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Содержание

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UP THE PARANA AND IN PARAGUAY

CONCLUDING PAPER

One day—to return to our traveler and his personal experiences—M. Forgues makes the acquaintance of a Swiss who resides at Paraguari, a small interior town distant about twenty-five leagues from Asuncion. His new acquaintance invites him to go with him to Paraguari, but before complying with the invitation M. Forgues crosses the river and rides into the territory of Gran Chaco as far as the Quinta de la Miseria, situated about two miles and a half from the river-bank. The owner of this farm, Mequelain, a French pioneer, his wife and three servants,

had been surprised and murdered by the Chaco Indians a short while before the arrival of M. Forgues in Asuncion. The quinta is on the edge of a vast plain. The unfortunate Mequelain had surrounded his house with ditches and a small fence of posts. Besides this, he had built a sort of observatory from which to watch the movements of the Indians. But his precautions, as the end showed, proved useless. The farm was occupied by new tenants at the time of M. Forgues's visit, and the bodies of the five victims were buried in one of the ditches. The Quinta de la Miseria derives its gloomy name from the tragic event that had given it its melancholy prominence in the minds of the people of Asuncion. To reach Paraguari our traveler avails himself of the railroad which extends between that town and the capital. The railroad-station presents a lively scene with its crowd of savage-looking natives thronging it. In connection with this station M. Forgues mentions a curious circumstance—that in order to prevent the rush of the multitude to the cars on the departure of the train the station-master has ingeniously replaced gates and fences, which might be climbed easily, with brushes steeped in pitch and tar, so disposed as to bar the passage. As the Paraguayan women hold cleanliness to be one of the cardinal virtues, they religiously avoid these defiling brushes for fear of soiling their garments. The cars are built on the most approved American model. The train, furthermore, has two platform-cars attached to it, which are reserved exclusively for the gratuitous use of the poor, who are permitted to ride on them with as

much as they can carry in the way of bundles and other goods. Sometimes the platforms are so crowded that they are lost to sight under the passengers' heads and legs. Another feature of railway travel in Paraguay—for a foreigner a sensation—is to observe a woman clad in the Arcadian simplicity of a single garment enter a car and take a seat opposite you or alongside of you with the most unconstrained air imaginable.

The train on its way to Paraguari passes Trinidad and many other stations. The station-houses are all small structures covered with tile roofs. At Luque, a village where the passengers stop for refreshments, the women of the place flock at the windows and offer for sale embroideries of their own invention worked on tulle or on a special kind of netting, while the venders of lunches appear, not with the traditional fried oysters, fried chickens or sandwiches of our own favored land, but with bottles of fresh milk and *chiapa*, a kind of bread made from manioc, among the ingredients of which are starch and eggs, and for which Luque is famous. The engineer of the train, an Englishman, is a person who is as important in his way as is the Brazilian minister in his. At Luque he descends from his locomotive to chat with a friend on the platform. Time—or what would be "time" elsewhere—is up, but our Englishman continues to talk, notwithstanding that after the utterance of impatient cries the passengers leave the cars in wrath to crowd around him and overwhelm him with abusive words. An admirable representative of English phlegm, he finishes his conversation at his ease, looks at his watch, climbs

in a leisurely way to his position on the engine and puts the train in motion. There is no danger of collision with any other train, however, for this train is the only one on the line. It leaves Asuncion every morning, moving at an average rate of fifteen miles an hour, and arrives at Paraguari some time during the day, at the will of the engineer. Returning from Paraguari the same day, it reaches Asuncion, remarks M. Forgues, when it pleases Heaven that it shall do so.

The scenery along the road is beautiful, but the country is almost a desert. Around the stations are groups of dwellings of varied appearance, the most solidly built of which are connected with farms that belonged to the late President Lopez. At times appear palm trees, the feathery leaves of which mingle with beautiful effect with the pale or dark foliage of an exuberant vegetation. Lopez had established telegraphic communication between the mouth of the Paraguay and Paraguari, but the line having been broken between the latter terminus and a place called Cerro Leon, and nobody having been sufficiently interested in it to have it repaired, it now stops at Cerro Leon, the only telegraphic wire in the country, as the Asuncion and Paraguari Railroad is the only railroad.

As the train approaches its destination the passengers see in the distance the three *cerros* of Paraguari. These isolated sugar-loaf-shaped hills called *cerros*, covered with verdure, are a marked feature of Paraguayan scenery. They rise from the flat plains, and although their isolated situations impart

to them an appearance of great height, they are rarely more than four hundred feet above the level of the plain. Paraguari comprises fifty or sixty houses worthy of the appellation, built around a square. In the outskirts are numerous mud-huts, all well populated with women and children. Its inhabitants number about three thousand, and in its quality as terminus of an unfinished railroad it has that flavor of desperadoism which usually attaches to positions of that kind. Here gather malefactors, generally of foreign birth, from Asuncion and elsewhere—refugees from the central authority and the metropolitan police—who are more free in Paraguari to prey on whomsoever chance may throw in their way. Of the sixty houses, twelve are *tiendas*, shops in which are sold at retail English cotton goods, Hamburg gins, etc., in exchange for the products of the country—hides, tobacco, *maté* and other commodities.

The Paraguayan is an inveterate gambler, and in Paraguari two at least of the houses are devoted to public play. They are crowded nightly, and often the stakes amount to five hundred or a thousand francs. Quarrels frequently arise over the play, and then the knife is brought into requisition, but the affrays are due more to the presence of the Italian, Argentine and Brazilian adventurers who flock there than to the Paraguayans, who are not, naturally, a quarrelsome race. On the night of his arrival, M. Forgues, with revolver in belt and accompanied by his Swiss friend, walks through the village. The *tiendas* are lighted up, but

the other houses are in darkness. They look in on the gamblers. The dingy room is partially illuminated by a petroleum lamp which hangs from the ceiling and casts its rays on groups of men with hang-dog countenances seated or standing around a long table, smoking pipes and playing at cards for silver coin, or else engaged in a certain game played on a billiard-table, in which a handful of small balls is thrown on the table by the players, the end to be attained being to cause as many of the balls as possible to enter the pockets. Then M. Forgues and his companion leave the scene of the gambling orgie and look on another phase of life in Paraguari after dark. Not far distant is a lighted stable-lantern on the ground: around it, with a confused medly of ponchos and white skirts flying in the air, goes on the merry dance to the sound of an organ's whining notes. This is all that can be seen from where they stand, for the faces of the dancers, too dark to be distinguishable in the night, are invisible.

The village square is a kind of permanent fair-ground filled with diminutive booths, each one composed of four posts stuck in the ground and upholding a bit of cloth not much larger than a hand-kerchief, under which the hucksters, women and children, sit as under a tent. There is a multitude of sellers, and a pitiful lack of goods to be sold. One woman, with her four children seated near her, offers six eggs to the passer-by as her little store of merchandise: another booth is presided over by two women and three children, and a dozen ears of corn constitute their stock. There is a sad suggestion of poverty about all this which

is very depressing. The day before the arrival of M. Forgues in the place an enterprising baker, the first who had ever set foot in Paraguari, began the making and selling of wheat bread. Everybody deserted his customary manioc and bought a loaf of the good fellow, who rubbed his hands with delight at the success of his speculation. The next day, not satisfied with a legitimate profit, he raised the price of his loaves. Human nature is the same all over the world, and the speculator found his bread left on his hands. Nobody would pay his price, and everybody returned to manioc.

From Paraguari our traveler's course next led him toward Villa Rica, a thriving town situated still farther in the interior, and near the Cordillera of Caaguazu. He sets out accompanied by his Swiss acquaintance. The journey is made in two days and on horseback. Their route in the beginning lies across a small mountain-range, and then through a piece of thick woods bearing an evil reputation as the home of footpads. But the two pass through in safety, for the robbers are either asleep or absent from their haunts. Reaching the head-waters of the Yuqueri, which empties into the Canabe, a tributary of the Paraguay, they skirt the heights of Angostura, where Lopez, after the evacuation of Humaita, planted his batteries, and which he made his final strategic point. Near by, on the right bank of the Canabe, is the field of Las Lomas Valentinas, where the Paraguayan president fought his last great battle. So far, the route had been through an almost unpeopled solitude. In the evening they reach Ibitimi,

a village built, as are all the Paraguayan hamlets, in the shape of a square, with its little church in the centre. Here the ravages of war are painfully apparent. Many of the houses have gone to ruin, dismantled piecemeal by passers-by, their owners never having come back from the battlefield to reoccupy them. The surrounding country is charming, and, seated on one side, M. Forgues sketches a cart drawn by oxen which goes by slowly with the declining sun shining on its leather top. An eight-year-old boy of the village, whose attire is limited strictly to a necklace of black seeds, approaches him, looks over his shoulder, and reads aloud the word which he writes under his sketch: "Ibitimi." Returning from his little sketching excursion to where his companion is awaiting him, he observes that he has suddenly become an object of mingled curiosity and respect on the part of the villagers. The cause of this prominence is a mystery to him until he learns that during his absence his friend had spread the rumor that he is a civil engineer who has come to make a definite survey of the line of the Asuncion and Villa Rica Railroad, which, although it was completed only to Paraguari, was originally intended to extend to Villa Rica, taking Ibitimi in its route. Thus become a great man in the little community, M. Forgues is besought by the political chief of the village—a functionary who fulfills the duties of mayor—almost the only male adult in Ibitimi, to command his services. These services are pressed on him with so much warmth that he is fain to seek relief from this persecuting hospitality by announcing his desire

to sleep that night under the canopy of heaven. Consequently, a bed of girths is carried out into the public square for his use, a sort of leather ticking is stretched on it, and he sleeps quietly with his face to the stars.

A long day's journey to Villa Rica lies before our traveler and his companion, and so they rise early while the moon is still brightly shining. They bid the friendly political chief farewell, and take their departure for Villa Rica. As they emerge from the village the moon silvers with its pure light the tops of the palms and of the bushes that line the road. Away from Ibitimi their course lies through a pretty forest, wherein the party is increased by the addition of two Paraguayans on horseback, one of them armed with a long sword, and of a Paraguayan woman, who rides her horse man-fashion. A few miles farther on they come to a vast marsh, a common feature of the topography of Paraguay, and one of the great drawbacks to travel in the country, for when the rains fall these marshes become dangerous and impassable, and the traveler is compelled to go miles out of his way to turn them before he can continue his journey. The lagoon which lies before them on this occasion, however, is empty, and they are thus saved the détour of more than ten leagues which they would be compelled to make if it were filled with water. The sun, dispersing the last vestige of the morning fog, rises in a clear blue sky, and this spectacle they witness from a slight eminence, in front of which extends an immense plain with its limit at the bank of the Tebicuari-mi, the waters of which shine like a mirror.

M. Forgues now begins to enter a stretch of wooded country in which the solitude of the day previous is replaced by a thickly-settled region, wherein are to be seen in quick succession a multitude of pretty ranchos nestled in the foliage. The day before, on the journey from Paraguari to Ibitimi, scarcely ten persons had been met with, but now they pass groups of men—the fact is more noticeable because of the rarity of men in Paraguay—and women. The men salute the party by removing their hats, and the women with a *Buen dia* ("Good-day"), uttered with a gracious smile. The whole of this forest is peopled like the environs of Paris. Rancho succeeds rancho at short distances apart, and each shelters under its blackened thatched roof many women and children, of whose number its small dimensions give no idea. In the towns the houses need to be large to protect their occupants from the heat, but in this forest the people live in the open air chiefly, entering their hovels only to sleep, be it during the day or the night. In strange contrast with the humble aspect of the houses is the heavy silver pitcher, weighing at least two pounds, from which M. Forgues is given to drink by the owner of one of the huts of whom he has asked water.

