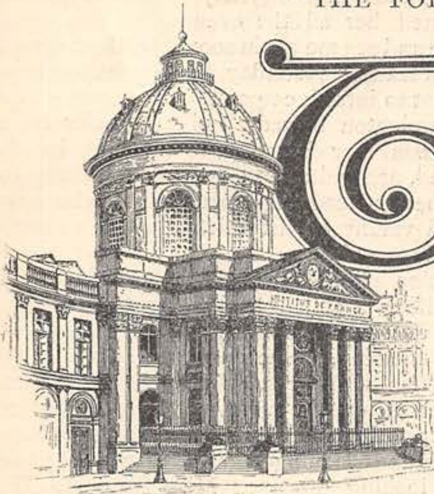
"THE FORTY IMMORTALS."



PALAIS MAZARIN.

TO BELONG some day to the Academy is the hidden ambition of every young Frenchman who adopts literature as a profession. He may rail at that body; may blame it for not giving an arm-chair to Molière, Balzac, and Michelet; may sneer at its weakness for dukes and high ecclesiastics, and may call it an accretion of old-fashioned ways and motives; nevertheless, he often dreams that he is being raised to "immortality," and often in hard times cheers himself by teasing, in an imaginary academical speech, some rival author who has had better luck. In the outset of his career he is obliged to court the public. Should there be a demand for ignoble literature, he may try, like Zola, to meet it. But Zola having made his fortune, shows, as they all do at last, a wish to conciliate the Academy, which he certainly had in his eye when he wrote his last novel, the heroine of which is virtuous enough to merit the white-rose crown awarded annually at Nanterre to the most deserving maiden in the commune.

Low comedy has never been in favor at the Academy, where the humorous dialogues of Molière were deemed too broad for polite ears. The Grand Monarch and his red-heeled courtiers enjoyed them; but they offended the nicer taste of the Forty who, when *M. Jourdain* and *Tartuffe* were new creations, had not yet emancipated themselves from the literary canons of the Hôtel de Rambouillet.

Catherine de Vivonne, Marquise de Rambouillet, and a dainty writer named Valentin Conrart were the progenitors of the Academy. Survivals of both are perceptible at the private meetings and the public sittings. Richelieu was merely godfather. It was of almost spontaneous growth, and issued from the circles of Madame de Rambouillet and Conrart. The iron-willed Cardinal, whose ideal in the moral as in the political order of things, was uniformity, lent himself to a plan for creating a fixed standard of grammar and rhetoric. He had leveled feudal strongholds, broken down the Protestant federation at Rochelle, and turned the king's mother, who got in his way, out of the realm, to die a beggar at the gates. All power was concentrated in the sovereign's hands. Equality in servitude to the crown was established. It was expedient to clear away dialects which were an impediment to the unification of France, and would tend to transform what survived of the feudal into a federal system. Richelieu's policy was in spirit the same as Napoleon's. Though a man of violent will, he was politic enough to see that it was better to coax than to force the nation into verbal uniformity. He found the instrument for doing this ready to hand at the Hôtel de Rambouillet and in the literary circle of Conrart. They formed the mold. The iron-willed Cardinal granted the investiture.

Conrart was named perpetual Secretary of the Academy. He had permission to centralize literary activity and to direct it. The function which he and his thirty-nine colleagues were chiefly to discharge was "to purify and fix the national tongue, to throw light on its obscurities, to maintain its character and principles; and at its private meetings to keep this object in view. Their discussions were to turn on grammar, rhetoric, and poetry; their critical observations on the beauties and defects of classical French authors, in order to prepare editions of their works and to compose a new dictionary of the language. The director of the Academy was to take the advice of the other members of the company on the order in which tasks were to be executed." In virtue of another article, vacancies were to be supplied by election and members were to be the electors. Richelieu was a churchman. His idea was to establish a literary conclave. Circumstances and the sociable French genius gave his foundation the character of a salon. It was furthermore ordained that once

ALEXANDRE DUMAS FILS. (FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY MULNIER.)

a year the Forty were, in their corporate capacity, to hear mass in the church of St. Louis, at the Sorbonne. This rule is obsolete.

Conrart was scholarly but not pedantic. He was subtle-minded, and had the ready dexterity of a man of the world. Being of agreeable countenance and a man of good fortune, he was received in those salons in which dames of high degree held literary conversazioni. His table was well served, he knew how to choose his guests, and he often gave hospitality to poets and aristocratic votaries of the muses at his country house. Voiture, Gombault, St. Amant, Mlle. de Scudéry, Colletet, and Pélisson belonged to his circle. They cultivated politeness and looked to Italy for their models. Conceits were then regarded as a stamp of elegance. Conrart lived at an angle of the Rue St. Martin and the Rue Vieille du Temple. The Academy met at his house before it was installed at the Louvre. Christina, the eccentric Queen of Sweden, was sometimes present at the meetings. She also dabbled in poetry and indited madrigals. The mania for versification and conceits led to the formation of the neat, pointed style which is a characteristic of French literature. The fair literary friends of Conrart were brought on the stage by Molière, to be laughed at in "*Les Précieuses Ridicules.*"

The "immortality" of members of the Academy is a survival of the high-flown style of language which was in vogue in Paris when Mlle. de Scudéry was writing her interminable novel. In ordinary speech and literary composition this mode soon died out. It took refuge in fine art. Louis Quatorze became the "Sun-King." Madame de Montespan, in becoming the favorite of "le grand monarque," brought in the sprightly, alert, piquant, natural, and yet elegant verbiage of which there are so many charming examples in Madame de Sévigné's letters.

The claim of the present Academy to an unbroken descent from the one that first met at Conrart's house is disputed, and with reason. The original Academy was swept away in 1793, along with the ancient nobility and monarchy. It was revived as a part of the Institute in 1795; and in 1803, Napoleon,

ERNEST RENAN. (FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY LOPEZ.)

who was then First Consul, re-organized the Institute. He had been advised in the opening year of the century by Fontanes, his Minister of Public Instruction, to restore the literary corporation founded by Richelieu. But the Emperor (in all but name) shrunk from an act which might determine an outburst of hostile opinion. A popular charge brought against the Academy was that it had never offered an arm-chair to Rousseau. Voltaire, it is true, was given one; but while he only spoke to the intellect, Rousseau appealed to sensibilities and sentiments as well as to mind, and was better understood by women of all classes and by the laborious bourgeoisie. Napoleon, much as he wished to set up a disguised monarchy, and to keep within the general lines of Richelieu's policy, did not dare to revive the Academy under its former style and title. All he could venture upon doing was to add a class of Literature and Eloquence to the Institute which he had lodged in the Palais Mazarin. But he placed this class under the direction of a perpetual secretary, who was instructed to act as if the original Academy had not been abrogated. Napoleon liked the graces and amenities of the defunct monarchy, although he never tried to practice them himself. He enjoyed the taste for luxury of his soft and brainless creole wife, and was sensible to the intellectual refinement and lady-like address of Madame de Rémusat. The savants whom the Revolution had brought up were of hard grain and angular and conceited; self-made men in Europe generally are. It was Bonaparte's wish to draw together a company of well-bred writers who would advance literature and cultivate the *art de bien vivre*. Conrart, he remembered, did not think the less justly for being a white-handed nobleman. Buffon made an elaborate toilet before sitting down to his daily task of authorship, and was careful not to let sputtering quill pens stain his point-lace wrist-frills with ink. Who ever turned a compliment with more grace than Voltaire?

