MY WORLD STORY BOOK

France / Canada / Switzerland

A Compilation of Historical
Biographies for the Young Reader

Compiled by Marlene Peterson

Libraries of Hope

My World Story Book
Book Five: France / Canada / Switzerland

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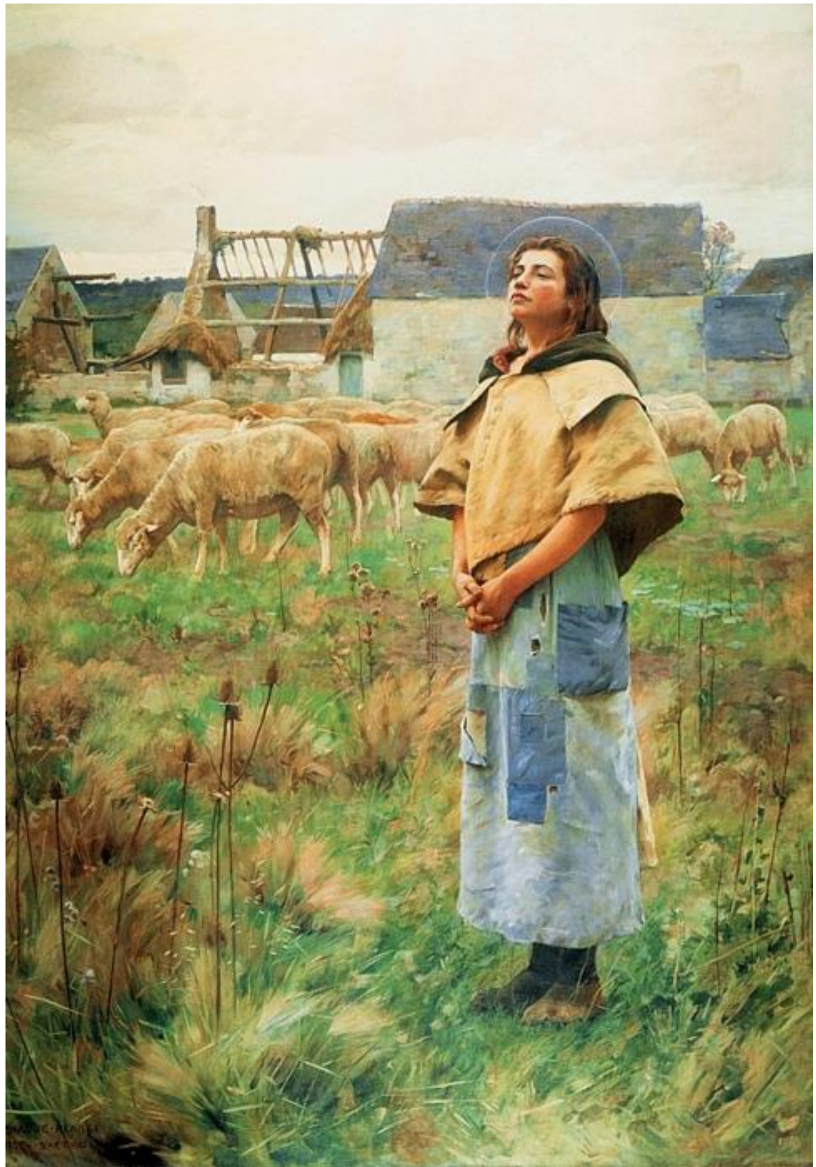
Chapter 1

Saint Genevieve

424-512 A.D., France

She is one of the saints who were very real. She was living in France when the Romans were leaving our Island, and it was her thrilling story which strengthened Joan of Arc when her hour came about a thousand years later.

Genevieve, like Joan, looked after her father's sheep; it was in that lovely country where the Seine winds round and round after leaving Paris as if to linger longer near the City Beautiful. In one of these little spots now called Nanterre lived a man who tilled his land and a wife who spun her wool, and they had a daughter who out-witted all the children of her age.



Saint Genevieve by Charles Sprague Pearce

One day in her childhood the coming of two bishops was heralded at Nanterre. They were on their way, preaching in the villages, and Genevieve always remembered that one of the bishops stopped in front of her and said, "Oh, happy parents who are bringing this child up."

After this day, famous to her, she went back to her sheep, and the land that nourished her flock

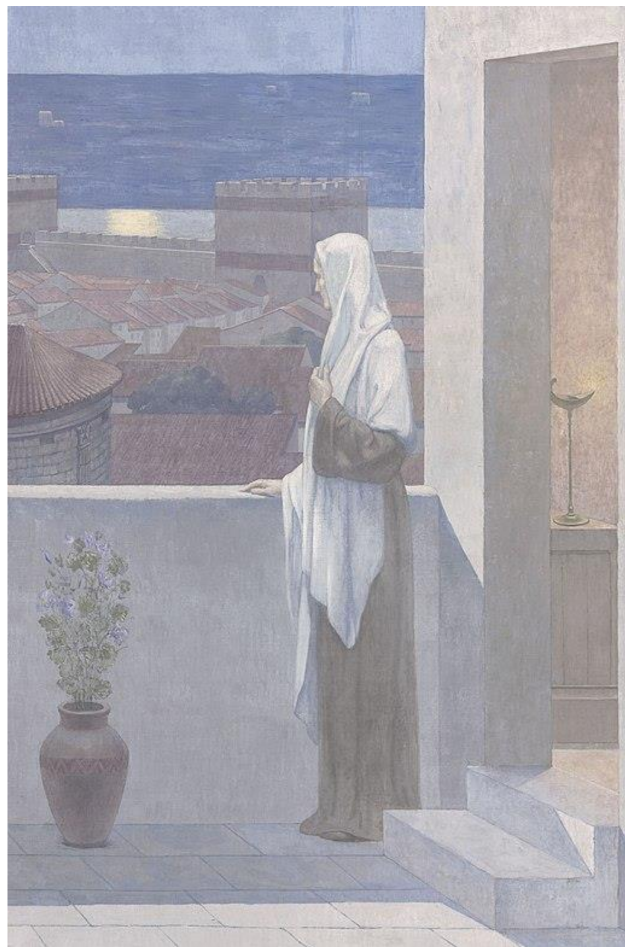
Scenes from the Life of Saint Genevieve
by Pierre Puvis de Chavannes

continued to fill her dreams. She was 15 when she lost her parents and went to live on the island between the two arms of the River Seine in Paris.

The barbarian world was then astir. The Huns of Asia, having failed to master China, had thronged westward. In the year 451 Attila, he who made great emperors tremble, invaded Gaul with his army. God's Scourge they called him then, and the savage was so proud of the title that he declared with barbaric delight that grass would not grow on the soil his horse had trodden.

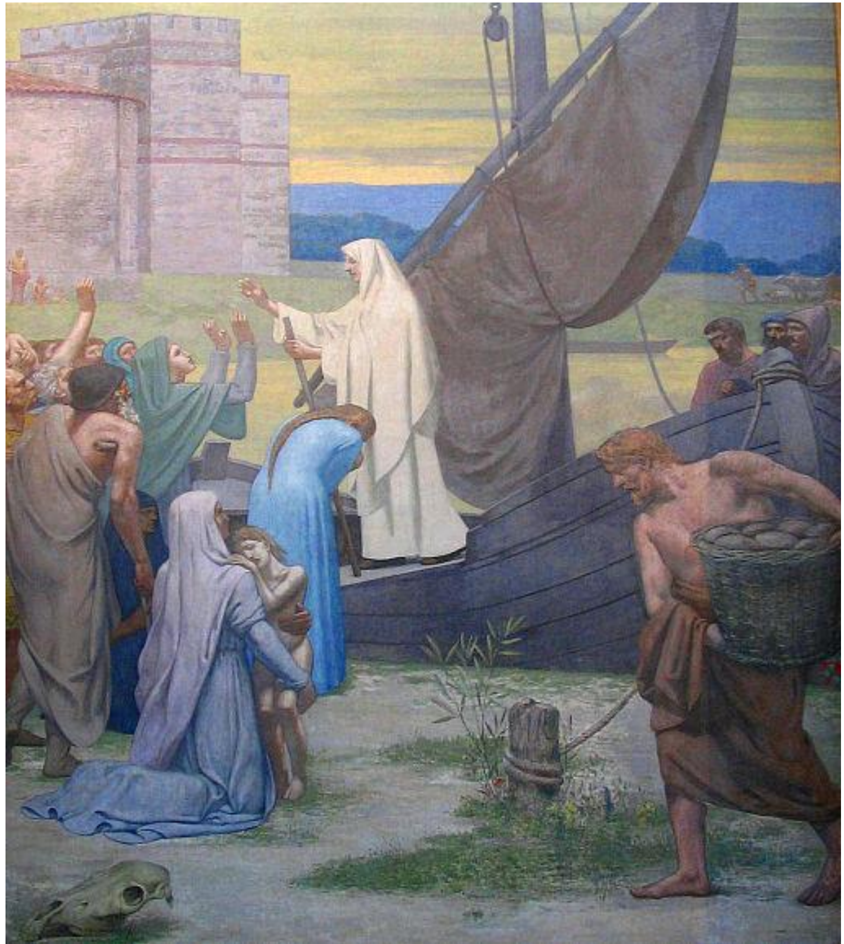
The Parisians, as soon as they heard of the coming of Attila, had but one thought, to flee from their city. Priests, lawyers, merchants, the bargemen of the Seine hurried the people away. One woman alone remained calm and confident; she was Genevieve, now about 28.

Her faith had strengthened her in the thought that God will always be with those who trust in Him, and while men trembled and left the city, Genevieve gathered the women together and reminded them of Judith and Esther, the saviours of their people. Her steadfastness impressed the women; and Genevieve then went to the men and showed them how boldness could check the barbarians, while fear would leave the city open to their savagery and destruction. But the men were proud, they hesitated to take advice from a young woman. "Is that Genevieve not a witch?" they asked. "Or is she not a traitor, paid by the enemy who wishes to take our lives?"



La Vie de Sainte Genevive

But Genevieve let them talk and remained calm; she knew God would not abandon her. As a mob was hastening to make an end of her, a bishop appeared at her side. "Parisians," he cried. "Beware of what you do!" and the mob stayed its hand; the storm passed by; all was well; Attila was driven from Gaul. The renown of Genevieve dates back to that day, but her fame was to be greater still.



Sainte Genevieve Ravitaillant Paris Assieg by Pierre Puvis de Chavannes

The time came when Paris was threatened with an invasion of the Franks. They came along the valley of the Seine and besieged the walls the Romans had built. These were strong enough for the defence of Paris, but could the citizens hold out against that most cruel foe of all—hunger? Genevieve, resolute as a knight, forgetting that she was but a woman, ventured out in a little boat. She steered her way down the river and passed beyond the enemy's camps. She went from village to village imploring help in the name of God for those in Paris. And God led Genevieve as in a thousand years He was to lead Joan. She was able to convey safely to Paris eleven boats brimming over with grain. Nobody knows how she managed to do it and evade the enemy's sharp watch.

But the fact was that the Franks loved Paris and wished no harm to come to it; perhaps they loved it so much that they overlooked the supplies now regularly brought to the city by water; and so it may be that the resistance would have lasted years and years had not Clovis, King of the Franks, fallen in love with the Christian princess Clotilde of Burgundy whom the Parisians wished to have as queen.

The peace was made; Clovis reigned in Paris, first king of the French—so called from Frank. Genevieve became his friend and counsellor; they joined in their plans for the good of the people and the prosperity of France, and together they began the cathedral of St. Denis, where the French kings lie.

Genevieve lived long enough to see the French throne safe from wild invaders.

Chapter 2

Alcuin

735-804 A.D., France

But for him Charlemagne would be known simply as the mightiest conqueror of Europe during the Dark Ages; Alcuin made him, although unable to write, a scholar and a saint in shining armour. Alcuin himself was of a conquering line; he was of a powerful Saxon family settled in Yorkshire, where he was born in the year that Bede died. For the next five hundred years there was no rival in the world to Bede as a historian; Alcuin came into the golden age that the old monk had created, and is regarded as its great and splendid crown.

Charlemagne et Alcuin (detail) by Jean-Victor Schnetz

Barbarism had swamped learning in tears and blood on the Continent, but it lingered on in England, where the great school at York under Egbert and Ethelbert was a last lighthouse of culture in an agonized world. They had no creative, original spirit; they had no store of classics with which to carry them far beyond the bounds of monastic teaching, for the ancient learning was sealed up in Constantinople, which was fortified against the barbarians and was not to deliver her treasure to common knowledge for seven hundred years.

But at Alcuin's school they had Virgil, and they learned and taught his writings as part of Christian doctrine, although he was a pagan of pagans, if a saintly one. But his mind out-towered Dark Ages thought, and they loved and reverenced him as, after the Bible, the greatest of teachers. They yearned for more of such riches from the past, and Alcuin made perilous journeys in

Alcuin of York to the Court of Charlemagne

Europe to seek them.

Egbert the Archbishop died, and Ethelbert surrendered the masterships of the school to Alcuin, who trained young princes and patricians from all parts of the land. When one of his own pupils, Eanbald, was elected to the see of York in place of Ethelbert, Alcuin himself went to Rome to bring back the official emblems of the new archbishop's office. On the way home he met Charlemagne at Parma. The two men knew of each other and were immediately attracted.

Charlemagne was 39, Alcuin 46; the king a barbarian in habit of life, but fired with the noblest instincts and with longings for the treasures of the mind and spirit. He, who had all Europe at his mercy, begged the English scholar to quit his home and go to Aachen to set up school and teach him and his family, and practically to civilise them. Years later the old scholar wrote to him, "Would I had been as useful in the service of God as I was eager to obey you. I loved so much in you that I saw you were seeking in me."

Alcuin returned to England to fulfil his mission, obtained leave of absence, and in 782 settled at the Court of Charlemagne as schoolmaster, with the great king himself as his first scholar. Other members of the royal family were added to the class, and these in turn brought in eager aspirants for knowledge among the princes and nobles of the Court; and for many years there existed under Alcuin one of the strangest, most delightful schools that ever imparted knowledge to noble minds.

He had help in his tuition from English scholars whom he had taken back from his own school, but he was the inspiration and the chief teacher. He never could manage to make poor Charlemagne master any writing beyond his own signature, as he taught by word of mouth. He instructed Charlemagne in philosophy, religion, and oratory, and he taught him to read, so that he could enjoy the writings of our Bede and the father of English poetry, our Saxon Caedmon; but those fine letters

that Charlemagne sent to Alcuin, addressing him as Beloved Master, he had to dictate.

Charlemagne et Alcuin by Jean-Victor Schnetz

Other members of the family had more time and skill of hand, and Alcuin taught them all he knew. The work was important, for the mind of the world was in a state of flux. The barbarian conquerors of Rome picked up the Latin of the former mistress of the world, but they could not read or write it, and their own languages were mere sounds and phrases, without any written characters. Their spoken Latin was, of course, a hash of mispronunciations and bad grammar.

The task of Alcuin was to make his royal scholars learn like children. He taught them the spelling and grammar of Latin, which, as it was the one universal language of the age, enabled them not only to read all the books and manuscripts that could be found but to correspond in the tongue, to write letters to far lands that any scholar could read and answer. Such was his tact, such was his gentle courtesy and sweetness of bearing, that he never offended, but had grown-up princes, princesses, and warriors for scholars as docile and loving as if they had been little children.

At the end of eight years Alcuin, who was master of the mind of the master of Christianity, came home like an obedient younger son of the Church to resume his duties in York, and then was permitted to return to Charlemagne, whom he never afterwards left. We must not forget, however, that Alcuin's life was one of frequent danger and hazard. He had repeatedly to close his school in Charlemagne's palace at Aachen and accompany the warrior king on his campaigns.

He shared the horrors and dangers of many a dreadful battlefield, and in the ebb and flow of the fortunes of war with enormous armies of fierce barbarians the great scholar needed all his faith in God and ultimate good to maintain a stout and unshaken heart. He never flinched; where his beloved king went Alcuin also went, until increasing age enfeebled his strength, and a yearning for the quiet of the cloisters induced him to ask Charlemagne to permit him to alter his method of life.

Charlemagne so loved him that he would have given him a kingdom had he desired it. Alcuin accepted three great abbeys, not for love of power or riches but in order that he might institute reforms among the clergy corresponding to those that he was instituting at Court, compelling the

monks to make themselves masters of learning and to live earnest, godly lives, consecrated to religion and the teaching and succour of the poor.

A fourth great abbey, that at Tours, he chose as his own home. There he founded a school of learning that only his old monastery at York rivalled. He caused the Continent to be scoured for books and manuscripts, and earnest seekers after knowledge flocked to him from all European countries.

Charlemagne, realising that various important manuscripts on the same subject differed in their contents, desired that Alcuin should collect and compare all such pretenders to authority and prepare new and acceptable ones on whose truth the reader could rely. In response Alcuin created the finest scriptorium in Europe, a department of the monastery in which scholars wrote.

He and his own old scholars set the pattern. The writing was done in good English characters, such as York had taught, and when we read of the famous Caroline script we may remember that this was the writing founded on that which Alcuin taught. It was the finest, most legible writing in Europe, and lasted for books and documents until Gutenberg came in to print and relieve the scriveners of the burden of their age-old task.

At Court and at his great school at Tours Alcuin reigned as president of a little republic of letters. Master and scholars all adopted names in their studies. Charlemagne himself was David, a name by which Alcuin used to address him in familiar affectionate letters; modest Alcuin was Flaccus, a very poor poet of the first century; Charlemagne's son-in-law Angilbert was Homer—presumptuous pupil!

But the names chosen—kingship, of course, for Charlemagne, and those of pagan writers of the classical age for devout Christian students—are an indication of the sympathy and tolerance of the school for pure intellect, whatever the religious beliefs of the possessors of those names. Alcuin's study of his pupils and the teaching for them that resulted also affords an amusing and profitable sidelight on the age.

Always remembering that the age was one of incessant war and bloodshed, how attractive it is to think of that peaceful sanctuary in the palace at Aachen, or at the vast monastery of Tours, with Alcuin writing of his methods of Charlemagne:

> To some I give the honey of Scripture; others I set myself to nourish upon the fruit of grammatical subtlety. Now and then I intoxicate a student with the wine of ancient sciences, and a few I dazzle with the brightness and the fixed order of the stars.

So ardent was Charlemagne in cooperating with his beloved master in this teaching of Astronomy that he set up at Aachen a jewelled representation of the heavens called a planisphere, so rich that his grandson Lothair, in a later age and in an hour of crisis, broke it into fragments and used them to pay his soldiers.

So the happy, fruitful years passed away, with learning spreading in widening eddies, with books multiplying under the busy pens of Alcuin's learned clerks. The day came when Charlemagne was to be crowned Emperor of Rome, and he desired that his master should set the crown upon his brow.

"Have a pious compassion," replied Alcuin, who was now old and feeble; "permit repose to a man who is worn out with labours; suffer him to pray for you in his devotions and to prepare himself, by confession and fasting, to appear before the Eternal Judge." So Charlemagne went to Rome with-

out the man he loved best, and it was the Pope who crowned him Emperor.

Alcuin died at Tours and was buried in the church of St. Martin. Charlemagne was the noblest, most heroic figure of the Dark Ages, and this splendid old scholar was his guiding star. Through him England relit the lamp of learning in the world, and brought light, humanity, and mercy into an age otherwise horrible with violence and ignorance.

Statue of Alcuin at Kunsthistorisches Museum

Chapter 3

Charlemagne

742-814 A.D., France

Charlemagne, Empereur d'Occident by Louis-Félix Amiel

When Rome fell and Europe was plunged into the abyss, with barbarian chiefs leading their hordes wheresoever they chose, a man came forth to stay the flood of ruin. He was Charlemagne, who wrought perhaps the most superb revolution in the life of nations ever achieved in a single age.

He was the grandson of Charles Martel, who, raising himself to the kingship of the Franks, saved Europe from becoming a Moslem land by defeating an immense army of Saracens in the very heart of France, after they had conquered Spain and mastered a world far greater than Europe. His father, Pepin the Short, conquered and disciplined the south of France, and Charlemagne succeeded to the sovereignty of the Franks when he was 26.

His people, of obscure Germanic origin, were stalwart and of warlike habit, and war continued nearly everywhere after three centuries of rapine and bloodshed. The frightful wars in England at the time between Britons, Saxons, and Danes were part of a wider movement in Europe, where conflict was constant between peoples whose very names are now forgotten.

Charlemagne and his trusted counsellors decided that the safety of Christendom demanded a defensive war which, keeping at bay the Saracens on the one hand, would, on the other, curb the

numerous tribes in the north loosely called Saxons, who, enemies in England, had a working understanding with the Vikings in northern Europe, the bond of union being a hatred of Christianity, worship of the pagan gods, and a love of war and plunder. The decision taken was a terrible one, for the Saxons were widely scattered; they could not be met in any concentrated area, for they had no cities; they must be fought again and again.

To follow the war would be to write the history of Europe for a generation. Charlemagne's conquest of the Saxons took him 32 years, and cost him twenty armies. He won in the end, but in the meantime his life was as that of a man combating wolf packs that grew and advanced from all quarters. He had no love of war, no desire for gain or glory; he felt himself a defender of religion and civilisation, and for these he must fight and die, if necessary. Danger came from all points of the compass, and whenever he advanced in a new direction to meet it the Saxons rose to burn and harry, to murder or enslave.

In northern Italy, the Lombards, delighting in war and hating Christianity, were threatening to overrun the land and destroy the Church. Answering an appeal of the Pope, Charlemagne crossed the Alps in two columns and in a wonderful campaign conquered the Lombards in 774 and made himself their king. The Lombards disappeared as a separate nation, absorbed by the Italians, but they left their name in Lombardy; they came to England and started our banking system, giving us in Lombard Street, their home, one of the most famous thoroughfares in the financial world of the present day, and adding to our language the word lumber.

He was welcomed to Rome by the Pope, who crowned the conqueror's two sons, a few years later, King of Italy and King of Aquitaine respectively. Three times within less than ten years Charlemagne had to go with arms to the aid of the Pope, each time being called back to fight new battles with the Saxons. Sandwiched between these expeditions was one into Spain, where Charlemagne beat back the Saracens and extended his dominions to the River Ebro. Again a serious Saxon incursion, this time to the walls of Cologne, recalled him.

He rode with the main body of his army, leaving the rearguard to his nephew Roland. The rearguard, returning through the valley of Roncesvalles, was attacked by Gascons concealed in the wooded heights, and exterminated. From that sadly memorable day sprang the great epic of France, the Song of Roland. Probably it is true that Chivalry takes its rise in the heroic story of the valiant Roland, but the facts in the great poem are falsified; the Gascons, who did the fell deed, are represented as Saracens, numbering hundreds of thousands. A literature grew up about the event, and when the Normans were losing heart at the Battle of Hastings, nearly three hundred years later, Taillefer, the Norman-French minstrel, chanted his version of the song, and so played his part in making William of Normandy William the Conqueror.

Soon after this one of the finest accidents in history happened. A splendid Yorkshireman, Alcuin, a learned abbot of noble character, returning from Rome to York, met Charlemagne, seven years his junior. The great King fell under the spell of the Saxon's learning, and begged him to make his home with him at Aachen, to educate not only his children but Charlemagne himself. Alcuin was the first of a host of the most learned men in Europe that Charlemagne gathered about him. He set up a school in Charlemagne's own palace, and taught Latin and Greek as well as mathematics and writing.

But the poor great King never learned to write! We have a magnificent autograph of his, but it

Charlemagne Mourning Over the Death of His Wife Fastrada by Adolf Ehrhardt

may have been a secretary's. In a pathetic little note his secretary, in writing his Life, tells us that Charlemagne "tried to write, and would keep under his pillow his tablets and writing-book, so as to practise his hand when he had leisure, but (the secretary adds) he began late in life and made little advance."

