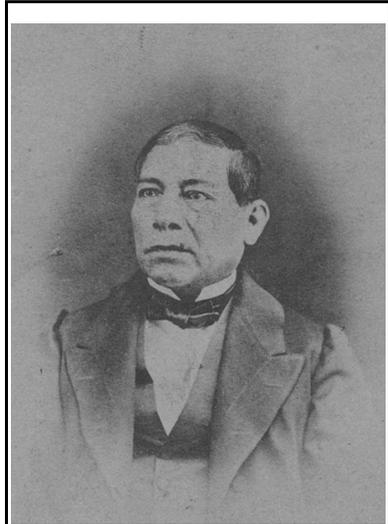
When the imperial cortege entered the crowded ball-room, the quadrille d'honneur was danced by their Majesties, the general-in-chief, and the more distinguished members of their respective suites, after which the Emperor



Maximilian I, Emperor of Mexico, in full imperial regalia.

and Empress were respectfully escorted by the general to their throne, set under a crimson-velvet canopy resting upon French cannon.

They were so young and so handsome in their imperial pomp! By them stood Princess Zichy, tall and distinguished, in a simple white-tulle gown and natural flowers, with a wealth of such diamonds as are seldom seen on one person—a homely woman, but interesting to us as the daughter of the Metternichs. Her husband, Prince Zichy, was the most striking figure in the imperial party. He wore the full state costume of a Hungarian Magyar; and his many



*The Liberal government of **Benito Juárez** secularized the government and declared complete racial equality before being dismantled by French Imperial armies.*

orders, hanging around his neck and upon his breast, as well as the marvelous hilt, belt, and jeweled sheath of his ancestral sword, stood out finely upon his black-velvet costume, and made him a conspicuous figure even in an assemblage where the ordinary evening dress was almost unseen.

The glitter of all this court life, the revival of trade, the abundance of money so freely brought and spent in the country, dazzled the people, and a golden dust was thrown into the eyes of all, which for a brief period prevented them from seeing the true drift of political events. Indeed, the brilliancy of the scene was not entirely due to flash-light. The revenues derived from the customs of Tampico and Vera Cruz were at this time materially increasing. An official report, read to

the French Chamber in 1865, showed that the revenues from those ports, which for three months in 1864 had been \$96,000 and \$900,000 respectively, had for the same period in 1865 risen respectively to \$431,000 and \$1,645,000.

Large concessions for railroads had been asked for and granted under solid guaranties—the line from Vera Cruz to Mexico to an Anglo-French company, pledged to complete it in five years, and another concession for three lines, for the carrying out of which \$4,500,000 had been subscribed. Telegraph lines were being established; coal, petroleum, and gold- and silver-mines were being exploited, or were in a fair way to be.

The good management of the regency under General Almonte's frugal administration had accumulated a balance of 15,000,000 francs in the treasury—a small surplus which must have been encouraging to the Emperor upon his arrival. Moreover, the loan of 200,000,000 francs, so readily taken up abroad, had given a substantial foundation for hopeful anticipation, and it seemed as though France might possibly get out of her rash venture with honor and profit.

The mirage that had lured Napoleon to these perilous shores now appeared materially nearer, and its outlines seemed more vivid and attractive than ever before.

But it was an easy matter to create an empire as the result of an armed invasion of an unwilling land, it was quite another thing to organize it upon a permanent basis. As Prince Napoleon—familiarly known as Plon-Plon—very wittily remarked later, "One can do anything with bayonets, except sit upon them." ("On peut tout faire avec des baionnettes, excepte s'asseoir dessus.") For over two years

Napoleon III endeavored to make Maximilian perform the latter feat—with what result we all know only too well.

[. . .]

Matamoros had fallen in July, 1866. Now, while preparing for the difficult task of withdrawing his troops in the presence of an advancing army, the marshal sought not only to obey the instructions of the home government, but to serve the empire by concentrating its defense within possible limits and by placing between it and the northern frontier a natural barrier of wilderness in which "neither friend nor foe could easily subsist."

The movement was not only planned in order to facilitate the country's defense against the Liberal forces, but also to guard against any possible aggression on the part of its formidable Northern neighbor after the withdrawal of the French army. This eminently prudent strategy was, however, irritating to Maximilian, who complained of it in the bitterest terms.