Suard, the perpetual secretary of the class of Literature and Eloquence at the Institute, was at heart a royalist. But as he had not gone to Coblentz and endured the miseries of emigration, his sympathy with the ideas of progress that he had imbibed before the Revolution was not chilled. He remained an encyclopedist. Napoleon's protection did not lessen Suard's affection for the old state of things. Suard and Talleyrand agreed in thinking that those who had not lived in France previous to the downfall of the monarchy, when freedom of thought was secured by verbal dexterity and polite manners, could have no conception of the charm and suavity which can be thrown into human life. The perpetual secretary found occasion to injure the Emperor in 1812. Chateaubriand was elected to fill a vacant arm-chair. This was the first political election that ever took place in the Academy. It was a protest against the despotism of the empire in things intellectual. The *récipiendaire* was to eulogize Marie-Joseph Chénier. But he so violently attacked the Emperor that the Bureau of the Academy (or class of Literature) decided not to give him a public reception. Three years later, the desire of Suard was accomplished. Louis XVIII. was brought back by the allies. The perpetual secretary enjoyed his favor up to the time of his death in 1817. Suard died that year at the age of eighty-two. Since 1815, he had worked steadily to eliminate those democratic elements which Napoleon could not help admitting.

All the other sections or classes of the Institute have remained what the Convention, on the last day but one of its existence, and Napoleon made them. They are assemblies of learned scientists and antiquaries. Louis XVIII. restored the old name and statutes and the Academy proper.

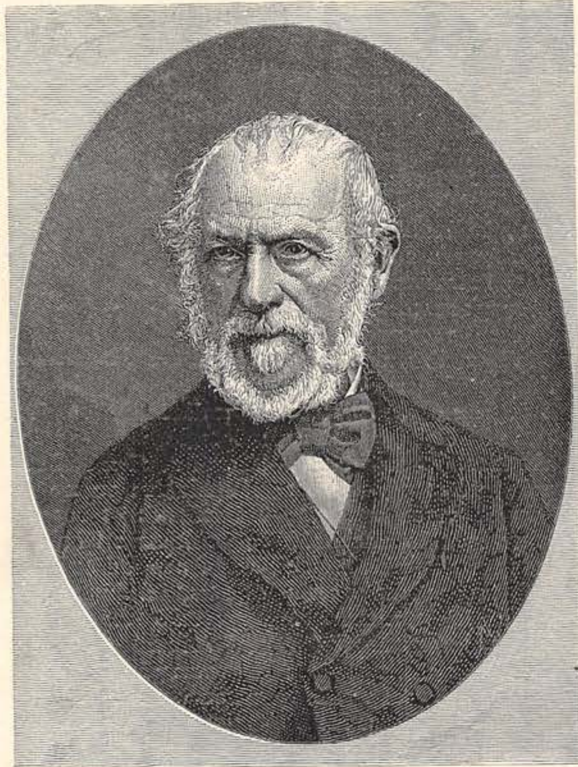
The perpetual secretary of the Academy has a salary of 12,000 francs a year and a spacious lodging at the Institute. His influence in the literary world is like still water that runs deep. The "Philistine" world

knows little of him. Directors of the Academy are elected every year. The perpetual secretary is the managing director for life. He attends every public and private sitting, and is first to enter and last to leave. It is he who gives sequence to the general business and turns down work for a director, who leaves all initiative to him. The questions set down for consideration are studied by him and presented by him. As he gives most attention to them, he can, by the exercise of a little tact and art, suggest their solutions and bring the majority round to them. In the prize awards, which exceed yearly the sum of 85,000 francs, his suggestions nearly always tell; 20,000 francs, the interest of part of the fortune left by a miserly philanthropist, M. Montyon, to the Academy, is spent annually in recompenses to poor people for acts of disinterested benevolence and humanity. An equal sum is given to the Frenchman whom the Academy thinks has written and published the book most useful to the advancement of manners *(mœurs)* and morals. When M. de Villemain was perpetual secretary, he suggested an elastic and elevated interpretation of the clause in Montyon's will disposing of this annuity. But for Villemain the 20,000 francs a year might have been spent in encouraging imitations of Miss Edgeworth's novels and Miss Hannah More's strictures. He caused the literary Montyon prize to be awarded to Tocqueville for his work on Democracy in America, and to authors of lexicons of Corneille's, Racine's, and Molière's tragedies and comedies, and Madame de Sévigné's letters. The prize founded by Baron Gobert is an annual one of 10,000 francs for the most eloquent page or chapter of French history. The names of Augustin Thierry and Henri Martin are on the list of those who have been rewarded in pursuance of Gobert's will. The prize for eloquence brings a pecuniary reward of only 4000 francs, but it is held the most honorable. "Eloquence" in this instance does not mean oratory, but written eulogium. The subject is confined to the life or writings of some great man. Government allows the Academy, for the payment of its officers and the conservation of its library, 85,000 francs a year and free lodgings at the Palais Mazarin.

JOHN LEMOINNE. (FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY TRUCHELUT & VALKMAN.)

The history of the Academy is to be found

in the reigns of its perpetual secretaries. Suard, as I have shown, mended the link in the chain of tradition which was broken on the tenth of August. Those who have reigned since 1817 are Raynouard, Auger, Andrieux (an all but forgotten poet), Villemain, and Camille Doucet. Raynouard was not the man for the place. He was a mere methodical clerk and a pedagogue. When he should have insinuated, he was dictatorial. In subjects chosen for prizes of eloquence in his time, we find that seventeenth century literature was in highest esteem. The choice of the life and writings of Vauvenargues, who was a moralist and indeed an epic character, it should be acknowledged, was due to Raynouard, and was fated to bring up in Thiers a mind created to make France deflect from the lines into which the battle of Waterloo had thrown her. Vauvenargues belonged to a noble family near Aix, in Provence, where, in 1821, Thiers, who was miserably poor, was studying law. The student was prompted by a visit to their castle to compete for the prize of 4000 francs. In winning it, he obtained money enough to come to Paris to seek his fortune along with his friend Mignet, now the senior member of the Academy. This prize award was the salient event of Raynouard's secretaryship.



HENRI MARTIN. (FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY LOPEZ.)

The baggage-wagons of the allies brought something more than the Bourbons into France in 1815. Waterloo rendered English (which many of the *émigrés* had picked up) a fashionable language. In polite society there were Anglomaniacs, as there were in military circles, and in most of the middle-class families Anglophobes. Scott's novels and Shakspere's plays were read at court. Miss Burney, the author of "Evelina," had married General d'Arblay, and occupied a good position in courtly circles. Those *émigrés* who had been to Germany imbibed a taste for the drama of Schiller and Goethe. The rising generation of authors who had seen history in violent action, and in no classic garb either, were bitten with the taste for an English, that is to say, a non-conventional treatment of heroes and heroines of romance and tragedy. Free thought was asserted in the time of Voltaire. Free form and literary expression was not demanded until after the battle of Waterloo. Although in close quarters with the court, which unknown to itself was for innovation, the Academy was hostile to live

DUC D'AUMALE. (FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANCK.)

books and plays—to what was stirring, striking, and colored in vivid tints. The new school of writers who were governed by inner light and direct impressions were called *Les Romantiques*. At an annual meeting of all the classes or academies of the Institute, Auger, the perpetual secretary who succeeded Raynouard, tilted at the romantic writers. They were "poetic barbarians and violated every principle of literary orthodoxy." It was for the Academy, which had been founded to improve and keep undefiled taste and diction, to stand out against the heretics. Olympian Victor Hugo was chief of the new school and had been already given the Cross of the Legion of Honor. Lamartine, who had been a child of nature in the hills of Upper Burgundy until he became a dandified member of the diplomatic service, wrote according to his own impressions. He was received in the Academy in 1829. In the same year, Victor Hugo brought out his short and poignant work, "Les Derniers Jours d'un Condamné à Mort." It set the impressionable heart of Paris throbbing. This was too much for Auger. He threw himself into the Seine from the bridge which connects the Palais Mazarin and the Louvre, and was drowned.