In the intervals of war he pursued the arts of peace. Alcuin he addressed as his "beloved master, always to be named by us with love," and thanked him for his "welcome blessing both on us and our family." He esteemed the school in his own home that he built schools and churches all over his dominions and provided them with worthy masters and pastors. A light was beginning to rise on the dark and turbulent waters of ignorance and savagery the incursions of the barbarians had let loose. The hosts against whom he fought saw that there was virtue in peace and culture, and as missionaries accompanied all his armies conquests became more frequent and enduring.

He conquered the Saxons, he conquered Bohemia, Bavaria, and the greater part of Hungary, and settled what was to become the Austrian Empire. Nowhere did lust of inquest dictate his actions, but a recognition of the fact that life and religion, law and property, could not be safe until

peace and discipline were imposed. He fought and triumphed as a crusader. He had become undisputed monarch of the whole of France, Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, part of Spain, and nearly all of Italy.

He was in Rome at Mass on Christmas Day in 800 when suddenly the Pope, apparently without warning, approached him as he knelt at the altar, and, placing a crown on his head, hailed him as "Augustus, crowned of God, great and pacific Emperor of the Romans," anointed him with consecrated oil and bowed before him, a great company of priests and warriors ratifying the act with solemn enthusiasm.

Thus was founded what was called the Holy Roman Empire, which, with our own Earl of Cornwall as one of its 13th-century Emperors, lasted 1006 years, collapsing quietly one day in 1806 after the French Revolution had made it a mockery and a scorn. Charlemagne was already as exalted as his new title sounded, for the greater part of Western Europe was now under his law; but the name of Rome and its rulers and offices had lost nothing of its magic and awe-inspiring majesty. It stood as the one thing believed to be eternal on Earth, and the Emperor was now in name, as in fact, the greatest man in the world.

The worst of his wars were over, and he settled to the solidification of the immense empire that he had brought under subjection. In his conduct we are reminded of our own Alfred, as with yearning affection he sought to win men from war to scholarship and the arts of peace.

He built an edifice which, in the hands of worthy successors, would have spared Europe another

Charlemagne's Coronation as Emperor by Friedrich Kaulbach

Charlemagne Placing the Relics of Christ in the Chapel of Aachen by Bernard van Orley

seven centuries of misery. He devised a magnificent judicial system whereby local self-government was to some extent secured throughout his dominions. There was no need to have recourse to the sword; the laws existed, and there were officials to administer them, with appeal every year to higher authority. Every wild nation under him had traditions, tribal laws or regulations, and all that was worthy he preserved in written codes. But he Christianised all his laws.

Churchmen were the great scholars of the age, and he made them his lawyers. He enriched the Church, he covered his conquered lands with homes of learning, and made aptitude in learning more a matter for reward than proficiency with the spear and battle-axe. Under his system the lowliest born could rise, by learning, to the highest offices. He made his beloved Alcuin the richest man in the whole of his dominions and gave one of his daughters in marriage to his learned secretary.

He converted bog-trotting brigands into useful farmers, and their sons into scholars and officials.

He rewarded industry and raged against indolence. In his palace there were no sottish carousals ending in quarrel and bloodshed; he loved music, he popularised chanting; he encouraged minstrels of repute, and in his halls were sung some of the first of the great body of German poems.

If he abolished war in that fierce and war-like age, he could not prevent recourse to violence, but he instituted a system whereby the offender was made to pay in money for injury—so much for a nose, so much for limb, so much for a tooth; and the system survives in modified form in our own courts where we are awarded damages for injury by motor-cars, trains, and so on. He found Europe bleeding and her house on fire; he stanched its wounds, put out the flames, built new homes, created industries, tamed the fierce hearts of brutal men, and gave them an ideal of peace. It seemed as if the Golden Age of which the ancients wrote had come to Europe.

Even enemies recognised his greatness and paid him honour. He strides through Europe like the prince in a fairy story. He himself, a magnificent figure, stalwart, brave as a lion, had half the world at his disposal, yet his tastes were as modest as a peasant's. On art and learning and good works he was a noble spendthrift, but for himself he cared only for the consolations of a simple life.

Take him for all in all, he ranks with Caesar and Alfred among the sublime figures of the world. To the Church he was a saint, to Germany a fellow-countryman, to the French the greatest of their kings, and to the Roman Empire its Emperor. To us he is a practical crusader, strong, resolute, inspired, terrible on the battlefield, but a patriarch of wisdom and loving kindness in the home and the council chamber, a founder of civilisation, order, and goodwill, patron of learning, and friend of peace.

Chapter 4

Louis IX

1215-1270 A.D., France

He is the only Louis France has called a saint. Piety was the mainspring of his life, and made of him a Crusader, but he gave to his country peace, security, and prosperity.

King of France during nearly half of the 13th century, a period when the great cathedrals of France, the supreme expression of her art, were rising into being, and when the University of Paris was at the height of its reputation for learning, his life is well epitomised in a contemporary tribute paid to him:

> Happy the kingdom governed by a king, foreseeing, pious, and courageous in adversity.
>
> He used his riches to succour the poor, he despised the soft things of life, he loved labour, and defended the Church, he established the Throne on justice, he caused France to enjoy peace.
>
> The Church owes to him her prosperity and the whole of France the honour where with she is surrounded.

Saint Louis, King of France by Nicolas-Guy Brenet

His grandfather was the great Philip Augustus who recovered the English provinces in France from King John, strengthened the power of the Crown, and made Paris the capital of France. His father Louis the Eighth, once summoned in desperation to England by the English barons during their struggle with John, reigned only three years, so that he himself was a child when he succeeded to the throne.

He was fortunate in having a mother, Blanche of Castile, with sufficient understanding to bring up her son wisely and a force of character enabling her to hold her own against the French barons who thought they saw a welcome opportunity of recovering the authority of which they had been deprived by the strong hand of Philip Augustus. They formed a feudal coalition against the regent Blanche, the She-Wolf, as they called her, and they accused her of sending the King's money to Spain. Fortunately for France the coalition lacked leadership and a united front. One of the barons, Thibaud, Count of Champagne and afterwards King of Navarre, had a romantic attachment to the regent of which she availed herself. In any case Blanche, granddaughter of the redoubtable Eleanor of Aquitaine and of Henry the Second of England, knew how to defend herself and the opposition was not popular.

On one occasion, when the prince and his mother were in Montlhéry, they dared not return to Paris till the people of the capital came in arms to escort them, so that the roads were full of men, armed and unarmed, calling on God to give a good life and a long one to the King and to defend and guard him from his enemies. Blanche formed and educated her son in the long years of his minority. She had energy, ability, and a taste for public affairs in which she never ceased to take part; and years after, when Louis went to the Crusades, he paid her the compliment of making her regent during his absence.

Louis IX and the Prisoners Freed at His Coronation
from The Story of the Greatest Nations, 1906

Virtuous and pious as she was, the regent's training of her son was essentially austere, and even after his marriage with Margaret of Provence she tyrannised over both him and her daughter-in-law with a fierce possessiveness that in some of its incidents would be almost unbelievable if we had not the word of the King's biographer for them.

But when in 1234 Louis came of age to govern for himself he emerged from his mother's tutelage with a character remarkable for personal courage and an intense faith. His great object in life was to lead men heavenward. Throughout his life he spent much time in prayer and meditation. He himself gave his child-

Saint Louis Receiving the Holy Crown from Baudouin II by Rafael Tejeo

ren their religious education, coming each evening to their bedside to pray with them. He was no less concerned with the spiritual welfare of all surrounding him. He charged Vincent de Beauvais, the author of Speculum, a sort of moral encyclopedia famous in the Middle Ages, to give moral and religious instruction to his princes, knights, councillors, and ministers. The Sainte Chapelle of Paris, that exquisite monument of medieval piety, was built by his orders. He endowed an asylum of 300 blind people, and founded a number of monasteries.

His friend and biographer De Joinville occasionally fell short of the ideals demanded by the King.

> The King asked me if I washed the feet of the poor on Holy Thursday. I replied to him, "No indeed, certainly not," for it did not seem good to me. He said that I ought not to despise it, for the good Lord had done so.

In appearance Louis is described as slender to leanness, and tall. He had an angelic countenance and a gracious presence. Physically he was weak, and mortified himself by rigorous pious exercises. He was often ill, and had contracted a form of malaria in fighting the English and nearly died of its effects. When he returned from the seventh Crusade in 1252 he was already bent and bald like an

old man, though he was not yet 40.

He was an absolute monarch, and his piety enhanced his sense of the Divine Authority of Kings. He felt this divinity himself, for he once said to his confessor that he had no tears to water the aridity of his heart. Yet there was one thing lacking to this kingly saint. Sin, or what he believed to be sin, so horrified him that he would not feel pity for the sinner. The grace of charity was denied to him. He was a fanatic. After the iniquitous war against the Albigenses, whom the Roman Church regarded as heretics, he yielded to the Pope in sanctioning the most cruel punishment of heresy.

As a ruler he was preeminent. He banned private wars in his realm, he dealt severely with baronial tyranny, he issued a good coinage, he kept overbearing officials in check, reorganised the machinery of government, and founded the parliament of Paris. The Sorbonne was established in his reign and named after his confessor. The peasants of France owed to him and to his mother a tranquillity which before his time had been unknown to them.

His foreign policy was to some extent influenced by family considerations. The royal houses of England and France were at that time closely related. His wife's sister Eleanor had married Henry the Third of England. Henry had supported the religious barons against Louis and made ineffectual attempts to recover the lost inheritance of his father John. But in 1263 it was to the just and powerful King of France that Henry and his barons appealed as arbiter. It is true that the decision of Louis against the just demands of Simon de Montfort and the barons for reform was disregarded, but the fact that he should have been called in to give a decision shows the esteem in which he was held.

The great ambition of his life was to lead a Crusade for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre. He

Saint Louis Delivering Justice Under the Oak Tree at Vincennes by Pierre-Narcisse Guérin

made a vow to take the cross during a severe illness. When he was sufficiently recovered his mother and all his councillors endeavoured to dissuade him for the sake of France from fulfilling the vow; but he persisted. In 1248 the Crusaders, including many English nobles, assembled at the little walled town of Aigues-Mortes, on the marshy shores of the Mediterranean in the South of France. Today the port has silted up, but the gates and battlements are much the same now as then. The statue of St. Louis is in the chief square, not far from the solitary cypress. Something of the glamour of the Crusaders still hangs about the forsaken spot where the sour marshes come close to the walls. When the hour of departure came, the ships, gay with the banners of the knights, set their course for Egypt, intending first to strike at the Sultan who had been responsible for the defeat of the Christians some years before. Louis broke the journey at Cyprus, wintering there and collecting further troops. Early in the spring the voyage was continued to Egypt, and Damietta was taken.

That was the end of the Crusade's success. It was already June, a few days before the rising of the Nile. Six months were wasted, provisions were consumed, the expedition was attacked by scurvy. It suffered more from divided counsels. The Saracens inflicted heavy losses on the weakened forces of the Crusaders. Louis himself was at the point of death from dysentery when he was taken prisoner. After being restored by an Arab physician he bought his freedom at the price of the surrender of Damietta. Then, undaunted by failure, he went on to Syria with a view to strengthening the forts still in Christian hands there. Four years he remained in Palestine; even the news of his mother's death, which should have hastened his return to France, did not bring him back till 1254.

But these ineffectual four years did not exhaust the King's crusading zeal. Unhappily for France he again returned to the fray, though, fortunately for his kingdom, not before he had put his many reforms in working order. The Sultan of Egypt had begun new aggressions against the Christians in Syria. He took Jaffa and Antioch, and by 1268 only Acre, Tripoli, and a few towns remained to the Latin kingdom. France needed her King Louis, but Louis the saint believed that the Holy Land needed him more.

In 1270 he embarked upon the eighth and last Crusade. Among those who went with him was his English nephew Prince Edward, afterwards Edward the First. Louis was ill before he started; the expedition was begun in July, the hottest month of the year. By some pious twist of his mind, aided by some specious arguments of his brother, Charles of Anjou and Sicily, he was persuaded to direct the expedition to Tunis, where he hoped that his presence at the head of the army would induce the Sultan to embrace Christianity. It was a hope he did not live to realise.

Arrived in Tunis he encamped on the site of ancient Carthage. His malady rapidly increased, and he died there soon after his arrival. As death approached, his last entreaty was to St. Denis, the patron saint of France, in whose church he was buried in accordance with his last wish. His tomb became a shrine where for long years afterwards people went in hope and belief of miracles.

His life was given to his ideals. His greatest reward, even if he would not have thought it so, was that long afterwards he lived in the hearts of his people and is even now the most revered of all French kings.

Chapter 5

Joan of Arc

1412-1431 A.D., France

Till the world ends men will talk of her with wonder and amaze. This peasant girl who lived 500 years ago achieved in her short life of 19 years a miracle for which she died. She was herself the miracle. She was herself the unity of every element of greatness; she was a leader of the leader-less, an inspiration where faith was dead, the veritable saviour of a lost cause.

She was the imperishable emblem of those who fight for what the Englishman calls My Country and the Frenchman calls La Patrie. To France, all these centuries afterwards, she is herself la patrie, the embodiment of all that Frenchmen live and die for.

To the England that martyred her she is no less, and the reverence in which the whole world holds her is tinged with remorse for the infamy that sent this heroine, this saint, this martyr to her death. She died because she was the saviour of her country; she was delivered to the tormentors because the spirit of God spoke in her; she was as one who is sold for thirty pieces of silver.

Joan of Arc by Gari Melchers

None other has more truly followed in the steps of Him who came not to send peace but a sword. Her story was set in the century of Agincourt, when France lay at the feet of her English kings, when a French king who was a lunatic had been succeeded by one who was a half-wit, whom in derision

his people called the King of Bourges, for Bourges was nearly all that was left to him of the land of his inheritance. What the armies left, the marauders and bandits pillaged and plundered. Half of that land of France, so fair with its great cathedrals and villages nestling among industriously tilled fields, was maimed and bleeding, while another part which should have come to her rescue was impotent or, like the Dauphin and his evil Court, lived in slothful and careless ease. In this welter of hate and discord, slothfulness and impenitent luxury, was born to France not a man but a village girl. We see her through her childhood and girlhood tending her father's flocks and herds, or sewing with her mother in the window, making embroideries for the church. The simple piety filling the heart of this child who went to Mass like many another and saw the light fall through the stained-glass windows of the little church of Domremy, was to blossom into a glory of faith and inspiration that has no name nor any explanation except that it was the gift of God to the humble.

A poet of our own time has written how a child went forth, and all that the child saw and heard became part of her.

> The early lilacs became part of this child
> And grass, and white and red clover, and the song of the birds.

The child of Domremy knew all these; but many other things were mingled with them. She would hear tales of war and of the ransacking of her land. They came very close to her, filling her with stern resolve; but beyond and above them were other thoughts, far transcending the imaginings of childhood.

What she had learned in her simple faith in her church became transfigured into something like a vision sent from Heaven itself. She saw the white and shining saints and believed that they were calling; and one day in her garden these Voices startled her. She was to save poor France, she was to go to the Dauphin, the King's son, and crown him King at Rheims. "Daughter of God, go on: I will be with you," the Voices said.

Joan listened with trembling and wonder, moving in two worlds, the one common to all about her, the other peopled with God and His angels. She believed that God was speaking to her and, so believing, she lived every hour as if He lived in her.

From this belief, inexplicable because it is beyond explanation, arose the miracle. No facts can explain what she did; she turns history upside down. We have simply to accept what happened. This girl of 16 set out to save France, to set a tottering king firm on the throne, to drive the English away, and to give France a vision which would lift her high among the nations.

She went on this adventure with no other weapon than her faith in God. Nothing could keep her back, neither her father's anger, nor persuasion, nor ridicule; not even the ban of the Church. Her father said he would rather drown her in the Meuse than see her riding with soldiers. The captain of the town, when she told him she must go to the Dauphin to make him king, sent her away with a jest. The priest with whom her uncle and the captain conferred had no other thought than to order the evil spirits out of her.

But God is not mocked. We have high authority for saying that. He chooses the simple things in this world to confound the wise, and in the end Joan's persistence won. The captain of Vaucouleurs set Joan with two guardians on the road to the Court at Chinon. She put on boy's clothes and for eleven days these three travelled by dangerous ways. They slept by day and rode by night to

Joan of Arc by Jules Bastien-Lepage

avoid the roving bands of Englishmen, and forded rivers to miss the towns. “God clears the way for me,” said Joan; “I was born for this”; and at last they reached the Court where Charles the Seventh wasted his days among clowns and flatterers and fops.

If we wonder that the inspiration of this heavenly Maid should have gathered round a man so base we must remind ourselves that all she did was not for a witless figure of a king but for the ideal of the kingship of France. For the sake of the kingdom she tried to save its king, and what was surest in her mind was that there was no true king till he had consecrated his life to noble causes. This Dauphin, if he would be the leader of a new life in France, must be God’s Anointed and crowned in sight of all; and Joan would see to it.

After two days waiting they led her into his presence, an object we do not doubt of much curiosity and amusement. The country maid ignored them all, went straight to the king, and knelt

before him. “God give your good life, gentle Dauphin,” she said, and then the Dauphin played a trick on her. “It is not I who am the king,” he said, pointing, “there is the king.” But she was not deceived. “Gentle prince, it is you or no other,” she said; “I am sent to you by the King of Heaven to tell you that you shall be crowned at Rheims.” And then she took Charles aside and said something to him which for ever after he regarded as a proof of her sincerity and inspiration. The king had a bitter secret, and what Joan said to him showed that she understood.

He was torn in one way by a kind of superstitious awe of this strange girl who came to him with an air of authority almost divine, and in another by the ridicule showered on her claims by priest and soldier, lord and lady. In the end he elected for her. It was announced that the king, “bearing in mind the great goodness that was in the Maid,” would make use of her.

The English army was besieging Orleans and blocked the way to Rheims. To drive the troops from their encircling lines and raise the siege was the first thing commanded of Joan. They gave her a banner of white and gold, and on it was embroidered the portrait of Christ. All through her triumphs she bore with her own hand this standard of the Light of the World. The sword she carried but never used was brought from behind an altar where she had been told that it would be found. We see her riding through all her appointed ways a stainless figure clad in white like a sainted messenger of God.

She was put at the head of all the king’s armies, and in April 1429 led them to Orleans. With an assurance that had in it a touch of the sublime she demanded from the English the keys of all

Jeanne d’Arc Blessing the Standard at Blois by Charles-Henri Michel

the good towns they had taken by violence in God's France, and begged them to leave the kingdom. If they would not believe her, she declared to them, she would make her way and cause "so great a commotion as has not been in France for a thousand years."

The English mocked her. They sent their defiance to the dairy-maid and bade her go back to her cows. But there must have been in this dairy-maid, besides her unwavering faith in her mission, something of the indefinably great quality of leadership. She knew her business better than her captains. Inspired by her, the French men-at-arms flung themselves against the English defences and the English fled, their forces broken. The siege of seven months was raised in eight days. Joan of Domremy was Maid of Orleans.

The news flew from end to end of France, almost too great for belief. It was received with a sort of timorous incredulity at the Court of the Dauphin. Joan called on him to follow up the victory by

Sleeping Joan of Arc by George W. Joy

marching to Rheims. The wavering Dauphin said there was plenty of time, and Joan, with a sad foreboding replied, "I shall only last a year; use me as long as you can."

It was true; she lasted but a year—but what a year! On the way to Rheims the city of Troyes surrendered at the sight of the Maid, and after Troyes fell Chalons, where the gates were opened to them, and, Chalons not being far from Domremy, a group of neighbours came to see if all these tales were true about their Maid.

The campaign lasted no more than six weeks with a victory almost every day before they reached Rheims and the king rode into the town. In that great cathedral, more than any other the spiritual emblem of France, Charles was anointed king, and Joan, her triumph won, knelt before him crying amid her tears, "Now is the pleasure of God fulfilled."

If it had been decreed that her story should end there this must have seemed her greatest hour. It was ordained that she should move through treachery and defeat, dismay and death, to a greater

hour, the hour of her martyrdom in sight of another cathedral, that of Rouen. It might have been that Joan should have gone back to Domremy with the only reward asked, which was that her village might be free from taxes. That, at any rate, was granted. For 360 years you will find in the books of taxes where the payments of all the towns and villages are set down that opposite Domremy is no record of taxes paid, but simply the words: "Nothing, for the sake of the Maid."

She had been too successful. The king's generals, stirred by so many unexpected triumphs, were anxious to go forward. Joan, for the first time since she left home, doubted and faltered—she had done what the Voices had told her to do and the Voices were no longer clear. But she went on, resolved to deliver Paris. Soissons surrendered before her, Chateau Thierry gave way, and then the wretched king for whom all this was done made a secret truce with his enemies and betrayed his own army. In the crisis of the battle for Paris he recalled his generals and abandoned Joan.

Never till that hour had she been beaten, and the desertion of the king changed her fortune. The loyalty about her broke down. In that hour of betrayal her own loyalty remained but she went to the Cathedral of St. Denis and laid her armour on the altar there. Her work was done. Yet even then she would not desert the king who had deserted her. She stayed a little while at his Court, but found no place there and left it, as we may well believe, in a disdain not less deep for being unspoken.

The Departure of Joan of Arc by Jean-Jacques Scherrer

Yet once more she raised a hand to help the pitiful creature who had abandoned the Maid who had crowned him. Charles was in danger at Compiegne and she hastened there, raising a troop. There, in a disordered rush of the battle, she was surrounded and dragged from her horse into the dust and made a prisoner. They sold her to the English; her own countrymen sold her, as one long ago sold her Master.

Not a hand of all those she had helped was raised to help her. The people of the towns she had delivered wept for her, the whole population of Tours

walked barefoot through the streets; but all official France was silent while Paris lit its bonfires and sang the Te Deum in Notre Dame because Joan of Domremy was chained up in a cage.

They put her in an iron cage at Rouen, and there, bound by chains to a pillar, she was watched night and day by soldiers and common men so that she was never for a moment alone. They spied on her, listening for some word which might convict her; and then they dragged her to the chapel of the Castle of Rouen where she was to face the judgment of the Church.

Joan of Arc Imprisoned, in Prayer by Charles-Henri Michel

Not an Englishman breathing is there now who is not ashamed of this page in our past. But to the English Joan was at least an enemy, and in those days of superstition she seemed to them a witch of evil subtlety and power. But what shall we say of Joan's own countrymen, who deserted and sold her and sat by idle and silent while the hours of one of the greatest tragedies in history tolled slowly to the doom awaiting this fair Maid of France?

With malignant ingenuity the English contrived that Joan's judges, when she should be brought to trial for her imagined offences against the Church, should be French churchmen and lawyers. The Bishop of Winchester, who represented the English king, made Bishop Cauchon president of the tribunal. He was well fitted for the task, a master of subtle questioning, of learned mind, and of mean soul, with a relentless determination to satisfy his English paymasters.

For three months this peasant girl faced this monster and her 62 other judges in the great hall at Rouen, with unfaltering determination and an address not less astonishing than all else in her brief career. But the end was predetermined. The wolves were resolute to destroy the lamb. They threatened her with torture, they wore her down with endless questionings, but almost to the very last she was resolute in her denials.

When at the end they told her that if she would embrace the Church and sign a paper admitting that she was murderous and blasphemous and lying they would not kill her, she answered that, if she were in judgment and saw the fire lighted and the faggots burning and the executioner ready to

rake the fire and she herself within the fire, she could say no more.

But there came a moment, to us the saddest of all, when poor Joan was to show that, after all, she was a woman, and broken down with her long persecution and the threat of the fire. They pressed her to submit. Did she not love her life? Would she not trust the Church? And the voices from the crowd came to disturb her. Joan, why will you die? they asked; Joan, will you not save yourself?