Article I of the preamble of the treaty of Miramar, signed in April, 1864, provided that "the French troops actually in Mexico shall, as soon as possible, be reduced to a corps of twenty-five thousand men, including the foreign legion." This corps was temporarily to remain in order to protect the interests in which the French intervention had been undertaken, but under the following conditions:

ARTICLE II. The French troops shall gradually evacuate Mexico as H. M. the Emperor of Mexico shall be able to organize the troops necessary to take their place.

ARTICLE III. The foreign legion in the service of France, composed of eight thousand men, shall, however, remain for six years in Mexico after all other French forces shall have been recalled under Article II. From that date said legion shall pass into the service and pay of the Mexican government, the Mexican government reserving unto itself the right to shorten the duration of the employment in Mexico of the foreign legion.

Permission had been granted to French officers to take service in this legion. Recruits were also expected from Europe, and twelve hundred Austrians, on the eve of embarking at St. Nazaire, were stopped only by the peremptory interference of the United States. Various army-corps had been formed, officered by foreigners, among whom were some good French and Austrian officers. Much interest had at first been shown in the scheme; and the new army, its recruits, its uniforms and equipment, furnished society with a fruitful theme for conversation. For a time it had seemed as though it might be possible to so strengthen the empire as to enable it to stand without French official assistance. In 1866, however, Napoleon formally instructed the marshal to advance no more funds and to pay only the auxiliary troops. The Mexican army might dissolve. The French, on withdrawing, would leave the Austro-Belgian corps and the foreign legion—i.e., some fifteen thousand men—upon which the empire must depend. Under the new arrangement the Austro-Belgian soldiers were to receive the same pay as the French—that is, about one half the amount formerly paid them—and were once more placed under French control.

* * *

Maximilian, Emperor of Mexico, *Proclamation of Oct. 3, 1866*



Maximilian I

In 1864, Napoleon III declared Mexico an 'independent' Empire, under the Austrian aristocrat Ferdinand Maximilian Joseph, henceforth Emperor Maximilian I. Once in Mexico, Maximilian proved more relatively Liberal than Napoleon III had intended—he abolished child labour and the quasi-Feudal peon system. But while he supported more religious freedom and a broader electorate than expected, it remained far less than the secular government of universal suffrage that he had crushed, and garnered him little local support. Resistance continued.

Article I. All individuals forming a part of armed bands or bodies existing without legal authority, whether or not proclaiming a political pretext, whatever the number of those forming such band, or its organization, character, and denomination, shall be judged militarily by the courts martial. If found guilty, even though only of the fact of belonging to an armed band, they shall be condemned to capital punishment, and the sentence shall be executed within twenty-four hours.

Article II. Those who, forming part of the bands mentioned in the above article, shall have been taken prisoners in combat shall be judged by the officer commanding the force into the power of which they have fallen. It shall become the duty of said officer within the twenty-four hours following to institute an inquest, hearing the accused in his own behalf. Upon this inquest a report shall be drawn and sentence shall be passed. The pain of death shall be pronounced against offenders even if

only found guilty of belonging to an armed band. The chief shall have the sentence carried into execution within twenty-four hours—being careful to secure to the condemned spiritual aid—after which he will address the report to the Minister of War.

[. . .]

Article V. There shall be judged and sentenced under the terms of Article I of the present law:

- I. All individuals who voluntarily have procured money or any other succor to guerrilleros.
- II. Those who have given them advice, news, or counsel.
- III. Those who voluntarily and with knowledge of the position of said guerrilleros have sold them or procured for them arms, horses, ammunition, provisions, or any other materials of war.

Article VI. There shall be judged and sentenced in accordance with Article I:

- I. Those who have entertained with guerrilleros relations constituting the fact of connivance.
- II. Those who of their own free will and knowingly have given them shelter in their houses or on their estate.
- III. Those who have spread orally or in writing false or alarming news calculated to disturb order, or who have made any demonstration against the public peace.
- IV. The owners or agents of rural property who have not at once given notice to the nearest authority of the passage of a band upon their estate.

The persons included in the first and second sections of this article shall be liable to an imprisonment of from six months to two years, or from one to three years' hard labor, according to the gravity of the offense.

[. . .]