Between 1829 and 1835, the Academy through its perpetual secretaries, Andrieux and Arnault, remained hostile to free form. In the latter years, the election of M. de Villemain marked a new departure. His maxim was, that in keeping tradition alive, the present should be closely observed and its teachings accepted. Thiers, Guizot, Mignet, and Flourens were elected before Victor Hugo was admitted in 1841. Under Villemain, who died in 1871, the illustrious company reached a far higher altitude than it ever previously attained. He was singularly ugly. The figure was thick-set and vulgar; the face was lumpy and pock-pitted, but was lighted up by a bright mind. His intellect was bold and his wit subtle and delicate. Literary criticism was his forte. His charm lay in his conversational abilities. As Minister of Public Instruction of Louis Philippe, he defended free thought and free form at the College of France. He exerted his influence to get the novel, in the person of Jules Sandeau, represented among the Forty, and the newspaper in the person of M. Prévost-Paradol. The Academy's indirect action upon literature and politics reached its apogee in Villemain's time. A militant spirit was

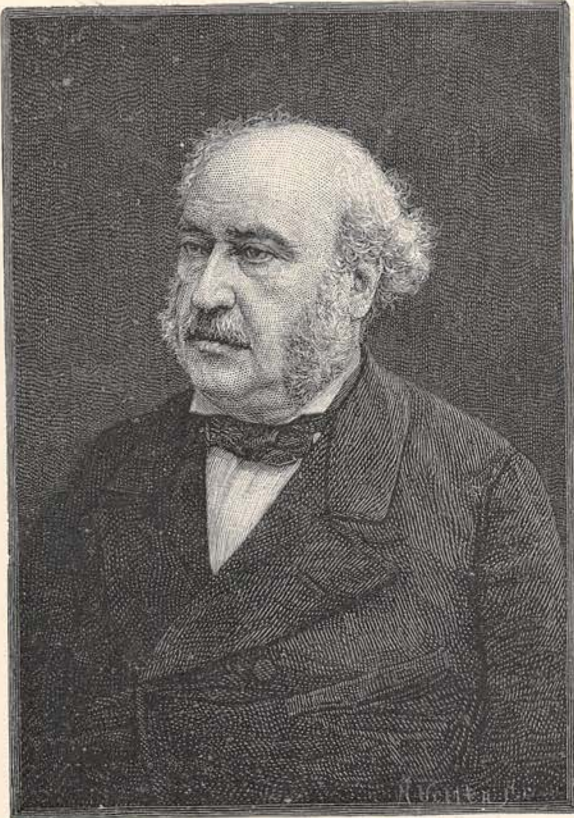
DUC DE BROGLIE. (FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANCK.)

aroused in it by the *Coup d'État.* Berryer was elected by way of protest against the Empire in 1852, and the late Duc de Broglie in 1855. This forensic orator submitted a written speech or harangue to the Bureau. On the day of his reception he unfolded his manuscript to read it. But he was accustomed to improvise, and needed liberty to gesticulate with his left hand. The right hand he usually thrust into the breast of his waistcoat. To be at ease, he flung away his set discourse, and, trusting to the inspiration of the moment, delivered a speech of inimitable grandeur. It was a philippic against the Empire. No journal dared to report it. The bold line he thus took resulted in a union of all the monarchists and liberals against imperialism.

When the French press was silenced by Napoleon III., the educated classes watched the receptions at the Academy with keen interest. Orleanist liberalism had a strong foot-hold there. Villemain, as perpetual secretary, was able to foster opposition. He lived at the Palais Mazarin, and entertained at his soirées most of the eminent writers, orators, and *beaux esprits* who stood aloof from the court. Not to drive the Emperor to bay and tempt him to deal harshly with the Academy, Villemain occasionally advised his friends to vote for non-political adherents to the Empire. Their entrance was used as an occasion for protesting against the régime under which they were obliged to live. The public looked on with outstretched head, as if expecting that every pin-prick given by an Academician would inflict a mortal wound on the spurious Cæsar. There were then many doors to the Academy. One was from the office of the "Débats," and a second from the office of the "Revue des Deux Mondes." Two others were from the salons of Madame d'Haussonville, granddaughter of Madame de Staël and daughter of the late Duc de Broglie, and of Madame Jules Mohl. This lady was Irish. Her maiden name was Clarke, and her husband was Professor of Persian Literature at the College of France. For perhaps more than a quarter of a century she never missed a public sitting of the Academy. If a foreigner wanted to see in a few hours the greatest men and women of the time of Louis Philippe, the best means for succeeding was to get himself invited to Madame Mohl's. She was thin, lively, and had a vulgar face, which in her youth looked like a wrinkled skull animated by fine eyes. Her personal appearance gave her small trouble. She usually wore a coal-scuttle bonnet at the Academy, a dingy Paisley shawl, and, when crinoline was fashionable, a limp and skimp dress of some neutral color. She was nicknamed "Our Lady of the Academy." The late Queen of Holland, when visiting Paris, used to go to her dinners and soirées and give her court news. Is it because the Madonna of the Palais Mazarin used to go there in the plainest garb that showy dress at a reception is counted vulgar? The salons of Mesdames Buloz, Pailleron, Jules Simon, and the Ducs de Broglie and Chantilly are now side-ways into the Academy.

There is no reality in the "arm-chairs" in which the Forty are supposed to sit. Academicians, with the exception of the officers (*i. e.*, the director, chancellor, and perpetual secretary, forming the Bureau) and the new member, occupy ordinary chairs. Originally the officers alone had chairs; the others were ranged on benches. But the equality in the republic of letters founded by Conrart and Richelieu did not suit the cardinals who had been admitted. They were princes of the Church and electors of the Sacred College, to say nothing of their aristocratic birth. In 1713 a change was brought about. Cardinal d'Estrées, who was of the Academy, wanted to vote for a friend, and went to talk about the impediment which the sedentary rule threw in his way to Cardinals de Rohan and de Polignac, who also were of the company of the Forty. De Polignac had a Gascon's forwardness. He offered to wait on the King and submit the matter, and ask him to release their eminences from the obligation of sitting on benches. Louis Quatorze had social tact pushed to the extent of genius, and nice judgment in small things. He solved the difficulty by a general leveling up. All were to continue equal, but on a higher plane.

Forty arm-chairs were sent by the King's order to the hall in the Louvre where the Academy met, and orders were given for the removal of the benches. This settlement of the difficulty so won the hearts of those who were not princes of the Church or noble, that when Louis XIV. shortly after died it was proposed by one of them that henceforth each *récipiendaire* was to add in his harangue a eulogium on that monarch, to the customary eulogies on Richelieu, the Chancellor Séguier (who was one of the founders of the Academy and a friend of Conrart), on the reigning king, and on the defunct immortal whose chair he had been elected to fill. In 1803 Napoleon did not restore the chairs. The old sedentary rule which Louis Quatorze abrogated is now in force. At private and informal meetings, which are held in a room attached to the library of the Institute, members sit as they can, on chairs armless or armed.



