II.

If quick, sound seed be wanting where
The virgin soil feels sun and air,
And longs to fill a higher state,
There let my meanings germinate.

Let not my strength be spilled for naught,
But, in some fresher vessel caught,
Be blended into sweeter forms,
And fraught with purer aims and charms.

Let bloom-dust of my life be blown
To quicken hearts that flower alone;
Around my knees let scions rise
With heavenward-pointing destinies.

And when I fall, like some old tree,
And subtile change makes mould of me,
There let earth show a fertile line,
Whence perfect wild-flowers leap and shine!

Maurice Thompson.

EN PROVINCE.

I.

THE COUNTRY OF THE LOIRE.

We good Americans — I say it without presumption — are too apt to think that France is Paris, just as we are accused of being too apt to think that Paris is the celestial city. This is by no means the case, fortunately for those persons who take an interest in modern Gaul, and yet are still left vaguely unsatisfied by that epitome of civilization which stretches from the Arc de Triomphe to the Gymnase theatre. It had already been revealed to the author of these light pages that there are many good things in the *doux pays de France* of which you get no hint in a walk between those ornaments of the capital; but the truth had been revealed only in quick-flashing glimpses, and he was conscious of a desire to look it well in the face. To this end he started one rainy morning, in mid-September, for the charming little city of Tours, from which point it seemed possible to make a variety of fruitful excursions. His excursions resolved themselves ultimately into a journey through several provinces, a journey which had its dull moments (as one may defy any journey not to have), but which enabled him to feel that his proposition was demonstrated. France may be Paris, but Paris is not France; that was perfectly evident on the return to the capital. I must not speak, however, as if I had discovered the provinces. They were discovered, or at least revealed, by Balzac, if by any one, and are now easily accessible to visitors.

It is true, I met no visitors, or only one or two, whom it was pleasant to meet. Throughout my little tour, I was almost the only tourist. That is perhaps one reason why it was so agreeable.

I.

I am ashamed to begin with saying that Touraine is the garden of France; that remark has long ago lost its bloom. The town of Tours, however, has something sweet and bright, which suggests that it is surrounded by a land of fruits. It is a very agreeable little city; few towns of its size are more ripe, more complete, or I should suppose in better humor with themselves and less disposed to envy the responsibilities of bigger places. It is truly the capital of its smiling province, a region of easy abundance, of good living, of genial, comfortable, optimistic, rather indolent, opinions. Balzac says in one of his tales that the real Tourangeau will not make an effort, or displace himself even, to go in search of a pleasure; and it is not difficult to understand the sources of this genial indifference. He must have a vague conviction that he can only lose by almost any change. Fortune has been kind to him: he lives in a temperate, reasonable, sociable climate, on the banks of a river which, it is true, sometimes floods the country around it, but of which the ravages appear to be so easily repaired that its aggressions may perhaps be regarded (in a region where so many good things are certain) merely as an occasion for healthy suspense. He is surrounded by fine old traditions, religious, social, architectural, culinary; and he may have the satisfaction of feeling that he is French to the core. No part of his admirable country is more characteristically national. Normandy is Normandy, Burgundy is Burgundy, Provence is Provence; but Touraine is essentially France. It is the land of Rabelais, of Descartes, of Balzac, of good books and good company, as well as good dinners and good houses. George Sand has somewhere a charming passage about the mildness, the convenient quality, of the physical conditions of central France: "son climat souple et chaud, ses pluies abondantes et courtes." In the autumn of 1882, the rains perhaps were less short than abundant; but when the days were fine it was impossible that anything in the way of weather could be more charming. The vineyards and orchards looked rich in the fresh, gay light; cultivation was everywhere, but everywhere it seemed to be easy. There was no visible poverty; thrift and success presented themselves as matters of good taste. The white caps of the women glittered in the sunshine, and their well-made sabots clicked cheerfully on the hard, clean roads. Touraine is a land of old châteaux — a gallery of architectural specimens and of large hereditary properties. The peasantry have less of the luxury of ownership than in most other parts of France; though they have enough of it to give them quite their share of that shrewdly conservative look which, in the little chaffering *place* of the market-town, the stranger observes so often in the wrinkled brown masks that surmount the agricultural blouse. This is moreover the heart of the old French monarchy, and as that monarchy was splendid and picturesque, a reflection of the splendor still glitters in the current of the Loire. Some of the most striking events of French history have occurred on the banks of that river, and the soil it waters bloomed for awhile with the flowering of the Renaissance. The Loire gives a great style to a landscape of which the features are not, as the phrase is, prominent, and carries the eye to distances even more poetic than the green horizons of Touraine. It is a very fitful stream, and is sometimes seen to run thin and expose all the crudities of its channel; a great defect certainly in a river which has such serious artistic responsibilities. But I speak of it as I saw it last, full, tranquil, powerful, bending in large, slow curves, and sending back half the light of the sky. Nothing can be finer than the view of its course which you get from the battle-

ments and terraces of Amboise. As I looked down on it from that elevation one lovely Sunday morning, through a mild glitter of autumn sunshine, it seemed the very model of a generous, beneficent stream. The most charming part of Tours is naturally the shaded quay that overlooks it, and looks across too at the friendly faubourg of Saint Symphorien and at the terraced heights which rise above this. Indeed, throughout Touraine it is half the charm of the Loire that you can travel beside it. The great dike which protects it, or protects the country from it, from Blois to Angers, is an admirable road; and on the other side, as well, the highway constantly keeps it company. A great river, as you follow a great road, is excellent company; it heightens and shortens the way. The inns at Tours are in another quarter, and one of them, which is midway between the town and the station, is very good. It is worth mentioning for the fact that every one belonging to it is extraordinarily polite — so unnaturally polite as (at first) to excite your suspicion that the hotel has some hidden vice, so that the waiters and chambermaids are trying to pacify you in advance. There was one waiter in especial who was the most accomplished social being I have ever encountered; from morning till night he kept up an inarticulate murmur of urbanity, like the hum of a spinning top. I may add that I discovered no dark secrets at the Hôtel de l'Univers; for it is not a secret to any traveler to-day that the obligation to partake of a lukewarm dinner in an over-heated room is as imperative as it is detestable. There is a certain Rue Royale at Tours which has pretensions to the monumental; it was constructed a hundred years ago, and the houses, all alike, have on a moderate scale a pompous eighteenth-century look. It connects the Palais de Justice, the most important secular building in the town, with the long bridge which spans the Loire — the spacious, solid bridge pronounced by Balzac, in Le Curé de Tours, "one of the finest monuments of French architecture." The Palais de Justice was the seat of the government of Léon Gambetta in the autumn of 1870, after the dictator had been obliged to retire in his balloon from Paris, and before the Assembly was constituted at Bordeaux. The Germans occupied Tours during that terrible winter; it is astonishing, the number of places the Germans occupied. It is hardly too much to say that wherever one goes in certain parts of France, one encounters two great historic facts: one is the Revolution, the other is the German invasion. The traces of the Revolution remain, in a hundred scars and bruises and mutilations; but the visible marks of the war of 1870 have passed away. The country is so rich, so living, that she has been able to dress her wounds, to hold up her head, to smile again; so that the shadow of that darkness has ceased to rest upon her. But what you do not see you still may hear, and one remembers with a certain shudder that only a few short years ago this province, so intimately French, was under the heel of a foreign foe. To be intimately French was apparently not a safeguard; for so successful an invader it could only be a challenge. Peace and plenty, however, have succeeded that episode; and among the gardens and vineyards of Touraine it seems only a legend the more in a country of legends. It was not, all the same, for the sake of this chequered story that I mentioned the Palais de Justice and the Rue Royale. The most interesting fact, to my mind, about the High Street of Tours was that as you walk toward the bridge on the right-hand trottoir you can look up at the house, on the other side of the way, in which Honoré de Balzac first saw the light. That violent and complicated genius was a child of the good-humored and succulent Touraine. There

is something anomalous in this fact, though if one thinks about it a little one may discover certain correspondences between his character and that of his native province. Strenuous, laborious, constantly infelicitous in spite of his great successes, he suggests at times a very different set of influences. But he had his jovial, full-feeding side — the side that comes out in the Contes Drolatiques, which are the romantic and epicurean chronicle of the old manors and abbeys of this region. And he was moreover the product of a soil into which a great deal of history had been trodden. Balzac was genuinely as well as affectedly monarchical, and he was impregnated with a sense of the past. Number 39 Rue Royale, of which the basement, like all the basements in the Rue Royale, is occupied by a shop, is not shown to the public, and I know not whether tradition designates the chamber in which the author of Le Lys dans la Vallée opened his eyes into a world in which he was to see, and to imagine, such extraordinary things. If this were the case, I would willingly have crossed its threshold; not for the sake of any relic of the great novelist which it may possibly contain, nor even for that of any mystic virtue which may be supposed to reside within its walls; but simply because to look at those four modest walls can hardly fail to give one a strong impression of the force of human endeavor. Balzac, in the maturity of his vision, took in more of human life than any one, since Shakespeare, who has attempted to tell us stories about it; and the very small scene on which his consciousness dawned is one end of the immense scale that he traversed. I confess it shocked me a little to find that he was born in a house "in a row," a house moreover which at the date of his birth must have been only about twenty years old. All that is contradictory. If the tenement selected for this honor could not be ancient and picturesque, it should at least have been detached. There is a charming description in his little tale of La Grenadière of the view of the opposite side of the Loire as you have it from the square at the end of the Rue Royale, — a square that has some pretensions to grandeur, overlooked as it is by the Hôtel de Ville and the Musée, a pair of edifices which directly contemplate the river, and ornamented with marble images of François Rabelais and René Descartes. The former, erected a few years since, is a very honorable production; the pedestal of the latter could as a matter of course only be inscribed with the *Cogito, ergo Sum*. The two statues mark the two opposite poles to which the brilliant French mind has traveled, and if there were an effigy of Balzac at Tours, it ought to stand midway between them. Not that he by any means always struck the happy mean between the sensible and the metaphysical; but one may say of him that half of his genius looks in one direction and half in the other. The side that turns toward François Rabelais would be on the whole the side that takes the sun. But there is no statue of Balzac at Tours; there is only, in one of the chambers of the melancholy museum, a rather clever, coarse bust. The description in La Grenadière, of which I just spoke, is too long to quote; neither have I space for any one of the brilliant attempts at landscape-painting which are woven into the shimmering texture of Le Lys dans la Vallée. The little manor of Clochegourde, the residence of Madame de Mortsauf, the heroine of that extraordinary work, was within a moderate walk of Tours, and the picture in the novel is presumably a copy from an original which it would be possible to-day to discover. I did not, however, even make the attempt. There are so many châteaux in Touraine that have been commemorated in history, that it would take one too far to look up those that

have been commemorated in fiction. The most I did was to endeavor to identify the former residence of Mademoiselle Gamard, the sinister old maid of Le Curé de Tours. This terrible woman occupied a small house in the rear of the cathedral, where I spent a whole morning in wondering rather stupidly which house it could be. To reach the cathedral from the little *place* where we stopped just now to look across at La Grenadière, without, it must be confessed, very vividly seeing it, you follow the quay to the right and pass out of sight of the charming *côteau* which, from beyond the river, faces the town — a soft agglomeration of gardens, vineyards, scattered villas, gables and turrets of slate-roofed châteaux, terraces with gray balustrades, moss-grown walls draped in scarlet Virginia creeper. You turn into the town again beside a great military barrack which is ornamented with a rugged mediæval tower, a relic of the ancient fortifications, known to the Tourangeaux of to-day as the Tour de Guise. The young Prince of Joinville, son of that Duke of Guise who was murdered by the order of Henry II. at Blois, was, after the death of his father, confined here for more than two years, but made his escape one summer evening in 1591, under the nose of his keepers, with a gallant audacity which has attached the memory of the exploit to his sullen-looking prison. Tours has a garrison of five regiments, and the little red-legged soldiers light up the town. You see them stroll upon the clean, uncommercial quay, where there are no signs of navigation, not even by oar, no barrels nor bales, no loading nor unloading, no masts against the sky nor booming of steam in the air. The most active business that goes on there is that patient and fruitless angling in which the French, as the votaries of art for art, excel all other people. The little soldiers, weighed down by the contents of their enormous pockets, pass with respect from one of these masters of the rod to the other, as he sits soaking an indefinite bait in the large, indifferent stream. After you turn your back to the quay you have only to go a little way before you reach the cathedral.

II.

It is a very beautiful church of the second order of importance, with a charming mouse-colored complexion and a pair of fantastic towers. There is a commodious little square in front of it, from which you may look up at its very ornamental face; but for purposes of frank admiration the sides and the rear are perhaps not sufficiently detached. The cathedral of Tours, which is dedicated to Saint Gatianus, took a long time to build. Begun in 1170, it was finished only in the first half of the sixteenth century; but the ages and the weather have interfused so well the tone of the different parts that it presents, at first, at least, no striking incongruities, and looks even exceptionally harmonious and complete. There are many grander cathedrals, but there are probably few more pleasing, and this effect of delicacy and grace is at its best toward the close of a quiet afternoon, when the densely decorated towers, rising above the little Place de l'Archevêché, lift their curious lanterns into the slanting light, and offer a multitudinous perch to troops of circling pigeons. The whole front, at such a time, has an appearance of great richness, although the niches which surround the three high doors (with recesses deep enough for several circles of sculpture) and indent the four great buttresses that ascend beside the huge rose-window, carry no figures beneath their little chiseled canopies. The blast of the great Revolution blew down most of the statues in France, and the wind has never set very strongly toward putting them up again. The embossed and crocketed cupolas which crown the towers of Saint Gatien

are not very pure in taste; but, like a good many impurities, they are decidedly picturesque. The interior has a stately slimness with which no fault is to be found, and which in the choir, rich in early glass and surrounded by a broad passage, becomes very bold and noble. Its principal treasure, perhaps, is the charming little tomb of the two children (who died young) of Charles VIII. and Anne of Brittany, in white marble, embossed with symbolic dolphins and exquisite arabesques. The little boy and girl lie side by side on a slab of black marble, and a pair of small kneeling angels, both at their head and their feet, watch over them. Nothing could be more perfect than this monument, which is the work of Michel Colomb, one of the earlier glories of the French Renaissance; it is really a lesson in good taste. Originally placed in the great abbey-church of Saint Martin, which was for so many ages the holy place of Tours, it happily survived the devastation to which that edifice, already sadly shattered by the wars of religion and successive profanations, finally succumbed in 1797. In 1815, the tomb found an asylum in a quiet corner of the cathedral. I ought, perhaps, to be ashamed to acknowledge that I found the profane name of Balzac capable of adding an interest even to this venerable sanctuary. Those who have read the terrible little story of the Curé de Tours will perhaps remember that, as I have already mentioned, the simple and child-like old Abbé Birotteau, victim of the infernal machinations of the Abbé Troubert and Mademoiselle Gamard, had his quarters in the house of that lady (she had a specialty of letting lodgings to priests), which stood on the north side of the cathedral, so close under its walls that the supporting pillar of one of the great flying buttresses was planted in the spinster's garden. If you wander round behind the church, in search of this more than historic habitation, you will have occasion to see that the side and rear of Saint Gatien make a delectable and curious figure. A narrow lane passes beside the high wall which conceals from sight the palace of the archbishop, and beneath the flying buttresses, the far-projecting gargoyles and the fine south porch of the church. It terminates in a little, dead grass-grown square, entitled the Place Grégoire de Tours. All this part of the exterior of the cathedral is very brown, ancient, gothic, grotesque; Balzac calls the whole place "a desert of stone." A battered and gabled wing, or outhouse (as it appears to be), of the hidden palace, with a queer old stone pulpit jutting out from it, looks down on this melancholy spot, on the other side of which is a seminary for young priests, one of whom issues from a door in a quiet corner, and, holding it open a moment behind him, shows a glimpse of a sunny garden, where you may fancy other black young figures strolling up and down. Mademoiselle Gamard's house, where she took her two abbés to board, and basely conspired with one against the other, is still further round the cathedral. You cannot quite put your hand upon it to-day, for the dwelling of which you say to yourself that it *must* have been Mademoiselle Gamard's does not fulfill all the conditions mentioned in Balzac's description. The edifice in question, however, fulfills conditions enough; in particular, its little court offers hospitality to the big buttress of the church. Another buttress, corresponding with this (the two, between them, sustain the gable of the north transept), is planted in the small cloister, of which the door on the further side of the little soundless Rue de la Psalette, where nothing seems ever to pass, opens opposite to that of Mademoiselle Gamard. There is a very genial old sacristan at Tours, who introduced me to this cloister from the church. It is very small and solitary, and much mutilated, but it nestles with a kind of

wasted friendliness beneath the big walls of the cathedral. Its lower arcades have been closed, and it has a little plot of garden in the middle, with fruit-trees which I should imagine to be too much overshadowed. In one corner is a remarkably picturesque turret, the cage of a winding staircase which ascends (no great distance) to an upper gallery, where an old priest, the *chanoine-gardien* of the church, was walking to and fro with his breviary. The turret, the gallery, and even the chanoine-gardien, belonged, that sweet September morning, to the class of objects that are dear to painters in water-colors.

III.

I have mentioned the church of Saint Martin, which was for many years the sacred spot, the shrine of pilgrimage, of Tours. Originally the simple burial place of the great apostle who, in the fourth century, christianized Gaul, and who, in his day a brilliant missionary and worker of miracles, is chiefly known to modern fame as the worthy that cut his cloak in two at the gate of Amiens to share it with a beggar (tradition fails to say, I believe, what he did with the other half), the Abbey of Saint Martin, through the Middle Ages, waxed rich and powerful, till it was known at last as one of the most luxurious religious houses in Christendom, with kings for its titular abbots (who, like Francis I., sometimes turned and despoiled it), and a great treasure of precious things. It passed, however, through many vicissitudes. Pillaged by the Normans in the ninth century and by the Huguenots in the sixteenth, it received its death-blow from the Revolution, which must have brought to bear upon it an energy of destruction proportionate to its mighty bulk. At the end of the last century a huge group of ruins alone remained, and what we see to-day may be called the ruin of a ruin. It is difficult to understand how so vast an edifice can have been so completely obliterated. Its site is given up to several ugly streets, and a pair of tall towers, separated by a space which speaks volumes as to the size of the church, and looking across the close-pressed roofs to the happier spires of the cathedral, preserve for the modern world the memory of a great fortune, a great abuse, perhaps, and at all events a great penalty. One may believe that to this day a considerable part of the foundations of the great abbey is buried in the soil of Tours. The two surviving towers, which are dissimilar in shape, are enormous; with those of the cathedral they form the great landmarks of the town. One of them bears the name of the Tour de l'Horloge; the other, the so-called Tour Charlemagne, was erected (two centuries after her death) over the tomb of Luitgarde, wife of the great Emperor, who died at Tours in 800. I do not pretend to understand in what relation these very mighty and effectually detached masses of masonry stood to each other; but in their gray elevation and loneliness they are very striking and suggestive to-day, holding their hoary heads far above the modern life of the town, and looking sad and conscious, as they had outlived all uses. I know not what is supposed to have become of the bones of the blessed saint during the various scenes of confusion in which they may have got mislaid; but a mystic connection with his wonder working relics may be perceived in a strange little sanctuary on the left of the street, which opens in front of the Tour Charlemagne — the rugged base of which, by the way, inhabited like a cave, with a diminutive doorway, in which, as I passed, an old woman stood cleaning a pot, and a little dark window decorated with homely flowers, would be appreciated by a painter in search of "bits." The present shrine of Saint Martin is inclosed (provisionally, I suppose) in a very modern structure of timber, where, in a dusky cellar, to

which you descend by a wooden staircase adorned with votive tablets and paper roses, is placed a tabernacle surrounded by twinkling tapers and prostrate worshipers. Even this crepuscular vault, however, fails, I think, to attain solemnity, for the whole place is strangely vulgar and garish. The Catholic church, as churches go to-day, is certainly the most spectacular; but it must feel that it has a great fund of impressiveness to draw upon when it opens such queer little shops of sanctity as this. It is impossible not to be struck with the grotesqueness of such an establishment, as the last link in the chain of a great ecclesiastical tradition. In the same street, on the other side, a little below, is something better worth your visit than the shrine of Saint Martin. Knock at a high door in a white wall (there is a cross above it), and a fresh-faced sister of the convent of the Petit Saint Martin will let you into the charming little cloister, or rather fragment of a cloister. Only one side of this exquisite structure remains, but the whole place is effective. In front of the beautiful arcade, which is terribly bruised and obliterated, is one of those walks of interlaced *tilleuls* which are so frequent in Touraine, and into which the green light filters so softly through a lattice of clipped twigs. Beyond this is a garden, and beyond the garden are the other buildings of the convent, where the placid sisters keep a school — a test, doubtless, of placidity. The imperfect arcade, which dates from the beginning of the sixteenth century (I know nothing of it but what is related in Mrs. Pattison's Renaissance in France), is a truly enchanting piece of work; the cornice and the angles of the arches being covered with the daintiest sculpture of arabesques, flowers, fruit, medallions, cherubs, griffins, all in the finest and most attenuated chiseling. It is like the chasing of a bracelet in stone. The taste, the fancy, the elegance, the refinement, bring tears to the eyes; such a piece of work is the purest flower of the French Renaissance; it is one of the most delicate things in all Touraine. There is another fine thing at Tours which is not particularly delicate, but which makes a great impression — the very interesting old church of Saint Julian, lurking in a crooked corner, at the right of the Rue Royale, near the point at which this indifferent thoroughfare emerges — with its little cry of admiration — on the bank of the Loire. Saint Julian stands to-day in a kind of neglected hollow, where it is much shut in by houses; but in the year 1225, when the edifice was begun, the site was doubtless, as the architects say, more eligible. At present, indeed, when once you have caught a glimpse of the stout, serious Romanesque tower, which is not high, but strong, you feel that the building has something to say, and that you must stop to listen to it. Within, it has a vast and splendid nave, of immense height — the nave of a cathedral, with a shallow choir and transepts, and some admirable old glass. I spent half an hour there one morning — listening to what the church had to say — in perfect solitude. Not a worshiper entered, not even an old man with a broom. I have always thought there is a sex in fine buildings; and Saint Julian, with its noble nave, is of the masculine gender. It was that same morning, I think, that I went in search of the old houses of Tours; for the town contains several goodly specimens of the domestic architecture of the past. The dwelling to which the average Anglo-Saxon will most promptly direct his steps, and the only one I have space to mention, is the so-called Maison de Tristan l'Hermite, — a gentleman whom the readers of Quentin Durward will not have forgotten — the hangman in ordinary to the great King Louis XI. Unfortunately the house of Tristan is not the house of Tristan at all; this illusion has been cruelly dispelled. There are

no illusions left, at all, in the good city of Tours, with regard to Louis XI. His terrible castle of Plessis, the picture of which sends a shiver through the youthful reader of Scott, has been reduced to suburban insignificance; and the residence of his *triste compère* — on the front of which a festooned rope figures as a motive for decoration — is observed to have been erected in the succeeding century. The Maison de Tristan may be visited for itself, however, if not for Walter Scott; it is an exceedingly picturesque old façade, to which you pick your way through a narrow and tortuous street — a street terminating a little beyond it in the walk beside the river. An elegant gothic doorway is let into the rusty-red brick-work, and strange little beasts crouch at the angles of the windows, which are surmounted by a tall graduated gable, pierced with a small orifice, where the large surface of brick, lifted out of the shadow of the street, looks yellow and faded. The whole thing is disfigured and decayed; but it is a capital subject for a sketch in colors. Only I must wish the sketcher better luck — or a better temper — than my own. If he ring the bell to be admitted to see the court, which I believe is more sketchable still, let him have patience to wait till the bell is answered. He can do the outside while they are coming. The Maison de Tristan, I say, may be visited for itself; but I hardly know what the remnants of Plessis-les-Tours may be visited for. To reach them you wander through crooked suburban lanes, down the course of the Loire, to a rough, undesirable, incongruous spot, where a small, crude building of red brick is pointed out to you by your cabman (if you happen to drive) as the romantic abode of a superstitious king, and where a strong odor of pig-sties and other unclean things so prostrates you for the moment that you have no energy to protest against this obvious fiction. You enter a yard encumbered with rubbish and a defiant dog, and an old woman emerges from a shabby lodge and assures you that you are indeed in an historic place. The red brick building, which looks like a small factory, rises on the ruins of the favorite residence of the dreadful Louis. It is now occupied by a company of night-scavengers, whose huge carts are drawn up in a row before it. I know not whether this be what is called the irony of fate; at any rate, the effect of it is to accentuate strongly the fact (and through the most susceptible of our senses) that there is no honor for the authors of great wrongs. The dreadful Louis is reduced simply to an offense to the nostrils. The old woman shows you a few fragments — several dark, damp, much-encumbered vaults, denominated dungeons, and an old tower staircase, in good condition. There are the outlines of the old moat; there is also the outline of the old guard-room, which is now a stable; and there are other vague outlines and confused masses, which I have forgotten. You need all your imagination, and even then you can make out that Plessis was a castle of large extent, though the old woman, as your eye wanders over the neighboring *potagers*, talks a good deal about the gardens and the park. The place looks mean and flat, and as you drive away you scarcely know whether to be glad or sorry that all those bristling horrors have been reduced to the commonplace. A certain flatness of impression awaits you also, I think, at Marmoutier, which is the other indispensable excursion in the near neighborhood of Tours. The remains of this famous abbey lie on the other bank of the stream, about a mile and a half from the town. You follow the edge of the big brown river; of a fine afternoon you will be glad to go further still. The abbey has gone the way of most abbeys, but the place is a restoration as well as a ruin, inasmuch as the sisters of the

Sacred Heart have erected a terribly modern convent here. A large gothic doorway, in a high fragment of ancient wall, admits you to a garden-like inclosure, of great extent, from which you are further introduced into an extraordinarily tidy little parlor, where two good nuns sit at work. One of these came out with me, and showed me over the place — a very definite little woman, with pointed features, an intensely distinct enunciation, and those pretty manners which (for whatever other teachings it may be responsible) the Catholic church so often instills into its functionaries. I have never seen a woman who had got her lesson better than this little trotting, murmuring, edifying nun. The interest of Marmoutier to-day is not so much an interest of vision, so to speak, as an interest of reflection — that is, if you choose to reflect (for instance) upon the wondrous legend of the seven sleepers (you may see where they lie in a row), who lived together — they were brothers and cousins — in primitive piety, in the sanctuary constructed by the blessed Saint Martin (emulous of his precursor, Saint Gatianus), in the face of the hillside that overhung the Loire, and who, twenty-five years after his death, yielded up their seven souls at the same moment, and enjoyed the curious privilege of retaining in their faces, in spite of this process, the rosy tints of life. The abbey of Marmoutier, which sprung from the grottoes in the cliff to which Saint Gatianus and Saint Martin retired to pray, was therefore the creation of the latter worthy, as the other great abbey, in the town proper, was the monument of his repose. The cliff is still there, and a winding staircase, in the latest taste, enables you conveniently to explore its recesses. These sacred niches are scooped out of the rock, and will give you an impression if you cannot do without one. You will feel them to be sufficiently venerable when you learn that the particular pigeon-hole of Saint Gatianus, the first Christian missionary to Gaul, dates from the third century. They have been dealt with as the Catholic church deals with most of such places to-day: polished and furnished up, labeled and ticketed — *edited*, with notes, in short, like an old book. The process is a mistake. The early editions had more sanctity. The modern buildings (of the Sacred Heart), on which you look down from these points of vantage, are in the vulgar taste which seems doomed to stamp itself on all new Catholic work; but there was nevertheless a great sweetness in the scene. The afternoon was lovely, and it was flushing to a close. The large garden stretched beneath us, blooming with fruit and wine and succulent vegetables, and beyond it flowed the shining river. The air was still, the shadows were long, and the place, after all, was full of memories, most of which might pass for virtuous. It certainly was better than Plessis-les-Tours.

IV.