Leaving these cheerful forest-homes behind him, our traveler fords the Tebicuari-mi, which rises in the cordillera where are gathered the yerba-leaves from which is made the *maté*. The water at Paso de Itape, as the ford is called, is shallow enough to permit the party to walk their horses through it, although usually the passage is made on the flat-boat and the two long canoes

which are tied to the bank near by. The ford derives its name from the village of Itape, which lies a short distance beyond—a pleasant, prosperous hamlet with cultivated lands surrounding it, and built in a square, with its church and its bell-tower in the centre. The space at the entrance of the sacred edifice is covered with sweet, fine grass, and contented-looking oxen and horses browse at the foot of the wall.

It is the breakfast-hour, and M. Forgues and his companion stop in front of the first house they reach as they enter the village and utter the traditional *Ave Maria*, thus requesting the hospitality of the owner. In response, from the shadow of the verandah in which he is seated comes a tall, superb-looking, bearded man, who replies, "*Sin peccado concebida"* ("conceived without sin"), which indicates that the hospitality asked for is granted. When the Paraguayan gives this response to the invocation of the traveler, the latter may consider himself at home; and so is it on this occasion with M. Forgues. His host proves to have been one of that body of the Paraguayan army, eight or ten thousand strong, which, besieged by the Brazilians in the town of Uruguayana in 1865, at the very beginning of the war, became prisoners when the town was surrendered. They fared far better than their unfortunate fellow-soldiers, for, sent to Brazil, they remained there four years before they were exchanged. In addition to this, they returned to their own country more instructed and more civilized than when they left it. It is to this long relief from the perils of battle, by which the troops drawn

from the department of Itape were so generally spared the fate that overtook their comrades in the field, that are due the evident prosperity and the large male adult population of the district, as M. Forgues observed it. His host of the rancho is as gracious in manners and as affable as it is possible to be, and serves up for breakfast a soup of Indian corn, a chicken fricasee and some delicious bread of crusty *chipa*—a frugal meal assuredly, and one entirely out of keeping with the richness of the service of silver plate which burdens the table, and which, worth fully two thousand francs, includes three large plates, an enormous dish and several massive mugs. The spoons and the forks, however, are of more modest material, for the former are made of horn and the latter of iron.

After a brief siesta M. Forgues and his companion resume their journey toward Villa Rica. Under a shed on the roadside they see a dozen women, all talking at the same time, and engaged in grating manioc-roots in pails of water. The mixture thus obtained composes the dough of manioc. This dough is very white, and is made into small balls which are pressed between the hands—an operation which, when completed, constitutes the entire process of making a coarse kind of bread, not at all of delicate flavor, called *galetta*, which is furnished to laborers of both sexes. Under another shed a young girl with a complexion like bronze is seated before a loom weaving, with a light and elegant shuttle, a hammock out of the cotton thread of the country.

Evening is about deepening into night when M. Forgues arrives at Villa Rica. His host in the town, a prosperous shopkeeper, invites him to dinner, and at the table he meets the mistress of the house, a tall, handsome Paraguayan woman, who receives him and his fellow-traveler with polished courtesy. She belongs to the class of the posterity of the old Spanish colonists. She is dressed in a long calico dress with a white train, and with a row of small red buttons down the front. The sleeves have deep cuffs, also fastened with small buttons. A wide, turned-down collar partly covers the shoulders, and exposes to the sight the lower part of a very shapely neck. In the course of conversation this lady informs M. Forgues that the department of Villa Rica is perhaps the only part of the country which may give an idea of what Paraguay was before the war. The men, it is true, were killed off, as were the men of the other departments, but by a happy chance the women and children were spared that terrible flight to the Cordilleras whereby thousands of their sex and age perished. His hostess relates to him her experiences during that fearful period. After the occupation of Asuncion by the Brazilians, and their advance as far as Paraguari, Lopez gave the order that Villa Rica should be abandoned and that the population should follow him to the mountains. As it happened, however, the commanding officer of the two hundred men who constituted the Paraguayan force at Villa Rica just about that time committed some breach of discipline, for which he was arrested by order of Lopez and sent to another point to be tried and shot. Coincidently with

this his detachment suddenly fell back, leaving word with the inhabitants to quit the town within twenty-four hours or take the consequences of disobedience. Despair and terror prevailed among the people, and while they were hesitating as to what course to pursue, before the twenty-four hours of grace had expired news came to them that the Brazilians had reached Ibitimi in the pursuit. Then the whole population fled in the night to the Brazilians for protection, traveling until morning to Ibitimi, twelve leagues distant.

The Guayrinos, as the inhabitants of Villa Rica are called, are industrious, amiable and temperate. They possess great independence of character, and speak somewhat contemptuously of the submissiveness of the rest of Paraguay to the slightest caprice of the dictators who have successively ruled the country. Foreigners meet with a cordial welcome from them, and are often voluntarily selected by them to be the godfathers of their children. The Guayrinos are, moreover, a contented community, and are disposed to congratulate themselves on the fact that they are spared the presence of the adventurers and cut-throats of the class that infests Asuncion and Paraguari. The women are very devout, and on Sundays the church is filled with worshipers of the female sex, while the men are possibly engaged in attending a cock-fight. Apropos of the religious fervor of the Paraguayan women, M. Forgues relates that there is not a single house in Paraguay occupied by natives which does not possess its two penates in the shape of wooden images of a saint, which are

kept enclosed in a glass box and are the objects of incessant devotion. This box stands on a small table which serves as a sort of altar, and is placed in a certain corner of the hut, sacred for that reason from all other use. From time to time the family, with a pious inspiration on them, walk abroad in the village carrying the box with them. Then all the neighbors, observing this, issue from their houses and follow the bearers of the box. Family and escort chant while marching, and everybody uncovers as the little procession passes. After a while the transient ceremony is over, the box is brought back to its accustomed corner, the neighbors disperse and quiet resumes its sway in the hovel.

The department of Villa Rica produces excellent cotton, which is cultivated, however, only in infinitesimal quantities. Indigo, called by the natives *añil*, grows wild. The tobacco of the district is especially renowned, and in the Cordillera, the tops of which compose the background of the beautiful region lying to the east of the town, *maté* is grown successfully. The very name of the Cordillera of Caaguazu bears testimony to the abundance of the yerba, *caa* meaning *maté* in the Guaranian language, and *guazu*, "great" or "much." As seen from the elevation on which Villa Rica stands, this mountain-range, twelve leagues distant, stretches along the horizon an undulating mass of blue. The intervening space nearer the town is filled with beautiful forests, while beyond are vast plains, the monotony of which is broken by lagoons and clumps of palms. The population of the region around Villa Rica is estimated at fifteen thousand. There are

good opportunities here for immigrants, for Nature, like a fruitful mother, holds ample treasures in her bosom, which need only a little well-directed labor to bring the tiller of the soil his reward. Laborers receive a sum equal to about twenty cents of our money for a day's work, and carpenters about fifty cents. Food of coarse quality, however, is supplied by the employer.

Owing to the decrease in the population—which, as before stated, is composed almost altogether of women and children—and the simple life of the people, the importations into Paraguay are limited to a few articles. Of these products of foreign industry, the observer may see exposed for sale in the shops coarse cotton goods and hardware of an inferior quality, both manufactured in England; boots and shoes, the former of which are worn chiefly, of Buenos Ayres make; and ready-made garments of linen and poor cloths. The imported liquors and articles of food are principally a small quantity of sugar, lard, wine of an execrable quality, and Hamburg gin, together with a few boxes of candles and some oil and soap. To this list of imports must be added the inevitable Chinese fire-crackers, without which noisy accessories no Paraguayan holiday would be complete. Throughout South America a passion for fire-crackers and fireworks prevails; and as an example of this mania, M. Forgues relates that when the Argentine troops were on their return to Buenos Ayres after the close of the war, great preparations were made by the authorities to greet them on their arrival at three o'clock in the afternoon with a great display

of fireworks. There was a delay in the coming of the troops, however, and so, to satisfy the people, the fireworks were let off a half hour after the appointed time, although the soldiers had not yet made their appearance. Still the troops delayed, and the populace, satiated with pageantry, retired to their homes and to bed. About eleven o'clock at night a tumult of trumpets, cymbals and drums was heard in the dark and deserted streets: it was the army, which, landed at last, was making a solemn entry into the city, with nobody on the sidewalks to admire it. The timely—or perhaps untimely—fireworks had appeased the desire for show, and the spectacle of the marching soldiers was only of secondary importance in a celebration that included skyrockets and Roman candles. Yerba is the principal article exported, and as the use of maté is so general on the continent, this trade is a very important branch of industry. In addition to these leaves, a small quantity of tobacco, a few hides, hard woods and demijohns of a primitive kind of rum constitute the exportations of a country in which cotton and indigo grow wild, and where sugar and rice could be made to yield large revenues.

The lack of money and of banking facilities in Paraguay has made the process of buying and selling, in reality, but not professedly, a matter of exchange of commodities. For instance, a shopkeeper will barter his imported cotton stuffs, his demijohns of wine, his candles, etc. for the tobacco grown by the natives. The merchants also endeavor to buy as much tobacco as possible, when the crop is first in, for specie. Usually, large

profits are derived from this course, as the planters have pretty well exhausted their receipts for the crop of the previous year, and hence are disposed at that time to sell at a sacrifice. The money thus obtained returns to the merchant in the usual way of business, and thus the latter is enabled to buy more tobacco. The result is, that in the end the merchant gets the planter's cash as well as his tobacco. It is a curious fact, however, that the Paraguayans do not admit the principle of exchange. They must touch the value of their wares in the shape of coin before parting with them. Thus, no woman of the country will exchange outright a quantity of yerba, large or small, or any product of her industry, for cotton or thread. She will first insist on holding in her hand, even if it be for a moment, the price in silver of her wares, and with this money she will pay for what she obtains from the merchant.

During his sojourn in Villa Rica, M. Forgues purchases a house there, to the great gratification of the community, who, in the simplicity of their hearts, see in him the pioneer of European immigration, the influential capitalist who is to introduce foreign money among them. Attentions are showered on him. The political chief of the town invites him to a twelve-o'clock breakfast to meet the notabilities of the place. A salvo of firecrackers at noon announces that the chief is prepared to welcome his friends, and the invited guests, male and female, hasten to the prefecture. Before entering the banquet-hall the guests, as they arrive, take seats in wooden chairs in a large

ball-room which adjoins it, receiving as they do so, from the hands of the host, a glass of *caña*. The breakfast-table is decked with flowers, and under it grunts and roots about among the feet of the guests a very tame tapir as large as a decently-sized pig. The hard and dry Spanish wine used at the entertainment is drunk out of large beer-glasses. The mistress of the house and the officers of the Paraguayan guard that composes the political chief's escort act as waiters. After many toasts have been offered and honored, M. Forgues, mustering up his few words of Spanish-Guaranian, drinks to the health of the pretty girls of Villa Rica amid the enthusiastic hurrahs of the guests, one of whom, with exclamations of *Bueno! bravo!* and the like, leaves his seat to scatter flowers over our traveler's head, wishing him at the same time every prosperity. At this moment a bass drum and a clarionet intervene in the clamor with a delicious French melody, "Ah! zut alors si Nadar est malade!" and the company retire to the ball-room to dance, and also, women as well as men, to smoke immense cigars.

Yakaguazu, a large square village near Villa Rica, is visited by M. Forgues. It contains eighty or ninety houses, and a church which is the counterpart of that at Itape. There is a school in the place attended by one hundred and twenty-five pupils, who secure a patriotic but limited education with nothing in the way of a printed text-book but a lot of surplus copies of the constitution of Paraguay. Their teacher informs M. Forgues that of the three hundred and sixty-five school-children in his district,

three hundred are orphans.

