

MEMOIRS OF MIRABEAU.

Mémoires biographiques, littéraires, et politiques, de Mirabeau; écrits par lui-même, par son Père, son Oncle, et son Fils Adoptif (Memoirs, biographical, literary, and political, of Mirabeau: written by himself, by his Father, his Uncle, and his Adopted Son). 8 vols. 8vo. Paris, 1834-36.

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A PROVERB says, ‘The house that is a-building looks not as the house that is built.’ Environed with rubbish and mortar-heaps, with scaffold-poles, hodmen, dust-clouds, some rudiments only of the thing that is to be, can, to the most observant, disclose themselves through the mean tumult of the thing that hitherto is. How true is this same with regard to all works and facts whatsoever in our world; emphatically true in regard to the highest fact and work which our world witnesses,—the Life of what we call an Original Man. Such a man is one not made altogether by the common pattern; one whose phases and goings forth cannot be prophecied of, even approximately; though, indeed, by their very newness and strangeness they most of all provoke prophecy. A man of this kind, while he lives on earth, is ‘unfolding himself out of nothing into something,’ surely under very complex conditions: he is drawing continually towards him, in continual succession and variation, the materials of his structure, nay, his very plan of it, from the whole realm of Accident, you may say, and from the whole realm of Freewill: he is *building* his life together in this manner; a guess and a problem as yet, not to others only but to himself.

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Hence such criticism by the bystanders; loud no-knowledge, loud
 misknowledge! It is like the opening of the Fisherman's Casket in the
 Arabian Tale, this beginning and growing-up of a life: vague smoke
 wavering hither and thither; some features of a Genie looming through;
 5 of the ultimate shape of which no fisherman or man can judge. And
 yet, as we say, men do judge, and pass provisional sentence, being
 forced to it; you can predict with what accuracy! 'Look at the audi-
 ence in a theatre,' says one: 'the life of a man is there compressed
 within five hours' duration; is transacted on an open stage, with
 10 lighted lamps, and what the fittest words and art of genius can do to
 make the spirit of it clear; yet listen, when the curtain falls, what a
 discerning public will say of that!' And now, if the drama extended
 over three-score and ten years; and were enacted, not with a view to
 clearness, but rather indeed with a view to concealment, often in the
 15 deepest attainable involution of obscurity; and your discerning pub-
 lic, occupied otherwise, cast its eye on the business now here for a
 moment, and then there for a moment? Woe to him, answer we, who
 has no court of appeal against the world's judgment! He is a doomed
 man: doomed by conviction to hard penalties; nay, purchasing acquit-
 20 tal (too probably) by a still harder penalty, that of being a triviality,
 superficiality, self-advertiser, and partial or total quack, which is the
 hardest penalty of all.

But suppose farther, that the man, as we said, was an original man;
 that his life-drama would not and could not be measured by the three
 25 unities alone, but partly by a rule of its own too: still farther, that the
 transactions he had mingled in were great and world-dividing; that of
 all his judges there were not one who had not something to love him
 for unduly, to hate him for unduly! Alas! is it not precisely in this
 case, where the whole world is promptest to judge, that the whole
 30 world is likeliest to be wrong; natural opacity being so doubly and
 trebly darkened by accidental difficulty and perversion? The crabbed
 moralist had some show of reason who said: To judge of an original
 contemporary man, you must, in general, reverse the world's judg-
 ment about him; the world is not only wrong on that matter, but
 35 cannot on any such matter be right.

One comfort is that the world is ever working itself righter and
 righter on such matters; that a continual revisal and rectification of
 the world's first judgment on them is inevitably going on. For, after

all, the world loves its original men, and can in no wise forget them; not till after a long while; sometimes not till after thousands of years. Forgetting *them*, what, indeed, should it remember? The world's wealth is its original men; by these and their works it is a world and not a waste: the memory and record of what MEN it bore—this is the sum of its strength, its sacred 'property forever,' whereby it upholds itself, and steers forward, better or worse, through the yet undiscovered deep of Time. All knowledge, all art, all beautiful or precious possession of existence, is, in the long run, this, or connected with this. Science itself, is it not, under one of its most interesting aspects, Biography; is it not the Record of the *Work* which an original man, still named by us, or not now named, was blessed by the heavens to do? That Sphere-and-cylinder is the monument and abbreviated history of the man Archimedes; not to be forgotten, probably, till the world itself vanish. Of Poets, and what they have done, and how the world loves them, let us, in these days, very singular in respect of that Art, say nothing, or next to nothing. The greatest modern of the poetic guild has already said: 'Nay, if thou wilt have it, who but the poet first formed gods for us, brought them down to us, raised us up to them?'

Another remark, on a lower scale, not unworthy of notice, is by Jean Paul: that, 'as in art, so in conduct, or what we call morals, before there can be an Aristotle, with his critical canons, there must be a Homer, many Homers with their heroic performances.' In plainer words, the original man is the true creator (or call him revealer) of Morals too: it is from his example that precepts enough are derived, and written down in books and systems: he properly is the *Thing*; all that follows after is but talk about the thing, better or worse interpretation of it, more or less wearisome and ineffectual discourse of logic on it. A remark, this of Jean Paul's, which, well meditated, may seem one of the most pregnant lately written on these matters. If any man had the ambition of building a new system of morals (not a promising enterprise, at this time of day), there is no remark known to us which might better serve him as a chief cornerstone, whereon to found, and to build, high enough, nothing doubting;—high, for instance, as the Christian Gospel itself. And to whatever other heights man's destiny may yet carry him! Consider whether it was not, from the first, by example, or say rather by human

5 exemplars, and such reverent imitation or abhorrent aversion and avoidance as these gave rise to, that man's duties were made indubitable to him? Also, if it is not yet, in these last days, by very much the same means (example, precept, prohibition, 'force of public opinion,' and other forcings and inducings), that the like result is brought about; and, from the Woolsack down to the Treadmill, from Almack's to Chalk Farm and the west-end of Newgate, the incongruous whirlpool of life is forced and induced to whirl with some attempt at regularity? The two Mosaic Tables were of simple limited stone; no logic appended to them: we, in our days, are privileged with Logic,—
 10 Systems of Morals, Professors of Moral Philosophy, Theories of Moral Sentiment, Utilities, Sympathies, Moral Senses, not a few; useful for those that feel comfort in them. But to the observant eye, is it not still plain that the rule of man's life rests not very steadily on logic (rather carries logic unsteadily resting on *it*, as an excuse, an exposition, or ornamental solacement to oneself and others); that ever, as of old, the thing a man will do is the thing he feels commanded to do: of which command, again, the origin and reasonableness remains often as good as *indemonstrable* by logic; and, indeed, lies mainly in
 15 this, that it has been demonstrated otherwise and better by experiment; namely, that an experimental (what we name original) man has already done it, and we have *seen* it to be good and reasonable, and now know it to be so once and for evermore?—Enough of this.

25 He were a sanguine individual surely that should turn to the French Revolution for new rules of conduct, and creators or exemplars of morality,—except, indeed, exemplars of the gibbeted, *in-terrorem* sort. A greater work, it is often said, was never done in the world's history by men so small. Twenty-five millions (say these severe critics)
 30 are hurled forth out of all their old habitudes, arrangements, harnessings, and garnitures, into the new, quite void arena and career of *Sansculottism*; there to show what originality is in them. Fanfaronading and gesticulation, vehemence, effervescence, heroic desperation, they do show in abundance; but of what one can call originality,
 35 invention, natural stuff or character, amazingly little. Their heroic desperation, such as it was, we will honour and even venerate, as a new document (call it rather a renewal of that primeval ineffaceable document and charter) of the manhood of man. But, for the rest,

there were Federations; there were Festivals of Fraternity, ‘the Statue of Nature pouring water from her two *mammelles*,’ and the august Deputies all drinking of it from the same iron saucer: Weights and Measures were attempted to be changed; the Months of the Year became Pluviose, Thermidor, Messidor (till Napoleon said, *Il faudroit débarrasser de ce Messidor*, One must get this Messidor sent about its business): also Mrs. Momoro and others rode prosperous, as Goddesses of Reason; and then, these being mostly guillotined, Mahomet Robespierre did, with bouquet in hand, and in new black breeches, in front of the Tuileries, pronounce the scraggiest of prophetic discourses on the *Etre Suprême*, and set fire to much emblematic pasteboard:—all this, and an immensity of such, the Twenty-five millions did devise and accomplish; but (apart from their heroic desperation, which was no miracle either, beside that of the old Dutch, for instance) this, and the like of this, was almost all. Their arena of *Sansculottism* was the most original arena opened to man for above a thousand years; and they, at bottom, were unexpectedly commonplace in it. Exaggerated common-place, triviality run distracted, and a kind of universal ‘Frenzy of John Dennis,’ is the figure they exhibit. The brave Forster,—sinking slowly of broken heart, in the midst of that volcanic chaos of the Reign of Terror, and clinging still to the cause, which, though now bloody and terrible, he believed to be the highest, and for which he had sacrificed all, country, kindred, fortune, friends, and life,—compares the Revolution, indeed, to ‘an explosion and new creation of the world;’ but the actors in it, who went buzzing about him, to a ‘*handvoll mücken*, handful of flies.’¹ And yet, one may add, this same explosion of a world was their work; the work of these—flies? The truth is, neither Forster nor any man can see a French Revolution; it is like seeing the ocean: poor Charles Lamb complained that he could not see the multitudinous ocean at all, but only some insignificant fraction of it from the deck of the Margate hoy. It must be owned, however (urge these severe critics), that examples of rabid triviality abound, in the French Revolution, to a lamentable extent. Consider Maximilien Robespierre; for the greater part of two years, what one may call Autocrat of France. A poor sea-green (*verdâtre*), atrabiliar Formula of a man; without head, without heart, or any grace, gift, or even vice beyond common, if it were

¹ Forster’s *Briefe und Nachlass*.

not vanity, astucy, diseased rigour (which some count strength) as of a cramp: really a most poor sea-green individual in spectacles; meant by Nature for a Methodist parson of the stricter sort, to doom men who departed from the written confession; to chop fruitless
 5 shrill logic; to contend, and suspect, and ineffectually wrestle and wriggle; and, on the whole, to love, or to know, or to be (properly speaking) Nothing:—this was he who, the sport of wracking winds, saw himself whirled aloft to command *la première nation de l'univers*, and all men shouting long life to him; one of the most lamentable,
 10 tragic, sea-green objects, ever whirled aloft in that manner, in any country, to his own swift destruction, and the world's long wonder!

So argue these severe critics of the French Revolution: with whom we argue not here; but remark rather, what is more to the purpose, that the French Revolution did disclose original men: among the
 15 twenty-five millions, at least one or two units. Some reckon, in the present stage of the business, as many as three: Napoleon, Danton, Mirabeau. Whether more will come to light, or of what sort, when the computation is quite liquidated, one cannot say: meanwhile let the world be thankful for these three;—as, indeed, the world is; lov-
 20 ing original men, without limit, were they never so questionable, well knowing how rare they are! To us, accordingly, it is rather interesting to observe how on these three also, questionable as they surely are, the old process is repeating itself; how these also are getting known in their true likeness. A second generation, relieved in some measure
 25 from the spectral hallucinations, hysterical ophthalmia, and natural panic-delirium of the first contemporary one, is gradually coming to discern and measure what its predecessor could only execrate and shriek over: for, as our Proverb said, the dust is sinking, the rubbish-
 30 heaps disappear; the built house, such as it is, and was appointed to be, stands visible, better or worse.

Of Napoleon Bonaparte, what with so many bulletins, and such self-proclamation from artillery and battle-thunder, loud enough to ring through the deafest brain, in the remotest nook of this earth, and now, in consequence, with so many biographies, histories, and
 35 historical arguments for and against, it may be said that *he* can now shift for himself; that his true figure is in a fair way of being ascertained. Doubtless it will be found one day what significance was in him; how (we quote from a New England Book) ‘the man was a

divine missionary, though unconscious of it; and preached, through the cannon's throat, that great doctrine, "*La carrière ouverte aux talens*, The tools to him that can handle them," which is our ultimate Political Evangel, wherein alone can Liberty lie. Madly enough he preached, it is true, as enthusiasts and first missionaries are wont; with imperfect utterance, amid much frothy rant; yet as articulately perhaps as the case admitted. Or call him, if you will, an American backwoodsman, who had to fell unpenetrated forests, and battle with innumerable wolves, and did not entirely forbear strong liquor, rioting, and even theft; whom, nevertheless, the peaceful sower will follow, and, as he cuts the boundless harvest, bless.'—From 'the incarnate Moloch,' which the word once was, onwards to this quiet version, there is a considerable progress. 5

Still more interesting is it, not without a touch almost of pathos, to see how the rugged *Terre Filius* Danton begins likewise to emerge, from amid the blood-tinted obscurations and shadows of horrid cruelty, into calm light; and seems now not an Anthropophagus, but partly a man. On the whole, the Earth feels it to be something to have a 'Son of Earth;' *any* reality, rather than a hypocrisy and formula! With a man that went honestly to work with himself, and said and acted, in any sense, with the whole mind of him, there is always something to be done. Satan himself, according to Dante, was a praiseworthy object, compared with those *juste-milieu* angels (so over- 20 numerous in times like ours) who 'were *neither* faithful nor rebellious,' but were for their little selves only: trimmers, moderates, plausible persons, who, in the Dantean Hell, are found doomed to this frightful penalty, that 'they have not the hope to die (*non han speranza di morte*);' but sunk in torpid death-life, in mud and the plague of flies, they are to doze and dree forever,—'hateful to God and to the Enemies of God:' 30

'Non ragionam di lor, ma guarda e passa!'

If Bonaparte were the 'armed Soldier of Democracy,' invincible while he continued true to that, then let us call this Danton the *Enfant Perdu*, and *unenlisted* Revolter and Titan of Democracy, which could not yet have soldiers or discipline, but was by the nature of it lawless. An Earth-born, we say, yet honestly born of Earth! In the *Memoirs* 35

of Garat, and elsewhere, one sees these fire-eyes beam with earnest insight, fill with the water of tears; the broad rude features speak withal of wild human sympathies; that Antæus' bosom also held a heart. "It is not the alarm-cannon that you hear," cries he to the

5 terror-struck, when the Prussians were already at Verdun: "it is the *pas de charge* against our enemies." "*De l'audace, et encore de l'audace, et toujours de l'audace*, To dare, and again to dare, and without limit to dare!"—there is nothing left but that. Poor 'Mirabeau of the Sans-culottes,' what a mission! And it could not be but done,—and it was

10 done! But, indeed, may there not be, if well considered, more virtue in this feeling itself, once bursting earnest from the wild heart, than in whole lives of immaculate Pharisees and Respectabilities, with their eye ever set on 'character,' and the letter of the law: "*Que mon nom soit flétri*, Let my name be blighted, then; let the Cause be glorious, and have victory!" By-and-by, as we predict, the Friend of Humanity, since so many Knife-grinders have no story to tell him, will find some sort of story in this Danton. A rough-hewn giant of a man, not anthropophagous entirely; whose 'figures of speech,' and also of action, 'are all gigantic;' whose 'voice reverberates from the domes,'—and

20 dashes Brunswick across the marches in a very wrecked condition. Always his total freedom from cant is one thing; even in his briberies, and sins as to money, there is a frankness, a kind of broad greatness. Sincerity, a great rude sincerity of insight and of purpose, dwelt in the man, which quality is the root of all: a man who could see through many things, and would stop at very few things; who marched and fought impetuously forward, in the questionablest element; and now bears the penalty, in a name 'blighted,' yet, as we say, visibly clearing itself. Once cleared, why should not this name too have significance for men? The wild history is a tragedy, as all human histories are.

25 Brawny Dantons, still to the present hour, rend the glebe, as simple brawny Farmers, and reap peaceable harvests, at Arcis-sur-Aube; and *this* Danton—! It is an *unrhymed* tragedy; very bloody, fuliginous (after the manner of the *elder* dramatists); yet full of tragic elements; not undeserving natural pity and fear. In quiet times, perhaps still at

30 a great distance, the happier onlooker may stretch out the hand, across dim centuries, to him, and say: "Ill-starred brother, how thou foughtest with wild lion-strength, and yet not with strength *enough*, and flamedst aloft, and wert trodden down of sin and misery;—be-

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hold, thou also wert a man!" It is said there lies a Biography of Danton written, in Paris, at this moment; but the editor waits till the 'force of public opinion' ebb a little. Let him publish, with utmost convenient dispatch, and say what he knows, if he do know it: the lives of remarkable men are always worth understanding instead of misunderstanding; and public opinion must positively adjust itself the best way it can. 5

But without doubt the far most interesting, best-gifted of this questionable trio is not the Mirabeau of the Sansculottes, but the Mirabeau himself: a man of much finer nature than either of the others; of a genius equal in strength, we will say, to Napoleon's; but a much humaner genius, almost a poetic one. With wider sympathies of his own, he appeals far more persuasively to the sympathies of men. 10

Of him too it is interesting to notice the progressive dawning, out of calumny, misrepresentation, and confused darkness, into visibility and light; and how the world manifests its continued curiosity about him; and as book after book comes forth with new evidence, the matter is again taken up, the old judgment on it revised and anew revised;—whereby, in fine, we can hope the right, or approximately right, sentence will be found; and so the question be left settled. It would seem this Mirabeau also is one whose memory the world will not, for a long while, let die. Very different from many a high memory, dead and deep buried long since then! In his lifetime, even in the final effulgent part of it, this Mirabeau took upon him to write, with a sort of awe-struck feeling, to our Mr. Wilberforce; and did not, that we can find, get the benefit of any answer. Pitt was prime minister, and then Fox, then again Pitt, and again Fox, in sweet vicissitude; and the noise of them, reverberating through Brookes's and the club-rooms, through tavern dinners, electioneering hustings, leading articles, filled all the earth; and it seemed as if those two (though which might be *which*, you could not say) were the Ormuzd and Ahriman of political Nature;—and now! Such difference is there, once more, between an original man, of never such questionable sort, and the most dexterous, cunningly-devised parliamentary mill. The difference is great; and one of those on which the future time makes largest contrast with the present. Nothing can be more important than the mill while it continues and grinds; important above all to those who 15 20 25 30 35

have sacks about the hopper. But the grinding once done, how can the memory of it endure? It is important now to no individual, not even to the individual with a sack. So that, this tumult well over, the memory of the original man, and of what small revelation he, as Son of Nature and brother-man, could make, does naturally rise on us: his memorable sayings, actings, and sufferings, the very vices and crimes he fell into, are a kind of pabulum which all mortals claim their right to.