Your business at Tours is to make excursions, and if you make them all you will be very well occupied. Touraine is rich in antiquities, and an hour's drive from the town in almost any direction will bring you to the knowledge of some curious fragment of domestic or ecclesiastical architecture, some turreted manor, some lonely tower, some gabled village or historic site. Even, however, if you do everything — which was not my case — you cannot hope to relate everything, and fortunately for you the excursions divide themselves into the greater and the less. You may achieve most of the greater in a week or two; but a summer in Touraine — which, by the way, must be a charming thing — would contain none too many days for the others. If you come down to Tours from Paris, your best economy is to spend a few days at Blois, where a clumsy but rather attractive little inn,

on the edge of the river, will offer you a certain amount of that familiar and intermittent hospitality which a few weeks spent in the French provinces teaches you to regard as the highest attainable form of accommodation. Such an economy I was unable to practice; I could only go to Blois (from Tours) to spend the day; but this feat I accomplished twice over. It is a very sympapathetic little town, as we say nowadays, and one might easily resign one's self to a week there. Seated on the north bank of the Loire, it presents a bright, clean face to the sun, and has that aspect of cheerful leisure which belongs to all white towns that reflect themselves in shining waters. It is the water-front only of Blois, however, that exhibits this lucid complexion; the interior is of a proper brownness, as befits a signally historic city. The only disappointment I had there was the discovery that the castle, which is the special object of one's pilgrimage, does not overhang the river, as I had always allowed myself to understand. It overhangs the town, but it is scarcely visible from the river. That peculiar good fortune is reserved for Amboise and Chaumont. The Château de Blois is one of the most beautiful and elaborate of all the old royal residences of this part of France, and I suppose it should have all the honors of my description. As you cross its threshold you step straight into the brilliant movement of the French Renaissance. But it is too rich to describe — I can only touch it here and there. It must be premised that in speaking of it as one sees it to-day, one speaks of a monument completely restored. The work of restoration has been as skillful as it is profuse; but it rather chills the imagination. This is perhaps almost the first thing you feel as you approach the castle from the streets of the town. These little streets, as they leave the river, have pretensions to romantic steepness; one of them, indeed, which resolves itself into a high staircase, with divergent wings — the *escalier monumental* — achieved this result so successfully as to remind me vaguely — I hardly know why — of the great slope of the Capitol, beside the Ara Cœli, at Rome. The view of that part of the castle which figures to-day as the back (it is the only aspect I had seen reproduced) exhibits the marks of restoration in the most vivid way. The long façade, consisting only of balconied windows, deeply recessed, erects itself on the summit of a considerable hill, which gives a fine, plunging movement to its foundations. The deep niches of the windows are all aglow with color; they have been repainted with red and blue, relieved with gold figures, and each of them looks more like the royal box at a theatre than like the aperture of a palace dark with memories. For all this, however, and in spite of the fact that, as in some others of the châteaux of Touraine (always excepting the colossal Chambord which is not in Touraine!), there is less vastness than one had expected, the least hospitable aspect of Blois is abundantly impressive. Here, as elsewhere, lightness and grace are the keynote; and the recesses of the windows, with their happy proportions, their sculpture and their color, are the empty frames of brilliant pictures. They need the figure of a Francis I. to complete them — or of a Diane de Poitiers, or even of a Henry III. The base of this exquisite wing emerges from a bed of light verdure, which has been allowed to mass itself there and which contributes to the springing look of the walls; while on the right it joins the most modern portion of the castle, the building constructed, on foundations of enormous height and solidity, in 1635, by Gaston d'Orléans. This fine frigid mansion — the proper view of it is from the court within — is one of the masterpieces of François Mansard, whom a kind providence

did not allow to make over the whole palace in the superior manner of his superior age. This had been a part of Gaston's plan — he was a blunderer born, and this precious project was worthy of him. This execution of it would surely have been one of the great misdeeds of history. Partially performed, the misdeed is not altogether to be regretted, for as one stands in the court of the castle and lets one's eye wander from the splendid wing of Francis I., which is the last word of free and joyous invention, to the ruled lines and blank spaces of the ponderous erection of Mansard, one makes one's reflections upon the advantage, in even the least personal of the arts, of having something to say, and upon the stupidity of a taste which had ended by becoming an aggregation of negatives. Gaston's wing, taken by itself, has much of the *bel air* which was to belong to the architecture of Louis XIV.; but taken in contrast to its flowering, laughing, living neighbor, it marks the difference between inspiration and calculation. We scarcely grudge it its place, however, for it adds a price to the rest of the château. We have entered the court, by the way, by jumping over the walls. The more orthodox method is to follow a modern terrace, which leads to the left, from the side of the château that I began by speaking of, and passes round, ascending, to a little square on a considerably higher level, which is not, like the very modern square on which the back (as I have called it) looks out, a thoroughfare. This small, empty *place*, oblong in form, at once bright and quiet, with a certain grass-grown look, offers an excellent setting to the entrance-front of the palace, the wing of Louis XII. The restoration here has been lavish; but it was no more than a just reaction against the injuries, still more lavish, by which the unfortunate building had long been overwhelmed. It had fallen into a state of ruinous neglect, relieved only by the misuse proceeding from successive generations of soldiers, for whom its charming chambers served as barrack-room. Whitewashed, mutilated, dishonored, the castle of Blois may be said to have escaped simply with its life. This is the history of Amboise as well, and is to a certain extent the history of Chambord. Delightful, at any rate was the refreshed façade of Louis XII., as I stood and looked at it one bright September morning. In that soft, clear, merry light of Touraine, everything shows, everything speaks. Charming are the taste, the happy proportions, the color of this beautiful front, to which the new feeling for a purely domestic architecture — an architecture of security and tranquillity, in which art could indulge itself — gave an air of youth and gladness. It is true that for a long time to come the castle of Blois was neither very safe nor very quiet; but its dangers came from within, from the evil passions of its inhabitants, and not from siege or invasion. The front of Louis XII. is of red brick, crossed here and there with purple; and the purple state of the high roof, relieved with chimneys beautifully treated and with the embroidered caps of pinnacles and arches, with the porcupine of Louis, the ermine and the festooned rope which formed the devices of Anne of Brittany — the tone of this rich-looking roof carries out the mild glow of the wall. The wide, fair windows look as if they had expanded to let in the rosy dawn of the Renaissance. Charming, for that matter, are the windows of all the châteaux of Touraine, with their squareness corrected (as it is not in the Tudor architecture) by the curve of the upper corners, which makes this line look — above the expressive aperture — like a penciled eyebrow. The low door of this front is crowned by a high, deep niche, in which, under a splendid canopy, stiffly astride of a stiffly-draped charger, sits in profile an image of the good King

Louis. Good as he had been, the father of his people as he was called (I believe he remitted several taxes), he was not good enough to pass muster at the Revolution, and the effigy I have just described is no more than a reproduction of the primitive statue, demolished at that period. Pass beneath it, into the court, and the sixteenth century closes round you; it is a pardonable flight of fancy to say that the expressive faces of an age in which human passions lay very near the surface seem to look out at you from the windows, from the balconies, from the thick foliage of the sculpture. The portion of the wing of Louis XII. that looks toward the court is supported on a deep arcade. On your right is the wing erected by Francis I., the reverse of the mass of building which you see on approaching the castle. This exquisite, this extravagant, this transcendent piece of architecture is the most joyous utterance of the French Renaissance. It is covered with an embroidery of sculpture in which every detail is worthy of the hand of a goldsmith. In the middle of it, or rather a little to the left, rises the famous winding staircase which even the ages which most misused it must vaguely have admired. It forms a kind of chiseled cylinder, with wide interstices, so that the stairs are open to the air. Every inch of this structure, of its balconies, its pillars, its great central columns, is wrought over with lovely images, strange and ingenious devices, prime among which is the great heraldic salamander of Francis I. The salamander is everywhere at Blois — over the chimneys, over the doors, on the walls; this whole division of the castle bears the stamp of that eminently pictorial prince. The running cornice along the top of the front is like an unfolded, an elongated, bracelet. The windows of the attic are like shrines for saints. The gargoyles, the medallions, the statuettes, the festoons, are like the elaboration of some precious cabinet rather than the details of a building exposed to the weather and to the ages. In the interior there is a profusion of restoration, and it is all restoration in color. This has been, evidently, a work of great science and research, but it will easily strike you as overdone. The universal freshness is a discord, a false note; it seems to light up the dusky past with an unnatural glare. Begun in the reign of Louis Philippe, this terrible process — the more terrible always the more you admit that it has been necessary — has been carried so far that there is now scarcely a square inch of the interior that has the color of the past upon it. It is true that the place had been so coated over with modern abuse that something was needed to keep it alive; it is only, perhaps, a pity that the restorers, not content with saving its life, should have undertaken to restore its youth. The love of consistency, in such a business, is a dangerous lure. All the old apartments have been rechristened, as it were; the geography of the castle has been reëstablished. The guard-rooms, the bed-rooms, the closets, the oratories, have recovered their identity. Every spot connected with the murder of the Duke of Guise is pointed out by a small, shrill boy who takes you from room to room, and who has learned his lesson in perfection. The place is full of Catherine de' Medici, of Henry III., of memories, of ghosts, of echoes, of possible evocations and revivals. It is covered with crimson and gold; the fireplaces and the ceilings are magnificent; they look like expensive "sets" at the grand opera. I should have mentioned that below, in the court, the front of the wing of Gaston d'Orléans faces you as you enter, so that the place is a course of French history. Inferior in beauty and grace to the other portions of the castle, the wing is yet a nobler monument than the memory of Gaston deserves. The second of the

sons of Henry IV., who was no more fortunate as a father than as a husband, younger brother of Louis XIII., and father of the great Mademoiselle, the most celebrated, most ambitious, most self-complacent and most unsuccessful *fille à marier* in French history, passed in enforced retirement at the castle of Blois the close of a life of clumsy intrigues against Cardinal Richelieu, in which his rashness was only equaled by his pusillanimity and his ill-luck by his inaccessibility to correction, and which, after so many follies and shames, was properly summed up in the project, begun but not completed, of demolishing the beautiful habitation of his exile in order to erect a better one. With Gaston d'Orléans, however, who lived there without dignity, the history of the Château de Blois declines. Its interesting period is that of the wars of religion. It was the chief residence of Henry III., and the scene of the principal events of his weak, violent, immoral reign. It has been restored more than enough, as I have said, by architects and decorators; the visitor, as he moves through its empty rooms, which are at once brilliant and ill-lighted (they have not been refurnished), undertakes a little restoration of his own. His imagination helps itself from the things that remain; he tries to see the life of the sixteenth century in its form and dress — its turbulence, its passions, its loves and hates, its treacheries, falsities, touches of faith, its latitude of personal development, its presentation of the whole nature, its nobleness of costume, charm of speech, splendor of taste, unequaled picturesqueness. The picture is full of movement, of contrasted light and darkness, full altogether of abominations. Mixed up with them all is the great name of religion, so that the drama wants nothing to make it complete. What episode was ever more perfect — looked at as a dramatic occurrence — than the murder of the Duke of Guise? The insolent prosperity of the victim; the weakness, the vices, the terrors, of the author of the deed; the perfect execution of the plot; the accumulation of horror in what followed it, give it, as a crime, a kind of immortal solidity. But we must not take the Château de Blois too hard; I went there, after all, by way of entertainment. If among these sinister memories, your visit should threaten to prove a tragedy, there is an excellent way of removing the impression. You may treat yourself, at Blois, to a very cheerful afterpiece. There is a charming industry practiced there, and practiced in charming conditions. Follow the bright little quay, down the river, till you get quite out of the town — reach the point where the road beside the Loire becomes sinuous and attractive, turns the corner of diminutive headlands, and makes you wonder what is beyond. Let not your curiosity induce you, however, to pass by a modest white villa which overlooks the stream, inclosed in a fresh little court; for here dwells an artist — an artist in faience. There is no sort of sign, and the place looks peculiarly private. But if you ring at the gate, you will not be turned away. You will, on the contrary, be ushered upstairs, into a parlor — there is nothing resembling a shop — encumbered with specimens of remarkably handsome pottery. The work is of the best, a careful reproduction of old forms, colors, devices; and the master of the establishment is one of those completely artistic types that are often found in France. His reception is as friendly as his work is ingenious, and I think it is not too much to say that you like the work the better because he has produced it. His vases, cups and jars, lamps, platters, *plaques*, with their deep, strong hues, their innumerable figures, their family likeness and wide variations, are scattered through his occupied rooms; they serve at once as his stock-in-trade and as household ornament. As we all know, this is an age

of prose, of machinery, of wholesale production, of coarse and hasty processes. But one brings away from the establishment of the very intelligent M. Ulysse the sense of a less eager activity and a greater search for perfection. He has but a few workmen, and he gives them plenty of time. The place makes a little vignette, leaves an impression: the quiet white house, in its garden, on the road by the wide clear river, without the smoke, the bustle, the ugliness, of so much of our modern industry. It ought to gratify Mr. Ruskin.

Henry James.

SOMETHING PASSES.

Something passes in the air,
That if seen would be most fair;
And if we the ear could train
To a keener joy and pain,
Sweeter warblings would be heard
Than from wild Arabian bird:
Something passes.

Blithest in the spring it stirs,
Wakes with earliest harbingers;
Then it peers from heart's-ease faces,
Clothes itself in wind-flower graces;
Or, begirt with waving sedge,
Pipes upon the river's edge;
Or its whispering way doth take
Through the plumed and scented brake;
Or, within the silent wood,
Whirls one leaf in fitful mood.
Something knits the morning dews
In a web of seven hues;
Something with the May-fly races,
Or the pallid blowball chases
Till it darkens 'gainst the moon,
Full, upon a night of June:
Something passes.

Something climbs, from bush or croft,
On a gossamer stretched aloft;
Sails, with glistening spars and shrouds,
Till it meets the sailing clouds;
Else it with the swallow flies,
Glimpsed at dusk in southern skies;
Glides before the even-star,
Steals its light, and beckons far.
Something sighs within the sigh
Of the wind, that, whirling by,

from Chaldea with Abraham, or followed Moses out of the mighty empire of Egypt into those wild solitudes of Sinai; — pictures of life; landmarks of great deeds, and thoughts, and worships, and laws; a dawn to history, not of abstract theories, or dazzling, unreal sun myths, but of real peoples and real men.

Brooke Herford.

EN PROVINCE.

II.

THE COUNTRY OF THE LOIRE.

V.

THE second time I went to Blois I took a carriage for Chambord and came back by the Château de Cheverny and the forest of Russy; a charming little expedition, to which the beauty of the afternoon (the finest in a rainy season that was spotted with bright days) contributed not a little. To go to Chambord, you cross the Loire, leave it on one side, and strike away through a country in which salient features become less and less numerous, and which at last has no other quality than a look of intense and peculiar rurality, the characteristic, even when it is not the charm, of so much of the landscape of France. This is not the appearance of wildness, for it goes with great cultivation; it is simply the presence of the delving, drudging, saving peasant. But it is a deep, unrelieved rusticity. It is a peasant's landscape; not, as in England, a landlord's. On the way to Chambord you enter the flat and sandy Sologne. The wide horizon opens out like a great *potager*, without interruptions, without an eminence, with here and there a long, low stretch of wood. There is an absence of hedges, fences, signs of property; everything is absorbed in the general flatness — the patches of vineyard, the scattered cottages, the villages, the children, planted and staring and almost always pretty, the women in the fields, the white caps, the faded blouses, the big sabots. At the end of an hour's drive (they will assure you at Blois that even with two horses you will spend double that time) I passed through a sort of gap in a wall, which does duty as the gateway of the domain of an exiled pretender. I drove along a straight avenue, through a disfeatured park — the park of Chambord has twenty-one miles of circumference — a very sandy, scrubby, melancholy plantation, in which the timber must have been cut many times over and is to-day a mere tangle of brushwood. Here, as in so many spots in France, the traveler perceives that he is in a land of revolutions. Nevertheless, its great extent and the long perspective of its avenues give this desolate boskage a certain majesty; just as its shabbiness places it in agreement with one of the strongest impressions of the château. You follow one of these long perspectives a proportionate time, and at last you see the chimneys and pinnacles of Chambord rise apparently out of the ground. The filling-in of the wide moats that formerly surrounded it has in vulgar parlance let it down, and given it an appearance of topheaviness that is at the same time a magnificent grotesqueness. The towers, the turrets, the cupolas, the gables, the lanterns, the chimneys, look more like the spires of a city than the salient points of a single building. You emerge from the avenue and find yourself at the foot of an enormous fantastic mass. Chambord has a strange mixture of society and solitude.

A little village clusters within view of its stately windows, and a couple of inns near by offer entertainment to pilgrims. These things, of course, are incidents of the political proscription which hangs its thick veil over the place. Chambord is truly royal — royal in its great scale, its grand air, its indifference to common considerations. If a cat may look at a king, a palace may look at a tavern. I enjoyed my visit to this extraordinary structure as much as if I had been a legitimist; and indeed there is something interesting in any monument of a great system, any bold presentation of a tradition. You leave your vehicle at one of the inns, which are very decent and tidy, and in which every one is very civil, as if in this latter respect the influence of the old régime pervaded the neighborhood, and you walk across the grass and the gravel to a small door — a door infinitely subordinate and conferring no title of any kind on those who enter it. Here you ring a bell, which a highly respectable person answers (a person perceptibly affiliated, again, to the old régime), after which she ushers you across a vestibule into an inner court. Perhaps the strongest impression I got at Chambord came to me as I stood in this court. The woman who had admitted me did not come with me; I was to find my guide somewhere else. The specialty of Chambord is its prodigious round towers. There are, I believe, no less than eight of them, placed at each angle of the inner and outer square of buildings; for the castle is in the form of a larger structure which incloses a smaller one. One of these towers stood before me in the court; it seemed to fling its shadow over the place; while above, as I looked up, the pinnacles and gables, and even the enormous chimneys, soared into the bright blue air. The place was empty and silent; shadows of gargoyles, of extraordinary projections, were thrown across the clear gray surfaces. One felt that the whole thing was monstrous. A cicerone appeared, a languid young man in a rather shabby livery, and led me about with a mixture of hurry and delay, of condescension and humility. I do not profess to understand the plan of Chambord, and I may add that I do not even desire to do so; for it is much more entertaining to think of it, as you can so easily, as an irresponsible insoluble labyrinth. Within it is a wilderness of empty chambers, a royal and romantic barrack. The exiled prince to whom it gives its title has not the means to keep up four hundred rooms; he contents himself with preserving the huge outside. The repairs of the prodigious roof alone must absorb a large part of his revenue. The great feature of the interior is the celebrated double staircase, rising straight through the building, with two courses of steps, so that people may ascend and descend without meeting. This staircase is a truly majestic piece of humor; it gives you the note, as it were, of Chambord. It opens on each landing to a vast guard-room, in four arms, radiations of the winding shaft. One of these arms served as a theatre on the occasion on which Molière's Bourgeois Gentilhomme was played to Louis XIV. My guide made me climb to the great open-work lantern which, springing from the roof at the termination of the great staircase (surmounted here by a smaller one), forms the pinnacle of the bristling crown of Chambord. This lantern is tipped with a huge *fleur de lys* in stone — the only one, I believe, that the Revolution did not succeed in pulling down. Here, from narrow windows, you look over the wide, flat country and the tangled, melancholy park, with the rotation of its straight avenues. Then you walk about the roof, in a complication of galleries, terraces, balconies, through the multitude of chimneys and gables. This roof, which is in itself a sort of castle in the air, has an extravagant, fabulous quality,

and with its profuse ornamentation — the salamander of Francis I. is a constant motive — its lonely pavements, its sunny niches, the balcony that looks down over the closed and grass-grown main entrance, a strange, half-sad, half-brilliant charm. The stone-work is covered with fine mould. There are places that reminded me of some of those quiet, mildewed corners of courts and terraces, into which the traveler who wanders through the Vatican looks down from neglected windows. They show you two or three furnished rooms, with Bourbon portraits, hideous tapestries from the ladies of France, a collection of the toys of the *enfant du miracle*, all military and of the finest make. *Tout cela fonctionne*, the guide said of these miniature weapons; and I wondered, if he should take it into his head to fire off his little cannon, how much harm the Comte de Chambord would do. From below, the castle would look crushed by the redundancy of its upper protuberances, if it were not for the enormous girth of its round towers, which appear to give it a robust lateral development. These towers, however, fine as they are in their way, struck me as a little stupid; they are the exaggeration of an exaggeration. In a building erected after the days of defense, and proclaiming its peaceful character from its hundred embroideries and cupolas, they seem to indicate a want of invention. I shall risk the accusation of bad taste if I say that, impressive as it is, the Château de Chambord seemed to me to have altogether a little of that quality of stupidity. The trouble is that it represents nothing very particular; it has not happened, in spite of sundry vicissitudes, to have a very interesting history. Compared with that of Blois and Amboise, its past is rather vacant, and one feels to a certain extent the contrast between its pompous appearance and its spacious but somewhat colorless annals. It had indeed the good fortune to be erected by Francis I., whose name by itself expresses a good deal of history. Why he should have built a palace in those sandy plains will ever remain an unanswered question, for kings have never been obliged to give reasons. In addition to the fact that the country was rich in game and that Francis was a passionate hunter, it is suggested by M. de la Saussaye, the author of the very complete little history of Chambord which you may buy at the bookseller's at Blois, that he was governed in his choice of the site by the accident of a charming woman having formerly lived there. The Comtesse de Thoury had a manor in the neighborhood, and the Comtesse de Thoury had been the object of a youthful passion on the part of the most susceptible of princes before his accession to the throne. This great pile was reared, therefore, according to M. de la Saussaye, as a *souvenir de premières amours!* It is certainly a very massive memento, and if these tender passages were proportionate to the building that commemorates them, they were tender indeed. There has been much discussion as to the architect employed by Francis I., and the honor of having designed this splendid residence has been claimed for several of the Italian artists who early in the sixteenth century came to seek patronage in France. It seems well established to-day, however, that Chambord was the work neither of Primaticcio, of Vignola, nor of il Rosso, all of whom have left some trace of their sojourn in France; but of an obscure yet very complete genius, Pierre Nepveu, known as Pierre Trinqueau, who is designated in the papers which preserve in some degree the history of the origin of the edifice, as the *maistre de l'œuvre de maçonnerie*. Behind this modest title, apparently, we must recognize one of the most original talents of the French Renaissance; and it is a proof of the vigor of the artistic life of that period that, brilliant production being every-

where abundant, an artist of so high a value should not have been treated by his contemporaries as a celebrity. We manage things very differently to-day. The immediate successors of Francis I. continued to visit Chambord, but it was neglected by Henry IV., and was never afterwards a favorite residence of any French king. Louis XIV. appeared there on several occasions, and the apparition was characteristically brilliant; but Chambord could not long detain a monarch who had gone to the expense of creating a Versailles ten miles from Paris. With Versailles, Fontainebleau, Saint-Germain and Saint-Cloud within easy reach of their capital, the later French sovereigns had little reason to take the air in the dreariest province of their kingdom. Chambord therefore suffered from royal indifference, though in the last century a use was found for its deserted halls. In 1725 it was occupied by the luckless Stanislaus Leszczynski, who spent the greater part of his life in being elected King of Poland and being ousted from his throne, and who, at this time a refugee in France, had found a compensation for some of his misfortunes in marrying his daughter to Louis XV. He lived eight years at Chambord, and filled up the moats of the castle. In 1748 it found an illustrious tenant in the person of Maurice de Saxe, the victor of Fontenoy, who, however, two years after he had taken possession of it, terminated a life which would have been longer had he been less determined to make it agreeable. The Revolution, of course, was not kind to Chambord. It despoiled it in so far as possible of every vestige of its royal origin, and swept like a whirlwind through apartments to which upwards of two centuries had contributed a treasure of decoration and furniture. In that wild blast these precious things were destroyed or forever scattered. In 1791 an odd proposal was made to the French government by a company of English Quakers, who had conceived the bold idea of establishing in the palace a manufacture of some commodity not to-day recorded — possibly of soap or of candles. Napoleon allotted Chambord as a "dotation" to one of his marshals, Berthier, for whose benefit it was converted, in Napoleonic fashion, into the so-called principality of Wagram. By the Princess of Wagram, the marshal's widow, it was after the Restoration sold to the trustees of a national subscription, which had been established for the purpose of presenting it to the infant Duke of Bordeaux, then prospective King of France. The presentation was duly made, but the Comte de Chambord, who had changed his title in recognition of the gift, was despoiled of his property by the government of Louis Philippe. He appealed for redress to the tribunals of his country, and the consequence of his appeal was an interminable litigation, by which, however, finally, after the lapse of twenty-five years, he was established in his rights. In 1871 he paid his first visit to the domain which had been offered him half a century before, a term of which he had spent forty years in exile. It was from Chambord that he dated his famous letter of the 5th of July of that year — the letter, directed to his so-called subjects, in which he waves aloft the white flag of the Bourbons. This amazing epistle, which is virtually an invitation to the French people to repudiate, as their national ensign, that immortal tricolor, the flag of the Revolution and the Empire, under which they have won the glory which of all glories has hitherto been dearest to them, and which is associated with the most romantic, the most heroic, the epic, the consolatory, period of their history — this luckless manifesto, I say, appears to give the measure of the political wisdom of the excellent Henry V. It is the most factitious proposal ever addressed to an eminently ironical nation. On the whole, Chambord

makes a great impression, and the hour I was there, while the yellow afternoon light slanted upon the September woods, there was a dignity in its desolation. It spoke, with a muffled but audible voice, of the vanished monarchy, which had been so strong, so splendid, but to-day has become a sort of fantastic vision, like the cupolas and chimneys that rose before me. I thought, while I lingered there, of all the fine things it takes to make up such a monarchy; and how one of them is a superfluity of moulder-ing, empty palaces. Chambord is touch-ing — that is the best word for it; and if the hopes of another restoration are in the follies of the Republic, a little re-flection on that eloquence of ruin ought to put the Republic on its guard. A sen-timental tourist may venture to remark that in the presence of several châteaux which appeal in this mystical manner to the retrospective imagination, it cannot afford to be foolish. I thought of all this as I drove back to Blois by the way of the Château de Cheverny. The road took us out of the park of Chambord, but through a region of flat woodland, where the trees were not mighty, and again into the prosy plain of the So-logne; a thankless soil, all of it, I be-lieve, but lately much amended by the magic of cheerful French industry and thrift. The light had already begun to fade, and my drive reminded me of a passage in some rural novel of Madame Sand. I passed a couple of timber and plaster churches, which looked very old, black, and crooked, and had picturesque wooden porches and galleries encircling the base. By the time I reached Che-verny, the clear twilight had approached. It was late to ask to be allowed to visit an inhabited house; but it was the hour at which I like best to visit almost any-thing. My coachman drew up before a gateway, in a high wall, which opened upon a short avenue, along which I took my way on foot; the coachmen in those parts being, for reasons best known to themselves, mortally averse to driving up to a house. I answered the challenge of a very tidy little portress, who sat, in company with a couple of children, enjoying the evening air in front of her lodge, and who told me to walk a little further and turn to the right. I obeyed her to the letter, and my turn brought me into sight of a house as charming as an old manor in a fairy-tale. I had but a rapid and partial view of Cheverny; but that view was a glimpse of perfection. A light, sweet mansion stood looking over a wide green lawn, over banks of flowers and groups of trees. It had a striking character of elegance, produced partly by a series of Renaissance busts let into circular niches in the façade. The place looked so private, so reserved, that it seemed an act of violence to ring, a stranger and foreigner, at the graceful door. But if I had not rung I should be unable to express — as it is such a pleasure to do — my sense of the exceeding courtesy with which this ad-mirable house is shown. It was near the dinner-hour — the most sacred hour of the day; but I was freely conducted into the inhabited apartments. They are extremely beautiful. What I chiefly remember is the charming staircase of white embroidered stone, and the great *salle des gardes* and *chambre à coucher du roi* on the second floor. Cheverny, built in 1634, is of a much later date than the other royal residences of this part of France; it belongs to the end of the Renaissance, and has a touch of the rococo. The guard-room is a superb apartment, and as it contains little save its magnificent ceiling and fire-place and certain dim tapestries on its walls, you the more easily take the measure of its noble proportions. The servant opened the shutters of a single window, and the last rays of the twilight slanted into the rich brown gloom. It was in the same picturesque fashion that I saw the bed-room (adjoining) of Henry IV., where a legendary-looking bed, draped in folds

long unaltered, defined itself in the haunted dusk. Cheverny remains to me a very charming, a partly mysterious vision. I drove back to Blois in the dark, some nine miles, through the forest of Russy, which belongs to the state, and which, though consisting apparently of small timber, looked under the stars sufficiently vast and primeval. There was a damp autumnal smell and the occasional sound of a stirring thing, and as I moved through the evening air I thought of Francis I. and Henry IV.

VI.