Continuing his journey the next day, with his host of Yakaguazu added to the party, M. Forgues reaches the dwelling of an old and very rich Paraguayan, Vicente Fleytas, whose farm, happily spared the ravages of war, is a fair sample of what the farms of the country were in the days of Lopez. Fleytas lives in patriarchal style, and he entertains his visitors most hospitably. At night, seated under the verandah, they smoke, or eat delicious oranges which the wife and daughters of old Vicente peel in a large silver dish, and the hours of sleep are passed in hammocks, the doors of the house having first been closed carefully to keep out any wandering jaguars that may be prowling around. In regard to these fierce animals, M. Forgues says that enough of them are to be met with in the forests of Paraguay to affright the bravest man, but it is more difficult to avoid them than to see them. They are sometimes caught in traps resembling enormous rat-traps and baited with raw meat. The skin of the jaguar sells for eight dollars, and consequently the man who is so lucky as to catch one in his trap rejoices greatly. The next night a ball is given at the patriarch's in honor of our traveler. During the day they ride around the neighborhood and personally invite to the entertainment the guests to the number of seventy-four, of whom seventy are young women, some of them very handsome. The music is of the modest kind that might be expected from a clarionet and a guitar. The majority of the participants come to the house with their chairs on their heads. The dances are

the polka, the waltz, quadrilles, including the Lancers, and two or three native dances called La Polomila, the Dondon Karapé and La Santa Fé, which are accompanied with graceful poses, while the women, as they dance, snap their fingers in imitation of castanets. While the dance is in progress the good and hospitable Vicente remains outside to fire off his gun at intervals with the view of frightening away the jaguars, one of these animals having been killed only eight days before in the very room wherein the revelers are enjoying themselves. Before taking leave of the brave Fleytas, M. Forgues is regaled with several jaguar stories which doubtless admirably prepare him for the remainder of his journey through forest and jungle.

The next morning he bids the patriarch farewell. On the women and children of the family, grouped in front of the house, he bestows a benediction with the utterance of a "Peace be with you!" Then with his Swiss acquaintance he rides away, to return not to Villa Rica, but to Paraguari, on his way to Asuncion. His course lies nearly due west, and for six leagues he rides through a beautiful country, but on a road so muddy that the horses sink up to the saddle-girths. He tarries for dinner at the estancia of another Paraguayan, Don Matias Ramirez—not as rich a man, but as hospitable a host, as Don Vicente—who spreads before his guests for dinner a simple repast of boiled turnips and small manioc doughnuts. But before reaching the estancia our traveler has had the good fortune to shoot three large birds of the pheasant variety called *mutus*, and thus the humble

board of Don Matias is graced with meat, a rare commodity in those parts.

After a short siesta—as much an institution in Paraguay as dinner itself—M. Forgues pushes forward, furnished with a youthful guide mounted on a mule whom Don Matias has bidden accompany him. For six hours the route lies through a virgin forest composed of orange, cedar and other trees, mingled with dense thorny thickets, trunks of decayed trees and a twisted network of climbers. The passage through this forest is attended with many vexatious incidents, owing to the difficulty experienced in making a way through the undergrowth and thickly-growing climbers. After having his spectacles, his maps, his gun and his hat jerked from him, M. Forgues himself is pulled from his horse. The horses are attacked by a multitude of small yellow flies, which sting them unmercifully in the nostrils, the ears and in whatever part of their bodies the animals cannot reach with their tails, so that, maddened with pain, they break into a fierce gallop to avoid the pest, carrying their riders in their course along the edge of a hole in the ground in which swarms about a bushel of small snakes of a bright green color. When the party finally emerge from this beautiful but inhospitable forest, their clothes are hanging in rags about their persons, and their faces and hands are covered with scratches caused by the thorns.

Their next troublesome experience, although not so long continued, is almost as exhausting, for when the forest is left behind they enter on a marshy waste, through which they are

compelled to ride for two hours. Finally, worn out with fatigue, hunger and thirst, they arrive at an estancia, where sleeping accommodations are offered them in the shape of the under side of a cart, nourishment in the shape of fire wherewith to cook a *mutus*, and assistance comes in the persons of two servants, whose service consists in aiding M. Forgues and his companion to devour, without thanks, salt or manioc, the frugal supper. After that, "Good-night to you!" At daybreak our traveler takes his departure from his churlish—or, it may be, hungry—entertainers, tending in the direction of the foundry of Ibicuy, where in the days of Lopez was smelted the iron ore of San Miguel. Before the war this foundry was a small model establishment with a handsome tile-covered roof, and was thoroughly equipped for the purpose to which it was devoted. All the machinery was destroyed by the Brazilians, and the foundry was left a wreck. Near by is the estancia of Margarita Rivarola, where our traveler and his companion stop to breakfast. Margarita is a poor widow with a beautiful daughter. She is a cousin of a former president of the republic, but so destitute did M. Forgues find her that she and her daughter led an existence bordering on starvation. As in the case of his entertainment at the dwelling of Don Matias, he fortunately brings his breakfast with him. He had killed that morning an *ara*, a beautiful bird, but not so pleasant to the taste, and this constitutes the meal.

Leaving this spot, and traveling five leagues farther in the direction of Paraguari, M. Forgues and his companion reach

the village of Mbuyapey at eight o'clock at night. Here they meet with an adventure. As they enter the village three men, composing the guard of the place and armed with rusty pikes of the Lopez period, challenge them and order them to halt. An interview is held in the darkness, and after a thousand explanations they are permitted to pass. Early next morning they are aroused from sleep by a tumult at their window. Through the grating a number of boys are glaring in on them, capering and uttering a variety of ejaculations. The secret of this popular demonstration is soon explained, for almost at the same moment the door is opened abruptly and the magistrate of the place makes his appearance, asking in Spanish to see their passports and the passports of their horses. The dispute thickens. Finally, M. Forgues, toying with his revolver, proclaims that he and his companion are Frenchmen, and not Paraguayans, that no passports are necessary to travel in the country, and that they cannot be interfered with with impunity. At this a change comes over the magistrate. He begs a thousand pardons, and justifies his course as being merely in the interest of good order, while declaring his belief in the entire respectability of our traveler and his friend. Even in this solitary and almost deserted village a school flourishes (and here it may be remarked in passing that so diffused is public instruction in Paraguay that it is a rare thing to meet with a Paraguayan who cannot sign his name), and when M. Forgues and his companion ride away they are followed by the benign smiles of the magistrate and the bewildered looks of

the scholars.

In this departure from the retired hamlet of Mbuyapey our traveler falls into the great highway that passes through the Missiones between Asuncion and Encarnacion on the Parana, in the south-eastern corner of Paraguay. It includes in its extent the towns and villages of Jesus, Yuti, Ibicuy, Quindi, Carapegua and Paraguari. The road presents a busy scene, for it is along this route that the *troperos* drive their herds of cattle obtained from the Argentine province of Corrientes, on the other side of the Parana. These drovers are free livers, and they spend their money lavishly in the villages. The aspect of the Missiones differs from the part of Paraguay lying to the north of it, as the names of the villages in the province differ from the nomenclature elsewhere. Pampas covered with water prevail, for the country south of the Tebicuari is generally marshy, and during a part of the year is transformed into a lake. Throughout this region decay and ruin have set their seal on what was formerly one of the most prosperous parts of the republic. Orange trees grow in wild profusion on the spots where once stood farm-houses, while mud ranchos, tenanted by a few old women who sustain life with oranges and manioc, here and there disturb the monotony of desolation. The early Jesuits have left their traces in their churches, college squares now empty, and houses gone to wreck, while their labors in the cause of religion and civilization are recalled in the names of saints borne by the villages. At Carapegua, which owes what importance it possesses

to its proximity to Paraguari and the railroad, our traveler once more finds himself amid the products of civilization, for on the shelves of the grocery stores are displayed, among other wares, cans of preserved fruits and meats from Europe.

From Carapegua, M. Forgues journeys to Paraguari, a day's ride. Eight days later he is in Asuncion, and ready to take passage on the Republica for Buenos Ayres. "From the preceding extracts," he writes, "a very exact idea may be formed of a journey in the interior of Paraguay at the present time. How to procure a piece of bread is a matter of serious moment: riding on horseback fifteen leagues at a stretch, or threatening to blow out somebody's brains, is, as it were, a matter of daily occurrence. What is seen and done there is often monstrous compared with our European customs, and yet is not even shocking there where it is seen and done."

The political future of the country is still an unsolved problem. The rule of the dictators, which the allied powers specifically covenanted among themselves to destroy, has ended, probably for ever. When the war closed with the death of Lopez, chaos prevailed in Paraguay, and the people were both bankrupt in fortune and degraded in morals. The reign of outlaws commenced, and it was dangerous to go beyond Asuncion and into the interior. But the Brazilians and the Argentines occupied the capital with a force strong enough to maintain order, and to convince the Paraguayans that their rule must be respected. To-day Paraguay possesses only a nominal independence. She

has her president, and he has his cabinet, who hold their offices under the constitution of the republic; but from the glimpse that M. Forgues has given us of the submissive spirit of these officials, it is clear that they themselves feel that they govern only by the sufferance of their conquerors. The policy of Dom Pedro's government is to intervene Paraguay between Brazil and the Argentine Confederation in order to prevent a clashing of interests between his empire and its late ally. In the mean time, Paraguay is loaded with heavy debts, contracted under Brazilian auspices since the war, in the shape of loans and obligations which must weigh her down for a long time. To illustrate the attitude of Brazil toward the conquered state one incident, and a recent one, will suffice. In the autumn of 1874 the boundary commission, composed of Brazilian and Paraguayan officers, set out for the final survey of the new boundary-line between Paraguay and Brazil. The commission had been engaged on this duty for two years, and last November it brought its work to a close. The line fixed by the Brazilians follows the Apa River from its junction with the Paraguay to its source, and thence extends along the summit of the cordillera to the falls of the Parana—the Salto de la Guayra of the Paraguayans and the Siete Quedas of the Brazilians. The Brazilian commissioners took advantage of the fact that the Apa River has two forks, and chose the south fork as the boundary. This selection added a few hundred square miles to the territory of the Brazilian province of Matto Grosso, but, in spite of the protests and objections of Paraguay, the boundary

treaty has been made on the basis of the Brazilian idea of what is right between the two governments. The liberty of opinion accorded to Paraguay by Brazil is merely the liberty which a cat grants to a captive mouse, to run about within reach of its sheathed claws.

A TALE OF THE CONSCRIPTION

One afternoon, some years ago, I was walking along a narrow old road which leads from Le Crotay, a fishing-village in Picardy, to the town of St. Valéry-sur-Somme. It was in the month of February, and one of those luckless days on which cold, wind and rain all seem banded in league against the comfort of mankind: the sky, dull and lowering, presented to the eye nothing but a bleak, cheerless desert of gray, relieved only by troops of dark, inky clouds, which would at moments, as though flying the fury of a raging storm, roll pell-mell through the air like an army in rout, pouring down at the same time through the thick, black fog that covered land and sea like a pall a deluge of cold, heavy water, which occasional blasts of a violent north-west wind would lash into whistling, pelting and drenching gusts. It was wretched weather; and how I came to be out in it I am sure I forget; but perhaps it was that the morning had been a bright one, and that, beguiled by the clear winter sun, which threw its will-o'-the-wisp rays on my table like gold-edged invitation cards to be stirring, I had set out joyously in hopes of a good bracing walk on the hard, frost-dried roads, which, seen from my windows, gleamed smooth and glistening as white marble, or, again, in expectation of a gay stroll through the crisp, clean snow which draped the fields with its downy folds and reflected the morning light in opal tints like the glossy satin of a wedding-dress.