JULES SIMON. (FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY E. LADREY.)

Old court formalities were observed at the Academy's receptions in the Louvre, which appear to us quaint and picturesque. Members were placed round a long table, at one end of which sat the director and at the other the new-comer. It rarely happened that all the two-score attended. Twenty-six was the average maximum. But members of the Academies of Soissons and of Marseilles received vacant arm-chairs. When all the Academicians were seated, the director and the neophyte, who alone had entered with their heads covered, placed themselves at the ends of the table. After he had delivered his speech, the director took off his hat and made a sweeping bow to the gentleman facing him. It was the sign that his turn had come. Whenever the *récipiendaire* spoke of the King he uncovered his head and bowed. The subjects to which he was limited have been mentioned. As for the director, he was to speak only of the new member and his writings and of the reigning monarch.

Public meetings of the Academy are held in what used to be, under the old monarchy, the Chapel of the Palais Mazarin, an edifice taking the form of a Greek cross, with a central rotunda under a cupola. While the muses are not sumptuously lodged there, they have plenty of light and air. No trace of the Latin cult remains in the

public hall; every religious painting and symbol was removed when the Church was secularized. The mural paintings in *grissaille* are browned with the dust of eighty years. The Pierian Nine, arranged in the pseudo-classic mode of the First Empire, decorate the cupola above the amphitheater, from which tiers of narrow benches rise in rapid gradation, and after filling the rotunda are continued up into three ends of the Greek cross. There should be a tenth muse to personify that essentially modern flower of the human brain — the novel.

ÉMILE AUGIER. (FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY NADAR.)

The different "classes" or academies forming the Institute are seated on a platform or stage, filling a segment of the round part and the northern end of the cross. Benches reserved for them are to right and left. A wide central space between the lateral forms is covered with a dingy carpet. In the middle, near a bronze portal, which used to be the grand entrance from the quai to the church, is placed a table draped with a green cloth of baize. Behind it are three chairs for the officers. At right angles to the table, but a short distance from it, the *recipiendaire* is seated before a tall reading-desk on a pillar-stand, which he may or may not use. His entrance is a curious sight, intensely French in its accompanying circumstances. Escorted by soldiers, he comes in by the portal, which opens and shuts with a clang. The sponsors walk on each side. They and the members of the Bureau wear the uniform of the Academy. This dress is composed of trowsers and a swallow-tailed coat buttoned up to the throat, with a high standing collar, which, as well as the chest, is covered with palm leaves embroidered in a crude shade of green silk. This verdure is very trying to the masculine complexion of all ages, but especially to the one to which senility gives the tone of old ivory. Littré's picturesque ugliness was rendered hideous by the embroidery of his uniform.

Candidates for vacant seats are expected to pay canvassing visits to immortals. It is a popular error to suppose they are obliged to do so. Littré never paid any. This usage is contrary to a statute which, on the ground that electors should judge in strict accordance with literary worth, forbids personal solicitation of votes. But the Academy is a drawing-room without ladies, an athenæum club of

the most refined character, at which weekly and monthly as well as annual meetings are held. The statute in question has therefore become obsolete. Before the Revolution, when, as a matter of course, an Academician took off his hat and made a sweeping bow in mentioning the King, politics did not exist. Paris was not a city of great distances. Eminence was not acquired in an ugly rushing, shoving, and racing, as games of foot-ball are won in England. It was obtained by the spontaneously uttered approval of a small number of supercivilized, delicate-nerved, and very clever writers, and men and women of quality. Every one who counted in arts and letters knew everybody else. It is now possible for an author of great talent to be only known to his book-seller and a small set of disciples and journalists.

When Thiers, the Warwick of the bourgeois monarchy, paid the customary round of visits in 1833, he wore a camlet mantle, fastened at the neck with a large buckle. In every house at which he called he left the cloak in the anteroom, and in again donning it slipped a golden coin into the hand of the servant who helped him to put it on. This profusion arose from his native shrewdness. Parisian servants talk freely to their employers. The widow of an Academician whom M. Thiers visited to obtain his support has related to me her first impressions of him. M. Laya was the author of "L'Ami de la Loi," a drama written to defend Louis XVI. and played in the Reign of Terror. He was out when the candidate for immortality called. But Madame Laya asked the visitor to stay until her husband returned. She thought him odd. They fell into conversation. He had something original to say in a falsetto voice on every topic that she broached. It did not occur to her that he was the king-maker of the days of July, until M. Laya came in and recognized in him the statesman and historian. When the visitor had gone, Madame Laya said to her husband:

"Of course you will vote for him?"

"I don't know."

"Why?"

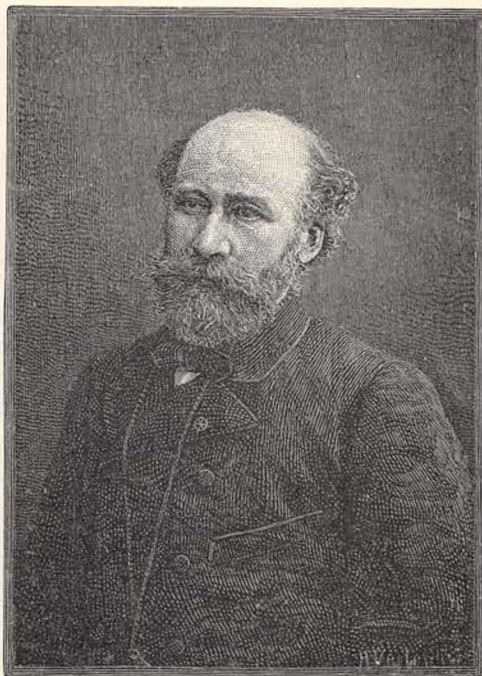
"He is not a man of the world; he is petulant and ill brooks contradiction."

"But what of that?"

"Why, because at the Academy he would be *comme un diable dans un bénitier* (like Satan in the holy-water font)."

"What matter, since he is charming. In voting for him you will do me a pleasure."

"If monsieur will allow me to risk an observation," broke in the maid, who was sewing in the drawing-room, "I shall take the liberty of saying that generous men, like good wine, soften down with age."



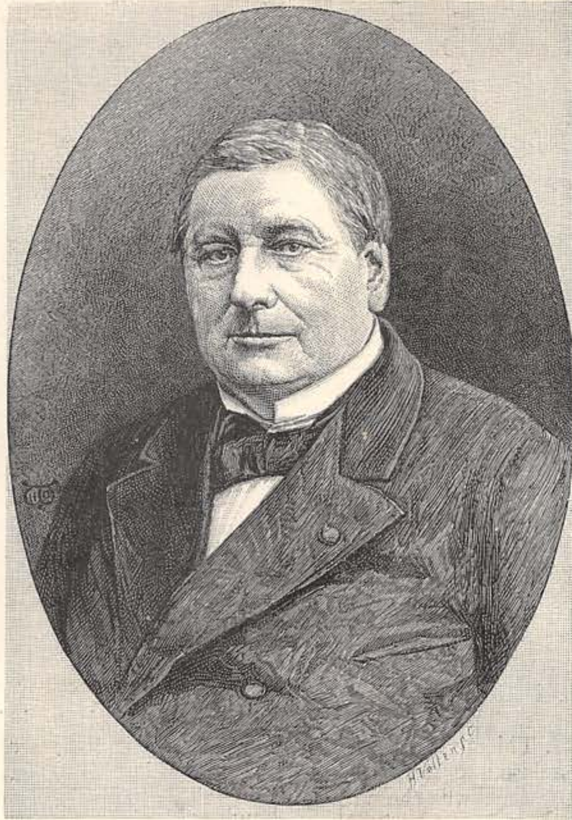
OCTAVE FEUILLET. (FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY NADAR.)