You may go to Amboise either from Blois or from Tours; it is about halfway between these towns. The great point is to go, especially if you have put it off repeatedly; and to go, if possible, on a day when the great view of the Loire, which you enjoy from the battlements and terraces, presents itself under a friendly sky. Three persons, of whom the author of these lines was one, spent the greater part of a perfect Sunday morning in looking at it. It was astonishing, in the course of the rainiest season in the memory of the oldest Tourangeau, how many perfect days we found to our hand. The town of Amboise lies, like Tours, on the left bank of the river, a little white-faced town, staring across an admirable bridge, and leaning, behind, as it were, against the pedestal of rock on which the dark castle masses itself. The town is so small, the pedestal so big, and the castle so high and striking, that the clustered houses at the base of the rock are like the crumbs that have fallen from a well-laden table. You pass among them, however, to ascend by a circuit to the château, which you attack, obliquely, from behind. It is the property of the Comte de Paris, another pretender to the French throne; having come to him remotely, by inheritance, from his ancestor, the Duc de Penthièvre, who toward the close of the last century bought it from the crown, which had recovered it after a lapse. Like the castle of Blois it has been sadly injured and defaced by base uses, but unlike the castle of Blois it has not been completely restored. "It is very, very dirty, but very curious:" it is in these terms that I heard it described by an English lady, who was generally to be found engaged upon a tattered Tauchnitz in the little *salon de lecture* of the hotel at Tours. The description is not inaccurate; but it should be said that if part of the dirtiness of Amboise is the result of its having served for years as a barrack and as a prison, part of it comes from the presence of restoring stone-masons, who have woven over a considerable portion of it a mask of scaffolding. There is a good deal of neatness as well, and the restoration of some of the parts seems finished. This process, at Amboise, consists for the most part of simply removing the vulgar excrescences of the last two centuries. The interior is virtually a blank, the old apartments having been chopped up into small modern rooms; it will have to be completely reconstructed. A worthy woman, with a military profile and that sharp, positive manner which the goodwives who show you through the châteaux of Touraine are rather apt to have, and in whose high respectability, to say nothing of the frill of her cap and the cut of her thick brown dress, my companions and I thought we discovered the particular note or *nuance* of Orleanism — a competent, appreciative, peremptory person, I say — attended us through the particularly delightful hour we spent upon the ramparts of Amboise. Denuded and disfeatured within, and bristling without with bricklayers' ladders, the place was yet extraordinarily impressive and interesting. I should confess that we spent a great deal of time in looking at the view. Sweet was the view and magnificent; we preferred it so much to certain portions of the interior, and to

occasional effusions of historical information, that the old lady with the profile sometimes lost patience with us. We laid ourselves open to the charge of preferring it even to the little chapel of St. Hubert, which stands on the edge of the great terrace, and has, over the portal, a wonderful sculpture of the miraculous hunt of that holy man. In the way of plastic art this elaborate scene is the gem of Amboise. It seemed to us that we had never been in a place where there are so many points of vantage to look down from. In the matter of position Amboise is certainly supreme among the old houses of the Loire; and I say this with a due recollection of the claims of Chaumont and of Loches — which latter, by the way (excuse the Hibernianism), is not on the Loire. The platforms, the bastions, the terraces, the high-perched windows and balconies, the hanging gardens and dizzy crenelations of this complicated structure, keep you in perpetual relation with an immense horizon. The great feature of the place is the obligatory round tower which occupies the northern end of it, and which has now been completely restored. It is of astounding size, a fortress in itself, and contains (instead of a staircase) a wonderful inclined plane, so wide and so gradual that a coach and four might be driven to the top. This colossal cylinder has to-day no visible use; but it corresponds, happily enough, with the great circle of the prospect. The gardens of Amboise, perched in the air, covering the irregular remnants of the platform on which the castle stands, and making up in picturesqueness what they lack in extent, constitute of course but a scanty domain. But bathed, as we found them, in the autumn sunshine, and doubly private from their aerial site, they offered irresistible opportunities for a stroll, interrupted, as one leaned against their low parapets, by long, contemplative pauses. I remember, in particular, a certain terrace, planted with clipped limes, upon which we looked down from the summit of the big tower. It seemed from that point to be absolutely necessary to one's happiness to go down and spend the rest of the morning there; it was an ideal place to walk to and fro and talk. Our venerable conductress, to whom our relation had gradually become more filial, permitted us to gratify this innocent wish — to the extent, that is, of taking a turn or two under the mossy *tilleuls*. At the end of this terrace is the low door in a wall, against the top of which, in 1498, Charles VIII., according to an accepted tradition, knocked his head to such good purpose that he died. It was within the walls of Amboise that his widow, Anne of Brittany, already in mourning for three children, two of whom we have seen commemorated in sepulchral marble at Tours, spent the first violence of that grief which was presently dispelled by a union with her husband's cousin and successor, Louis XII. Amboise was a frequent resort of the French court during the sixteenth century; it was here that the young Mary Stuart spent sundry hours of her first marriage. The wars of religion have left here the ineffaceable stain which they left wherever they passed. An imaginative visitor at Amboise to-day may fancy that the traces of blood are mixed with the red rust on the crossed iron bars of the grim-looking balcony, to which the heads of the Huguenots executed on the discovery of the conspiracy of La Renaudie are rumored to have been suspended. There was room on the stout balustrade — an admirable piece of work — for a ghastly array. The same rumor represents Catherine de' Medici and the young queen as watching from this balcony the *noyades* of the captured Huguenots in the Loire. The facts of history are bad enough, the fictions are, if possible, worse; but there is little doubt that the future Queen of Scots learnt the first

lessons of life at a horrible school. If in subsequent years she was a prodigy of innocence and virtue, it was not the fault of her whilom mother-in-law, of her uncles of the house of Guise, or of the examples presented to her either at the windows of the castle of Amboise or in its more private recesses. It was difficult to believe in these dark deeds, however, as we looked through the golden morning at the placidity of the far-shining Loire. The ultimate consequence of this spectacle was a desire to follow the river as far as the castle of Chaumont. It is true that the cruelties practiced of old at Amboise might have seemed less phantasmal to persons destined to suffer from a modern form of inhumanity. The mistress of the little inn at the base of the castle rock — it stands very pleasantly beside the river, and we had breakfasted there — declared to us that the Château de Chaumont, which is often, during the autumn, closed to visitors, was at that particular moment standing so wide open to receive us that it was our duty to hire one of her carriages and drive thither with speed. This assurance was so satisfactory that we presently found ourselves seated in this wily woman's most commodious vehicle, and rolling, neither too fast nor too slow, along the margin of the Loire. The drive of about an hour, beneath constant clumps of chestnuts, was charming enough to have been taken for itself; and indeed, when we reached Chaumont, we saw that our reward was to be simply the usual reward of virtue — the consciousness of having attempted the right. The Château de Chaumont was inexorably closed: so we learned from a talkative lodge-keeper, who gave what grace she could to her refusal. This good woman's dilemma was almost touching; she wished to reconcile two impossibles. The castle was not to be visited, for the family of its master was staying there; and yet she was loath to turn away a party of which she was good enough to say that it had a "*grand genre*," for, as she also remarked, she had her living to earn. She tried to arrange a compromise, one of the elements of which was that we should descend from our carriage and trudge up a hill, which would bring us to a designated point, where, over the paling of the garden, we might obtain an oblique and surreptitious view of a small portion of the castle-walls. This suggestion led us to inquire (of each other) to what degree of baseness it is allowed to an enlightened lover of the picturesque to resort, in order to catch a glimpse of a feudal château. One of our trio decided, characteristically, against any form of derogation; so she sat in the carriage and sketched some object that was public property, while her two companions, who were not so proud, trudged up a muddy ascent which formed a kind of back-stairs. It is perhaps no more than they deserved that they were disappointed. Chaumont is feudal, if you please; but the modern spirit is in possession. It forms a vast clean-scraped mass, with big round towers, ungarnished with a leaf of ivy or a patch of moss, surrounded by gardens of moderate extent (save where the muddy lane of which I speak passes near it), and looking rather like an enormously magnified villa. The great merit of Chaumont is its position, which almost exactly resembles that of Amboise: it sweeps the river up and down, and seems to look over half the province. This, however, was better appreciated as, after coming down the hill and reëntering the carriage, we drove across the long suspension-bridge which crosses the Loire just beyond the village, and over which we made our way to the small station of Onzain, at the farther end, to take the train back to Tours. Look back from the middle of this bridge; the whole picture composes, as the painters say. The towers, the pinnacles, the fair front of the château,

perched above its fringe of garden and the rusty roofs of the village, and facing the afternoon sky, which is reflected also in the great stream that sweeps below — all this makes a contribution to your happiest memories of Touraine.

VII.

We never went to Chinon; it was a fatality. We planned it a dozen times, but the weather interfered, or the trains did n't suit, or one of the party was fatigued with the adventures of the day before. This excursion was so much postponed that it was finally postponed to everything. Besides, we had to go to Chenonceaux, to Azay-le-Rideau, to Langeais, to Loches. So I have not the memory of Chinon; I have only the regret. But regret, as well as memory, has its visions; especially when, like memory, it is assisted by photographs. The castle of Chinon, in this form, appears to me as an enormous ruin, a mediæval fortress of the extent almost of a city. It covers a hill above the Vienne, and after being impregnable in its time is indestructible to-day. (I risk this phrase in the face of the prosaic truth. Chinon, in the days when it was a prize, more than once suffered capture, and at present it is crumbling inch by inch. It is apparent, however, I believe, that these inches encroach little upon acres of masonry.) It was in the castle that Jeanne Darc had her first interview with Charles VII., and it is in the town that François Rabelais is supposed to have been born. To the castle, moreover, the lover of the picturesque is earnestly recommended to direct his steps. But one cannot do everything, and I would rather have missed Chinon than Chenonceaux. Fortunate exceedingly were the few hours that we passed at this exquisite residence.

"In 1747," says Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in his Confessions, "we went to spend the autumn in Touraine, at the château of Chenonceaux, a royal residence upon the Cher, built by Henry II. for Diana of Poitiers, whose initials are still to be seen there, and now in possession of M. Dupin, the farmer-general. We amused ourselves greatly in this fine spot; the living was of the best, and I became as fat as a monk. We made a great deal of music and acted comedies." This is the only description that Rousseau gives of one of the most picturesque houses in France, and of an episode that must have counted as one of the most agreeable in his uncomfortable career. The eighteenth century contented itself with general epithets, and when Jean-Jacques has said that Chenonceaux was a "beau lieu" he thinks himself absolved from further characterization. We later sons of time have, both for our pleasure and our pain, invented the fashion of special terms, and I am afraid that even common decency obliges me to pay some larger tribute than this to the architectural gem of Touraine. Fortunately, I can discharge my debt with gratitude. In going from Tours you leave the valley of the Loire and enter that of the Cher, and at the end of about an hour you see the turrets of the castle on your right, among the trees, down in the meadows, beside the quiet little river. The station and the village are about ten minutes' walk from the château, and the village contains a very tidy inn, where, if you are not in too great a hurry to commune with the shades of the royal favorite and the jealous queen, you will perhaps stop and order a dinner to be ready for you in the evening. A straight, tall avenue leads to the grounds of the castle; what I owe to exactitude compels me to add that it is crossed by the railway-line. The place is so arranged, however, that the château need know nothing of passing trains — which pass, indeed, though the grounds are not large, at a very sufficient distance. I may add that the trains throughout this part of France have a noiseless, desultory,

dawdling, almost stationary quality, which makes them less of an offense than usual. It was a Sunday afternoon, and the light was yellow, save under the trees of the avenue, where, in spite of the waning of September, it was duskily green. Three or four peasants, in festal attire, were strolling about. On a bench, at the beginning of the avenue, sat a man with two women. As I advanced with my companions he rose, after a sudden stare, and approached me with a smile, in which (to be Johnsonian for a moment) certitude was mitigated by modesty, and eagerness was embellished with respect. He came toward me with a salutation that I had seen before, and I am happy to say that after an instant I ceased to be guilty of the brutality of not knowing where. There was only one place in the world where people smile like that — only one place where the art of salutation has that perfect grace. This excellent creature used to crook his arm, in Venice, when I stepped into my gondola; and I now laid my hand on that member with the familiarity of glad recognition; for it was only surprise that had kept me even for a moment from accepting the genial Francesco as an ornament of the landscape of Touraine. What on earth — the phrase is the right one — was a Venetian gondolier doing at Chenonceaux? He had been brought from Venice, gondola and all, by the mistress of the charming house, to paddle about on the Cher. Our meeting was affectionate, though there was a kind of violence in seeing him so far from home. He was too well dressed, too well fed; he had grown stout, and his nose had the tinge of good claret. He remarked that the life of the household to which he had the honor to belong was that of a *casa regia;* which must have been a great change for poor Checco, whose habits in Venice were not regal. However, he was the sympathetic Checco still; and for five minutes after I left him I thought less about the little pleasure-house by the Cher than about the palaces of the Adriatic. But attention was not long in coming round to the charming structure that presently rose before us. The pale yellow front of the château, the small scale of which is at first a surprise, rises beyond a considerable court, at the entrance of which a massive and detached round tower, with a turret on its brow (a relic of the building that preceded the actual villa), appears to keep guard. This court is not inclosed — or is inclosed, at least, only by the gardens, portions of which are at present in a state of reformation. Therefore, though Chenonceaux has no great height, its delicate façade stands up boldly enough. This façade, one of the most finished things in Touraine, consists of two stories, surmounted by an attic which, as so often in the buildings of the French Renaissance, is the richest part of the house. The high-pitched roof contains three windows of beautiful design, covered with embroidered caps and flowering into crocketed spires. The window above the door is deeply niched; it opens upon a balcony made in the form of a double pulpit — one of the most charming features of the front. Chenonceaux is not large, as I say, but into its delicate compass is packed a great deal of history — history which differs from that of Amboise and Blois in being of the private and sentimental kind. The echoes of the place, faint and far as they are to-day, are not political, but personal. Chenonceaux dates, as a residence, from the year 1515, when the shrewd Thomas Bohier, a public functionary who had grown rich in handling the finances of Normandy, and had acquired the estate from a family which, after giving it many feudal lords, had fallen into poverty, erected the present structure on the foundations of an old mill. The design is attributed, with I know not what justice, to Pierre Nepveu, *alias* Trinqueau, the audacious ar-

chitect of Chambord. On the death of Bohier the house passed to his son, who, however, was forced, under cruel pressure, to surrender it to the crown, in compensation for a so-called deficit in the accounts of the late superintendent of the treasury. Francis I. held the place till his death, but Henry II., on ascending the throne, presented it out of hand to that mature charmer, the admired of two generations, Diana of Poitiers. Diana enjoyed it till the death of her protector; but when this event occurred, the widow of the monarch, who had been obliged to submit in silence, for years, to the ascendency of a rival, took the most pardonable of all the revenges with which the name of Catherine de' Medici is associated, and turned her out-of-doors. Diana was not in want of refuges, and Catherine went through the form of giving her Chaumont in exchange; but there was only one Chenonceaux. Catherine devoted herself to making the place more completely unique. The feature that renders it sole of its kind is not appreciated till you wander round to either side of the house. If a certain springing lightness is the characteristic of Chenonceaux, if it bears in every line the aspect of a place of recreation, a place intended for delicate, chosen pleasures, nothing can confirm this expression better than the strange, unexpected movement with which, from behind, it carries itself across the river. The earlier building stands in the water; it had inherited the foundations of the mill destroyed by Thomas Bohier. The first step, therefore, had been taken upon solid piles of masonry, and the ingenious Catherine — she was a *raffinée* — simply proceeded to take the others. She continued the piles to the opposite bank of the Cher, and over them she threw a long, straight gallery of two stories. This part of the château, which looks simply like a house built upon a bridge and occupying its entire length, is of course the great curiosity of Chenonceaux. It forms on each floor a charming corridor, which, within, is illuminated from either side by the flickering river-light. The architecture of these galleries, seen from without, is less elegant than that of the main building, but the aspect of the whole thing is delightful. I have spoken of Chenonceaux as a "villa," using the word advisedly, for the place is neither a castle nor a palace. It is a great villa, but it has the villa quality — the look of being intended for life in common. This look is not at all contradicted by the wing across the Cher, which only suggests intimate pleasures, as the French say: walks, in pairs, on rainy days; games and dances on autumn nights; together with as much as may be of moonlighted dialogue (or silence) in the course of evenings more genial still, in the well-marked recesses of windows. It is safe to say that such things took place there in the last century, during the kindly reign of Monsieur and Madame Dupin. This period presents itself as the happiest in the annals of Chenonceaux. I know not what festive train the great Diana may have led, and my imagination, I am afraid, is only feebly kindled by the records of the luxurious pastimes organized on the banks of the Cher by the terrible daughter of the Medici, whose appreciation of the good things of life was perfectly consistent with a failure to perceive why others should live to enjoy them. The best society that ever assembled there was collected at Chenonceaux during the middle of the eighteenth century. This was surely, in France at least, the age of good society, the period when it was well for appreciative people to have been born. Such people should of course have belonged to the fortunate few, and not to the miserable many, for the prime condition of a society being good is that it be not too large. The sixty years that preceded the French Revolution were

the golden age of fireside talk and of those pleasures which proceed from the presence of women in whom the social art is both instinctive and acquired. The women of that period were, above all, good company; the fact is attested by a thousand documents. Chenonceaux offered a perfect setting to free conversation; and infinite joyous discourse must have mingled with the liquid murmur of the Cher. Claude Dupin was not only a great man of business, but a man of honor and a patron of knowledge; and his wife was gracious, clever, and wise. They had acquired this famous property by purchase (from one of the Bourbons; for Chenonceaux, for two centuries after the death of Catherine de' Medici, remained constantly in princely hands), and it was transmitted to their son, Dupin de Francueil, grandfather of Madame George Sand. This lady, in her Correspondence, lately published, describes a visit that she paid, more than thirty years ago, to those members of her family who were still in possession. The owner of Chenonceaux to-day is the daughter of an Englishman naturalized in France. But I have wandered far from my story, which is simply a sketch of the surface of the place. Seen obliquely, from either side, in combination with its bridge and gallery, the château is singular and fantastic, a striking example of a willful and capricious conception. Unfortunately, all caprices are not so graceful and successful, and I grudge the honor of this one to the false and blood-polluted Catherine. (To be exact, I believe the arches of the bridge were laid by the elderly Diana. It was Catherine, however, who completed the monument.) Within, the house has been, as usual, restored. The staircases and ceilings, in all the old royal residences of this part of France, are the parts that have suffered least; many of them have still much of the life of the old time about them. Some of the chambers of Chenonceaux, however, encumbered as they are with modern detail, derive a sufficiently haunted and suggestive look from the deep setting of their beautiful windows, which thickens the shadows and makes dark corners. There is a charming little gothic chapel, with its apse hanging over the water, fastened to the left flank of the house. Some of the upper balconies, which look along the outer face of the gallery, and either up or down the river, are delightful protected nooks. We walked through the lower gallery to the other bank of the Cher; this fine apartment appeared to be for the moment a purgatory of ancient furniture. It terminates rather abruptly; it simply stops with a blank wall. There ought, of course, to have been a pavilion here, though I prefer very much the old defect to any modern remedy. The wall is not so blank, however, but that it contains a door which opens on a rusty draw-bridge. This draw-bridge traverses the small gap which divides the end of the gallery from the bank of the stream. The house, therefore, does not literally rest on opposite edges of the Cher, but rests on one and just fails to rest on the other. The pavilion would have made that up; but after a moment we ceased to miss this imaginary feature. We passed the little draw-bridge, and wandered a while beside the river. From this opposite bank the mass of the château looked more charming than ever; and the little peaceful, lazy Cher, where two or three men were fishing in the eventide, flowed under the clear arches and between the solid pedestals of the part that spanned it, with the softest, vaguest light on its bosom. This was the right perspective; we were looking across the river of time. The whole scene was deliciously mild. The moon came up; we passed back through the gallery and strolled about a little longer in the gardens. It was very still. I met my old gondolier in the twilight. He showed me his gondola; but I hated, somehow, to see it

there. I don't like, as the French say, to *mêler les genres.* A gondola in a little flat French river? The image was not less irritating, if less injurious, than the spectacle of a steamer in the Grand Canal, which had driven me away from Venice a year and a half before. We took our way back to the Grand Monarque, and waited in the little inn-parlor for a late train to Tours. We were not impatient, for we had an excellent dinner to occupy us; and even after we had dined we were still content to sit a while and exchange remarks upon the superior civilization of France. Where else, at a village-inn, should we have fared so well? Where else should we have sat down to our refreshment without condescension? There were two or three countries in which it would not have been well for us to arrive hungry on a Sunday evening, at so modest an hostelry. At the little inn at Chenonceaux the *cuisine* was not only excellent, but the service was graceful. We were waited on by mademoiselle and her mamma; it was so that mademoiselle alluded to the elder lady, as she uncorked for us a bottle of Vouvray mousseux. We were very comfortable, very genial; we even went so far as to say to each other that Vouvray mousseux was a delightful wine. From this opinion, indeed, one of our trio differed; but this member of the party had already exposed herself to the charge of being too fastidious, by declining to descend from the carriage at Chaumont and take that back-stairs view of the castle.

VIII.

Without fastidiousness, it was fair to declare, on the other hand, that the little inn at Azay-le-Rideau was very bad. It was terribly dirty, and it was in charge of a fat *mégère* whom the appearance of four trustful travelers — we were four, with an illustrious fourth, on that occasion — roused apparently to fury. I attached a great importance to this incongruous hostess, for she uttered the only uncivil words I heard spoken (in connection with any business of my own) during a tour of some six weeks in France. Breakfast not at Azay-le-Rideau, therefore, too trustful traveler; or if you do so, be either very meek or very bold. Breakfast not, save under stress of circumstance; but let no circumstance whatever prevent you from going to see the admirable château, which is almost a rival of Chenonceaux. The village lies close to the gates, though after you pass these gates you leave it well behind. A little avenue, as at Chenonceaux, leads to the house, making a pretty vista as you approach the sculptured doorway. Azay is a most perfect and beautiful thing; I should place it third in any list of the great houses of this part of France in which these houses should be ranked according to charm. For beauty of detail it comes after Blois and Chenonceaux; but it comes before Amboise and Chambord. On the other hand, of course, it is inferior in majesty to either of these vast structures. Like Chenonceaux it is a watery place, though it is more meagrely moated than the little château on the Cher. It consists of a large square *corps de logis*, with a round tower at each angle, rising out of a somewhat too slumberous pond. The water — the water of the Indre — surrounds it, but it is only on one side that it bathes its feet in the moat. On one of the others there is a little terrace, treated as a garden, and in front there is a wide court, formed by a wing which, on the right, comes forward. This front, covered with sculptures, is of the richest, stateliest effect. The court is approached by a bridge over the pond, and the house would reflect itself in this wealth of water if the water were a trifle less opaque. But there is a certain stagnation — it affects more senses than one — about the picturesque pools of Azay. On the hither side of the bridge is a garden, over-

shadowed by fine old sycamores — a garden shut in by greenhouses and by a fine last-century gateway, flanked with twin lodges. Beyond the cheâteau and the standing waters behind it is a so-called *parc*, which, however, it must be confessed, has little of park-like beauty. The old houses (many of them, that is) remain, in France; but the old timber does not remain, and the denuded aspect of the few acres that surround the châteaux of Touraine is pitiful to the traveler who has learned to take the measure of such things from the manors and castles of England. The domain of the lordly Chaumont is that of an English suburban villa; and in that and in other places there is little suggestion, in the untended aspect of walk and lawns, of the vigilant British gardener. The manor of Azay, as seen to-day, dates from the early part of the sixteenth century, and the industrious Abbé Chevalier, in his very entertaining though slightly rose-colored book on Touraine,[1] speaks of it as "perhaps the purest expression of the *belle Renaissanee française*." "Its height," he goes on, "is divided between two stories, terminating under the roof in a projecting entablature which imitates a row of machicolations. Carven chimneys and tall dormer windows, covered with imagery, rise from the roofs; turrets on brackets, of elegant shape, hang with the greatest lightness from the angles of the building. The soberness of the main lines, the harmony of the empty spaces and those that are filled out, the prominence of the crowning parts, the delicacy of all the details, constitute an enchanting whole." And then the Abbé speaks of the admirable staircase which adorns the north front, and which, with its extension inside, constitutes the principal treasure of Azay. The staircase passes beneath one of the richest of porticos — a portico over which a monumental salamander indulges in the most decorative contortions. The sculptured vaults of stone which cover the windings of the staircase within, the fruits, flowers, ciphers, heraldic signs, are of the noblest effect. The interior of the château is rich, comfortable, extremely modern; but it makes no picture that compares with its external face, about which, with its charming proportions, its profuse yet not extravagant sculpture, there is something very tranquil and pure. I took a particular fancy to the roof, high, steep, old, with its slope of bluish slate, and the way the weather-worn chimneys seemed to grow out of it, like living things out of a deep soil. The only defect of the house is the blankness and bareness of its walls, which have none of those delicate parasites attached to them that one likes to see on the surface of old dwellings. It is true that this bareness results in a kind of silvery whiteness of complexion, which carries out the tone of the quiet pools and even that of the scanty and shadeless park.

[1] Promenades pittoresques en Touraine. Tours. 1869.

IX.

I hardly know what to say about the tone of Langeais, which, though I have left it to the end of my sketch, formed the objective point of the first excursion I made from Tours. Langeais is rather dark and gray; it is perhaps the simplest and most severe of all the castles of the Loire. I don't know why I should have gone to see it before any other, unless it be because I remembered the Duchesse de Langeais, who figures in several of Balzac's novels, and found this association very potent. The Duchesse de Langeais is a somewhat transparent fiction; but the castle from which Balzac borrowed the title of his heroine is an extremely solid fact. My doubt just above as to whether I should pronounce it exceptionally gray came from my having seen it under a sky which made most things look dark. I have, however, a very kindly memory of that

moist and melancholy afternoon, which was much more autumnal than many of the days that followed it. Langeais lies down the Loire, near the river, on the opposite side from Tours, and to go to it you will spend half an hour in the train. You pass on the way the Château de Luynes, which, with its round towers catching the afternoon light, looks uncommonly well on a hill at a distance; you pass also the ruins of the castle of Cinq-Mars, the ancestral dwelling of the young favorite of Louis XIII., the victim of Richelieu, the hero of Alfred de Vigny's novel, which is usually recommended to young ladies engaged in the study of French. Langeais is very imposing and decidedly sombre; it marks the transition from the architecture of defense to that of elegance. It rises, massive and perpendicular, out of the centre of the village to which it gives its name, and which it entirely dominates; so that as you stand before it, in the crooked and empty street, there is no resource for you but to stare up at its heavy overhanging cornice and at the huge towers surmounted with extinguishers of slate. If you follow this street to the end, however, you encounter in abundance the usual embellishments of a French village: little ponds or tanks, with women on their knees on the brink, pounding and thumping a lump of saturated linen; brown old crones, the tone of whose facial hide makes their night-caps (worn by day) look dazzling; little alleys perforating the thickness of a row of cottages, and showing you behind, as a glimpse, the vividness of a green garden. In the rear of the castle rises a hill which must formerly have been occupied by some of its appurtenances, and which indeed is still partly inclosed within its court. You may walk round this eminence, which, with the small houses of the village at its base, shuts in the castle from behind. The inclosure is not defiantly guarded, however, for a small, rough path, which you presently reach, leads up to an open gate. This gate admits you to a vague and rather limited parc, which covers the crest of the hill, and through which you may walk into the gardens of the castle. These gardens, of small extent, confront the dark walls with their brilliant parterres, and covering the gradual slope of the hill form, as it were, the fourth side of the court. This is the stateliest view of the château, which looks sufficiently grim and gray as, after asking leave of a neat young woman who sallies out to learn your errand, you sit there on a garden bench and take the measure of the three tall towers attached to this inner front and forming severally the cage of a staircase. The huge bracketed cornice (one of the features of Langeais), which is merely ornamental, as it is not machicolated, though it looks so, is continued on the inner face as well. The whole thing has a fine feudal air, though it was erected on the ruins of feudalism. The main event in the history of the castle is the marriage of Anne of Brittany to her first husband, Charles VIII., which took place in its great hall in 1491. Into this great hall we were introduced by the neat young woman — into this great hall and into sundry other halls, winding staircases, galleries, chambers. The cicerone of Langeais is in too great a hurry; the fact is pointed out in the excellent Guide-Joanne. This ill-dissimulated vice, however, is to be observed, in the country of the Loire, in every one who carries a key. It is true that at Langeais there is no great occasion to indulge in the tourist's weakness of dawdling; for the apartments, though they contain many curious odds and ends of antiquity, are not of first-rate interest. They are cold and musty indeed, with that touching smell of old furniture, as all apartments should be through which the insatiate American wanders in the rear of a bored domestic, pausing to stare at a faded tapestry

or to read the name on the frame of some simpering portrait. To return to Tours my companion and I had counted on a train which (as is not uncommon in France) existed only in the Indicateur des Chemins de Fer; and instead of waiting for another we engaged a vehicle to take us home. A sorry *carriole* or *patache* it proved to be, with the accessories of a lumbering white mare and a little wizened, ancient peasant, who had put on, in honor of the occasion, a new blouse of extraordinary stiffness and blueness. We hired the trap of an energetic woman who put it "to" with her own hands; women, in Touraine and the Blésois appearing to have the best of it in the business of letting vehicles, as well as in many other industries. There is in fact no branch of human activity in which one is not liable, in France, to find a woman engaged. Women, indeed, are not priests; but priests are, more or less, women. They are not in the army, it may be said; but then they *are* the army. They are very formidable. In France one must count with the women. The drive back from Langeais to Tours was long, slow, cold; we had an occasional spatter of rain. But the road passes most of the way close to the Loire, and there was something in our jog-trot through the darkening land, beside the flowing river, which it was very possible to enjoy.

X.

The consequence of my leaving to the last my little mention of Loches is that space and opportunity fail me; and yet a brief and hurried account of that extraordinary spot would after all be in best agreement with my visit. We snatched a fearful joy, my companion and I, the afternoon we took the train for Loches. The weather this time had been terribly against us: again and again a day that promised fair became hopelessly foul after lunch. At last we determined that if we could not make this excursion in the sunshine, we would make it with the aid of our umbrellas. We grasped them firmly and started for the station, where we were detained an unconscionable time by the evolutions, outside, of certain trains laden with liberated (and exhilarated) conscripts, who, their term of service ended, were about to be restored to civil life. The trains in Touraine are provoking; they serve as little as possible for excursions. If they convey you one way at the right hour, it is on the condition of bringing you back at the wrong; they either allow you far too little time to examine the castle or the ruin, or they leave you planted in front of it for periods that outlast curiosity. They are perverse, capricious, exasperating. It was a question of our having but an hour or two at Loches, and we could ill afford to sacrifice to accidents. One of the accidents, however, was that the rain stopped before we got there, leaving behind it a moist mildness of temperature and a cool and lowering sky, which were in perfect agreement with the gray old city. Loches is certainly one of the greatest impressions of the traveler in central France — the largest cluster of curious things that presents itself to his sight. It rises above the valley of the Indre, the charming stream set in meadows and sedges, which wanders through the province of Berry and through many of the novels of Madame George Sand; lifting from the summit of a hill, which it covers to the base, a confusion of terraces, ramparts, towers and spires. Having but little time, as I say, we scaled the hill amain, and wandered briskly through this labyrinth of antiquities. The rain had decidedly stopped, and save that we had our train on our minds, we saw Loches to the best advantage. We enjoyed that sensation with which the conscientious tourist is — or ought to be — well acquainted, and for which, at any rate, he has a formula, in his rough-and-ready language. We "experienced,"

as they say, an "agreeable disappointment." We were surprised and delighted; we had not suspected that Loches was so good. I hardly know what is best there: the strange and impressive little collegial church, with its Romanesque atrium or narthex, its doorways covered with primitive sculpture of the richest kind, its treasure of a so-called pagan altar, embossed with fighting warriors, its three pyramidal domes, so unexpected, so sinister, which I have not met elsewhere, in church architecture; or the huge square keep, of the eleventh century, the most cliff-like tower I remember, whose immeasurable thickness I did not penetrate; or the subterranean mysteries of two other less striking but not less historic dungeons, into which a terribly imperative little cicerone introduced us, with the aid of downward ladders, ropes, torches, warnings, extended hands, and many fearful anecdotes — all in impervious darkness. These horrible prisons of Loches, at an incredible distance below the daylight, were a favorite resource of Louis XI., and were for the most part, I believe, constructed by him. One of the towers of the castle is garnished with the hooks or supports of the celebrated iron cage in which he confined the Cardinal La Balue, who survived so much longer than might have been expected this extraordinary mixture of seclusion and exposure. All these things form part of the castle of Loches, whose enormous *enceinte* covers the whole of the top of the hill, and abounds in dismantled gateways, in crooked passages, in winding lanes that lead to postern doors, in long façades that look upon terraces interdicted to the visitor, who perceives with irritation that they command magnificent views. These views are the property of the sub-prefect of the department, who resides at the Château de Loches, and who has also the enjoyment of a garden — a garden compressed and curtailed, as those of old castles that perch on hill-tops are apt to be — containing a horse-chesnut tree of fabulous size, a tree of a circumference so vast and so perfect that the whole population of Loches might sit in concentric rows beneath its boughs. The gem of the place, however, is neither the big *marronier*, nor the collegial church, nor the mighty dungeon, nor the hideous prisons of Louis XI.; it is simply the tomb of Agnes Sorel, *la belle des belles*, so many years the mistress of Charles VII. She was buried, in 1450, in the collegial church, whence, in the beginning of the present century, her remains, with the monument that marks them, were transferred to one of the towers of the castle. She has always, I know not with what justice, enjoyed a fairer fame than most ladies who have occupied her position, and this fairness is expressed in the delicate statue that surmounts her tomb. It represents her lying there in lovely demureness, her hands folded with the best modesty, a little kneeling angel at either side of her head, and her feet, hidden in the folds of her decent robe, resting upon a pair of couchant lambs, innocent reminders of her name. Agnes, however, was not lamb-like, inasmuch as, according to popular tradition at least, she exerted herself sharply in favor of the expulsion of the English from France. It is one of the suggestions of Loches that the young Charles VII., hard put to it as he was for a treasury and a capital — "le roi de Bourges," he was called at Paris — was yet a rather privileged mortal, to stand up as he does before posterity between the noble Joan and the *gentille Agnès;* deriving, however, much more honor from one of these companions than from the other. Almost as delicate a relic of antiquity as this fascinating tomb is the exquisite oratory of Anne of Brittany, among the apartments of the castle the only chamber worthy of note. This small room, hardly larger than a closet, and forming part of the addition made to

the edifice by Charles VIII., is embroidered over with the curious and remarkably decorative device of the ermine and festooned cord. The objects in themselves are not especially graceful; but the constant repetition of the figure on the walls and ceiling produces an effect of richness, in spite of the modern whitewash with which, if I remember rightly, they have been endued. The little streets of Loches wander crookedly down the hill, and are full of charming pictorial "bits:" an old town-gate, passing under a mediæval tower, which is ornamented by gothic windows and the empty niches of statues; a meagre but delicate hôtel de ville, of the Renaissance, nestling close beside it; a curious *chancellerie* of the middle of the sixteenth century, with mythological figures and a Latin inscription on the front — both of these latter buildings being rather unexpected features of the huddled and precipitous little town. Loches has a suburb on the other side of the Indre, which we had contented ourselves with looking down at from the heights, while we wondered whether, even if it had not been getting late and our train were more accommodating, we should care to take our way across the bridge and look up that bust, in terra-cotta, of Francis I., which is the principal ornament of the Château de Sansac and the faubourg of Beaulieu. I think we decided that we should not; that we were already quite well enough acquainted with the long nose of that monarch.