But in any case, and whatever may have been my reasons for so doing, certain it is that about noon I had ventured out; and equally so that some two hours after I had good reasons to regret my presumption, for at three, having already wandered far from home, I found myself tramping on the road I have named, wearily plodding my way through a slough of thawing snow, teeth chattering, eyes watering and fingers numbed, whilst a wind fit to dethrone all the weather-cocks in Christendom was ploughing up the earth in showers of mud around me, blowing my hat off my head and howling in my ears like a maniac who has broken his chains and got loose.

I groaned pitifully amidst all this: in the first place, because I had no umbrella; and in the second, because I had no companion to be drenched through with me; for it is a curious fact, and one aptly illustrative of the happy way in which man is constituted, that, whereas I should most certainly have scrupled to ask a dog out on such a day, yet I should have felt the most pleasurable relief in seeing a fellow-being soaked like a towel in my company. The fact is, man is a sociable animal, and, loving to share his emotions with his neighbors, steps into a puddle with a lighter heart when a bosom friend is being wetted to the skin by his side.

Lacking a partner, however, I trudged on alone, plish-plash-plosh, through the clayey sludge, cold, dripping and miserable, stopping occasionally to turn my back to the wind or to tie up a wayward shoestring, and pondering dolefully in my mind that I had full two hours to go, not only before reaching home, but

perhaps before finding a shelter of any kind. I think I must have been walking thus three-quarters of an hour when I suddenly heard the music of two pairs of hobnailed boots splashing in the dirt behind me, and forming between them a symphony, the charms of which those only who have been in the same predicament as I can appreciate. "Thank the Fates!" I murmured, and stopped to allow the comers to reach me, noting with a grim smile that they were covered with mud from top to toe, and as damp as a couple of Malvern hydropaths. Their plight was every whit as pitiable as mine; and although the rain had not abated its flow or the wind its strength, yet I almost felt as though it had grown fine again. Corroborative proof of the sociability of the human race.

The two men who were stepping along the road in my direction, and reconciling me by their crestfallen demeanor with the inclemencies of the season, were peasants. The one was an old man, gray-haired, stooping, and apparently sixty years of age: the other, his son, as I afterward found out, was a mere youth of, at the most, twenty. They were strikingly alike in physiognomy, notwithstanding the difference in their years, but neither had anything at all remarkable either in his looks or general appearance: both were small, clumsy-limbed, somewhat simple-faced, rather ugly; and on the whole they were a very commonplace, every-day-to-be-seen pair of countrymen.

Both mechanically raised their rusty beaver hats as they approached me; but after wishing me a short "Good-

evening" continued, much to my surprise and no less to my disappointment, to walk on without taking the slightest notice of me, or, indeed, seeming to remember that I existed; and this although I stepped by their side and tried to keep pace with them.

"This is poor weather," I observed, in hopes of starting a conversation with my fellow-wayfarers.

"Yes, sir," was the curt reply, and both relapsed again into silence, receiving in monosyllables or with simple shrugs of the shoulders every attempt of mine—and I made many—to renew an intercourse.

As such uncivil taciturnity is very rare amongst Frenchmen, I began to examine my companions with more attention than I had hitherto done, in order to discover, if I could, some clue to their strange behavior. I scanned them curiously, and it was then I noticed for the first time that their faces wore a look of the most profound dejection—so profound indeed that I wondered how it was that I had not observed it at once upon seeing them. Their features were pale and drawn; their eyes, rimmed with black, were cast moodily on the ground, and their heads, hanging heavily upon their chests, had, seemingly, a weighty load of sorrow to press them down.

Besides this, their gait was uneven, undecided, I might almost say spasmodical: they did not keep step, although close side by side, for now one and now the other, as though goaded by a troublesome thought which he wished to avoid, would of a sudden quicken his pace and break into a hasty, feverish walk,

or, contrarily, as though held back by the chain of some unhappy reflection, lag in his stride and draw his hand across his brow with a gesture of pain.

Each seemed so wrapped in the gloom of his own musings as to be unconscious of all around him, and I began to feel angry with myself for having intruded upon the privacy of this grief with my idle and silly chattering. A feeling of remorse, too, sprang up in me as I remembered that for a moment I had accused these poor people of churlishness and set down the sensitiveness of their sorrow to a sulky rudeness. There must be something very revolting to the feeling of our better nature in the sense of an injustice done even in thought, for I declare I felt for a minute as if I ought to confess my ideas to my companions and beg their pardon for having wronged them, though only in mind. "Who knows," I muttered, "what efforts it may have cost them to answer me with the composure they did? and am I sure that I myself, under similar circumstances, should have suffered with the same forbearance the company of a stranger, whose presence must have been both irksome and galling?"

Once it seemed to me that the two turned to gaze earnestly into each other's eyes and then to clasp their hands in a quick nervous grasp, as though each hoped, by so doing, to take from the other a part of the sorrow they appeared to share in common. Neither spoke, however, but the mute sympathetic touch was doubtless more eloquent than words. Once again both stopped, at once and together, as if their minds, acting in unison and following the

same strain, had arrived simultaneously at a point where rest and relief were needed. The old man placed his hand upon the boy's shoulder. "Courage, Henri!" he said, and hastily walked on.

Tears rose to my eyes, but how or why I can scarcely tell, unless it be indeed that grief is contagious, and that the angel who hovers over those who mourn cannot bear to see a heart indifferent: yes, tears started to my eyes, and pity with them. The features of the two peasants became transformed for me: they were no longer ugly and uninteresting: how could they be so, brightened by the halo with which sympathy crowned them?

"Have you far to go, sir?" suddenly asked the old man, breaking in abruptly upon the course of my reflections.

"About a league," I answered.

He made no reply, and we walked on again in silence, the rain continuing meanwhile to pour down in torrents, and the wind lashing itself by degrees into the fury of a hurricane.

After a few minutes we reached a spot where the road branched off in two directions: my path lay to the right. The wayfarers paused as though to take the left: both looked at me.

"This is no weather for such as you, sir, to be out in," said the elder considerately, but in the shy, hesitating tone usual to the poor when addressing those whom they fancy their betters. "If you go a league more in the plight in which you are, you will be in a sad state before reaching home;" and he pointed significantly to my clothes, every stitch of which was dripping with mud and water.

"Yes, indeed," I replied, "but what is to be done?"

"Why, sir," he answered, "two hundred yards or so from this I've a cottage, and if nothing else, I can at least offer you a fire to dry yourself at."

Certainly I was in good need of a shelter, for I was tired as well as cold and wet, but still I am sure that I should have refused this invitation from the fear that it had been made out of mere courtesy, and that my acceptance of it might, in fact, be unwelcome. A few words spoken by the younger man convinced me, however, of the contrary.

"Yes, sir," said he, "come;" and he added in a low voice to the other, "it will do mother good to have a visitor to divert her this evening. She will fret less."

"Thank you, then," I assented, moved now by a feeling of painful curiosity; and we all three marched on.

A few minutes' walk brought us in sight of a small one-storied cottage, built with flintstones, and standing isolated near a tilled field of about two acres: before it stood a small kitchen-garden, and at one end of it an open shed half filled with firewood. A thin wreath of blue smoke curling through its single chimney gave to the house, thanks to the desolate appearance of all the country around, an attractive look which on a finer day it might not have possessed.

"That's my home," exclaimed the old man, but as we approached it I noticed that both he and Henri slackened their pace and seemed to dread advancing: at last both stopped and

began to whisper. They were evidently much moved, and the fear that I might be in their way occurring to me again, I told them of it, and expressed a hope that I was not intruding.

"No, no, sir," cried they together, turning their poor sorrow-thinned faces toward me, as though they had interpreted my words as a reproach. "No, no, sir, we are very glad to see you;" and they led the way to their cottage door. Here, however, they paused again, and looked dismally at me. Their emotion, too long pent up, was mastering them. "The fact is, sir," said the old man, trying, but in vain, to smile as he saw my eyes fixed upon him —"The fact is, sir, we have not been quite hap—py, not quite hap—py, to—day—sir;" and he looked at me apologetically, as though his grief had been a fault to him, whilst two big tears, for a time kept in by an effort, rolled stealthily down his cheeks.

I am but a poor comforter even at the best of moments, but in this instance, not knowing upon what chord to touch, my speaking could be of very little avail; nevertheless, I hazarded a few consolatory words, such as we always have at hand to exhort sufferers to bear their ills with patience and look beyond the cloud surrounding them to hopes of better things; but I am afraid all I said was very meaningless, for the affliction of which I had been the witness, without knowing its cause, having in a manner impregnated my own heart, I was too much in need of comfort myself to be able to impart any to others. The two men thanked me, however, artlessly, naïvely, and seemed about to initiate me into the secret of their distress, when the cottage

door by which we were standing opened, and a woman with an anxious, inquiring expression on her face came out to meet us. She was old, being perhaps fifty-five years of age, but Time had dealt less harshly with her features than Grief, and the wrinkles which furrowed her cheeks and contracted her forehead into thin, shriveled folds showed less the footprints of departed seasons than the marks of that hard iron hand of Sorrow whose least touches sear more surely than fire. Her hair was white as spun-glass, and neatly confined under one of those high Norman caps of which the long starched frills, encircling the face, lend a cold, severe expression to the wearer: her gait was stooping, her steps feeble, and her whole appearance denoted lassitude and weakness. She was, as I guessed, the wife of the elder and the mother of the younger of my companions; and the glance she threw at these when she saw them told as plainly as the language of a wife's and mother's eyes can tell what a large and willing share she claimed of all their trials. As she appeared her husband hastily turned his face from her to dry his tears and to assume with a loving, simple hypocrisy a cheerful countenance, with which he fondly hoped to hide the trouble of his heart. "Madeleine," he said in a voice which, poor man! he meant to be gay—"Madeleine, I bring you a stranger very cold, very wet, and, I've no doubt, very hungry. You must try to—" but here he stopped short: his wife's eyes were fixed upon him with a look of quiet reproach.

"François," she asked in a low, slightly tremulous tone, "you

have some news to give me?" and at the same time she glanced from him to her son. A moment's silence followed. Henri and his father exchanged a timid look, but before either had spoken the wife had thrown herself into her husband's arms: what need had she of an answer—she, who for years had been used to read every thought, every wish, every feeling of those she loved, long ere they gave expression to them?

I shall never forget that scene—father, mother and son clasped in each other's embrace, and giving free course to their grief in tears of which each tried to stop the flow from the other's eyes, forgetful of the bitter stream which ran from his own; each striving to find in his heart a word of comfort for the other, and each seeking in vain a like word for himself.

"We must hope," faltered the old man.

"Yes, mother," echoed Henri, "we must hope."

"Ay, my poor boy," said Madeleine, "hope, hope!—in God!" and she pointed upward.