Concerning *Peuchet, Chaussard, Gassicourt*, and, indeed, all the former Biographers of Mirabeau, there can little be said here, except that they abound with errors: the present ultimate *Fils Adoptif* has never done picking faults with them. Not as memorials of Mirabeau, but as memorials of the world's relation to him, of the world's treatment of him, they may, a little longer, have some perceptible significance. From poor Peuchet (he was known in the *Moniteur* once), and other the like labourers in the vineyard, you can justly demand thus much; and not justly much more.

Etienne Dumont's *Souvenirs sur Mirabeau* might not, at first sight, seem an advance towards true knowledge, but a movement the other way; and yet it was really an advance. The book, for one thing, was hailed by a universal choral blast from all manner of reviews and periodical literatures that Europe, in all its spellable dialects, had: whereby, at least, the minds of men were again drawn to the subject; and so, amid whatever hallucination, ancient or new-devised, some increase of insight was unavoidable. Besides, the book itself did somewhat. Numerous specialties about the great Frenchman, as read by the eyes of the little Genevese, were conveyed there; and could be deciphered, making allowances. Dumont is faithful, veridical; within his own limits he has even a certain freedom, a picturesqueness and light clearness. It is true, the whim he had of looking at the great Mirabeau as a thing set in motion mainly by him (M. Dumont) and such as he, was one of the most wonderful to be met with in psychology. Nay, more wonderful still, how the reviewers, pretty generally, some from whom better was expected, took up the same with aggravations; and it seemed settled on all sides, that here again a pretender had been stripped, and the great made as little as the rest of us (much to our comfort); that, in fact, figuratively speaking, this enormous Mirabeau, the sound of whom went forth to all lands, was no other

than an enormous trumpet, or coach-horn, of japanned tin, through which a dexterous little M. Dumont was blowing all the while, and making the noise! Some men and reviewers have strange theories of man. Let any son of Adam, the shallowest now living, try honestly to scheme out, within his head, an existence of this kind; and say how verisimilar it looks! A life and business actually conducted on such coach-horn principle,—we say not the life and business of a statesman and world-leader, but say of the poorest laceman and tape-seller,—were one of the chief miracles hitherto on record. O M. Dumont! But thus, too, when old Sir Christopher struck down the last stone in the Dome of St. Paul's, was it he that carried up the stone? No; it was a certain strong-backed man, never mentioned (covered with envious or unenvious oblivion),—probably of the Sister Island. 5 10

Let us add, however, more plainly, that M. Dumont was less to blame here than his reviewers were. The good Dumont accurately records what ingenious journey-work and fetching and carrying he did for his Mirabeau; interspersing many an anecdote, which the world is very glad of; extenuating nothing, we do hope, nor exaggerating anything: this is what he did, and had a clear right and call to do. And what if it failed, not altogether, yet in some measure if it did fail, to strike him, that he still properly was but a Dumont? Nay, that the gift this Mirabeau had of enlisting such respectable Dumonts to do hod-work and even skilful handiwork for him; and of ruling them and bidding them by the look of his eye; and of making them cheerfully fetch and carry for him, and serve him as loyal subjects, with a kind of chivalry and willingness,—that this gift was precisely the kingdom of the man, and did itself stamp him as a leader among men! Let no man blame M. Dumont (as some have too harshly done); his error is of oversight, and venial; his worth to us is indisputable. On the other hand, let all men blame such public instructors and periodical individuals as drew that inference and life-theory for him, and brayed it forth in that loud manner; or rather, on the whole, do not blame, but pardon, and pass by on the other side. Such things are an ordained trial of public patience, which perhaps is the better for discipline; and seldom, or rather never, do any lasting injury. 15 20 25 30 35

Close following on Dumont's 'Reminiscences' came this Biography by M. Lucas Montigny, 'Adopted Son;' the first volume in 1834, the rest at short intervals; and lies complete now in Eight consider-

able Volumes octavo: concerning which we are now to speak,—unhappily, in the disparaging sense. In fact it is impossible for any man to say unmixed good of M. Lucas’s work. That he, as Adopted Son, has lent himself so resolutely to the washing of his hero white, and even to the white-washing of him where the natural colour was black, be this no blame to him; or even, if you will, be it praise. If a man’s Adopted Son may not write the best book he can for him, then who may? But the fatal circumstance is, that M. Lucas Montigny has not written a book at all; but has merely clipped and cut out, and cast together the materials for a book, which other men are still wanted to write. On the whole M. Montigny rather surprises one. For the reader probably knows, what all the world whispers to itself, that when ‘Mirabeau, in 1783, adopted this infant born the year before’ he had the best of all conceivable obligations to adopt him; having, by his own act (*non-notarial*), summoned him to appear in this World. And now consider both what Shakspeare’s Edmund, what Poet Savage, and such like, have bragged; and also that the Mirabeaus, from time immemorial, had (like a certain British kindred known to us) ‘produced many a blackguard, but not one blockhead’! We almost discredit that statement, which all the world whispers to itself; or, if crediting it, pause over the ruins of families. The Haarlem canal is not flatter than M. Montigny’s genius. He wants the talent which seems born with all Frenchmen, that of presenting what knowledge he has in the most knowable form. One of the solidest men, too: doubtless a valuable man; whom it were so pleasant for us to praise, if we could. May he be happy in a private station, and never write more;—except for the Bureaux de Préfecture, with tolerably handsome official appointments, which is far better!

His biographical work is a monstrous quarry, or mound of shot-rubbish, in eight strata, hiding valuable matter, which he that seeks will find. Valuable, we say; for the Adopted Son having access, nay welcome and friendly entreaty, to family papers, to all manner of archives, secret records; and working therein long years, with a filial unweariedness, has made himself piously at home in all corners of the matter. He might, with the same spirit (as we always upbraidingly think), so easily have made us at home too! But no: he brings to light things new and old; now precious illustrative private documents, now the poorest public heaps of mere pamphleteer and parliamentary matter,

so attainable elsewhere, often so omissible were it not to be attained; and jumbles and tumbles the whole together with such reckless clumsiness, with such endless copiousness (having waggons enough), as gives the reader many a pang. The very pains bestowed on it are often perverse; the whole is become so hard, heavy; unworkable, except in the sweat of one's brow! Or call it a mine,—artificial-natural silver mine. Threads of beautiful silver ore lie scattered, which you must dig for, and sift: suddenly, when your thread or vein is at the richest, it vanishes (as is the way with mines) in thick masses of agglomerate and pudding-stone, no man can guess whither. This is not as it should be; and yet unfortunately it could be no other. The long bad book is so much easier to do than the brief good one; and a poor bookseller has no way of measuring and paying but by the ell, cubic or superficial. The very weaver comes and says, not "I have woven so many ells of stuff," but "so many ells of *such* stuff": satin and Cashmere-shawl stuff,—or, if it be so, duffle and coal-sacking, and even cobweb stuff.

Undoubtedly the Adopted Son's will was good. Ought we not to rejoice greatly in the possession of these same silver-veins; and take them in the buried mineral state, or in any state; too thankful to have them now indestructible, now that they are printed? Let the world, we say, be thankful to M. Montigny, and yet know what it is they are thanking him for. No *Life of Mirabeau* is to be found in these Volumes, but the amplest materials for writing a *Life*. Were the Eight Volumes well riddled and smelted down into One Volume, such as might be made, that one were the volume! Nay it seems an enterprise of such uses, and withal so feasible, that some day it is as good as sure to be done, and again done, and finally well done.

The present reviewer, restricted to a mere article, purposes, nevertheless, to sift and extract somewhat. He has bored (so to speak) and run mine-shafts through the book in various directions, and knows pretty well what is in it, though indeed not so well where to find the same, having unfortunately (as reviewers are wont) 'mislaide our paper of references'! Wherefore, if the best extracts be not presented, let not M. Lucas suffer. By one means and another, some sketch of Mirabeau's history; what befel him successively in this World, and what steps he successively took in consequence; and how he and it, working together, made the thing we call Mirabeau's Life,—may be brought out; extremely imperfect, yet truer, one can hope, than the

Biographical Dictionaries and ordinary voice of rumour give it. Whether, and if so, where and how, the current estimate of Mirabeau is to be rectified, fortified, or in any important point overset and expunged, will hereby come to light, almost of itself, as we proceed. 5 Indeed, it is very singular, considering the emphatic judgments daily uttered, in print and speech, about this man, what Egyptian obscurity rests over the mere facts of his external history; the right knowledge of which, one would fancy, must be the preliminary of any judgment, however faint. But thus, as we always urge, are such judgments generally passed: vague *plebiscita*, decrees of the common people; made 10 up of innumerable loud empty ayes and loud empty noes; which are without meaning, and have only sound and currency: *plebiscita* needing so much revisal!—To the work, however.

15 One of the most valuable elements in these Eight chaotic Volumes of M. Montigny is the knowledge he communicates of Mirabeau's father; of his kindred and family, contemporary and anterior. The father, we in general knew, was Victor Riquetti, Marquis de Mirabeau, called and calling himself the *Friend of Men*; a title, for the rest, 20 which bodes him no good, in these days of ours. Accordingly one heard it added with little surprise, that this Friend of Men was the enemy of almost every man he had to do with; beginning at his own hearth, ending at the utmost circle of his acquaintance; and only beyond that, feeling himself free to love men. "The old hypocrite!" 25 cry many,—not we. Alas, it is so much easier to love men while they exist only on paper, or quite flexible and compliant in your imagination, than to love Jack and Kit who stand there in the body, hungry, untoward; jostling you, barring you, with angular elbows, with appetites, irascibilities, and a stupid will of their own! There is no doubt 30 but old Marquis Mirabeau found it extremely difficult to get on with his brethren of mankind; and proved a crabbed, sulphurous, choleric old gentleman, many a sad time: nevertheless, there is much to be set right in that matter; and M. Lucas, if one can carefully follow him, has managed to do it. Had M. Lucas but seen good to print these 35 private letters, family documents, and more of them (for he 'could make thirty octavo volumes'), in a separate state; in mere chronological order, with some small commentary of annotation; and to leave all the rest alone!—As it is, one must search and sift. Happily the old

Marquis himself, in periods of leisure, or forced leisure, whereof he had many, drew up certain ‘unpublished memoirs’ of his father and progenitors; out of which memoirs young Mirabeau also in forced leisure (still more forced, in the Castle of If!) redacted one Memoir, of a very readable sort: by the light of this latter, so far as it will last, we walk with convenience.

The Mirabeaus were Riquettis by surname, which is a slight corruption of the Italian *Arrighetti*. They came from Florence; cast out of it in some Guelph-Ghibelline quarrel, such as were common there and then, in the year 1267. Stormy times then, as now! The chronologist can remark that Dante Alighieri was a little boy of some two years that morning the Arrighettis had to go, and men had to say, “They are gone, these villains! They are gone, these martyrs!” the little boy listening with interest. Let the boy become a man, and he too shall have to go; and prove *come è duro calle*, and what a world this is; and have his poet-nature not killed, for it would not kill, but darkened into Old-Hebrew sternness, and sent onwards to Hades and Eternity for a home to itself. As Dame Quickly said in the Dream—“Those were rare times, Mr. Rigmartole!”—“Pretty much like our own,” answered he.—In this manner did the Arrighettis (doubtless in grim Longobardic ire) scale the Alps; and become Tramontane French Riquettis; and produce,—among other things, the present Article in this Review.

It was hinted above that these Riquettis were a notable kindred; as indeed there is great likelihood, if we knew it rightly, the kindred and fathers of most notable men are. The Vacluse fountain, that gushes out as a river, may well have run some space under ground in that character, before it found vent. Nay perhaps it is not always, or often, the intrinsically greatest of a family-line that becomes the noted one, but only the best favoured of fortune. So rich here, as elsewhere, is Nature, the mighty Mother; and scatters from a single Oak-tree, as provender for pigs, what would plant the whole Planet into an oak-forest! For truly, if there were not a *mute* force in her, where were she with the speaking and exhibiting one? If under that frothy superficies of braggarts, babblers, and high-sounding, richly-decorated personages, that strut and fret, and preach in all times *Quam parvâ sapientiâ regatur*, there lay not some substratum of silently heroic men; working as men; with man’s energy, enduring and endeavouring; invincible,

who whisper not even to themselves how energetic they are?—The Riquetti family was, in some measure, defined already by analogy to that British one; as a family totally exempt from blockheads, but a little liable to produce blackguards. It took root in Provence, and bore strong southern fruit there: a restless, stormy line of men; with the wild blood running in them, and as if there had been a doom hung over them ('like the line of Atreus,' Mirabeau used to say); which really there was, the wild blood itself being doom enough. How long they had stormed in Florence and elsewhere, these Riquettis, history knows not; but for the space of those five centuries, in Provence, they were never without a man to stand Riquetti-like on the earth. Men sharp of speech, prompt of stroke; men quick to discern, fierce to resolve; headlong, headstrong, strong every way; who often found the civic race-course too strait for them, and kicked against the pricks; doing this thing or the other, which the world had to animadvert upon, in various dialects, and find 'clean against rule.'

One Riquetti (in performance of some vow at sea, as the tradition goes) chained two mountains together: 'the iron chain is still to be seen at Moustier;—it stretches from one mountain to the other, and in the middle of it there is a large star with five rays;' the supposed date is 1390. Fancy the smiths at work on *this* business! The town of Moustier is in the Basses-Alpes of Provence: whether the Riquetti chain creaks there to this hour, and lazily swags in the winds, with its 'star of five rays' in the centre, and offers an uncertain perch to the sparrow, we know not. Or perhaps it was cut down in the Revolution time, when there rose such a hatred of noblesse, such a famine for iron; and made into pikes? The Adopted Son, so minute generally, ought to have mentioned, but does not.—That there was building of hospitals, endowing of convents, Chartreux, Récollets, down even to Jesuits; still more, that there was harrying and fighting, needs not be mentioned: except only that all this went on with uncommon emphasis among the Riquettis. What quarrel could there be and a Riquetti not in it? They fought much: with an eye to profit, to redress of disprofit; probably too for the art's sake.

What proved still more rational, they got footing in Marseilles as trading nobles (a kind of French Venice in those days), and took with great diligence to commerce. The family biographers are careful to say that it was in the Venetian style, however, and not ignoble. In

which sense, indeed, one of their sharp-spoken ancestors, on a certain bishop's unceremoniously styling him 'Jean de Riquetti, Merchant of Marseilles,' made ready answer, "I am, or was, merchant of police here" (first consul, an office for nobles only), "as my Lord Bishop is merchant of holy-water": let his Reverence take that. At all events, the ready-spoken proved first-rate traders; acquired their *bastide*, or mansion (white, on one of those green hills behind Marseilles), endless warehouses; acquired the lands first of this, then of that; the lands, Village, and Castle of Mirabeau on the banks of the Durance; respectable Castle of Mirabeau, 'standing on its scarped rock, in the gorge of two valleys, swept by the north wind,'—very brown and melancholy-looking now! What is extremely advantageous, the old Marquis says, they had a singular talent for choosing wives; and always chose discreet, valiant women; whereby the lineage was the better kept up. One grandmother, whom the Marquis himself might all but remember, was wont to say, alluding to the degeneracy of the age: "You are men? You are but manikins (*sias boumachomes*, in Provençal); we women, in our time, carried pistols in our girdles, and could use them too." Or fancy the Dame Mirabeau sailing stately towards the church-font; another dame striking in to take precedence of her; the Dame Mirabeau dispatching this latter with a box on the ear (*soufflet*), and these words: "Here, as in the army, the baggage goes last!" Thus did the Riquettis grow, and were strong; and did exploits in their narrow arena, waiting for a wider one.

When it came to courtiership, and your field of preferment was the Versailles *Œil-de-Bœuf*, and a Grand Monarque walking encircled with scarlet women and adulators there, the course of the Mirabeaus grew still more complicated. They had the career of arms open, better or worse: but that was not the only one, not the main one; gold apples seemed to rain on other careers,—on that career lead bullets mostly. Observe how a Bruno, Count de Mirabeau, comports himself:—like a rhinoceros yoked in carriage-gear; his fierce forest-horn set to dangle a plume of *fleurs-de-lis*. 'One day he had chased a *blue man* (it is a sort of troublesome usher, at Versailles), into the very cabinet of the King, who thereupon ordered the Duke de la Feuillade to put Mirabeau under arrest. Mirabeau refused to obey; he "would not be punished for chastising the insolence of a valet; for the rest, would go to the *dîner du roi* (king's dinner), who might then give his

order himself." He came accordingly; the King asked the Duke why he had not executed the order? The Duke was obliged to say how it stood; the King, with a goodness equal to his greatness, then said, "It is not of to-day that we know him to be mad, one must not ruin him,"—and rhinoceros Bruno journeyed on. But again, on the day
 5 when they were 'inaugurating the pedestrian statue of King Louis in the Place des Victoires (a masterpiece of adulation),' the same Mirabeau, 'passing along the Pont Neuf with the Guards, raised his spontoon to his shoulder before Henry the Fourth's statue, and saluting first,
 10 bawled out, "Friends, we will salute this one; he deserves it as well as some, *Mes amis, saluons celui-ci; il en vaut bien un autre.*"—Thus do they, the wild Riquettis, in a state of courtiership. Not otherwise, according to the proverb, do wild bulls, unexpectedly finding themselves in crockery-shops. O Riquetti kindred, into what centuries and
 15 circumstances art thou come down!