Henry James.

GLINTS OF NAHANT.

Beyond the clatter of the town,
The surf-beat on the level strand,
The beds of sea-weed, dead and brown,
The ripple-etchings on the sand;

The wee sandpipers, as they fled
Like shadows down the sandy waste,
Pursuing every wave that fled,
And fleeing every wave that chased;

The isle, from whose lone cottage soon
The beacon light should flash aslant
Across the foam; the pale day-moon;
The purple headlands resonant;

The twilight, flecked with fading ships;
The passionate sea, that wooed the shore,
And kissed, with white and quivering lips,
Her garment's hem but could no more;

The night, with breaths of vague perfume,
And breezes wandering fitfully;
And ever, through the tremulous gloom,
The rhythmic thunder of the sea!

Charles F. Lummis.

kitchen, in anticipation of our supper, she had been afraid to leave the cat alone in the house, lest we should find nothing left to eat when we returned. This was sufficiently prudent, for a scatter-brained old spendthrift like Mariuccia.

That was a merry supper, and De Pretis became highly dramatic when we got to the second flask.

F. Marion Crawford.

EN PROVINCE.

III.

FROM BOURGES TO LA ROCHELLE.

I.

I KNOW not whether the exact limits of an excursion, as distinguished from a journey, have ever been fixed; at any rate, it seemed none of my business, at Tours, to settle the question. Therefore, though the making of excursions had been the purpose of my stay, I thought it vain, while I started for Bourges, to determine to which category that little expedition might belong. It was not till the third day that I returned to Tours, and the distance, traversed for the most part after dark, was even greater than I had supposed. That, however, was partly the fault of a tiresome wait at Vierzon, where I had more than enough time to dine, very badly, at the *buffet*, and to observe the proceedings of a family who had entered my railway carriage at Tours and had conversed, unreservedly, for my benefit, all the way from that station — a family whom it entertained me to assign to the class of *petite noblesse de province*. Their noble origin was confirmed by the way they all made *maigre* in the refreshment-room (it happened to be a Friday), as if it had been possible to do anything else. They ate two or three omelettes apiece, and ever so many little cakes, while the positive, talkative mother watched her children as the waiter handed about the roast fowl. I was destined to share the secrets of this family to the end; for when I had taken place in the empty train that was in waiting to convey us to Bourges, the same vigilant woman pushed them all on top of me into my compartment, though the carriages on either side contained no travelers at all. It was better, I found, to have dined (even on omelettes and little cakes) at the station at Vierzon than at the hotel at Bourges, which, when I reached it at nine o'clock at night, did not strike me as the prince of hotels. The inns in the smaller provincial towns in France are all, as the term is, commercial, and the *commis-voyageur* is in triumphant possession. I saw a great deal of him for several weeks after this; for he was apparently the only traveler in the southern provinces, and it was my daily fate to sit opposite to him at tables d'hôte and in railway trains. He may be known by two infallible signs: his hands are fat, and he tucks his napkin into his shirt-collar. In spite of these idiosyncrasies, he seemed to me a reserved and inoffensive person, with singularly little of the demonstrative good-humor that he has been described as possessing. I saw no one who reminded me of Balzac's "illustre Gaudissart;" and indeed, in the course of a month's journey through a large part of France, I heard so little desultory conversation that I wondered whether a change had not come over the spirit of the people. They seemed to me as silent as Americans when Americans have not

been "introduced," and infinitely less addicted to exchanging remarks in railway trains and at tables d'hôte than the colloquial and cursory English; a fact perhaps not worth mentioning were it not at variance with that reputation which the French have long enjoyed of being a preëminently sociable nation. The common report of the character of a people is, however, an indefinable product; and it is apt to strike the traveler who observes for himself as very wide of the mark. The English, who have for ages been described (mainly by the French) as the dumb, stiff, unapproachable race, present to-day a remarkable appearance of good-humor and garrulity, and are distinguished by their facility of intercourse. On the other hand, any one who has seen half a dozen Frenchmen pass a whole day together in a railway-carriage without breaking silence is forced to believe that the traditional reputation of these gentlemen is simply the survival of some primitive formula. It was true, doubtless, before the Revolution; but there have been great changes since then. The question of which is the better taste, to talk to strangers or to hold your tongue, is a matter apart; I incline to believe that the French reserve is the result of a more definite conception of social behavior. I allude to it only because it is at variance with the national fame, and at the same time is compatible with a very easy view of life in certain other directions. On some of these latter points the Boule d'Or at Bourges was full of instruction; boasting, as it did, of a hall of reception in which, amid old boots that had been brought to be cleaned, old linen that was being sorted for the wash, and lamps of evil odor that were awaiting replenishment, a strange, familiar, promiscuous household life went forward. Small scullions in white caps and aprons slept upon greasy benches; the Boots sat staring at you while you fumbled, in a row of pigeon-holes, for your candlestick or your key; and, amid the coming and going of the commis-voyageurs, a little sempstress bent over the under-garments of the hostess, the latter being a heavy, stern, silent woman, who looked at people very hard.

It was not to be looked at in that manner that one had come all the way from Tours; so that within ten minutes after my arrival I sallied out into the darkness to get somehow and somewhere a happier impression. However late in the evening I may arrive at a place, I cannot go to bed without an impression. The natural place, at Bourges, to look for one seemed to be the cathedral; which, moreover, was the only thing that could account for my presence *dans cette galère*. I turned out of a small square, in front of the hotel, and walked up a narrow, sloping street, paved with big, rough stones and guiltless of a footway. It was a splendid starlight night; the stillness of a sleeping *ville de province* was over everything; I had the whole place to myself. I turned to my right, at the top of the street, where presently a short, vague lane brought me into sight of the cathedral. I approached it obliquely, from behind; it loomed up in the darkness above me, enormous and sublime. It stands on the top of the large but not lofty eminence over which Bourges is scattered — a very good position, as French cathedrals go, for they are not all as nobly situated as Chartres and Laon. On the side on which I approached it (the south) it is tolerably well exposed, though the precinct is shabby; in front, it is rather too much shut in. These defects, however, it makes up for on the north side and behind, where it presents itself in the most admirable manner to the garden of the Archevêché, which has been arranged as a public walk, with the usual formal alleys of the *jardin français*. I must add that I appreciated these points only on the fol-

lowing day. As I stood there in the light of the stars, many of which had an autumnal sharpness, while others were shooting over the heavens, the huge, rugged vessel of the church overhung me in very much the same way as the black hull of a ship at sea would overhang a solitary swimmer. It seemed colossal, stupendous, a dark leviathan. The next morning, which was lovely, I lost no time in going back to it, and found, with satisfaction, that the daylight did it no injury. The cathedral of Bourges is indeed magnificently huge, and if it is a good deal wanting in lightness and grace it is perhaps only the more imposing. I read in the excellent handbook of M. Joanne that it was projected "*dès* 1172," but commenced only in the first years of the thirteenth century. "The nave," the writer adds, "was finished *tant bien que mal, faute de ressources;* the façade is of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in its lower part, and of the fourteenth in its upper." The allusion to the nave means the omission of the transepts. The west front consists of two vast but imperfect towers; one of which (the south) is immensely buttressed, so that its outline slopes forward, like that of a pyramid, being the taller of the two. If they had spires, these towers would be prodigious; as it is, given the rest of the church, they are wanting in elevation. There are five deeply recessed portals, all in a row, each surmounted with a gable; the gable over the central door being exceptionally high. Above the porches, which give the measure of its width, the front rears itself, piles itself, on a great scale, carried up by galleries, arches, windows, sculptures, and supported by the extraordinarily thick buttresses of which I have spoken, and which, though they embellish it with deep shadows thrown sidewise, do not improve its style. The portals, especially the middle one, are extremely interesting; they are covered with curious early sculptures. The middle one, however, I must describe alone. It has no less than six rows of figures — the others have four — some of which, notably the upper one, are still in their places. The arch at the top has three tiers of elaborate imagery. The upper of these is divided by the figure of Christ in judgment, of great size, stiff and terrible, with outstretched arms. On either side of him are ranged three or four angels, with the instruments of the Passion. Beneath him, in the second frieze, stands the angel of justice, with his scales; and on either side of him is the vision of the last judgment. The good prepare, with infinite titillation and complacency, to ascend to the skies; while the bad are dragged, pushed, hurled, stuffed, crammed, into pits and caldrons of fire. There is a charming detail in this section. Beside the angel, on the right, where the wicked are the prey of demons, stands a little female figure, that of a child, who, with hands meekly folded and head gently raised, waits for the stern angel to decide upon her fate. In this fate, however, a dreadful big devil also takes a keen interest; he seems on the point of appropriating the tender creature; he has a face like a goat and an enormous hooked nose. But the angel gently lays a hand upon the shoulder of the little girl — the movement is full of dignity — as if to say, "No, she belongs to the other side." The frieze below represents the general resurrection, with the good and the wicked emerging from their sepulchres. Nothing can be more quaint and charming than the difference shown in their way of responding to the final trump. The good get out of their tombs with a certain modest gayety, an alacrity tempered by respect; one of them kneels to pray as soon as he has disinterred himself. You may know the wicked, on the other hand, by their extreme shyness; they crawl out slowly and fearfully; they hang back, and seem to say,

"Oh, dear!" These elaborate sculptures, full of ingenuous intention and of the reality of early faith, are in a remarkable state of preservation; they bear no superficial signs of restoration and appear scarcely to have suffered from the centuries. They are delightfully expressive; the artist had the advantage of knowing exactly the effect he wished to produce. The interior of the cathedral has a great simplicity and majesty, and above all a tremendous height. The nave is extraordinary in this respect; it dwarfs everything else I know. I should add, however, that I am, in architecture, always of the opinion of the last speaker. Any great building seems to me, while I look at it, the ultimate expression. At any rate, during the hour that I sat gazing along the high vista of Bourges, the interior of the great vessel corresponded to my vision of the evening before. There is a tranquil largeness, a kind of infinitude, about such an edifice: it soothes and purifies the spirit, it illuminates the mind. There are two aisles, on either side, in addition to the nave — five in all — and, as I have said, there are no transepts; an omission which lengthens the vista, so that from my place near the door the central jeweled window in the depths of the perpendicular choir seemed a mile or two away. The second, or outward, of each pair of aisles is too low, and the first too high; without this inequality the nave would appear to take an even more prodigious flight. The double aisles pass all the way round the choir, the windows of which are inordinately rich in magnificent old glass. I have seen glass as fine in other churches; but I think I have never seen so much of it at once.

Beside the cathedral, on the north, is a curious structure of the fourteenth or fifteenth century, which looks like an enormous flying buttress, with its support, sustaining the north tower. It makes a massive arch, high in the air, and produces a very picturesque effect as people pass under it to the open gardens of the Archevêché, which extend to a considerable distance in the rear of the church. The structure supporting the arch has the girth of a largish house, and contains chambers with whose uses I am unacquainted, but to which the deep pulsations of the cathedral, the vibration of its mighty bells and the roll of its organ-tones, must be transmitted even through the great arm of stone. The archiepiscopal palace, not walled in as at Tours, is visible as a stately habitation of the last century, now in course of reparation in consequence of a fire. From this side, and from the gardens of the palace, the nave of the cathedral is visible in all its great length and height, with its extraordinary multitude of supports. The gardens aforesaid, accessible through tall iron gates, are the promenade — the Tuileries — of the town, and, very pretty in themselves, are immensely set off by the overhanging church. It was warm and sunny; the benches were empty; I sat there a long time, in that pleasant state of mind which visits the traveler in foreign towns, when he is not too hurried, while he wonders where he had better go next. The straight, unbroken line of the roof of the cathedral was very noble; but I could see from this point how much finer the effect would have been if the towers, which had dropped almost out of sight, might have been carried still higher. The archiepiscopal gardens look down at one end over a sort of esplanade or suburban avenue which lies at a lower level, on which they open, and where several detachments of soldiers (Bourges is full of soldiers) had just been drawn up. The civil population was also collecting, and I saw that something was going to happen. I learned that a private of the Chasseurs was to be "broken" for stealing, and every one was eager to behold the ceremony. Sundry other detachments arrived on the ground, besides many of

the military who had come as a matter of taste. One of them described to me the process of degradation from the ranks, and I felt for a moment a hideous curiosity to see it, under the influence of which I lingered a little. But only a little; the hateful nature of the spectacle hurried me away, at the same time that others were hurrying forward. As I turned my back upon it I reflected that human beings are cruel brutes, though I could not flatter myself that the ferocity of the thing was exclusively French. In another country the concourse would have been equally great, and the moral of it all seemed to be that even the military should n't steal.

II.

The cathedral is not the only lion of Bourges; the house of Jacques Cœur is an object of interest scarcely less positive. This remarkable man had a very strange history, and he too was "broken," like the wretched soldier whom I did not stay to see. He has been rehabilitated, however, by an age which does not fear the imputation of paradox, and a marble statue of him ornaments the street in front of his house. To interpret him according to this image — a womanish figure in a long robe and a turban, with big bare arms and a dramatic pose — would be to think of him as a kind of truculent sultana. He wore the dress of his period, but his spirit was very modern; he was a Vanderbilt or Rothschild of the fifteenth century. He supplied the ungrateful Charles VII. with money to pay the troops who, under the heroic Maid, drove the English from French soil. His house, which to-day is used as a Palais de Justice, appears to have been regarded at the time it was built very much as the residence of Mr. Vanderbilt is regarded, in New York, to-day. It stands on the edge of the hill on which most of the town is planted, so that, behind, it plunges down to a lower level, and, if you approach it on that side, as I did, to come round to the front of it you have to ascend a longish flight of steps. The back, of old, must have formed a portion of the city-wall; at any rate, it offers to view two big towers, which Joanne says were formerly part of the defense of Bourges. From the lower level of which I speak — the square in front of the post-office — the palace of Jacques Cœur looks very big and strong and feudal; from the upper street, in front of it, it looks very handsome and delicate. To this street it presents two stories and a considerable length of façade; and it has, both within and without, a great deal of curious and beautiful detail. Above the portal, in the stonework, are two false windows, in which two figures, a man and a woman, apparently household servants, are represented, in sculpture, as looking down into the street. The effect is homely, yet grotesque, and the figures are sufficiently living to make one commiserate them for having been condemned, in so dull a town, to spend several centuries at the window. They appear to be watching for the return of their master, who left his beautiful house one morning, and never came back. The history of Jacques Cœur, which has been written by M. Pierre Clément, in a volume crowned by the French Academy, is very wonderful and interesting, but I have no space to go into it here. There is no more curious example, and few more tragical, of a great fortune crumbling from one day to the other, or of the antique superstition that the gods grow jealous of human success. Merchant, millionaire, banker, ship-owner, royal favorite and minister of finance, explorer of the East and monopolist of the glittering trade between that quarter of the globe and his own, great capitalist who had anticipated the brilliant operations of the present time, he expiated his prosperity by poverty, imprisonment, and torture. The obscure points in his career

have been elucidated by M. Clément, who has drawn, moreover, a very vivid picture of the corrupt and exhausted state of France during the middle of the fifteenth century. He has shown that the spoliation of the great merchant was a deliberately calculated act, and that the king sacrificed him without scruple or shame to the avidity of a singularly villainous set of courtiers. The whole story is an extraordinary picture of high-handed rapacity — the crudest possible assertion of the right of the stronger. The victim was stripped of his property, but escaped with his life, made his way out of France, and, betaking himself to Italy, offered his services to the Pope. It is proof of the consideration that he enjoyed in Europe, and of the variety of his accomplishments, that Calixtus III. should have appointed him to take command of a fleet which his Holiness was fitting out against the Turks. Jacques Cœur, however, was not destined to lead it to victory. He died shortly after the expedition had started, in the island of Chios, in 1456. The house at Bourges, his native place, testifies in some degree to his wealth and splendor, though it has in parts that want of space which is striking in many of the buildings of the Middle Ages. The court, indeed, is on a large scale, ornamented with turrets and arcades, with several beautiful windows, and with sculptures inserted in the walls, representing the various sources of the great fortune of the owner. M. Pierre Clément describes this part of the house as having been of an "*incomparable richesse*" — an estimate of its charms which seems slightly exaggerated to-day. There is, however, something delicate and familiar in the bas-reliefs of which I have spoken, little scenes of agriculture and industry, which show that the proprietor was not ashamed of calling attention to his harvests and enterprises. To-day we should question the taste of such allusions, even in plastic form, in the house of a "merchant prince" (say in the Fifth Avenue). Why is it, therefore, that these quaint little panels at Bourges do not displease us? It is perhaps because things very ancient never, for some mysterious reason, appear vulgar. This fifteenth-century millionaire, with his palace, his autobiographical sculptures, may have produced that impression on some critical spirits of his own day.

The portress who showed me into the building was a dear little old woman, with the gentlest, sweetest, saddest face — a little white, aged face, with dark, pretty eyes and the most considerate manner. She took me into an upper hall, where there were a couple of curious chimney-pieces and a fine old oaken roof, the latter representing the hollow of a long boat. There is a certain oddity in a native of Bourges, an inland town if there ever was one, without even a river (to call a river) to encourage nautical ambitions, having found his end as admiral of a fleet; but this boat-shaped roof, which is extremely graceful and is repeated in another apartment, would suggest that the imagination of Jacques Cœur was fond of riding the waves. Indeed, as he trafficked in Oriental products and owned many galleons, it is probable that he was personally as much at home in certain Mediterranean ports as in the capital of the pastoral Berry. If, when he looked at the ceilings of his mansion, he saw his boats upside down, this was only a suggestion of the shortest way of emptying them of their treasures. He is presented in person above one of the great stone chimney-pieces, in company with his wife, Macée de Léodepart — I like to write such an extraordinary name. Carved in white stone, the two sit playing at chess at an open window, through which they appear to give their attention much more to the passers-by than to the game. They are also exhibited in other attitudes; though I do not recognize them in the composition on top

of one of the fire-places, which represents the battlements of a castle, with the defenders (little figures between the crenelations) hurling down missiles with a great deal of fury and expression. It would have been hard to believe that the man who surrounded himself with these friendly and humorous devices had been guilty of such wrong-doing as to call down the heavy hand of justice. It is a curious fact, however, that Bourges contains legal associations of a purer kind than the prosecution of Jacques Cœur, which, in spite of the rehabilitations of history can hardly be said yet to have terminated, inasmuch as the law-courts of the city are installed in his quondam residence. At a short distance from it stands the Hôtel Cujas, one of the curiosities of Bourges and habitation for many years of the great jurisconsult who revived in the sixteenth century the study of the Roman law, and professed it during the close of his life in the university of the capital of Berry. The learned Cujas had in spite of his sedentary pursuits led a very wandering life; he died at Bourges in the year 1590. Sedentary pursuits is perhaps not exactly what I should call them, having read in the Biographie Universelle, sole source of my knowledge of the renowned Cujacius, that his usual manner of study was to spread himself on his belly on the floor. He did not sit down; he lay down; and the Biographie Universelle has (for so grave a work) an amusing picture of the short, fat, untidy scholar dragging himself *à plat ventre* across his room, from one pile of books to the other. The house in which these singular gymnastics took place, and which is now the headquarters of the gendarmerie, is one of the most picturesque at Bourges. Dilapidated and discolored, it has a charming Renaissance front. A high wall separates it from the street, and on this wall, which is divided by a large open gateway, are perched two overhanging turrets. The open gateway admits you to the court, beyond which the melancholy mansion erects itself, decorated also with turrets, with fine old windows, and with a beautiful tone of faded red brick and rusty stone. It is a charming encounter for a provincial by-street; one of those accidents in the hope of which the traveler with a propensity for sketching (whether on a little paper block or on the tablets of his brain) decides to turn a corner at a venture. A brawny gendarme, in his shirt-sleeves, was polishing his boots in the court; an ancient, knotted vine, forlorn of its clusters, hung itself over a doorway and dropped its shadow on the rough grain of the wall. The place was very sketchable. I am sorry to say, however, that it was almost the only "bit." Various other curious old houses are supposed to exist at Bourges, and I wandered vaguely about in search of them. But I had little success, and I ended by becoming skeptical. Bourges is a ville de province in the full force of the term, especially as applied invidiously. The streets, narrow, tortuous, and dirty, have very wide cobble-stones; the houses for the most part are shabby, without local color. The look of things is neither modern nor antique — a kind of mediocrity of middle age. There is an enormous number of blank walls — walls of gardens, of courts, of private houses — that avert themselves from the street, as if in natural chagrin at there being so little to see. Round about is a dull, flat, featureless country, on which the magnificent cathedral looks down. There is a peculiar dullness and ugliness in a French town of this type, which, I must immediately add, is not the most frequent one. In Italy everything has a charm, a color, a grace; even desolation and *ennui*. In England a cathedral-city may be sleepy, but it is pretty sure to be mellow. In the course of six weeks spent *en province*, however, I saw few places that had not more expression than Bourges.

I went back to the cathedral; that, after all, was a feature. Then I returned to my hotel, where it was time to dine, and sat down, as usual, with the commis-voyageurs, who cut their bread on their thumb and partook of every course; and after this repast I repaired for a while to the café, which occupied a part of the basement of the inn and opened into its court. This café was a friendly, homely, sociable spot, where it seemed the habit of the master of the establishment to *tutoyer* his customers, and the practice of the customers to tutoyer the waiter. Under these circumstances, the waiter of course felt justified in sitting down at the same table as a gentleman who had come in and asked him for writing-materials. He served this gentleman with a horrible little portfolio, covered with shiny black cloth and accompanied with two sheets of thin paper, three wafers, and one of those instruments of torture which pass in France for pens — these being the utensils invariably evoked by such a request; and then, finding himself at leisure, he placed himself opposite and began to write a letter of his own. This trifling incident reminded me afresh that France is a democratic country. I think I received an admonition to the same effect from the free, familiar way in which the game of whist was going on just behind me. It was attended with a great deal of noisy pleasantry, flavored every now and then with a dash of irritation. There was a young man of whom I made a note; he was such a beautiful specimen of his class. Sometimes he was very facetious, chattering, joking, punning, showing off; then, as the game went on and he lost, and had to pay the "*consommation*," he dropped his amiability, slanged his partner, declared he would n't play any more, and went away in a fury. Nothing could be more perfect or more amusing than the contrast. The manner of the whole affair was such as, I apprehend, one would not have seen among our English-speaking people; both the jauntiness of the first phase and the petulance of the second. To hold the balance straight, however, I may remark that if the men were all fearful "cads," they were, with their cigarettes and their inconsistency, less heavy, less brutal, than our dear English-speaking cad; just as the bright little café, where a robust materfamilias, doling out sugar and darning a stocking, sat in her place under the mirror behind the *comptoir*, was a much more civilized spot than a British public-house, or a "commercial room," with pipes and whisky, or even than an American saloon.

III.

It is very certain that when I left Tours for Le Mans it was a journey and not an excursion; for I had no intention of coming back. The question, indeed, was to get away; no easy matter in France, in the early days of October, when the whole *jeunesse* of the country is going back to school. It is accompanied, apparently, with parents and grandparents, and it fills the trains with little pale-faced *lycéens*, who gaze out of the windows with a longing, lingering air, not unnatural on the part of small members of a race in which life is intense, who are about to be restored to those big educative barracks that do such violence to our American appreciation of the opportunities of boyhood. The train stopped every five minutes; but fortunately the country was charming, hilly and bosky, eminently good-humored, and dotted here and there with a smart little château. The old capital of the province of the Maine, which has given its name to a great American State, is a fairly interesting town, but I confess that I found in it less than I expected to admire. My expectations had doubtless been my own fault; there is no particular reason why Le Mans should fascinate. It stands upon a hill, indeed — a much better hill than the gentle swell

of Bourges. This hill, however, is not steep in all directions; from the railway, as I arrived, it was not even perceptible. Since I am making comparisons, I may remark that, on the other hand, the Boule d'Or at Le Mans is an appreciably better inn than the Boule d'Or at Bourges. It looks out upon a small market-place which has a certain amount of character and seems to be slipping down the slope on which it lies, though it has in the middle an ugly *halle*, or circular market-house, to keep it in position. At Le Mans, as at Bourges, my first business was with the cathedral, to which I lost no time in directing my steps. It suffered by juxtaposition to the great church I had seen a few days before; yet it has some noble features. It stands on the edge of the eminence of the town, which falls straight away on two sides of it, and makes a striking mass, bristling behind, as you see it from below, with rather small but singularly numerous flying buttresses. On my way to it I happened to walk through the one street which contains a few ancient and curious houses; a very crooked and untidy lane, of really mediæval aspect, honored with the denomination of the Grand' Rue. Here is the house of Queen Berengaria — an absurd name, as the building is of a date some three hundred years later than the wife of Richard Cœur de Lion, who has a sepulchral monument in the south aisle of the cathedral. The structure in question — very sketchable, if the sketcher could get far enough away from it — is an elaborate little dusky façade, overhanging the street, ornamented with panels of stone, which are covered with delicate Renaissance sculpture. A fat old woman, standing in the door of a small grocer's shop next to it — a most gracious old woman, with a bristling mustache and a charming manner — told me what the house was, and also indicated to me a rotten-looking brown wooden mansion, in the same street, nearer the cathedral, as the Maison Scarron. The author of the Roman Comique, and of a thousand facetious verses, enjoyed for some years, in the early part of his life, a benefice in the cathedral of Le Mans, which gave him a right to reside in one of the canonical houses. He was rather an odd canon, but his history is a combination of oddities. He wooed the comic muse from the arm-chair of a cripple, and in the same position — he was unable even to go down on his knees — prosecuted that other suit which made him the first husband of a lady of whom Louis XIV. was to be the second. There was little of comedy in the future Madame de Maintenon; though after all there was doubtless as much as there need have been in the wife of a poor man who was moved to compose for his tomb such an epitaph as this, which I quote from the Biographie Universelle: —

> "Celui qui cy maintenant dort,
> Fit plus de pitié que d'envie,
> Et souffrit mille fois la mort,
> Avant que de perdre la vie.
> Passant, ne fais icy de bruit,
> Et garde bien qu'il ne s'éveille,
> Car voicy la première nuit,
> Que le pauvre Scarron sommeille."