This was the story of the poor family: François Derblay was a peasant, born and brought up in Picardy, and the son of poor parents, who, at dying, had left him little to add to what Nature had given him—a pair of strong arms and a sound, honest mind. With this fortune François had begun early to till the fields, and by the age of twenty-five had laid by a little store sufficient to marry on. His choice had been happy, and Madeleine, although poor and untaught, had been a good and loving wife to him. By her thrift and his own hard work his little store quickly increased,

and within a few years Derblay reached the goal to which all poor Frenchmen so ardently aspire—the position of a landowner. He had bought himself a few acres of ground, and their produce was sufficient not only to feed his family, but also to enable him to lay by each year a little sum wherewith to enlarge his property. For some time, prosperous in all his undertakings, François was really happy, and at the age of forty could reasonably look forward to passing a quiet, comfortable old age; but, as so often occurs in life, at the very moment when the man deemed himself most secure in his ease, misfortunes began to rain upon him. Dazzled by the accounts of some successful ventures made by neighbors, Derblay began to dream of doubling his capital by speculation, and accordingly invested the two or three thousand francs of his savings in shares which were to bring him fifteen per cent., but which ultimately left him without a sixpence. To make matters worse, his land was bought by a railway company, and this sale, by placing in his hands a round sum of ready money, prompted him with the delusive hope of regaining his losses: he speculated again, and this time as unhappily as the first, swamping all his funds in some worthless enterprise, which on the strength of its prospectus he had believed "safe as the Bank of France." To fill the cup of his sorrows to the brim, four of his five children were carried off by illness, the only one spared being Henri, the youngest. At forty-eight, François and his wife, but five years younger than himself, were thus obliged to begin life again, poorer than at first, for they had no longer youth,

as when they married. They were not disheartened, however: they had their boy to live for, and set to work so bravely that after ten years' struggle they found themselves owners of the cottage and field I have described. Still, they were not happy, for a painful anticipation was constantly dwelling on their minds and souring every moment of their existence. Henri, their only boy, had reached his twentieth year, and the time had come when he must "draw for the conscription;" that is, stake upon the chances of a lottery-ticket the seven best years of his own life and all the happiness of theirs. This thought it was which, like a heavy storm-cloud, was day and night hanging over their peace, and throwing them into a tremor of doubt and sickening anxiety that made them watch the flight of each hour which brought them nearer to the minute they dreaded with aching, panting hearts. How *should* they bear it, how *could* they bear it, if their loved boy, their one child, upon whom all their affections and all their hopes were centred, was enrolled and taken rudely from them against his will, as against theirs, to be a soldier? How could they support this cruel bereavement at an age when, life having lost all its sweets for them, they lived but in the happiness and in the presence of their boy, and, like weak plants drooping toward the earth, were kept from falling only by the young and vigorous prop beside them?

Had it come to this, that after all the projects, all the vows, all the prayers, all the charming aspirations made for the one hope of their declining years, the simple hazard of a figured paper was

to be called upon to realize the dreams of their lives or to blast all their cherished schemes in a moment? to decide whether they should be happy or eternally afflicted, or, in short, whether they should continue to live or hasten quickly to their graves; for a seven years' separation would be an eternity to them, and how could they expect to drag themselves through it?

They were sad moments, those in which the parents asked themselves these questions, looking woefully before them, and neglecting the happiness they might enjoy in the present to mourn over its possible loss in the future; counting the hours as they raced by, and turning pale at the risks their son was to face, as though his hand were already in the urn and his fingers grasping the little ticket upon which was inscribed his destiny.

Ah, how often had they seen it in their dreams, that dreadful mahogany cylinder turning lazily upon its pivot and rolling in its womb, along with that of a hundred others, the fate of all that was dear to them on earth! How often, too, had their poor brains, racked and fired by doubt, fear and anguish, followed their child as he stood beside it, and grown dizzy as they watched him plunge his hand through its lid and tear open the little white slip which might be his sentence of slavery, his order of exile, or—O God! who knows?—his death-warrant!

One night the father and mother had started up in their sleep together: they had dreamt that all was over: giddy with terror, they had rushed into Henri's room. Thank Heaven! he was still there, and asleep: they knelt by his bed and wept.

"Mother," he said on awaking, "I've been dreaming that they had taken me."

Another night Madeleine saw herself in a field somewhere. All around and before her were soldiers; by them stood lines of cannon; here and there were horses, and by the light of a few bivouac-fires she perceived some bleeding heaps of dead. Of a sudden she stumbled: a corpse was barring her way. She stooped over it: it was her boy!

Once again she fancied herself seated by her cottage door: the sun was setting, and down the small road which led to the house galloped an orderly, a dragoon, covered with dust. "Are you Madeleine Derblay?" he asked.—"Yes."—He drew from his sack a letter sealed with black. "Madame," he said, "your son has died for his country, but he has gained this on the field of battle;" and he handed her the cross of the Legion of Honor. "Give me back my child!" she had shrieked: "take away your reward! Give me back my child! I won't sell him for that cross."

And Henri the while? His heart was as heavy as that of his parents, for he well knew that the day which doomed him to a seven years' absence would also condemn him to orphanhood. His father and mother were too aged by sorrow to be able to abide his return: they would soon die; and if not, who would be there to tend them, to earn them bread, to find them the comforts which their old arms were unfit to earn by themselves? These reflections were terrible; and besides, to make his pain more torturing, he was in love. A young girl of his own age had

been destined for him by his parents and by hers, and she was to become his wife at once if—if—and ever uppermost to cloud all his prospects came that fatal *if*—if he should draw a lucky number at the conscription. But what if he should not? How could he ask her to wait for him seven years? or how, indeed, could he expect that her friends would allow her to do so? They were poor people, as he knew, and it was but natural that they should wish to see their daughter speedily settled. This thought filled the unhappy boy with despair; and as the twentieth of February, the day appointed for the conscription, approached, he was almost beside himself with anxiety. For a long while his father and his mother, trusting to their arms and their economy, had lived in the hope of being able to buy him off. Two thousand three hundred francs were needed to do this, and neither hard work, self-denial nor thrift had been spared to collect the money; but it was a large sum, and notwithstanding all the hard toil of father and son, and all the frugality of the mother, they had not been able in five years' time to collect more than two-thirds of it. An accident had then happened to them: Madeleine, whose love, deep and boundless as Heaven, had pushed her to pinch and stint herself almost to starvation in order to save, had fallen ill under her efforts, and her life had only been saved after a three months' combat with death, during which doctor's fees, medicines and little comforts had swallowed up five hundred francs of what had been laid by. At the beginning of February there were, therefore, nearly fourteen hundred francs wanting to make up the amount

needed.

In this emergency, François Derblay had thought of a person to whom he had once rendered a service of importance—a tradesman who lived in a neighboring town, who was known to be rich, and who had promised his benefactor in the first flush of his gratitude that if ever he could discharge the obligation under which he lay, he would do so at any cost and with the sincerest joy. Poor, guileless Derblay! measuring the words of others by the same simple and honest standard of truth by which he was used to mete his own sayings and promises, he innocently believed in the sterling worth of his debtor's assurance, and starting off to visit him with his son, naïvely asked the man to lend him the fourteen hundred francs he so much needed. Of course the worthy shopkeeper would have been, as he said, delighted to do so: day and night had he thought of his dear friend, and prayed Providence to send him an occasion of showing his gratitude. But why, alas! had not François come but half an hour before? He should then have had the sum, and double, treble the sum, had he pleased; whereas now—and dear! dear! what an unfortunate thing it was!—now it was completely out of his power to comply with the request, for he had just paid in to a creditor five thousand francs, "the last money he had or should have for some months." The good soul was grieved beyond expression, wept, and affectionately showed his visitors to the door.

It was on their return from this bootless errand the day

previous to the drawing of the conscription that I had fallen in with the two peasants. They had cast their last die but one, and unsuccessfully: a single chance yet remained—that of drawing a lucky ticket—but on this they dared not even hope. Their match against Fortune they considered already lost, and told me so.

"No, no," I exclaimed in as cheering a tone as possible, "you must not despair, Monsieur Derblay: your son has as good a chance of drawing happily as any one else."

"Ay," answered the old man, "but few have a good chance at all this year;" and he then explained that owing to the Mexican expedition, there was a greater demand for soldiers than usual, and also that, by a strange fatality, the number of young men of age to draw—that is, of twenty—was smaller that year than usual. Some one hundred and ten only were to be chosen from, and of these about eighty would be conscripts.

"Well, well," I cried, "there will still be thirty winning numbers."

Henri shook his head: "We cannot count so many as that, sir, for of the eighty taken twenty at least will claim exemption on the ground of infirmities, as being only sons of widows, or as having elder brothers already in the service. The government will thus be obliged to press twenty more, and this will bring the number of losing figures up to one hundred."

"The odds are ten to one against him," sadly muttered the father, drawing from his pocket a paper covered with figures. "We have it all written down here: I've calculated it;" and for

perhaps the thousandth time the old man recommenced his dismal arithmetic.

At this moment we heard a knock at the door of the cottage, where we were all four seated round the fire. "It is Louise, poor girl!" cried Madeleine, rising: "she told me she would come;" and she opened the door to give admittance to two women. The first was a tall, neatly-dressed, middle-aged woman: the second, her daughter, was a young, slight, fair-haired girl of twenty. She was not pretty, but her features wore a look of honesty and candor which gave a bright and pleasing expression to her face, and one could see at a glance that although poor and possibly untaught, that part of her education had not been neglected which was to render her a good and virtuous woman. I was not long in finding out that she was the betrothed of Henri Derblay, and I could not wonder that the poor lad should grieve at the prospect of losing her.

Casting her eyes timidly around for her lover, she blushed as she entered upon seeing a stranger, and passing by me with a little curtsey went to greet François and his wife.

"God bless you, dear child!" cried Madeleine, caressing her: "we are in sad need of your bright, sunny face to cheer us;" and she led the young girl toward Henri, who, leaning against the chimney, was affecting a composure strangely at variance with the trembling of his limbs and the violent quivering of his upper lip.

Louise walked up to him, and seeming to forget my presence

innocently held up her forehead for him to kiss. "Tu as du chagrin, mon pauvre ami?" she said in tones of exquisite delicacy and tenderness, and took one of his hands in hers.

A few minutes after I rose to take my leave: François accompanied me to the door. "I think, sir," he said hesitatingly, "you might perhaps bring good-luck to our poor boy by going to-morrow to see the conscription. Would you do us the favor of joining us? We shall all be at St. Valéry."

"Certainly," I replied, shaking his hand, and starting off with my heart so full that the league's walk from the cottage to my lodgings filled up one of the saddest hours I have ever spent.

I passed a dull night: how indeed could I do otherwise? And I am sure that I never so sincerely lamented the want of wealth as upon that occasion, when a thousand francs might have given me the joy of making four people happy.

The next day, the twentieth of February, dawned brightly—so brightly indeed that I began to draw from the smiling appearance of the heavens a good augury for the luck of Henri Derblay. It was about eight when I set out. The conscription was to begin at nine, but already the one straggling, narrow street which bisects the old bathing-town was filled with country-people hastening in groups or singly toward the market-place, where the town-hall was situated. The scene presented here was of a most animated kind. The market had some time since begun, and in and out amongst the stalls of the sellers moved a crowd of people of all trades, of all ranks and of all appearances. Fishermen, tradesmen, peasants,

soldiers—knots of all these were there, some from curiosity or to accompany a friend or relation to the urn; some laughing, some shouting, some drinking, some dancing in a boisterous round to the music of a barrel-organ; some bawling a popular song in a gay, ever-repeated chorus; some raffling for nuts and biscuits at smartly-decked fair-booths, or playing at Chinese billiards for painted mugs or huge cakes of gilt gingerbread; some listening to the stump orations of an extempore fortuneteller, who promised the bâton of the field-marshal to any conscript who would give him a penny; and some buying by yards the patriotic, soul-stirring songs of Béranger, and reciting them in every tone, in every key and to every tune. One of these songsters was a young soldier, a lancer, with a bright intelligent look: he was standing outside a cabaret with several companions, and trolling in a rich, clear voice a melody which seemed thoroughly to spring from his heart. His eye alternately sparkled or dimmed as his words were animated or affecting, and the expression he breathed into his notes was full of feeling and admirably suited to all he sang. The last stanza of his ballad was especially well given, and it seemed so entirely the interpretation of his sentiments that I am sure more than one person in the crowd must have thought that the young soldier was repeating a composition of his own. This was the final strophe:

> Ah, depuis si longtemps je prolonge mon rêve,
> La route est commencée, il faut que je l'achève;

Il est trop tard pour m'arrêter.
Que la gloire m'oublie, ou qu'elle me couronne,
Quel que soit mon destin, à lui je m'abandonne,
J'ai besoin de chanter.