Article IX. All inhabitants between the ages of eighteen and fifty-five years of age not physically incapacitated shall, when the locality inhabited by them is threatened by a band, take part in the defense of the place, under penalty of a fine of from five to two hundred piasters or of from fifteen days' to four months' imprisonment. If the authorities deem it proper to punish the village for non-resistance, they may impose a fine of from two hundred to two thousand piasters, which shall be payable by all those who have not taken part in the defense.

[. . .]

Article XIII. Sentence of death passed upon those guilty of the offenses enumerated by the present law shall be executed in the time fixed, and the benefit of appeal for mercy shall be refused to the condemned. When the accused has not been condemned to death, and is a stranger, the government, after he shall have undergone punishment, may make use with regard to him of its right to expel from its territory pernicious strangers.

Article XIV. Amnesty is proclaimed in favor of all who, having belonged or still belonging to armed bands and having committed no other offense, shall present themselves to the authorities before the 10th of next November. The authorities shall take possession of the arms of those so surrendering themselves.



Indigenous Mexican cavalrymen in the Republican army, photographed after their victory over French forces at the battle of Puebla, 1863.

Article XV. The government reserves unto itself the right to fix the time when the provisions of the present law shall cease to be enforced. Each of our ministers is bound, as far as his department is concerned, to enforce the present law and to issue such orders as will secure its strict observance.

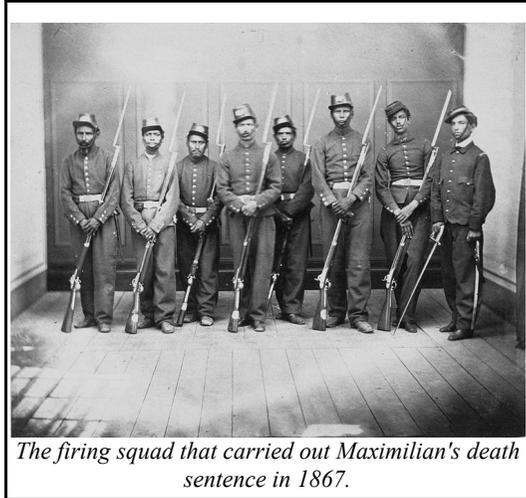
Issued in the Palace of Mexico,
October 3, 1865.

* * *

from Percy F. Martin, *Maximilian in Mexico: The Story of the French Intervention, 1914*

In 1865 the US Civil War ended, and 50,000 American troops were sent to the Mexican border, while arms were supplied to the resistance armies and diplomatic pressure exerted in Europe. In 1866, Napoleon III withdrew all French troops from Mexico, leaving Maximilian to defend his 'Empire' with a mere 8,000 Mexican Royalists, personal bodyguard, and European adventurers; he refused to leave Mexico, not wanting to abandon his supporters to the inevitable reprisals. On June 19, 1867 he was executed by firing squad with his top lieutenants.

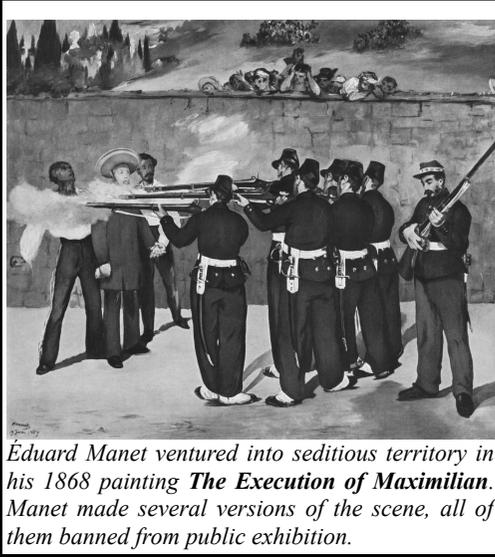
It is customary in all Latin countries for the politically as for the criminally condemned to deliver a farewell oration upon the eve of dissolution. It is a privilege accorded to even the worst malefactors, and one which is but seldom discarded. Maximilian's soft and well modulated voice was heard addressing the soldiery facing him, for he was too far distant for his utterances to reach the ranks of the troops and beyond them the gathering of the public who had followed them to the execution ground.