There is rather a quiet, satisfactory *place* in front of the cathedral, with some good "bits" in it; notably a turret at the angle of one of the towers, and a very fine, steep-roofed dwelling, behind low walls, which it overlooks, with a tall iron gate. This house has two or three little pointed towers, a big, black, precipitous roof, and a general air of having had a history. There are houses which are scenes, and there are houses which are only houses. The trouble with the domestic architecture of the United States is that it is not scenic, thank Heaven! and the good fortune of an old structure like the turreted mansion on the hillside of Le Mans is that it is not simply a house. It is a place, as it were, as well. It

would be well, indeed, if it might have communicated a little of its expression to the front of the cathedral, which has none of its own. Shabby, rusty, unfinished, this front has a Romanesque portal, but nothing in the way of a tower. One sees from without, at a glance, the peculiarity of the church — the disparity between the Romanesque nave, which is small and of the twelfth century, and the immense and splendid transepts and choir, of a period a hundred years later. Outside, this end of the church rises far above the nave, which looks merely like a long porch leading to it, with a small and curious Romanesque porch in its own south flank. The transepts, shallow but very lofty, display to the spectators in the *place* the reach of their two clere-story windows, which occupy, above, the whole expanse of the wall. The south transept terminates in a sort of tower, which is the only one of which the cathedral can boast. Within, the effect of the choir is superb; it is a church in itself, with the nave simply for a point of view. As I stood there, I read in my Murray that it has the stamp of the date of the perfection of pointed Gothic, and I found nothing to object to the remark. It suffers little by confrontation with Bourges, and, taken in itself, seems to me quite as fine. A passage of double aisles surrounds it, with the arches that divide them supported on very thick round columns, not clustered. There are twelve chapels in this passage, and a charming little lady-chapel, filled with gorgeous old glass. The sustained height of this almost detached choir is very noble; its lightness and grace, its soaring symmetry, carry the eye up to places in the air from which it is slow to descend. Like Tours, like Chartres, like Bourges (apparently like all the French cathedrals, and unlike several English ones), Le Mans is rich in splendid glass. The beautiful upper windows of the choir make, far aloft, a sort of gallery of pictures, blooming with vivid color. It is the south transept that contains the formless image — a clumsy stone woman, lying on her back — which purports to represent Queen Berengaria aforesaid. The view of the cathedral from the rear is, as usual, very fine. A small garden behind it masks its base; but you descend the hill to a large *place de foire*, adjacent to a fine old public promenade which is known as Les Jacobins, a sort of miniature Tuileries, where I strolled for a while in rectangular alleys, destitute of herbage, and received a deeper impression of vanished things. The cathedral, on the pedestal of its hill, looks considerably farther than the fair-ground and the Jacobins, between the rather bare poles of whose straightly-planted trees you may admire it at a convenient distance. I admired it till I thought I should remember it (better than the event has proved), and then I wandered away and looked at another curious old church, Notre-Dame-de-la-Couture. This sacred edifice made a picture for ten minutes, but the picture has faded now. I reconstruct a yellowish-brown façade, and a portal fretted with early sculptures; but the details have gone the way of all incomplete sensations. After you have stood a while in the choir of the cathedral, there is no sensation at Le Mans that goes very far. For some reason not now to be traced, I had looked for more than this. I think the reason was to some extent simply in the name of the place, for names, on the whole, whether they be good reasons or not, are very active ones. Le Mans, if I am not mistaken, has a sturdy, feudal sound; suggests something dark and square, a vision of old ramparts and gates. Perhaps I had been unduly impressed by the fact, accidentally revealed to me, that Henry II., first of the English Plantagenets, was born there. Of course it is easy to assure one's self in advance, but does it

not often happen that one had rather not be assured? There is a pleasure sometimes in running the risk of disappointment. I took mine, such as it was, quietly enough, while I sat before dinner at the door of one of the cafés in the market-place, with a *bitter-et-curaçao* (invaluable pretext at such an hour) to keep me company. I remember that in this situation there came over me an impression which both included and excluded all possible disappointments. The afternoon was warm and still; the air was admirably soft. The good Manceaux, in little groups and pairs, were seated near me; my ear was soothed by the fine shades of French enunciation, by the moulded syllables of that perfect tongue. There was nothing in particular in the prospect to charm; it was an average French view. Yet I felt a charm, a kind of sympathy, a sense of the completeness of French life and of the lightness and brightness of the social air; together with a desire to arrive at friendly judgments, to express a positive interest. I know not why this transcendental mood should have descended upon me then and there; but that idle half hour in front of the café, in the mild October afternoon, suffused with human sounds, is perhaps the most definite thing I brought away from Le Mans.

IV.

I am shocked at finding, just after this noble declaration of principles, that in a little note-book, which at that time I carried about with me, the celebrated city of Angers is denominated a "sell." I reproduce this vulgar term with the greatest hesitation, and only because it brings me more quickly to my point. This point is that Angers belongs to the disagreeable class of old towns that have been, as the English say, "done up." Not the oldness, but the newness, of the place is what strikes the sentimental tourist to-day, as he wanders with irritation along second-rate boulevards, looking vaguely about him for absent gables. "Black Angers," in short, is a victim of modern improvements, and quite unworthy of its admirable name — a name which, like that of Le Mans, had always had, to my eyes, a highly picturesque value. It looks particularly well on the Shakespearean page (in King John), where we imagine it uttered (though such would not have been the utterance of the period) with a fine old English accent. Angers figures with importance in early English history: it was the capital city of the Plantagenet race, home of that Geoffrey of Anjou who married, as second husband, the Empress Maud, daughter of Henry I. and competitor of Stephen, and became father of Henry II., first of the Plantagenet kings, born, as we have seen, at Le Mans. These facts create a natural presumption that Angers will look historic; I turned them over in my mind as I traveled in the train from Le Mans, through a country that was really pretty, and looked more like the usual English than like the usual French scenery, with its fields cut up by hedges and a considerable rotundity in its trees. On my way from the station to the hotel, however, it became plain that I should lack a good pretext for passing that night at the Cheval Blanc; I foresaw that I should have contented myself before the end of the day. I remained at the White Horse only long enough to discover that it was an exceptionally good provincial inn, one of the best that I encountered during six weeks spent in these establishments. "Stupidly and vulgarly modernized" — that is another phrase from my note-book, and note-books are not obliged to be reasonable. "There are some narrow and tortuous streets, with a few curious old houses," I continue to quote; "there is a castle, of which the exterior is most extraordinary, and there is a cathedral of moderate interest." It is fair to say that the

Château d'Angers is by itself worth a pilgrimage; the only drawback is that you have seen it in a quarter of an hour. You cannot do more than look at it, and one good look does your business. It has no beauty, no grace, no detail, nothing that charms or detains you; it is simply very old and very big — so big and so old that this simple impression is enough, and it takes its place in your recollections as a perfect specimen of a superannuated stronghold. It stands at one end of the town, surrounded by a huge, deep moat, which originally contained the waters of the Maine, now divided from it by a quay. The water-front of Angers is poor — wanting in color and in movement; and there is always an effect of perversity in a town lying near a great river and yet not upon it. The Loire is a few miles off, but Angers contents itself with a meagre affluent of that stream. The effect was naturally much better when the huge, dark mass of the castle, with its seventeen prodigious towers, rose out of the protecting flood. These towers are of tremendous girth and solidity; they are encircled with great bands, or hoops, of white stone, and are much enlarged at the base. Between them hang vast curtains of infinitely old-looking masonry, apparently a dense conglomeration of slate — the material of which the town was originally built (thanks to rich quarries in the neighborhood), and to which it owed its appellation of the Black. There are no windows, no apertures, and to-day no battlements nor roofs. These accessories were removed by Henry III., so that, in spite of its grimness and blackness, the place has not even the interest of looking like a prison; it being, as I suppose, the essence of a prison not to be open to the sky. The only features of the enormous structure are the blank, sombre stretches and protrusions of wall, the effect of which, on so large a scale, is strange and striking. Begun by Philip Augustus, and terminated by St. Louis, the Château d'Angers has of course a great deal of history. The luckless Fouquet, the extravagant minister of finance of Louis XIV., whose fall from the heights of grandeur was so sudden and complete, was confined here in 1661, just after his arrest, which had taken place at Nantes. Here, also, Huguenots and Vendeans have suffered effective captivity. I walked round the parapet which protects the outer edge of the moat (it is all up hill, and the moat deepens and deepens), till I came to the entrance which faces the town, and which is as bare and strong as the rest. The concierge took me into the court; but there was nothing there to see. The place is used as a magazine of ammunition, and the yard contains a multitude of ugly buildings. The only thing to do is to walk round the bastions for the view; but at the moment of my visit the weather was thick, and the bastions began and ended with themselves. So I came out and took another look at the big, black exterior, buttressed with white-ribbed towers, and perceived that a desperate sketcher might extract a picture from it, especially if he were to bring in, as they say, the little black bronze statue of the good King René (a weak production of David d'Angers), which, standing within sight, ornaments the melancholy faubourg. He would do much better, however, with the very striking old timbered house (I suppose of the fifteenth century) which is called the Maison d'Adam and is easily the first specimen at Angers of the domestic architecture of the past. This admirable house, in the centre of the town, gabled, elaborately timbered, and much restored, is a really imposing monument. The basement is occupied by a linen-draper, who flourishes under the auspicious sign of the Mère de Famille; and above his shop the tall front rises in five overhanging stories. As the house occupies the angle of a little *place*, this

front is double, and the black beams and wooden supports, displayed over a large surface and carved and interlaced, have a high picturesqueness. The Maison d'Adam is quite in the grand style; and I am sorry to say I failed to learn what history attaches to its name. If I spoke just above of the cathedral as "moderate," I suppose I should beg its pardon; for this serious charge was probably prompted by the fact that it consists only of a nave, without side aisles. A little reflection now convinces me that such a form is a distinction; and, indeed, I find it mentioned, rather inconsistently, in my note-book, a little further on, as "extremely simple and grand." The nave is spoken of in the same volume as "big, serious, and Gothic," though the choir and transepts are noted as very shallow. But it is not denied that the air of the whole thing is original and striking, and it would therefore appear, after all, that the cathedral of Angers, built during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, is a sufficiently honorable church; the more that its high west front, adorned with a very primitive Gothic portal, supports two elegant tapering spires, between which, unfortunately, an ugly modern pavilion has been inserted.

I remember nothing else at Angers but the curious old Café Serin, where, after I had had my dinner at the inn, I went and waited for the train which, at nine o'clock in the evening, was to convey me, in a couple of hours, to Nantes: an establishment remarkable for its great size and its air of tarnished splendor, its brown gilding and smoky frescoes, as also for the fact that it was hidden away on the second floor of an unassuming house in an unilluminated street. It hardly seemed a place where you would drop in; but when once you had found it, it presented itself, with the cathedral, the castle, and the Maison d'Adam, as one of the historical monuments of Angers.

V.

If I spent two nights at Nantes, it was for reasons of convenience rather than of sentiment; though, indeed, I spent them in a big circular room which had a stately, lofty, last-century look — a look that consoled me a little for the whole place being dirty. The high, old-fashioned inn (it had a huge, windy *porte-cochère*, and you climbed a vast black stone staircase to get to your room) looked out on a dull square, surrounded with other tall houses and occupied on one side by the theatre, a pompous building, decorated with columns and statues of the muses. Nantes belongs to the class of towns which are always spoken of as "fine," and its position near the mouth of the Loire gives it, I believe, much commercial movement. It is a spacious, rather regular city, looking, in the parts that I traversed, neither very fresh nor very venerable. It derives its principal character from the handsome quays on the Loire, which are overhung with tall eighteenth-century houses (very numerous, too, in the other streets) — houses with big *entresols* marked by arched windows, classic pediments, balcony-rails of fine old ironwork. These features exist in still better form at Bordeaux; but putting Bordeaux aside, Nantes is quite architectural. The view up and down the quays has the cool, neutral tone of color that one finds so often in French waterside places — the bright grayness which is the tone of French landscape art. The whole city has rather a grand, or at least an eminently well-established, air. During a day passed in it, of course I had time to go to the Musée; the more so that I have a weakness for provincial museums — a sentiment that depends but little on the quality of the collection. The pictures may be bad, but the place is often curious; and, indeed, from bad pictures, in certain moods of the mind, there is a de-

gree of entertainment to be derived. If they are tolerably old, they are often touching; but they must have a relative antiquity, for I confess I can do nothing with works of art of which the badness is of recent origin. The cool, still, empty chambers in which indifferent collections are apt to be preserved, the red brick tiles, the diffused light, the musty odor, the mementoes around you of dead fashions, the snuffy custodian in a black skull cap, who pulls aside a faded curtain to show you the lustreless gem of the museum — these things have a mild historical quality, and the sallow canvases after all illustrate something. Many of those in the museum of Nantes illustrate the taste of a successful warrior, having been bequeathed to the city by Napoleon's marshal, Clarke (created Duc de Feltre). In addition to these there is the usual number of specimens of the contemporary French school, culled from the annual Salons and presented to the museum by the state. Wherever the traveler goes, in France, he is reminded of this very honorable practice — the purchase by the government of a certain number of "pictures of the year," which are presently distributed in the provinces. Governments succeed each other and bid for success by different devices; but the "patronage of art" is a plank, as we should say here, in every platform. The works of art are often ill selected — there is an official taste which you immediately recognize — but the custom is essentially liberal, and a government which should neglect it would be felt to be painfully incomplete. The only thing in this particular Musée that I remember is a fine portrait of a woman, by Ingres — very flat and Chinese, but with an interest of line and a great deal of style. There is a castle at Nantes which resembles in some degree that of Angers, but has, without, much less of the impressiveness of great size, and, within, much more interest of detail. The court contains the remains of a very fine piece of late Gothic, a tall, elegant building of the sixteenth century. The château is naturally not wanting in history. It was the residence of the old Dukes of Brittany, and was brought, with the rest of the province, by the Duchess Anne, the last representative of that race, as her dowry, to Charles VIII. I read in the excellent handbook of M. Joanne that it has been visited by almost every one of the kings of France, from Louis XI. downward; — and also that it has served as a place of sojourn less voluntary on the part of various other distinguished persons, from the horrible Maréchal de Retz, who, in the fifteenth century, was executed at Nantes for the murder of a couple of hundred young children, sacrificed in abominable rites, to the ardent Duchess of Berry, mother of the Count of Chambord, who was confined there for a few hours in 1832, just after her arrest in a neighboring house. I looked at the house in question — you may see it from the platform in front of the château — and tried to figure to myself that embarrassing scene. The duchess, after having unsuccessfully raised the standard of revolt (for the exiled Bourbons), in the Legitimist Bretagne, and being "wanted," as the phrase is, by the police of Louis Philippe, had hidden herself in a small but loyal house at Nantes, where, at the end of five months of seclusion, she was betrayed, for gold, to the austere M. Guizot, by one of her servants, an Alsatian Jew named Deutz. For many hours before her capture she had been compressed into an interstice behind a fireplace, and by the time she was drawn forth into the light she had been ominously scorched. The man who showed me the castle indicated also another historic spot, a house with little *tourelles*, on the Quai de la Fosse, in which Henry IV. is said to have signed the Edict of Nantes. I am, however, not in a position to answer for this pedigree.

There is another point in the history of the fine old houses which command the Loire, of which, I suppose, one may be tolerably sure; that is, their having, placid as they stand there to-day, looked down on the horrors of the Terror of 1793, the bloody reign of the monster Carrier and his infamous *noyades*. The most hideous episode of the Revolution was enacted at Nantes, where hundreds of men and women, tied together in couples, were set afloat upon rafts and sunk to the bottom of the Loire. The tall, eighteenth-century house, full of the *air noble*, in France always reminds me of those dreadful years — of the street-scenes of the Revolution. Superficially, the association is incongruous, for nothing could be more formal and decorous than the patent expression of these eligible residences. But whenever I have a vision of prisoners bound on tumbrels that jolt slowly to the scaffold, of heads carried on pikes, of groups of heated *citoyennes* shaking their fists at closed coach-windows, I see in the background the well-ordered features of the architecture of the period — the clear gray stone, the high pilasters, the arching lines of the entresol, the classic pediment, the slate-covered attic. There is not much architecture at Nantes except the domestic. The cathedral, with a rough west front and stunted towers, makes no impression as you approach it. It is true that it does its best to recover its reputation as soon as you have passed the threshold. Begun in 1434 and finished about the end of the fifteenth century, as I discover in Murray, it has a magnificent nave, not of great length, but of extraordinary height and lightness. On the other hand, it has no choir whatever. There is much entertainment in France in seeing what a cathedral will take upon itself to possess or to lack; for it is only the smaller number that have the full complement of features. Some have a very fine nave and no choir; others a very fine choir and no nave. Some have a rich outside and nothing within; others a very blank face and a very glowing heart. There are a hundred possibilities of poverty and wealth, and they make the most unexpected combinations. The great treasure of Nantes is the two noble sepulchral monuments which occupy either transept, and one of which has (in its nobleness) the rare distinction of being a production of our own time. On the south side stands the tomb of Francis II., the last of the Dukes of Brittany, and of his second wife, Margaret of Foix, erected in 1507 by their daughter Anne, whom we have encountered already at the Château de Nantes, where she was born; at Langeais, where she married her first husband; at Amboise, where she lost him; at Blois, where she married her second, the "good" Louis XII., who divorced an impeccable spouse to make room for her, and where she herself died. Transferred to the cathedral from a demolished convent, this monument, the masterpiece of Michel Colomb, author of the charming tomb of the children of Charles VIII. and the aforesaid Anne, which we admired at Saint Gatien of Tours, is one of the most brilliant works of the French Renaissance. It has a splendid effect, and is in perfect preservation. A great table of black marble supports the reclining figures of the duke and duchess, who lie there peacefully and majestically, in their robes and crowns, with their heads each on a cushion, the pair of which are supported, from behind, by three charming little kneeling angels; at the foot of the quiet couple are a lion and a greyhound, with heraldic devices. At each of the angles of the table is a large figure in white marble of a woman elaborately dressed, with a symbolic meaning; and these figures, with their contemporary faces and clothes, which give them the air of realistic portraits, are truthful and living, if not remarkably

beautiful. Round the sides of the tomb are small images of the apostles. There is a kind of masculine completeness in the work, and a certain robustness of taste.

In nothing were the sculptors of the Renaissance more fortunate than in being in advance of us with their tombs: they have left us nothing to say in regard to the great final contrast — the contrast between the immobility of death and the trappings and honors that survive. They expressed in every way in which it was possible to express it the solemnity of their conviction that the marble image was a part of the personal greatness of the defunct, and the protection, the redemption, of his memory. A modern tomb, in comparison, is a skeptical affair; it insists too little on the honors. I say this in the face of the fact that one has only to step across the cathedral of Nantes to stand in the presence of one of the purest and most touching of modern tombs. Catholic Brittany has erected in the opposite transept a monument to one of the most devoted of her sons, General de Lamoricière, the defender of the Pope, the vanquished of Castelfidardo. This noble work, from the hand of Paul Dubois, one of the most interesting of that new generation of sculptors who have revived in France an art of which our overdressed century had begun to despair, has every merit but the absence of a certain prime feeling. It is the echo of an earlier tune — an echo with a beautiful cadence. Under a Renaissance canopy of white marble, elaborately worked with arabesques and cherubs, in a relief so low that it gives the work a certain look of being softened and worn by time, lies the body of the Breton soldier, with a crucifix clasped to his breast and a shroud thrown over his body. At each of the angles sits a figure in bronze, the two best of which, representing Charity and Military Courage, had given me extraordinary pleasure when they were exhibited (in the clay) in the Salon of 1876. They are admirably cast, and they have a certain greatness: the one, a serene, robust young mother, beautiful in line and attitude; the other, a lean and vigilant young man, in a helmet that overshadows his serious eyes, resting an outstretched arm, an admirable military member, upon the hilt of a sword. These figures contain abundant assurance that M. Paul Dubois has been attentive to Michael Angelo, whom we have all heard called a splendid example but a bad model. The visor-shadowed face of his warrior is more or less a reminiscence of the figure on the tomb of Lorenzo de' Medici at Florence; but it is doubtless none the worse for that. The interest of the work of Paul Dubois is its peculiar seriousness, a kind of moral good faith which is not the commonest feature of French art, and which, united as it is in this case with exceeding knowledge and a remarkable sense of form, produces an impression of deep refinement. The whole monument is a proof of exquisitely careful study; but I am not sure that this impression on the part of the spectator is altogether a happy one. It explains much of its great beauty, and it also explains, perhaps, a little of a certain weakness. That word, however, is scarcely in place; I only mean that M. Dubois has made a visible effort, which has been most fruitful. Simplicity is not always strength, and our complicated modern genius contains treasures of intention. This fathomless modern element is an immense charm on the part of M. Paul Dubois. I am lost in admiration of the deep æsthetic experience, the enlightenment of taste, revealed by such work. After that, I only hope that Giuseppe Garibaldi may have a monument as fair.

VI.

To go from Nantes to La Rochelle you travel straight southward, across

the historic *bocage* of La Vendée, the home of royalist bush-fighting. The country, which is exceedingly pretty, bristles with copses, orchards, and hedges, and with trees more spreading and sturdy than the traveler is apt to deem the feathery foliage of France. It is true that as I proceeded it flattened out a good deal, so that for an hour there was a vast featureless plain, which offered me little entertainment beyond the general impression that I was approaching the Bay of Biscay (from which, in reality, I was yet far distant). As we drew near La Rochelle, however, the prospect brightened considerably, and the railway kept its course beside a charming little canal, or canalized river, bordered with trees, and with small, neat, bright-colored, and yet old-fashioned cottages and villas, which stood back on the further side, behind small gardens, hedges, painted palings, patches of turf. The whole effect was Dutch and delightful; and in being delightful, though not in being Dutch, it prepared me for the charms of La Rochelle, which from the moment I entered it I perceived to be a fascinating little town, a most original mixture of brightness and dullness. Part of its brightness comes from its being extraordinarily clean — in which, after all, it *is* Dutch; a virtue not particularly noticeable at Bourges, Le Mans, and Angers. Whenever I go southward, if it be only twenty miles, I begin to look out for the south, prepared as I am to find the careless grace of those latitudes even in things of which it may be said that they may be south of something, but are not southern. To go from Boston to New York (in this state of mind) is almost as soft a sensation as descending the Italian side of the Alps; and to go from New York to Philadelphia is to enter a zone of tropical luxuriance and warmth. Given this absurd disposition, I could not fail to flatter myself, on reaching La Rochelle, that I was already in the Midi, and to perceive in everything, in the language of the country, the *caractère méridional*. Really, a great many things had a hint of it. For that matter, it seems to me that to arrive in the south at a bound — to wake up there, as it were — would be a very imperfect pleasure. The full pleasure is to approach by stages and gradations; to observe the successive shades of difference by which it ceases to be the north. These shades are exceedingly fine, but your true south-lover has an eye for them all. If he perceive them at New York and Philadelphia — we imagine him boldly as liberated from Boston — how could he fail to perceive them at La Rochelle? The streets of this dear little city are lined with arcades — good, big, straddling arcades of stone, such as befit a land of hot summers, and which recalled to me, not to go further, the dusky porticoes of Bayonne. It contains, moreover, a great wide *place d'armes*, which looked for all the world like the piazza of some dead Italian town, empty, sunny, grass-grown, with a row of yellow houses overhanging it, an unfrequented café, with a striped awning, a tall, cold, florid, uninteresting cathedral of the eighteenth century on one side, and on the other a shady walk, which forms part of an old rampart. I followed this walk for some time, under the stunted trees, beside the grass-covered bastions; it is very charming, winding and wandering, always with trees. Beneath the rampart is a tidal river, and on the other side, for a long distance, the mossy walls of the immense garden of a seminary. Three hundred years ago La Rochelle was the great French stronghold of Protestantism; but to-day it appears to be a nursery of Papists.

The walk upon the rampart led me round to one of the gates of the town, where I found some small modern fortifications and sundry red-legged soldiers, and, beyond the fortifications, another

shady walk — a *mail*, as the French say, as well as a *champ de manœuvre* — on which latter expanse the poor little red-legs were doing their exercise. It was all very quiet and very picturesque, rather in miniature; and at once very tidy and a little out of repair. This, however, was but a meagre back-view of La Rochelle, or poor side-view at best. There are other gates than the small fortified aperture just mentioned; one of them, an old gray arch beneath a fine clock-tower, I had passed through on my way from the station. This picturesque Tour de l'Horloge separates the town proper from the port; for beyond the old gray arch the place presents its bright, expressive little face to the sea. I had a charming walk about the harbor, and along the stone piers and sea-walls that shut it in. This indeed, to take things in their order, was after I had had my breakfast (which I took on arriving) and after I had been to the hôtel de ville. The inn had a long, narrow garden behind it, with some very tall trees; and passing through this garden to a dim and secluded *salle à manger*, buried in the heavy shade, I had, while I sat at my repast, a feeling of seclusion which amounted almost to a sense of incarceration. I lost this sense, however, after I had paid my bill, and went out to look for traces of the famous siege, which is the principal title of La Rochelle to renown. I had come thither partly because I thought it would be interesting to stand for a few moments in so gallant a spot, and partly because, I confess, I had a curiosity to see what had been the starting-point of the Huguenot emigrants who founded the town of New Rochelle, in the State of New York, a place in which I had passed certain memorable hours. It was strange to think, as I strolled through the peaceful little port, that these quiet waters, during the wars of religion, had swelled with a formidable naval power. The Rochelais had fleets and admirals, and their stout little Huguenot bottoms carried defiance up and down. To say that I found any traces of the siege would be to misrepresent the taste for vivid whitewash by which La Rochelle is distinguished to-day. The only trace is the dent in the marble top of the table on which, in the hôtel de ville, Jean Guiton, the mayor of the city, brought down his dagger with an oath, when in 1628 the vessels and regiments of Richelieu closed about it on sea and land. This terrible functionary was the soul of the resistance; he held out from February to October, in the midst of pestilence and famine. The whole episode has a brilliant place among the sieges of history; it has been related a hundred times, and I may only glance at it and pass. I limit my ambition, in these light pages, to speaking of those things of which I have personally received an impression; and I have no such impression of the defense of La Rochelle. The hôtel de ville is a pretty little building, in the style of the Renaissance of Francis I.; but it has left much of its interest in the hands of the restorers. It has been "done up" without mercy; its natural place would be at Rochelle the New. A sort of battlemented curtain, flanked with turrets, divides it from the street and contains a low door (a low door in a high wall is always felicitous), which admits you to an inner court, where you discover the face of the building. It has statues set into it, and is raised upon a very low and very deep arcade. The principal function of the deferential old portress who conducts you over the place is to call your attention to the indented table of Jean Guiton; but she shows you other objects of interest besides. The interior is absolutely new and extremely sumptuous, abounding in tapestries, upholstery, morocco, velvet, and satin. This is especially the case with a really beautiful *grande salle*, where, surrounded with the most expensive upholstery, the

mayor holds his official receptions. (So, at least, said my worthy portress.) The mayors of La Rochelle appear to have changed a good deal since the days of the grim Guiton, but these evidences of municipal splendor are interesting for the light they throw on French manners. Imagine the mayor of an English or an American town of twenty thousand inhabitants holding magisterial soirées in the town-hall! The said grande salle, which is unchanged in form and in its larger features, is, I believe, the room in which the Rochelais debated as to whether they should shut themselves up, and decided in the affirmative. The table and chair of Jean Guiton have been restored, like everything else, and are very elegant and coquettish pieces of furniture — incongruous relics of a season of starvation and blood. I believe that Protestantism is somewhat shrunken to-day, at La Rochelle, and has taken refuge mainly in the *haute société* and in a single place of worship. There was nothing particular to remind me of its supposed austerity, as, after leaving the hôtel de ville, I walked along the empty porticoes and out of the Tour de l'Horloge, which I have already mentioned. If I stopped and looked up at this venerable monument, it was not to ascertain the hour, for I foresaw that I should have more time at La Rochelle than I knew what to do with; but because its high, gray, weather-beaten face was an obvious subject for a sketch.

The little port, which has two basins, and is accessible only to vessels of light tonnage, had a certain gayety and as much local color as you please. Fisher folk of picturesque type were strolling about, most of them Bretons; several of the men with handsome, simple faces, not at all brutal, and with a splendid brownness — the golden-brown color, on cheek and beard, that you see on an old Venetian sail. It was a squally, showery day, with sudden drizzles of sunshine; rows of rich-toned fishing-smacks were drawn up along the quays. The harbor is effective to the eye by reason of three battered old towers which, at different points, overhang it, and look infinitely weather-washed and sea-silvered. The most striking of these, the Tour de la Lanterne, is a big, gray mass, of the fifteenth century, flanked with turrets and crowned with a Gothic steeple. I found it was called by the people of the place the Tour des Quatre Sergents, though I know not what connection it has with the touching history of the four young sergeants of the garrison of La Rochelle, who were arrested in 1821 as conspirators against the government of the Bourbons, and executed, amid a general indignation, in Paris, in the following year. The quaint little walk labeled Rue sur les Murs, to which one ascends from beside the Grosse Horloge, leads to this curious Tour de la Lanterne and passes under it. This walk has the top of the old town-wall, toward the sea, for a parapet on one side, and is bordered on the other with decent but irregular little tenements of fishermen, where brown old women, whose caps are as white as if they were painted, seem chiefly in possession. In this direction there is a very pretty stretch of shore, out of the town, through the fortifications (which are Vauban's, by the way); through, also, a diminutive public garden or straggling shrubbery, which edges the water and carries its stunted verdure as far as a big Etablissement des Bains. It was too late in the year to bathe, and the Etablissement had the bankrupt aspect which belongs to such places out of the season; so I turned my back upon it, and gained, by a circuit in the course of which there were sundry waterside items to observe, the other side of the cheery little port, where there is a long breakwater and a still longer sea-wall, on which I walked a while, and inhaled the strong, salt

breath of the Bay of Biscay. La Rochelle serves, in the months of July and August, as a *station de bains* for a modest provincial society; and, putting aside the question of inns, it must be charming on summer afternoons.

Henry James.

KING'S CHAPEL.

Is it a weanling's weakness for the past
That in the stormy, rebel-breeding town,
Swept clean of relics by the levelling blast,
Still keeps our gray old chapel's name of "King's," —
Still to its outworn symbols fondly clings,
Its unchurched mitres and its empty crown?

Poor harmless emblems! All has shrunk away
That made them gorgons in the patriot's eyes;
The priestly plaything harms us not to-day;
The gilded crown is but a pleasing show,
An old-world heirloom, left from long ago,
Wreck of the past that memory bids us prize.

Lightly we glance the fresh-cut marbles o'er;
Those two of earlier date our eyes enthrall:
The proud old Briton's by the western door,
And hers, the Lady of Colonial days,
Whose virtues live in long-drawn classic phrase, —
The fair Francisca of the southern wall.