Cauchon stood there with two sentences written out, imprisonment for life if she submitted, burning at the stake if she did not. They gave her papers and pressed her to sign, and in that faltering moment Joan signed her name. The clerk of the court, whose name has come down to us, Gilbert Manchon, was there to make his record and on the margin he put down these words: "At the end of the sentence Joan, fearing the fire, said she would obey the Church."

They had got what they wanted, and, having got it, sent her back into captivity with no intention of sparing her the uttermost penalty. Joan found them out. The moment of her weakness had passed and all her courage returned anew. She scorned them all. She would not have their lies above her name. She had confessed no guilt, she told them; all she had done was in fear of the fire. But she spoke in vain to these ravening wolves, and her judges were quick to burn the Maid whom in their hearts they feared. English soldiers followed the cart that was to take her to the old market-place of Rouen, where the stake was set among the faggots. The platform was set near it with chairs and benches for the bishops who were to watch her burn, and the pulpit for the preacher who was to lecture her.

She stepped on the platform and asked for a cross, but none of her accusers had dared to bring one. We like to think that an English soldier standing by took a stick, broke it in two, and quickly made a cross. It is something that it was an Englishman who gave Joan in that hour the emblem of the only hope she had.

The fire was lit, she looked out for the last time on a world she had filled with glory and pride, and the heart that for a moment had failed was lifted up again by powers beyond this world. She heard the Voices in the fire. "My Voices were of God," she cried; "they have not deceived me." It was the last thing she said. Her ashes were thrown in the Seine by the Bishop of Winchester, her great soul soaring beyond the infamy and cruelty of those about her, who were unable to perceive its greatness. She stands today in gold facing the Bishop of Winchester in Winchester Cathedral, and she remains for all time the emblem of constancy and courage and the unstained heart. If our own hearts fail us at the memory of her pitiful end, let it be remembered for all time that it was the end which crowns her wondrous story.

Chapter 6

Paracelsus

1490-1541 A.D., Switzerland

Paracelsus by Quinten Mestys

Only an alchemist! men say; an alchemist who tried to turn base metals into gold; an astrologer who told men's fortunes through the stars; a quack who cured his patients when by all the laws of Nature they should have died; only another alchemist!

But were not the alchemists feeling after truth, and were they not more nearly right than all their enemies? They had a vision of things that even now are proving true, and Paracelsus was among the wisest of them all.

A strange and baffling figure, at one time wandering o'er the Earth an outcast, resting in tents and hovels, mixing with robbers, gipsies, and slaves; at another time standing in the universities of Europe talking like a scientific Solomon.

Listen to him hurling his defiance at those who would not listen. "There is more knowledge in my shoestrings," he would say, "than in these books. The universities are full of ignorant quacks, but one day you will follow me, for I am the monarch of medicine." He was like a whirlwind; there had not been such a noise as he made in Europe since the Roman Empire fell.

Robert Browning loved to think of him, and his poem on Paracelsus is 4000 lines long. "Heap logs, and let the blaze laugh out," says Paracelsus to his friend, that friend to whom the poet makes

him speak as he lies on his last bed. He knows he had failed to win the world, but he believes in himself still:

Meanwhile, I have done well, though not all well.
As yet men cannot do without contempt;
Tis for their good, and therefore fit awhile
That they reject the weak, and scorn the false,
Rather than praise the strong and true, in me:
But after, they will know me. If I stoop
Into a dark, tremendous sea of cloud,
It is but for a time; I press God's lamp
Close to my breast; its splendour, soon or late,
Will pierce the gloom; I shall emerge one day.

His day has come, and Paracelsus has emerged. We who have health and strength owe something to him and know it not. Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim he was by name, born in Switzerland, and sent as a poor boy to the University at Basel.

His father and his tutors found the boy a strange creature, not in the least satisfied with their teachings, ill content with the little room in which his father studied herbs and stars. He was born with a gleaming question mark in his brain. He wanted to know Why? How? When? Where? He wanted the proof of everything, and even when he had the proof he wanted to travel beyond the little that was known, to cleave his way into the unmapped world of knowledge, as explorers cleave their way into new regions of the Earth. There was the spirit of his native mountains in his blood, and he panted and pined in the stagnant valleys of ignorance.

About the year of his birth the Saracens were overthrown in Spain after many centuries of dominion. In 1492 Columbus reached America. Before Paracelsus was out of his teens Copernicus reached the mighty conclusion that hitherto mankind had been wrong in its belief that the Earth stood still while the Sun and the rest of the heavens marched round it; while Paracelsus was still a young man the work of his friend Martin Luther bore fruit, and the Reformation was begun.

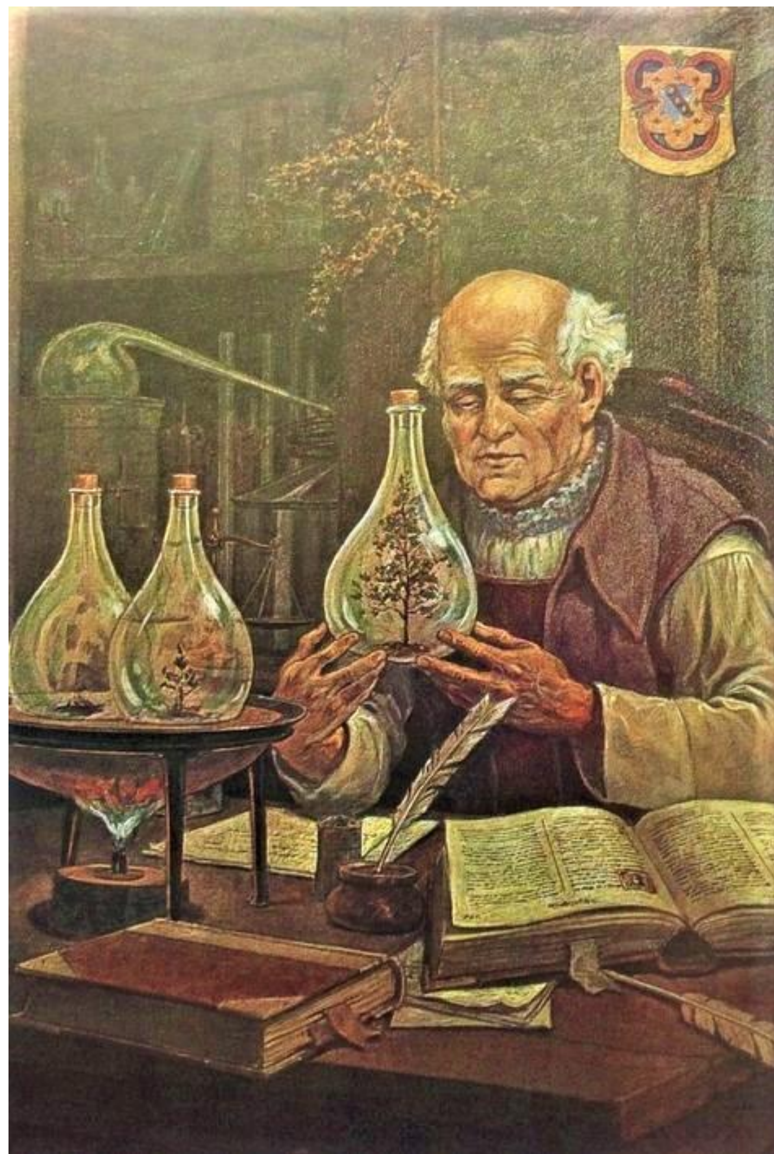
The heavens, the Earth, and the faith of Christendom all came into question in the first 25 years of this man's life, and he, for his part, was dreaming greater things still. For over a thousand years nothing that was really useful and creditable to science had been achieved by a surgeon, a physician, or a chemist, and Paracelsus was not content with the school books. He was a Columbus of the study, bound by wild and fierce determination to burst out and explore. He gave us no new continent, but he found some islands leading to one, and with his eloquence and audacity he blew up some of the old dens of ignorance and haunts of rascality that had existed to his time.

We have to remember that in those days alchemy stood for scientific learning. It was what we may call the intellectual side of chemistry. Alchemy was science gone mad in its cradle. It began with a search for gold, gold to be made by men. In those old days men believed that gold and silver arose in the Earth as a flower arises in a garden. It was the Philosopher's Stone, the Elixir of Life. We laugh at it all today; it is easy to laugh when the sufferings and labours of others have taught us to be wise. But the alchemists contained within their ranks some of the greatest minds in the world; Roger Bacon, with the finest mind of his age, was an alchemist.

The fortunes that were lost over this phantom quest, the brains that were turned, the hearts

that were broken, the lives that were wasted—what a tragedy it is to read! Yet the alchemists were in many ways right in their dreams.

Paracelsus was the first man to thunder forth that chemistry's true function was not to make gold artificially, but to prepare medicines for the cure of sickness and to make substances useful for arts and crafts. It was revolutionary then; a challenge to the verdict of a thousand years of history, a challenge to every professor and bishop in Europe.



Portrait of Paracelsus Performing Chemical Life Regeneration Operations by John Augustus Knapp

He roamed far and wide, a pilgrim of knowledge. He went to the mines in the Tyrol, a geologist before geology was recognised as a science. He studied ores and rocks, he studied the ways of working them, of separating mineral from mineral, of refining the pure from the impure. He learned the ways of the miners; he studied their ailments and pondered their cures. He roamed from university to university, as Oliver Goldsmith was to do when his time came. With proud scholars he was haughty, even audacious and insolent; but he was never proud with the poor. His heart warmed to a peasant. He was fearlessly at home with the grim savages of Tartary; with the serfs of Poland he was as a brother. He travelled on foot, but he travelled far—through France, Spain, Germany, Italy, and eastward. There must have been charm in the personality of a man who, in the rude age, could mix in safety with gipsies, robbers, slaves, magicians, conjurors, and fortune-tellers. This man who lorded over towering scholars was a welcome guest in tents and hovels where armed men would not go with ease.

What was he doing there? Learning and teaching; that is all. He sought no gold or silver; he was an alchemist of life, seeking to transmute disease into health, infirmity into human well-being. From all these poor people he met he gleaned information concerning disease and its treatment, and he carried to them priceless knowledge. He passed from village to village telling all he knew to the

downcast and oppressed, and learning from all. He was as much at home in a convent as in the hut of a slave or the palace of a prince. He was allowed to visit all the seats of culture, with the result that he was called back to his old University at Basel as professor of medicine and of chemistry too. He who had declared that chemistry must not be merely the science of seeking gold was made the first professor of true chemistry in history. The daring which had carried him scatheless through the savage wilderness marked his life as a professor.

He had seen the absurdity of the prescriptions ordered by doctors for sick people, prescriptions containing ingredients by the score, so that a poor man, to obtain a draught of such a medicine, must sell half his earthly possessions. Paracelsus knew what could and should be used. He horrified his university by burning the books of Galen and other old writers, "quacks and misleading imposters," as he called them.

Students flocked to him from all parts of Europe; there had been no such stirring of thought in medicine and chemistry since the fall of the Roman Empire. Paracelsus was a whirlwind, and the sound of his roaring voice reached far and wide; but he knew that if he was to build up he must destroy the system against which he protested. He denounced the quackeries of the doctors; he exposed the villainies of chemists who sold bad drugs; he laid bare the crimes of magistrates who connived at fraud.

There can be no doubt that he unnecessarily provoked his enemies by the furious contempt with which he treated all of them. They waited their time, and they had not to wait long. When he attacked the wretched poisoners of human life who called themselves physicians they retorted: "He is a charlatan and a quack, and he drinks."

As in a twinkling, the man who had been the oracle of scientific Europe became an outcast, driven to wander from village to village, from town to town, and to make a living he even turned his talent to the recovery of lost property.

For 12 years he ranged like a restless spirit over Europe, through Germany, Hungary, and France, the enmity of his foes never far away. On and on he went, sad, poor, but unbroken. It is to his enemies, the men whose teaching he overthrew, that we owe much of our knowledge of him, and they say he drank himself to ruin and finally to death. The case is not proved against him, however. The men who have most closely studied his life simply ignore the charge. What we know is that Paracelsus was only about 51 when he died, and there are three versions of his death: one that he sank under dissipation; another that he was poisoned; the third that his enemies had him hurled to death down a steep place. This sad-hearted, fiery-tempered, rough-speaking Paracelsus was a mighty pioneer. He influenced tens of thousands of men who came after him. Some of his ways seem mad to us, but the other men were madder, and his fame suffers from their extravagant folly. But the work of Paracelsus is alive in every healthy home and every hospital today. Where shall we find it?

Where shall we find the record of the man who first navigated a boat, the man who made the first ladder, the man who first gave us an alphabet or a set of signs? Their names are all unknown, but their lessons have come into the common sum of human knowledge. Doubtless those primitive pioneers made many a ludicrous blunder before they succeeded, and Paracelsus, being human, mixed up much inherited nonsense with the product of his own mind. He thought, as all did then, that stars and planets govern our actions. He thought shooting stars predicted plagues; but so did the mightiest men in Greece and Rome. He is credited with a belief in demons, but there is not an

early saint in the calendar who did not believe in demons. Paracelsus believed that the stars influenced the actions of the human body, but hosts of people, otherwise sane, pay swindlers in this 20th century to tell them things as absurd.

He had his follies, but he was struggling up with new pearls of knowledge from the sea of ignorance and superstition into which he was born. Let us smile at his errors and be thankful for his wisdom and his new teaching. There was more than a grain of wheat in his bushel of chaff.

He it was who first pointed to chemistry as something worth pursuing apart from gain; he first made chemistry an indispensable part of medical training. He discovered that the body is always going through chemical changes. He revealed the chemical properties of vegetables. Instead of the frightful mixtures of the old doctors he gave definite substances for definite diseases. In his day poison was used as poison and as nothing else; with his lightning perception he found that poison, used in right quantities, is a medicine too.

Paracelsus Moment is Salzburg

There are twenty things in the discoveries of Paracelsus which marked new jumping-off points for medicine. They have all come into the great commonplace book of knowledge, and the man who recovers his health by means of them may never have heard that Paracelsus ever lived. Books bearing his name ran into hundreds; and the mere fact that later writers were anxious to put his name to their books shows how tremendous a figure he must have been in his own day, and how dazzling the blaze of glory in which his tortured heart sank at last to rest.

He was wild, fierce, and intolerant; loud, eloquent, boastful; but his fantasies and errors were those of his age; his virtues and discoveries were his own. His work was great and fundamental, and all humanity is enriched in health and happiness by it. A rough-hewn diamond of a man, he feared no one, and he loved his humble fellows. He inherited a plague of nonsense, but he divested himself of much of it, and by almost unparalleled toil, through infinite trouble and peril, he built up a storehouse of knowledge, and gave it to the world without money and without price.

Chapter 7

Bernard Palissy

1510-1589 A.D., France

Following the trade of his father as a glass stainer, he wandered off as a young man to widen his experience in the cities of France and Germany. Practice made him a capable portrait painter, and, learning as he went, he mastered surveying and plandrawing. Naturally an investigator, he saw not only the land but something of the secrets of the soil itself. His researches made him a pioneer reformer of agricultural methods centuries before cultivation became a science. He was the first to grasp the fact that fossils, then a complete mystery, were creatures of remote ages turned to stone. No poet could have felt greater ecstasy than Palissy did as he poured over a collection that an old monk had got together, not knowing their nature or meaning. The one thing Palissy did not study during his wander-years was the calling of the potter.

Bernard Palissy in His Workshop by Joseph-Nicolas Robert-Fleury

Settling down at Saintes, he married, and, while earning a comfortable livelihood with his brush, saw a family grow up about him. Suddenly the quiet of the artist's household was disturbed by the arrival of a cup of foreign make, covered with a beautiful white enamel. France at that time made only plain earthenware; Palissy set himself to give her china faced like this new won-

Bernard Palissy in His Workshop by Jean Hegesippe Vetter

der, with an enamel on which he could paint designs. So began a quest extending over nearly twenty years, a quest for a material and a method that would yield enamelled china, a quest which, for sustained effort resulting in poverty and suffering, is perhaps without a parallel in the history of art and commerce.

To keep the wolf from the door he had from time to time to work on glass, to draw plans, to make land surveys; but he lived for what he felt was to be his mission. He broke up pots and ground and baked them, adding to them all the things he could find in the fields and among the rocks—pulverised minerals believing that if he put the whole of Nature into his mortar he must one day arrive at the right combination.

But the cost of fuel, pots, chemicals, furnaces, drained his resources. His wife complained of unrelieved poverty; his children cried for bread. The situation could hardly have seemed more hopeless, for all that he earned went to buy pots and material to be broken up and burned. His family regarded him with terror, thinking him mad. Too poor to maintain a furnace of his own, he carried his mixtures miles to a tile works, till at last, after years of effort, one solitary piece of pot came out of the fire white and smooth.

He turned again to a furnace of his own, carrying the bricks from where they were made, building the whole thing himself. He went on searching the fields for new materials, the laboratories for new chemicals. For months he lay out at night watching the furnace. His hands were cut and torn with labour, his body was worn with struggle and privation; his health was shattered.

At last what he saw must be the final trial drew near. He felt that he had eliminated the causes of previous failures, and that if he could get but sufficient fuel success must now crown his long pilgrimage. His drooping spirits flamed up with one last rush of gallant energy. The fire was lit, and

he watched in a lever as he saw it begin to decline before the requisite heat had been attained. His fuel was gone, and triumph seemed again about to elude him.

He tore down the wooden palisading of his garden and threw it into the furnace. The supply was insufficient. He rushed into the house and, seizing chairs and tables, broke them up and flung them after the railings. Still melting point had not been reached. There remained but one further supply; he pulled down all the shelves in the house and took them to the furnace. At this his wife and children left the house screaming, to run through the town declaring that Palissy was possessed of an evil spirit and was burning down their home.

The shelves turned the scale. The fire, fierce with embers, blazed up afresh and the enamel formed! In an hour all the weary impoverishing years were rewarded with ample triumph, and the indomitable hero was a made man. It was only a matter of time for fame and fortune to attend the output of his furnaces.

Soon he established a reputation, and was engaged to beautify the new palace that the Duke of Montmorency was building. In the meantime disciples of Luther, fleeing from Germany, had converted Palissy to Protestantism; and now happened an astounding thing. Our discoverer was seized, hurried off to Bordeaux, and condemned to be burned as a heretic! Fortunately the Duke urgently desired that his palace should not lose the adornment that Palissy alone could give it, and he secured his release and restored him to his task.

Inventor of French Porcelain by Moreau

During the potter's absence his fellow townsmen had broken into his home and reduced it, with his furnaces and workshop, to ruins. Having seen what had happened, Palissy quitted Saintes, never to return. But fortune now turned a smiling face upon him for the next twenty years. He was taken to Paris as supreme artist-craftsman to the terrible Catherine de Medici, and while working out wonderful schemes of decoration for her he had leisure to write and lecture on subjects dear to his heart.

He was able to give the world his views on geology and agriculture, on the art of life, and on religion. His writings prove him to have been a man of original genius, who saw clearly into the

secrets of Nature where his contemporaries were blind. He was a supreme naturalist, and in rule of life he was a saint. Although his religion exposed him hourly to peril of the stake his talent as an artist screened him for the time being from the worst. Thus he was fortunately out of the way when in 1572 Bartholomew Day was made forever sadly memorable by the terrible massacre of Protestants. But his time was to come; his spirit was to be submitted to a furnace more pitiless than any he had fired for the winning of his secret as an artist.

Bernard Palissy by Mihály Zichy

The year was 1585, Palissy was 75, broken and enfeebled. Henry the Third was on the throne of France, and a new storm of Roman Catholic fury was rising. Palissy was seized and carried off to the Bastille, where repeated efforts were vainly made to induce him to abandon his faith. The King himself visited him and urged him to recant, adding that unless he did so he would be "forced to leave him in the hands of his enemies." The Sovereign himself could not save a heretic in those days.

But Palissy, whose courage had become like tempered steel during his long lonely years of trial, refused to sell his honesty at any price.

"Sire," answered the brave old man, "I was willing to give my life for the glory of God; if I had felt any regret it would have been extinguished when I heard my Sovereign say he was forced, for neither you nor those who force you can force me, since I know how to die." There was the old spirit that had animated him throughout the long ordeal by his ill-fuelled furnaces; he was unconquerable to the end.

Four years of imprisonment and ill-usage closed his life; misery and want were with him to the end in the Bastille; but he died in splendour of spirit, a martyr. He died in his cell, having triumphed over the obstinate clay and the tyranny of his times.

Toward the end of 1589 a kinswoman went to visit him, but she went too late. If she wished to see the body, the gaoler told her, she would find it with the dogs on the city ramparts, "where he had been thrown, like the dog he was."

Such deaths did heroes die in what the fool still calls those good old days.

Chapter 8

Theophraste Renaudot

1586-1653 A.D., France

One summer's day three hundred years ago there was on sale the first newspaper ever printed in France. It was edited by a Paris doctor, with a king and a prime minister as his chief contributors. Theophraste Renaudot was its editor.

He was born in 1586, in Loudun, a small town in the west of France. His parents were rich Protestants and his boyhood days were happy. Yet, when he was little more than a child he learned the great truth that personal happiness is no lasting satisfaction, and he already had an idea of how best to make use of life; he would use it to give some lasting happiness to the world. How he did not know, but he would find a way.

Théophraste Renaudot, founder of the press

The boy's parents died so early that when his college days were over he found himself alone. He looked around. France was passing through one of the most miserable periods of her history. Religious wars had ruined the people; Henry the Fourth had fallen by the sword of an assassin; and disease and poverty spread death and misery through the land. Cardinal Richelieu voiced the general feeling when he declared at a State Council: We are all poor, and myself not the least so!

Renaudot was appalled by the hardships suffered by the sick, who died in thousands for want of attention. There, he felt, lay work waiting to be done. He began to study medicine so that he might help. He went to Paris, obtained a doctor's degree, and, after in-

creasing his knowledge by travel in different countries, returned to Loudun a learned physician, ready and able to carry out the dream of his childhood.

He worked hard and eased much suffering, but all the time he pondered on how much better it would be to prevent rather than cure the disease. He knew the cause was poverty, and he set himself to solve the problem of how to do away with it. One day the people of Loudun saw among the new volumes on the book stall a humble-looking work called On the Life of the Poor. It bore no name, and the author remained for some time unrecognised. But the book attracted many readers, and it sold increasingly. One day it was brought to the notice of Richelieu, who admired it greatly and soon found out the mysterious writer. Renaudot was invited to Paris, where Richelieu introduced him at Court. Almost before he knew what was happening he found himself physician to the King, and was commissioned to organise a scheme for the relief of the poor.

Among the different categories of the poor of that time were the beggars, who were of three kinds: the unemployed, the disabled soldiers, and the convalescents turned out of crowded hospitals before they had entirely recovered health. One of the remedies proposed by Renaudot in his book was the creation of a Bureau of Employment and Information, where people could find a way out of their misery through work. It would be a link between employers and workmen, rich and poor, doctors and patients, a place giving every sort of information at a penny a time for all who could afford it, free to those who could not.

Although Richelieu and the King were on his side, there were so many difficulties to be overcome that six years passed before he was able to open his first Information and Employment Bureau at the Grand Coq. near the bridge of Saint Michel in Paris. The people had never heard of anything like this; it sounded like heaven to them. They thronged to the place, which soon had to start other branches, all the more so when a department was added where goods could be bought, sold, or exchanged. Anyone in need of money could take a piece of furniture, or any other possession, to the office, and if he could find no purchaser there he could borrow money on it from the office itself, with the hope of buying his furniture back again if he wished.

Renaudot had not only created an Employment Bureau; he had founded the first pawnshop in France.