Directly prior to our old Marquis himself, the Riquetti kindred had as near as possible gone out. Jean Antoine, afterwards named Silverstock (*Col d'Argent*), had, in the earlier part of his life, been what he used to call *killed*,—of seven-and-twenty wounds in one
 20 hour. Haughtier, juster, more choleric man need not be sought for in biography. He flung gabelle-men and excisemen into the river Durance (though otherwise a most dignified, methodic man), when their claims were not clear; he ejected, by the like brief process, all manner of attorneys from his villages and properties; he planted vineyards,
 25 solaced peasants. He rode through France repeatedly (as the old men still remembered), with the gallantest train of outriders, on return from the wars; intimidating innkeepers and all the world, into mute prostration, into unerring promptitude, by the mere light of his eye;—withal drinking rather deep, yet never seen affected by it. He was a
 30 tall, straight man (of six feet and upwards) in mind as in body; Vendôme's 'right arm' in all campaigns. Vendôme once presented him to Louis the Great, with compliments to that effect, which the splenetic Riquetti quite spoiled. Erecting his *killed* head, which needed the silver stock now to keep it straight, he said: "Yes, Sire; and had
 35 I left my fighting, and come up to court, and bribed some *catin* (scarlet woman!) I might have had my promotion and fewer wounds to-day!" The Grand King, every inch a king, instantaneously spoke of something else.

But the reader should have first seen that same killing; how twenty-seven of those unprofitable wounds were come by in one fell lot. The *Battle of Casano* has grown very obscure to most of us; and indeed Prince Eugene and Vendôme themselves grow dimmer and dimmer, as men and battles must: but, curiously enough, this small fraction of it has brightened up again to a point of history, for the time being:—

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‘My grandfather had foreseen that manœuvre’ (it is Mirabeau, the Count, not the Marquis, that reports: Prince Eugene has carried a certain bridge which the grandfather had charge of); ‘but he did not, as has since happened at Malplaquet and Fontenoy, commit the blunder of attacking right in the teeth a column of such weight as that. He lets them advance, hurried on by their own impetuosity and by the pressure of their rearward; and now seeing them pretty well engaged, he raised his troop (it was lying flat on the ground), and rushing on, himself at the head of them, takes the enemy in flank, cuts them in two, dashes them back, chases them over the bridge again, which they had to repossess in great disorder and haste. Things brought to their old state, he resumes his post on the crown of the bridge, shelters his troop as before, which, having performed all this service under the sure deadly fire of the enemy’s double lines from over the stream, had suffered a good deal. M. de Vendôme coming up, full gallop, to the attack, finds it already finished, the whole line flat on the earth, only the tall figure of the colonel standing erect! He orders him to do like the rest, not to have himself shot till the time came. His faithful servant cries to him, “Never would I expose myself without need; I am bound to be here, but you, Monseigneur, are bound not. I answer to you for the post; but take yourself out of it, or I give it up.” The Prince (Vendôme) then orders him, in the king’s name, to come down. “Go to, the king and you: I am at my work; go you and do yours.” The good generous Prince yielded. The post was entirely untenable.

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‘A little afterwards my grandfather had his right arm shattered. He formed a sort of sling for it of his pocket handkerchief, and kept his place; for there was a new attack getting ready. The right moment once come, he seizes an axe in his left hand, repeats the same manœuvre as before; again repulses the enemy, again drives him back over the bridge. But it was here that ill fortune lay in wait for him. At the very moment while he was recalling and ranging his troop, a bullet struck him in the throat; cut asunder the tendons, the jugular vein. He sank on the bridge; the troop broke and fled. M. de Montolieu, Knight of Malta, his relative, was wounded beside him; he tore up his own shirt, and those of several others, to stanch the blood, but fainted

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himself by his own hurt. An old serjeant, named Laprairie, begged the aide-major of the regiment, one Guadin, a Gascon, to help and carry him off the bridge. Guadin refused, saying he was dead. The good Laprairie could only cast a camp-kettle over his colonel's head, and then run. The enemy trampled
 5 over him in torrents to profit by the disorder; the cavalry at full speed, close in the rear of the foot. M. de Vendôme, seeing his line broken, the enemy forming on this side the stream, and consequently the bridge lost, exclaimed, "Ah! Mirabeau *is dead* then;" a eulogy forever dear and memorable to us.'

10 How nearly, at this moment, it was all over with the Mirabeaus; how, but for the cast of an insignificant camp-kettle, there had not only been no Article *Mirabeau* in this Review, but no French Revolution, or a very different one; and all Europe had found itself in far other latitudes at this hour, any one who has a turn for such things
 15 may easily reflect. Nay, without great difficulty, he may reflect farther, that not only the French Revolution and this Article, but all revolutions, articles, and achievements whatsoever, the greatest and the smallest, which this world ever beheld, have not once, but often, in their course of genesis, depended on the veriest trifles, castings of
 20 camp-kettles, turnings of straws; except only that we do not *see* that course of theirs. So inscrutable is genetic history; impracticable the theory of causation, and transcends all calculus of man's devising! Thou, thyself, O Reader (who art an achievement of importance), over what hairsbreadth bridges of Accident, through yawning perils,
 25 and the man-devouring gulf of Centuries, hast thou got safe hither,—from Adam all the way!

Be this as it can, *Col d'Argent* came alive again, by 'miracle of surgery;' and, holding his head up by means of a silver stock, walked
 30 this earth many long days, with respectability, with fiery intrepidity and spleen; did many notable things: among others, produced, in dignified wedlock, Mirabeau the Friend of Men; who again produced Mirabeau the Swallower of Formulas; from which latter, and the wondrous blazing funeral-pyre he made for himself, there finally goes
 35 forth a light, whereby those old Riquetti destinies, and many a strange old hidden thing, become noticeable.

But perhaps in the whole Riquetti kindred there is not a stranger figure than this very Friend of Men; at whom, in the order of time, we have now arrived. That Riquetti who chained the mountains together, and hung up the star with five rays to sway and bob there, was

but a type of him. Strong, tough as the oak-root, and as gnarled and unwedgeable; no fibre of him running straight with the other: a block for Destiny to beat on, for the world to gaze at, with ineffectual wonder! Really a most notable, questionable; hateable, loveable old Marquis. How little, amid such jingling triviality of Literature, *Philosophie*, and the pretentious cackle of innumerable Baron Grimms, with their correspondence and self-proclamation, one could fancy that France held in it such a Nature-product as the Friend of Men! Why, there is substance enough in this one Marquis to fit out whole armies of *Philosophes*, were it properly attenuated. So many poor Thomases perorate and have *éloges*, poor Morellets speculate, Marmontels moralize in rose-pink manner, Diderots become possessed of encyclopædical heads, and lean Carons de Beaumarchais fly abroad on the wings of *Figaros*; and this brave old Marquis has been hid under a bushel! He was a Writer, too; and had talents for it (certain of the talents), such as few Frenchmen have had since the days of Montaigne. It skilled not: he, being unwedgeable, has remained in antiquarian cabinets; the others, splitting up so readily, are the ware you find on all market-stalls, much prized (say, as brimstone Lucifers, 'light-bringers,' so called) by the generality. Such is the world's way. And yet complain not; this rich, unwedgeable old Marquis, have we not him too at last, and can keep him all the longer than the Thomases?

The great Mirabeau used to say always that his father had the greater gifts of the two; which surely is saying something. Not that you can subscribe to it in the full sense, but that in a very wide sense you can. So far as mere speculative head goes, Mirabeau is probably right. Looking at the old Marquis as a speculative thinker and utterer of his thought, and with what rich colouring of originality he gives it forth, you pronounce him to be superior, or even say supreme in his time; for the genius of him almost rises to the poetic. Do our readers know the German Jean Paul, and his style of thought? Singular to say, the old Marquis has a quality in him resembling afar off that of Paul; and actually works it out in his French manner, far as the French manner can. Nevertheless intellect is not of the speculative head only; the great end of intellect surely is, that it make one *see* something; for which latter result the whole man must co-operate. In the old Marquis there dwells withal a crabbedness, stiff cross-grained

humour, a latent fury and fuliginosity, very perverting; which stiff crabbedness, with its pride, obstinacy, affectation, what else is it at bottom but *want* of strength? The real quantity of our insight,—how justly and thoroughly we shall comprehend the nature of a thing, especially of a human thing,—depends on our patience, our fairness, lovingness, what strength soever we have: intellect comes from the whole man, as it is the light that enlightens the whole man. In this true sense, the younger Mirabeau, with that great flashing eyesight of his, that broad, fearless freedom of nature he had, was very clearly the superior man.

At bottom, perhaps, the main definition you could give of old Marquis Mirabeau is, that he was of the Pedant species. Stiff as brass, in all senses; unsympathizing, uncomplying; of an endless, unfathomable pride, which cloaks but does nowise extinguish an endless vanity and need of shining: stately, euphuistic mannerism enveloping the thought, the morality, the whole being of the man. A solemn, high-stalking man; with such a fund of indignation in him, or of latent indignation; of contumacity, irrefragability;—who (after long experiment) accordingly looks forth on mankind and this world of theirs with some dull-snuffling word of forgiveness, of contemptuous acquittal; or oftenest with clenched lips (nostrils slightly dilated), in expressive silence. Here is pedantry; but then pedantry under the most interesting new circumstances; and withal carried to such a pitch as becomes sublime, one might almost say transcendental. Consider indeed whether Marquis Mirabeau could be a pedant, as your common Scaligers and Scioppiuses are! His arena is not a closet with Greek manuscripts, but the wide world and Friendship to Humanity. Does not the blood of all the Mirabeaus circulate in his honourable veins? He too would do somewhat to raise higher that high house; and yet, alas, it is plain to him that the house is sinking; that much is sinking. The Mirabeaus, and above all others this Mirabeau, are fallen on evil times. It has not escaped the old Marquis how Nobility is now decayed, nearly ruinous; based no longer on heroic nobleness of conduct and effort, but on sycophancy, formality, adroitness; on Parchments, Tailor's trimmings, Prunella, and Coach-leather: on which latter basis, unless his whole insight into Heaven's ways with Earth have misled him, no institution in this God-governed world can pretend to continue. Alas, and the priest has now no tongue but for

plate-licking; and the tax-gatherer squeezes; and the strumpetocracy sits at its ease, in high-cushioned lordliness, under baldachins and cloth of gold: till now at last, what with one fiction, what with another (and veridical Nature dishonouring all manner of fictions, and refusing to pay realities for them), it has come so far that the Twenty-five millions, long scarce of knowledge, of virtue, happiness, cash, are now fallen scarce of food to eat; and do not, with that natural ferocity of theirs which Nature has still left them, feel the disposition to die starved; and all things are nodding towards chaos, and no man layeth it to heart! One man exists who might perhaps stay or avert the catastrophe, were he called to the helm: the Marquis Mirabeau. His high, ancient blood, his heroic love of truth, his strength of heart, his loyalty and profound insight (for you cannot hear him speak without detecting the man of genius), this, with the appalling predicament things have come to, might give him claims. From time to time, at long intervals, such a thought does flit, portentous, through the brain of the Marquis. But ah! in these scandalous days, how shall the proudest of the Mirabeaus fall prostrate before a Pompadour? Can the Friend of Men hoist, with good hope, as his battle-standard, the furbelow of an unmentionable woman? No; not hanging by the apron-strings of such a one will this Mirabeau rise to the premiership; but summoned by France in her day of need, in her day of vision, or else not at all. France does not summon; the *else* goes its road.

Marquis Mirabeau tried Literature too, as we said; and with no inconsiderable talent; nay, with first-rate talents in some sort: but neither did this prosper. His *Ecce signum*, in such era of downfall and all-darkening ruin, was Political Economy; and a certain man, whom he called 'the Master,'—that is, Dr. Quesnay. Round this Master (whom the Marquis succeeded as Master himself) he and some other idolaters did idolatrously gather: to publish books and tracts, periodical literature, proclamation by word and deed,—if so were, the world's dull ear might be opened to salvation. The world's dull ear continued shut. In vain preached this apostle and that other, simultaneously or in Melibœan sequence, in literature, periodical and stationary; in vain preached Marquis Mirabeau in his *Ami des Hommes*, number after number, through long volumes,—though really in a most eloquent manner. Marquis Mirabeau had the indisputablest ideas; but then his style! In very truth, it is the strangest of styles, though one of the

richest: a style full of originality, picturesqueness, sunny vigour; but all cased and slated over, threefold, in metaphor and trope; distracted into tortuosities, dislocations; starting out into crotchets, cramp turns, quaintnesses, and hidden satire; which the French head had no ear for. Strong meat, too tough for babes! The Friend of Men found warm partisans, widely scattered over this Earth; and had censer-fumes transmitted him from Marquises, nay, from Kings and principalities, over seas and alpine chains of mountains; whereby the pride and latent indignation of the man were only fostered: but at home, with the million all jigging each after its suitable scrannel-pipe, he could see himself make no way,—if it were not way towards being a monstrosity and thing men wanted ‘to see:’ not the right thing! Neither through the press, then, is there progress towards the premiership? The staggering state of French statesmen must even stagger whither it is bound. A light Public froths itself into tempest about Palissot and his comedy of *Les Philosophes*,—about Gluck-Piccini Music; neglecting the call of Ruin; and hard must come to hard. Thou, O Friend of Men, clench thy lips together; and wait, silent as the old rocks. Our Friend of Men did so, or better; not wanting to himself, the lion-hearted old Marquis! For his latent indignation has a certain devoutness in it; is a kind of holy indignation. The Marquis, though he knows the *Encyclopédie*, has not forgotten the higher Sacred Books, or that there is a God in this world,—very different from the French *Etre Suprême*. He even professes, or tries to profess, a kind of diluted Catholicism, in his own way, and then turn an eye towards heaven: very singular in his attitude he is too. Thus it would appear this world is a mad imbroglio, which no Friend of Men can set right: it shall go wrong then, in God’s name; and the staggering state of all things stagger whither it can. To deep, fearful depths,—not to bottomless ones!

But in the Family Circle? There surely a man, and friend of men, is supreme; and, ruling with wise autocracy, may make something of it. Alas, in the family circle it went not better, but worse! The Mirabeaus had once a talent for choosing wives: had it deserted them in this instance, then, when most needed? We say not so: we say only that Madame la Marquise had human freewill in her too; that all the young Mirabeaus were likely to have human freewill, in great plenty;

that within doors as without, the Devil is busy. Most unsuccessful is the Marquis as ruler of men: his family kingdom, for the most part, little otherwise than in a state of mutiny. A sceptre as of Rhadamanthus will sway and drill that household into perfection of Harrison Clockwork; and cannot do it. The royal ukase goes forth, in its calm, irrefragable justice; meets hesitation, disobedience open or concealed. Reprimand is followed by remonstrance; harsh coming thunder mutters, growl answering growl. With unaffectedly astonished eye the Marquis appeals to Destiny and Heaven; explodes, since he needs must then, in red lightning of paternal authority. How it went, or who by forethought might be to blame, one knows not; for the *Fils Adoptif*, hemmed in by still extant relations, is extremely reticent on these points: a certain Dame de Pailly, 'from Switzerland, very beautiful and very artful,' glides half seen through the Mirabeau household (the Marquis's Orthodoxy, as we said, being but of the diluted kind): there are eavesdroppers, confidential servants; there are Pride, Anger, Uncharitableness, Sublime Pedantry, and the Devil always busy. Such a figure as Pailly, of herself, bodes good to no one. Enough, there are Lawsuits, *Lettres de Cachet*; on all hands, *peine forte et dure*. Lawsuits, long drawn out, before gaping *Parlements*, between man and wife: to the scandal of an unrighteous world; how much more of a righteous Marquis, minded once to be an example to it! *Lettres de Cachet*, to the number, as some count, of fifty-four, first and last, for the use of a single Marquis: at times the whole Mirabeau fire-side is seen empty, except Pailly and Marquis; each individual sitting in his separate Strong-house, there to bethink himself. Stiff are your tempers, ye young Mirabeaus; not stiffer than mine the old one's! What pangs it has cost the fond paternal heart to go through all this Brutus duty, the Marquis knows, and Heaven. In a less degree, what pangs it may cost the filial heart to go *under* (or *undergo*) the same! The former set of pangs he, aided by Heaven, crushes down into his soul suppressively, as beseems a man and Mirabeau: the latter set,—are they not self-sought pangs; medicinal; which will cease of their own accord, when the unparalleled filial impiety pleases to cease? For the rest, looking at such a world and such a family, at these prison-houses, mountains of divorce-papers, and the staggering state of French statesmen, a Friend of Men may pretty naturally ask himself, Am not I a strong old

Marquis, then, whom all this has not driven into Bedlam,—not into hypochondria, dyspepsia even? The Heavens are bounteous, and make the back equal to the burden.