Ay! those were goodly men that Reynolds drew,
And stately dames our Copley's canvas holds,
To their old Church, their Royal Master, true,
Proud of the claim their valiant sires had earned,
That "gentle blood," not lightly to be spurned,
Save by the churl ungenerous Nature moulds.

All vanished! It were idle to complain
That ere the fruits shall come the flowers must fall;
Yet somewhat we have lost amidst our gain,
Some rare ideals time may not restore, —
The charm of courtly breeding, seen no more,
And reverence, dearest ornament of all.

— Thus musing, to the western wall I came,
Departing: lo! a tablet fresh and fair,
Where glistened many a youth's remembered name
In golden letters on the snow-white stone, —
Young lives these aisles and arches once have known,
Their country's bleeding altar might not spare.

EN PROVINCE.

VI.

FROM POITIERS TO CARCASSONNE.

I.

It is an injustice to Poitiers to approach her by night, as I did some three hours after leaving La Rochelle; for what Poitiers has of best, as they would say at Poitiers, is the appearance she presents to the arriving stranger who puts his head out of the window of the train. I gazed into the gloom from such an aperture before we got into the station, for I remembered the impression received on another occasion; but I saw nothing save the universal night, spotted here and there with an ugly railway-lamp. It was only as I departed, the following day, that I assured myself that Poitiers still makes something of the figure she ought on the summit of her considerable hill. I have a kindness for any little group of towers, any cluster of roofs and chimneys, that lift themselves from an eminence over which a long road ascends in zigzags; such a picture creates for the moment a presumption that you are in Italy, and even leads you to believe that if you mount the winding road you will come to an old town-wall, a mass of creviced brownness, and pass under a gateway surmounted by the arms of a mediæval despot. Why I should find it a pleasure, [illegible]rance, to imagine myself in Italy [illegible]than I can say; the illusion has [illegible]d long enough to be analyzed. [illegible]tom of its perch Poitiers [illegible]high; and indeed, the [illegible]d it, the interminable [illegible]bus of the hotel I had [illegible]ound at the station, [illegible]e of its commanding [illegible]l, "magnifique con[illegible]atues," as the Guide-Joanne, usually so reticent, takes the trouble to announce, has an omnibus, and, I suppose, has statues, though I didn't perceive them; but it has very little else save immemorial accumulations of dirt. It is magnificent, if you will, but it is not even relatively proper; and a dirty inn has always seemed to me the dirtiest of human things — it has so many opportunities to betray itself.

Poitiers covers a large space, and is as crooked and straggling as you please; but these advantages are not accompanied with any very salient features or any great wealth of architecture. Although there are few picturesque houses, however, there are two or three curious old churches. Notre Dame la Grande, in the market-place, a small Romanesque structure of the twelfth century, has a most interesting and venerable exterior. Composed, like all the churches of Poitiers, of a light brown stone with a yellowish tinge, it is covered with primitive but ingenious sculptures, and is really an impressive monument. Within, it has lately been daubed over with the most hideous decorative painting that was ever inflicted upon passive pillars and indifferent vaults. This battered yet coherent little edifice has the touching look that resides in everything supremely old: it has arrived at the age at which such things cease to feel the years; the waves of time have worn its edges to a kind of patient dullness; there is something mild and smooth, like the stillness, the deafness, of an octogenarian, even in its rudeness of ornament, and it has become insensible to differences of a century or two. The cathedral interested me much less than Our Lady the Great, and I have not the spirit to go into statistics about it. It is not statistical to say that the cathe-

dral stands half-way down the hill of Poitiers, in a quiet and grass-grown *place*, with an approach of crooked lanes and blank garden-walls, and that its most striking dimension is the width of its façade. This width is extraordinary, but it fails, somehow, to give nobleness to the edifice, which looks within (Murray makes the remark) like a large public hall. There are a nave and two aisles, the latter about as high as the nave; and there are some very fearful modern pictures, which you may see much better than you usually see those specimens of the old masters that lurk in glowing side-chapels, there being no fine old glass to diffuse a kindly gloom. The sacristan of the cathedral showed me something much better than all this bright bareness; he led me a short distance out of it to the small Temple de Saint-Jean, which is the most curious object at Poitiers. It is an early Christian chapel, one of the earliest in France; originally, it would seem, that is, in the sixth or seventh century, a baptistery, but converted into a church while the Christian era was still comparatively young. The Temple de Saint-Jean is therefore a monument even more venerable than Notre Dame la Grande, and that numbness of age which I imputed to Notre Dame ought to reside in still larger measure in its crude and colorless little walls. I call them crude, in spite of their having been baked through by the centuries, only because, although certain rude arches and carvings are let into them, and they are surmounted at either end with a small gable, they have (so far as I can remember) little fascination of surface. Notre Dame is still expressive, still pretends to be alive; but the Temple has delivered its message, and is completely at rest. It retains a kind of atrium, on the level of the street, from which you descend to the original floor, now uncovered, but buried for years under a false bottom. A semicircular apse was, apparently at the time of its conversion into a church, thrown out from the east wall. In the middle is the cavity of the old baptismal font. The walls and vaults are covered with traces of extremely archaic frescoes, attributed, I believe, to the twelfth century. These vague, gaunt, staring fragments of figures are, to a certain extent, a reminder of some of the early Christian churches in Rome; they even faintly recalled to me the great mosaics of Ravenna. The Temple de Saint-Jean has neither the antiquity nor the completeness of those extraordinary monuments, nearly the most impressive in Europe; but, as one may say, it is very well for Poitiers.

Not far from it, in a lonely corner which was animated for the moment by the vociferations of several old women who were selling tapers, presumably for the occasion of a particular devotion, is the graceful Romanesque church erected in the twelfth century to Saint Radegonde; a lady who found means to be a saint even in the capacity of a Merovingian queen. It bears a general resemblance to Notre Dame la Grande, and, as I remember it, is corrugated in somewhat the same manner with porous-looking carvings; but I confess that what I chiefly recollect is the row of old women sitting in front of it, each with a tray of waxen tapers in her lap, and upbraiding me for my neglect of the opportunity to offer such a tribute to the saint. I know not whether this privilege is occasional or constant; within the church there was no appearance of a festi
and I see that the name-day o
Radegonde occurs in Augus
the importunate old wom
always, perhaps, and dep
priety the epithet I
this provincial corner.
old women, however,
place is lonely; and i
the old women that l
lation.

The lion of Poitiers, in the eyes of the natives, is doubtless the Palais de Justice, in the shadow of which the statue-guarded hotel, just mentioned, erects itself; and the gem of the court-house, which has a prosy modern front, with pillars and a high flight of steps, is the curious *salle-des-pas-perdus*, or central hall, out of which the different tribunals open. This is a feature of every French court-house, and seems the result of a conviction that a palace of justice — the French deal in much finer names than we — should be in some degree palatial. The great hall at Poitiers has a long pedigree, as its walls date back to the twelfth century, and its open wooden roof, as well as the remarkable trio of chimney-pieces at the left end of the room as you enter, to the fifteenth. The three tall fire-places, side by side, with a delicate gallery running along the top of them, constitute the originality of this ancient chamber, and make one think of the groups that must formerly have gathered there — of all the wet boot-soles, the trickling doublets, the stiffened fingers, the rheumatic shanks, that must have been presented to such an incomparable focus of heat. To-day, I am afraid, these mighty hearths are forever cold; justice is probably administered with the aid of a modern *calorifère*, and the walls of the palace are perforated with regurgitating tubes. Behind and above the gallery that surmounts the three fireplaces are high gothic windows, the tracery of which masks, in some sort, the chimneys; and in each angle [illegible]his and of the room to the right and [illegible]the trio of chimneys, is an open-[illegible]l staircase, ascending to — I [illegible]; perhaps to the roof of [illegible]This whole side of the [illegible]rdly, and seems to ex-[illegible]d hospitality, to extend [illegible]f all invitations, to bid [illegible]come and get warm. [illegible]ion of John, Duke of Berry and Count of Poitou, about 1395. I give this information on the authority of the Guide-Joanne, from which source I gather much other curious learning: as, for instance, that it was in this building, when it had surely a very different front, that Charles VII. was proclaimed king, in 1422; and that here Joan of Arc was subjected, in 1429, to the inquisition of certain doctors and matrons.

The most charming thing at Poitiers is simply the promenade de Blossac — a small public garden at one end of the flat top of the hill. It has a happy look of the last century (having been arranged at that period), and a beautiful sweep of view over the surrounding country, and especially of the course of the little river Clain, which winds about a part of the base of the big mound of Poitiers. The limit of this dear little garden is formed, on the side that turns away from the town, by the rampart erected in the fourteenth century, and by its big semi-circular bastions. This rampart, of great length, has a low parapet; you look over it at the charming little vegetable-gardens with which the base of the hill appears exclusively to be garnished. The whole prospect is delightful, especially the details of the part just under the walls, at the end of the walk. Here the river makes a shining twist, which a painter might have invented, and the side of the hill is terraced into several ledges, — a sort of tangle of small blooming patches and little pavilions with peaked roofs and green shutters. It is idle to attempt to reproduce all this in words; it should be reproduced only in water-colors. The reader, however, will already have remarked that disparity in these ineffectual pages, which are pervaded by the attempt to sketch without a palette or brushes. He will doubtless, also, be struck with the groveling vision which, on such a spot as the ramparts of Poitiers, peoples itself with carrots and cabbages rather

than with images of the Black Prince and the captive king. I am not sure that in looking out from the promenade de Blossac you command the old battle-field; it is enough that it was not far off and that the great rout of Frenchmen poured into the walls of Poitiers, leaving on the ground a number of the fallen equal to the little army (eight thousand) of the invader. I did think of the battle; I wondered, rather helplessly, where it had taken place; and I came away (as the reader will see from the preceding sentence), without finding out. This indifference, however, was a result rather of a general dread of military topography than of a want of admiration of this particular victory, which I have always supposed to be one of the most brilliant on record. Indeed, I should be almost ashamed, and very much at a loss, to say what light it was that this glorious day seemed to me to have left forever on the horizon, and why the very name of the place had always caused my blood gently to tingle. It is carrying the feeling of race to quite inscrutable lengths when a vague American permits himself an emotion because more than five centuries ago, on French soil, one rapacious Frenchman got the better of another. Edward was a Frenchman as well as John, and French were the cries that urged each of the hosts to the fight. French is the beautiful motto graven round the image of the Black Prince, as he lies forever at rest in the choir of Canterbury: *à la mort ne pensai-je mye*. Nevertheless, the victory of Poitiers declines to lose itself in these considerations; the sense of it is a part of our heritage, the joy of it a part of our imagination, and it filters down through centuries and migrations till it titillates a New Yorker who forgets in his elation that he happens at that moment to be enjoying the hospitality of France. It was something done, I know not how justly, for England, and what was done in the fourteenth century for England was done also for New York.

II.

If it was really for the sake of the Black Prince that I had stopped at Poitiers (for my prevision of Notre Dame la Grande and of the little temple of St. John was of the dimmest), I ought to have stopped at Angoulême for the sake of David and Eve Séchard, of Lucien de Rubempré and of Madame de Bargeton, who when she wore a *toilette étudiée* sported a Jewish turban ornamented with an Eastern brooch, a scarf of gauze, a necklace of cameos, and a robe of "painted muslin," whatever that may be; treating herself to these luxuries out of an income of twelve thousand francs. The persons I have mentioned have not that vagueness of identity which is the misfortune of historical characters; they are real, supremely real, thanks to their affiliation to the great Balzac, who had invented an artificial reality which was as much better than the vulgar article as mock-turtle soup is than the liquid it emulates. The first time I read Les Illusions Perdues I should have refused to believe that I was capable of passing the old capital of Anjou without alighting to visit the Houmeau. But we never know what we are capable of till we are tested, as I reflected when I found myself looking back at Angoulême from the window of the train, just after we had emerged from the long tunnel that passes under the town. This tunnel perforates the hill on which, like Poitiers, Angoulême rears itself, and which gives it an elevation still greater than th[at] Poitiers. You may have a toler[able] at the cathedral without leavi[ng] way-carriage; for it stand[s] the tunnel and is expos[ed] shortened, to the spectato[r] is evidently a charming plateau of the town, c[om] pretty views of whic[h] account. But the train

and these are my only impressions. The truth is that I had no need, just at that moment, of putting myself into communication with Balzac; for opposite to me in the compartment were a couple of figures almost as vivid as the actors in the Comédie Humaine. One of these was a very genial and dirty old priest, and the other was a reserved and concentrated young monk — the latter (by which I mean a monk of any kind) being a rare sight to-day in France. This young man, indeed, was mitigatedly monastic. He had a big brown frock and cowl, but he had also a shirt and a pair of shoes; he had, instead of a hempen scourge round his waist, a stout leather thong, and he carried with him a very profane little valise. He also read, from beginning to end, the Figaro, which the old priest, who had done the same, presented to him; and he looked altogether as if, had he not been a monk, he would have made a distinguished officer of engineers. When he was not reading the Figaro he was conning his breviary or answering, with rapid precision and with a deferential but discouraging dryness, the frequent questions of his companion, who was of quite another type. This worthy had a bored, good-natured, unbuttoned, expansive look; was talkative, restless, and almost disreputably human. He was surrounded by a great deal of small luggage, and had scattered over the carriage his books, his papers, the fragments of his lunch, and the contents of an extraordinary bag, which he kept beside him — a kind of secular reliquary — and which appeared to contain odds and ends of a life-time, as he om it successively a pair of slipld padlock (which evidently ng to it), an opera-glass, a almanacs, and a large sea- very carefully examined. he had not been afraid onk, who was so much n he, he would have his ear, like a child. Indeed, he was a very childish and delightful old priest, and his companion evidently thought him most frivolous. But I liked him the better of the two. He was not a country curé, but an ecclesiastic of some rank, who had seen a good deal both of the church and of the world; and if I too had not been afraid of his confrère, who read the Figaro as seriously as if it had been an encyclical, I should have entered into conversation with him.

All this while I was getting on to Bordeaux, where I permitted myself to spend three days. I am afraid I have next to nothing to show for them, and that there would be little profit in lingering on this episode, which is the less to be justified as I had in former years examined Bordeaux attentively enough. It contains a very good hotel — an hotel not good enough, however, to keep you there for its own sake. For the rest, Bordeaux is a big, rich, handsome, imposing commercial town, with long rows of fine old eighteenth-century houses overlooking the yellow Garonne. I have spoken of the quays of Nantes as fine, but those of Bordeaux have a wider sweep and a still more architectural air. The appearance of such a port as this makes the Anglo-Saxon tourist blush for the sordid water-fronts of Liverpool and New York, which, with their larger activity, have so much more reason to be stately. Bordeaux gives a great impression of prosperous industries and suggests delightful ideas, images of prune-boxes and bottled claret. As the focus of distribution of the best wine in the world, it is indeed a sacred city — dedicated to the worship of Bacchus in the most discreet form. The country all about it is covered with precious vineyards, sources of fortune to their owners and of satisfaction to distant consumers; and as you look over to the hills beyond the Garonne you see them, in the autumn sunshine, fretted with the rusty richness of this or that immortal

clos. But the principal picture, within the town, is that of the vast curving quays, bordered with houses that look like the *hôtels* of farmers-general of the last century, and of the wide, tawny river, crowded with shipping and spanned by the largest of bridges. Some of the types on the water-side are of the sort that arrest a sketcher — figures of stalwart, brown-faced Basques, such as I had seen of old in great numbers at Biarritz, with their loose circular caps, their white sandals, their air of walking for a wager. Never was a tougher, a harder, race. They are not mariners, nor watermen, but, putting questions of temper aside, they are the best possible dock-porters. "Il s'y fait un commerce terrible," a *douanier* said to me, as he looked up and down the interminable docks; and such a place has indeed much to say of the wealth, the capacity for production, of France — the bright, cheerful, smokeless industry of the wonderful country which produces above all the agreeable things of life, and turns even its defeats and revolutions into gold. The whole town has an air of almost depressing opulence, an appearance which culminates in the great *place* which surrounds the Grand-Théâtre — an establishment in the grandest style, encircled with columns, arcades, lamps, gilded cafés. One feels it to be a monument to the virtue of the well-selected bottle. If I had not forbidden myself to linger, I should venture to insist on this, and, at the risk of being considered fantastic, trace an analogy between good claret and the best qualities of the French mind; pretend that there is a taste of sound Bordeaux in all the happiest manifestations of that fine organ, and that, correspondingly, there is a touch of French reason, French completeness, in a glass of Pontet-Canet. The danger of such an excursion would lie mainly in its being so open to the reader to take the ground from under my feet by saying that good claret does n't exist. To this I should have no reply whatever. I should be unable to tell him where to find it. I certainly did n't find it at Bordeaux, where I drank a most vulgar fluid; and it is of course notorious that a large part of mankind is occupied in vainly looking for it. There was a great pretense of putting it forward at the Exhibition which was going on at Bordeaux at the time of my visit, an "exposition philomathique," lodged in a collection of big, temporary buildings in the Allées d'Orléans, and regarded by the Bordelais for the moment as the most brilliant feature of their city. Here were pyramids of bottles, mountains of bottles, to say nothing of cases and cabinets of bottles. The contemplation of these shining embankments was of course not very convincing; and indeed the whole arrangement struck me as a high impertinence. Good wine is not an optical pleasure, it is an inward emotion; and if there was a chamber of degustation on the premises I failed to discover it. It was not in the search for it, indeed, that I spent half an hour in this bewildering bazaar. Like all "expositions," it seemed to me to be full of ugly things, and gave one a portentous idea of the quantity of rubbish that man carries with him on his course through the ages. Such an amount of luggage for a journey after all so short! There were no individual objects; there was nothing but dozens and hundreds, all machine-made and expressionless, in spite of the repeated grimace, the conscious smartness, of "the last new thing," that was stamped on all of them. The fatal facility of the Fren[ch] *article* becomes at last as irritati[ng] the refrain of a popular song. [The] "Indiens Galibis" struck m[e] more interesting — a grou[p] savages who formed one [of] tions of the place, and w[ere] a pen in the open air, [with] people pushing and sq[ueez]ing over the barrier, to loo[k]

had no grimace, no pretension to be new, no desire to catch your eye. They looked at their visitors no more than if they had been so many sunbeams, and seemed ancient, indifferent, terribly bored.

III.

There is much entertainment in the journey through the wide, smiling garden of Gascony; I speak of it as I took it in going from Bordeaux to Toulouse. It is the south, quite the south, and had for the present narrator its full measure of the charm he is always determined to find in countries that may even by courtesy be said to appertain to the sun. It was, moreover, the happy and genial view of these mild latitudes, which, heaven knows, often have a dreariness of their own; a land teeming with corn and wine, and speaking everywhere (that is, everywhere the phylloxera had not laid it waste) of wealth and plenty. The road runs constantly near the Garonne, touching now and then its slow, brown, rather sullen stream, a sullenness that incloses great dangers and disasters. The traces of the horrible floods of 1875 have disappeared, and the land smiles placidly enough while it waits for another immersion. Toulouse, at the period I speak of, was up to its middle (and in places above it) in water, and looks still as if it had been thoroughly soaked — as if it had faded and shriveled with a long steeping. The fields and copses, of course, are more forgiving. The railway line follows as well the charming Canal du Midi, which is as pretty as a river, barring the straightness, and here and there occupies the foreground, beneath a screen of tall trees, while the Garonne takes a larger and more irregular course beyond it. People who are — and, speaking from the point, I hold the taste to — will delight in this men of the class, which esting history, not to be narrated here. On the other side of the road (the left), all the way, runs a long, low line of hills, or rather one continuous hill, or perpetual cliff, with a straight top, in the shape of a ledge of rock, which might pass for a ruined wall. I am afraid the reader will lose patience with my habit of constantly referring to the landscape of Italy, as if that were the measure of the beauty of every other. Yet I am still more afraid that I cannot apologize for it, and must leave it in its culpable nakedness. It is an idle habit, but the reader will long since have discovered that this was an idle journey and that I give my impressions as they came to me. It came to me, then, that in all this view there was something transalpine, with a greater smartness and freshness and much less elegance and languor. This impression was occasionally deepened by the appearance, on the long eminence of which I speak, of a village, a church, or a château, which seemed to look down at the plain from over the ruined wall. The perpetual vines, the bright-faced, flat-roofed houses, covered with tiles, the softness and sweetness of the light and air, recalled the prosier portions of the Lombard plain. Toulouse itself has a little of this Italian expression, but not enough to give a color to its dark, dirty, crooked streets, which are irregular without being eccentric, and which, if it were not for the superb church of Saint Sernin, would be quite destitute of monuments.

I have already alluded to the way in which the names of certain places impose themselves on the mind, and I must add that of Toulouse to the list of expressive appellations. It certainly evokes a vision — suggests something highly *méridional*. But the city, it must be confessed, is less pictorial than the word, in spite of the Place du Capitole, in spite of the quay of the Garonne, in spite of the curious cloister of the old museum. What justifies the

images that are latent in the word is not the aspect, but the history, of the town. The hotel to which the well-advised traveler will repair stands in a corner of the Place du Capitole, which is the heart and centre of Toulouse, and which bears a vague and inexpensive resemblance to Piazza Castello at Turin. The Capitol, with a wide modern face, occupies one side, and like the palace at Turin looks across at a high arcade, under which the hotels, the principal shops, and the lounging citizens are gathered. The shops are probably better than the Turinese, but the people are not so good. Stunted, shabby, rather vitiated looking, they have none of the personal richness of the sturdy Piedmontese; and I will take this occasion to remark that in the course of a journey of several weeks in the French provinces I rarely encountered a well-dressed male. Can it be possible that republics are unfavorable to a certain attention to one's boots and one's beard? I risk this somewhat futile inquiry because the proportion of neat coats and trousers seemed to be about the same in France and in my native land. It was notably lower than in England and in Italy, and even warranted the supposition that most good provincials have their chin shaven and their boots blacked but once a week. I hasten to add, lest my observation should appear to be of a sadly superficial character, that the manners and conversation of these gentlemen bore (whenever I had occasion to appreciate them) no relation to the state of their chin and their boots. They were almost always marked by an extreme amenity. At Toulouse there was the strongest temptation to speak to people, simply for the entertainment of hearing them reply with that curious, that fascinating accent of the Languedoc, which appears to abound in final consonants, and leads the Toulousains to say *bien-g* and *maison-g*, like Englishmen learning French. It is as if they talked with their teeth rather than with their tongue. I find in my note-book a phrase in regard to Toulouse which is perhaps a little ill-natured, but which I will transcribe as it stands. "The oddity is that the place should be both animated and dull. A big, brown-skinned population clattering about in a flat, tortuous town, which produces nothing whatever that I can discover. Except the church of Saint Sernin and the fine old court of the Hôtel d'Assézat, Toulouse has no architecture; the houses are for the most part of brick, of a grayish-red color, and have no particular style. The brickwork of the place is in fact very poor — inferior to that of the north Italian towns, and quite wanting in the richness of tone which this homely material takes on in the damp climates of the north." And then my note-book goes on to narrate a little visit to the Capitol, which was soon made, as the building was in course of repair and half the rooms were closed.

IV.

The history of Toulouse is detestable, saturated with blood and perfidy; and the ancient custom of the Floral Games, grafted upon all sorts of internecine traditions, seems, with its false pastoralism, its mock chivalry, its display of fine feelings, to set off rather than to mitigate these horrors. The society was founded in the fourteenth century, and it has held annual meetings ever since — meetings at which poems in the fine old *langue d'oc* are declaimed and a blushing laureate is chosen. This business takes place in the Capitol, before th
chief magistrate of the town, w
known as the *capitoul*, and of
pretty women as well — a
numerous at Toulouse. It
sible to have a finer pers
of the portress who prete
me the apartments in wh
Games are held: a big, br
woman, still in the prime

speaking eye, an extraordinary assurance, and a pair of magenta stockings, which were inserted into the neatest and most polished little black sabots, and which, as she clattered up the stairs before me, lavishly displaying them, made her look like the heroine of an *opéra-bouffe*. Her talk was all in *n*'s, *g*'s, and *d*'s, and in mute *e*'s strongly accented, as *autré*, *théatré*, *splendidé* — the last being an epithet she applied to everything the Capitol contained, and especially to a horrible picture representing the famous Clémence Isaure, the reputed foundress of the poetical contest, presiding on one of these occasions. I wondered whether Clémence Isaure had been anything like this terrible Toulousaine of to-day, who would have been a capital figure-head for a floral game. The lady in whose honor the picture I have just mentioned was painted is a somewhat mythical personage, and she is not to be found in the Biographie Universelle. She is, however, a very graceful myth, and if she never existed her statue does, at least; a shapeless effigy, transferred to the Capitol from the so-called tomb of Clémence in the old church of La Daurade. The great hall in which the Floral Games are held was encumbered with scaffoldings, and I was unable to admire the long series of busts of the bards who have won prizes and the portraits of all the capitouls of Toulouse. As a compensation I was introduced to a big bookcase, filled with the poems that have been crowned since the days of the troubadours, a portentous collection, and the big butcher's knife with which, according to the legend, Henry, Duke of Montmorency, who had conspired against the great cardinal with Gaston of Orleans and Mary de' Medici, was, in 1632, beheaded on this spot by the order of Richelieu. With these objects the interest of the Capitol was exhausted. The building, indeed, has not the grandeur of its name, which is a sort of promise that the visitor will find some sensible embodiment of the old Roman tradition that once flourished in this part of France. It is inferior in impressiveness to the other three famous Capitols of the modern world — that of Rome (if I may call the present structure modern), and those of Washington and Albany!

The only Roman remains at Toulouse are to be found in the museum, a very interesting establishment, which I was condemned to see as imperfectly as I had seen the Capitol. It was being rearranged, and the gallery of paintings, which is the least interesting feature, was the only part that was not upside down. The pictures are mainly of the modern French school, and I remember nothing but a powerful though disagreeable specimen of Henner, who paints the human body, and paints it so well, with a brush dipped in blackness; and, placed among the paintings, a bronze replica of the charming young David of Mercié. These things have been set out in the church of an old monastery, long since suppressed, and the rest of the collection occupies the cloisters. These are two in number; a small one, which you enter first from the street, and a very vast and elegant one beyond it, which with its light gothic arches and slim columns (of the fourteenth century), its broad walk, its little garden with old tombs and statues in the centre, is by far the most picturesque, the most sketchable, spot in Toulouse. It must be doubly so when the Roman busts, inscriptions, slabs and sarcophagi are ranged along the walls; it must indeed, to compare small things with great, and as the judicious Murray remarks, bear a certain resemblance to the Campo Santo at Pisa. But these things are absent now; the cloister is a litter of confusion, and its treasures have been stowed away, confusedly, in sundry inaccessible rooms. The custodian attempted to console me by telling me that when they are exhibited again it

will be on a scientific basis, and with an order and regularity of which they were formerly innocent. But I was not consoled. I wanted simply the spectacle, the picture, and I did n't care in the least for the classification. Old Roman fragments, exposed to light in the open air, under a southern sky, in a quadrangle round a garden, have an immortal charm simply in their general effect, and the charm is all the greater when the soil of the very place has yielded them up.

V.

My real consolation was an hour I spent in Saint-Sernin, one of the noblest churches in southern France, and easily the first among those of Toulouse. This great structure, a masterpiece of twelfth-century Romanesque, and dedicated to St. Saturninus — the Toulousains have abbreviated — is, I think, alone worth a journey to Toulouse. What makes it so is the extraordinary seriousness of its interior; no other term occurs to me as expressing so well the character of its clear gray nave. As a general thing, I do not favor the fashion of attributing moral qualities to buildings; I shrink from talking about tender porticoes and sincere campanili; but I find I cannot get on at all without imputing some sort of morality to Saint-Sernin. As it stands to-day, the church has been completely restored by Viollet-le-Duc. The exterior is of brick, and has little charm save that of a tower of four rows of arches, narrowing together as they ascend. The nave is of great length and height, the barrel-roof of stone, the effect of the round arches and pillars in the triforium especially fine. There are two low aisles on either side. The choir is very deep and narrow; it seems to close together, and looks as if it were meant for intensely earnest rites. The transepts are most noble, especially the arches of the second tier. The whole church is narrow for its length, and is singularly complete and homogeneous. As I say all this, I feel that I quite fail to give an impression of its manly gravity, its strong proportions, or of the lonesome look of its renovated stones as I sat there while the October twilight gathered. It is a real work of art, a high conception. The crypt, into which I was eventually led captive by an importunate sacristan, is quite another affair, though indeed I suppose it may also be spoken of as a work of art. It is a rich museum of relics, and contains the head of St. Thomas Aquinas, wrapped up in a napkin and exhibited in a glass case. The sacristan took a lamp and guided me about, presenting me to one saintly remnant after another. The impression was grotesque, but some of the objects were contained in curious old cases of beaten silver and brass; these things, at least, which looked as if they had been transmitted from the early church, were venerable. There was, however, a kind of wholesale sanctity about the place which overshot the mark; it pretends to be one of the holiest spots in the world. The effect is spoiled by the way the sacristans hang about and offer to take you into it for ten sous — I was accosted by two and escaped from another — and by the familiar manner in which you pop in and out. This episode rather broke the charm of Saint-Sernin, so that I took my departure and went in search of the cathedral. It was scarcely worth finding, and struck me as an odd, dislocated fragment. The front consists only of a portal, beside which a tall brick tower, of a later period, has been erected. The nave was wrapped in dimness, with a few scattered lamps. I could only distinguish an immense vault, like a high cavern, without aisles. Here and there, in the gloom, was a kneeling figure; the whole place was mysterious and lopsided. The choir was curtained off; it appeared not to correspond with the nave, that is, not to have the same axis. The only

other ecclesiastical impression I gathered at Toulouse came to me in the church of La Daurade, of which the front, on the quay by the Garonne, was closed with scaffoldings; so that one entered it from behind, where it is completely masked by houses, through a door which has at first no traceable connection with it. It is a vast, high, modernized, heavily decorated church, dimly lighted at all times, I should suppose, and enriched by the shades of evening at the time I looked into it. I perceived that it consisted mainly of a large square, beneath a dome, in the centre of which a single person — a lady — was praying with the utmost absorption. The manner of access to the church interposed such an obstacle to the outer profanities that I had a sense of intruding, and presently withdrew, carrying with me a picture of the vast, still interior, the gilded roof, gleaming in the twilight, and the solitary worshiper. What was she praying for, and was she not almost afraid to remain there alone?