"How do you know he's generous?"

"Why, he handed me a twenty-franc piece when I buckled his cloak. Monsieur has two sons. The friendship of a man in M. Thiers's position is not to be thrown away." This argument was conclusive. M. Laya voted for the little great man, who was ever ready afterward to oblige any member of his family.

Victor Hugo, who feels that he should not attend private meetings unless to vote, only receives candidates at dinner. I was at his table in the society of three rival competitors. They were MM. Paul St. Victor, Renan, and Eugène Manuel the poet. St. Victor and Manuel talked, as well as listened to their illustrious host. Paul St. Victor was an old and much cherished friend of the poet, but angular, and held to his own opinions on socialism, religion, and philosophy. He was a Catholic and Bonapartist. Renan for three hours only listened, except to ejaculate every two or three minutes, when Victor Hugo was speaking, "*Maître, vous avez raison.*" He kept his head hung on one side, and continued to smile as if in a state of beatitude. Need I say that on the day of the election "the Master" voted for him? Hugo excused himself to the older friend, St. Victor, on the ground that he was bound to protest against the fanaticism of the Bishop of Orleans.

The Academy is a place where literary men rub shoulders with polished men of the



EUGÈNE LABICHE. (FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY TRUCHELUT & VALKMAN.)

world and forensic and parliamentary orators of the highest eminence. This mingling of classes in a little republic of letters is good for all the Forty. Owing to it, controversy among them loses its sting. Geniuses who are unable to master their irritable nerves are not held desirable associates. To mental power combined with social amenity, the Academy is of easy access. Chateaubriand, whose vanity took a rudely self-assertive form, would not probably have been elected if the immortals had not felt obliged to him for standing out against Napoleon's tyranny. Victor Hugo, who won an arm-chair in his fortieth year, was then a lady-killer as well as a great poet. The virile strength of his body, soul, and mind, were toned down by chivalrous respect for women and an almost feminine tenderness for little children. He was a lion in whose presence a lamb might play fearlessly. Lamartine got into the Academy on the basis of dandyism and poetry. Palpably, he had blood, and he had acquired the shibboleth of fashionable society in diplomacy.

Voltaire thus defined the Academy: "A learned body in which men of rank, men in office, prelates, doctors, mathematicians, and even literary persons are received." It now contains four dukes, one of whom is royal and a soldier, two counts, one bishop, two scientists (Pasteur and J. B. Dumas), two political lawyers (Émile Ollivier and Rousse), and a great many literary men, some of whom enjoy world-wide celebrity. Journalism is represented in the latter group by Cuvillier, Fleury, and John Lemoinne. The first was secretary to the late ex-King of Holland, Louis Bonaparte, and then tutor to the Duc d'Aumale. He defended warmly the interests of the Orleans family under the son of his first patron, and, notwithstanding his friendship with the Ducs d'Aumale and de Montpensier, advocated in the "Débats" a republican form of government when MacMahon was at the Élysée. He is an accomplished polemist and essayist. The longest of his essays fits into the third page of the "Débats." When Queen Mercedes died, he wrote on her a necrological article, the spirit of which was grandfatherly and very touching. John Lemoinne is also a "Débats" leader-writer, and has never been anything else. He externally resembles those photographic images

of celebrated men in which the head is vastly magnified at the expense of body and limbs. He is gifted with that brilliant cleverness bordering upon wit which the French call *esprit;* plumes himself upon having no fixed political principles and being able to laugh at all; and is ready to break a lance one day for the Orleanists, another for the fusionists, and then for the Republic. Dwarfs have more self-confidence than giants. Under all circumstances, John Lemoinne can make-believe in his own cock-certainty that he is right. He was born in the island of Jersey, and speaks and writes English. M. de Sacy was the first journalist writing only for the daily press who was admitted to the honors of immortality. His election was in 1854. Mignet and Henri Martin are, as Thiers was, historians and journalists, but have not for years written articles. Jules Simon was for a year editor of the "Siècle" and for three months of the "Gaulois." He is an unready journalist. Ollivier's attempts to find with his pen a lever in journalism have been utter failures. He can never take a ball on the bound, and his self-consciousness gets between him and the subject that he should treat rapidly and with which alone he should be occupied while treating it.

The historical group used to be the most brilliant one at the Academy, when Mignet, Thiers, and Guizot were in their prime. Mignet is now eighty-seven. He walks or, when the weather is wet or snowy, rides in an omnibus to the Academy from his lodging in the Rue d'Aumale. The distance is about a mile and a half. To attend to his duties as a literary executor of Thiers, he resigned this year the office of secretary to the Academy of Moral Sciences and History. The emoluments were 6000 francs. Mignet fell in with Thiers at the law school of Aix in 1818. They were called to the bar simultaneously, won academical money prizes which enabled them to journey together to Paris to seek their fortune, shared the same garret, studied in the same public libraries, chose the same subjects for histories they meditated writing and wrote, worked in the same journals, promoted the candidature of Louis Philippe to the throne when he was Duke of Orleans, and lived until 1877 in the closest intimacy. Mignet remained a bachelor. He has been from 1833 a tenant in the same house, first with Madame Dosne, afterward Madame Thiers, and now with her sister, Mlle. Dosne. It is in proximity to the historical mansion in which Thiers lived in the Place St. George. The gardens of both dwellings are connected by a private alley. Mignet dined, as often as he did not accept invitations to other houses, with his illustrious friend. He preserves his erect carriage and the ardent southern brightness of his eyes, which gleam out from beneath bushy eyebrows.

Henri Martin stands next to Mignet. This good man has rehabilitated the Druids, erected an altar to Joan of Arc, and shown the Revolution to be the triumph of the equality-loving Celt over the Frank and his feudal system. Henri Martin is in his seventy-third year. He has a tall, strong-boned, loose-made, stooping figure, and a serious face which easily lights up into smiles and expresses pleasure—mental or moral—in blushing cheeks. His inner man lives in the most transparent of glass houses. Though a well of erudition, he keeps the freshness of childhood. It delights him to oblige. His conversation, when he is set talking on a subject in which he is at home, is an instructive and delightful essay. He lives in a pretty little house of his own at Passy, far from the center of the town. He, therefore, goes often to the Senate and the Institute in clumsily made evening dress. Nothing fits him. The gloves—of cotton—are a world too big for hands that are in proportion to his stature. Though tolerant of every belief, or unbelief, he groans when he sees materialist articles in the scientific columns of the Republican papers. His grandchildren are nourished with works of Unitarian piety. One of his two children—a daughter—was the delight of his eyes and pride of his heart. She grew up in beauty, and cultivated, under Ary Scheffer, a genius for painting. On the day on which she had achieved an artistic triumph and was engaged to be married she died. Henri Martin clings to the old belief in the soul's immortality.

Taine has written a history of the Revolution, the aim of which is to show that France might have progressed more steadily but for that movement. It is the book of an industrious searcher into records, which is devoid of philosophical scope and inferior to his works of criticism.