5 Out of all which circumstances, and of such struggle against them, there has come forth this Marquis de Mirabeau, shaped (it was the shape *he* could arrive at) into one of the most singular Sublime Pedants that ever stepped the soil of France. Solemn moral rigour, as of some antique Presbyterian Ruling Elder: heavy breadth, dull heat, cholera and pride as of an old ‘Bozzy of Auchinleck;’ then a high-flown euphuistic courtesy, the airiest mincing ways, suitable to your French Seigneur! How the two divine missions, for both seem to him divine, of Riquetti and Man of Genius or World-schoolmaster, blend themselves; and philosophism, chivalrous euphuism, presbyterian ruling-elderism, all in such strength, have met, to give the world assurance of a man! There never entered the brain of Hogarth, or of rare old Ben, such a piece of Humour (high meeting with low, and laughter with tears) as, in this brave old Riquetti, Nature has presented us ready-made. For withal there is such genius in him; rich depth of character; indestructible cheerfulness and health breaking out, in spite of these divorce-papers, ever and anon,—like strong sunlight in thundery weather. We have heard of the ‘strife of Fate with Freewill’ producing Greek Tragedies, but never heard it till now produce such astonishing comico-tragical French Farces. Blessed old Marquis,—or else accursed! He is there, with his broad bull-brow; with the huge cheek-bones; those deep eyes, glazed as in weariness; the lower visage puckered into a simpering graciousness, which would pass itself off for a kind of smile. What to do with him? Welcome, thou tough old Marquis, with thy better and thy worse! There is stuff in thee (very different from moonshine and formula); and stuff is stuff, were it never so crabbed.

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Besides the old Marquis de Mirabeau, there is a Brother, the Bailli de Mirabeau: a man who, serving as Knight of Malta, governing in Guadaloupe, fighting and doing hard sea-duty, has sown his wild oats long since; and settled down here, in the old ‘Castle of Mirabeau on its sheer rock’ (for the Marquis usually lives at Bignon, another estate, within reach of Paris), into one of the worthiest quiet uncles and house-friends. It is very beautiful, this mild strength, mild clearness and justice of the brave Bailli, in contrast with his brother’s nodosity;

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whom he comforts, defends, admonishes, even rebukes; and on the whole reverences, both as head Riquetti and as World-schoolmaster, beyond all living men. The frank true love of these two brothers is the fairest feature in Mirabeaudom; indeed the only feature which is always fair. Letters pass continually: in letter and extract we here, from time to time, witness (in these Eight chaotic Volumes) the various personages speak their dialogue, unfold their farce-tragedy. The *Fils Adoptif* admits mankind into this strange household,—though stingily, uncomfortably, and all in darkness, save for his own capricious dark-lantern. Seen or half seen, it is a stage; as the whole world is. What with personages, what with destinies, no stranger house-drama was enacting on the Earth at that time.

Under such auspices, which were not yet ripened into events and fatalities, but yet were inevitably ripening towards such, did Gabriel Honoré, at the Mansion of Bignon, between Sens and Nemours, on the 9th day of March, 1749, first see the light. He was the fifth child; the second male child; yet born heir, the first having died in the cradle. A magnificent ‘enormous’ fellow, as the gossips had to admit, almost with terror: the head especially great; ‘two grinders’ in it, already shot!—Rough-hewn, truly, yet with bulk, with limbs, vigour bidding fair to do honour to the line. The paternal Marquis, to whom they said, “*N’ayez pas peur*, Don’t be frightened,” gazed joyful, we can fancy, and not fearful, on this product of his; the stiff pedant features relaxing into a veritable smile. Smile, O paternal Marquis: the future indeed ‘veils sorrow and joy,’ one knows not in what proportion; but here is a new Riquetti, whom the gods send; with the rudiments in him, thou wouldst guess, of a very Hercules, fit for Twelve Labours, which surely are themselves the best joys. Look at the oaf, how he sprawls. No stranger Riquetti ever sprawled under our Sun: it is as if, in this thy man-child, Destiny had swept together all the wildnesses and strengths of the Riquetti lineage, and flung him forth as her finale in that kind. Not without a vocation! He is the last of the Riquettis; and shall do work long memorable among mortals.

Truly, looking now into the matter, we might say, in spite of the gossips, that on this whole Planet, in those years, there was hardly born such a man-child as this same, in the ‘Mansion-house of Bignon, not far from Paris,’ whom they named Gabriel Honoré. Nowhere, we

say, came there a stouter or braver into this Earth; whither they come marching by the legion and the myriad, out of Eternity and Night!— Except, indeed, what is notable enough, one other that arrived some few months later, at the town of Frankfort on the Maine, and got christened *Johann Wolfgang Goethe*. Then, again, in some ten years more, there came another, still liker Gabriel Honoré in his brawny ways. It was into a mean hut that this one came, an infirm hut (which the wind blew down at the time), in the shire of Ayr, in Scotland: him they named *Robert Burns*. These, in that epoch, were the Well-born of the World; by whom the world's history was to be carried on. Ah! could the well-born of the world be always rightly bred, rightly entreated there, what a world were it! But it is not so; it is the reverse of so. And then few, like that Frankfort one, can peaceably vanquish the world, with its black imbroglios; and shine above it, in serene help to it, like a sun! The most can but *Titanically* vanquish it, or be vanquished by it: hence, instead of light (stillest and strongest of things), we have but lightning; red fire, and oftentimes conflagrations, which are very woful.

Be that as it might, Marquis Mirabeau determined to give his son, and heir of all the Riquettis, such an education as no Riquetti had yet been privileged with. Being a world-schoolmaster (and indeed a *Martinus Scriblerus*, as we here find, more ways than one), this was not strange in him; but the results were very lamentable. Considering the matter now, at this impartial distance, you are lost in wonder at the good Marquis; know not whether to laugh at him, or weep over him; and on the whole are bound to do both. A more sufficient product of Nature than this 'enormous Gabriel,' as we said, need not have been wished for: 'beating his nurse,' but then loving her, and loving the whole world; of large desire, truly, but desire towards *all* things, the highest and the lowest: in other words, a large mass of *life* in him, a large man waiting there! Does he not rummage (the rough cub, now tenfold rougher by the effect of small-pox) in all places, seeking something to know; dive down to the most unheard-of recesses for papers to read? Does he not, spontaneously, give his hat to a peasant-boy whose head-gear was defective? He writes the most sagacious things, in his fifth year, extempore, at table; setting forth what '*Monsieur Moi*, Mr. Me,' is bound to do. A rough strong genuine soul, of the frankest open temper; full of loving fire and strength;

looking out so brisk with his clear hazel eyes, with his brisk sturdy bulk, what might not fair breeding have done for him! On so many occasions, one feels as if he needed nothing in the world but to be well let alone.

But no; the scientific paternal hand must interfere, at every turn, to assist Nature: the young lion's whelp has to grow up all bestrapped, bemuzzled in the most extraordinary manner; shall wax and unfold himself by theory of education, by square and rule,—going punctual, all the way, like Harrison Clockwork, according to the theoretic program; or *else*—! O Marquis, World-schoolmaster, what theory of education is this? No lion's whelp or young Mirabeau will go like clockwork, but far otherwise. 'He that spareth the rod hateth the child;' that on its side is true: and yet Nature, too, is strong; 'Nature will come running back, though thou expel her with a fork!' In one point of view there is nothing more Hogarthian comic than this long Peter Peebles' *ganging plea* of 'Marquis Mirabeau *versus* Nature and others:' yet in a deeper point of view it is but too serious. Candid history will say that whatsoever of worst it was in the power of art to do, against this young Gabriel Honoré, was done. Not with unkind intentions; nay, with intentions which, at least, began in kindness. How much better was Burns's education (though this too went on under the grimmest pressures), on the wild hill-side, by the brave peasant's hearth, with no theory of education at all, but poverty, toil, tempest, and the handles of the plough!

At bottom, the Marquis's wish and purpose was not complex, but simple. That Gabriel Honoré de Riquetti shall become the very same man that Victor de Riquetti is; perfect as he is perfect: this will satisfy the fond father's heart, and nothing short of this. Better exemplar, truly, were hard to find; and yet, O Victor de Riquetti, poor Gabriel, on his side, wishes to be Gabriel and not Victor! Stiffer loving Pedant never had a more elastic loving Pupil. Offences (of mere *elasticity*, mere natural springing-up, for most part) accumulate by addition: Madame Pailly and the confidential servants, on this as on all matters, are busy. The household itself is darkening, the mistress of it gone; the Lawsuits, and by-and-by Divorce-Lawsuits, have begun. Worse will grow worse, and ever worse, till Rhadamanthus-Scriblerus Marquis de Mirabeau, swaying vainly the sceptre of order, see himself environed by a waste chaos as of Bedlam. Stiff is he; elastic, and yet

still loving, reverent, is his son and pupil. Thus cruelty, and yearnings that must be suppressed; indignant revolt, and hot tears of penitence, alternate, in the strangest way, between the two; and for long years our young Alcides has, by Destiny, his own Demon, and Juno de Pailly, Labours enough imposed on him.

But, to judge what a task was set this poor paternal Marquis, let us listen to the following successive utterances from him; which he emits, in letter after letter, mostly into the ear of his Brother the good Bailli. Cluck, cluck,—is it not as the sound of an agitated parent-fowl, now in terror, now in anger, at the brood it has brought out?

‘This creature promises to be a very pretty subject.’ ‘Talent in plenty, and cleverness, but more faults still inherent in the substance of him.’ ‘Only just come into life, and the extravasation (*extravasement*) of the thing already visible! A spirit cross-grained, fantastic, iracund, incompatible, tending towards evil before knowing it, or being capable of it.’ ‘A high heart under the jacket of a boy; it has a strange instinct of pride this creature; noble withal; the embryo of a shaggy-headed bully and killcow, that would swallow all the world, and is not twelve years old yet.’ ‘A type, profoundly inconceivable, of baseness, sheer dull grossness (*platitudo absolute*), and the quality of your dirty, rough-crust-ed caterpillar, that will never uncrust itself or fly.’ ‘An intelligence, a memory, a capacity, that strike you, that astonish, that frighten you.’ ‘A nothing bedizened with crotchets. May fling dust in the eyes of silly women, but will never be the fourth part of a man, if by good luck he be anything.’ ‘One whom you may call ill-born, this elder lad of mine; who bodes, at least hitherto, as if he could become nothing but a madman: almost invincibly maniac, with all the vile qualities of the maternal stock over and above. As he has a great many masters, and all, from the confessor to the comrade, are so many reporters for me, I see the nature of the beast, and don’t think we shall ever do any good with him.’

In a word, offences (of elasticity or expansivity) have accumulated to such height, in the lad’s fifteenth year, that there is a determination taken, on the part of Rhadamanthus-Scriblerus, to pack him out of doors, one way or the other. After various plannings, the plan of one Abbé Choquenard’s Boarding-school is fallen upon: the rebellious Expansive shall to Paris; there, under ferula and short-commons, contract himself and consider. Farther, as the name Mirabeau is honourable and right honourable, he shall not have the honour of it; never again, but be called *Pierre Buffière*, till his ways decidedly alter.

This *Pierre Buffière* was the name of an estate of his mother's, in the Limousin: sad fuel of those smoking lawsuits which at length blazed out as divorce-lawsuits. Wearing this melancholy nickname of Peter Buffière, as a perpetual badge, had poor Gabriel Honoré to go about for a number of years; like a misbehaved soldier with his eyebrows shaven off; alas, only a fifteen-years' recruit yet, too young for that! 5

Nevertheless, named or shorn of his name, Peter or Gabriel, the youth himself was still there. At Choquenard's Boarding-school, as always afterwards in life, he carries with him, he unfolds and employs, the qualities which Nature gave, which no shearing or shaving of art and mistreatment could take away. The *Fils Adoptif* gives a grand list of studies followed, acquisitions made: ancient languages ('and we have a thousand proofs of his indefatigable tenacity in this respect'); modern languages, English, Italian, German, Spanish; then 'passionate study of mathematics;' design pictorial and geometrical; music, so as to read it at sight, nay, to compose in it; singing, to a high degree; 'equitation, fencing, dancing, swimming, and tennis:' if only the half of which were true, can we say that Pierre Buffière spent his time ill? What is more precisely certain, the disgraced Buffière worked his way very soon into the good affections of all and sundry, in this House of Discipline, who came in contact with him; school-fellows, teachers, the Abbé Choquenard himself. For, said the paternal Marquis, he has the tongue of the Old Serpent! In fact, it is very notable how poor Buffière, Comte de Mirabeau, revolutionary King Riquetti, or whatever else they might call him, let him come, under what discommen- 25 dation he might, into any circle of men, was sure to make them his ere long. To the last, no man could look into him with his own eyes, and continue to hate him. He could talk men *over*, then? Yes, O Reader: and he could *act* men over; for, at bottom, that was it. The large open soul of the man, purposing deliberately no paltry, unkindly, or dishonest thing towards any creature, was felt to be withal a *brother's* soul. Defaced by black drossy obscurations very many; but yet shining out, lustrous, warm; in its troublous effulgence, great! That a man be loved the better by men the nearer they come to him: is not this the fact of all facts? To know what extent of prudential 30 diplomacy (good, indifferent, and even bad) a man has, ask public opinion, journalistic rumour, or at most the persons he dines with: to know what of real worth is in him, ask infinitely deeper and farther;

ask, first of all, those who have tried by experiment; who, were they the foolishest people, can answer pertinently here if anywhere. 'Those at a distance esteem of me a little worse than I; those near at hand a little better than I:' so said the good Sir Thomas Browne; so will all men say who have much to say on that.

The Choquenard Military Boarding-School having, if not fulfilled its function, yet ceased to be a house of penance, and failed of its function, Marquis Mirabeau determined to try the Army. Nay, it would seem, the wicked mother has been privily sending him money; which he, the traitor, has accepted! To the army therefore. And so Pierre Buffière has a basnet on his big head; the shaggy pock-pitted visage looks martially from under horse-hair and clear metal; he dresses rank, with tight bridle-hand and drawn falchion, in the town of Saintes, as a bold volunteer dragoon. His age was but eighteen as yet, and some months.

The people of Saintes grew to like him amazingly; would even 'have lent him money to any extent.' His Colonel, one De Lambert, proved to be a martinet, of sharp sour temper: the shaggy visage of Buffière, radiant through its seaminess with several things, had not altogether the happiness to content him. Furthermore there was an *Archer* (Bailiff) at Saintes, who had a daughter: she, foolish minx, liked the Buffière visage *better* even than the Colonel's! For one can fancy what a pleader Buffière was, in this great cause; with the tongue of the Old Serpent. It was his first *amourette*; plainly triumphant: the beginning of a quite unheard-of career in that kind. The aggrieved Colonel emitted 'satires' through the mess-rooms; this bold volunteer dragoon was not the man to give him worse than he brought: matters fell into a very unsatisfactory state between them. To crown the whole, Buffière went one evening (contrary to wont, now and always) to the gaming-table, and lost four *louis*. Insubordination, Gambling, Archer's daughter! Rhadamanthus thunders from Bignon; Buffière doffs his basnet, flies covertly to Paris. Negotiation there now was; confidential spy to Saintes; correspondence, fulmination: Dupont de Nemours as daysman between a Colonel and a Marquis, both in high wrath,—Buffière to pay the piper! Confidential spy takes evidence; the whole atrocity comes to light: what wilt thou do, O Marquis, with this devil's child of thine? Send him to Surinam; let the Tropical heats and rains tame the hot liver of him!—so whispered

paternal Brutus'-justice and Dame Pailly; but milder thoughts prevailed. *Lettre de Cachet* and the Isle of Rhé shall be tried first. Thither fares poor Buffière; not with Archer's daughters, but with Archers; amid the dull rustle and autumnal brown of the falling leaves of 1768, his nineteenth autumn. It is his second Hercules' Labour; the Choquenard Boarding-house was the first. Bemoaned by the loud Atlantic he shall sit there, in winter season, under ward of a Bailli d'Aulan, governor of the place, and said to be a very Cerberus. 5

At Rhé the old game is played: in few weeks, the Cerberus Bailli is Buffière's; baying, out of all his throats, in Buffière's behalf! What 'sorcery' is this that the rebellious prodigy has in him, O Marquis? Hypocrisy, cozenage, which no governor of strong places can resist? Nothing short of the hot swamps of Surinam will hold him quiet, then? Happily there is fighting in Corsica; Paoli fighting on his last legs there; and Baron de Vaux wants fresh troops against him. Buffière, though he likes not the cause, will go thither gladly; and fight his very best: how happy if, by any fighting, he can conquer back his baptismal name, and some gleam of paternal tolerance! After much soliciting, his prayer is acceded to: Buffière, with the rank now of 'Sub-lieutenant of Foot, in the Legion of Lorraine,' gets across the country to Toulon, in the month of April; and enters 'on the plain which furrows itself without plough' (euphuistic for *ocean*): 'God grant he may not have to row there one day,'—in red cap, as convict galley-slave! Such is the paternal benediction and prayer; which was realized. Nay, Buffière, it would seem, before quitting Rochelle, indeed 'hardly yet two hours out of the fortress of Rhé,' had fallen into a new atrocity,—his first duel; a certain quondam messmate (discharged for swindling) having claimed acquaintance with him on the streets; which claim Buffière saw good to refuse; and even to resist, when demanded at the sword's point! The 'Corsican Buccaneer, *fli-* 30
bustier Corse' that he is!