For the rest, the picturesque at Toulouse consists principally of the walk beside the Garonne, which is spanned, to the faubourg of Saint-Cyprien, by a stout brick bridge. This hapless suburb, the baseness of whose site is noticeable, lay for days under the water at the time of the last inundations. The Garonne had almost mounted to the roofs of the houses, and the place continues to present a blighted, frightened look. Two or three persons, with whom I had some conversation, spoke of that time as a memory of horror. I have not done with my Italian comparisons; I shall never have done with them. I am therefore free to say that in the way in which Toulouse looks out on the Garonne there was something that reminded me vaguely of the way in which Pisa looks out on the Arno. The red-faced houses — all of brick — along the quay have a mixture of brightness and shabbiness, as well as the fashion of the open *loggia* in the top-story. The river, with another bridge or two, might be the Arno, and the buildings on the other side of it — a hospital, a suppressed convent — dip their feet into it with real southern cynicism. I have spoken of the old Hôtel d'Assézat as the best house at Toulouse; with the exception of the cloister of the museum, it is the only "bit" I remember. It has fallen from the state of a noble residence of the sixteenth century to that of a warehouse and a set of offices; but a certain dignity lingers in its melancholy court, which is divided from the street by a gateway that is still imposing, and in which a clambering vine and a red Virginia-creeper were suspended to the rusty walls of brick and stone.

The most interesting house at Toulouse is far from being the most striking. At the door of number 50 Rue des Filatiers, a featureless, solid structure, was found hanging, one autumn evening, the body of the young Marc-Antoine Calas, whose ill-inspired suicide was to be the first act of a tragedy so horrible. The fanaticism aroused in the towns-folk by this incident; the execution by torture of Jean Calas, accused as a Protestant of having hanged his son, who had gone over to the church of Rome; the ruin of the family; the claustration of the daughters; the flight of the widow to Switzerland; her introduction to Voltaire; the excited zeal of that incomparable polemist, and the passionate persistence with which, from year to year, he pursued a reversal of judgment, till at last he obtained it, and devoted the tribunal of Toulouse to execration and the name of the victims to lasting wonder and pity — these things form part of one of the most interesting and touching episodes of the social history of the eighteenth century. The story has the fatal progression, the dark rigidity, of one of the tragic dramas of the Greeks. Jean Calas, advanced in life, blameless,

bewildered, protesting his innocence, had been broken on the wheel, and the sight of his decent dwelling, which brought home to me all that had been suffered there, spoiled for me, for half an hour, the impression of Toulouse.

VI.

I spent but a few hours at Carcassonne; but those hours had a rounded felicity, and I cannot do better than transcribe from my note-book the little record I made at the moment. Vitiated as it may be by crudity and incoherency, it has at any rate the freshness of a great emotion. This is the best quality that a reader may hope to extract from a narrative in which "useful information" and technical lore even of the most general sort are completely absent. For Carcassonne is moving, beyond a doubt, and the traveler who, in the course of a little tour in France, may have felt himself urged, in melancholy moments, to say that on the whole the disappointments are as numerous as the satisfactions must admit that there can be nothing better than this.

The country, after you leave Toulouse, continues to be charming; the more so that it merges its flatness in the distant Cévennes on one side, and on the other, far away on your right, in the richer range of the Pyrenees. Olives and cypresses, pergolas and vines, terraces on the roofs of houses, soft, iridescent mountains, a warm yellow light — what more could the difficult tourist want? He left his luggage at the station, warily determined to look at the inn before committing himself to it. It was so evident (even to a cursory glance) that it might easily have been much better that he simply took his way to the town, with the whole of a superb afternoon before him. When I say the town, I mean the towns; there being two at Carcassonne, perfectly distinct, and each with excellent claims to the title. They have settled the matter between them, however, and the elder, the shrine of pilgrimage, to which the other is but a stepping-stone, or even, as I may say, a humble door-mat, takes the name of the Cité. You see nothing of the Cité from the station; it is masked by the agglomeration of the *ville-basse*, which is relatively (but only relatively) new. A wonderful avenue of acacias leads to it from the station — leads past it, rather, and conducts you to a little high-backed bridge over the Aude, beyond which, detached and erect, a distinct mediæval silhouette, the Cité presents itself. Like a rival shop, on the invidious side of a street, it has "no connection" with the establishment across the way, although the two places are united (if old Carcassonne may be said to be united to anything) by a vague little rustic faubourg. Perched on its solid pedestal, the perfect detachment of the Cité is what first strikes you. To take leave, without delay, of the ville-basse, I may say that the splendid acacias I have mentioned flung a summerish dusk over the place, in which a few scattered remains of stout walls and big bastions looked venerable and picturesque. A little boulevard winds round the town, planted with trees and garnished with more benches than I ever saw provided by a soft-hearted municipality. This precinct had a warm, lazy, dusty, southern look, as if the people sat out-of-doors a great deal, and wandered about in the stillness of summer nights. The figure of the elder town, at these hours, must be ghostly enough on its neighboring hill. Even by day it has the air of a vignette of Gustave Doré, a couplet of Victor Hugo. It is almost too perfect — as if it were an enormous model, placed on a big green table at a museum. A steep, paved way, grass-grown like all roads where vehicles never pass, stretches up to it in the sun. It has a double *enciente*, complete outer walls and complete inner (these, elaborately *fortified*, are the

more curious); and this congregation of ramparts, towers, bastions, battlements, barbicans, is as fantastic and romantic as you please. The approach I mention here leads to the gate that looks toward Toulouse — the Porte de l'Aude. There is a second, on the other side, called, I believe, the Porte Narbonnaise, a magnificent gate, flanked with towers thick and tall, defended by elaborate outworks; and these two apertures alone admit you to the place — putting aside a small sally-port, protected by a great bastion, on the quarter that looks toward the Pyrenees. As a votary, always, in the first instance, of a general impression, I walked all round the outer enceinte; a process on the very face of it entertaining. I took to the right of the Porte de l'Aude, without entering it, where the old moat has been filled in. The filling-in of the moat has created a grassy level at the foot of the big gray towers, which, rising at frequent intervals, stretch their stiff curtain of stone from point to point. The curtain drops without a fold upon the quiet grass, which was dotted here and there with a humble native, dozing away the golden afternoon. The natives of the elder Carcassonne are all humble, for the core of the Cité has shrunken and decayed, and there is little life among the ruins. A few tenacious laborers, who work in the neighboring fields or in the ville-basse, and sundry octogenarians of both sexes, who are dying where they have lived, and contribute much to the pictorial effect — these are the principal inhabitants. The process of converting the place from an irresponsible old town into a conscious "specimen" has of course been attended with eliminations; the population has, as a general thing, been restored away. I should lose no time in saying that restoration is the great mark of the Cité. M. Viollet-le-Duc has worked his will upon it, put it into perfect order, revived the fortifications in every detail. I do not pretend to judge the performance, carried out on a scale and in a spirit which really impose themselves on the imagination. Few architects have had such a chance, and M. Viollet-le-Duc must have been the envy of the whole restoring fraternity. The image of a more crumbling Carcassonne rises in the mind, and there is no doubt that forty years ago the place was more affecting. On the other hand, as we see it to-day, it is a wonderful evocation, and if there is a great deal of new in the old, there is plenty of old in the new. The repaired crenelations, the inserted patches, of the walls of the outer circle sufficiently express this commixture. My walk brought me into full view of the Pyrenees, which, now that the sun had begun to sink and the shadows to grow long, had a wonderful violet glow. The platform at the base of the walls has a greater width on this side, and it made the scene more complete. Two or three old crones had crawled out of the Porte Narbonnaise, to examine the advancing visitor; and a very ancient peasant, lying there with his back against a tower, was tending half-a-dozen lean sheep. A poor man in a very old blouse, crippled and with crutches lying beside him, had been brought out and placed on a stool, where he enjoyed the afternoon as best he might. He looked so ill and so patient that I spoke to him; found that his legs were paralyzed and he was quite helpless. He had formerly been seven years in the army, and had made the campaign of Mexico with Bazaine. Born in the old Cité, he had come back there to end his days. It seemed strange, as he sat there, with those romantic walls behind him and the great picture of the Pyrenees in front, to think that he had been across the seas to the far-away new world, had made part of a famous expedition, and was now a cripple at the gate of the mediæval city where he had played as a child. All this struck me as a great deal of history

for so modest a figure — a poor little figure that could only just unclose its palm for a small silver coin. He was not the only acquaintance I made at Carcassonne. I had not pursued my circuit of the walls much further when I encountered a person of quite another type, of whom I asked some question which had just then presented itself, and who proved to be the very genius of the spot. He was a sociable son of the ville-basse, a gentleman, and as I afterwards learned an employé at the prefecture — a person, in short, much esteemed at Carcassonne. (I may say all this, as he will never read these pages.) He had been ill for a month, and in the company of his little dog was taking his first airing; in his own phrase he was *amoureux-fou de la Cité* — he could lose no time in coming back to it. He talked of it, indeed, as a lover, and, giving me for half an hour the advantage of his company, showed me all the points of the place. (I speak here always of the outer enceinte; you penetrate to the inner, which is the specialty of Carcassonne, and the great curiosity, only by application at the lodge of the regular custodian, a remarkable functionary, who, half an hour later, when I had been introduced to him by my friend the amateur, marched me over the fortifications with a tremendous accompaniment of dates and technical terms.) My companion pointed out to me in particular the traces of different periods in the structure of the walls. There is a portentous amount of history embedded in them, beginning with Romans and Visigoths; here and there are marks of old breaches, hastily repaired. We passed into the town — into that part of it not included in the citadel. It is the queerest and most fragmentary little place in the world, as everything save the fortifications is being suffered to crumble away, in order that the spirit of M. Viollet-le-Duc alone may pervade it, and it may subsist simply as a magnificent shell. As the leases of the wretched little houses fall in, the ground is cleared of them, and a mumbling old woman approached me in the course of my circuit, inviting me to condole with her on the disappearance of so many of the hovels which in the last few hundred years (since the collapse of Carcassonne as a stronghold) had attached themselves to the base of the walls, in the space between the two circles. These habitations, constructed of materials taken from the ruins, nestled there snugly enough. This intermediate space had therefore become a kind of street, which has crumbled in turn, as the fortress has grown up again. There are other streets beside, very diminutive and vague, where you pick your way over heaps of rubbish and become conscious of unexpected faces, looking at you out of windows as detached as the cherubic heads. The most definite thing in the place was a little café, where the waiters, I think, must be the ghosts of the old Visigoths; the most definite, that is, after the little château and the little cathedral. Everything in the Cité is little; you can walk round the walls in twenty minutes. On the drawbridge of the château, which, with a picturesque old face, flanking towers and a dry moat, is to-day simply a bare *caserne*, lounged half a dozen soldiers, unusually small. Nothing could be more odd than to see these objects inclosed in a receptacle which has much of the appearance of an enormous toy. The Cité and its population vaguely reminded me of an immense Noah's ark.

VII.

Carcassonne dates from the Roman occupation of Gaul. The place commanded one of the great roads into Spain, and in the fourth century Romans and Franks ousted each other from such a point of vantage. In the year 436, Theodoric, king of the Visigoths, superseded both these parties, and it is during his occupation that the inner en-

ceinte was raised upon the ruins of the Roman fortifications. Most of the Visigoth towers that are still erect are seated upon Roman substructions which appear to have been formed hastily, probably at the moment of the Frankish invasion. The authors of these solid defenses, though occasionally disturbed, held Carcassonne and the neighboring country, in which they had established their kingdom of Septimania, till the year 713, when they were expelled by the Moors of Spain, who ushered in an unillumined period of four centuries, of which no traces remain. These facts I derive from a source no more recondite than a pamphlet by M. Viollet-le-Duc — a very luminous description of the fortifications, which you may buy from the accomplished custodian. The writer makes a jump to the year 1209, when Carcassonne, then forming part of the realm of the viscounts of Béziers and infected by the Albigensian heresy, was besieged, in the name of the Pope, by the terrible Simon de Montfort and his army of crusaders. Simon was accustomed to success, and the town succumbed in the course of a fortnight. Thirty-one years later, having passed into the hands of the king of France, it was again besieged by the young Raymond de Trincavel, the last of the viscounts of Béziers; and of this siege M. Viollet-le-Duc gives a long and minute account, which the visitor who has a head for such things may follow, with the brochure in hand, on the fortifications themselves. The young Raymond de Trincavel, baffled and repulsed, retired at the end of twenty-four days. Saint Louis and Philip the Bold, in the thirteenth century, multiplied the defenses of Carcassonne, which was one of the bulwarks of their kingdom on the Spanish quarter; and from this time forth, being regarded as impregnable, the place had nothing to fear. It was not even attacked, and when, in 1355, Edward the Black Prince marched into it, the inhabitants had opened the gates to the conqueror before whom all Languedoc was prostrate. I am not one of those who, as I said just now, have a head for such things, and having extracted these few facts had made all the use of M. Viollet-le-Duc's pamphlet of which I was capable.

I have mentioned that my obliging friend the amoureux-fou handed me over to the door-keeper of the citadel. I should add that I was at first committed to the wife of this functionary, a stout peasant-woman, who took a key down from a nail, conducted me to a postern door, and ushered me into the presence of her husband. Having just begun his rounds with a party of four persons, he was not many steps in advance. I added myself perforce to this party, which was not brilliantly composed, except that two of its members were gendarmes in full toggery, who announced in the course of our tour that they had been stationed for a year at Carcassonne and had never before had the curiosity to come up to the Cité. There was something brilliant, certainly, in that. The *gardien* was an extraordinarily typical little Frenchman, who struck me even more forcibly than the wonders of the inner enceinte; and as I am bound to assume, at whatever cost to my literary vanity, that there is not the slightest danger of his reading these remarks, I may treat him as public property. With his diminutive stature and his perpendicular spirit, his flushed face, expressive, protuberant eyes, high, peremptory voice, extreme volubility, lucidity, and neatness of utterance, he reminded me of the gentry who figure in the revolutions of his native land. If he was not a fierce little Jacobin he ought to have been, for I am sure there were many men of his pattern on the Committee of Public Safety. He knew absolutely what he was about, understood the place thoroughly, and constantly reminded his audience of what he himself had done in

the way of excavations and reparations. He described himself as the brother of the architect of the work actually going forward (that which has been done since the death of M. Viollet-le-Duc, I suppose he meant), and this fact was more illustrative than all the others. It reminded me, as one is reminded at every turn, of the democratic conditions of French life: a man of the people, with a wife *en bonnet*, extremely intelligent, full of special knowledge, and yet remaining essentially of the people, and showing his intelligence with a kind of ferocity, of defiance. Such a personage helps one to understand the red radicalism of France, the revolutions, the barricades, the sinister passion for thrones. (I do not, of course, take upon myself to say that the individual I describe — who can know nothing of the liberties I am taking with him — is actually devoted to these ideals; I only mean that many such devotees must have his qualities.) In just the *nuance* that I have tried to indicate here, it is a terrible pattern of man. Permeated in a high degree by civilization, it is yet untouched by the desire which one finds in the Englishman, in proportion as he rises in the world, to approximate to the figure of the gentleman; on the other hand, a *netteté*, a faculty of exposition, such as the English gentleman is rarely either blessed or cursed with. This brilliant, this suggestive warden of Carcassonne marched us about for an hour, haranguing, explaining, illustrating, as he went: it was a complete little lecture, such as might have been delivered at the Boston Music Hall, on the manner in which a first-rate *place forte* used to be attacked and defended. Our peregrinations made it very clear that Carcassonne was impregnable; it is impossible to imagine, without having seen them, such refinements of immurement, such ingenuities of resistance. We passed along battlements and *chemins de ronde*, ascended and descended towers, crawled under arches, peered out of loop-holes, lowered ourselves into dungeons, halted in all sorts of tight places, while the purpose of something or other was described to us. It was very curious, very interesting, above all it was very pictorial, and involved perpetual peeps into the little crooked, crumbling, sunny, grassy, empty Cité. In places, as you stand upon it, the great towered and embattled enceinte produces an illusion; it looks as if it were still equipped and defended. One vivid challenge, at any rate, it flings down before you; it calls upon you to make up your mind on the matter of restoration. For myself, I have no hesitation; I prefer in every case the ruined, however ruined, to the reconstructed, however splendid. What is left is more precious than what is added; the one is history, the other is fiction, and I like the former the better of the two; it is so much more romantic. One is positive, so far as it goes; the other fills up the void with things more dead than the void itself, inasmuch as they have never had life. After that I am free to say that the restoration of Carcassonne is a splendid achievement. The little custodian dismissed us at last, after having, as usual, inducted us into the inevitable repository of photographs. These photographs are a great nuisance, all over the Midi. They are exceedingly bad, for the most part; and the worst, those in the form of the hideous little *album-panorama*, are thrust upon you at every turn. They are a kind of tax that you must pay; the best way is to pay to be let off. It was not to be denied that there was a relief in separating from our accomplished guide, whose manner of imparting information reminded me of the energetic process by which I have seen mineral waters bottled. All this while the afternoon had grown more lovely; the sunset had deepened, the horizon of hills grown purple; the mass of the Canigou became

more delicate, yet more distinct. The day had so far faded that the interior of the little cathedral was wrapped in twilight, into which the glowing windows projected something of their color. This church has high beauty and value, but I will spare the reader a presentation of details which I myself had no opportunity to master. It consists of a Romanesque nave of the end of the eleventh century, and a gothic choir and transepts of the beginning of the fourteenth; and, shut up in its citadel like a precious casket in a cabinet, it seems — or seemed at that hour — to have a sort of double sanctity. After leaving it and passing out of the two circles of walls, I treated myself, in the most infatuated manner, to another walk round the Cité. It is certainly this general impression that is most striking — the impression from outside, where the whole place detaches itself at once from the landscape. In the warm southern dusk it looked more than ever like a city in a fairy-tale. To make the thing perfect, a white young moon, in its first quarter, came out and hung just over the dark silhouette. It was hard to come away — to incommode one's self for anything so vulgar as a railway-train; I would gladly have spent the evening in revolving round the walls of Carcassonne. But I had in a measure engaged to proceed to Narbonne, and there was a certain magic in that name which gave me strength — Narbonne, the richest city in Roman Gaul.

Henry James.

PERSEPOLIS.

HERE is the royalty of ruin: naught
Of later pomp the desert stillness mars;
Alone these columns face the fiery sun,
Alone they watch beneath the midnight stars.

Forests have sprung to life in colder climes,
Grown stalwart, nourished many a savage brood,
Ripened to green age, fallen to decay,
Since this gray grove of marble voiceless stood.

Not voiceless once, when, like a rainbow woof
Veiling the azure of the Persian sky,
Curtains of crimson, violet, and gold
In folds of priceless texture hung on high!

And what have sun and shadow left to us?
What glorious picture in this marble frame
Ever, as soundless centuries roll by,
Gives this lone mount its proudest, dearest fame?

The sculptured legend on yon polished cliff
Has lost its meaning. Persia, gray and old,
Upon her bed of roses sleeps away
The ages, all her tales of triumph told.

quiet seclusion. Works of charity became the occupation, we may say the passion, of her life. Without children of her own, she earned the beautiful name of Mother of the Poor. Her house in the Faubourg St. Antoine became an asylum for the unfortunate and oppressed. From this gentle and pious existence she passed away in her seventy-fifth year, August, 1691, and was buried beside her beloved husband in the chapel of the Château de Nanteuil. Bossuet, who always cherished her memory tenderly, never was at Meaux without passing by Nanteuil, that he might pray beside her tomb.

I seem to have been describing here a paragon. Assuredly Marie de Hautefort must have had her defects, but the record of them has not come down to us, and whatever they may have been we are permitted to believe that her virtues cast her faults into the shade.

Maria Louise Henry.

EN PROVINCE.

IV.

FROM NARBONNE TO NÎMES.

I.

At Narbonne I took up my abode at the house of a *serrurier mécanicien*, and was very thankful for the accommodation. It was my misfortune to arrive at this ancient city late at night, on the eve of market-day; and market-day at Narbonne is a very serious affair. The inns, on this occasion, are stuffed with wine-dealers, for the country roundabout, dedicated almost exclusively to Bacchus, has hitherto escaped the phylloxera. This deadly enemy of the grape is encamped over the Midi in a hundred places; blighted vineyards and ruined proprietors being quite the order of the day. The signs of distress are more frequent as you advance into Provence, many of the vines being laid under water, in the hope of washing the plague away. There are healthy regions still, however, and the vintners find plenty to do at Narbonne. The traffic in wine appeared to be the sole thought of the Narbonnais; every one I spoke to had something to say about the harvest of gold that bloomed under its influence. "C'est inoui, monsieur, l'argent qu'il y a dans ce pays. Des gens à qui la vente de leur vin rapporte jusqu'à 500,000 francs par an." That little speech, addressed to me by a gentleman at the inn, gives the note of these revelations. It must be said that there was little in the appearance either of the town or of its population to suggest the possession of such treasures. Narbonne is a *sale petite ville* in all the force of the term, and my first impression on arriving there was an extreme regret that I had not remained for the night at the lovely Carcassonne. My journey from that delectable spot lasted a couple of hours, and was performed in darkness — a darkness not so dense, however, but that I was able to make out, as we passed it, the great figure of Béziers, whose ancient roofs and towers, clustered on a goodly hill-top, looked as fantastic as you please. I know not what appearance Béziers may present by day; but by night it has quite the grand air. On issuing from the station at Narbonne, I found that the only vehicle in waiting was a kind of bastard tramcar, a thing shaped as if it had been meant to go upon rails; that is, equipped with small wheels, placed beneath it, and with a

platform at either end, but destined to rattle over the stones like the most vulgar of omnibuses. To complete the oddity of this conveyance, it was under the supervision not of a conductor, but of a conductress. A fair young woman, with a pouch suspended from her girdle, had command of the platform, and as soon as the car was full she jolted us into the town through clouds of the thickest dust I ever have swallowed. I have had occasion to speak of the activity of women in France — of the way they are always in the ascendent; and here was a signal example of their general utility. The young lady I have mentioned conveyed her whole company to the wretched little Hôtel de France, where it is to be hoped that some of them found a lodging. For myself, I was informed that the place was crowded from cellar to attic, and that its inmates were sleeping three or four in a room. At Carcassonne I should have had a bad bed, but at Narbonne, apparently, I was to have no bed at all. I passed an hour or two of flat suspense, while fate settled the question of whether I should go on to Perpignan, return to Béziers, or still discover a modest couch at Narbonne. I shall not have suffered in vain, however, if my example serves to deter other travelers from alighting unannounced at that city on a Wednesday evening. The retreat to Béziers, not attempted in time, proved impossible, and I was assured that at Perpignan, which I should not reach till midnight, the affluence of wine-dealers was not less than at Narbonne. I interviewed every hostess in the town, and got no satisfaction but distracted shrugs. Finally, at an advanced hour, one of the servants of the Hôtel de France, where I had attempted to dine, came to me in triumph to proclaim that he had secured for me a charming apartment in a *maison bourgeoise*. I took possession of it gratefully, in spite of its having an entrance like a stable, and being pervaded by an odor compared with which that of a stable would have been delicious. As I have mentioned, my landlord was a locksmith, and he had strange machines which rumbled and whirred in the rooms below my own. Nevertheless, I slept, and I dreamed of Carcassonne. It was better to do that than to dream of the Hôtel de France. I was obliged to cultivate relations with the cuisine of this establishment. Nothing could have been more *méridional;* indeed, both the dirty little inn and Narbonne at large seemed to me to have the infirmities of the south without its usual graces. Narrow, noisy, shabby, belittered and encumbered, filled with clatter and chatter, the Hôtel de France would have been described in perfection by Alphonse Daudet. For what struck me above all in it was the note of the Midi, as he has represented it — the sound of universal talk. The landlord sat at supper with sundry friends, in a kind of glass cage, with a genial indifference to arriving guests; the waiters tumbled over the loose luggage in the hall; the travelers who had been turned away leaned gloomily against doorposts; and the landlady, surrounded by confusion, unconscious of responsibility, and animated only by the spirit of conversation, bandied high-voiced compliments with the *voyageurs de commerce*. At ten o'clock in the morning there was a *table d'hôte* for breakfast — a wonderful repast, which overflowed into every room and pervaded the whole establishment. I sat down with a hundred hungry marketers, fat, brown, greasy men, with a good deal of the rich soil of Languedoc adhering to their hands and their boots. I mention the latter articles because they almost put them on the table. It was very hot, and there were swarms of flies; the viands had the strongest odor; there was in particular a horrible mixture known as *gras-double*, a light gray, glutinous, nauseating mess, which my companions devoured in large quantities.

A man opposite to me had the dirtiest fingers I ever saw; a collection of fingers which in England would have excluded him from a farmers' ordinary. The conversation was mainly bucolic; though a part of it, I remember, at the table at which I sat, consisted of a discussion as to whether or no the maid-servant were *sage* — a discussion which went on under the nose of this young lady, as she carried about the dreadful gras-double, and to which she contributed the most convincing blushes. It was thoroughly méridional.

II.

In going to Narbonne I had of course counted upon Roman remains; but when I went forth in search of them I perceived that I had hoped too fondly. There is really nothing in the place to speak of; that is, on the day of my visit there was nothing but the market, which was in complete possession. "This intricate, curious, but lifeless town," Murray calls it; yet to me it appeared overflowing with life. Its streets are mere crooked, dirty lanes, bordered with perfectly insignificant houses; but they were filled with the same clatter and chatter that I had found at the hotel. The market was held partly in the little square of the hôtel de ville, a structure which a flattering wood-cut in the Guide-Joanne had given me a desire to behold. The reality was not impressive, the old color of the front having been completely restored away. Such interest as it superficially possesses it derives from a fine mediæval tower which rises beside it, with turrets at the angles — always a picturesque thing. The rest of the market was held in another *place*, still shabbier than the first, which lies beyond the canal. The Canal du Midi runs through the town, and, spanned at this point by a small suspension-bridge, presented a certain sketchability. On the further side were the venders and chafferers — old women under awnings and big umbrellas, rickety tables piled high with fruit, white caps and brown faces, blouses, sabots, donkeys. Beneath this picture was another — a long row of washerwomen, on their knees on the edge of the canal, pounding and wringing the dirty linen of Narbonne — no great quantity, to judge by the costume of the people. Innumerable rusty men, scattered all over the place, were buying and selling wine, straddling about in pairs, in groups, with their hands in their pockets, and packed together at the doors of the cafés. They were mostly fat and brown and unshaven; they ground their teeth as they talked; they were very méridional.

The only two lions at Narbonne are the cathedral and the museum, the latter of which is quartered in the hôtel de ville. The cathedral, closely shut in by houses, and with the west front undergoing repairs, is singular in two respects. It consists exclusively of a choir, which is of the end of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the next, and of great magnificence. There is absolutely nothing else. This choir, of extraordinary elevation, forms the whole church. I sat there a good while; there was no other visitor. I had taken a great dislike to poor little Narbonne, which struck me as sordid and overheated, and this place seemed to extend to me, as in the Middle Ages, the privilege of sanctuary. It is a very solemn corner. The other peculiarity of the cathedral is that, externally, it bristles with battlements, having anciently formed part of the defenses of the *archevêché*, which is beside it and which connects it with the hôtel de ville. This combination of the church and the fortress is very curious, and during the Middle Ages was not without its value. The palace of the former archbishops of Narbonne (the hôtel de ville of to-day forms part of it) was both an asylum and an arsenal during the hideous wars by which the Languedoc was ravaged in the thirteenth century. The whole mass of buildings is jammed

together in a manner that from certain points of view makes it far from apparent which feature is which. The museum occupies several chambers at the top of the hôtel de ville, and is not an imposing collection. It was closed, but I induced the portress to let me in — a silent, cadaverous person, in a black coif, like a *beguine*, who sat knitting in one of the windows while I went the rounds. The number of Roman fragments is small, and their quality is not the finest; I must add that this impression was hastily gathered. There is indeed a work of art in one of the rooms which creates a presumption in favor of the place — the portrait (rather a good one) of a citizen of Narbonne, whose name I forget, who is described as having devoted all his time and his intelligence to collecting the objects by which the visitor is surrounded. This excellent man was a connoisseur, and the visitor is doubtless often an ignoramus.

III.

"Cette, with its glistening houses white,
Curves with the curving beach away
To where the lighthouse beacons bright,
Far in the bay."