The small fry of historians in the Academy are the Duc de Noailles, who wrote about St. Louis; the Duc de Broglie, who undertook, in his history of Constantine the Great, to refute Gibbon; Camille Rousset, whose great achievement is having classed the archives at the War Office; the Duc d'Aumale, who will probably never have the courage to finish his history of the house of Condé, the first chapter of which he brought out in England; and M. Viel-Castel, whose literary "baggage" is a history of the Restoration.

Jules Simon is also the author of a historical work. It deals with the period of four

VICTORIEN SARDOU. (FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY MELANDRI.)

years which ended on the 24th of May, 1873. His other works are on moral philosophy and sociology, which he treats more as a man of feeling than as a reformer. His writings are inferior to his lectures; these to his speeches; and his orations to his drawing-room talk, which is the perfection of conversational genius and art. Jules Simon's private life is honest, honorable, and morally healthy. His wife is good, unaffected, intelligent, and broad-minded, and they both are wrapped up in their infant granddaughter, whose pretty childish ways console them for the ingratitude of old political associates.

The poets of the Academy are Victor Hugo, Lecomte de Lisle, and Sully-Prudhomme. With the first the whole civilized world is acquainted. Lecomte de Lisle is "immortal" because he is Hugo's friend. As for Sully-Prudhomme, he is a modernized and middle-class Hamlet, from whom the tragic element has been eliminated, but whose heart and soul are tormented and whose intellect is perplexed by questions which science and the conditions of modern life now force upon thinking minds. He lives in a small and plainly furnished third floor opposite the Élysée. He made the acquaintance of his neighbor, President Grévy, the day on which, soon after his reception at the Academy, he paid him the regulation visit.

The dramatic group includes Victor Hugo, Legouvé, Émile Augier, Camille Doucet, Victorien Sardou, Dumas *fils*, Labiche, and

Pailleron. Victor Hugo may be said to be the chief poet, novelist, and dramatist in the Academy. He is vast, astounding, sublime, beautiful, defective, and faulty in all three branches. His genius has its scoria. Legouvé is a delightful essayist and lecturer. He is the author of "Adrienne Lecouvreur" and launched Ristori in Paris; he was in love with Malibran; is a poet, and venerates woman, as well as loves her by hereditary impulse. Old age — M. Legouvé is seventy-three — has only mellowed the experience of earlier years. He is charitable and stimulates charity in others, but avoids those trading in philanthropy. As a lecture-room or salon elocutionist he has no parallel. Sardou is better as a reader of plays because his face lends itself to delicate mimicry. Legouvé is of Breton origin and Paris breeding.

Octave Feuillet's plays are aftermaths of his novels. He studied fashionable life at the Tuileries and Compiègne, and won not only the favor but the friendship of the Empress. She went to the Academy to witness his reception, and she was to have appeared on the boards of the palace theater of Compiègne, in a character expressly written to fit her. The "Débats" first, and the war with Germany finally, prevented her from acting this part, which was a somewhat indecorous one. Octave Feuillet excels in diagnosis of the moral ailments of idle, frivolous, delicately-nurtured, and rich women. His feminine characters might be noble, were a healthy sphere of action open to them. As it is, they are flowers of evil and restless dwellers in the Land of Nod. The novelist, being unable to follow them into old age, and to show the ultimate penalties which in the natural order of things overtake all such, makes suicide the wind-up of their vain, futile, and unhappy lives. He is a painter of decadence. His morbidness is *sui generis* and has a penetrating and intoxicating charm. St. Lô, in Normandy, is his birthplace, and pictures of Norman localities abound in his novels.

Camille Doucet is the dwarf of the dramatic group. He has written only one play — a comedy, in five acts, which is almost forgotten. It is entitled "Considération," or "Respectability." Two lines of it are still remembered. They are:

> "Considération! Considération!
> C'est ma seule passion! ma seule passion."

He is the incarnation of amiable kindliness and social tact. His election was owing to his relations, as director of theaters under the Empire, with dramatic authors belonging to the Academy. He was the link connecting them with the imperial court. No great dramatic author save Victor Hugo resented the *Coup d'État.*

Dumas *fils* tried novel-writing at the outset of his career, but with small success. Description is not his forte. He is an analyst and a polemist, a superficial prober of sores and wounds, but knows nothing of those tempests between good and evil which sometimes rage in the human heart and conscience. We get very soon to the bottom of a worthless person. Dumas's bad people are natural. His good folks are conventional, and simply mouth-pieces whereby the author expresses his own views in short, strong, clear, ringing, and ear-catching sentences upon current vices or desirable virtues.

Dumas *père* was never an Academician. In his time the Academy would have fainted at the idea of letting in a man so spontaneous, irrepressible, imaginative, exuberant, and original, to say nothing of the Bohemianism of his life and the Africanism of his head. Guizot was then king of the Academy, and he was a prig.

Dumas *fils* inherits nothing from Africa, unless the texture of his hair and the savage frankness of speech. He takes from his father capacity for rapid literary production, light blue eyes, which protrude and stare, and the vein of kindness which runs through his man-of-business flintiness. He has a heart, and a good one, but it is not on his sleeve. In the example of his father he saw how undisguised good nature is preyed upon, and how thankless people are for spontaneous kindness. Dumas *fils* buys pictures as an investment. He is married to a Russian lady of rank and fortune, and has two daughters to whom he is devotedly attached. Desclée was to him the beau ideal of a modern actress. Sarah Bernhardt's affectations irritate him. As he cannot take her by the back of the neck and shake her, he says to her and of her the rudest things imaginable. He was the author of that *mot*, *Un os jeté à un chien* (A bone thrown to a dog), which described a picture of her with a big dog at her side. Dumas *fils* is a neighbor at the sea-side near Dieppe, of Lord Salisbury. He lives in Paris, in a detached house of his own, beautifully furnished with salable bric-à-brac and furniture, in the Avenue de Villiers. Since he entered the Academy he has cut the *demi-monde.* He is now engaged in a campaign against those sumptuous stage toilets which oblige actresses to lead vicious lives.

Pailleron writes flimsy and sparkling plays in verse. They are like those diaphanous Eastern stuffs into which gold and silver threads are interwoven; if well acted, they are

very effective. Their author is young and already very wealthy. He is married to a sister of Buloz, the actual editor of the "Revue des Deux Mondes," and inhabits a stately flat in what used to be the residence of the de Chimay family on the Quai Voltaire.

LOUIS PASTEUR. (FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY TRUCHELUT & VALKMAN.)

Labiche's muse is purely farcical. His plays are as droll to read as to see acted. Labiche is a prodigiously hard worker. He constantly rewrites whole scenes of his comedies. His father was an opulent grocer. Labiche has a passion for agriculture and has reclaimed a large tract in Sologne. He is there "Farmer Labiche" and mayor of a commune which he created. As such, he often unites in marriage the hands of rustic couples. Until Labiche as a candidate for the Academy visited the Duc de Noailles, this nobleman had never seen him. The duke is a gentleman of the old school, formal, and apt to stand on his dignity. In showing out an author who visits him to canvass, he never advances beyond a certain number of steps. But Labiche told with a quietness that did not ruffle the octogenarian's nerves mirth-exciting stories, and made comical remarks which so tickled and pleased the duke that, instead of ringing for the valet, he accompanied the visitor to the door.