I am not sure whether these verses are by Béranger or not, but they certainly deserve to be.

As the song ended, the market-place was being rapidly filled by streams of people who came pouring into it from all directions. The crowd was now mostly composed of country-people, all dressed in holiday garments, but in appearance, nevertheless, for the greater part at least, the very reverse of happy. In almost every case the families of peasants as they arrived walked into the church, of which the doors were wide open to invite the faithful to mass, and from which flowed occasionally into the tumult of the crowd without, like a little brook of pure water into a bubbling, surging lake, a few waves of gentle, calm religious music. Each one of the poor people who entered to pray went up, as I noticed, to the charity-box and dropped in a mite, in the hope, no doubt, that this good action might buy fair fortune for a son or brother about to "draw." I also remarked that it was toward the chapel of the Virgin that most of the suppliants bent their steps, and more than one mother and sister, moved by a naïve faith which one can only respect, carried with them large nosegays of winter flowers to lay at the feet of the Holy Mother's image.

As I left the church and stood looking at a poor ploughboy

who, pale with apprehension, was endeavoring to give to himself a look of unconcern by smoking a big cigar in company with some soldiers, who were laughing at him for his pains, a hand touched my arm, and upon turning round I saw François Derblay with his wife and Henri and Louise. A year's illness could not have aged them more than the night they had just spent: they all seemed completely worn out, and when the old man tried to speak his voice was so hollow and harsh that it frightened me. "Look at Louise, sir," he said at last, slowly shaking his white head: "she and Madeleine there have been sitting up all night praying to God."

"'Cast thy bread upon the waters,'" I answered, "'and thou shalt find it after many days.'"

"Yes, sir," said Louise: "our curate tells us that prayers are like letters—when properly stamped with faith they always reach their address."

"Ay," exclaimed Henri, "but does God always answer them?"

François drew a mass-book from his pocket and finding the Lord's Prayer, "Look," he said as he pointed to the words, *Fiat voluntas tua in terra ut in coelo.*

A few minutes after the church-clock struck nine, and by a common impulse all the population of the market-place hurried simultaneously toward the town-hall. The door and ground-floor windows of this building opened at the same time, and we could see the mayor of St. Valéry, with the commissioner of police and a captain of infantry in full uniform, seated at a table upon

which stood a cylindrical box horizontally between two pivots. This was the urn. Two gendarmes, one upon each side, stood watching over it with their arms folded. A man came to the window and shouted something which I could not catch, and at the same moment half a dozen mayors of districts, girt with their tri-color sashes, ran up the steps of the Hôtel de Ville to draw for the order in which their respective communes were to present themselves. This formality occupied five minutes, and the mayors then came out again to marshal their people into separate groups. The district in which the Derblays lived was to go up third, and as he came to tell us this the mayor of N– patted François on the back and told him that *three* was an odd number and therefore lucky. Poor Madeleine was so weak that she could hardly stand up: Louise and I were obliged to support her.

At half-past nine, punctually, the conscription began, and amidst a breathless silence one of the mayor's assistants came to the window and called out the first name: "Adolphe Monnier, of the commune of S–;" and a tall country-boy, elbowing his way through the crowd, walked up into the town-hall. The commissioner of police gave the round box a touch, and as it turned round some six or seven times one might almost have heard a raindrop fall. "Now," said he laughing, "good luck to you!" and the peasant, plunging his hand into the trap of the box, drew out a little piece of card-board rolled into a curl. "No. 17," shouted the infantry captain, taking it from his hands and reading it, whilst a loud roar of laughter from the mob hailed the dismal

face with which the unhappy lad heard of his ill-success.

"Oh, what a head for a soldier!" cried some wag in the crowd. "Yes," screamed another, "he'll make the Russians run." "Have you chosen your regiment yet?" barked a third. "Why, of course!" yelped a fourth: "he is to be fife-player in the second battalion of the pope's horse-beadles."

And amid a shower of jokes equally witty No. 17 came down, and a second name was called. After him came a third, and then a fourth, and so on, all equally unlucky; and no wonder, since all the numbers up to one hundred were losing ones. There were great differences in the way in which the youths bore their discomfiture: some went up crying to the urn and trembled as in an ague whilst it was rolling round; three stamped and sobbed like children when they had lost, and the crowd, ever charitable in its doings, threw about their ears by way of comfort a volley of epigrams which pricked them like so many wasps; others, on the contrary, went up laughing, and upon drawing a bad number stuck the card in their hats and came down bandying jokes with the mob as unconcernedly as though they had been only taking a pinch of snuff instead of selling seven long years of their lives. Others, again, trying to imitate the latter, but in reality too miserable to do so with ease, only succeeded in making themselves ridiculous, drawing upon themselves an extra amount of squibs from the spectators; upon which, like young steers worried by mosquitoes, they would begin distributing kicks and blows right and left with most liberal profusion, to the no small

disgust of the mayor and the immense amusement of the infantry captain, who laughed like an ox in a clover-field.

At last a boy went up and drew the number 109: frantic cheers greeted this check to fortune, and the lucky fellow rushed down with such wild demonstrations of joy that it would have been no great folly to have mistaken him for a criminal just reprieved.

A few minutes after the commune of Henri Derblay was called up. Henri himself was sixth on the roll. His father's face had become livid; his mother hung so heavily on my arm that I fancied at one moment she had fainted; Louise was as white as a sheet, and her lips, bloodless and cold, looked blue and frozen as ice.

"Courage, Henri!" I said: "more than forty have drawn, and but one winning number has come out yet: you will have at least nine good chances."

"Henri Derblay, of the commune of N–," cried an official, and we all started as though a gun had been fired. The moment had come: a minute more and the doubt would become certainty.

"Courage, mother!" whispered the boy, stooping over Madeleine and repeating in a faltering tone the words I had just spoken to him.

The poor woman was speechless: she tried to smile, but her face twitched as though in a convulsion. "My child—" she whispered, and stopped short.

"Henri Derblay!" cried the voice again, and the crowd around repeated the cry: "Be quick, Derblay, they are waiting for you."

The boy drew his sleeve across his eyes and tottered up to the steps of the hall. Louise fell down on her knees; François and his wife did the same; for myself, my temples throbbed as in fever, my hands were dry as wood, and my eyes, fixed on the conscription-urn, seemed starting out of their sockets.

Henri walked up to the box.

"Allons, mon garçon," said the mayor, "un peu d'aplomb;" and he opened the lid. Derblay thrust in his hand: his face was turned toward us, and I could see him draw out his ticket and give it to the captain: a moment's deep silence.

"No. 3!" roared the officer; and a howl of derision from the mob covered his words. Henri had become a soldier.

I could not well see what then followed: there was a sudden hush, a chorus of exclamations, a rush toward the steps of the town-hall, and then the crowd fell back to make way for two gendarmes who were carrying a body between them.

"Is he dead?" asked a number of voices.

"Oh no," tittered the two men—"only fainted: he'll soon come round again." And the mob burst into a laugh.

E.C. GRENVILLE MURRAY.

THE SYMPHONY

"O Trade! O Trade! would thou wert dead!
The age needs heart—'tis tired of head.
We're all for love," the violins said.
"Of what avail the rigorous tale
Of coin for coin and box for bale?
Grant thee, O Trade! thine uttermost hope,
Level red gold with blue sky-slope,
And base it deep as devils grope,
When all's done what hast thou won
Of the only sweet that's under the sun?
Ay, canst thou buy a single sigh
Of true love's least, least ecstasy?"

Then all the mightier strings, assembling,
Fell a-trembling, with a trembling
Bridegroom's heart-beats quick resembling;
Ranged them on the violin's side
Like a bridegroom by his bride,
And, heart in voice, together cried:
"Yea, what avail the endless tale
Of gain by cunning and plus by sale?
Look up the land, look down the land—
The poor, the poor, the poor, they stand
Wedged by the pressing of Trade's hand

Against an inward-opening door
That pressure tightens ever more:
They sigh, with a monstrous foul-air sigh,
For the outside heaven of liberty,
Where Art, sweet lark, translates the sky
Into a heavenly melody.
'Each day, all day' (these poor folks say),
'In the same old year-long, drear-long way,
We weave in the mills and heave in the kilns,
We sieve mine-meshes under the hills,
And thieve much gold from the Devil's bank tills,
To relieve, O God, what manner of ills?—
Such manner of ills as brute-flesh thrills.
The beasts, they hunger, eat, sleep, die,
And so do we, and our world's a sty;
And, fellow-swine, why nuzzle and cry?
Swinehood hath never a remedy,
The rich man says, and passes by,
And clamps his nostril and shuts his eye.
Did God say once in God's sweet tone,
Man shall not live by bread alone,
But by all that cometh from His white throne?
Yea: God said so,
But the mills say No,
And the kilns and the strong bank-tills say *No:*
There's plenty that can, if you can't. Go to:
Move out, if you think you're underpaid.
The poor are prolific; we re not afraid;
Business is business; a trade is a trade,

Over and over the mills have said.'"

And then these passionate hot protestings
Changed to less vehement moods, until
They sank to sad suggestings
And requestings sadder still:
"And oh, if the world might some time see
'Tis not a law of necessity
That a trade just naught but a trade must be!
Does business mean, *Die, you—live, I?*
Then 'business is business' phrases a lie:
'Tis only war grown miserly.
If Traffic is battle, name it so:
War-crimes less will shame it so,
And we victims less will blame it so.
But oh, for the poor to have some part
In the sweeter half of life called Art,
Is not a problem of head, but of heart.
Vainly might Plato's head revolve it:
Plainly the heart of a child could solve it."

And then, as when our words seem all too rude
We cease from speech, to take our thought and brood
Back in our heart's great dark and solitude,
So sank the strings to heartwise throbbing,
Of long chords change-marked with sobbing—
Motherly sobbing, not distinctlier heard
Than half wing-openings of the sleeping bird,
Some dream of danger to her young hath stirred.

Then stirring and demurring ceased, and lo!
Every least ripple of the strings' song flow
Died to a level with each level bow,
And made a great chord tranquil-surfaced so
As a brook beneath his curving bank doth go
To linger in the sacred dark and green
Where many boughs the still pool overlean,
And many leaves make shadow with their sheen.
But presently
A velvet flute-note fell down pleasantly
Upon the bosom of that harmony,
And sailed and sailed incessantly,
As if a petal from a wild-rose blown
Had fluttered down upon that pool of tone,
And boatwise dropped o' the convex side
And floated down the glassy tide,
And clarified and glorified
The solemn spaces where the shadows bide.

From the velvet convex of that fluted note
Somewhat, half song, half odor, forth did float—
As if God turned a rose into a throat—
"When Nature from her far-off glen
Flutes her soft messages to men,
The flute can say them o'er again;
Yea, Nature, singing sweet and lone,
Breathes through life's strident polyphone
The flute-voice in the world of tone.