That stanza of Matthew Arnold's, which I happened to remember, gave a certain importance to the half hour I spent in the buffet of the station at Cette while I waited for the train to Montpellier. I had left Narbonne in the afternoon, and by the time I reached Cette the darkness had descended. I therefore missed the sight of the glistening houses, and had to console myself with that of the beacon in the bay, as well as with a *bouillon* of which I partook at the buffet aforesaid; for, since the morning, I had not ventured to return to the table d'hôte at Narbonne. The Hôtel Nevet, at Montpellier, which I reached an hour later, has an ancient renown all over the south of France — advertises itself, I believe, as *le plus vaste du midi*. It seemed to me the model of a good provincial inn: a big, rambling, creaking establishment, with brown, labyrinthine corridors, a queer old open-air vestibule, into which the diligence, in the *bon temps*, used to penetrate, and a hospitality more expressive than that of the new caravansaries. It dates from the days when Montpellier was still accounted a fine winter residence for people with weak lungs; and this rather melancholy tradition, together with the former celebrity of the school of medicine still existing there, but from which the glory has departed, helps to account for its combination of high antiquity and vast proportions. The old hotels were usually more concentrated; but the school of medicine passed for one of the attractions of Montpellier. Long before Mentone was discovered or Colorado invented, British invalids traveled down through France in the post-chaise or the public coach, to spend their winters in the wonderful place which boasted both a climate and a faculty. The air is mild, no doubt, but there are refinements of mildness which were not then suspected, and which in a more analytic age have carried the annual wave far beyond Montpellier. The place is charming, all the same, and it served the purpose of John Locke, who made a long stay there, between 1675 and 1679, and became acquainted with a noble fellow-visitor, Lord Pembroke, to whom he dedicated the famous Essay. There are places that please, without your being able to say wherefore, and Montpellier is one of the number. It has some charming views, from the great promenade of the Peyrou; but its position is not strikingly fair. Beyond this, it contains a good museum and the long façades of its school, but these are its only definite treasures. Its cathedral struck me as quite the weakest I had seen, and I remember no other monument that made up for it. The place has neither the gayety of a modern nor the solemnity of an ancient town, and it

is agreeable as certain women are agreeable who are neither beautiful nor clever. An Italian would remark that it is sympathetic; a German would admit that it is *gemüthlich*. I spent two days there, mostly in the rain, and even under these circumstances I carried away a kindly impression. I think the Hôtel Nevet had something to do with it and the sentiment of relief with which, in a quiet, even a luxurious room that looked out on a garden, I reflected that I had washed my hands of Narbonne. The phylloxera has destroyed the vines in the country that surrounds Montpellier, and at that moment I was capable of rejoicing in the thought that I should not breakfast with vintners.

The gem of the place is the Musée Fabre, one of the best collections of paintings in a provincial city. François Fabre, a native of Montpellier, died there in 1837, after having spent a considerable part of his life in Italy, where he had collected a good many valuable pictures and some very poor ones, the latter class including several from his own hand. He was the hero of a remarkable episode, having succeeded no less a person than Vittorio Alfieri in the affections of no less a person than Louise de Stolberg, Countess of Albany, widow of no less a person than Charles Edward Stewart, the second pretender to the British crown. Surely no woman ever was associated sentimentally with three figures more diverse: a disqualified sovereign, an Italian dramatist, and a bad French painter. The productions of M. Fabre, who followed in the steps of David, bear the stamp of a cold mediocrity; there is not much to be said even for the portrait of the genial countess (her life has been written by M. Saint-Réné-Taillandier, who depicts her as delightful), which hangs in Florence, in the gallery of the Uffizzi, and makes a pendant to a likeness of Alfieri by the same author. Stendhal, in his Mémoires d'un Touriste, says that this work of art represents her as a cook who has pretty hands. I am delighted to have an opportunity of quoting Stendhal, whose two volumes of the Mémoires d'un Touriste every traveler in France should carry in his portmanteau. I have had this opportunity more than once, for I have met him at Tours, at Nantes, at Bourges, and everywhere he is suggestive. But he has the defect that he is never pictorial, that he never by any chance makes an image, and that his style is perversely colorless, for a man so fond of contemplation. His taste is often singularly false; it is the taste of the early years of the present century, the period that produced clocks surmounted with sentimental "subjects." Stendhal does not admire these clocks, but he almost does. He admires Domenichino and Guercino, and prizes the Bolognese school of painters because they "spoke to the soul." He is a votary of the new classic, is fond of tall, square, regular buildings, and thinks Nantes, for instance, full of the "air noble." It was a pleasure to me to reflect that five and forty years ago he had alighted in that city, at the very inn in which I spent a night, and which looks down on the Place Grâslin and the theatre. The hotel that was the best in 1837 appears to be the best to-day. On the subject of Touraine, Stendhal is extremely refreshing; he finds the scenery meagre and much overrated, and proclaims his opinion with perfect frankness. He does, however, scant justice to the banks of the Loire; his want of appreciation of the picturesque — want of the sketcher's sense — causes him to miss half the charm of a landscape which is nothing if not "quiet," as a painter would say, and of which the felicities reveal themselves only to waiting eyes. He even despises the Indre, the river of Madame Sand. The Mémoires d'un Touriste are written in the character of a commercial traveler, and the author has nothing to say about Chenonceaux or

Chambord, or indeed about any of the châteaux of that part of France; his system being to talk only of the large towns, where he may be supposed to find a market for his goods. It was his ambition to pass for an ironmonger. But in the large towns he is usually excellent company, though as discursive as Sterne, and strangely indifferent, for a man of imagination, to those superficial aspects of things which the poor pages now before the reader are mainly an attempt to render. It is his conviction that Alfieri, at Florence, bored the Countess of Albany terribly, and he adds that the famous Gallophobe died of jealousy of the little painter from Montpellier. The Countess of Albany left her property to Fabre; and I suppose some of the pieces in the museum of his native town used to hang in the sunny saloons of that fine old palace on the Arno which is still pointed out to the stranger in Florence as the residence of Alfieri.

The institution has had other benefactors, notably a certain M. Bruyas, who has enriched it with an extraordinary number of portraits of himself. As these, however, are by different hands, some of them distinguished, we may suppose that it was less the model than the artists that M. Bruyas wished to exhibit. Easily first are two large specimens of David Teniers, which are incomparable for brilliancy and a glowing perfection of execution. I have a weakness for this singular genius, who combined the delicate with the groveling, and I have rarely seen richer examples. Scarcely less valuable is a Gerard Dow which hangs near them, though it must rank lower as having kept less of its freshness. This Gerard Dow did me good, for a master is a master, whatever he may paint. It represents a woman paring carrots, while a boy before her exhibits a mouse-trap in which he has caught a frightened victim. The goodwife has spread a cloth on the top of a big barrel which serves her as a table, and on this brown, greasy napkin, of which the texture is wonderfully rendered, lie the raw vegetables she is preparing for domestic consumption. Beside the barrel is a large cauldron lined with copper, with a rim of brass. The way these things are painted brings tears to the eyes; but they give the measure of the Musée Fabre, where two specimens of Teniers and a Gerard Dow are the jewels. The Italian pictures are of small value, but there is a work by Sir Joshua Reynolds, said to be the only one in France — an infant Samuel in prayer, apparently a repetition of the picture in England which inspired the little plaster image, disseminated in Protestant lands, that we used to admire in our childhood. Sir Joshua, somehow, was an eminently Protestant painter; no one can forget that who, in the National Gallery in London, has looked at the picture in which he represents several young ladies as nymphs, voluminously draped, hanging garlands over a statue, a picture suffused indefinably with the Anglican spirit and exasperating to a member of one of the Latin races. It is an odd chance, therefore, that has led him into that part of France where Protestants have been least *bien vus*. This is the country of the dragonnades of Louis XIV. and of the pastors of the desert. From the garden of the Peyrou, at Montpellier, you may see the hills of the Cévennes, to which they of the religion fled for safety, and out of which they were hunted and harried.

I have only to add, in regard to the Musée Fabre, that it contains the portrait of its founder, a little, pursy, fat-faced, elderly man, whose countenance contains few indications of the power that makes distinguished victims. He is, however, just such a personage as the mind's eye sees walking on the terrace of the Peyrou of an October afternoon in the early years of the century: a plump figure in a chocolate-colored

coat and a *culotte* that exhibits a good leg — a culotte provided with a watch-fob from which a heavy seal is suspended. This Peyrou (to come to it at last) is a wonderful place, especially to be found in a little provincial city. France is certainly the country of towns that aim at completeness; more than in other lands, they contain stately features as a matter of course. We should never have ceased to hear about the Peyrou, if fortune had placed it in a Shrewsbury or a Hartford. It is true that the place enjoys a certain celebrity at home, which it amply deserves, moreover, for nothing could be more impressive and monumental. It consists of an "elevated platform," as Murray says, an immense terrace, laid out, in the highest part of the town, as a garden, and commanding in all directions a view which in clear weather must be of the finest. I strolled there in the intervals of showers, and saw only the nearer beauties: a great pompous arch of triumph, in honor of Louis XIV. (which is not, properly speaking, in the garden, but faces it, straddling across the *place* by which you approach it from the town), an equestrian statue of that monarch set aloft in the middle of the terrace, and a very exalted and complicated fountain, which forms a background to the picture. This fountain gushes from a kind of hydraulic temple, to which you ascend by broad flights of steps, and which is fed by a splendid aqueduct, stretched in the most ornamental and unexpected manner across the neighboring valley. All this work dates from the middle of the last century. The combination of features — the triumphal arch, or gate; the wide, fair terrace, with its beautiful view; the statue of the grand monarch; the big architectural fountain, which would not surprise one at Rome, but does surprise one at Montpellier; and to complete the effect, the extraordinary aqueduct, charmingly foreshortened — all this is worthy of a capital, of a little court city. The whole place, with its repeated steps, its balustrades, its massive and plentiful stone-work, is full of the air of the last century — *sent bien son dix-huitième siècle;* none the less so, I am afraid, that, as I read in my faithful Murray, after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, the block, the stake, the wheel, had been erected here for the benefit of the hunted and tracked Camisards.

IV.

It was a pleasure to feel one's self in Provence again — the land where the silver-gray earth is impregnated with the light of the sky. To celebrate the event, as soon as I arrived at Nîmes I engaged a calèche to convey me to the Pont du Gard. The day was yet young, and it was perfectly fair; it appeared well, for a longish drive, to take advantage, without delay, of such security. After I had left the town I became more intimate with that Provençal charm which I had already enjoyed from the window of the train, and which glowed in the sweet sunshine and the white rocks, and lurked in the smoke-puffs of the little olives. The olive-trees in Provence are half the landscape. They are neither so tall, so stout, nor so richly contorted as I have seen them beyond the Alps; but this mild, colorless bloom seems the very texture of the country. The road from Nîmes, for a distance of fifteen miles, is superb; broad enough for an army, and as white and firm as a dinner-table. It stretches away over undulations which suggest a kind of harmony, and in the curves it makes through the wide, free country, where there is never a hedge or a wall, and the detail is always exquisite, there is something majestic, almost processional. Some twenty minutes before I reached the little inn that marks the termination of the drive, my vehicle met with an accident which just missed being serious, and which engaged the attention of a gentleman who, followed by his groom

and mounted on a strikingly handsome horse, happened to ride up at the moment. This young man, who, with his good looks and charming manner, might have stepped out of a novel of Octave Feuillet, gave me some very intelligent advice in reference to one of my horses, who had been injured, and was so good as to accompany me to the inn, with the resources of which he was acquainted, to see that his recommendations were carried out. The result of our interview was that he invited me to come and look at a small but ancient château in the neighborhood, which he had the happiness — not the greatest in the world, he intimated — to inhabit, and at which I engaged to present myself after I should have spent an hour at the Pont du Gard. For the moment, when we separated, I gave all my attention to that great structure. You are very near it before you see it; the ravine it spans suddenly opens and exhibits the picture. The scene at this point grows extremely beautiful. The ravine is the valley of the Gardon, which the road from Nîmes has followed some time without taking account of it, but which, exactly at the right distance from the aqueduct, deepens and expands, and puts on those characteristics which are best suited to give it effect. The gorge becomes romantic, still and solitary, and with its white rocks and wild shrubbery hangs over the clear-colored river, in whose slow course there is here and there a deeper pool. Over the valley, from side to side, and ever so high in the air, stretch the three tiers of the tremendous bridge. They are unspeakably imposing, and nothing could well be more Roman. The hugeness, the solidity, the unexpectedness, the monumental rectitude, of the whole thing leave you nothing to say — at the time — and make you stand gazing. You simply feel that it is noble and perfect, that it has the quality of greatness. A road, branching from the highway, descends to the level of the river and passes under one of the arches. This road has a wide margin of grass and loose stones, which slopes upward into the bank of the ravine. You may sit here as long as you please, staring up at the light, strong piers; the spot is extremely natural, though two or three stone benches have been erected on it. I remained there an hour, and got a complete impression; the place was perfectly soundless, and for the time, at least, lonely; the splendid afternoon had begun to fade, and there was a fascination in the object I had come to see It came to pass that at the same time I discovered in it a certain stupidity, a vague brutality. That element is rarely absent from great Roman work, which is wanting in the nice adaptation of the means to the end. The means are always exaggerated, the end is so much more than attained. The Roman rigidity was apt to overshoot the mark, and I suppose a race which could do nothing small is as defective as a race which can do nothing great. Of this Roman rigidity the Pont du Gard is an admirable example. It would be a great injustice, however, not to insist upon its beauty — a kind of manly beauty, that of an object constructed not to please but to serve, and impressive simply from the scale on which it carries out this intention. The number of arches in each tier is different; they are smaller and more numerous as they ascend. The preservation of the thing is extraordinary; nothing has crumbled or collapsed; every feature remains; and the huge blocks of stone, of a brownish-yellow (as if they had been baked by the Provençal sun for eighteen centuries), pile themselves, without mortar or cement, as evenly as the day they were laid together. All this to carry the water of a couple of springs to a little provincial city! The conduit on the top has retained its shape and traces of the cement with which it was lined. When the vague twilight began to gather, the

lonely valley seemed to fill itself with the shadow of the Roman name, as if the mighty empire were still as erect as the supports of the aqueduct; and it was open to a solitary tourist, sitting there sentimental, to believe that no people has ever been, or will ever be, as great as that, measured as we measure the greatness of an individual, by the push they gave to what they undertook. The Pont du Gard is one of the three or four deepest impressions they have left; it speaks of them in a manner with which they might have been satisfied.

I feel as if it were scarcely discreet to indicate the whereabouts of the château of the obliging young man I had met on the way from Nîmes; I must content myself with saying that it nestled in an enchanting valley — *dans le fond*, as they say in France — and that I took my course thither on foot, after leaving the Pont du Gard. I find it noted in my journal as "an adorable little corner." The principal feature of the place is a couple of very ancient towers, brownish-yellow in hue, and mantled in scarlet Virginia-creeper. One of these towers is isolated, and is only the more effective; the other is incorporated in the house, which is delightfully fragmentary and irregular. It had got to be late by this time, and the lonely *castel* looked crepuscular and mysterious. An old housekeeper was sent for, who showed me the rambling interior; and then the young man took me into a dim old drawing-room, which had no less than four chimney-pieces, all unlighted, and gave me a refection of fruit and sweet wine. When I praised the wine, and asked him what it was, he said simply, "C'est du vin de ma mère!" Throughout my little journey I had never yet felt myself so far from Paris; and this was a sensation I enjoyed more than my host, who was an involuntary exile, consoling himself with laying out a *manège*, which he showed me as I walked away. His civility was great, and I was greatly touched by it. On my way back to the little inn where I had left my vehicle, I passed the Pont du Gard, and took another look at it. Its great arches made windows for the evening sky, and the rocky ravine, with its dusky cedars and shining river, was lonelier than before. At the inn I swallowed, or tried to swallow, a glass of horrible wine with my coachman; after which, with my reconstructed team, I drove back to Nîmes in the moonlight. It only added a more solitary whiteness to the constant sheen of the Provençal landscape.

V.

The weather the next day was equally fair, so that it seemed an imprudence not to make sure of Aigues-Mortes. Nîmes itself could wait; at a pinch, I could attend to Nîmes in the rain. It was my belief that Aigues-Mortes was a little gem, and it is natural to desire that gems should have an opportunity to sparkle. This is an excursion of but a few hours, and there is a little friendly, familiar, dawdling train that will convey you, in time for a noonday breakfast, to the small dead town where the blessed Saint Louis twice embarked for the crusades. You may get back to Nîmes for dinner; the run — or rather the walk, for the train does n't run — is of about an hour. I found the little journey charming, and looked out of the carriage window, on my right, at the distant Cévennes, covered with tones of amber and blue, and, all around, at vineyards red with the touch of October. The grapes were gone, but the plants had a color of their own. Within a certain distance of Aigues-Mortes they give place to wide salt-marshes, traversed by two canals; and over this expanse the train rumbles slowly upon a narrow causeway, failing for some time, though you know you are near the object of your curiosity, to bring

you to sight of anything but the horizon. Suddenly it appears, the towered and embattled mass, lying so low that the crest of its defenses seems to rise straight out of the ground; and it is not till the train stops, close before them, that you are able to take the full measure of its walls.

Aigues-Mortes stands on the edge of a wide *étang*, or shallow inlet of the sea, the further side of which is divided by a narrow band of coast from the Gulf of Lyons. Next after Carcassonne, to which it forms an admirable *pendant*, it is the most perfect thing of the kind in France. It has a rival in the person of Avignon, but the ramparts of Avignon are much less effective. Like Carcassonne, it is completely surrounded with its old fortifications, and if they are far simpler in character (there is but one circle) they are quite as well preserved. The moat has been filled up, and the site of the town might be figured by a billiard-table without pockets. On this absolute level, covered with coarse grass, Aigues-Mortes presents quite the appearance of the walled town that a school-boy draws upon his slate, or that we see in the background of early Flemish pictures — a simple parallelogram, of a contour almost absurdly bare, broken at intervals by angular towers and square holes. Such, literally speaking, is this delightful little city, which needs to be seen to tell its full story. It is extraordinarily pictorial, and if it is a very small sister of Carcassonne it has at least the essential features of the family. Indeed, it is even more like an image and less like a reality than Carcassonne; for by position and prospect it seems even more detached from the life of the present day. It is true that Aigues-Mortes does a little business; it sees certain bags of salt piled into barges which stand in a canal beside it, and which carry their cargo into regions comparatively modern. But nothing could well be more drowsy and desultory than this industry as I saw it practiced, with the aid of two or three brown peasants and under the eye of a solitary douanier, who strolled on the little quay beneath the western wall. "C'est bien plaisant, c'est bien paisible," said this worthy man, with whom I had some conversation; and pleasant and peaceful is the place indeed, though the former of these epithets may suggest an element of gayety in which Aigues-Mortes is deficient. The sand, the salt, the dull sea-view, surround it with a bright, quiet melancholy. There are fifteen towers and nine gates, five of which are on the southern side, overlooking the water. I walked all round the place three times (it does n't take long), but lingered most under the southern wall, where the afternoon light slept in the dreamiest, sweetest way. I sat down on an old stone, and looked away to the desolate salt-marshes and the still, shining surface of the étang; and, as I did so, reflected that this was a queer little out-of-the-world corner to have been chosen, in the great dominions of either monarch, for that pompous interview which took place, in 1538, between Francis I. and Charles V. It was also not easy to perceive how Louis IX., when in 1248 and 1270 he started for the Holy Land, set his army afloat in such very undeveloped channels. An hour later I purchased in the town a little pamphlet by M. Marius Topin, who undertakes to explain this latter anomaly, and to show that there is water enough in the port, as we may call it by courtesy, to have sustained a fleet of crusaders. I was unable to trace the channel that he points out, but was glad to believe that, as he contends, the sea has not retreated from the town since the thirteenth century. It was comfortable to think that things are not so changed as that. M. Topin indicates that the other French ports of the Mediterranean were not then *disponibles*, and

that Aigues-Mortes was the most eligible spot for an embarkation.

Behind the straight walls and the quiet gates the little town has not crumbled, like the Cité of Carcassonne. It can hardly be said to be alive, but if it is dead it has been very neatly embalmed. The hand of the restorer rests on it constantly; but this artist has not, as at Carcassonne, had miracles to accomplish. The interior is very still and empty, with small, stony, whitewashed streets, tenanted by a stray dog, a stray cat, a stray old woman. In the middle is a little *place*, with two or three cafés decorated by wide awnings, — a little *place* of which the principal feature is a very bad bronze statue of Saint Louis by Pradier. It is almost as bad as the breakfast I had at the inn that bears the name of that pious monarch. You may walk round the enceinte of Aigues-Mortes both outside and in, but you may not, as at Carcassonne, make a portion of this circuit on the *chemin de ronde*, the little projecting footway attached to the inner face of the battlements. This footway, wide enough only for a single pedestrian, is in the best order, and near each of the gates a flight of steps leads up to it; but a locked gate, at the top of the steps, makes access impossible, or at least unlawful. Aigues-Mortes, however, has its citadel, an immense tower, larger than any of the others, a little detached, and standing at the northwest angle of the town. I called upon the *casernier* — the custodian of the walls — and in his absence I was conducted through this big Tour de Constance by his wife, a very mild, meek woman, yellow with the traces of fever and ague, a scourge which, as might be expected in a town whose name denotes "dead waters," enters freely at the nine gates. The Tour de Constance is of extraordinary girth and solidity, divided into three superposed circular chambers, with very fine vaults, that are lighted by embrasures of prodigious depth, converging to windows little larger than loopholes, The place served for years as a prison to many of the Protestants of the south whom the revocation of the Edict of Nantes had exposed to atrocious penalties, and the annals of these dreadful chambers during the first half of the last century were written in tears and blood. Some of the recorded cases of long confinement there make one marvel afresh at what man has inflicted and endured. In a country in which a policy of extermination was to be put into practice this horrible tower was an obvious resource. From the battlements at the top, which is surmounted by an old disused light-house, you see the little compact rectangular town, which looks hardly bigger than a garden-patch, mapped out beneath you, and follow the plain configuration of its defenses. You take possession of it, and you feel that you will remember it always.

VI.

After this I was free to look about me at Nîmes, and I did so with such attention as the place appeared to require. At the risk of seeming too easily and too frequently disappointed, I will say that it required rather less than I had been prepared to give. It is a town of three or four fine features, rather than a town with, as I may say, a general figure. In general Nîmes is poor; its only treasures are its Roman remains, which are of the first order. The new French fashions prevail in many of its streets; the old houses are paltry and the good houses are new; while beside my hotel rose a big spick-and-span church, which had the oddest air of having been intended for Brooklyn or Buffalo. It is true that this church looked out on a square completely French — a square of a fine modern disposition, flanked on one side by a classical palais de justice, embellished with trees and parapets, and occupied in the centre with a group of allegorical statues, such as one encoun-

ters only in the cities of France, the chief of these being a colossal figure by Pradier, representing Nîmes. An English, an American town which should have such a monument, such a square as this, would be a place of great pretensions; but like so many little *villes de province* in the country of which I write, Nîmes is easily ornamental. What nobler ornament can there be than the old Roman baths at the foot of Mont Cavalier, and the delightful old garden that surrounds them? All that quarter of Nîmes has every reason to be proud of itself; it has been revealed to the world at large by copious photography. A clear, abundant stream gushes from the foot of a high hill (covered with trees and laid out in paths), and is distributed into basins which sufficiently refer themselves to the period that gave them birth — the period that has left its stamp on that pompous Peyrou which we admired at Montpellier. Here are the same terraces and steps and balustrades, and a system of water-works less impressive, perhaps, but very ingenious and charming. The whole place is a mixture of old Rome and of the French eighteenth century; for the remains of the antique baths are in a measure incorporated in the modern fountains. In a corner of this umbrageous precinct stands a small Roman ruin which is known as a temple of Diana, but was more apparently a *nymphæum*, and appears to have had a graceful connection with the adjacent baths. I learn from Murray that this little temple, of the period of Augustus, "was reduced to its present state of ruin in 1577;" the moment at which the townspeople, threatened with a siege by the troops of the crown, partly demolished it, lest it should serve as a cover to the enemy. The remains are very fragmentary, but they serve to show that the place was lovely. I spent half an hour in it on a lovely Sunday morning (it is inclosed by a high *grille*, carefully tended, and has a warden of its own), and with the help of my imagination tried to reconstruct a little the aspect of things in the Gallo-Roman days. I do wrong, perhaps, to say that I *tried;* from a flight so deliberate I should have shrunk. But there was a certain contagion of antiquity in the air, and among the ruins of baths and temples, in the very spot where the aqueduct that crosses the Gardon in the wondrous manner I had seen discharged itself, the picture of a splendid paganism seemed vaguely to glow. Roman baths — Roman baths; those words alone were a scene. Everything was changed: I was strolling in a *jardin français;* the bosky slope of the Mont Cavalier (a very modest mountain), hanging over the place, is crowned with a shapeless tower, which is as likely to be of mediæval as of antique origin; and yet, as I leaned on the parapet of one of the fountains, where a flight of curved steps (a hemicycle, as the French say) descended into a basin full of dark, cool recesses, where the slabs of the Roman foundations gleam through the clear green water — as in this attitude I surrendered myself to contemplation and reverie, it seemed to me that I touched for a moment the ancient world. Such moments are illuminating, and the light of this one mingles, in my memory, with the dusky greenness of the Jardin de la Fontaine.

The fountain proper — the source of all these distributed waters — is the prettiest thing in the world, a reduced copy of Vaucluse. It gushes up at the foot of the Mont Cavalier, at a point where that eminence rises with a certain cliff-like effect, and like other springs in the same circumstances appears to issue from the rock with a sort of quivering stillness. I trudged up the Mont Cavalier — it is a matter of five minutes — and having committed this cockneyism enhanced it presently by another. I ascended the stupid Tour Magne, the mysterious structure I men-

tioned a moment ago. The only feature of this massive, empty cylinder, except the inevitable collection of photographs to which you are introduced by the door-keeper, is the view you enjoy from its summit. This view is of course remarkably fine, but I am ashamed to say I have not the smallest recollection of it; for while I looked into the brilliant spaces of the air I seemed still to see only what I saw in the depths of the Roman baths — the image, disastrously confused and vague, of a vanished world. This world, however, has left at Nîmes a far more considerable memento than a few old stones covered with water-moss. The Roman arena is the rival of those of Verona and of Arles; at a respectful distance it emulates the Colosseum. It is a small Colosseum, if I may be allowed the expression, and is in a much better preservation than the great circus at Rome. This is especially true of the external walls, with their arches, pillars, cornices. I must add that one should not speak of preservation, in regard to the arena at Nîmes, without speaking also of repair. After the great ruin ceased to be despoiled, it began to be protected, and most of its wounds have been dressed with new material. These matters concern the archæologist, and I felt here, as I felt afterwards at Arles, that one of the profane, in the presence of such a monument, can only admire and hold his tongue. The great impression, on the whole, is an impression of wonder that so much should have survived. What remains at Nîmes, after all dilapidation is estimated, is astounding. I spent an hour in the Arènes on that same sweet Sunday morning, as I came back from the Roman baths, and saw that the corridors, the vaults, the staircases, the external casing, are still virtually there. Many of these parts are wanting in the Colosseum, whose sublimity of size, however, can afford to dispense with detail. The seats at Nîmes, like those at Verona, have been largely renewed; not that this mattered much, as I lounged on the cool surface of one of them, and admired the mighty concavity of the place and the elliptical sky-line, broken by uneven blocks and forming the rim of the monstrous cup — a cup that had been filled with horrors. And yet I made my reflections; I said to myself that though a Roman arena is one of the most impressive of the works of man, it has a touch of that same stupidity which I ventured to discover in the Pont du Gard. It is brutal, it is monotonous, it is not at all exquisite. The Arènes at Nîmes were arranged for a bull-fight — a form of recreation that, as I was informed, is much *dans les habitudes Nîmoises* and very common throughout Provence, where (still according to my information) it is the usual pastime of a Sunday afternoon. At Arles and Nîmes it has a characteristic setting, but in the villages the patrons of the game make a circle of carts and barrels, on which the spectators perch themselves. I was surprised at the prevalence, in mild Provence, of this Iberian vice, and hardly know whether it makes the custom more respectable that at Nîmes and Arles the thing is shabbily and imperfectly done. The bulls are rarely killed, and indeed often are bulls only in the Irish sense of the term — being domestic and motherly cows. Such an entertainment of course does not supply to the arena that element of the exquisite which I spoke of as wanting. The exquisite at Nîmes is mainly represented by the famous Maison Carrée. The first impression you receive from this delicate little building, as you stand before it, is that you have already seen it many times. Photographs, engravings, models, medals, have placed it definitely in your eye, so that from the sentiment with which you regard it curiosity and surprise are almost completely, and perhaps deplorably, absent. Admiration re-

mains, however — admiration of a familiar and even slightly patronizing kind. The Maison Carrée does not overwhelm you ; you can conceive it. It is not one of the great sensations of antique art, but it is perfectly felicitous, and, in spite of having been put to all sorts of incongruous uses, marvelously preserved. Its slender columns, its delicate proportions, its charming compactness, seem to bring one nearer to the century that built it than the great superpositions of arenas and bridges, and give it the interest that vibrates from one age to another when the note of taste is struck. If anything were needed to make this little toy-temple a happy production, the service would be rendered by the second-rate boulevard that conducts to it, adorned with inferior cafés and tobacco-shops. Here, in a respectable recess, surrounded by vulgar habitations, and with the theatre, of a classic pretension, opposite, stands the small "square house," so called because it is much longer than it is broad. I saw it first in the evening, in the vague moonlight, which made it look as if it were cast in bronze. Stendhal says, justly, that it has the shape of a playing-card, and he expresses his admiration for it by the singular wish that an "exact copy" of it should be erected in Paris. He even goes so far as to say that in the year 1880 this tribute will have been rendered to its charms ; nothing would be more simple, to his mind than to "have" in that city "le Panthéon de Rome, quelques temples de Grèce." Stendhal found it amusing to write in the character of a *commis-voyageur*, and sometimes it occurs to his reader that he really was one.

Henry James.

OMENS.

I.

As, ere the storm, a silence fills the world,
No blade is stirred, no banner is unfurled,
In conscious field or wood ;
So, all the morning, hushed and tranced with fear,
I seemed to see a messenger draw near,
Whose errand was not good.
I turned, and lo ! within the open door,
The one I deemed beset with perils sore
Close by me, smiling, stood.

II.

I know not why (I said that summer night)
The heart in me should be so wondrous light,
So sweet each moment's breath :
Assurance kind greets me from every star ;
The all-gathering breeze, that hastens from afar, —
How glad a thing it saith !
That was the night my friend beyond the seas,
Within a tent beneath the olive-trees,
Turned his blue eyes on death.

Edith M. Thomas.