Sardou is the sole author whom a buffoon piece served at the Academy. He got in there for two reasons. One was having caricatured Gambetta in "Rabagas," and the other was in having for his competitor the Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier, whom M. Thiers after the 24th of May detested. Sardou is very much dependent upon stage accessories and bewildering toilets for the success of his pieces. What would "Fédora" be without Sarah Bernhardt's wondrous dresses, or the "Famille Benoiton" have been were it not for the mantua-maker, hair-dresser, and milliner? Perhaps this may account for the heat with which the author of "La Dame aux Camélias" (Dumas *fils*) resents the intrusion of Worth upon the stage. Sardou regards dramatic literature from a purely business point of view. Foreigners who come to Paris to spend their money, and who keep the theaters well filled, would not understand his best literary efforts. "Les Pattes des Mouches," a *chef d'œuvre* of wit, fancy, and invention, is not appreciated by them. It was the first play that he brought out, but not by

any means the first that he wrote. Déjazet produced it at her theater, Sardou, who had called upon her at her country cottage, having inspired that aged actress with a half maternal half sentimental interest. He had vainly knocked at many other doors. A tragedy in five acts and in verse was his initial play. He wrote it in the hope that Rachel would patronize it; but as the heroine was not a Greek or Roman, but a Queen of Sweden, she refused. For some years Sardou lived by teaching Latin to the son of an Egyptian pasha at a salary of five francs a day. He is now a millionaire and the possessor of a historical château, standing in a fine park at Marly, and of a villa at Nice. He spends the summer in one place and winter in the other.

Émile Augier, taken all round, is the greatest modern French dramatist. *Le style c'est l'homme*, and he is one of nature's noblemen. Strength and good proportion are two leading features of his drama. He does not attach much importance to scenic accessories. When the passions of human beings are in manifest play, we only think of the action in which they show themselves. It does not occur to us to look whether there are fine curtains to a window from which we see a man or woman jump with suicidal intent. We do not think of the window at all. Unlike Dumas, Augier sounds the conscience and brings it into play with a dramatic effect which bears away the spectator. He comes of a fine race, probably of Latin origin. Valence, his native town, was the center of a Gallo-Roman colony. Pigault-Lebrun was his grandfather, and he has inherited his fun and cleverness. These qualities are allied with others of a higher order. Augier has the sculptural instinct and philosophical elevation. His comedies in prose are stirring and excitants to "mental gayety"; his dramas in verse, though modern in their subjects, are written with classical simplicity and *verve*. The characters are clean-built. Augier writes French as Dryden wrote English. This dramatist is an old bachelor. He has remained one because his only sister, as he rose to eminence, was left a widow with five young children. She and they live with "Uncle Émile." The greater part of the year they reside in a plain, roomy house on the edge of the Seine at Croissy. Augier is almost a Chinese in ancestral cult. He venerates and cherishes the memory of father and mother and of the hearty and humorous Pigault-Lebrun.

Taine is like a stiff cold soil which is hard to break, and when broken, produces excellent wheat, but rarely brings forth sweet, delicate herbage. He is an encyclopedia, and has a methodic brain, which he beats very hard when he wants to entertain and interest. Nor does he beat in vain. But the force acquired in the beating process carries him on too far in the same direction. He rides to death the system borrowed from Condillac, by which he explains the peculiarities of English and French literature, and of the Dutch, Flemish, and Italian schools of art. Variety in Taine's books and lectures is a result of will, not of spontaneous cerebration. Ardennes is his native country. He has a strong frame, and his complexion and physiognomy are Flemish. One of the eyes is slightly turned inward. Both are near-sighted. Glasses hide and remedy these defects.

Taine and his fellow-Academicians, Caro, Mézières, M. de Mazade, and Gaston Boissier, are all distinguished lecturers in great public seats of fine art and learning. Caro descants on moral philosophy at the Sorbonne. He is a handsome man, and has a bland, persuasive style. Ladies of quality form perhaps three-fourths of his auditory. He has made mincemeat of the works of German philosophers to suit their taste and mental digestions, and has explained to them, in combating it, Schopenhauer's pessimism. Schopenhauer advises human beings not to marry, because the best thing in his opinion that could happen to the world would be the extinction of humanity. He hated women because they stood in the way of this desideratum. Caro became the darling of the drawing-rooms. At the examination for the bachelor's degree last session, a candidate who feared not said to him in passing:

"I am so anxious to get through in order to do myself the pleasure of attending your lectures."

"May I ask," inquired the professor, with a smile, "whether you have a rendezvous in my lecture-room?"

M. de Mazade lectures at the Sorbonne on Latin literature, and writes articles on contemporaneous French history for the "Revue des Deux Mondes." They are in a severe and somewhat pompous style. In private life, their author is an exuberant Southern, speaking with a Languedoc accent.

Renan also occupies a chair at the College of France. He is the most complex of all the immortals. He is a strange compound of Gascon keenness and expansiveness, Breton superstition, and of Celtic sensibility, of *verve*, of scholastic erudition, theological lore, and Virgilian grace. An æolian harp is not more impressionable. There is a good deal of æolian harpism in the female population of little seaports in Brittany. Every scudding cloud, every moaning breeze, every storm sign affects them. They rejoice in every precursor of fine weather.

VICTOR CHERBULIEZ. (FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY TRUCHELUT & VALKMAN.)

Renan's mother was a Breton woman, who was reared, as all her people had been time out of mind, at Tréguier, a small port of Brittany, with an old church and monastery. Renan's father was a Bordelais skipper. He was found dead at the foot of a cliff when his son was five years old. Had he been accidentally drowned, thrown overboard by the crew, or had he committed suicide? Nobody can tell. The son found more than a mother in his only sister, who was grown when they were orphaned. She had the æolian-harp impressionability, but great heart-power behind it, and the adventurous courage of a hero. Though their mother was alive, the sister attended to the education of Ernest. He and she were intellectual, and letters were represented at Tréguier only by the Church. Ecclesiasticism became the nursing mother of his literary faculties. Feminine converse and sympathy and wild sea-side nature did the rest. How well Renan understands the fishers who followed Jesus! He went from Tréguier to St. Sulpice to study theology. Rosalie, who had gone as a teacher to Russia, helped him with her purse. When she came back to France, and learned that he did not believe in the Catholic dogmas, she said: "Follow the inner light. Have faith in it only." She was the first to discard dogmas. She accompanied her brother to Syria when he went there to study Biblical localities, and there she died. Madame Cornu, foster-sister of the late Emperor, encouraged Renan to transmute into a prose poem the work of Strauss, which ordinary minds could not digest. Renan has always been taken care of by women. His wife, a daughter of Henri Scheffer, Ary Scheffer's brother, is a cheerful Martha,—very intelligent, well instructed, and competent to chat with him about his literary plans and projects. She is an agnostic brought up in Protestantism, and he a materialist reared in the Catholic faith and still loving it.

Monsignor Perraud, the Bishop of Autun, was a class-fellow of Taine at the École Normale. He is a man of refined mind, vibrating heart, and elevated aims. He wrote twenty years ago an account of "A Tour in Ireland," which was read with delight by Madame d'Haussonville, and he has never missed an opportunity to lift up his voice in behalf of Poland. He is of an emaciated countenance; but his eyes beam with hope and faith. He believes that God's grace is inexhaustible and that it will operate a wide-world miracle.