Sweet friends,
Man's love ascends
To finer and diviner ends
Than man's mere thought e'er comprehends.
For I, e'en I,
As here I lie,
A petal on a harmony,
Demand of Science whence and why
Man's tender pain, man's inward cry,
When he doth gaze on earth and sky?
Behold, I grow more bold:
I hold
Full powers from Nature manifold.
I speak for each no-tonguèd tree
That, spring by spring, doth nobler be,
And dumbly and most wistfully
His mighty prayerful arms outspreads
Above men's oft-unheeding heads,
And his big blessing downward sheds.
I speak for all-shaped blooms and leaves,
Lichens on stones and moss on eaves,
Grasses and grains in ranks and sheaves;
Broad-fronded ferns and keen-leaved canes,
And briery mazes bounding lanes,
And marsh-plants, thirsty-cupped for rains,
And milky stems and sugary veins;
For every long-armed woman-vine
That round a piteous tree doth twine;
For passionate odors, and divine

Pistils, and petals crystalline;
All purities of shady springs,
All shynesses of film-winged things
That fly from tree-trunks and bark-rings;
All modesties of mountain-fawns
That leap to covert from wild lawns,
And tremble if the day but dawns;
All sparklings of small beady eyes
Of birds, and sidelong glances wise
Wherewith the jay hints tragedies;
All piquancies of prickly burs,
And smoothnesses of downs and furs
Of eiders and of minevers;
All limpid honeys that do lie
At stamen-bases, nor deny
The humming-birds' fine roguery,
Bee-thighs, nor any butterfly;
All gracious curves of slender wings,
Bark-mottlings, fibre-spiralings,
Fern-wavings and leaf-flickerings;
Each dial-marked leaf and flower-bell
Wherewith in every lonesome dell
Time to himself his hours doth tell;
All tree-sounds, rustlings of pine-cones,
Wind-sighings, doves' melodious moans,
And night's unearthly undertones;
All placid lakes and waveless deeps,
All cool reposing mountain-steeps,
Vale-calms and tranquil lotos-sleeps;

Yea, all fair forms, and sounds, and lights,
And warmths, and mysteries, and mights,
Of Nature's utmost depths and heights,—
—These doth my timid tongue present,
Their mouthpiece and lead instrument
And servant, all love-eloquent.
I heard, when '*All for love*' the violins cried:
Nature through me doth take their human side.
That soul is like a groom without a bride
That ne'er by Nature in great love hath sighed.
Much time is run, and man hath changed his ways,
Since Nature, in the antique fable-days,
Was hid from man's true love by proxy fays,
False fauns and rascal gods that stole her praise.
The nymphs, cold creatures of man's colder brain,
Chilled Nature's streams till man's warm heart was fain
Never to lave its love in them again.
Later, a sweet Voice *Love thy neighbor* said;
Then first the bounds of neighborhood outspread
Beyond all confines of old ethnic dread.
Vainly the Jew might wag his covenant head:
'*All men are neighbors*,' so the sweet Voice said.
So, when man's arms had measure as man's race,
The liberal compass of his warm embrace
Stretched bigger yet in the dark bounds of space;
With hands a-grope he felt smooth Nature's grace,
Drew her to breast and kissed her sweetheart face:
His heart found neighbors in great hills and trees
And streams and clouds and suns and birds and bees,

And throbbed with neighbor-loves in loving these.
But oh, the poor! the poor! the poor!
That stand by the inward-opening door
Trade's hand doth tighten ever more,
And sigh with a monstrous foul-air sigh
For the outside heaven of liberty,
Where Nature spreads her wild blue sky
For Art to make into melody!
Thou Trade! thou king of the modern days!
Change thy ways,
Change thy ways;
Let the sweaty laborers file
A little while,
A little while,
Where Art and Nature sing and smile.
Trade! is thy heart all dead, all dead?
And hast thou nothing but a head?
I'm all for heart," the flute-voice said,
And into sudden silence fled,
Like as a blush that while 'tis red
Dies to a still, still white instead.

Thereto a thrilling calm succeeds,
Till presently the silence breeds
A little breeze among the reeds
That seems to blow by sea-marsh weeds:
Then from the gentle stir and fret
Sings out the melting clarionet,
Like as a lady sings while yet

Her eyes with salty tears are wet.
"O Trade! O Trade!" the Lady said,
"I too will wish thee utterly dead
If all thy heart is in thy head.
For O my God! and O my God!
What shameful ways have women trod
At beckoning of Trade's golden rod!
Alas when sighs are traders' lies,
And heart's-ease eyes and violet eyes
Are merchandise!
O purchased lips that kiss with pain!
O cheeks coin-spotted with smirch and stain!
O trafficked hearts that break in twain!
—And yet what wonder at my sisters' crime?
So hath Trade withered up Love's sinewy prime,
Men love not women as in olden time.
Ah, not in these cold merchantable days
Deem men their life an opal gray, where plays
The one red sweet of gracious ladies' praise.
Now comes a suitor with sharp prying eye—
Says, *Here, you Lady, if you'll sell, I'll buy:*
Come, heart for heart—a trade? What! weeping? why?
Shame on such wooers' dapper mercery!
I would my lover kneeling at my feet
In humble manliness should cry, *O sweet!*
I know not if thy heart my heart will meet:
I ask not if thy love my love can greet:
Whatever thy worshipful soft tongue shall say,
I'll kiss thine answer, be it yea or nay:

I do but know I love thee, and I pray
To be thy knight until my dying day.
Woe him that cunning trades in hearts contrives!
Base love good women to base loving drives.
If men loved larger, larger were our lives;
And wooed they nobler, won they nobler wives."

There thrust the bold straightforward horn
To battle for that lady lorn;
With heartsome voice of mellow scorn,
Like any knight in knighthood's morn.
"Now comfort thee," said he,
"Fair Ladye.
Soon shall God right thy grievous wrong,
Soon shall man sing thee a true-love song,
Voiced in act his whole life long,
Yea, all thy sweet life long,
Fair Ladye.
Where's he that craftily hath said
The day of chivalry is dead?
I'll prove that lie upon his head,
Or I will die instead,
Fair Ladye.
Is Honor gone into his grave?
Hath Faith become a caitiff knave,
And Selfhood turned into a slave
To work in Mammon's cave,
Fair Ladye?
Will Truth's long blade ne'er gleam again?

Hath Giant Trade in dungeons slain
All great contempts of mean-got gain
And hates of inward stain,
Fair Ladye?
For aye shall Name and Fame be sold,
And Place be hugged for the sake of gold,
And smirch-robed Justice feebly scold
At Crime all money-bold,
Fair Ladye?
Shall self-wrapt husbands aye forget
Kiss-pardons for the daily fret
Wherewith sweet wifely eyes are wet—
Blind to lips kiss-wise set—
Fair Ladye?
Shall lovers higgle, heart for heart,
Till wooing grows a trading mart
Where much for little, and all for part,
Make love a cheapening art,
Fair Ladye?
Shall woman scorch for a single sin
That her betrayer can revel in,
And she be burnt, and he but grin
When that the flames begin,
Fair Ladye?
Shall ne'er prevail the woman's plea,
We maids would far, far whiter be
If that our eyes might sometimes see
Men maids in purity,
Fair Ladye?

Shall Trade aye salve his conscience-aches
With jibes at Chivalry's old mistakes,
The wars that o'erhot knighthood makes
For Christ's and ladies' sakes,
Fair Ladye?
Now by each knight that e'er hath prayed
To fight like a man and love like a maid,
Since Pembroke's life, as Pembroke's blade,
I' the scabbard, death, was laid,
Fair Ladye.
I dare avouch my faith is bright
That God doth right and God hath might,
Nor time hath changed His hair to white,
Nor His dear love to spite,
Fair Ladye.
I doubt no doubts: I strive, and shrive my clay,
And fight my fight in the patient modern way
For true love and for thee—ah me! and pray
To be thy knight until my dying day,
Fair Ladye,"
Said that knightly horn, and spurred away
Into the thick of the melodious fray.

And then the hautboy played and smiled,
And sang like a little large-eyed child,
Cool-hearted and all undefiled.
"Huge Trade!" he said,
"Would thou wouldst lift me on thy head,
And run where'er my finger led!

Once said a Man—and wise was He—
Never shalt thou the heavens see,
Save as a little child thou be."

Then o'er sea-lashings of commingling tunes
The ancient wise bassoons,
Like weird
Gray-beard
Old harpers sitting on the wild sea-dunes,
Chanted runes:
"Bright-waved gain, gray-waved loss,
The sea of all doth lash and toss,
One wave forward and one across.
But now 'twas trough, now 'tis crest,
And worst doth foam and flash to best,
And curst to blest.

"Life! Life! thou sea-fugue, writ from east to west,
Love, Love alone can pore
On thy dissolving score
Of wild half-phrasings,
Blotted ere writ,
And double erasings.
Of tunes full fit.
Yea, Love, sole music-master blest,
May read thy weltering palimpsest.
To follow Time's dying melodies through,
And never to lose the old in the new,
And ever to solve the discords true—

Love alone can do.
And ever Love hears the poor-folks' crying,
And ever Love hears the women's sighing,
And ever sweet knighthood's death-defying,
And ever wise childhood's deep implying,
And never a trader's glozing and lying.

"And yet shall Love himself be heard,
Though long deferred, though long deferred:
O'er the modern waste a dove hath whirred:
Music is Love in search of a Word."

SIDNEY LANIER.

THE BLOUSARD IN HIS HOURS OF EASE

Bulwer in his last novel said something to the effect that an orang-outang would receive a degree of polish and refinement by ten years of life in Paris. This statement is not to be taken literally, of course: I have detected no special polish of manners in the monkeys confined at the Jardin d'Acclimatation in Paris, some of whom are pretty well on in years. The novelist only sought to make a strong expression of his good opinion of French manners, no doubt. In observing the blouse wearers of Paris in their hours of ease and relaxation, I have been struck with the great prevalence of a certain unforced courtesy of manner, even among the coarsest. No one would dream what a howling demon this creature could and did become in the days of the Commune who should see him enjoying himself at his ball, his concert, his theatre or his dinner.

I suppose no one not in the confidence of the managers of these places would readily credit to what an extent the public masquerade-balls of Paris are the peculiar possession of the blousard. The gaping crowds of English and Americans who go to the disreputable Jardin Mabille and the like resorts in summer to gaze at what they imagine is a scene of French revelry, do not know that the cancan-dancer there is paid for his jollity.

The men who dance at the Jardin Mabille are not there for revelry's sake: they are earning a few sous from the manager, who knows that he must do something to amuse his usual spectators—viz., the tourists—who go back to Manchester or to Omaha and astonish their friends with tales of the goings-on of those dreadful Frenchmen in Paris. The women who disport in the cancan at the same place are simply hired by the season. It is not at the Jardin Mabille that the visitor to Paris need ever look to see genuine revelry: the place is as much a place of jollification for the people as the stage of a theatre is, and no more. Very often the dancer at night is a blousard by day. So at many of the masquerade-balls which rage in the winter, particularly during the weeks just preceding Mardi Gras. These are less purely tourist astonishers than the Jardin Mabille. They are largely visited by the fast young men and old beaux and roués of Paris, but these are almost never seen to go upon the floor and dance. In the crowded ball-room of the Valentino on a masquerade-night you may have observed with wondering awe the gyrations of an extraordinary couple around whom a ring has been formed, giving them free space on the floor for their wild abandon of exercise. The man is long, lank and grotesque; he wears a tail coat which reaches the floor, and upon his back is strapped a crazy guitar with broken strings; his false nose stands out from his face at prodigious length; his hat is a bottle, his gloves are buckskin gauntlets, and his trousers are those of a circus-rider. The woman does not hide her face with a mask, for her face is her fortune, and she cannot afford to hide

it: she is painted tastefully with vermilion and white; abundant false curls cluster at her neck, and are surmounted by a dainty little punchinello cap in pink silk and gilding; her dress is every color of the rainbow, and reaches to her knees; blue gaiters with pink rosettes are on her feet, and kid gloves are on her hands. The saltatory terpsichoreanisms of this couple are seemingly inspired by a mad gayety of spirit which only the utmost extravagance of gesture and pirouette will satisfy. The man flings his feet above the woman's head; the woman sinks to the floor, and springs up again as if made of tempered steel; and as a conclusion to the figure she turns a complete somersault in the air. If you are so innocent as to suppose that these performers are exerting themselves in that manner for the mere pleasure of the thing, you are innocent indeed. They are "artists," and receive a salary from the manager of the Valentino.