The famous doctor saw to everything, and everything prospered under his management. Yet he could never rest. As soon as this scheme was well established he looked round for some other wrong to right.

He knew that half the healing of the sick depended on their mental condition, and he believed that happy thoughts were the best medicine he could give them. He was a splendid talker, and he never failed to entertain his patients with some bit of news or some amusing story. This treatment worked wonders, but his patients were so numerous that to save time he thought of distributing copies of his talks instead of relating them in each house.

"I lent my copy to a friend," a patient said to the doctor one day. "He is not an invalid, but he enjoyed it immensely. Why do you not sell them, so that other people may enjoy them besides your patients?" It was an inspiration. "It is just the thing to do, of course," said the doctor; "I cannot think why it did not occur to me."

He went from the sickroom tremendously excited, planning and replanning the whole thing in his head. He would gather during the week all the news he could from every source and bring out

every Saturday a cheap Gazette. The paper would heal his patients through cheerful tidings; it would spread information from his Bureau and advertise his Employment Office. It would spread new ideas all over France, it would do everything. Never in his life before had the good doctor felt so happy.

However great the scheme, it could not be carried through without the sanction of the Government. He hurried off to Richelieu, who understood at once the far-reaching power of such a paper and all it would mean to be in such close touch with the public. He congratulated his friend and gave him power to do as he would.

The first issues of the Gazette bore neither date nor number, but the sixth issue was dated July 4, 1631. Other newspapers of a kind were already appearing in Germany and England, but they were dull compared with this astonishing Gazette. Richelieu himself wrote much of the foreign news, and King Louis was childishly excited and interested in it. He wrote many short paragraphs, taking them to the printing office himself, so that he could watch his own words being set in type.

The paper was brought out once a week, and was divided into two parts, for in that way, the doctor-editor pointed out, two people might read the paper at the same time. The first half contained news that reached the paper from the North and West, the other told of what was going on in the South and East.

Once a month Renaudot brought out a summary of all the news received. He formed the habit of writing what we now call an editorial column, and he loved to talk directly to his readers, explaining himself to them. He soon realised the special difficulties that beset an editor, and this is what he wrote in one of his columns:

> If the style of the Gazette does not always correspond to the dignity of its subject it is because it must cater for varying moods and tastes; and of the difficulties I meet with you know, dear readers.
>
> Of course, captains would like to read of battles and sieges in every copy; devout people of renowned preachers; those who know nothing of the mysteries of the Court would wish to find them in capital letters; and if Colonel So-and-So has led a regiment from one village to another without loss of men he is angry that the King should not see his name in the paper. While professors approve only of pedantic language amateurs hate it.
>
> Is it possible, then, dear reader, that you do not pity me for having to face so many difficulties, and that you will not excuse my pen if it cannot please everybody?

But it seems that letters continued to arrive and readers continued to complain, for he writes again:

> I am ready to do my very best to please you, dear readers, and I appeal to you all: Let those who think they would do better come and help me and we shall see together what is to be done. There is one thing only to which I shall never yield: it is the suppression of the truth.

The advertisements read much as our own read today.

> A house in the New Bridge quarter consisting of two entrance gates, two cellars, kitchen, then a big hall, seven bedrooms with their light posts and closets. Price to be discussed.
>
> A new cloth coat, unfinished, purple, lined with the same shade of satin, trimmed with silver galoons. Price 36 francs.
>
> The sum of £1000 will be lent to a religious community only, against security.

For sale, a young dromedary.

Another scheme of his had prospered, yet it was not enough for a man of his amazing power of work and activity. Renaudot looked upon all that he had done as little compared with his intense longing for the progress of medicine. Improvement in that science was desperately slow. The Faculty of Medicine in Paris was living on its ancient glory. It remained stationary, wasting its time in such futile discussions as those Moliere made fun of in his comedy of the Imaginary Invalid. Yet science elsewhere was making great strides. Harvey had just discovered the circulation of the blood, and much had been contributed to the knowledge of physics. But the medical schools of Paris continued in their examinations to ask such questions as:

Was the healing of Toby by the liver of the fish natural or not?

Are people who eat honey and butter capable of choosing between good and evil?

"One would fancy oneself in Constantinople on the eve of its capture by the Turks," said Renaudot when told of these ridiculous questions. Medical teaching must undergo a radical change, he said; but the Faculty refused its support. Then it was that Renaudot, in spite of his increasing responsibilities, started his own school of medicine, and this was soon attended by all the most advanced students.

Statue of Théophraste Renaudot, Vienne, France

The medical profession of Paris was divided into two camps—Renaudot with his advanced ideas, helped by the powerful friendship of Richelieu, and the routine-bound official school of the Faculty, which was supported by Parliament. Renaudot was then at the height of his power and his reputation. He gave free consultations to poor patients and would explain interesting cases to his students; but how much better, he thought, if the poor people could obtain careful treatment in a special home and his students could have a hospital to practise in. To think of anything was with Renaudot to carry it into action. He begged from the King a large

site on which to build his hospital for poor people, offering to erect the building at his own cost.

The King gave the land, and it remained only for Parliament to give its assent. Parliament refused. The King and Richelieu between them would have helped him to carry through his plan, but at this time they both fell ill and died. Parliament, with the Faculty of Medicine behind it, seized its opportunity. Renaudot was not only refused permission to build a hospital but was ordered to give up his letters patent for the Bureau and was no longer allowed to practise medicine in Paris.

But Renaudot still had his paper, and hard he worked at it, until one day, at the beginning of November, 1653, this announcement appeared in its columns:

> After fifteen months illness died Theophraste Renaudot, consulting physician to the King, historian to His Majesty, all the more interesting to posterity that, as posterity will learn the names of all the great men of the time through his daily chronicle, his own name, already famous enough, must never die.

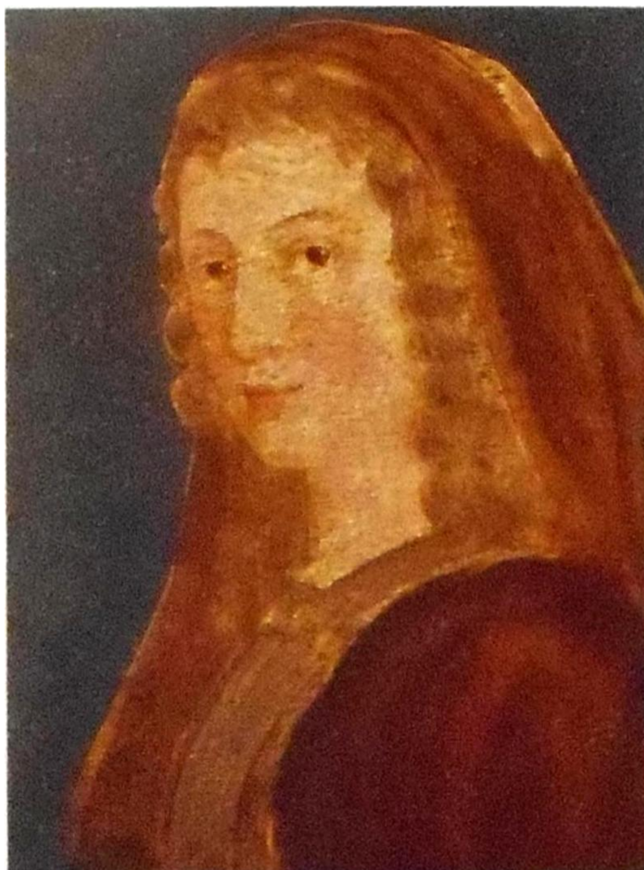
One of his enemies, wishing to emphasise his complete downfall, wrote to a friend: “Poor old Renaudot has just passed on, as poor as a church mouse.”

Poor he may have been, for he had given his all; but his paper was flourishing and his two sons were carrying it on. It continued to prosper, and under the name of the Gazette de France it remained until recent years, a living memorial to this noble editor, brilliant doctor, and kindest and best of men.

Chapter 9

Jeanne Mance

1606-1673 A.D., France / Canada



Jeanne Mance by L. Dugardin

She was born in Nogent-le-Roi, the daughter of a magistrate. An ordinary child, with big intelligent eyes, there was nothing about her to suggest that she was to break away from tradition to become a forerunner of Florence Nightingale and the founder and saviour of Montreal.

For years home duties held her. Then, as she grew into womanhood, calamity after calamity smote her province of Champagne. Twice it was invaded and pillaged; Nogent buried 500 of her citizens in eight weeks. Jeanne lost her father. Then her mother was taken. She was now free to give ear to what was going on in the world and to renew a vow she had made in her childhood to dedicate her life to the service of Christ.

There was much talk at this time of winning New France for Christ. Coming home from a visit to the cathedral town of Langres, where she had heard these questions discussed, Jeanne found herself longing to go out to help with the task of civilising the New World. This, she decided, must be God's plan for her life.

Yet everything was against it. Her family, she knew, would object; gentlewomen did not do that sort of thing unless they were nuns, and Jeanne felt no call to take the veil. Moreover her health was not of the best. Finally, she had only a tiny income, an income that was not nearly enough even to pay her passage.

She talked it over with her spiritual adviser, who thought that she must be mistaken; God would not call such a delicate reed to endure the hardships of pioneer life in New France. But Jeanne clung so persistently to her idea that at last the good priest advised her to go to Paris and discuss it with

others who knew more about conditions out there.

Saying merely that she was going to visit relations Jeanne went to Paris and put her case before Father Charles Lallemont. He took much the same view as the priest in Nogent. For three months the prelates with whom Jeanne talked were sceptical. They did not think her call was genuine; neither did they see of what use she could be; she had had no special training of discipline, was neither teacher nor nurse nor nun. But after testing the quality of her resolution for three months they advised her to go ahead with her plans.

This caused a great stir in her family, but in spite of all opposition she remained firm.

The world of fashion suddenly became curious about her. The Princess de Condé, Charlotte of Montmorency, even the Queen Mother herself, called her for interviews. Why, they all wanted to know, had she decided to abandon *la belle France* for the trackless wilds? Jeanne could not tell them why. She had merely, she said, given herself up, “like an atom to be borne to unknown destinies on the breath of God,” and this was part of His will.

Astute Father Rapin saw to it that one of the great ladies Jeanne met was the widow of the late superintendent of finance, Mme. de Bullion. The Duchess d’Aiguillon had founded a hospital in Canada; Mme. de Buillon wanted to found one too. She begged Jeanne to take the matter in hand, giving her 12,000 livres, and promised her more, but on one condition, that the giver should remain anonymous. Jeanne was not even to address a letter to her, but must write always though Father Rapin. This condition, prompted no doubt by the best of motives, was afterwards to cause Jeanne much trouble.

Encouraged by her good fortune, Jeanne next went to La Rochelle to see about her passage. Here, by a miracle, she ran into the President of the Montreal Company, who begged her to go out with the colonists he was sending under the Sieur de Maisonneuve. They were desperately in need of a woman like Jeanne to take charge of supplies and to care for the sick. Jeanne agreed to join them.

For a time it looked as if she were to be the only woman in Montreal, but at the last moment two workmen brought their wives, and another young woman sailed from Dieppe to help her.

When the three boatloads of colonists finally reassembled in Quebec, toward the end of August, 1641, everyone advised them against pushing on. There was not time, they said, to build boats, to find Montreal, select their site, fell trees, and put up houses before winter came. Besides, the Iroquois were on the warpath.

The authorities warned them against going on, but they did little to make them feel welcome, and had it not been for an eccentric old man who took them in they would have spent a miserable winter. As it was they busied themselves making boats, furniture, and equipment for their trek in the spring.

Jeanne’s presence was one of the bright spots. She distributed rations, medicines, and ammunition with a just hand, adding those little touches with which a woman can make the roughest blockhouse into a home. The men took her as mother, sister, comrade, and guardian-angel all in one, and all, including M. Maisonneuve came to rely more and more on her clear brain and wise counsel.

As soon as it was safe to venture on the waterways the settlers packed their possessions into boats and set out for the island of Montreal. They were ten days on the way.

There a smiling scene greeted them; prairies, enamelled with bright spring flowers, rolled to the water's edge. They could hardly wait to land to fall on their knees and give thanks for their safe arrival in so lovely a spot.

They worked like beavers, and before the next winter their little settlement of Villemarie was established. One building housed them all, and they had a fort and a chapel. The next building to be undertaken in the following spring was the hospital, where Jeanne was to have her own room. It was none too soon, for trouble broke out with the Iroquois and there was a crying need for a place to care for the wounded. The moment the new building was finished its two wards were filled, though surgical equipment did not arrive for a year.

For five years the colony got on as it could, growing weaker after each fresh onslaught by the Redskins and hearing more and more rarely from France. Rumour had it that the Montreal Company was in financial difficulties. If the company fails, Jeanne reasoned, and there is no public Act to testify to their right to the land, it might be wrenched from them and all their work go for naught. She set out for Quebec to see what could be done.

As no one in Quebec could help her Jeanne took ship for France. There she went about seeing people, explaining how things stood, stirring them up about the plight of the lonely colonist of Montreal.

She had only to talk to convince them, for, as one of the priests she interviewed said, she was "full of the light of God, that surrounded her like a sun." She got what she wanted. The Act ensuring the legal existence of the colony of Montreal was passed of March 21, 1650.

With Mme. de Bullion, Jeanne worked out a scheme for bringing the land around her hospital under cultivation and so training the natives in husbandry. When she returned she took some agricultural workers with her as well as some young women to help in the hospital.

About this time the Iroquois became still more intractable. Jeanne herself had a narrow escape, and the hospital, with only sixteen men to defend it, suffered a twelve-hour attack by 200 Redskins.

The colony had dwindled again to 100 souls, and France seemed once more to have forgotten its existence. M. Rapin had died, and Jeanne was no longer able to get messages through to Mme. de Bullion. The continued massacres were becoming too much for them all. Unless help came the settlement would soon be wiped out.

Jeanne believed that their Governor, Maisonneuve, should go to France to seek aid. Unless he could raise 100 men it would be useless for him to return. If he failed he could send her word and she would pack up and conduct the retreat.

This plan seemed wise; but it required money, and all that they had between them was now 22,000 livres that Mme. de Bullion had given Jeanne for the hospital. This Jeanne loaned to Maisonneuve to use for recruiting, for protection was their urgent need.

Maisonneuve not only succeeded in his mission but he also did Jeanne a good turn by adroitly contriving to get in touch with Mme. de Bullion without at the same time revealing her secret.

Jeanne had served Canada well; nevertheless she had still to face some difficult years. Trouble began when she fell on the ice, breaking her arm and dislocating her wrist. This accident showed her that she must delay no longer in carrying out a plan she had long had in mind for bringing some nursing sisters over from France. She knew the sort she wanted and where they were to be found; the trouble was the lack of money.

Statue of Jeanne Mance in Montreal

Jeanne went to France to see what could be done.

While she was absent an interfering priest who had just come out planned to turn Jeanne's hospital over to some sisters he had brought on from the other hospital at Quebec which the Duchess d'Aiguillon had founded. This started a conflict that was to darken the remaining years of Jeanne's life.

She found Mme. de Bullion ready, as usual, to come to the rescue with the funds she needed to establish three Sisters of St. Joseph as Nursing Staff of the Hôtel Dieu of Villemarie, Montreal. She also regained the use of her hand and wrist.

She would have returned a happy woman had not pestilence broken out on her ship, killing ten of the passengers and laying all the Sisters, including Jeanne herself, low. Besides disease, they had terrific gales and a water famine to contend with.

After two terrible months at sea they landed to find the Sisters from Quebec installed in Jeanne's hospital. Archbishop Laval favoured their staying. These new sisters whom Jeanne had brought with her were a scandal, he said, because their Order had been *founded by a married man!* The Archbishop advised the new nurses to return to France. Jeanne knew that they were needed in Montreal. She defied every objection he made and finally the poor women were allowed at last to proceed to Villemarie.

At Montreal a new disappointment awaited them. Their lodging, which was supposed to be finished, was barely begun. Jeanne threw herself energetically into the breach and, by sheer force of will, pushed the work through to completion.

The next calamity that befell the colony was the complete bankruptcy of the Montreal Company. The fund for the support of the sisters was also involved. They were ordered to return to France. Jeanne begged them to stick it out; and stick it out they did, living on such vegetables as they could themselves raise, plus the smallest possible ration of bread and bacon provided by charitable offerings sent out from France.

Archbishop Laval, having been worsted in his argument with Jeanne, did not intend to leave her in peace. He now brought up the old story of the 22,000 livres of hospital funds that Maisonneuve had used for recruiting. Maisonneuve had given the hospital some land as security but had not yet paid back the cash. "Misappropriation of funds," said the Archbishop; and if Mlle. Mance held otherwise she must produce a signed statement from the donor. Jeanne could not, would not; for she had accepted the condition that the donor was to remain anonymous.

For twenty years Laval kept up his effort to defame Jeanne's character, although the King's Council told him that his claims were ill-founded.

In spite of the archbishop's enmity the colony was at last on its feet. On its coming of age, in 1663, Louis the Fourteenth gave it a garrison of regular troops. This meant more work for the Hôtel Dieu, as epidemic after epidemic swept through their ranks. At one time 40 of the 60 men at Fort St. Anne were ill at once.

When news reached the king of all the hospital had done he issued it Letters Patent. Then Pope Alexander the Seventh accorded to the nursing Sisterhood full status as a religious Order.

So little Jeanne Mance of Nogent lived to see her work in the wilderness recognised by a king, her stand for justice vindicated by a Pope, and the uninhabited island on which she had landed in 1642 transformed, thanks to her foresight, decision, and steadfastness, into a town of 14,000 souls.

Chapter 10

Valentin Jameray Duval

1695-1775 A.D., France

He was a little French peasant boy who turned himself into a scholar and became librarian to the Emperor of Austria.

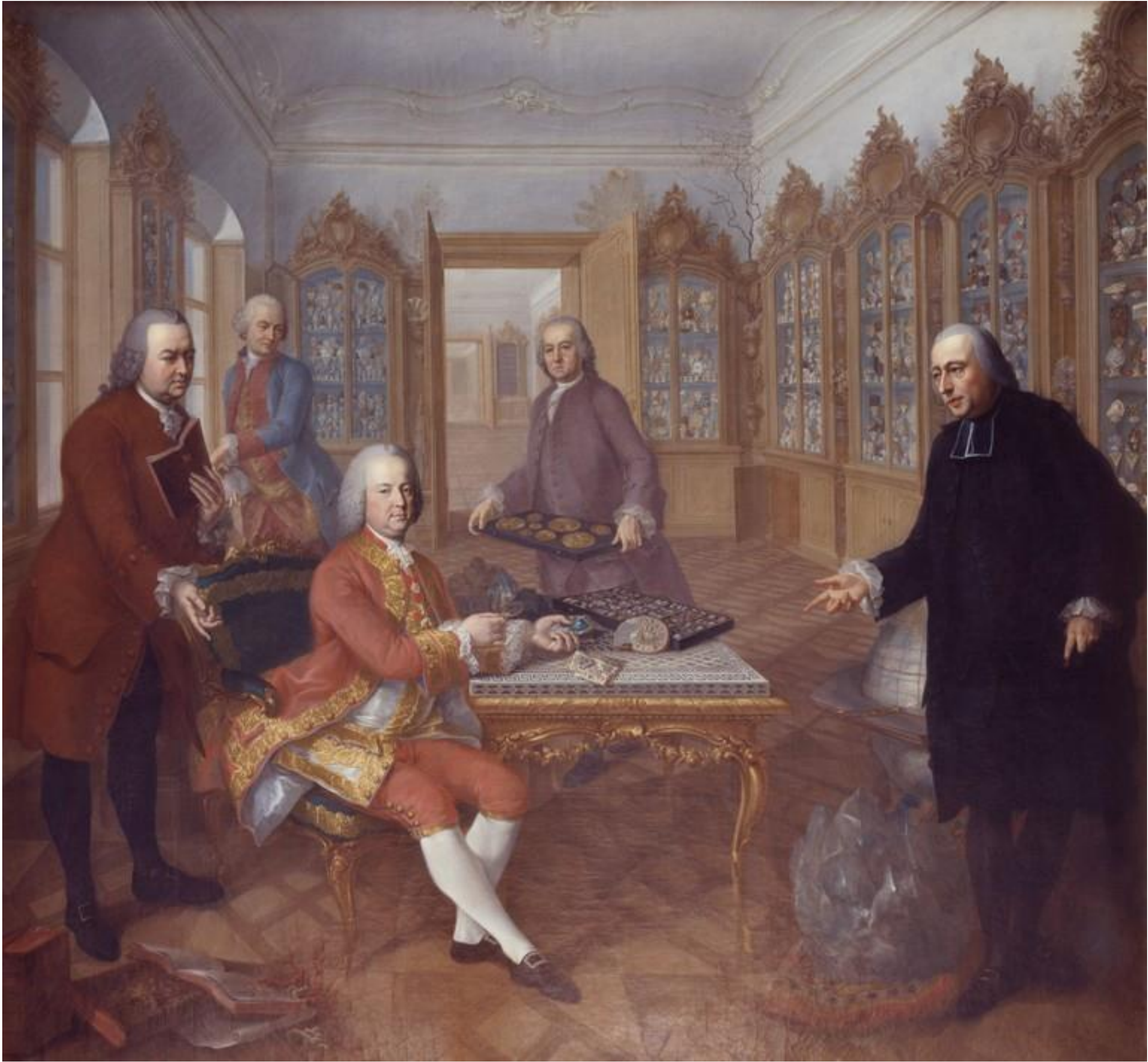
His father died early, leaving a widow burdened with young children at a time when famine and war were devastating the country. So at ten the child left his home at Artenay in the east of France to work for a peasant as turkey-keeper.

Later, when the winter of 1709 was setting in, the boy tramped from village to village offering his services, but so great was the misery and poverty that no one wanted him. Each morning he wondered whether he would have the strength to last till the evening, but he never seems to have thought about going back to his mother for help. At length he felt so ill that he begged a farmer to give him shelter in his sheepfold. He lay down in it, sickening for small-pox.

Valentin Jameray Duval by Franz Messmer

Much later Valentin wrote this account of his illness: "When the farmer noticed my state of health he covered me with several layers of hot manure, crossed himself, and recommended me to God, quite convinced that I would not escape death."

But as the boy did not die the farmer spoke to the parish priest, who consented to take him in. Valentin was drawn as if from the grave, set on an ass, and taken to the priest who rubbed him with snow and cured him. Then he had to take the road once more, but arriving at the frontier of Lorraine he at last found a shepherd who wanted a



Kaiserbild by Franz Messmer and Jakob Kohl

boy.

Not far from this new employer's hut lived a pious hermit, who took an interest in the little shepherd, taught him to read, told him stories, and explained man's idea of God to him. After a couple of years the good Brother recommended Valentin to a neighbouring hermitage where four hermits gave him their cows to look after. Valentin now felt he was doing well. One of the hermits taught him to write.

Having been sent to town one day he noticed a number of pictures for sale, among them a planisphere with the stars mapped and marked with their names. The planisphere and a map of the world ate up all his savings. The same evening he made himself a little observatory at the top of a tall oak, and each evening he spent hours gazing up at the sky. But his interests developed more

and more toward geography. He felt he must have more atlases and maps, and to get them he made war on the animals of the forest, catching them and selling their skins. In a short time he collected about 30 by this means, and hurried off the 15 miles to Nancy to spend it.

From then onward his hut became a marvellous world. Its walls were hung with pictures, and as the room was very small he tied his planisphere above his bed so that he could not wake up “without seeing clouds of stars which had light only for the mind.”

Soon after this Valentin found on the road a golden seal. He told the priest, who traced the seal to an English scholar. So touched was this Englishman by Valentin’s honesty and by his extraordinary culture, that he offered him the use of a library of a hundred books. This good fortune was followed by another still greater. In the wood where he studied surrounded by maps he one day met a stranger who asked him what he was doing there.