The Corsican Buccaneer did, as usual, a giant's or two giants' work in Corsica; fighting, writing, loving; 'eight hours a-day of study;' and gained golden opinions from all manner of men and women. It was his own notion that Nature had meant him for a soldier; he felt so equable and at home in that business,—the wreck of discordant death-tumult, and roar of cannon serving as a fine regulatory marching-music for him. Doubtless Nature meant him for a Man of Action; 35

as she means all great souls that have a strong body to dwell in: but Nature will adjust herself to much. In the course of twelve months, in May, 1770, Buffière gets back to Toulon; with much manuscript in his pocket; his head full of military and all other lore, ‘like a library turned topsy-turvy;’ his character much risen, as we said, with every
 5 one. The brave Bailli Mirabeau, though almost against principle, cannot refuse to see a chief nephew, as he passes so near the old Castle on the Durance: the good uncle is charmed with him; finds, ‘under features terribly seamed and altered from what they were,’ bodily and
 10 mentally all that is royal and strong, nay, an ‘expression of something refined, something gracious;’ declares him, after several days of incessant talk, to be the best fellow on earth if well dealt with, ‘who will shape into statesman, generalissimo, pope, what thou pleasest to desire!’ Or, shall we give poor Buffière’s testimonial in mess-room dialect; in
 15 its native twanging vociferosity, and garnished with old oaths,—which, alas, have become for us almost old prayers now,—the vociferous Moustachio-figures, whom they twanged through, having all vanished so long since: “*Morbleu, Monsieur l’Abbé; c’est un garçon diablement vif; mais c’est un bon garçon, qui a de l’esprit comme trois cent mille diables; et parbleu, un homme très brave.*”

Moved by all manner of testimonies and entreaties from uncle and family, the rigid Marquis consents, not without difficulty, to see this anomalous Peter Buffière of his; and then, after solemn deliberation, even to un-Peter him, and give him back his name. It was in September that they met; at Aiguesperse, in the Limousin near the *lands* of
 25 *Pierre Buffière*. Soft ruth comes stealing through the Rhadamanthine heart; tremblings of faint hope even, which, however, must veil itself in austerity and rigidity. The Marquis writes: ‘I perorate him very much;’ observe ‘my man, how he droops his nose, and looks fixedly,
 30 a sign that he is reflecting; or whirls away his head, hiding a tear: serious, now mild, now severe, we give it him alternately; it is thus I manage the mouth of this fiery animal.’ Had he but read the *Ephémérides*, the *Economiques*, the *Précis des Elémens* (‘the most laboured book I have done, though I wrote it in such health’): had he
 35 but got grounded in my Political Economy! Which, however, he does not take to with any heart. On the contrary, he unhappily finds it hollow, pragmatical, a barren jingle of formulas; pedantic even; un-nutritive as the east wind. Blasphemous words; which (or the like of

them) any eavesdropper has but to report to 'the Master!'—And yet, after all, is it not a brave Gabriel this rough-built young Hercules; and has finished handsomely his Second Labour? The head of the fellow is 'a wind-mill and fire-mill of ideas.' The War-office makes him captain, and he is passionate for following soldiership: but then, 5
unluckily, your Alexander needs such tools,—a whole world for workshop! 'Where are the armies and herring-shoals of men to come from? Does he think I have money,' snuffles the old Marquis, 'to get him up battles like Harlequin and Scaramouch?' The fool! he shall settle 10
down into rurality; first, however, though it is a risk, see a little of Paris.

At Paris, through winter, the brave Gabriel carries all before him; shines in saloons, in the Versailles *Ceil-de-Bœuf*; dines with your Duke of Orleans, (young Chartres, not yet become *Egalité*, hob-nobbing 15
with him); dines with your Guéménés, Broglies, and mere *Grandeurs*; and is invited to hunt. Even the old women are charmed with him, and rustle in their satins: such a light has not risen in the *Ceil-de-Bœuf* for some while. Grant, O Marquis, that there are worse sad-dogs than this. The Marquis grants partially; and yet, and yet! Few things 20
are notabler than these successive surveys by the old Marquis, critically scanning his young Count:—

'I am on my guard; remembering how vivacity of head may deceive you as to a character of morass (*de tourbe*): but, all considered, one must give him 25
store of exercise; what the devil else to do with such exuberance, intellectual and sanguineous? I know no woman but the Empress of Russia with whom this man were good to marry yet.' 'Hard to find a dog (*drôle*) that had more talent and action in the head of him than this; he would reduce the devil to terms.' 'Thy nephew Whirlwind (*l'Ouragan*) assists me; yesterday the valet 30
Luce, who is a sort of privileged simpleton, said pleasantly, "Confess, M. le Comte, a man's body is very unhappy to carry a head like that." 'The *terrible gift of familiarity* (as Pope Gregory called it)! He turns the great people here round his finger.'—Or again, though all this is some years afterwards: 'They have never done telling me that he is easy to set a-rearing; that you cannot 35
speak to him reproachfully but his eyes, his lips, his colour testify that all is *giving way*; on the other hand, the smallest word of tenderness will make him burst into tears, and he would fling himself into the fire for you.' 'I pass my life in cramming him (*à le bourrer*) with principles, with all that I know; for this man, ever the same as to his fundamental properties, has done nothing

by these long and solid studies but augment the rubbish-heap in his head, which is a library turned topsy-turvy; and then his talent for dazzling by superficials, for he has *swallowed all formulas*, and cannot substantiate anything.' 'A wicker-basket, that lets all through; disorder born; credulous as a nurse; indiscreet; a liar' (kind of white-liar), 'by exaggeration, affirmation, effrontery, without need, and merely to tell histories; a confidence that dazzles you on everything; cleverness and talent without limit. For the rest, the vices have infinitely less root in him than the virtues; all is facility, impetuosity, ineffectuality (not for want of fire, but of plan); wrong-spun, ravelled (*défaufilé*) in character; a mind that meditates in the vague, and builds of soap-bells.' 'Spite of the bitter ugliness, the intercadent step, the trenchant breathless blown-up precipitation, and the look, or, to say better, the atrocious eyebrow of this man when he listens and reflects, something told me that it was all but a scarecrow of old cloth, this ferocious outward garniture of his; that, at bottom, here was perhaps the man in all France least capable of deliberate wickedness.' 'Pie and jay by instinct.' 'Wholly reflex and reverberance (*tout de reflet et de réverbère*); drawn to the right by his heart, to the left by his head, which he carries four paces from him.' 'May become the Coryphæus of the Time.' 'A blinkard (*myope*) precipitancy, born with him, which makes him take the quagmire for firm earth—'

—Cluck, cluck,—in the name of all the gods, what prodigy is this I have hatched! Web-footed, broad-billed; which will run and drown itself, if Mercy and the parent-fowl prevent not!

How inexpressibly true, meanwhile, is this that the old Marquis says: 'He has swallowed all formulas (*il a humé toutes les formules*'), and made away with them! Formulas, indeed, if we think of it, Formulas and Gabriel Honoré had been, and were to be, at death-feud from first to last. What formula of this formalized (established) world had been a kind one to Gabriel? His soul could find no shelter in them, they were unbelievable; his body no solacement, they were tyrannical, unfair. If there were not *pabulum* and substance beyond formulas, and in spite of them, then woe to him! To this man formulas would yield no existence or habitation, if it were not in the Isle of Rhé, and such places; but threatened to choke the life out of him: either formulas or he must go to the wall; and so, after a tough fight, *they*, as it proves, will go. So cunningly thrifty is Destiny; and is quietly shaping her tools for the work they are to do, while she seems but spoiling and breaking them! For, consider, O Marquis, whether

France herself will not, by-and-by, have to swallow a formula or two? This sight thou lookest on from the baths of Mont d'Or, does it not bode something of that kind? A summer day in the year 1777:—

‘O Madame! the narrations I would give you if I had not a score of letters to answer, on dull sad business! I would paint to you the votive feast of this town, which took place on the 14th. The savages descending in torrents from the Mountains,—our people ordered not to stir out. The curate with surplice and stole; public justice in perriwig; *Maréchaussé*, sabre in hand, guarding the place, before the bagpipes were permitted to begin. The dance interrupted, a quarter of an hour after, by battle; the cries and fierce hissings of the children, of the infirm, and other on-lookers, ogling it, tarring it on, as the mob does when dogs fight. Frightful men, or rather wild creatures of the forest, in coarse woollen jupes and broad girths of leather, studded with copper nails; of gigantic stature, heightened by the high sabots; rising still higher on tip-toe, to look at the battle; beating time to it; rubbing their sides with their elbows; their face haggard, covered with their long greasy hair; top of the visage waxing pale, bottom of it twisting itself into the rudiments of a cruel laugh, a ferocious impatience—And these people pay the *taille*! And you want to take from them their salt too! And you know not what you strip bare, or, as you call it, govern; what, with the heedless, cowardly squirt of your pen, you will think you can continue stripping with impunity forever, till the Catastrophe come! Such sights recal deep thoughts to one. “Poor Jean-Jacques!” I said to myself: “they that sent thee, and thy System, to copy music among such a People as these same, have confuted thy System but ill!” But, on the other hand, these thoughts were consolatory for a man who has all his life preached the necessity of solacing the poor, of universal instruction; who has tried to show what such instruction and such solacement ought to be, if it would form a barrier (the sole possible barrier) between oppression and revolt; the sole but the infallible treaty of peace between the high and the low! Ah, Madame! this government by blind-man’s-buff, stumbling along too far, will end by the GENERAL OVERTURN.’

Prophetic Marquis!—Might other Nations listen to thee better than France did; for it concerns them *all*! But now is it not curious to think how the whole world might have gone so differently, but for this very prophet? Had the young Mirabeau had a father as other men have; or even no father at all! Consider him, in that case, rising by natural gradation, by the rank, the opportunity, the irrepressible buoyant faculties he had, step after step, to official place,—to the

chief official place; as in a time when Turgots, Neckers, and men of ability, were grown indispensable, he was sure to have done. By natural witchery he bewitches Marie Antoinette; her most of all, with her quick susceptible instincts, her quick sense for whatever was great and noble, her quick hatred for whatever was but pedantic, Neckerish, 5
Fayetteish, and pretending to be great. King Louis is a nullity; happily then reduced to be one: there would then have been at the summit of France the one French Man who could have grappled with that great Question; who, yielding and refusing, managing, guiding, and, 10
in short, *seeing* and daring what was to be done, had perhaps saved France her Revolution; remaking her by peaceabler methods! But to the Supreme Powers it seemed not so. Once after a thousand years all nations were to see the great Conflagration and Self-combustion of a Nation,—and learn from it if they could. And now, for a Swallower 15
of Formulas, was there a better schoolmaster in the world than this very Friend of Men; a better education conceivable than this which Alcides-Mirabeau had? Trust in Heaven, good reader, for the fate of nations, for the fall of a sparrow.

20 Gabriel Honoré has acquitted himself so well in Paris, turning the great people round his thumb, with that '*fond gaillard*, basis of gaiety,' with that '*terrible don de la familiarité*;' with those ways he has. Neither, in the quite opposite Man-of-business department, when summer comes and rurality with it, is he found wanting. In the summer 25
of the year, the old Friend of Men despatches him to the Limousin, to his own estate of Pierre Buffière, or his wife's own estate (under the law-balance about this time); to see whether anything can be done for men there. Much is to be done there; the Peasants, short of all things, even of victuals, here as everywhere, wear 'a settled *souffre-* 30
douleur (pain-stricken) look, as if they reckoned that the pillage of men was an inevitable ordinance of Heaven, to be put up with like the wind and the hail.' Here, in the solitude of the Limousin, Gabriel is still Gabriel: he rides, he writes, and runs; eats out of the poor people's pots; speaks to them, redresses them; institutes a court of 35
Villager '*Prudhommes*, good men and true,'—once more carries all before him. Confess, O Rhadamanthine Marquis, we say again, that there are worse sad-dogs than this! 'He is,' confesses the Marquis,

‘the Demon of the Impossible, *le démon de la chose impossible*.’² Most true this also: *impossible* is a word not in his dictionary. Thus the same Gabriel Honoré, long afterwards (as Dumont will witness), orders his secretary to do some miracle or other, miraculous within the time. The secretary answers, “Monsieur, it is impossible.” “Impossible?” answers Gabriel: “*Ne me dites jamais ce bête de mot*, Never name to me that blockhead of a word!” Really, one would say, a good fellow, were he well dealt with,—though still broad-billed, and with latent tendencies to take the water. The following otherwise insignificant Letter, addressed to the Bailli, seems to us worth copying. Is not his young Lordship, if still in the dandy-state and style-of-mockery, very handsome in it; standing there in the snow? It is of date December, 1771, and far onwards on the road towards Mirabeau Castle:

‘*Fracti bello satisque repulsi ductores Danaúm*: here, dear uncle, is a beginning in good Latin, which means that I am broken with fatigue, not having, this whole week, slept more than sentinels do; and sounding, at the same time, with the wheels of my vehicle, most of the ruts and jolts that lie between Paris and Marseilles. Ruts deep and numerous. Moreover, my axle broke between Mucreau, Romané, Chambertin, and Beaune; the centre of four wine districts: what a geographical point, if I had had the wit to be a drunkard! The mischief happened towards five in the evening; my lackey had gone on before. There fell nothing at the time but melted snow; happily it afterwards took some consistency. The neighbourhood of Beaune made me hope to find genius in the natives of the country: I had need of good counsel; the devil counselled me at first to swear, but that whim passed, and I fell by preference into the temptation of laughing; for a holy priest came jogging up, wrapt to the chin; against the blessed visage of whom the sleet was beating, which made him cut so singular a face, that I think this was the thing drove me from swearing. The holy man inquired, seeing my chaise on its beam-ends, and one of the wheels wanting, whether anything had befallen? I answered, “there was nothing falling here but snow.” “Ah,” said he, ingeniously, “it is your chaise, then, that is broken.” I admired the sagacity of the man, and begged him to double his pace, with his horse’s permission (who was also making a pleasant expression of countenance, as the snow beat on his nose); and to be so good as give notice at Chaigny that I was there. He assured me he would tell it to the post-mistress herself, she being his cousin; that she was a very amiable woman, married three years ago to one of the

² See La Fontaine: *Contes*, l. iv. c. 15.

5 honestest men of the place, nephew to the king's procureur at—: in fine,
 after giving me all the outs and ins of himself, the curate, of his cousin, his
 cousin's husband, and I know not whom more, he was pleased to give the
 spurs to his horse, which thereupon gave a grunt, and went on. I forgot to
 10 tell you that I had sent the postillion off to Mucreau, which he knew the road
 to, for he went thither daily, he said, to have a glass; a thing I could well
 believe, or even two glasses. The man was but tipsified when he went; hap-
 pily, when he returned, which was very late, he was drunk. I walked sentry:
 several Beaune men passed, all of whom asked me, if anything had befallen?
 15 I answered one of them, that it was an experiment; that I had been sent from
 Paris to see whether a chaise would run with one wheel; mine had come so
 far, but I was going to write that two wheels were preferable. At this moment
 my worthy friend struck his shin against the other wheel; clapped his hand
 on the hurt place; swore, as I had near done; and then said, smiling, "Ah,
 20 Monsieur, there is the other wheel!" "The devil there is!" said I, as if aston-
 ished. Another, after examining long, with a very capable air, informed me,
 "Ma foi, Monsieur! it is your *essi*" (meaning *essieu*, or axle) "that is broken."

20 Mirabeau's errand to Provence, in this winter season, was several-
 fold. To look after the Mirabeau estates; to domesticate himself among
 his people and peers in that region;—perhaps to choose a wife. Lately,
 as we saw, the old Marquis could think of none suitable, if it were not
 the Empress Catherine. But Gabriel has ripened astonishingly since
 25 that, under this sunshine of paternal favour,—the first gleam of such
 weather he has ever had. Short of the Empress, it were very well to
 marry, the Marquis now thinks, provided your bride had money. A
 bride, not with money, yet with connections, expectations, is found;
 and by stormy eloquence (Marquis seconding) is carried: wo worth
 the hour! Her portrait, by the seconding Marquis himself, is not very
 30 captivating: 'Marie-Emilie de Covet, only daughter of the Marquis de
 Marignane, in her eighteenth year then; she had a very ordinary face,
 even a vulgar one at the first glance; brown, nay, almost tawny (*mau-
 ricand*); fine eyes, fine hair; teeth not good, but a prettyish continual
 smile; figure small, but agreeable, though leaning a little to one side:
 35 showed great sprightliness of mind, ingenuous, adroit, delicate, lively,
 sportful; one of the most essentially pretty characters.' This brown,
 almost tawny, little woman, much of a fool too, Mirabeau gets to
 wife, on the 22d of June, 1772: her, and with a pension of 3,000
 francs from his father-in-law, and one of 6,000 from his own father

(say 500*l.* in all), and rich expectancies, he shall sit down, in the bottom of Provence, by his own hired hearth, in the town of Aix, and bless Heaven.

Candour will admit that this young Alexander, just beginning his twenty-fourth year, might grumble a little, seeing only one such world to conquer. However, he had his books, he had his hopes; health, faculty; a Universe (whereof even the town of Aix formed part) all rich with fruit and forbidden-fruit round him; the unspeakable 'seed-field of Time' wherein to sow: he said to himself, Go to, I will be wise. And yet human nature is frail. One can judge too, whether the old Marquis, now coming into decided lawsuit with his wife, was of a humour to forgive peccadilloes. The terrible, hoarsely calm, Rhadamanthine way in which he expresses himself on this matter of the lawsuit to his Brother, and enjoins silence from all mortals but him, might affect weak nerves; wherefore, contrary to purpose, we omit it. O, just Marquis! In fact, the Riquetti household, at this time, can do little for frail human nature; except, perhaps, make it fall faster. The Riquetti household is getting scattered; not always led asunder, but driven and hurled asunder: the tornado times for it have begun. One daughter is Madame du Saillant (still living), a judicious sister: another is Madame de Cabris, not so judicious; for, indeed, her husband has lawsuits,—owing to 'defamatory couplets' proceeding from him; she gets 'insulted on the public promenade of Grasse,' by a certain Baron de Villeneuve-Moans, whom some defamatory couplet had touched upon;—all the parties in the business being fools. Nay, poor woman, she by-and-by, we find, takes up with preternuptial persons; with a certain Brianson in epaulettes, described candidly, by the *Fils Adoptif*, as 'a man who'—is not fit to be described.