There are usually two scientists at the Academy. Dumas, the chemist, and Pasteur are

now occupants of chairs. It is a remarkable fact that both stood out against materialism in the harangues they delivered on being received. Dumas is a Spiritualist of a deistical shade. Pasteur is a Catholic and a reactionist. Outside of his special studies Pasteur is narrow. It is erroneously supposed that he did not rise to eminence through the school of any faculty. What he did was to work his own way into the great seats of learning. He began as an usher in the lyceum of Besançon, and set before himself the task of qualifying at the Normal School for the brevet of a university professor. His mind was led toward the lilliputian side of creation by an accident. The usher had a good-natured pupil, to whom a kind godfather sent a microscope for a birthday present. The boy had not time to amuse himself with the scientific plaything, and lent it to Pasteur, who studied with it so far as he was able the insect world and the organizations of plants. He was then not quite twenty. The idea that animalcules were the origin of contagious diseases was suggested to him by an apothecary at Dôle, who got it from Raspail, a quack of genius. This idea was often thought over, and dismissed, and then taken up again. As Raspail was nearly all his life in prison for his political opinions, he had not opportunities to demonstrate experimentally the truth of his notion. Pasteur won his university gown. But he yielded to his vocation, and, instead of teaching in high schools, became a scientist and obtained a chair in the faculty of Strasburg. There he came in contact with German thinkers, and had almost a European reputation as a geologist and chemist, when he was appointed scientific director of the École Normale by the Emperor Napoleon III. He owed his nomination to the head master, Nisard, under whom he studied in that school, and who, being a devout Catholic, liked him for his attachment to his religious principles. Pasteur entered the Institute when a controversy was going on there about spontaneous generation and the unity and origin of species. He fell back upon his microscope, which he had been neglecting, to elucidate these problems. He was thus brought round again to his starting-point—that of the effect of animalculesin giving rise to contagious diseases. Swift's penetration into many things his generation did not understand was justified by Pasteur. The scientist proved that the Lilliputians could, and often did, get the better of Gulliver. In binding him down they took the names of small-pox, scarlatina, yellow fever, cholera morbus, tuberculosis, glanders, murrain, hydrophobia, and other fell plagues. Lilliput transformed grape-juice into wine and dough into leavened bread. Pasteur then studied the laws of existence of the infinitesimal creatures and the conditions most favorable for the irreproduction or destruction. Could he modify their virulence, and turn those bred in specially arranged liquids into protecting agencies against the maladies which, in their natural state, they would cause? To use a Scriptural expression, he aimed at casting out Beelzebub by Beelzebub. It is certain that his "vaccines" are efficacious; but it is also to be feared that they break down health and weaken defenses against other morbid agencies. M. de Lesseps has deliberately averred that he never knew a fearless man to die of cholera. He was himself in the midst of it in Egypt in 1831, and turned his house, in which he continued to live, into a hospital. Yet the plague never touched him. The discoveries that fresh air, rich in oxygen, will consume microbes, and that animalcules cannot live in boiling water, are precious ones for the world. Pasteur may be known at the Academy by his absent air, and eyes in which there is, to judge by their look, no visual power. They are too habituated to the microscope to have any ordinary human focus, and they see as through a fog. Pasteur is free from conceit and loves what he thinks is true. He has been freed from the cares of life by his country. The present Chamber of Deputies has doubled the yearly pension of 12,000 francs which the Versailles Assembly granted to him. He has a rugged temper and a crabbed style as a writer. Perseverance is his dominant quality. He is undemonstrative. The face is not an expressive one; but the forehead and head are powerfully shaped.

Cherbuliez is a Swiss by birth and French by descent and by option. There is a brightness in his eyes that makes me think of mild moonbeams in which there is no heat. And so it is with the novels of Cherbuliez. They are sweet as the moonbeams that slept upon the bank in Portia's garden, and they are honest and of good report; but they do not take a grip of the reader, or stir him up to thought, emotion, or action. What the moon is to an ardent summer's sun, they are to the novels of George Sand, of whom Cherbuliez confesses himself an imitator.

Maître Rousse is the law Academician. He cannot be said to "replace" the Doric Dufaure, who had the genius of common sense, and whose plain, unvarnished style was more effective than brilliant flights of rhetorical eloquence. Rousse was brought into the Academy by the dukes, with the consent of Jules Simon and the aid of Taine, and some other reactionists. He was thus

rewarded for placing his talent, which is not of a high order, at the service of the religious orders when the famous decrees were executed against them.

Notwithstanding the laurels M. Émile Ollivier won at the bar, he would resent being called "Maître," as advocates are styled in France. He hung up forever his cap and gown when he entered the Corps Législatif. He is in his own eyes a statesman, and he dreams of being again the prime minister of an emperor. Prince Napoleon is the quenched sun round which he revolves. Ollivier is a man who is set drunk by his own eloquence and who has lived for eighteen years in a fool's paradise. His talent—which as a rhetorician is remarkable—is entirely subjective. He is a man of friendly disposition and boundless vanity. His infatuation led him to desert his Republican friends and become an Imperialist. It dragged him into a war with Germany, because he imagined the Empress was dazzled by his genius. In return for her supposed admiration, he lent himself to her desire "to give Prussia a lesson." If he had kept his head, he would have brought the whole Orleanist party and moderate liberals of every kind round to the Empire. They were tired of being governed and wanted to reënter the governing class. In sign thereof, M. Émile Ollivier was elected an Academician shortly after he formed a cabinet. Thiers did not believe that the Empire could avoid a collision with Germany, and he foresaw that United Italy would not be with France. But not to seem factious, he advised his friends at the Academy to vote for the Emperor's "liberal" prime minister.

Maxime Descamps is able to sign himself "Academician," because he "slew the slain" in writing a virulent book against the Commune after its defeat. He has the St. Simonian talent for extracting all the good out of the world that it is capable of yielding him. As a writer he is not first-rate. What he excels in is giving a readable form to statistics in review articles.

M. de Falloux, the most clerical of the Forty, is a wealthy land-holder in Anjou; cultivates a large estate there, and corresponds actively with a few distinguished old gentlemen who share his ideas.

The chair of Sandeau is now competed for by Alphonse Daudet and Edmond About. The former is an exquisite novelist, but only that. His rival has many strings to his bow, and can use them all with a master's hand. He is a journalist and polemist of the highest order, every inch a man, healthy in body and in mind, warm-hearted, and sharp-tongued when vexed, writes and speaks French as might a grandson of Voltaire and Diderot, is frank as a man who has risen direct from the popular class, thinks the best of those he likes, and says the worst of those who anger him. He is one of the best family men in Paris. With his wife and ten children he occupies a handsome and most comfortable town house and a château in the country, in both of which the virtue of hospitality is largely exercised. Daudet, through his brother Ernest, may count on a good number of Orleanist votes. But many of the Forty do not like the idea of having him at their Thursday meetings. What they object to in him is his habit of observing those whom he is with as if they were insects stuck on the glass plate of a microscope.

The Academy has no action now on politics. Its action on literature, as I have shown, is becoming remote. Life is too busy under the Republic for Academicians to attend faithfully to the task, enjoined in the statutes, of compiling a dictionary. Littré, it may be said, left the illustrious company nothing to do. There are social advantages in being one of the Forty. An Academician's wife finds it easy to obtain good matches for her daughters, although their portions are small. The book-seller, also, is more ready to enter into terms with a novelist, dramatist, or historian who is of the Academy, provided he is not fossilized or that his works have currency. But if an author is in the way to become a fossil, the right to don the palm-embroidered coat hastens the change. The literary man does not keep so fresh in as out of the Academy. Legouvé and Mignet have been exceptions. Renan has visibly gone down since he obtained a chair.

Y. D.