“I am studying geography,” said Valentin.

“And what do you search for now on this map, my friend?” continued the stranger.

“I am looking for the route to Quebec to go and study there,” replied Valentin.

“Really?” said the stranger. “But there are universities much nearer than that, and I shall be happy to show you one if you like.”

The stranger was Duke Leopold, Lord of Lorraine. He kept his promise, and when Valentin left college with the title of professor he offered him means to visit all the great European capitals, and finally made him his librarian. After Duke Leopold’s death Valentin followed his son, Duke François, to Florence, and when the duke became Emperor of Germany and Austria the scholar was made head librarian of the Imperial Library at Vienna. There he lived to the age of 80, conserving his intelligence and unchangeable gaiety. Many are his writings on art, history, and numismatology, and when he died in 1775 he was recognised as one of the most learned and advanced men of his century.

Kaiserbild (detail) by Franz Messmer and Jakob Kohl

Chapter 11

Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi

1746-1827 A.D., Switzerland

He was a man of genius who lived under a lifelong sense of failure. No man ever felt a stronger certainty that he had ideas which were of infinite importance to mankind. Yet he only managed to express himself in a confused way, either in words or in practical action. He must have died feeling that "the struggle naught availeth."

What seemed like heart-breaking failure struck him again and again. His life was over-clouded by poverty. He never knew a complete triumph. But now that a hundred years have passed since his death the whole world sees how sound his ideas were. His aims have been disentangled from their imperfect expression; his crude experiments have been comparatively perfected; and he is honoured as a benefactor whose influence has penetrated and permeated education.

Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi by Francisco Javier Romas

He was born at Zürich. His father, a clever physician, died when the boy was five, and his mother, a pious and unselfish woman, with the help of a faithful man servant, brought up her three children. Out of his home experiences he drew these four deeply-rooted beliefs: that a mother is the best of all teachers, that the spirit of a teacher should be that of a father, that the true crown of life is the happiness of the home, and that love is the open gateway to the scholar's whole being.

Admiration of his grandfather, a pastor, led him to think at first that he too would like to be a preacher. So when he entered the University at Zürich he began to study theology. A group of students there were of the active-minded kind, and they started a periodical on their own account. Pestalozzi edited it. It was a rather tame production if judged by twentieth-century ideas. It aimed at avoiding politics; but the paper was very quickly suppressed by the Government on the ground that such thinking tended toward conspiracy. The young editor fled the country, and Pestalozzi at nineteen found himself in prison, with some of his fellow-students who had dared to write for the paper.

When he was released his fancy turned to the law, which seemed to promise the means of defending the peasantry, who were suffering from extortion. Then reading Rousseau's praise of a purely natural life led him to give up his impulse toward social agitation and to become a farmer. At the same time he became engaged to a prosperous shopkeeper's daughter.

After a year's apprenticeship to farming he bought a small farm of poor land on which he started to grow madder. His correspondence with the lady whom he married is one of the curiosities of courtship. He thought it his duty to tell her exactly what kind of man he conceived himself to be. He declared that while he would be the tenderest of husbands he was guilty of "very reprehensible negligence in all matters of etiquette," that he was improvident, incautious, and had not sufficient presence of mind to meet unexpected changes. Also he would always consider his duty toward his wife subordinate to his duty to his country. On these terms she married him, and no man ever had a more devoted wife, although the character he had given himself proved to be remarkably true.

The Neuhof farm failed, though it was supported by his wife's money. The arrival of a son turned Pestalozzi's thoughts to education, and he sketched out a general idea of how education should be carried on simultaneously with work. Accordingly he took twenty children into his house and educated them by constant talk while they worked on his farm. Presently he increased the number of his scholars and helpers to fifty. The scheme failed, and the larger part of his wife's fortune was lost. The parents thought their children were being exploited, though Pestalozzi was losing money all the while and the only gainers were the children, who were well fed and clothed and appreciated their talkative tutor. The fact is that poor Pestalozzi was a hopelessly bad business man, and he remained so all his life. The next eighteen years were for Pestalozzi the most hopeless part of his life. How he lived is a mystery. He was in direst poverty, often with nothing to eat, and clad so shabbily that he could not appear in ordinary society. Yet in these years he thought out his educational theories as far as they ever were thought out; and he became known very widely. The year after he gave up his Neuhof farm he wrote a story called Leonard and Gertrude, which circulated wherever German was read. His heroine was a simple village woman who, by her sense and goodness, redeemed her unsatisfactory husband, educated her children, and changed a dissolute village into a sort of paradise. As it was first written the book is Pestalozzi's masterpiece, but he spoiled it by adding to it.

So pleased was the Swiss Government with the book as a piece of literature that it awarded the author a gold medal, which he had to sell to buy himself bread. Then he started a newspaper, but it failed, and he wrote books which few read then and no one reads now. It was not until he was over fifty that he had a chance of putting his theories of education into practice with a sufficient backing of money to give some chance of success. That chance came in an extraordinary way.

The French Republican army invaded and conquered Switzerland in 1798, and the Swiss resis-

tance left around the shores of Lake Lucerne a number of orphan children in terrible poverty, foodless and shelterless.

The French had become aware of the national need for education, and their Directors (who governed Switzerland for the time being) gave Pestalozzi a free hand to take charge of these desolate waifs in a convent at Stanz. They provided him with funds. Here the enthusiastic educator reigned for five or six months. He had no help. The only sympathy he met with was from the nuns who belonged to the convent that had been raided by the French on his behalf. The people of the country regarded him with suspicion as a Protestant, but Pestalozzi did very remarkable work with these poor bairns. He practised his theories on them with unmistakable success. The authorities declared that the children had improved beyond recognition.

This experiment at Stanz was the greatest single achievement of Pestalozzi's life. He almost killed himself by his exertions, but he had an ample reward in the love he won from his huge family. The enterprise ended as suddenly as it began. The French needed the convent for their wounded, as the war continued, and they dispossessed Pestalozzi and his family of children.

To him this experience was invaluable. It gave him confidence. He felt that he knew how children should be educated. It was true that his own education was patchy, that his manners were

Pestalozzi and the Orphans by Albert Anker

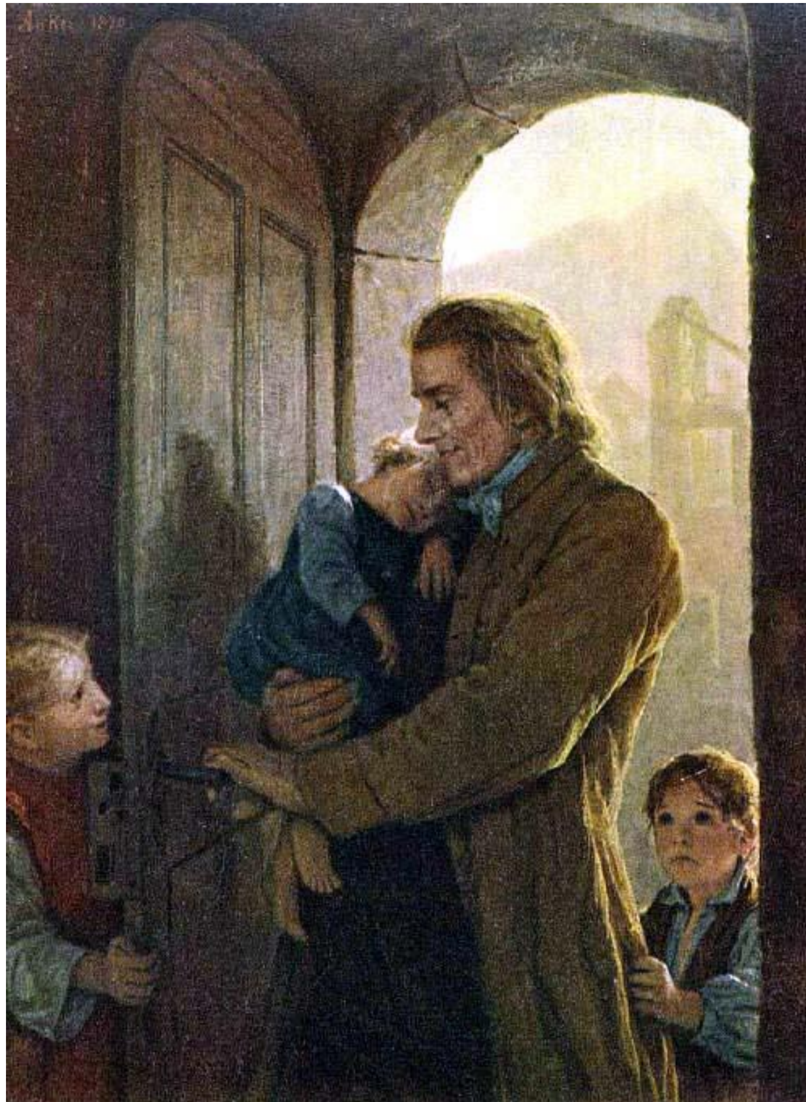
From *The Gazebo* by Theobald von Oer

odd; his movements ungainly, that nobody would have chosen him as a schoolmaster from his appearance. But his enthusiasm was infectious. He obtained a mastership at Burgdorf, where he stay from 1799 to 1809.

During these years he wrote a book called How Gertrude Teaches Her Children, the title being only a trick to connect the book with the earlier book's success. Gertrude, however, has no share in this second book, which really tells how Pestalozzi advises that children shall be taught. It is not a practical manual, but it made its writer better known. He had become a personality. In 1802 he went from Switzerland to Paris as a deputy to discuss the government of Switzerland, but he was more interested in education than in government and sought to interview Napoleon and explain to him a system of national education. But Napoleon declined to see him, remarking scornfully that he could not be bothered about the ABCs. Pestalozzi's school in Burgdorf was visited by teachers from near and far to study his methods.

In 1805 he removed to Yverdun, on Lake Neuchâtel, where he remained for 20 years. There famous educationalists went to see his methods, or to be trained under him, and his visitors included Froebel. Notable people such as Talleyrand and Madame de Staël found him an object of curiosity. But gradually the institution he had formed lost its novelty. Divisions arose between the members

of its staff, the school was closed, and Pestalozzi retired to Neuhof, where he had started life hopefully on his little farm. He died at Brugg.



Heinrich Pestalozzi by Albert Anker

What were the educational ideas which Pestalozzi impressed upon the world? He believed that education was the greatest power in the world, for by it character could be built up, and what a man *is* matters more than what he knows. He felt that education as it was commonly practised in his day was wrongly managed. It consisted for the most part of thrusting into inattentive or unwilling minds facts that were ill understood. It was largely concerned with words, mere words, that did not make real to the child's mind the things they represented. A child, he thought, should learn by observation, as it insensibly learns on its own account outside school. The teacher's object should be to set the child's mind naturally at work on a self-acting education. The aim should be to develop the child's nature, awakening its dormant forces and directing them to right ends. The child, so Pestalozzi taught, can best learn by doing things.

Pestalozzi, in fact, based his system on a study of the child and its development. He held that the existence of a deep sympathy between the teacher and the child led to a natural expansion and power of reception in the child's mind. He sought to reach the brain through the heart. He aimed at making children love to learn.

Some of his ways were clumsy, but never as clumsy as the old systems which ignored the psychology of the young mind. He made teachers feel that their work had a scientific foundation and was worthy of study, observation, and experiment. And so, though some of his own methods were crude, the spirit of his approach to education was passed on to succeeding inquirers, and education has become, thanks very largely to him, far more natural, effective, and joyous than it was a century ago.

Chapter 12

Madame Roland

1754-1793 A.D., France

She was the purest figure of the French Revolution, and her last words as she walked to the guillotine have resounded since in every land.

She was a daughter of a Paris engraver called Phlipon, who lived in an old house on the Quai des Lunettes, where the drawing-room had a tiny recess by the door of her father's studio. This was Manon's room. Here she would curl up with a book and read about the heroes of the past till her little cheeks flamed and her muslin neckerchief rose and fell with her eager breath. Once she wept because she was not a Roman or a Spartan, not dreaming that she would one day be called to face a crisis that was as great as anything hitherto known in the ancient world.

Jeanne-Marie Roland de la Platiére, Artist Unknown

But, although she cared for reading above everything else, the child also delighted in the walks her mother took her to the Jardin des Plantes, or to the Luxembourg. She loved the country, and wrote: "I like this tranquility, broken only by the crowing of the cocks. I have a sense of comfort, like that of a tree taken out of a box and transplanted into an open field." At the time she was staying with an uncle who was a canon at Vincennes; she tells her correspondent how she passed her time in that ecclesiastical circle.

"The moment the good canon smites the old bass-viol with his

quivering bow I begin to scrape a violin; a second canon accompanies us on a squeaking flute, and a concert ensues fit to terrify the cats. This fine performance over, the gentlemen congratulate themselves and compliment one another, while I escape to the garden to gather roses and parsley, or to take a turn in the poultry-yard, where the brooding hens are a subject of interest and the young chickens divert me. Then I turn over in my mind all the novels and histories I have ever read."

We do not know how well or ill she scraped the violin, but we know that her drawings have charm and power, and that some of her engraved gems, carved with little Grecian figures, are much admired.

She did not follow her father's profession for long. Her thirst was for knowledge: she longed to know more and more of this wonderful world, to read books on every sort of subject. Without knowing it she was building up a great intelligence which was one day to be put to public service.

When she was about 11 Manon went to a convent, where she made two great friends, Henriette and Sophie Cannet. At the end of a year they went home to Amiens, and she returned to the Quai des Lunettes; but the three girls corresponded at great length, and this made Grandmamma smile. "When you are married," she said, "you will soon forget Mademoiselle Cannet." We shall see whether this was true. Meantime we have Manon's letters to give us a picture of her girlhood.

They show us how the child's devotion to religion changed into a love of philosophy. Her vigorous mind was ever inquiring, never at rest. They do not tell us how she grew into a dazzlingly beautiful woman, but they do tell us of her suitors, and of how she fancied herself in love with a philosophical author called La Blancherie, until she saw him with a feather in his hat—when down fell her idol to the level of a dandy.

She had the greatest enthusiasm for the writings of Rousseau, and longed to see the great man. One day she found that a friend of hers had some sort of business to propose to the famous writer, and she begged to be allowed to transact it. Two days later she climbed Rousseau's steps "as if they had been the steps of a temple." But the door was opened by a coarse, vulgar woman, who gave her a rough refusal. So she was saved a second disillusionment, for surely her clear eyes would have seen in Rousseau's, despite the glamour of his genius, something of that revolting nature which allowed him to abandon his children on the doorsteps of a foundling hospital.

The letters of Manon Phlipon show us, in fact, an enthusiastic, intelligent girl, full of life and curiosity and vigour. But soon her life was darkened by the loss of her mother, and then she became tormented by anxieties about money.

During this time her affection was slowly but lastingly won by a grave man 20 years older than herself, Monsieur Roland, inspector-general of manufactures. At 26, Manon Phlipon became Madame Roland, and she now passed many years in the district of Lyons.

The Rolands had a circle of intellectual patriotic friends to whom she often wrote, but she did not sigh after the brilliant society of Paris. She has described her happy mornings, spent with her little girl learning to knit and her husband working at his desk, while the fire crackled and the snow whirled past the window. She loved the changing seasons of the year and the work of the fields; she loved nothing more than a quiet hour with Nature.

A lovely time it was; but such a peace was not to last. The country was misgoverned, and confronted by the glaring contrast of a luxurious aristocracy which seemed to be above the law, and starving people who could be sent to prison without trial if they murmured against their rulers. The

Rolands and their friends threw themselves into the movement which sought to overthrow the old feudal system, and this beautiful, ardent woman became the soul of the Girondin party, the party of those who wished the Reign of Liberty to be established by decent methods.

The Revolution began in 1789, and the Girondin party came into power in 1792. They condemned the massacres of September, and refused to vote for the execution of the King. Then the moderate men were swept away by extremists, and perished in the revolution they themselves had started. In 1793, the year of the execution of the King, nearly every Girondin was guillotined, and the Reign of Terror began under the Jacobins, the violent extremists of the Revolution.

When the Girondins came into power M. Roland was made Minister of the Interior, and it was his wife who prepared his papers. Instead of writing to Sophie and Henriette she now wrote to the Pope and the King letters that made history. If she had been a man, or if a woman had been allowed to take an open part in public life, the story of the French Revolution might have been different.

Madame Roland had now left her humble lodgings for the splendid house that had once belonged to Minister Necker, father of Madame de Staël. Her new setting suited her well but did not influence her simple manner. Every Friday she gave a dinner to all the ministers. After the cloth was removed she would go to a desk and seem to busy herself there. She was the calmest of them all, and often the discussion was enlightened, or a heated difference of opinion set aside, by a quiet sentence from her corner.

She urged her husband's colleagues to be proud and happy in the midst of so much uncertainty and peril, because Destiny had allowed them to be born in the same hour as freedom, and reminded them of their duty to the future.

Several times during the Revolution she was summoned to the bar of the Convention, and answered her questioners in a modest but clear and frank manner. She was not to be frightened; she wrote to a cautious friend: "You say men are afraid to speak? Then let them thunder!" Nevertheless she feared, not for her life but for her country. As she looked about, her discerning mind saw that among the worthy Girondins no man was strong enough to rule the land, and among the violent Jacobins no man was fit to be entrusted with another's fate.

Her forebodings were soon to be realised. When the Girondins were overthrown and Marat, Danton, and Robespierre began their frightful reign, the Rolands were condemned with the other moderates. M. Roland fled; his wife was arrested and released; but she was arrested again an hour later and thrown into a prison for the vilest type of criminal. Even there, as everywhere else, she conquered all hearts, and her gaolers became anxious to serve her.

A friend who used to speak with her at the iron window said that she talked with the courage of a great man, and her voice was like music. But, although she collected her strength to cheer others, it is known that when she was alone she would lean against the window and weep for hours. Her dream of France as a land of brotherhood and freedom had changed into the vision of a nightmare country, where men were butchered on the strength of a malicious accusation, and the lust for blood was not satisfied even when guillotining, shooting, and drowning went on by day and night.

Moreover, as we know by her written farewell, she loved the light of the sun, her home, her husband, her maid, and her darling child. For this little daughter she left many pages of tender, motherly advice, saying that she felt her husband would not survive her.

Oh Liberté! by Laslett John Pott

This is one of the letters this mother wrote in those dark hours to the child she loved more than life:

> I do not know, my little friend, if I shall be allowed to see you or to write to you again. Remember your mother. These few words are the best I can say to you. You have seen me happy through the consciousness of having done my duty and of having been helpful to those who suffer. There is no other way of living.
>
> You have seen me resigned in misfortune and captivity because I have no remorse, but the memory and joy which good deeds leave behind them. These are the only things that help one

> to bear the evils of life and the vicissitudes of fate.
>
> Perhaps, and I hope so, you are not destined for such experiences as mine, but there are others against which you have no means of defending yourself. A regular and busy life is the chief guard against all perils, and necessity, as well as wisdom, will cause you to work seriously.
>
> Be worthy of your parents: they leave you a fine example, and if you know how to profit by it you will not have lived in vain.

Madame Roland by Ferdinand Delannoy

One day there came to this terrible prison a woman who asked to see Madame Roland. It was Henriette Cannet. The grandmother had been wrong, for neither woman had forgotten. Henriette wished Manon to change clothes with her and escape. "But they would kill you!" said Manon, refusing her friend.

After five months Madame Roland was brought to trial. She was brutally questioned, and tears of indignant shame sprang into her brave eyes as she denied the vile accusations made against her. Presently she returned to her fellow-prisoners with a light step and a raised finger, "to signify that she was doomed," as one of them said.

The next day, on November 8, 1793, she set out to the guillotine with a man whose sinking courage she tried to raise. Never had she looked more noble and queenlike than she did now in the tumbril, dressed in white, her black hair streaming to her waist, her black eyes flashing with courage. At the foot of the scaffold she asked for pen and paper "to write the strange thoughts that were rising in her," but she was refused. We shall never know what thoughts came to this vivid mind on the brink of death. Looking up to the statue of Liberty as she passed, she exclaimed: "Oh Liberty, what crimes are committed in thy name!"

A week later, in an avenue some miles outside Rouen, someone found a dead man propped against a tree with a sword through his heart. A piece of paper at his feet said that he was Roland, who had tried to be useful to his countrymen, and had killed himself, not out of fear, but out of indignation on hearing of his wife's death. "I no longer wish to live in a world polluted with crime," he wrote. It was a bitter end to a terrible chapter of human history.

Chapter 13

Charles de Labussiere

1768-1802 A.D., France

He is one of the forgotten men of the French Revolution, a poor clown of the theatre who became a hero on the stage of life. Nothing is known of him till 1793, when he was 25. At that time he was an actor who successfully played the part of a fool at the Theatre Mareux, a strange, unconventional young man. He slept when he wished to, he ate at his own caprice, he did nothing quite in the way that other people did. But so good-hearted he was, so bright, so open, that his fellow actors loved him. He was one of the men who are popular with everybody.

Then came the Revolution, and though the Theatre Mareux continued for a time as well as it could the unrest and distress of his country influenced this player to such an extent that he sought a new mode of expression. At that time a strange art had come into being, a result of the growing Revolution—people hitherto crushed, overruled, went about as Talkers. They were even given an actual name; they were called Motionaries, and those who were in their way specialists with this gift could always attract an audience.

And so Labussiere left his theatre and sought the streets and byways of his unhappy country. Round about Paris he walked and talked—mimicking the speeches of orators he had heard, amusing and cheering the anxious, harassed crowds, enchanting them with his humour and charm.

And still the grinding wheels of the Revolution with its terrible harvesting moved onward, until the comedian, who came from a noble family, saw that he too was in danger, for the Government of the Convention had named him as a suspect. "The best way to hide oneself is to enter the cavern," urged a friend, and offered him a post at the Committee of Public Safety.

To this proposal Labussiere at first vehemently objected, but finally, though yielding with repugnance, he gave way and started work in the Louvre. The first office he found himself in was the office of correspondence, that which received all denunciations. But so inhuman and heartbreaking were the cruel accusations which arrived that Labussiere in disgust and anger told his friend he must leave. He could suffer it no more. "To ask to do so is to risk your head, my boy," his protector answered.

He succeeded, however, in having him transferred to the office of Indictments, where he was entrusted with the files of the prisoners' names, which he had to sort and classify. These death files, as he called them, were crammed with lists of innocent persons condemned to undergo a terrible end, and it was when he first cast his eye down this ghastly manuscript that an idea was conceived in his mind, like a little spark, which grew with the moments into a fire that burnt its way into his soul.

What if it were to succeed? What, if after all there had been a glorious purpose in his taking on

this deadly task? Had his footsteps indeed been led into the enemy's camp that he might save his fellows from a terrible death?

At first he acted with great prudence, testing the field, pretending to forget this or that paper, and never venturing to destroy a whole record; and the chaos which he found in the organisation gave him greater chances to carry out his work.

Let Labussiere tell for himself the story as he related it to a friend.

"I applied myself at first to saving the fathers and mothers of families of all classes. I hoped that that would bring me luck; to save a father is to save an entire home, as the bread is there. When I had taken out the papers of my doomed prisoners I put them aside in my good oak drawer, locking it firmly; then, as it was necessary for the executioner to believe that he had the right number of victims, I put back into the fatal box as much subject matter as was absolutely necessary.

"The plan went well. I earned the reputation of being a zealous worker, so that it surprised no one to see me still busy after the usual working hours."

One day in summer, at one o'clock in the early morning, he arrived at the Louvre at a moment when the members of the Committee were in discussion, presented his card, and quickly reached his office. The chief, the office boy, and himself had agreed on a place where the keys were to be kept, and, feeling for this place, he took the keys and entered quietly.