'Mexicans!' he said, 'persons of my rank and origin are destined by God either to be benefactors of the people or martyrs. Called by a great part of you, I came for the good of the country. Ambition did not bring me here: I came with the best of intentions and sincerest wishes for the future of my adopted country and for that of my soldiers, whom I thank before my death for the sacrifices which they have made for me. Mexicans! may my blood be the last which shall be spilled for the welfare of the country; and if it should be necessary that its sons should still shed theirs, may it flow for its good, never by treason. Long live Independence; long live Mexico!'

Glancing around, the emperor observed that several Indian peons, who had crept up behind the soldiery, were weeping; he smiled upon them encouragingly, and then faced the firing squad. Placing both his hands for a moment upon his breast just above his heart he dropped

them quickly to his side. At the same moment five shots rang out clearly upon the still morning air; for a brief second the emperor did not move, then he gently swayed and fell upon his right side, whispering almost inaudibly, 'Hombre!' ('man!'), an expression used to inferiors.



All five bullets had pierced his body, and the executioners had done their work well and truly. Observing a slight twitching of the arms, doubtless caused by the contraction and relaxation of the muscles, the commanding officer approached the body and

turned it upon its back. Indicating to the heart with the point of his bare sword, he silently motioned to one of the soldiers, who thereupon advanced and sent another bullet from his rifle straight through the heart.

[. . .]

The coffined body of the dead Maximilian was carried back to the chapel of the convent of the Capuchins, where it was roughly thrown upon a table. Summoning Dr. Basch, the late emperor's physician, and a number of the imprisoned Imperialist officers, most of whom were Frenchmen, Colonel Palacios, still smarting from the wound inflicted upon him by the woman whom he had addressed, exclaimed, while pointing to the body, 'Behold the work of France!'

[. . .]



The proceedings were characterized by much unnecessary and discreditable offensiveness upon the part of the Liberal officials. Dr. Licia, when plunging his knife into the body of the dead prince, exclaimed, 'What a delight it is to me to be enabled to wash my hands in the blood of an emperor.' Then the 'Hyena' tapped upon the head of the corpse, observing theatrically, 'Oh! you would place crowns

upon your head, would you? Now, perhaps, you will be satisfied with these for your crown,' and with those words he emptied over the head the intestines which had been removed from the stomach and placed in a bowl of water. Other similarly degrading acts upon the part of these monsters, types of the Mexican professional man of that day, were subsequently disclosed, proving that although dead and beyond the reach of their contemptible spite, Maximilian was still to be made the subject of their vindictiveness.

The embalming process extended over a full week.

* * *

Théophile Gautier, *Nostalgia of the Obelisks*

In 1829, Muhammad Ali Pasha declared himself ruler of Egypt, and defended his claim against the Ottoman Empire to lay the groundwork for the modern Egyptian state. Currying French support, he offered as a gift to France the two obelisks at



The Luxor Obelisk in the Place de la Concorde, Paris

the Temple of Luxor. Each was 3,300 years old 75 feet high. Only one obelisk was actually transported to France, and was erected in the Place de Concorde in 1833; the other remained in its original site. Gautier, who had written the first heavily-researched historical novel about ancient Egypt, was ambivalent about his country's relationship with the relics of Egyptian culture.

I. THE OBELISK IN PARIS

Distant from my native land,
Ever dull with ennui's pain,
Lonely monolith I stand,
In the snow and frost and rain.

And my shaft, once burnt to red
In a flaming heaven's glare,
Taket on a pallor dead
In this never azure air.

Oh, to stand again before
Luxor's pylons, and the dear,
Grim Colossi!—be once more
My vermilion brother near!

Oh, to pierce the changeless blue,
Where of old my peak upwon,
With my shadow sharp and true
Trace the footsteps of the sun!

Once, O Rameses! my tall mass
Not the ages could destroy.
But it fell cut down like grass.
Paris took it for a toy.

Now my granite form behold:
Sentinel the livelong day
Twixt a spurious temple old,
And the *Chambre des Députés!*

On the spot where *Louis Seize*
Died, they set me, meaningless,
With my secret which outweighs
Cycles of forgetfulness.

Sparrows lean defile my head,
Where the ibis used to light,
And the fierce gypaetus spread
Talons gold and plumage white.