A young heir-apparent of all the Mirabeaus is required to make some figure; especially in marrying himself. The present young heir-apparent has nothing to make a figure with but bare five hundred a-year, and very considerable debts. Old Mirabeau is hard as the Mosaic rock, and no wand proves miraculous on him; for *trousseaus*, *cadeaus*, foot-washings, festivities, and house-heatings, he does simply not yield one sou. The heir must himself yield them. He does so, and handsomely: but, alas, the five hundred a-year, and very considerable debts? Quit Aix and dinner-giving; retire to the old Château in the gorge of two valleys! Devised and done. But now, a young Wife

used to the delicacies of life, ought she not to have some suite of rooms done up for her? Upholsterers hammer and furbish; with effect; not without bills. Then the very considerable Jew-debts! Poor Mirabeau sees nothing for it, but to run to the father-in-law with tears in his eyes; and conjure him to make those ‘rich expectations’ in some measure fruitions. Forty thousand francs; to such length will the father-in-law, moved by these tears, by this fire-eloquence, table ready money; provided old Marquis Mirabeau, who has some provisional reversionary interest in the thing, will grant quittance. Old Marquis Mirabeau, written to in the most impassioned persuasive manner, answers by a letter, of the sort they call *Sealed Letter* (*Lettre de Cachet*), ordering the impassioned Persuasive, under his Majesty’s hand and seal, to bundle into Coventry, as we should say,—into Manosque, as the Sealed Letter says!—Farewell, thou old Château, with thy upholstered rooms, on thy sheer rock, by the angry-flowing Durance: welcome, thou miserable little borough of Manosque, since hither Fate drives us! In Manosque, too, a man can live, and read; can write an *Essai sur le Despotisme* (and have it printed in Switzerland, 1774); full of fire and rough vigour, and still worth reading.

The *Essay on Despotism*, with so little of the *Ephémérides* and Quesnay in it, could find but a hard critic in the old Marquis; snuffing out something (one fancies) about ‘Reflex and reverberance;’ formulas getting swallowed; rash hairbrain treating matters that require age and gravity;—however, let it pass. Unhappily there came other offences. A certain gawk, named Chevalier de Gassaud, accustomed to visit in the house at Manosque, sees good to commence a kind of theoretic flirtation with the little brown Wife, which she theoretically sees good to return. Billet meets billet; glance follows glance, *crescendo allegro*;—till the Husband opens his lips, volcano-like, with a proposal to kick Chevalier de Gassaud out of doors. Chevalier de Gassaud goes un-kicked, but not without some explosion or *éclat*: there is like to be a duel; only that Gassaud, knowing what a sword this Riquetti wears, will not fight; and his father has to plead and beg. Generous Count, kill not my poor son: alas, already this most lamentable explosion itself has broken off the finest marriage settlement, and now the family will not hear of him! The generous Count, so pleaded with, not only flings the duel to the winds, but

gallops off, forgetful of the *Lettre de Cachet*, half desperate, to plead with the marriage-family; to preach with them, and pray, till they have taken poor Gassaud into favour again. Prosperous in this, for nothing can resist such pleading, he may now ride home more leisurely, with the consciousness of a right action for once. 5

As we hint, this ride of his lies beyond the limits fixed in the royal Sealed Letter; but no one surely will mind it, no one will report it. A beautiful summer evening: O, poor Gabriel, it is the last peaceably prosperous ride thou shalt have for long,—perhaps almost ever in the world! For lo! who is this that comes curricling through the level yellow sun-light; like one of Respectability, keeping his gig? By Day and Night! it is that base Baron, de Villeneuve-Moans, who insulted Sister Cabris in the Promenade of Grasse! Human nature, without time for reflection, is liable to err. The swift-rolling gig is already in contact with one, the horse rearing against your horse; and you dismount, almost without knowing. Satisfaction which gentlemen expect, Monsieur! No? Do I hear rightly No? In that case, Monsieur,—and this wild Gabriel (*horresco referens!*) clutches the respectable Ville-neuve-Moans; and horsewhips him there, not emblematically only, but practically, on the king's highway: seen of some peasants! Here is a message for Rumour to blow abroad. 10 15 20

Rumour blows,—to Paris as elsewhere: for answer, on the 26th of June, 1774, there arrives a fresh Sealed Letter, of more emphasis; there arrive with it grim catchpoles and their chaise: the Swallower of Formulas, snatched away from his wife, from his child then dying, from his last shadow of a home, even an exiled home, is trundling towards Marseilles; towards the Castle of If, which frowns out among the waters in the roadstead there! Girt with the blue Mediterranean; within iron stanchions; cut off from pen, paper, and friends and men, except the Cerberus of the place, who is charged to be very sharp with him, there shall he sit: such virtue is in a Sealed Letter; so has the grim old Marquis ordered it. Our gleam of sunshine then, is darkening miserably down? Down, O thou poor Mirabeau, to thick midnight! Surely Formulas are all too cruel on thee: thou art getting really into war with Formulas (terriblest of wars); and thou, by God's help and the Devil's, wilt make away with them,—in the terriblest manner! From this hour, we say, thick and thicker darkness settles 25 30 35

round poor Gabriel; his life-path growing ever painfuller; alas, growing ever more devious, beset by *ignes fatui*, and lights not of Heaven. Such Alcides' Labours have seldom been allotted to any man.

5 Check thy hot frenzy, thy hot tears, poor Mirabeau; adjust thyself as it may be; for there is no help. Autumn becomes loud winter, revives into gentle spring: the waves beat round the Castle of If, at the mouth of Marseilles harbour; girdling in the unhappiest man. No, not the unhappiest: poor Gabriel has such a '*fond gaillard*, basis of joy and gaiety;' there is a deep fiery life in him, which no blackness
10 of destiny can quench. The Cerberus of If, M. Dallègre, relents, as all Cerberuses do with him; gives paper; gives sympathy and counsel. Nay, letters have already been introduced; 'buttoned in some scoundrel's gaiters,' the old Marquis says! On Sister du Saillant's kind letter there fall 'tears;' nevertheless you do not always weep. You do better;
15 write a brave *Col d'Argent's* Memoirs (quoted from above); occupy yourself with projects and efforts. Sometimes, alas, you do worse, though in the other direction,—where Canteen-keepers have pretty wives! A mere peccadillo this of the frail fair *Cantinière* (according to the *Fils Adoptif*); of which too much was made at the time.—Nor are
20 juster consolations wanting; sisters and brothers bidding you be of hope. Our readers have heard Count Mirabeau designated 'as the elder of my lads:' what if we now exhibited the younger for one moment? The Maltese Chevalier de Mirabeau, a rough son of the sea in those days: he also is a sad dog, but has the advantage of not being
25 the elder. He has started from Malta, from a sick bed, and got hither to Marseilles, in the dead of winter; the link of Nature drawing him, shaggy sea-monster as he is.

30 'It was a rough wind; none of the boatmen would leave the quay with me: I induced two of them, more by bullyings than by money; for thou knowest I have no money, and am well furnished, thank God, with the gift of speaking or stuttering. I reach the Castle of If: gates closed; and the Lieutenant, as M. Dallègre was not there, tells me quite sweetly that I must return as I came. "Not, if you please, till I have seen Gabriel."—"It is not allowed."—"I will
35 write to him."—"Not that either."—"Then I will wait for M. Dallègre."—"Just so; but for four-and-twenty hours, not more." Whereupon I take my resolution; I go to La Mouret' (the Canteen-keeper's pretty wife); 'we agree that so soon as the tattoo is beat, I shall see this poor devil. I get to him, in fact; not like a *paladin*, but like a pickpocket or a gallant, which thou wilt;

and we unbosom ourselves. They had been afraid that he would heat my head to the temperature of his own: Sister Cabris, they do him little justice; I can assure thee that while he was telling me his story, and when my rage broke out in these words: "Though still weakly, I have two arms, strong enough to break M. Villeneuve-Moans's, or his cowardly persecuting brother's at least," he said to me, "*Mon ami*, thou wilt ruin us both." And, I confess, this consideration alone, perhaps, hindered the execution of a project, which could not have profited, which nothing but the fermentation of a head such as mine could excuse.³

Reader, this tarry young Maltese chevalier is the Vicomte de Mirabeau, or Younger Mirabeau; whom all men heard of in the Revolution time,—oftenest by the more familiar name of *Mirabeau-Tonneau*, or Barrel Mirabeau, from his bulk, and the quantity of drink he usually held. It is the same Barrel Mirabeau who, in the States-General, broke his sword, because the Noblesse gave in, and chivalry was now ended: for in politics he was directly the opposite of his elder brother; and spoke considerably as a public man, making men laugh (for he was a wild surly fellow, with much wit in him and much liquor);—then went indignantly across the Rhine, and drilled Emigrant Regiments: but as he sat one morning in his tent, sour of stomach doubtless and of heart, meditating in Tartarean humour on the turn things took, a certain captain or subaltern demands admittance on business; is refused; again demands, and then again, till the Colonel Viscount Barrel Mirabeau, blazing up into a mere burning brandy-barrel, clutches his sword, and tumbles out on this *canaille* of an intruder,—alas, on the *canaille* of an intruder's sword's point (who drew with swift dexterity), and dies, and it is all done with him! That was the fifth act of Barrel Mirabeau's life-tragedy, unlike, and yet like, this first act in the Castle of If; and so the curtain fell, the Newspapers calling it 'apoplexy' and 'alarming accident.'

Brother and Sisters, the little brown Wife, the Cerberus of If, all solicit for a penitent unfortunate sinner. The old Marquis's ear is deaf as that of Destiny. Solely, by way of variation, not of alleviation, the rather as the If Cerberus too has been bewitched, he has this sinner removed, in May next, after some nine months' space, to the Castle of Joux; an 'old Owl's nest, with a few invalids,' among the Jura

³ Vol. ii. p. 43.

Mountains. Instead of melancholy main, let him now try the melancholy granites (still capped with snow at this season), with their mists and owlets; and on the whole adjust himself as if for permanence or continuance there; on a pension of 1,200 francs, fifty pounds a-year, since he could not do with five hundred! Poor Mirabeau;—and poor Mirabeau's Wife? Reader, the foolish little brown woman tires of soliciting: her child being buried, her husband buried alive, and her little brown self being still above ground and under twenty, she takes to recreation, theoretic flirtation; ceases soliciting, begins successful forgetting. The marriage, cut asunder that day the catchpole chaise drew up at Manosque, will never come together again, in spite of efforts; but flow onwards in two separate streams, to lose itself in the frightfullest sand-deserts. Husband and wife never more saw each other with eyes.

Not far from the melancholy Castle of Joux lies the little melancholy borough of Pontarlier; whither our Prisoner has leave, on his parole, to walk when he chooses. A melancholy little borough: yet in it is a certain Monnier Household; whereby hangs, and will hang, a tale. Of old M. Monnier, respectable legal President, now in his seventy-fifth year, we shall say less than of his wife, Sophie Monnier (once de Ruffey, from Dijon, sprung from legal Presidents there), who is still but short way out of her teens. Yet she has been married, or *seemed* to be married, four years: one of the loveliest sad-heroic women of this or any district of country. What accursed freak of Fate brought January and May together here once again? Alas, it is a custom there, good reader! Thus the old Naturalist Buffon, who, at the age of sixty-three (what is called 'the Saint-Martin's summer of incipient dotage and new myrtle garlands,' which visits some men), went ransacking the country for a young wife, had very nearly got this identical Sophie; but did get another, known as Madame de Buffon, well known to Philip Egalité, having turned out ill. Sophie de Ruffey loved wise men, but not at that extremely advanced period of life. However, the question for her is: Does she love a Convent better? Her mother and father are rigidly devout, and rigidly vain and poor: the poor girl, sad-heroic, is probably a kind of freethinker. And now, old President Monnier 'quarrelling with his daughter;' and then coming over to Pontarlier with gold-bags, marriage settlements, and

the prospect of dying soon? It is that same miserable tale, often sung against, often spoken against; very miserable indeed!—But fancy what an effect the fiery eloquence of a Mirabeau produced in this sombre Household: one's young girl-dreams incarnated, most unexpectedly, in this wild-glowing mass of manhood, though rather ugly; old Monnier himself gleaming up into a kind of vitality to hear him! Or fancy whether a sad-heroic face, glancing on you with a thankfulness like to become glad-heroic, were not——? Mirabeau felt, by known symptoms, that the sweetest, fatallest incantation was stealing over him, which could lead only to the devil, for all parties interested. He wrote to his wife, entreating, in the name of Heaven, that she would come to him: thereby might the 'sight of his duties' fortify him; he meanwhile would at least forbear Pontarlier. The wife 'answered by a few icy lines, indicating, in a covert way, that she thought me not in my wits.' He ceases forbearing Pontarlier; sweeter is it than the Owl's nest: he returns thither, with sweeter and ever sweeter welcome; and so—!

Old Monnier saw nothing, or winked hard;—not so our old foolish Commandant of the Castle of Joux. He, though kind to his prisoner formerly, 'had been making some pretensions to Sophie himself; he was but forty or five-and-forty years older than I; my ugliness was not greater than his; and I had the advantage of being an honest man.' Green-eyed Jealousy, in the shape of this old ugly Commandant, warns Monnier by letter; also, on some thin pretext, restricts Mirabeau henceforth to the four walls of Joux. Mirabeau flings back such restriction in an indignant Letter to this green-eyed Commandant; indignantly steps over into Switzerland, which is but a few miles off;—returns, however, in a day or two (it is dark January, 1776), covertly to Pontarlier. There is an explosion, what they call *éclat*. Sophie Monnier, sharply dealt with, resists; avows her love for Gabriel Honoré; asserts her right to love him, her purpose to continue doing it. She is sent home to Dijon; Gabriel Honoré covertly follows her thither.

Explosions: what a continued series of explosions,—through winter, spring, summer! There are tears, devotional exercises, threatenings to commit suicide; there are stolen interviews, perils, proud avowals, and lowly concealments. He on his part, 'voluntarily constitutes himself prisoner;' and does other haughty, vehement things; some

Commandants behaving honourably, and some not: one Commandant (old Marquis Mirabeau of the Château of Bignon) getting ready his red thunderbolts in the distance! ‘I have been lucky enough to obtain Mont Saint-Michel, in Normandy,’ says the old Marquis: ‘I think that prison good, because there is first the Castle itself, then a ring-work all round the mountain; and, after that, a pretty long passage among the sands, where you need guides, to avoid being drowned in the quicksands.’ Yes, it rises there, that Mountain of Saint-Michel, and Mountain of Misery; towering there up, like a bleak Pisgah with outlooks only into Desolation, sand, salt-water, and Despair.⁴ Fly, thou poor Gabriel Honoré! Thou poor Sophie, return to Pontarlier; for Convent-walls too are cruel!

Gabriel flies; and indeed there fly with him Sister Cabris and her preternuptial epauletted Brianson, who are already in flight for their own behoof: into deep thickets and covered ways, wide over the South-west of France. Marquis Mirabeau, thinking with a fond sorrow of Mont Saint-Michel and its quicksands, chooses the two best bloodhounds the Police of Paris has (Inspector Brugnière and another); and, unmuzzling them, cries: Hunt!—Man being a venatory creature, and the Chase perennially interesting to him, we have thought it might be good to present certain broken glimpses of this man-hunt through the South-west of France; of which, by a singular felicity, some Narrative exists, in the shape of official reports, very ill-spelt and otherwise curious, written down sectionally by the chief slot-hound himself, for transmittal to the chief huntsman eyeing it intently from the distance. It is not every day that there is such game afield as a Gabriel Honoré, such a huntsman tallyhoing in the distance as old Marquis Mirabeau; or that you have a hound who can, in never so bad spelling, *tell* you what his notions of the business are:

‘On arriving at Dijon, I went to see Madame la Présidente Ruffey, to gather new informations from her. Madame informed me that there was in the town a certain Chevalier de Macon, a half-pay officer, who was the Sieur Mirabeau’s friend, his companion and confidant, and that if any one could get acquainted with *him*’.—‘The Sieur Brugnière went therefore to lodge at this Macon’s inn; finds means to get acquainted with him, affecting the same tastes, following him to fencing-rooms, billiard-tables and other such places.’—

⁴ See *Mémoires de Madame de Genlis*, iii. 201.