> It was dark (he says), but I felt in the drawer for my pickings of the day. What joy, the first time that I snatched in this way many unhappy people from certain death! And yet, after this first moment, what trouble also, for the most strict inspection awaited all who left the building. I held in my hands the lives of Messieurs de la Tour du Pin and de Villeroy, among others, a magnificent haul! To give them up would have seemed like pushing my protégés to the scaffold. What was there to do, however? The papers were bulky. I racked my brains. My head was on fire; my suffering became unbearable, when, to cool my burning forehead, I thought of seeking relief in a bucket of water left there to cool wine for the meals. I plunged my hand into it. This was an inspiration. The papers that I held—couldn't I make them smaller and reduce them by soaking them?

In a moment he was at the task, pressing the paper into the water, making it into a paste, and forming balls, which he hid in his pockets. Then he proceeded to the Seine baths, drenched the balls once more, subdivided them into little balls and threw them out of the window into the river. Away went his little fleet, whose nautical cruise he followed in imagination, sailing triumphantly along beside the banks of the Place de la Revolution, with d'Estaing at the head of them, the first sailor of the epoch. After several months of this procedure he had drowned more than 800 trials.

And now the turn of the actors arrived. The Committee of Public Safety received a note condemning all ex-comedians of the King to the guillotine.

On this particular day Labussiere had been too busy to study his trial papers, and had only a moment at night to fetch them from the drawer where he had locked them and put them in his pocket. Barely had he done this when he heard a noise downstairs of men's Voices. With horror he realised that they were the voices of those for whom he worked, Saint-Just, Collot d'Herbois, and Fouquier-Tinville. They were mounting the stairs. They were there to trap him, of course!

Ah! Wait a moment! He remembered another little adjoining staircase; he would slip away down that. But now footsteps sounded there also. A man was going down them from above. Ah, for

some means—any means—of escape! Suddenly he noticed, not far from where he stood, a box used for winter wood. Into this he sprang, and crouched down among the logs.

Presently the men, who had evidently arranged a secret meeting here, arrived together, the stranger and the ones known to Labussiere, while cramped and aching he lay among the logs, as still as one, trying to make out as much as he could of the conversation.

The heat was overpowering and, two of the men having now seated themselves on the wood chest, almost every atom of air was excluded. Several times Labussiere fainted, and was on the point of crying out for mercy when the thought of the task he had set himself kept him silent.

When at last he was able to leave his hiding-place it took him some time to recover the use of his cramped limbs. His circulation was numbed from suffocation, his heart scarcely beating. However, he recovered enough to pass out through the office without exciting interest, and once outside the Louvre he breathed again.

Wandering as far as the boulevards he waited, as was his custom, for the opening of the baths so that he might destroy the papers which were weighing down his pockets; but, still feeling the effects of his imprisonment, he entered a cafe and sat down, his head between his hands.

Suddenly he felt a hand placed on his shoulder, and turning round he saw Aillaume, a zealous member of the Revolutionary Committee. Then this conversation took place:

"Where are you going?" asked Aillaume. "And where have you come from?"

"I am taking a walk," said Labussiere.

"Rubbish! You are walking seated?"

"I am sitting down because I have walked."

"You have a quick tongue, but a good citizen is not in the street at such an hour."

"In that case we are two bad citizens."

"I am called Aillaume."

"I am not called anything."

"If you will not tell me your name perhaps you will tell these," said Aillaume, as, raising a hand, he beckoned to a patrol who took Labussiere to the nearest guard.

Now indeed he had come from one terrible situation to another! He was narrowly questioned, surrounded by the dread guard, their bayonets fixed, while all the time close by his side lay those sealed documents containing the death sentences of his friends. Surely they would be found and taken!

But Labussiere's old self-possession even now refused to forsake him; perhaps his role of actor came to his aid. Calmly and firmly he refused to give his name, declaring there existed no law which could force him to tell this man his business.

Finally he created an uproar, hoping to attract a crowd for the sake of something unexpected happening; and, as it turned out, the unexpected, which is never far away, stepped from the crowd in the shape of a man he knew, one Pierre, a member of the Committee of Public Safety. It was a stroke of good fortune.

"Ah, it is you, citizen!" said Pierre, advancing and taking the prisoner by the arm with a friendly roughness. "Have you allowed yourself to be arrested for fun?"

"Not at all; this is serious," Labussiere answered. "The citizen Aillaume imagines I am a conspirator."

"Well, after all, it is something to laugh at. You, a conspirator! Tell me, troublemaker," turning to Aillaume, "what if the tables were turned and my friend were to take you prisoner?"

"What? Arrest me?" cried Aillaume. "I see you must be an accomplice of his." And, addressing the patrol, he shouted, "Seize that man!"

But Pierre's answer was ready. Opening his jacket, he cried, "Look at this! What is this badge?"

Abashed and humbled, Aillaume uncovered and apologised, holding his red cap in his hand, for the badge was the badge of the Committee of Public Safety, and no monarch's word held more power. Who was this man he had arrested?

"Ah, how a badge changes a man!" exclaimed Pierre. "But, my friend, you must also apologise to this citizen: he has his badge too. Here, I will find it."

And meaning to do his best for Labussiere, he began to rummage in his pockets, drawing out his official employee's card. But his hands had felt the packet of papers.

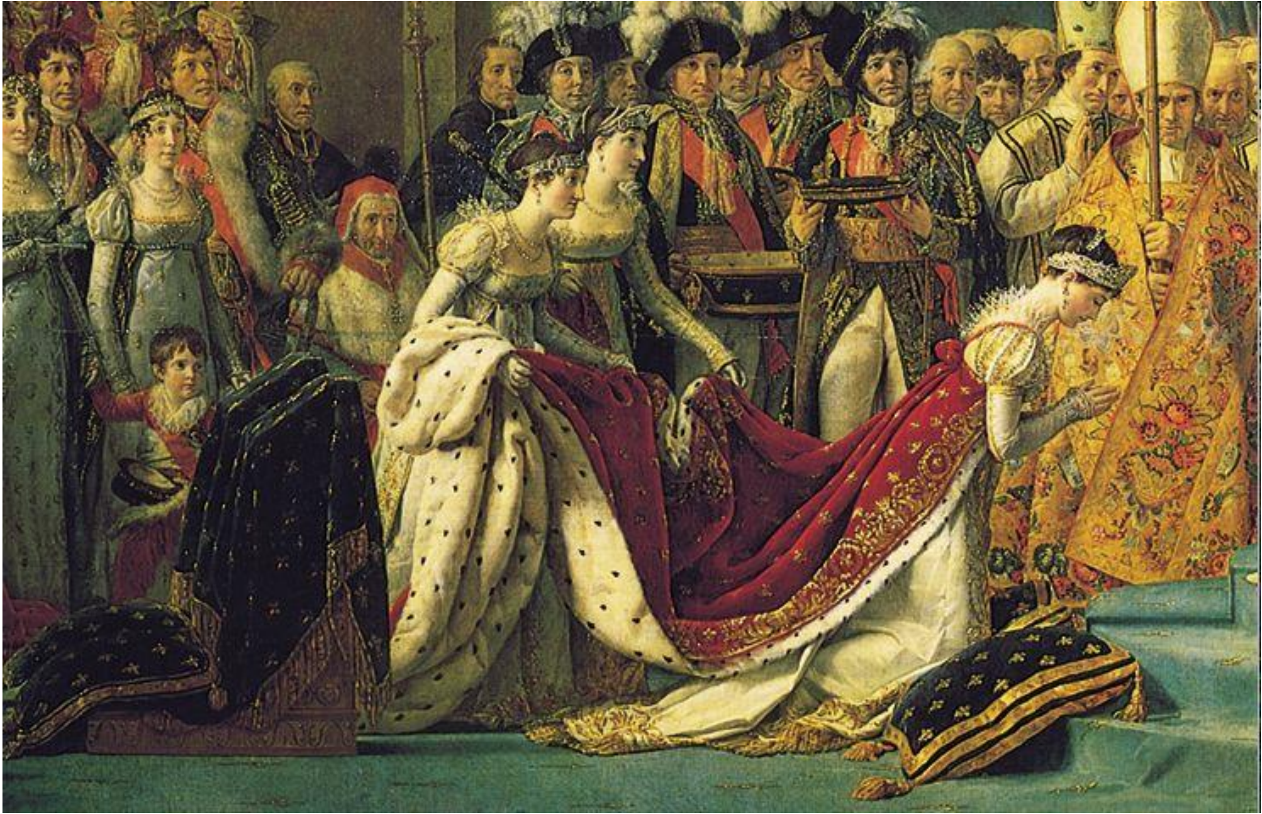
"Bless my soul!" he exclaimed. "Papers too! What a quantity!" And then he added to Labussiere, "Come, citizen, let us humiliate him a little."

Once more Labussiere nerved himself for this fresh ordeal. One small slip and all would be lost; but cleverly he turned the very discovery which might have led to his downfall into the weapon of his salvation.

Drawing the bundle of papers from his pockets, he broke the seals.

"I am proud," he said," to show the citizen Aillaume who I am, but not at his command, only in

A stirring scene of Labussiere's Day, from the Painting by Val Prinsep in the Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield



Josephine, Detail from The Coronation of Napoleon by Jacques-Louis David.
Josephine was among the lives saved by de Labussiere.

my own good time, for am I not a free man? See, here are proofs of the Government's confidence in me. Whose is this signature? Chaumette's; and this? Collot d'Herbois'."

But Labussiere was careful not to allow the crowd to examine the manuscripts too closely. Each time he mentioned the signatures he turned rapidly in the surrounding circle, as though to show them to the next person, and dexterously smuggled the paper back into his pocket.

Aillaume could make nothing of it, and by this time was thoroughly confused. Also, he was not a little concerned lest he had made an enemy of an influential man; but Labussiere himself came charitably to his aid. Turning to him, he congratulated Aillaume on his promptness in the name of the Public Safety. "If I did not make myself known at first it was but a test," he added. "Adieu, Aillaume, I shall give an account of your zeal to the Committee."

As Labussiere took leave of his friend he begged him for Aillaume's sake to hush the affair up; then he hurried to the baths to destroy the papers. There in that hidden place that order, stained with the blood of the innocent, was soaked in the clean water until all trace of its writing had gone. Labussiere could not wash those guilty hands clean of the writing, but he saved the actors of the Comedie Francaise.

However, the Tribunal of Executions was becoming impatient, and a week later a communication arrived at the Office of the Committee of Public Safety:

Representing Citizens (it said), the denunciation which has been made during these last few

> days to the Tribunal of the Convention is only too true. Your Prison Department is composed of counter-revolutionaries who hinder the working of affairs. For about ten months there has been total disorder among the Committee papers. Out of 30 individuals chosen for me to judge nearly always a half or two-thirds are missing. Lastly, all Paris is waiting for the judgment of the French comedians, and I have not yet received the statement about this affair. It is impossible for me to judge any prisoner without the papers which indicate at least the prison where he is to be found.

But once more Fate, when discovery was at his heels, befriended our hero, for only a week later Robespierre, whose position was becoming insecure, retired from office and the case of the comedians was dropped.

Labussiere's work was accomplished for all time. Over one thousand one hundred people (among them Josephine de Beauharnais, who later became the wife of Napoleon) had escaped a death of terror through this valiant and undefeated soul.

The final sequel to his story is not a happy one. Labussiere emerged from the mutilated years of the Revolution safe and sound in body. Once more he appeared at the Theatre Mareux, having for his audience many of the people he had saved; but then he was a poor man. From now onwards, as far as we can say, Labussiere vanished into complete obscurity; and after an attack of paralysis which caused his mind to become deranged, he was finally taken to an asylum, his brave spirit conquered only by the distraught fancies of his poor tired brain. Perhaps the only visible thing his country keeps to show that he lived is a tablet erected in the Comedie Françoise by an Englishman.

Chapter 14

Barthélemy Thimmonier

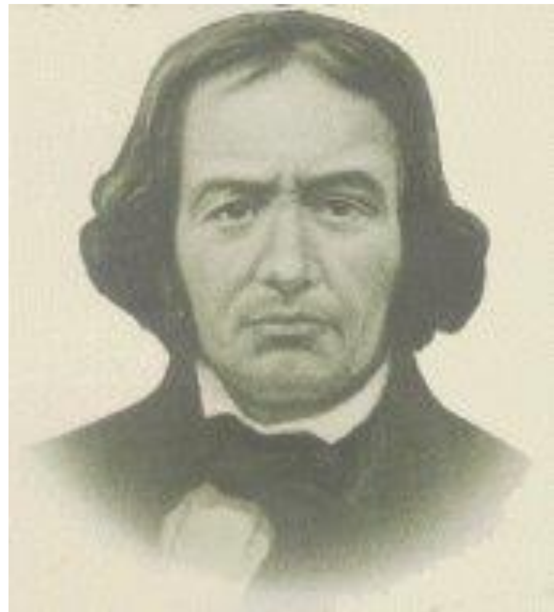
1793-1859 A.D., France

He gave all his life to an invention the world badly needed, and the world turned against him; yet he went on. The son of a dyer at Lyons, Barthelemy was born near there into a large family. The father seldom brought home enough money, and the mother spent half the night making clothes and mending them that her children might not suffer want. Even as a child Barthelemy rebelled to see his mother working well on into the night. "It is not right," he would say, "but what can be done about it?"

After a few years his "What can be done about it?" changed to "There must be something that can be done."

Young Barthelemy had by then taken up tailoring, and as he worked his mind was fixed on but one thing—somehow to improve the lot of poor sewing-women and badly paid workmen. It was not his mind that drove Thimmonier to invent the sewing machine—it was his heart, so keenly did he feel the need of something to relieve that vast multitude of women stitching, stitching, of whom Thomas Hood was to write in a few years' time his famous Song of the Shirt:

With fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat in unwomanly rags
Plying her needle and thread—
Stitch—stitch—stitch!
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch
She sang the "Song of the Shirt!"



Portrait of Barthelemy Thimmonier

One evening the idea came to Thimmonier to construct an apparatus that would do the stitching itself. He knew nothing of mechanics, but what of that? He would learn, he would study in the night, he would look and he would find.

He was at that time married and had children, but he resolved that his family should in no way suffer through the idea he had in mind. He continued to be a tailor all day, but in the evening, after dinner, he left his family, returned to the workshop, and gave himself up to work that was a mystery to his neighbours. He

Portrait of Barthelemy Thimmonier, Inventor of the Sewing Machine

was busy transforming a tailor into a mechanic.

Through trial and error, trial and error, Thimmonier pursued his experiments with incredible tenacity, and in 1829 he saw his ideas take form. The machine which did the sewing was at last a real thing. It was a primitive apparatus, made of wood and turned by a rope, producing only one stitch a minute, but it was the beginning of the 800 stitches a minute reached by some machines today.

When his machine had been tested, he resolved to go to Paris to give it a good start. He had no money, but he set out cheerfully on foot, carrying the precious machine on his back.

He had about 400 miles to go, and it took him months, for he had to earn his food on the way. Whenever he came to a town or a village he showed his invention, and gave a demonstration in some public place, following the demonstration by a collection. If the ingenious machine did not sufficiently rouse the people's generosity, he would set up a little theatre of marionettes, which helped him to pay for a meal. As for the nights, they were spent in the open, for luckily it was fair weather.

He arrived in Paris triumphant, and the first thing he met was disillusionment. Not only was there no one willing to help to put his machine on the market, but no one seemed even to care. He saw that invention was only one stage in realisation. He had no money; he was incapable of forcing the gates of industry by himself; what was to be done? He could do nothing but go home again till a way out of the difficulty was found; and so Thimmonier plodded sadly away from Paris, returning by a different route, for he hoped that by showing his machine in as many places as he could someone would become interested.

And someone did. An engineer from Lyons, a good man named Ferrand, came to him and in exchange for half the profit agreed to manufacture the machines and advertise them.

Ferrand was a man of experience and action, and it was through him that the tailor took out a patent for his invention. The next year he put Thimmonier in touch with a big Paris contractor, a company was formed, and Thimmonier found himself in charge of a workroom of eighty of his sewing-machines busy making military uniforms. He walked in the seventh heaven; his dreams were

coming true. But it did not last long.

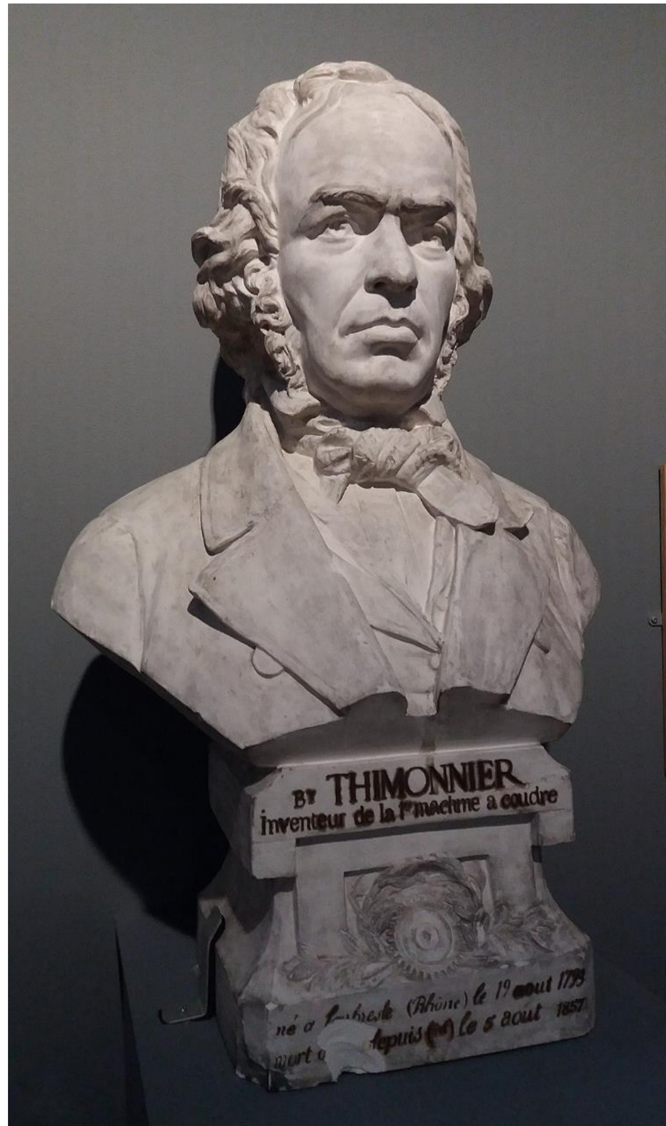
Something now happened which has always happened in such cases, but which the inventor does not always foresee. The reaction of the working-people had not been foreseen. Far from accepting sewing-machines as useful accessories to their work, they only saw in them dangerous competitors; and Thimmonier suffered the experience of Arkwright and Crompton and many other inventors who have sought to benefit the world. The working tailors rose in a body. Thimmonier's workroom was invaded, and out of the window they hurled his precious machines. Only by flight did the tailor save himself from being torn to pieces by the fury of the men and women he had wanted to help.

His company was broken up. Thimmonier fled from Lyons to Paris, there to get a living as workman to a tailor. But he was not yet beaten. He spent his spare time perfecting his machine, hoping from day to day that its time was near; but so great was the feeling against this labour-saving invention that for some time no one would take it up again. A letter in a paper of the period is significant of the feeling against the machine.

"It is reported (says the writer) that the sewing-machine is destined to produce a revolution in the sewing industry. It is this revolution that I am looking at, for it will have disastrous results. The poor women earn a salary recognized as insufficient and are often out of work, but what will it be like when the new machine takes away from five out of six their only means of existence? The orphans, the widows, the daughters are going to be reduced to public charity."

In a long reply Thimmonier refuted every argument, mentioning the immense benefits of the 18th and 19th century inventions, by the side of which his machine was a little thing.

In spite of all attacks and in face of great difficulties Thimmonier still worked on. By 1845 his machine could do 200 stitches a minute. Then it was that he found a lawyer willing to help him to manufacture the machines at the sale price of 50 francs. Four years later he obtained a new improved patent. His machine could now twist the thread, do embroidery, and sew all kinds of materials



Bust of Barthelemy Thimmonier

from muslin to leather at a speed of 300 stitches a minute.

Then the French Revolution crashed like a thunderbolt on all the dreams of men, and Thimmonier crossed to England and exhibited his machine in London, where it created great interest. He stayed several months in London, and then went back to France, not knowing whether to be glad or sad, for he had left his patent with a Manchester company. It was this company which arranged for the machine to be shown at the Great Exhibition of 1851. A stand was reserved for it, but by extreme bad luck the machine arrived a few hours too late. The committee had already disposed of the unoccupied stands, and where Thimmonier's machine should have stood were machines representing America's first attempt at an improved sewing-machine which Elias Howe had invented in 1845 and patented in 1846.

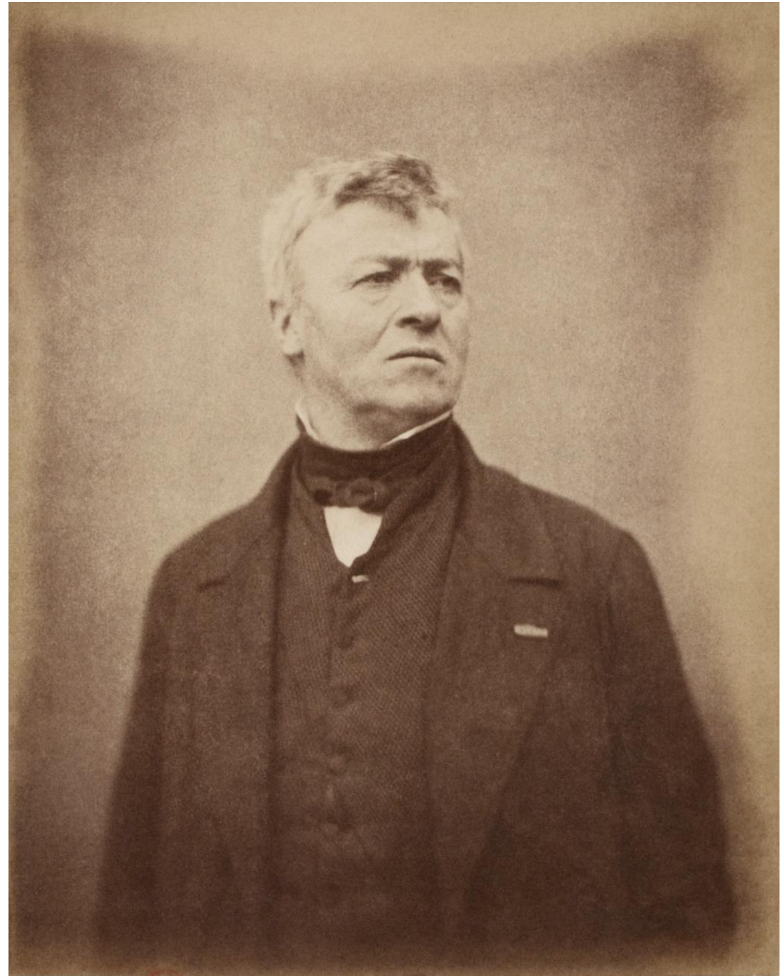
From that day Thimmonier's name fell little by little into oblivion. Five years later he was in great poverty, the next year he died, unknown and uncared for. But what he gave his life for lived on, and his dream has come true.

Chapter 15

Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot

1796-1875 A.D., France

He was born on the knees of the Muses, a writer has said. His father sold cloth in the Rue du Bac in Paris; his mother kept a hat shop opposite the Pont Royal. They were an honest couple, much absorbed in their work and anxious to make money. Camille, as he was called, was sent to a boarding school.



Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot

The story of his boyhood is the story of all who have won fame. He struggled to achieve his purpose. Instead of listening to the lessons he sketched the head of the master; instead of doing his exercises he decorated his copybooks; instead of playing he drew landscapes. At last, in despair at his son's slow progress at school, his father put him into business.

Camille now became a draper's assistant, but a very unusual one. He knew nothing about materials but their colour, and he drew pictures behind the counter.

"Camille only cares for pencils," said Monsieur Corot to himself; "better put him to accounts." So Camille was sent to a friend's counting-house. This suited him no better than the draper's shop. Finally, on his twentieth birthday, his father summoned him to a solemn interview.

"Camille," he said, "you are at the parting of two ways; by one, that is by commerce, you will become respected and rich, by the other you will become Heaven alone knows what. If you will

settle down and stick to business I will give you 100,000 francs, but if you prefer to seek adventure and live a Bohemian life do not count on my generosity. I shall give you an annual allowance of 1500 francs, but, however wretched and hungry you may be, do not expect a centime from me."

Camille threw his arms round his father's neck. "Fifteen hundred francs! But I shan't ask you for any more!" And, laughing and weeping at the same time, he exclaimed with glee, "I am a painter, a painter, a painter!"

Monsieur Corot, firmly persuaded that his son was as incapable of being a painter as he was of being a draper, resigned himself to the inevitable and produced the promised francs.

"It seems to me on leaving my father that flames were shooting out of my hat," wrote the young artist later. The evening after the interview he was painting on the banks of the Seine. The next day he joined a friend who had just returned from a journey in Italy.

Now Corot began to work furiously, but above all Nature attracted him, and as soon as spring came he fled to Ville d'Avray. There he painted everything—the stones of the road, the willows in the meadows, the crayfish in the stream. His first portrait was of himself.

After a time he went to Rome. He longed for the light of Italy. He did not go to Rome for any specific education, but to enjoy the sunny climate and work nearly all the year round in the open air, an impossibility under the changeable sky of Paris. He had spent two winters in Paris, he said, but he learned so little that when he arrived in Rome he proved to be a very bad artist.

The young artist was a prodigious worker, but sometimes became discouraged. "Never become

Landscape by Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot

The Morning Meeting on the Heights of Sevrés by Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot

a painter," he wrote to a friend, "if you wish to live quietly"; and to another friend he wrote: "Today we flatter ourselves, fancying we are geniuses; tomorrow we blush for our work." But he soon took up his life again gaily.

After three years in Rome, Corot returned to France, to his beloved Ville d'Avray. He stayed at Fontainebleau and at Chartres in Normandy. Then Italy called him and he set off there again.

In his fortieth year he returned to France. He was then doing his best work, and painted many masterpieces, but the critics were severe and he did not succeed in selling any of his pictures. He was still living on his father's 1500 francs, but that did not trouble him; he was still in love with Nature. "I feel like a child," he wrote in a letter to his mother; "a handful of leaves is enough to take me back to boyhood."

Corot always liked to have living figures in his landscapes. He wanted company in the woods, in the valleys, on the river banks. He liked to see animals and people moving about the country. "Do you see the shepherdess leaning against the trunk of that tree?" he said to a visitor. "She is turning her head suddenly; she has heard a rat; she is afraid." On one canvas a lilliputian lady is walking along an avenue and minute sailors are climbing up the riggings of ships. In another magpies are quarrelling among the branches.

One must not imagine from this that Corot's talent was in any way petty, but he had these little fancies. "I invite Nature to come to spend a few days with me," he wrote. "It is then my folly begins. Brush in hand I search for nuts in the woods of my studio; I hear birds singing there; I see streams flowing with reflections of Heaven and Earth; the Sun rises and sets in my room."

At 50 the longing to see Italy again overcame Corot, and once more he set out. Little is known about this third visit, but he continued to paint with the same youthfulness, the same charming simplicity. It was then that he painted his admirable Villa d'Este, Diana Surprised by Actaeon, and The Bath of the Shepherdess. In 1850 he visited London, but did not stay long. It was the English country that attracted him, and from here he obtained beautiful impressions for two of his famous pictures, Aurore and Solitude.

Corot exhibited his landscapes, but never showed his portraits, which he sometimes kept with their faces turned to the wall in his studio. He was an old man when he painted his finest figures. Models liked to sit for him because, unlike other portrait painters, Corot allowed them to move about, and made them feel at home.

Orders did not come in, but that did not trouble Corot. Hundreds of his studies passed into the hands of anybody who liked to use them. Most of the young landscape painters admired him, plundered him, and libelled him. One day he was seen buying back one of his canvases from a second-hand shop without a word of complaint against the man who had borrowed it and impudently sold it. He bought it back because he loved his pictures. Somebody once asked him if he had insured his studio against fire; if it caught fire he would lose at least forty thousand francs. "I laugh at francs," he answered. "But you must insure your studio," persisted the alarmist. "I had a friend whose studio was burned, but the sum paid him by the insurance company consoled him for the loss of his pictures." Corot looked at his friend amused: "Then it was not he who had painted them," he cried passionately. "If such a misfortune happened to me I should die of it!"

Photograph of Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot

He was good-natured to the point of allowing the most uninteresting visitors to bore him indefinitely; he was gentle to the point of not shaking a model who had fallen asleep; he was so fond of children that his pockets were always stuffed with sweets. He loved telling tales and singing songs. He would invite a friend to share the soup warming on his stove, forgetting that he had only one plate and spoon.

Corot was not a spoiled child of the public or of the Academy. For

fifteen years his pictures, exhibited in out-of-the-way corners in the Louvre, were scarcely seen. "I am in the Catacombs," joked the painter. But back in his house, standing with tears in his eyes before his pictures, he exclaimed, "Anyhow my talent is there."

At sixty Corot was awarded the Legion of Honour. After 25 years of indifference his relations now began to think they understood him. His father suggested that perhaps he ought to give Camille a little money, but he added: "They want to make me believe he has been decorated on account of his painting, but I am not so stupid as to believe that. I know very well it is as a lieutenant in the National Guard that he has been rewarded."

And Corot heroically continued his work, persuaded that work alone consoles for injustice and grief. He had pupils. He lavished advice on whoever sought his help, and he never accepted a farthing in return. He helped the poorest. Wonderfully endowed with gifts as a teacher he tried to develop individuality. "The soul of every artist is a mirror in which Nature is reflected in some special way," he said. One day when a young painter had servilely imitated him he exclaimed: "If you paint another picture like that I shall close my door to you!" Another day, while teaching a deaf and dumb pupil, he wrote the word "Conscience" for him, underlining it three times. Thereupon the boy began to copy a drawing so exactly that he even put in a smudge which happened to be there, and Corot assured him, smiling: "If you are as attentive in studying Nature you will find that she has no blemishes."

At 75 Corot had lost none of his splendid gifts. He travelled in Spain, and this is what he wrote about a picture that he saw there: "Do you see the freshness of this green? I have never done anything like that yet; a labourer must go on working to the last." And he worked to the last as if he still had everything to learn.

The end of the great painter was worthy of his life. On his bed of sickness he still painted. "When I consider the sky it seems to me that I have never known how to paint it," he said one day to a friend.

Camille Corot, the draper's assistant, had begun painting landscapes at 15, and he went on painting them till he was 78. One morning when his breakfast was brought up to him he said to the servant, "It is unnecessary; today old Corot is invited to breakfast up above." He had known how to live cheerfully, and it was characteristic of him that he died cheerfully that very day.

In order to understand the grandeur of Corot's works let us go and see them. Let us look at the Farnese Garden and the Bridge of Narni, his most beautiful canvases. Let us examine the Belfry of Douai and the Star of the Shepherd, his masterpieces. Let us observe his Nymphs dancing at sunrise. Let us admire the Lady in Blue leaning pensively on the black varnished piano. Let us listen to the divine Concert, which brings to mind that of Correggio.

As to Corot's style it is all soft painting without contrasts; the pure colour fades into infinite shades; the harmony is perfect, almost monochrome, and slightly veiled. His pictures do not catch the eye; a sort of greyish mist hangs over the ground, passing slowly across the water, enveloping the trees, dulling the rays of the Sun. Remove this light veil and there appear immense depths where all is bathed in warm light, which made the artist say, "In order to enter my landscapes you must have the patience to let the mist rise, for you can only go in little by little; but when you are there you must be happy." His constant aim in painting was to discern the values of different shades. "If it is not given to everybody to be born a man of genius and to become a great painter," he wrote,

"at least anybody, unless he has come infirmity, can attain the knowledge of the proportion of forms and the relation of one colour to another. At my sister's there is a girl gardener who could teach the laws of harmony to many of our famous artists."

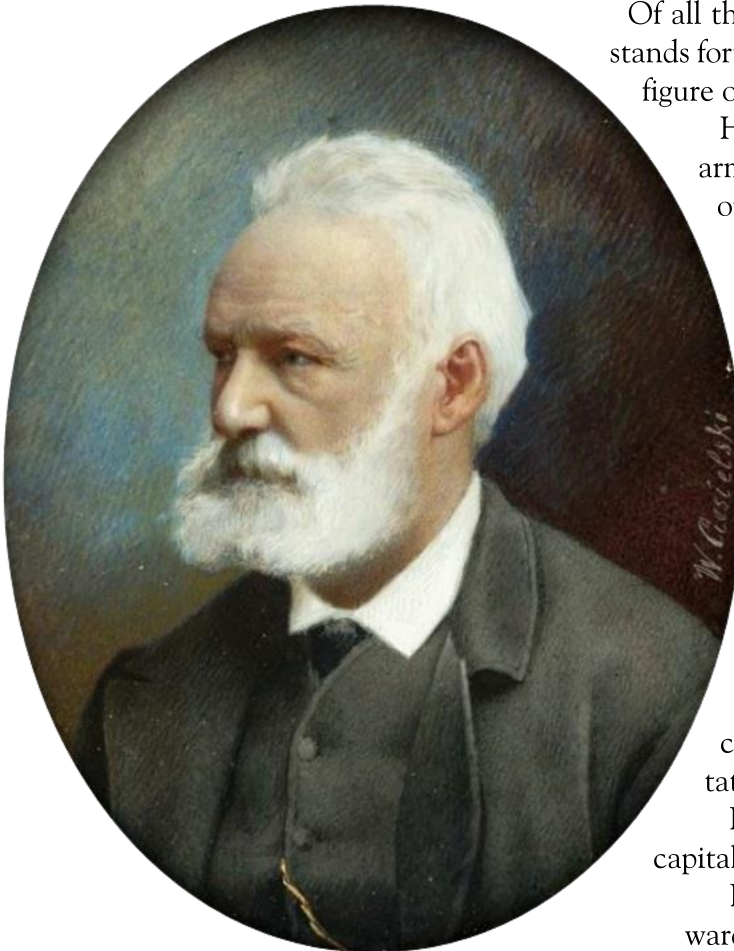
Painting was Corot's beloved friend, to whom he gave all his love, and for whose sake, like a monk, he remained unmarried. It was also his kind and faithful comforter in dark days, in times of mourning, for then it led him to the peace of the fields.

Painting made Corot one of those glowing figures in whom burns the ardent flame that faith kindles and passion keeps alight.

Chapter 16

Victor Hugo

1802-1885 A.D., France



Miniature of Victor Hugo by Wladyslaw Ciesielski

Of all the great figures in French literature none stands forth so wholly acceptable to us as the noble figure of Victor Hugo.

Hugo's father was a general of Napoleon's army. The boy was born in circumstances at once painful and dramatic—painful because of his weaknesses, so great as to cause fears for his life; dramatic because, as he came into the world at the time when Napoleon led his triumphant colours across Europe, his childhood was bound to be spent in camps, with the flourish of trumpets and the whizzing of bullets.

Young Victor Hugo was six weeks old when his father was sent from Besançon to Marseilles. What anxieties and fears disturbed his mother we can only imagine. Could the delicate child bear the journey? His mother hesitated.

In the end the whole family moved to the capital of Provence.

Everything went on well, but soon afterwards General Hugo was sent to Corsica, then from one island to another, until it became impossible for his people to follow him. Madame Hugo and her three sons, Abel, Eugène, and Victor, moved to Paris.

Paris it was that gave the child his earliest memories. He remembered that his mother sent him to school, that one morning he was taken to the room of the schoolmaster's daughter Rosa. He also remembered that before the school broke up, a play was performed in which he had a small part, but, understanding nothing of the drama, he was greatly bored, and amused himself on the stage by

kicking Mademoiselle Rosa's legs.

Now Italy was pacified, and General Hugo, longing to see his family again, called them to join him at Naples.

Napoleon's brother was hardly set on the throne of Naples when he was removed to the throne of Spain. General Hugo was to follow the prince to Madrid; but there was no possibility of exposing his family to such a perilous expedition through a country at war, and once more they said good-bye. Madame Hugo found a house with a garden that had once belonged to the Feuillantines, a house the poet was in later years to make famous by his writings.

It was a happy life for them. They played in a lovely garden among flowers and listened to the singing of birds. Hardly anything did they hear of the drama of Napoleon's campaigns. Yet little Victor knew well of that colossal figure strutting across the stage of Europe. Napoleon appeared to him as a superman; he would see him at any cost.

One day three visitors called at the house. They chatted as they walked along the garden paths, and, despite Madame Hugo's visible efforts to bring back her guests toward the house, they got to a chapel in the garden which was strictly forbidden to the children. Victor was walking behind the men when a voice suddenly sounded, and the tall figure of a man stood out against the dark shrubs. The visitors looked up, astonished at the sight of an old friend. This was how Victor Hugo told the story in later years.

> My mother, pale and scared, put her finger to her lips, but she could not stop the friends talking. I heard: "France is not great as long as she is not free," and "I would give all I have to see her free. And you?" "My life," replied the stranger. Then suddenly, the man turned to me and proudly declared: "Remember this, child, the only thing is Liberty." He laid his hands on my little shoulder, he repeated "Liberty," and went back to the cluster of trees he had come from. He was a friend of my father's, condemned to death for having conspired against the emperor, and mother had hidden him in the old chapel of the Feuillantines.

So Victor Hugo learned to love Liberty and to feel the thrill and tragedy of Liberty stirring in his soul. From that day the children, having discovered the secret, were regularly admitted to the old man's hiding-place. He would help them with their lessons and teach them games, but he would never go out.

So the days passed quietly by, and here, after exciting journeys to Spain in old stage coaches, Victor was back again as a boy of eleven, working hard, loving reading and drawing, and writing verses which nobody saw. Here it was that his first great disappointment came, for the Feuillantines was wanted to lengthen a Paris street, and the Hugos had to say good-bye to the charming garden.

However, the child's great passion, his love for poetry, was developing; he turned everything into verse. At 13 he translated Virgil; at 14 he translated Horace. His first tragedy was completed at 14, and it had 1500 verses. The same year he wrote a long poem called The Flood. At 15 he wrote another tragedy and the libretto for an opera.

He worked with an almost incredible ease and speed. He wrote Lucrèce Borgia in eleven days, and Marie Tudor in 20 days. What is even more amazing is the variety of his talents: in prose as well as in poetry he dealt with every phase of things: sonnets, dramas, idylls, madrigals, odes, satires, stories. He was dreamer and warrior, a tragic and a comic, a mystic, and a reformer.

But it was drama that chiefly appealed to the boy; he wanted to write for the stage. The same

year the French Academy offered a prize for poetry, and young Hugo tried for it. But he was at school, not free to go out, and the problem was how to take his manuscript to the Academy. He ran away from school for an hour to take his poem. He was punished, but the punishment he received was well worth while, for he won the Academy prize, a high achievement indeed for a boy of 15.

Now poetry was no longer enough to satisfy a mind like his. At 16 he founded a newspaper, a sort of literary and political review, in which a few scholars joined him.

In 1818 Hugo left school, now gave all his time to the studies he preferred. He read Aeschylus, Dante, Shakespeare. He sent articles and verse to newspapers. He was thinking of entering for the prize of the Toulouse Academy when his mother fell ill, and the boy, anxious and fearful for the life of his best friend, did not leave her day or night. No more could he think of the Toulouse prize. But one day, feeling better, the mother inquired, “What about your ode for Toulouse?” There was no answer. “Are you getting on with it?” the mother went on, and at last, as the mother insisted, Victor had to say, “I have not begun it. It is too late; I was to send it tomorrow, early.”

The poor mother could hardly hide her sorrow. They loved each other, and she was proud of him. Victor, hurt by the thought of her sorrow, set his heart and mind to work. He worked all night, and the next morning he showed the ode to his mother. It won the prize.

Already he had many friends among famous people. He was popular. Chateaubriand praised him. But however feasted he might be he would give the greater part of his time to work, and his work was his comfort when his mother died, leaving him sorrowing bitterly, a boy of 20.

Then began a sad time for him. His father, still away, bade him leave literature for a more remunerative career, and Victor refused, which led to the cutting off of his allowance. Eight hundred francs, made out of his paper, represented the whole of his fortune, and wretched weeks followed, often with hardly any food, no light, and only threadbare clothes.

But such a life cannot last for those who do not lose heart. One day Victor Hugo met, at the house of some old friends, a little girl with whom he used to play at the Feuillantines, Adèle Foucher, and they were married.

If misfortunes never come singly is it not true that happiness also seems to bring happiness? During his engagement the writer made money with a volume of poetry which was such a success that a new publication was certain to be welcomed. In the same year he received a pension from King Louis the Eighteenth, a timely benefaction that made his marriage easier. And then came the Legion of Honour.

At thirty Hugo lived in the house where the Musée Victor Hugo now stands, and it was in this house, furnished with refined taste, that the literary men of the time met.

Children were born to the happy couple, a little girl and two boys; the poet had his plays acted in the greatest theatres; he wrote books that everybody admired; he could afford a summer country house for his family and many guests. Such was Hugo’s life from thirty to forty.

But this happiness was soon to be mixed with sorrow, for bitter tragedies befell his family. Victor Hugo’s brother Abel lost his reason, and at about the same time the poet’s daughter and her husband were drowned in the River Seine.

Work was once more Hugo’s consolation. In a year he published three masterpieces any one of which would be enough to make a man famous. He wrote without effort or fatigue. There was no small thing, no colour, no idea, to which he was not naturally inclined to give a soul at once; there

was no vision, no impression, that he was not eager to express in verse.

Victor Hugo's fame was growing fast. In 1831 Byron was dead, Walter Scott was dying, Goethe had a few more months to live, Chateaubriand had written his last work, Lamartine was immersed in politics, and Victor Hugo gathered to himself these great men's inheritance, for he was now the most prominent writer in Europe.

But there was another Victor Hugo, the politician. As a Royalist he had been made a peer of France, but as he grew older the poet became a Liberal, and so active a Liberal that in 1848 he took an important part in the revolutionary movement, was made a deputy of Paris, and founded a paper, *The Event*, to prepare the way for him to stand for the Presidency of a French Republic. He failed. In 1851 Napoleon the Third reestablished the Empire. What was to become of the Liberal chiefs, those men so dangerous to the new Government? They were exiled from France. Driven from his own land, Victor Hugo went to Guernsey, and on that island, at Hauteville House, looking out on the all-inspiring sea, he produced the most famous of his works.

Cosette Sweeping (from Les Misérables) by Émile Bayard

Life was simple at Hauteville House. Victor Hugo entertained visitors, sketched, and made furniture. Abroad his great fame was growing; and it had grown from being French to be European; now it grew from European to universal. In his exile, Hugo heard of the first battles of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, and, unable to remain away from France after 18 years of exile, he rushed back to Paris.

In the midst of the upheaval of the nation his arrival passed almost unnoticed. The Prussians were nearing Paris, and the people, stricken with fear, thought only of their country. It was in the midst of this, calamity befell Victor Hugo himself. Madame Hugo was dead, and now his two sons died.

But Hugo's last years were comforted by two beloved grandchildren, Jeanne and Georges, for whom he

Photograph of Victor Hugo with Georges and Jeanne

wrote The Art of Being a Grandfather. His closing years went quietly by in Paris amid the greatest popularity. Distinguished visitors called from all parts of the world to see the master. But the end was drawing near. One day the Paris papers published these few lines: "Victor Hugo, whose heart was weak, is now suffering from congestion of the lungs." A series of alarming bulletins followed, and the great poet died.

People gathered at once all round the house, and thousands of visitors called. An open envelope was found in the poet's desk with this note in it:

> I give 50 thousand francs to the poor.
> I wish to have the simplest coffin.
> I refuse the prayers of the Church, but I beg one from every heart.
> I believe in God.
> Victor Hugo

The French Government decided that the funeral should be national and that the body of the great dead should lie for two days under the Triumphal Arch. He was buried in the Panthéon, and among the speeches then pronounced perhaps these few words best summed up the poet's character:

> Victor Hugo is the man of our time who has best understood and best loved humanity. Charitable to all, there is no moral or physical misery to which his magnanimity did not bend. The bettering of human nature and human destinies were the principal objects of his contemplation.

"There are, indeed, some nobler lives in their simplicity or in their unity, but none more immense in their variety," wrote one of his countrymen; "it is not the life of a man; it is the life of a Titan."

It is a true judgement. Easy, rich, a little original at bottom and extremely original in form, Hugo is indeed a great classic; for has it not been said that the purpose of a classic is to express the ideas of all in the language of a few?

Children loved him because he loved them. They think of him playing with his beloved grandchildren Jeanne and Georges; of his feeding the poor children of Guernsey twice every week; of his masterly skill in getting up Christmas parties for children. The house in which he lived in Paris is now preserved as a national museum, to which lovers of his works delight to go. There are portraits of his children and grandchildren on the walls. In this home of beautiful memories is a record of the

last words this great man wrote:

> *The party to which I belong does not yet exist. It is the party of Revolution for Civilisation. This party will form the twentieth century. From its teaching will rise, first, the United States of Europe, then the United States of the World.*

Chapter 17

Harriet Martineau

1802-1876 A.D., England (French Huguenot descent)

British Sociologist Harriet Martineau

She is a link with those great Norwich reformers, the Frys and the Gurneys, who awakened England to the darkest blots in its social life at the beginning of the 19th century. She was born in Norwich when Elizabeth Fry, who brought light to English prisons, had just come of age.

When her own girlhood was past and she was a young woman the blackest disgrace of the prisons had been removed, though there was still much to do in removing their abuses and in the reform of the dreadful vindictiveness of the criminal law. In that reform Samuel Romilly, an Englishman of French descent, was the pioneer. But Harriet Martineau, who also came of a French family of Huguenots, found opportunities for her reforming zeal in an altogether different direction. She it was who was one of the great pioneers of freedom for women, especially in the matter of their education. She knew and felt instinctively that if the great mass of English-women could be brought to understand the social needs of the time there could be no greater aid or incentive to reform.

Women intellectually able and highly educated there had always been in England, from the days of Lady Jane Grey and Margaret More to the bluestockings of the 18th century, or Jane Austen of the 19th. But the greater number of girls in what we should call the upper middle class and certainly in the classes below them were doomed to an education and training that entirely shut them out from any intelligent interest or influence in public affairs.

Harriet's own childhood was spent in surroundings in which skill with the needle was held of

more importance than anything, more than an elementary knowledge of reading, writing, arithmetic, and the use of the globes, and when the education of most girls, finishing at 15, was held to have accomplished all that was necessary if it fitted them to take up household matters. "When I was young," she afterwards wrote, "it was not thought proper for young ladies to study very conspicuously and especially with pen in hand." She had better opportunities than most, for she learned French and Latin with her brothers, and was passionately fond of music till her growing deafness, becoming acute when she was only 18, banished its enjoyment for her for the rest of her life.

Portrait of Harriet Martineau

This deprivation, by shutting her into herself, made her seek an outlet in writing. Her very first article was an essay to show that women had the capacity to teach through their pen and to urge that women could be truly womanly in their private lives and yet teachers and leaders of men in the highest subjects. Her work for the cause of women's education began with this article published in a magazine, The Monthly Repository, in 1823, and signed with a man's name because no editor in those days would have accepted an article written by a woman.