And the Seine, the drip of street,
Unclean river, crime's abyss,
Now befouls mine ancient feet,
Which the Nile was wont to kiss:

Hoary Nile that, crowned and stern,
To its lotus-laden shores
From its ever bended urn
Crocodiles for gudgeon pours!

Golden chariots gem-belit
Of the Pharaohs' pageanting
Grazed my side the cab-wheels hit,
Bearing out the last poor king.

By my granite shape of yore
Passed the priests, with stately ascent,
And the mystic boat upbore,
Emblemed and magnificent.

But to-day, profane and wan,
Camped between two fountains wide,
I behold the courtesan
In her carriage lounge with pride.

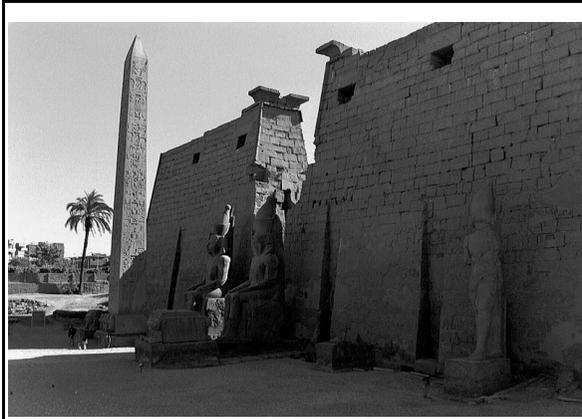
From the first of year to last
I must see the vulgar show—
Solons to the Council passed,
Lovers to the woods that go!

Oh, what skeletons abhorred,
Hence, an hundred years, this race!
Couched, unbandaged, on a board,
In a nailed coffin's place.

Never hypogeum kind,
Safe from foul corruption's fear;
Never hall where century-lined
Generations disappear!

Sacred soil of hieroglyph,
And of sacerdotal laws,
Where the Sphinx is waiting stiff,
Sharpening on the stone its claws,—

Soil of crypt where echoes part,
Where the vulture swoopeth free,
All my being,—all my heart,
O mine Egypt, weeps for thee!



The second Obelisk, which still remains at their original site at the Luxor Temple, Egypt.

II. The Obelisk in Luxor

Where the wasted columns brood,
Lonely sentinel stand I,
In eternal solitude
Facing all infinity.

Dumb, with beauty unendowed,
To the horizon limitless
Spreads earth's desert like a shroud
Stained by yellow suns that press.

While above it, blue and clean,
Is another desert cast—
Sky where cloud is never seen,
Pure, implacable, and vast.

And the Nile's great water-course
Glazed with leaden pellicle
Wrinkled by the river-horse
Gleameth dead, unlustreful.

All about the flaming isles,
By a turbid water spanned,
Hot, rapacious crocodiles
Swoon and sob upon the sand.

Perching motionless, alone,
Ibis, bird of classic fame,
From a carven slab of stone
Reads the moon-god's sacred name.

Jackals howl, hyenas grin,
Famished hawks descend and cry.
Down the heavy air they spin,
Commas black against the sky.

These the sounds of solitude,
Where the sphinxes yawn and doze,
Dull and passionless of mood,
Weary of their endless pose.

Child of sand's reflected shine,
And of sun-rays fiercely bent,
Is there ennui like to thine,
Spleen of luminous Orient?

Thou it was cried "Halt!" of yore
To satiety of kings.
Thou hast crushed me more and more
With thine awful weight of wings.

Here no zephyr of the sea
Wipes the tears from skies that fill.
Time himself leans wearily
On the palaces long still.

Naught shall touch the features terse
Of this dull, eternal spot.
In this changing universe,
Only Egypt changeth not!

When the ennui never ends,
And I yearn a friend to hold,
I've the fellahs, mummies, friends,
Of the dynasties of old.

I behold a pillar pale,
Or a chipped Colossus note,
Watch a distant, gleaming sail
Up and down the Nile afloat.

Oh, to seek my brother's side,
In a Paris wondrous, grand,
With his stately form to bide,
In the public place to stand!

For he looks on living men,
And they scan his pictures wrought
By an hieratic pen,
To be read by vision-thought.

Fountains fair as amethyst
On his granite lightly pour
All their irisated mist.
He is growing young once more.

Ah! yet he and I had birth
From Syene's veins of red.
But I keep my spot of earth.
He is living. I am dead.

* * *

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