‘Accordingly, on reaching Geneva, we learn that the Sieur Mirabeau did arrive there on the fifth of June. He left it for Thonon in Savoy; two women in men’s-clothes came asking for him, and they all went away together, by Chambéry, and thence by Turin. At Thonon we could not learn what road they had taken; so secret are they, and involve themselves in all manner of detours. After three days of incredible fatigue, we discover the man that had driven them: it is back to Geneva that they are gone; we hasten hither again, and have good hope of finding them now.’—Hope fallacious as before! 5

‘However, what helps Brugnère and me a little is this, that the Sieur Mirabeau and his train, though already armed like smugglers, bought yet other pistols, and likewise sabres, even a hunting-knife with a secret pistol for handle; we learned this at Geneva. They take remote diabolic roads to avoid entering France.’ * * * ‘Following on foot the trace of them, it brings us to Lyons, where they seem to have taken the most obscure methods, accompanied with impenetrable cunning, to enter the town: we lost all track of them; our researches were most painful. At length we have come upon a man named Saint-Jean, confidential servant of Madame de Cabris.’—‘On quitting this, along with Brianson, who I think is a bad subject, M. de Mirabeau signified to Saint-Jean that they were going to Lorgue in Provence, which is Brianson’s country; that Brianson was then to accompany him as far as Nice, where he would embark for Geneva and pass a month there.’— 10 15 20

‘Following this trace of M. de Mirabeau, who had embarked on the Rhone at Lyons, we came to Avignon: here we find he took post-horses, having sent for them half a league from the town; he had another pair of pistols bought for him here; and then, being well hidden in the cabriolet, drove through Avignon, put letters in the post-office; it was about the dusk of the evening. But now at that time was the chief tumult of the Beaucaire Fair,⁵ and this cabriolet was so lost in the crowd that it was impossible for us to track it farther. However, the domestic Saint-Jean’— * * —‘a M. Marsaut, Advocate, an honourable man, who gave us all possible directions.’ ‘He introduced us to this Brianson, with whom we contrived to sup. We gave ourselves out for travellers, Lyons merchants, who were going, the one of us to Geneva and Italy, the other to Geneva only: it was the way to make this Brianson speak.’ * * * 25 30

‘When you leave Provence to pass into the Country of Nice, you have to wade across the Var; a torrent which is almost always dangerous, and is often impracticable: it sometimes spreads out to a quarter of a league in breadth, and has an astonishing rapidity at all times: its reputation is greater still; and travellers who have to cross speak of it with terror. On each bank there are strong men who make a trade of passing travellers across; going before them 35 40

⁵ Napoleon’s *Souper de Beaucaire!*

and around them, with strong poles, to sound the bottom, which will change several times in a day: they take great pains to increase your fear, even when there is not danger. These people, by whose means we passed, told us that they had offered to pass a gentleman having the same description as he we seek; that this gentleman would have nobody, but crossed with some women of the country, who were wading without guide; that he seemed to dislike being looked at too close: we made the utmost researches there. We found that, at some distance, this person had entered a hedge-tavern for some refreshment; that he had a gold box with a lady's portrait in it, and in a word the same description every way; that he asked if they did not know of any ship at Nice for Italy, and that they told him of one for England. He had crossed the Var, as I had the honour of informing you, Monsieur, above: I have the honour of observing that there is no Police at Nice.' * *

* * 'Found that there had embarked, at Villefranche, which is another little haven near to Nice, a private person unknown, answering still to the same description (except that he wore a red coat, whereas M. de Mirabeau has been followed hitherto under a green coat, a red-brown one '*mordoré*,' and a grey ribbed one); and embarked for England. In spite of this we sent persons into the Heights to get information, who know the secret passages; the Sieur Brugnière mounted a mule accustomed to those horrific and terrifying Mountains, took a guide, and made all possible researches too: in a word, Monsieur, we have done all that the human mind (*l'esprit humain*) can imagine, and this when the heats are so excessive, and we are worn out with fatigue, and our limbs swollen.'

No: all that the human mind can imagine is ineffectual. On the twenty-third night of August (1776), Sophie de Monnier, in man's clothes, is scaling the Monnier garden-wall at Pontarlier; is crossing the Swiss marches, wrapped in a cloak of darkness, borne on the wings of love and despair. Gabriel Honoré, wrapped in the like cloak, borne on the like vehicle, is gone with her to Holland,—thenceforth a broken man.

'Crime forever lamentable,' ejaculates the *Fils Adoptif*; 'of which the world has so spoken, and must forever speak!' There are, indeed, many things easy to be spoken of it; and also some things not easy to be spoken. Why, for example, thou virtuous *Fils Adoptif*, was that of the Canteen-keeper's wife at If such a peccadillo, and this of the legal President's wife such a crime, lamentable to that late date of 'forever?' The present reviewer fancies them to be the same crime. Again, might not the first grand criminal and sinner in this business

be legal President Monnier, the distracted, spleen-stricken, moon-stricken old man;—liable to trial, with non-acquittal or difficult acquittal, at the great Bar of Nature herself? And then the second sinner in it? and the third and the fourth? ‘He that is *without* sin among you!’—One thing, therefore, the present reviewer will speak, in the words of old Samuel Johnson: My dear *Fils Adoptif*, my dear brethren of Mankind, ‘endeavour to clear your mind of Cant!’ It is positively the prime necessity for all men, and all women and children, in these days, who would have their souls live, were it even feebly, and not die of the detestablest asphyxia,—as in carbonic vapour, the more horrible, for breathing of, the more *clean* it looks. 5 10

That the *Parlement* of Besançon indicted Mirabeau for *rapt et vol*, abduction and robbery; that they condemned him ‘in contumacious absence,’ and went the length of beheading a Paper Effigy of him, was perhaps extremely suitable;—but not to be dwelt on here. Neither do we pry curiously into the garret-life in Holland and Amsterdam; being straitened for room. The wild man and his beautiful sad-heroic woman lived out their romance of reality, as well as was to be expected. Hot tempers go not always softly together; neither did the course of true love, either in wedlock or in elopement, ever run smooth. Yet it did run, in this instance, copious, if not smooth; with quarrel and reconciliation, tears and heart-effusion; sharp tropical squalls, and also the gorgeous effulgence and exuberance of general tropical weather. It was like a little Paphos islet in the middle of blackness; the very danger and despair that environed it made the islet blissful;—even as in virtue of death, life to the fretfullest becomes tolerable, becomes sweet, death being so nigh. At any hour, might not king’s exempt or other dread alguazil knock at our garret establishment, here ‘in the *Kalbestrand*, at Lequesne the tailor’s,’ and dissolve it? Gabriel toils for Dutch booksellers; bearing their heavy load; translating *Watson’s Philip Second*; doing endless Gibeonite work; earning, however, his gold louis a-day. Sophie sews and scours beside him, with her soft fingers, not grudging it: in hard toils, in trembling joys begirt with terrors, with one terror, that of being parted,—their days roll swiftly on. For eight tropical months!—Ah, at the end of some eight months (14th May, 1777) enter the alguazil! He is in the shape of Brugnière, our old slot-hound of the South-west; the swelling of his legs is fallen now; this time the human mind has been able to manage it. He 15 20 25 30 35

carries King's orders, High Mightiness' sanctions; sealed parchments. Gabriel Honoré shall be carried this way, Sophie that; Sophie, like to be a mother, shall behold him no more. Desperation, even in the female character, can go no farther: she will kill herself that hour, as even the slot-hound believes,—had not the very slot-hound, in mercy, undertaken that they should have some means of correspondence; that hope should not utterly be cut away. With embracings and interjections, sobbings that cannot be uttered, they tear themselves asunder, stony Paris now nigh: Mirabeau towards his prison of Vincennes; Sophie to some milder Convent-parlour relegation, there to await what Fate, very minatory at this time, will see good to bring.

Conceive the giant Mirabeau locked fast, then, in Doubting-castle of Vincennes; his hot soul surging up, wildly breaking itself against cold obstruction; the voice of his despair reverberated on him by dead stone walls. Fallen in the eyes of the world, the ambitious haughty man; his fair life-hopes from without all spoiled and become foul ashes: and from within,—what he has done, what he has parted with and *undone!* Deaf as Destiny is a Rhadamanthine father; inaccessible even to the attempt at pleading. Heavy doors have slammed to; their bolts growling *Wo to thee!* Great Paris sends eastward its daily multitudinous hum; in the evening sun thou seest its weathercocks glitter, its old grim towers and fuliginous life-breath all gilded: and thou?—Neither evening nor morning, nor change of day nor season, brings deliverance. Forgotten of Earth; not too hopefully remembered of Heaven! No passionate *Pater-Peccavi* can move an old Marquis; deaf he as Destiny. Thou must sit there.—For forty-two months, by the great Zodiacal Horologe! The heir of the Riquettis, sinful, and yet more sinned against, has worn out his wardrobe; complains that his clothes get looped and windowed, insufficient against the weather. His eyesight is failing; the family disorder, *nephritis*, afflicts him; the doctors declare horse-exercise essential to preserve life. Within the walls then! answers the old Marquis. Count de Mirabeau 'rides in the garden of forty paces;' with quick turns, hamperedly, overlooked by donjons and high stone barriers.

And yet fancy not Mirabeau spent his time in mere wailing and raging. Far from that!—

To whine, put finger i' the eye, and sob,
Because he had ne'er another tub,

was in no case Mirabeau's method, more than Diogenes's. Other such wild-glowing Mass of Life, which you might beat with Cyclops' hammers (and, alas, not beat the dross *out* of), was not in Europe at that time. Call him not the strongest man then living; for light, as we said, and not fire, is the strong thing: yet call him strong too, very strong; and for toughness, tenacity, vivaciousness, and a *fond gail-lard*, call him toughest of all. Raging passions, ill-governed; reckless tumult from within, merciless oppression from without; ten men might have died of what this Gabriel Honoré did not yet die of. Police-captain Lenoir allowed him, in mercy and according to engagement, to correspond with Sophie; the condition was that the letters should be seen by Lenoir, and be returned into his keeping. Mirabeau corresponded; in fire and tears, copiously, not Werter-like, but Mirabeau-like. Then he had penitential petitions, *Pater-Peccavis* to write, to get presented and enforced; for which end all manner of friends must be urged: correspondence enough. Besides, he could read, though very limitedly: he could even compose or compile; extracting, *not* in the manner of the bee, from the very Bible and Dom Calmet, a '*Biblion Eroticon*,' which can be recommended to no woman or man. The pious *Fils Adoptif* drops a veil over his face at this scandal; and says lamentably that there is nothing to be said. As for the Correspondence with Sophie, it lay in Lenoir's desk forgotten; but was found there by Manuel, Procureur of the Commune in 1792, when so many desks flew open; and by him given to the world. A book which fair sensibility (rather in a private way) loves to weep over: not this reviewer, to any considerable extent; not at all here, in his present strait for room. Good love-letters of their kind notwithstanding. But if anything can swell farther the tears of fair sensibility over Mirabeau's *Correspondence of Vincennes*, it must be this: the issue it ended in. After a space of years these two lovers, wrenched asunder in Holland, and allowed to correspond that they might not poison themselves, met again: it was under cloud of night; in Sophie's apartment, in the country; Mirabeau, 'disguised as a porter,' had come thither from a considerable distance. And they flew into each other's arms; to weep their child dead, their long unspeakable woes? Not at all. They stood, arms stretched oratorically, calling one another to account for causes of jealousy; grew always louder, arms set a-kimbo; and parted quite loud, never to meet more on earth. In September,

1789, Mirabeau had risen to be a world's wonder; and Sophie, far from him, had sunk out of the world's sight, respected only in the little town of Gien. On the 9th night of September, Mirabeau might be thundering in the Versailles *Salle des Menus*, to be reported of all
 5 Journals on the morrow; and Sophie, twice disappointed of new marriage, the sad-heroic temper darkened now into perfect black, was reclining, self-tied to her sofa, with a pan of charcoal burning near; to die as the unhappy die. Said we not, 'the course of true love never did run smooth'?

10 However, after two-and-forty months, and negotiations, and more intercessions than in Catholic countries will free a soul out of Purgatory, Mirabeau is once more delivered from the strong place: not into his own home (home, wife, and the whole Past are far parted from him); not into his father's home; but forth;—hurled forth, to seek his
 15 fortune Ishmael-like in the wide hunting-field of the world. Consider him, O Reader; thou wilt find him very notable. A disgraced man, not a broken one; ruined outwardly, not ruined inwardly; not yet, for there is no ruining of him on that side. Such a buoyancy of radical fire and *fond gaillard* he has; with his dignity and vanity, levity, so-
 20 lidity, with his virtues and his vices,—what a front he shows! You would say, he bates not a jot, in these sad circumstances, of what he claimed from Fortune, but rather enlarges it: his proud soul, so galled, deformed by manacles and bondage, flings away its prison-gear, bounds forth to the fight again, as if victory, after all, were certain. Post-
 25 horses to Pontarlier and the Besançon Parlement; that that 'sentence by contumacy' be annulled, and the Paper Effigy have its Head stuck on again! The wild giant, said to be 'absent by contumacy,' sits voluntarily in the Pontarlier Jail; thunders in pleadings which make Parleme-
 30 teers quake, and all France listen; and the Head reunites itself to the Paper Effigy with apologies. Monnier and the De Ruffeys know who is the most impudent man alive: the world, with astonishment, who is one of the ablest. Even the old Marquis snuffles approval, though with qualification. Tough old man, he has lost his own world-
 35 famous Lawsuit and other lawsuits, with ruinous expenses; has seen his fortune and projects fail, and even *lettres de cachet* turn out not always satisfactory or sanatory: wherefore he summons his children about him; and, really in a very serene way, declares himself invalided, fit only for the chimney-nook now; to sit patching his old mind

together again (*à rebouter sa tête, à se recoudre pièce à pièce*): advice and countenance they, the deserving part of them, shall always enjoy; but *lettres de cachet*, or other the like benefit and guidance, not any more. Right so, thou best of old Marquises! There he rests then, like the still evening of a thundery day; thunders no more; but rays forth many a curiously-tinted light-beam and remark on life; serene to the last. Among Mirabeau's small catalogue of virtues, very small of formulaary and conventional virtues, let it not be forgotten that he loved this old father warmly to the end; and forgave his cruelties, or forgot them in kind interpretation of them.

For the Pontarlier Paper Effigy, therefore, it is well: and yet a man lives not comfortably without money. Ah, were one's marriage not disrupted; for the old father-in-law will soon die; those rich expectations were then fruitions! The ablest, not the most shame-faced man in France, is off, next spring (1783), to Aix; stirring Parlement and Heaven and Earth there, to have his wife back. How he worked; with what nobleness and courage (according to the *Fils Adoptif*); giant's work! The sound of him is spread over France and over the world; English travellers, high foreign lordships, turning aside to Aix; and 'multitudes gathered even on the roofs' to hear him, the Court-house being crammed to bursting! Demosthenic fire and pathos; penitent husband calling for forgiveness and restitution:—'*ce n'est qu'un claquedents et un fol,*' rays forth the old Marquis from the chimney-nook; 'a chatter-teeth and madman!' The world and Parlement thought not that; knew not what to think, if not that this was the questionable able man they had ever heard; and, alas, still farther,—that his cause was *untenable*. No wife then; and no money! From this second attack on Fortune Mirabeau returns foiled, and worse than before; resourceless, for now the old Marquis too again eyes him askance. He must hunt Ishmael-like, as we said. Whatsoever of wit or strength he has within himself will stand true to him; on that he can count; unfortunately on almost nothing but that.

Mirabeau's life for the next five years, which creeps troublous, obscure, through several of these Eight Volumes, will probably, in the One right Volume which they hold imprisoned, be delineated briefly. It is the long-drawn practical improvement of the sermon already preached in Rhé, in If, in Joux, in Holland, in Vincennes, and else-

where. A giant man in the flower of his years, in the winter of his prospects, has to see how he will reconcile these two contradictions. With giant energies and talents, with giant virtues even, he, burning to unfold himself, has got put into his hands, for implements and means to do it with, disgrace, contumely, obstruction; character elevated only as Haman was; purse full only of debt-summonses; household, home and possessions, as it were, sown with salt; Ruin's ploughshare furrowing too deeply himself and all that was his. Under these, and not under other conditions, shall this man now live and struggle. Well might he 'weep' long afterwards (though not given to the melting mood), thinking over, with Dumont, how his life had been blasted, by himself, by others; and was now so defaced and thunder-riven, no glory could make it whole again. Truly, as we often say, a weaker, and yet very strong man, might have died,—by hypochondria, by brandy, or by arsenic: but Mirabeau did not die. The world is not his friend, nor the world's law and formula? It will be his enemy then; his conqueror and master not altogether. There are strong men who can, in case of necessity, make away with formulas (*humer les formules*), and yet find a habitation behind them: these are the very strong; and Mirabeau was of these. The world's esteem having gone quite against him, and most circles of society, with their codes and regulations, pronouncing little but anathema on him, he is nevertheless not lost; he does not sink to desperation; not to dishonesty, or pusillanimity, or splenetic aridity. Nowise! In spite of the world, he is a living strong man there: the world cannot take from him his just consciousness of himself, his warm open-hearted feeling towards others; there are still limits, on all sides, to which the world and the devil cannot drive him. The giant, we say! How he stands, like a mountain; thunder-riven, but broad-based, rooted in the Earth's (in Nature's) own rocks; and will not tumble prostrate! So true is it what a moralist has said: 'One could not wish any man to fall into a fault; yet is it often precisely after a fault, or a crime even, that the morality which is in a man first unfolds itself, and what of strength he as a man possesses, now when all else is gone from him.'

35 Mirabeau, through these dim years, is seen wandering from place to place; in France, Germany, Holland, England; finding no rest for the sole of his foot. It is a life of shifts and expedients, *au jour le jour*.

Extravagant in his expenses, thriftless, swimming in a welter of debts and difficulties; for which he has to provide by fierce industry; by skill in financiership. The man's revenue is his wits; he has a pen and a head; and, happily for him, 'is the demon of the impossible.' At no time is he without some blazing project or other, which shall warm and illuminate far and wide; which too often blazes out ineffectual; which in that case he replaces and renews, for his hope is inexhaustible. He writes Pamphlets unweariedly as a steam-engine: *On the Opening of the Scheldt*, and Kaiser Joseph; *on the Order of Cincinnatus* and Washington; *on Count Cagliostro*, and the Diamond Necklace. Innumerable are the helpers and journeymen, respectable Mauvillons, respectable Dumonts, whom he can set working for him on such matters: it is a gift he has. He writes Books, in as many as eight volumes, which are properly only a larger kind of Pamphlets. He has polemics with Caron Beaumarchais on the water-company of Paris; lean Caron shooting sharp arrows into him, which he responds to demoniacally, 'flinging hills with all their woods.' He is intimate with many men; his 'terrible gift of familiarity,' his joyous courtiership and faculty of pleasing, do not forsake him: but it is a questionable intimacy, granted to the man's talents, in spite of his character; a relation which the proud Riquetti, not the humbler that he is poor and ruined, correctly feels. With still more women is he intimate; girt with a whole system of intrigues, in that sort, wherever he abide; seldom travelling without a—wife (let us call her) engaged by the year, or during mutual satisfaction. On this large department of Mirabeau's history, what can you say, except that his incontinence was great, enormous, entirely indefensible? If any one please (which we do not) to be present, with the *Fils Adoptif*, at 'the *autopsie*' and *post-mortem* examination, he will see curious documents on this head; and to what depths of penalty Nature, in her just self-vindication, can sometimes doom men. The *Fils Adoptif* is very sorry. To the kind called unfortunate-females, it would seem, nevertheless, this unfortunate-male had an aversion amounting to complete *nolo-tangere*.