To innumerable blousards in Paris these dancers are objects of emulation. The Valentino supports a large troupe of such performers, and is less often the scene of the blousard's efforts, therefore, than ball-rooms where the regular corps of dancers is smaller. The matter of the admission-fee also regulates the blousard to some extent in his choice of resort. At the mask-balls he most favors—such as the Élysée-Montmartre at the Barrière Rochechouart, or the Tivoli Waux-Hall (*sic*) near the Château d'Eau—there is no charge for admission to cavaliers in costume. Tourists sometimes stumble upon these places, but not often: they are remote from the gay quarter which foreigners haunt.

The neighborhood of the Château d'Eau—an immense paved space at the junction of the Boulevards St. Martin and du Temple—is to the blousard what the neighborhood of the Madeleine is to the small shopkeeper. He does not frequent it every day: it is a scene for special visits—more expensive than the immediate quarter where he eats, drinks and sleeps, and more attractive. There is a café on the southern side of the esplanade, where, if you go on a Saturday night, you may see a curious sight. It is after midnight that the place is thronged. Descending a broad flight of steps, you turn to the right and go down another flight, entering an immense underground hall, broken up with sturdy square pillars, and brilliant with mirrors which line walls and pillars in every direction. Here are gathered a great number of men and women, sitting at the tables, drinking beer and wine, playing cards, dominoes and backgammon, and filling the air with the incessant din of conversation and the smoke of pipes and cigars. The women are generally bareheaded or in muslin caps. The men are almost without exception in blouses—some white, some black, some in the newest stages of shiny blue gingham, some faded with long wearing and frequent washing. Caps and soft hats are universal: a tall hat is nowhere to be seen—a fact which is much more significant in Paris than it would be in America, for in Paris the tall hat is almost *de rigueur* among the better classes. Girls from sixteen to twenty years of age stroll in from the street bareheaded with the cool manner of boys, quite alone and unconcerned, looking around quietly to see if there

is any one they know: in case of recognizing an acquaintance they perhaps sit down to a game or stand with hands in pockets and converse. They have not the air of *nymphes du pavé*, and are simply grisettes (working-girls), passing away their idle hours in precisely the same independent way as if they were of the opposite sex. For the price of the glass of beer which he orders when he sits down (six cents) the blousard can sit here all night, playing cards and smoking.

It is one o'clock in the morning when we leave this scene, and the place is in full blast. Crossing the Château d'Eau, we plunge into a quiet street, down which comes a flood of light from an electric lamp hung before the entrance of the Tivoli Waux-Hall. Within, the ball-room is thronged. An occasional blouse is visible, but the blousard who comes here is generally arrayed in some fancy costume, which he hires for the night for a trifling sum or has devised in his leisure moments from odds and ends gathered in an old-clo' market. There is a group of four now prancing in a quadrille, who are blousards enjoying at once their hours of ease and of triumph. Emulous of the "artists" of grander balls, they have got themselves up in the guise of American Indians, and are a sight to behold. Their faces are painted every color of the rainbow; and when I say painted I do not mean tricked out with the red and white of toilet-boxes, but daubed thickly with the kind of paint used in painting houses and signs—paint which *stays* in spite of the reeking perspiration which trickles off their cheeks. They wear

no masks, but have pasteboard noses stuck upon their faces with glue, for they are "got up" for all night, and this is the proud scene on which they win laurels. Their dance is a coarse imitation of the gyrations of the professional cancanists, and they prance and cavort with glowing enthusiasm, happy in the evident admiration of a surrounding throng of provincials, pickpockets and prostitutes.

For a more genuine scene of blousard gayety come with me to the Rue Mouffetard, where there is a ball frequented solely by the lowest and poorest class of Paris strugglers for bread, such as the ragpickers and the street-sweepers. At first thought it seems improbable that the squalid wretches who can barely earn sous enough to live on, to whom fifty cents a day are fine wages, should have a ball. But all things are possible in Paris in the way of popular amusements. In the Rue Mouffetard, then, near the Rue Pot de Fer, we read on the wall of a gloomy building a yellow advertisement which is translatable thus, literally:

GREAT HALL OF THE OLD OAK

MOUFFETARD STREET,
69, HOUSE OF LACROSSE,

All the Sundays, departing from the first January, up till Fat Tuesday

BALL OF NIGHT!

DRESS, MASK, DISGUISE

A Grand Orchestra, composed of Artists of Talent, will be conducted by G. Maurage, who will have performed a Repertory entirely new, composed of Quadrilles, Valses, Polkas, Schottisches, Varsoviennes, Mazurkas, Redowas, Lancers, etc.

ENTRANCE—On the Sundays, five cents; at ordinary times, four cents.

One commences at 8 o'clock.

Although one commences at eight o'clock on the bills, one does not commence in reality at any such unfashionable hour. If we are so innocent as to go to the ball-room before ten o'clock, we shall find only a crowd of boys and girls gathered about the entrance of the hall, waiting to see the guests arrive. Needless to say, no carriages roll up to this door. The revelers come on foot, emerging from dark alleyways, descending from garrets by creaking old staircases, filtering out one by one into the street, and making their way to the ball-room in couples or alone. To find the ball in the full tide of successful operation we should arrive about half-past ten in the evening. Entering then through a long, broad passage, midway of which we deposit five sous each with the Cerberus on guard, we pass into a hall crowded with people. The hall is not larger than that of an average country-tavern ball-room in New England: the space occupied by the dancers will accommodate perhaps fifty quadrille sets. (There are no "side couples" in the quadrilles of Paris popular balls; hence a set consists of but four persons.) This would indicate a pretty large ball-room to most minds, but the dancers here are crowded so close upon each other that they really occupy a surprisingly small space.

Up and down the two sides of the long hall are ranged coarse wooden tables, with the narrowest benches at them for use as seats that I think ever served that purpose. Sitting on a Virginia fence is the only exercise I remember that suggests the exceeding narrowness of the benches at the ragpickers' ball.

On the side of the tables nearest the wall runs a narrow alley, down which we walk in search of a seat. On the other side the tables are protected from the dancers—who might otherwise bang destructively against them, to the detriment of wine-bottles and glasses—by a stout wooden railing. Reaching the lower end of the hall, we find an unoccupied seat, and are able to survey the scene at our leisure.

The hall is lighted by no fewer than six chandeliers, with numerous burners, and between the chandeliers depend from the ceiling large glass balls, coated inside with quicksilver, which serve to reflect the light and add something of brilliancy. There are two round holes for ventilation in the ceiling: the only windows are two which are at the lower end of the hall, and look out on a gloomy courtyard surrounded by a high wall, on whose ridged top is a forbidding array of broken bottles imbedded in the mortar. On an elevated platform at one side, as high as the dancers' heads, sits the orchestra "composed of artists of talent," thirteen in number; and it is but justice to say that they make excellent music—far better than that we commonly hear at home in theatres and at dancing-assemblies. Blouses are abundant on the floor, in spite of the fact that the ball is advertised to be "dress, mask, disguise." Near us is a dusty blousard in huge wooden shoes, who dances no less vigorously with his head and arms than with his legs; and how earnestly he does bend to his work! He is one incessant teeter. While the music sounds he never flags. He spins, he whirls, he balances: he stands upon

the toes of his wooden sabots and pirouettes with clumsy ease, like one on stilts. He claps his hands smartly together, flings them wildly above his head, and pounds away with his feet as if it were his firm intention to go through into the cellar. But, though our attention is centred on him, he is by no means alone or peculiar. Around and around whirl others and others, under the gleaming chandeliers, in the clouds of tobacco smoke, dancing as vigorously, flinging their hands above their heads as wildly, as he. Here and there handsome costumes are seen, but the majority are in Cardigan jackets or blouses: many are in their shirt-sleeves. All wear their hats and caps. Women in male attire and men in women's frocks and ribbons are a favorite form of disguise: occasionally there is one of an elaborately grotesque character. The spectators, sitting at the tables or strolling down the narrow aisles, look on with applause and laughter at the boisterous scene. Occasionally one jumps upon a table and flings up his arms with a hilarious yell, but he is promptly tumbled down again. When the quadrille is over many of the dancers go on jumping and skipping, loath to have done; but the floor is promptly cleared by two men in authority, the proprietors of the place, for there is rigid discipline here.

In the interval, while the music is silent, three or four policemen armed to the teeth, with swords at their sides and glittering uniforms, saunter in an idle, unconcerned manner up and down the cleared floor, with the air of men who have no earthly use for their time, and are walking thus merely to stretch

their legs a bit. But they are keenly on the alert, these gendarmes. They cast their eyes on us where we sit with a sidelong glance which seems to say, "We see you, you two men in tall hats," for we presently find we are conspicuous in this crowd by the hats we wear. A ragamuffin Pierrot in a white nightcap is seen to touch a trousered female on the arm and look leeringly at us, and is overheard to say, "Vois donc, Delphine, those aristos there —have they hats?—quoi?" Whereupon I nod good-naturedly to them, and Delphine comes up to us with a smile. "One sees easily thou art not Parisian, little father *(p'tit père)*" she says to me. "Rest tranquil, then—thou shalt see dancing—rest tranquil." And with a flirt of her heel she bounds into the middle of the floor with her cavalier as the orchestra sounds the preliminary strain of a waltz.

It is the custom here for the orchestra to sound this preliminary note as a foretaste to the dancers of the coming piece. Then the musicians rest on their instruments while the two men in authority on the floor set up a stentorian call of "Advance, mesdames and messieurs: one is about to begin the waltz," or the polka, as the name of the coming dance may be. At this cry, through the little gates which open here and there in the wooden railing a crowd of eager clients pour upon the floor and range themselves in place. The men in authority coolly proceed to collect a tax of two sous from each couple, and then the music and the dance begin. In waltzing the dancers simply put their arms around each other's necks, and thus embracing vigorously, face to face, they spin about the room, bumping against each

other, laughing, shouting and chaffing. Waiters in white aprons dodge about among the dancers, taking orders for wine, beer and punch, and exciting our constant amazement that they do not get knocked down and trampled on. One of them approaches us and asks what we will take. Observe, he does not ask if we will take anything, for if you sit you must "consume" either drink or cigars. Your five cents paid at the door, you perceive, entitle you to neither a seat nor a dance. The constant drinking which goes on is the heaviest source of income of the establishment, after all. Yet nobody is drunk. In New York a like amount of guzzling would have put half the men under the table by this time. It is a popular notion that Frenchmen *never* get drunk, but this exaggerates the truth. One sees almost as much drunkenness among the lower classes in Paris as in New York, but the amount of drunkenness is so trifling in proportion to the enormous amount of tippling that goes on among Frenchmen that the matter is a cause of constant wonderment to visitors from other lands.

At the end of the waltz the floor is promptly cleared again. One woman puts her hand on the rail-fence and leaps over unconcernedly, rather than take her turn at the gate. Then the band strikes up the opening strain of the popular opera-bouffe quadrille of the hour, and the air echoes with the shout on every side, "C'est Angot! C'est Angot!" and the struggle for places is furious. "Madame Angot," the heroine of a fashionable opera-bouffe, is a market-woman, and a sort of goddess among the blousards, who are eager to dance to the inspiring melody of

her song. The men in authority have little need to persuade the dancers with their cry of "Avancez! avancez!" this time: they have only to collect the sous, and the wild revelry begins. The tallest man in the room leads on to the floor the shortest woman —a little humpbacked dwarf: he is smoking a cigar, and she a cigarette, and they dance with fury while puffing clouds of smoke. The man jumps in the air with wondrous pigeon-wings, slaps his heels with his hands, shouts and twists his lank body into grotesque shapes. The little dwarf, madly hilarious, rushes about with her head down, swings her long dress in the air, whirls and "makes cheeses," and in the climax of her efforts kicks her partner squarely in the back amid roars of laughter.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.