The old Marquis sits apart in the chimney-nook, observant: what this roaming, unresting, rebellious Titan of a Count may ever prove of use for? If it be not, O Marquis, for the General Overturn, *Culbute Générale*? He is swallowing Formulas; getting endless acquaintance

with the Realities of things and men: in audacity, in recklessness, he will not, it is like, be wanting. The old Marquis rays out curious observations on life;—yields no effectual assistance of money.

5 Ministries change and shift; but never, in the new deal, does there turn up a good card for Mirabeau. Necker he does not love, nor is love lost between them. Plausible Calonne hears him Stentor-like denouncing stock-jobbing (*Dénonciation de l'Agiotage*); communes with him, corresponds with him; is glad to get him sent, in some semi-ostensible or spy-diplomatist character, to Berlin; in any way to
10 have him sopped and quieted. The Great Frederick was still on the scene, though now very near the side-scenes: the wiry thin Drill-serjeant of the World, and the broad burly Mutineer of the World, glanced into one another with amazement; the one making entrance, the other making exit. To this Berlin business we owe pamphlets; we
15 owe *Correspondences* ('surreptitiously published'—with consent); we owe (brave Major Mauvillon serving as hodman) the *Monarchie Prussienne*, a Pamphlet in some eight octavo Volumes, portions of which are still well worth reading.

Generally, on first making personal acquaintance with Mirabeau as
20 a writer or speaker, one is not a little surprised. Instead of Irish oratory, with tropes and declamatory fervid feeling, such as the rumour one has heard gives prospect of, you are astonished to meet a certain hard angular distinctness, a totally unornamented force and massiveness: clear perspicuity, strong perspicacity, conviction that wishes
25 to convince,—this beyond all things, and instead of all things. You would say the primary character of those utterances, nay, of the man himself, is sincerity and insight; strength, and the honest use of strength. Which, indeed, it is, O Reader! Mirabeau's spiritual gift will be found on examination to be verily an honest and a great one; far the strong-
30 est, best practical intellect of that time; entitled to rank among the strong of all times. These books of his ought to be riddled, like this book of the *Fils Adoptif*. There is precious matter in them; too good to lie hidden among shot rubbish. Hear this man on any subject, you will find him worth considering. He has words in him, rough deliv-
35 erances; such as men do not forget. As thus: 'I know but three ways of living in this world: by wages for work; by begging; thirdly, by stealing (so named, or not so named).' Again: 'Malebranche saw all things in God; and M. Necker sees all things in Necker!' There are

nicknames of Mirabeau's worth whole treatises. 'Grandison-Cromwell Lafayette:' write a volume on the man, as many volumes have been written, and try to say more! It is the best likeness yet drawn of him,—by a flourish and two dots. Of such inexpressible advantage is it that a man have 'an eye, instead of a pair of spectacles merely;' that, seeing through the formulas of things, and even 'making away' with many a formula, he see into the thing itself, and so know it and be master of it! 5

As the years roll on, and that portentous decade of the Eighties, or 'Era of Hope,' draws towards completion, and it becomes ever more evident to Mirabeau that great things are in the wind, we find his wanderings, as it were, quicken. Suddenly emerging out of Night and Cimmeria, he dashes down on the Paris world, time after time; flashes into it with that fire-glance of his; discerns that the time is not yet come; and then merges back again. Occasionally his pamphlets provoke a fulmination and order of arrest, wherefore he must merge the faster. Nay, your Calonne is good enough to signify it beforehand: On such and such a day I shall order you to be arrested; pray make speed therefore. When the Notables meet, in the spring of 1787, Mirabeau spreads his pinions, alights on Paris and Versailles; it seems to him he ought to be secretary of those Notables. No! friend Dupont de Nemours gets it: the time is not yet come. It is still but the time of 'Crispin-Catiline' d'Espréménil, and other such animal-magnetic persons. Nevertheless, the Reverend Talleyrand, judicious Dukes, liberal noble friends not a few, are sure that the time will come. Abide thy time. 10 15 20 25

Hark! On the 27th of December, 1788, here finally is the long-expected announcing itself: royal Proclamation definitively convoking the States-General for May next! Need we ask whether Mirabeau bestirs himself now; whether or not he is off to Provence, to the Assembly of Noblesse there, with all his faculties screwed to the sticking-place? One strong dead-lift pull, thou Titan; and perhaps thou carriest it! How Mirabeau wrestled and strove under these auspices; speaking and contending all day, writing pamphlets, paragraphs, all night; also suffering much, gathering his wild soul together, motionless under reproaches, under drawn swords even, lest his enemies throw him off his guard; how he agitates and represses, unerringly dexterous, sleeplessly unwearied, and is a very 'demon of the impos- 30 35

sible,' let all readers fancy. With 'a body of Noblesse more ignorant, greedier, more insolent than any I have ever seen,' the Swallower of Formulas was like to have rough work. We must give his celebrated flinging up of the handful of dust, when they drove him out by overwhelming majority:—

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 'What have I done that was so criminal? I have wished that my Order were wise enough to give to-day what will infallibly be wrested from it to-morrow; that it should receive the merit and glory of sanctioning the assemblage of the Three Orders, which all Provence loudly demands. This is the crime of your "enemy of peace!" Or rather I have ventured to believe that the people might be in the right. Ah, doubtless, a patrician soiled with such a thought deserves vengeance! But I am still guiltier than you think; for it is my belief that the people which complains is always in the right; that its indefatigable patience invariably waits the uttermost excesses of oppression, before it can determine on resisting; that it never resists long enough to obtain complete redress; and does not sufficiently know that to strike its enemies into terror and submission, it has only to stand still, that the most innocent as the most invincible of all powers is the power of refusing to do. I believe after this manner: punish the enemy of peace!

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 'But you, ministers of a God of peace, who are ordained to bless and not to curse, and yet have launched your anathema on me, without even the attempt at enlightening me, at reasoning with me! And you, "friends of peace," who denounce to the people, with all vehemence of hatred, the one defender it has yet found, out of its own ranks;—who, to bring about concord, are filling capital and province with placards calculated to arm the rural districts against the towns, if your deeds did not refute your writings;—who, to prepare ways of conciliation, protest against the royal Regulation for convoking the States-General, because it grants the people as many deputies as both the other orders, and against all that the coming National Assembly shall do, unless its laws secure the triumph of your pretensions, the eternity of your privileges! Disinterested "friends of peace!" I have appealed to your honour, and summon you to state what expressions of mine have offended against either the respect we owe to the royal authority or to the nation's rights? Nobles of Provence, Europe is attentive; weigh well your answer. Men of God, beware; God hears you!

'And if you do not answer, but keep silence, shutting yourselves up in the vague declamations you have hurled at me, then allow me to add one word.

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 'In all countries, in all times, aristocrats have implacably persecuted the people's friends; and if, by some singular combination of fortune, there chanced to arise such a one in their own circle, it was he above all whom they struck

at, eager to inspire wider terror by the elevation of their victim. Thus perished the last of the Gracchi by the hands of the patricians; but, being struck with the mortal stab, he flung dust towards Heaven, and called on the Avenging Deities; and from this dust sprang Marius,—Marius not so illustrious for exterminating the Cimbri as for overturning in Rome the tyranny of the Noblesse!’

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There goes some foolish story of Mirabeau having now opened a cloth-shop in Marseilles, to ingratiate himself with the Third Estate; whereat we have often laughed. The image of Mirabeau measuring out drapery to mankind, and deftly snipping at tailors’ measures, has something pleasant for the mind. So that, though there is not a shadow of truth in this story, the very lie may justly sustain itself for a while, in the character of lie. Far otherwise was the reality there: ‘voluntary guard of a hundred men;’ Provence crowding by the ten thousand round his chariot-wheels; explosions of rejoicing musketry, heaven-rending acclamation; ‘people paying two louis for a place at the window!’ Hunger itself (very considerable in those days) he can pacify by speech. Violent meal-mobs at Marseilles and at Aix, unmanageable by fire-arms and governors, he smooths down by the word of his mouth; the governor soliciting him, though unloved. It is as a Roman Triumph, and more. He is chosen deputy for two places; has to decline Marseilles, and honour Aix. Let his enemies look and wonder, and sigh forgotten by him. For this Mirabeau too the career at last opens.

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At last! Does not the benevolent Reader, though never so unambitious, sympathize a little with this poor brother mortal in such a case? Victory is always joyful; but to think of such a man, in the hour when, after twelve Hercules’ Labours, he does finally triumph! So long he fought with the many-headed coil of Lernean serpents; and, panting, wrestled and wrang with it for life or death,—forty long stern years; and now he has it under his heel! The mountain tops are scaled, are scaled; where the man climbed, on sharp flinty precipices, slippery, abysmal; in darkness, seen by no kind eye,—amid the brood of dragons; and the heart, many times, was like to fail within him, in his loneliness, in his extreme need: yet he climbed, and climbed, glueing his footsteps in his blood; and now, behold, Hyperion-like he has scaled it, and on the summit shakes his glittering shafts of war!

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What a scene and new kingdom for him; all bathed in auroral radiance of Hope; far-stretching, solemn, joyful: what wild Memnon's music, from the depths of Nature, comes toning through the soul raised suddenly out of strangling death into victory and life! The very
 5 bystander, we think, might weep, with this Mirabeau, tears of joy.

Which, alas, will become tears of sorrow! For know, O Son of Adam (and Son of Lucifer, with that accursed ambition of thine), that they are all a delusion and piece of demonic necromancy, these same auroral splendours, enchantments, and Memnon's tones! The thing
 10 thou as mortal wantest is equilibrium, what is called *rest* or *peace*; which, God knows, thou wilt never get *so*. Happy they that find it without such searching. But in some twenty-three months more, of blazing solar splendour and conflagration, this Mirabeau will be ashes; and lie opaque, in the Pantheon of great men (or say,
 15 French-Pantheon of considerable, or even of considered, and small-noisy men),—at rest nowhere, save on the lap of his mother Earth. There are to whom the gods, in their bounty, give glory: but far oftener is it given in wrath, as a curse and a poison; disturbing the whole inner health and industry of the man; leading onward through
 20 dizzy staggerings and tarantula jiggings,—towards no saint's shrine. Truly, if Death did not intervene; or still more happily, if Life and the Public were not a blockhead, and sudden unreasonable oblivion were not to follow that sudden unreasonable glory, and beneficently, though most painfully, damp it down,—one sees not where many a poor
 25 glorious man, still more many a poor glorious woman could terminate,—far short of Bedlam.

On the 4th day of May, 1789, Madame de Staël, looking from a window in the main street of Versailles, amid an assembled world, as
 30 the Deputies walked in procession from the church of Notre-Dame to that of Saint Louis, to hear High Mass, and be constituted *States-General*, saw this: 'Among these Nobles who had been deputed to the Third Estate, above all others, the Comte de Mirabeau. The opinion men had of his genius was singularly augmented by the fear
 35 entertained of his immorality; and yet it was this very immorality which straitened the influence his astonishing faculties were to secure him. You could not but look long at this man, when once you had noticed him: his immense black head of hair distinguished him among

them all; you would have said his force depended on it, like that of Samson: his face borrowed new expression from its very ugliness; his whole person gave you the idea of an irregular power, but a power such as you would figure in a Tribune of the People.' Mirabeau's history through the first twenty-three months of the Revolution falls not to be written here: yet it is well worth writing somewhere. The Constituent Assembly, when his name was first read out, received it with murmurs; not knowing what they murmured at! This honourable member they were murmuring over was the member of all members; the august Constituent, without him, were no Constituent at all. Very notable, truly, is his procedure in this section of world-history; by far the notablest single element there: none like to him, or second to him. Once he is seen visibly to have saved, as with his own force, the existence of the Constituent Assembly; to have turned the whole tide of things: in one of those moments which are cardinal; decisive for centuries. The royal Declaration of the *Twenty-third of June* is promulgated: there is military force enough; there is then the King's express order to disperse, to meet as separate Third Estate on the morrow. Bastilles and scaffolds may be the penalty of disobeying. Mirabeau disobeys; lifts his voice to encourage others, all pallid, panic-stricken, to disobey. Supreme Usher De Brézé enters, with the King's renewed order to depart. "Messieurs," said De Brézé, "you heard the King's order?" The Swallower of Formulas bellows out these words, that have become memorable: "Yes, Monsieur, we heard what the King was advised to say; and you, who cannot be interpreter of his meaning to the States-General; you, who have neither vote nor seat, nor right of speech here, you are not the man to remind us of it. Go, Monsieur, tell those who sent you that we are here by will of the Nation; and that nothing but the force of bayonets can drive us hence!" And poor De Brézé vanishes,—back foremost, the *Fils Adoptif* says.

But this, cardinal moment though it be, is perhaps intrinsically among his smaller feats. In general, we would say once more with emphasis, He has '*humé toutes les formules.*' He goes through the Revolution like a substance and a force, not like a formula of one. While innumerable barren Sieyeses and Constitution-pedants are building, with such hammering and troweling, their august Paper Constitution (which endured eleven months), this man looks not at

cobwebs and *Social-Contracts*, but at things and men; discerning what is to be done,—proceeding straight to do it. He shivers out Usher De Brézé, back foremost, when that is the problem. ‘Marie Antoinette is charmed with him,’ when it comes to that. He is the man of the
 5 Revolution, while he lives; king of it; and only with life, as we compute, would have quitted his kingship of it. Alone of all these Twelve Hundred, there is in him the faculty of a king. For, indeed, have we not seen how assiduously Destiny had shaped him all along, as with an express eye to the work now in hand? O crabbed old Friend of
 10 Men, whilst thou wert bolting this man into Isles of Rhé, Castles of If, and training him so sharply to be *thys*self, not *him*self,—how little knewest thou *what* thou wert doing! Let us add, that the brave old Marquis lived to see his son’s victory over Fate and men, and rejoiced in it; and rebuked Barrel Mirabeau for controverting such a Brother
 15 Gabriel. In the invalid Chimney-nook at Argenteuil, near Paris, he sat raying out curious observations to the last; and died three days before the Bastille fell, precisely when the *Culbute Générale* was bursting out.

But finally, the twenty-three allotted months are over. Madame de Staël, on the 4th of May, 1789, saw the Roman Tribune of the
 20 People, and Samson with his long black hair: and on the 4th of April, 1791, there is a Funeral Procession extending four miles: king’s ministers, senators, national guards, and all Paris,—torchlight, wail of trombones and music, and the tears of men; mourning of a whole
 25 people,—such mourning as no modern people ever saw for one man. This Mirabeau’s work then is done. He sleeps with the primeval giants. He has gone over to the majority: *Abiit ad plures*.

In the way of eulogy and dyslogy, and summing up of character,
 30 there may doubtless be a great many things set forth concerning this Mirabeau; as already there has been much discussion and arguing about him, better and worse: which is proper surely; as about all manner of new things, were they much less questionable than this new giant is. The present reviewer, meanwhile, finds it suitabler to
 35 restrict himself and his exhausted readers to the three following moral reflections.

Moral reflection *first*,—that, in these centuries men are not born demi-gods and perfect characters, but imperfect ones, and mere blamea-

ble men; men, namely, environed with such short-coming and confusion of their own, and then with such adscititious scandal and misjudgment (got in the work they did), that they resemble less demi-gods than a sort of god-devils,—very imperfect characters indeed. The demi-god arrangement were the one which, at first sight, this reviewer might be inclined to prefer. 5

Moral reflection *second*,—however, that probably men were never born demi-gods in any century, but precisely god-devils as we see; certain of whom do become a kind of demi-gods! How many are the men, not censured, misjudged, calumniated only, but tortured, crucified, hung on gibbets,—not as god-devils even, but as devils proper; who have nevertheless grown to seem respectable, or infinitely respectable! For the thing which was *not* they, which was not anything, has fallen away piecemeal; and become avowedly babble and confused shadow, and no-thing: the thing which was they, remains. Depend on it, Harmodius and Aristogiton, as clear as they now look, had illegal plottings, conclaves at the Jacobins' Church of Athens; and very intemperate things were spoken, and also done. Thus too, Marcus Brutus and the elder Junius, are they not palpable Heroes? Their praise is in all Debating Societies; but didst thou read what the Morning Papers said of those transactions of theirs, the week after? Nay, Old Noll, whose bones were dug up and hung in chains, here at home, as the just emblem of himself and his deserts, the offal of Creation, at that time,—has not he too got to be a very respectable grim bronze-figure, though it is yet only a century and half since; of whom England seems proud rather than otherwise? 10 15 20 25

Moral reflection *third* and last,—that neither thou nor I, good Reader, had any hand in the making of this Mirabeau;—else who knows but we had objected, in *our* wisdom? But it was the Upper Powers that made him, without once consulting us; they and not we, so and not otherwise! To endeavour to understand a little what manner of Mirabeau he, so made, might be: this we, according to opportunity, have done; and therefore do now, with a lively satisfaction, take farewell of him, and leave him to prosper as he can. 30