It was a great moment in her life and, as it happened, a great consolation, which at that time she sorely needed, for it was then that the one love story of her life ended tragically with the death of the young Unitarian pastor to whom she was engaged. She went on writing religious essays, all signed by another name than her own; but presently she began to write stories of which she ventured to claim the authorship and which proved so popular that they found a public in America.

Then her great idea came to her. She was an earnest student of Adam Smith and other teachers of political economy, and it occurred to her that if people like her stories she might introduce into them, pleasantly wrapped up, some of the truths of political and social economics. The Reform Bill was then before Parliament. Could she make people take the right view of that? It was an excellent idea, but it was hard to get anybody to see it or to publish her first educational story. She took it to London and tramped about through the mud and sleet of December to the offices of the publishers, day after day, for nearly three weeks. None wanted it. But at last Charles Fox, a brother of her editor, agreed to publish two of her illustrations of political economy.

Her publisher lived at Dalston, and Harriet, who in those days had very little to spend, walked there back (four or five miles) to see him in the hope of getting better terms. She always remembered that excursion.

> I could not afford to ride more or less; but, weary, I now felt almost too ill to walk at all. On the road, not far from Shoreditch, I became too giddy to stand without some support; and I leaned over some dirty palings, pretending to look at a cabbage-bed, but saying to myself as I stood with closed eyes, "My book will do yet."

So it did. Story followed story, rather old-fashioned, but always with an idea in it. Self-help, cooperation, the meaning of money, the equality of human rights, and the paramount duty of society to provide for the support, comfort, and enlightenment of every member of it, all formed subjects for her storytelling pen. It is pleasant to know that she met with both success and recognition. Statesmen, politicians, thinkers, and students praised her work, and, best of all, people eagerly bought and read the little books. Some of the most difficult problems of the day were submitted to her. Lord Brougham asked her to write a tale dealing with pauperism, and this story, called *The Parish*, is one of the best. It is about life in a village where nearly every working man and woman was receiving parish relief to make up for miserable wages paid by farmers and other employers.

Bust of Harriet Martineau

It would be impossible to tell all the writing she did in her long life, for even when she was laid aside by serious illness she still went on with her work. Her fame as a writer and thinker grew as the years went on. She wrote articles for the most influential magazines and the daily papers. A whole page would be occupied with the mere list of her articles in the Daily News for one year.

The last 30 years of her life were spent in the home of her own that her pen had enabled her to afford at Ambleside. There great people of her day came to see her, among

them Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot, Emerson, and Douglas Jerrold. While she was active any public movement of value would enlist her help and her cooperation. The cotton famine of 1861 called forth all her sympathy and aid.

For the last twenty years of her life she was an invalid; never a helpless but always a helpful one. When she was young she was called plain, but in old age she became beautiful. The eyes were ever kind, the mouth quickly curved to a smile. Children loved her and so did all those who rendered service to her. When her long and useful life ended the picture that her many friends always kept of her was that of the delicate old lady with the lace cap above the smooth, dark hair, and the hands that seemed always as busy as her tireless brain.

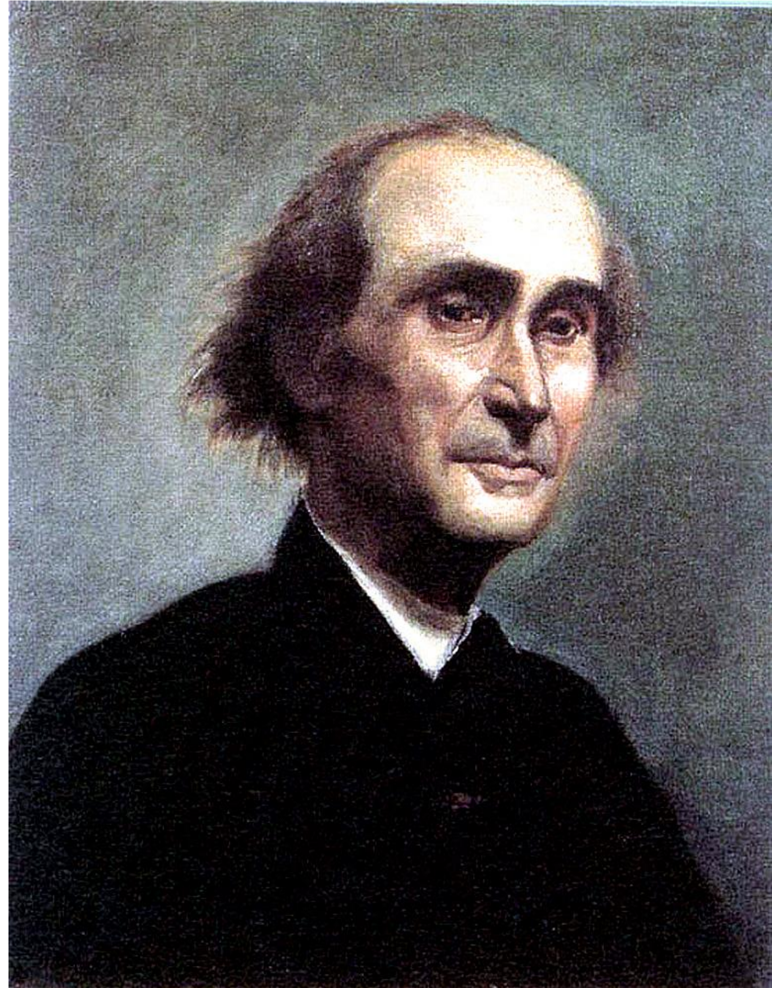
Chapter 18

Jean Henri Fabre

1823-1915 A.D., France

Henri Fabre was one of those rare personalities who combine the mind of a scientist with a poet's humility and love of beauty; and his claim to greatness lies, not in any dramatic discovery, or in any illuminating theory, but in the fact that he breathed life into the bare bones of science, and had imagination enough to perceive, under the bare fact, the "soul of the fact."

Jean Henri Casimir, son of Antoine and Elizabeth Fabre, was born at Saint-Léons, a small market town in Southern France. The Fabres were a humble and unenterprising race, and the story of Henri is proof that genius bloweth where it listeth, for there was no trace of scientific curiosity on either side of his family. There was no time in the lives of these dulled and hard-working peasants to stand and stare. As he said, "What difference did it make to us whether the Earth was round or square? In either case it was just as hard to make it bring forth anything."



Jean-Henri Fabre, Artist Unknown

So poor were they that when still very young Henri was sent to live with his grandparents to relieve the poor household of one mouth; and here, in his solitary life amid the geese and calves and sheep on a lean farm on the "cold granite ridge of the Rouergue tableland," young Fabre awoke to consciousness.

When he was seven he returned home to attend the local school, and from his pictures of life

Photograph of Jean-Henri Fabre

then we must admit that the schooling, though unusual and interrupted, was at least interesting. The schoolroom was kitchen, bedroom, and dining room, and at times piggery and chicken-house as well; and the master combined the duties of teacher, bailiff, barber, bell-ringer, and chorister.

Henri was given a penny alphabet with the picture of a pigeon on its cover; but as the master was fully occupied with the older boys it is hardly surprising that the book remained an unopened mystery; its chief benefit to Fabre was that it created a feeling of kinship with the pigeon on the cover, and recalled to him "beeches raising their smooth trunks above a mossy carpet studded with mushrooms; or of snowclad peaks where the birds leave the starry print of their red feet."

Diversions were often caused by the piglets creeping through the open door, followed by the hen and her pretty chicks; and often lessons were set aside altogether so that the boys could help in some practical occupation, like gathering in the crops or killing snails in the box-borders.

One magic day Henri was deputed to take the family ducklings to a lonely stream on the hillside above the cottage, and there he discovered wondrous things: crystals sparkling in the sunshine, gold-gleaming sand he fondly hoped would enrich his family for life; and a little beetle "of such an unutterable blue that the angels in Paradise must wear dresses of the colour."

Alas, the sequel was less happy—a scolding for torn pockets, and his treasures thrown out as rubbish.

In 1833, when Henri was ten, the family left its native village for Rodez, where Henri had free tuition at the grammar school; and in time he grew interested in Latin. He loved Virgil especially for his exquisite and detailed descriptions of the bees and the cicada. But the family grew ever poorer, and when he was 15 young Fabre had to take to the roads, earning a precarious livelihood by selling lemons.

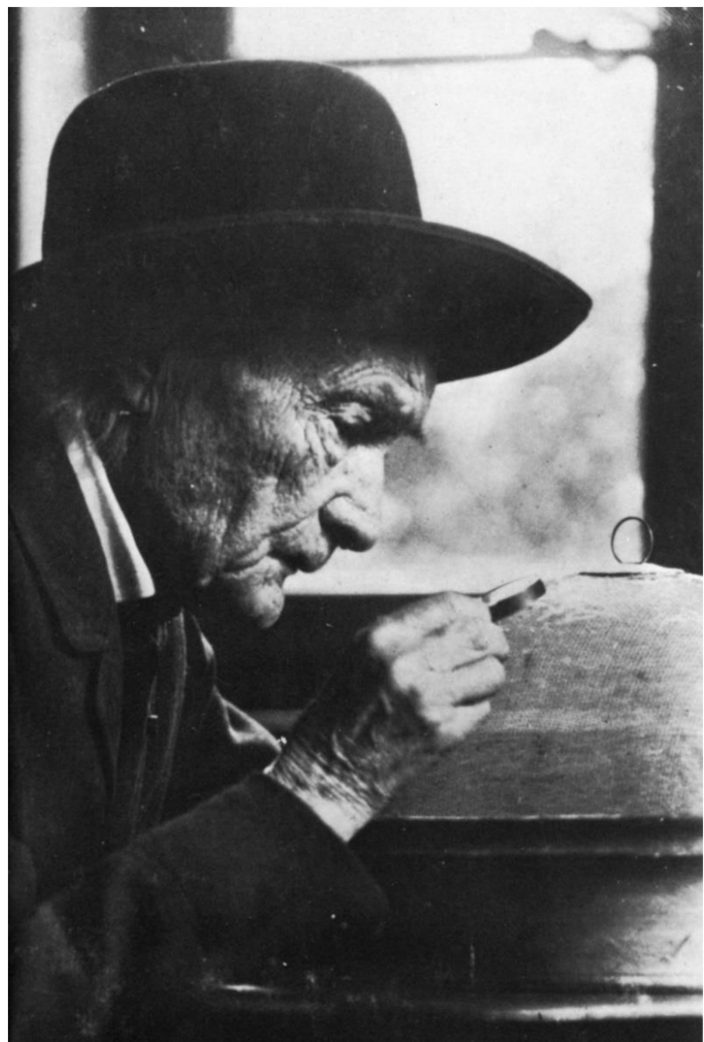
Sustained through grey and lonely hours by his love of Nature and learning, his sorrows would be forgotten in joy at some insect find, and sometimes, though hungry, he would spend his last penny on a slender volume of poetry.

At Avignon this rare and gallant soul sat at an examination for a bursary, and as a result was enabled to spend three happy years at college; and often, while his fellow students were scowling over their Latin, he would finish early, and was wont to spend those precious minutes examining in the secrecy of his desk "the fruit of the oleander, the flower of the snapdragon, or the sting of a wasp."

At 20 Henri was a fully-fledged teacher with a salary of £28 a year. In a damp cellar, under hard conditions, this gay and courageous student devoted himself to teaching agriculturalists about pickling, soap-making, and tanning; and his enthusiasm imparted to them something of his own delight in Nature.

One enchanted day, almost as much to his own astonishment as to that of his boys, he was successful in an experiment at making oxygen. We are reminded of our own schooldays as we read his comments when the magnesium ribbon burns successfully in the jar of oxygen, "a splendid firework," from which a red drop fell at intervals and hissed into the water below.

> This metallic tear with its indomitable heat makes every one of us shudder (he writes). They stamp and cheer and applaud. The timid ones place their hands before their faces and dare not look except through their fingers. My audience exults, and I myself triumph. Ha! My friends, isn't it grand, this chemistry!



Portrait of Jean Henri Fabre

And while he brought this courage and gaiety and love to an ill-paid task he was ever studying; and as he read the works of great scientists the still small voice of his genius whispered, "You too, shall be of their company."

By dint of his faith and fire and sustained mental effort he was at length appointed Professor of Physics and Chemistry at Ajaccio in Corsica, and it was here that he became acquainted with the sea and its wonders. He spent hours of perfect happiness wandering on the shore, examining shells and flowers and insects, listening to the booming of the many-sounding waters and gathering strength from the grandeur of the everlasting hills.

It was the ardour of his study which led him to leave Corsica, for nightly excursions in search of specimens brought on a

prostrating attack of malaria and drove him to the mainland. Curiously enough he was appointed Professor of Physics at Avignon, the portals of which he had first entered as a hungry ragged lad of 15. Here he spent many happy years, loved by pupils and masters alike for his youth, enthusiasm, good-humour, and charm. As before, he would take his boys with him in his rambles, instilling into them the love of his little ones, as he called the insects.

Gradually he became known outside scientific circles. A friendship with the Minister of Education in France led to his being presented to the Emperor. The Minister, delighted by Fabre's genius, had hoped he might become tutor to the Emperor's son, but a nearer acquaintance with the rugged simplicity and nobility of Fabre's character made him realise that he was unfitted for life at Court.

Though caring little for worldly fame Fabre longed to occupy a Chair of Natural History in one of the universities. He worked hard and obtained the crowing academic honour of Doctor's Degree, and it seemed as if his dream would be realised. But also for fickle fortune! He was told kindly but bluntly that nobody could hope to enter on university work without a considerable private income. Fabre was too well acquainted with the way of the world to be much surprised at this, and he set about experimenting with commercial dyes. A factory "rose skyward full of promise," but when success seemed within his grasp he was crushed by two apparent disasters.

With the discovery of making madder-dye cheaply all hope was gone of making money from the natural product; and almost at the same time a more serious reverse befell him. Victor Duruy had started a movement for promoting secondary education for girls, and Fabre gave his enthusiastic support, delivering a series of free lectures on the subject, which by their success wrought his ruin. Storms of abuse and shocked dismay met these two pioneers of education for girls. At Avignon everyone combined to rid the district of this dangerous Fabre, the unorthodox scientist, this presumptuous peasant. Duruy went down under the storm of hostile criticism, and Fabre, gentlest and most courageous of mortals, in this moment of his greatest weakness and discouragement, was evicted from his house.

For a time even his high-hearted courage failed: "It is all over; the downfall of my hopes is complete," he wrote.

But Fabre, the born fighter, after the first shock had spent itself, breasted this last wave of hostile fortune. "Let us try another lever and resume rolling the Sisyphean stone," he said. "Let us seek to draw from the inkpot what the madder-vat and the Alma Mater refuse us. Laboremus. Let us work!"

So might some hero of an Icelandic saga have spoken, and so did Fabre speak.

In due course he found a lonely house in the wide plains near Orange, and there he lived nine years, writing and observing the lives of plants and his "little ones"; so that out of his seeming failure there eventually came that work by which he is known to fame. His intercourse with the outside world was now slight indeed, but his family life was happy, and his son Jules was his constant companion in the study of his beloved insects.

It was little wonder, then, that Jules' death in 1879 was perhaps the greatest blow which ever befell him, and only his intense faith saved him from despair. His belief reminds us of Browning in its triumphant certainty.

When he was an old man someone asked him if he believed in God.

> I cannot say I believe in God (he said); I *see* Him. Without Him I understand nothing; without

House of French Entomologist Jean Henri Fabre at Sérignan-du-Comtat

> Him all is darkness. Every age has its manias. I regard atheism as a mania. It is a malady of the age. You could take my skin from me more easily than my faith in God.

Work was now more than ever necessary to him, and he spent long hours watching the insects with the same patience and tenacity of purpose that his ancestors had expended in wresting a scant livelihood from the earth.

It was in 1879 that he planned and seriously began the ten-volume work which was to make him famous.

True poet that he was, even as a child he had sensed the magic of words, and his books are entirely free from the jargon in which science is too often willing to clothe her cold facts and theories. Fabre's books are as true a revelation of his delightful personality as the lyrics of a poet. He dramatizes the life of his insects and trembles and exults and sympathises with the "courtships of the scorpions." Like the true scientist he watches and ponders and builds, proving one thing and then going on to another, each detail the outcome of hours of patient watching.

It was this scientific method of working together with his loving patience and tenacity of purpose which justly earned for him Darwin's tribute that he was "an incomparable observer," and therefore his work is of permanent value to the scientist besides being a storehouse of information and delight to the world. His most valuable contribution to science was on the subject of instincts. His long and

patient researches enabled him to open up new vistas concerning the perfect wisdom of insects within the usual conditions of their lives and their unbelievable stupidity when faced with anything outside the range of their normal environment.

Perhaps no single incident so clearly reveals the rare character of Fabre, his honesty and humour, his pugnacity and kindliness, as the guinea-pig story they tell of him.

He was always reluctant to make experiments on animals if he could make the experiment on himself—his arms were covered with scars; and one day, when someone suggested that he should use a guinea-pig instead of his own body, our hero glared and said:

> *I want the knowledge, not the guinea-pig. Why should he be made to pay for it? Besides, the guinea-pig can only say it hurts; I want to know just how it hurts.*

We may be thankful indeed for this gallant soul, great enough to retain his capacity for wonder and great enough to be simple; matchless in his industry, matchless, too, in his sensitiveness to beauty and his kinship with all living things.

Chapter 19

Marie Curie

1867-1934 A.D., France

Born in Poland she was the youngest in a family of five. Her father, Mr. Sklodowski, was a well-known professor in one of the colleges at Warsaw; her mother was headmistress in a high school for girls. Both parents gave much of their time to the education of their children, and the family life at

Portrait of Marie Curie and Pierre Curie

home was a very happy one.

This peaceful family life came to an end with the death of the mother. Marie, then nine, was sent to a Russian school. All these Russian schools were opposed to the Polish national spirit. The teachers treated the pupils as enemies, and the moral atmosphere was unbearable; the children lost all joy of life in the perpetual state of mistrust. Marie, like most Polish children, had a very strong national feeling, and the conditions in the Russian school were for her a source of constant suffering and struggle.

The only bright moments in her school life were the evenings she spent with her father and the other children at home. Mr. Sklodowski was interested in literature. Marie developed a strong taste for poetry, and soon became acquainted with foreign literatures. But her favourite studies were mathematics and physics, and the dream of her life was to have a laboratory, where she could experiment on all she was now learning in theory only.

At 15 she accepted a position as governess to some children in the country. It was a hard moment when she left her old home, and her heart was heavy when she climbed into the railway car which took her out among strangers. Her eldest pupil was about her own age, and was more a companion than a pupil. They used to go for long walks in the country, and in winter they had many delightful games.

Marie Curie at 16 years old

Marie even dared to organise a secret school for the village children who could not be educated under the Russian Government. She taught them to read and to write at great risk to herself for, had her work been discovered, it would have meant imprisonment for her or exile to Siberia.

Her evenings were given to study. When the whole house was asleep she took out her books of science and studied them with great ardour. Her education in science was far from complete; the books she picked up at random were often without any value, yet this method of learning, though not very productive, created in her the habit of independent work.

After four years of this life Marie left and went back to Warsaw. There, with the help of her father, she obtained access to a small physical laboratory where she could work every Sunday, the only day she was free. About that time a secret organisation was started among Polish students in Warsaw; its aim was to develop the intellectual and moral strength of the nation. Marie became one of its most enthusiastic

Pierre and Marie Curie with the bicycles on which, during their early married life, they roamed the roads of France together

members. She attended secret evening courses of learning and teaching, striving to deepen her own interests in order to be able to give more when the time should come.

At last the great longing for scientific work was fulfilled, and Marie went to Paris with the money she had saved from her small salary. She took a little garret on a sixth floor and went on giving lessons and working in her spare time for examinations that would admit her to the university.

Her small room was a very inhospitable place. In winter the water froze in her basin, and very often she had to pile up all her clothes on the bed to keep warm enough to sleep. There was a small iron stove, but all the coal had to be carried up six flights of stairs. She prepared her frugal meals on a small spirit lamp.

Yet, in spite of her poverty, the enthusiastic young student was happy. Her mind was centred on her studies. A new world seemed to open before her. After two years of hard work Marie Sklodowski graduated in physics, and not long after in mathematics.

She was now admitted to the laboratories of physics at the Sorbonne, and there she met Pierre Curie. It was love of science that brought them together, and they decided to marry. Pierre Curie was professor in the Paris School of Physics and Chemistry, but his salary was so small that both had to work hard to make their living. Of course all the housework and cooking had to be done by Madame Curie herself, but she managed not only to do it, but to help her husband in the laboratory and to prepare herself for the professor's certificate. She gained this with distinction about a year after the date of her marriage.

In 1897 their first child, Irene, was born. This meant new work for the mother, who could not afford to keep a nurse. Happily Pierre Curie's father now shared the young couple's rooms, and he used to take care of the baby while the mother was at work in the laboratory.

About that time Henri Becquerel made some new experiments on the salts of a rare metal, uranium. Placing uranium salt on a photographic plate covered with black paper he found that the plate was affected as if light had fallen on it. The Curies were very excited by this phenomenon and

resolved to make a special study of it. Madame Curie soon found out that substances containing thorium behaved in a similar way. She was about to undertake a study of uranium and thorium rays when she made a new discovery. While examining a number of minerals she noticed that a few of them showed activity, though they contained neither uranium nor thorium. She found a new substance, much more active than uranium, and gave it the name polonium, in memory of her native country. Yet this research was not finished. While she and her husband were engaged in this work on polonium they discovered that there was still another new element, which they called radium. It was not enough to define the existence of such a substance; it had to be separated as a pure element. To undertake such a difficult task without any money, without the necessary equipment, was almost impossible. Yet, the vision of great possibilities that might come from such a discovery urged them to continue their task.

Large quantities of ore had to be treated by special chemical processes. They obtained an old shed which stood in the grounds of the School of Physics. Its glass roof leaked in wet weather, the heat was terrible in summer, and the cold was intense in winter. Yet it was in this miserable shed that their greatest work was done. They were so absorbed in their research that sometimes they stayed for days in their shed, preparing all their meals on Madame Curie's old spirit lamp. Pierre Curie studied the physical properties of the radium rays while Madame Curie worked at the purification of the substance itself.

Marie Curie and her two daughters, Eve and Irene

It was hard work, requiring great physical strength as well as precision. She had sometimes to spend a whole day mixing a boiling mass with a heavy iron rod nearly as tall as herself. It had taken them four years to produce evidence that radium was a true element, though with a proper laboratory they could have done it in a year. One of their joys was to visit their shed at night. There on the shelves they saw the feebly luminous silhouettes of the bottles and capsules which contained radium. It was the first glimpse of this new light that was dawning for the world of knowledge. But all this

happy, quiet work was soon disturbed by the fame which followed the discovery. Though their financial position was greatly improved by the Nobel prize, which they received jointly with Professor Becquerel, the long years of struggle and privation had weakened their health to such a degree that for nearly four years both were unable to work. Meanwhile the publicity was increasing. Visitors and demands for lectures and articles robbed them of every quiet moment. Pierre Curie took a new chair of Physics at the Sorbonne, and Madame Curie was made Chief of Work in the Sorbonne Laboratory. About that time their second daughter was born. Their work in the old shed was coming to an end. A new laboratory with all necessary equipment was being prepared for them, but Pierre Curie was destined not to use it. He was killed by a lorry in Paris in 1906. Heartbroken as she was by this blow Madame Curie never ceased work. All her time was divided between the laboratory and her children. With the outbreak of the war she organised the first use of radium for military hospitals. She established several centres, and when these were insufficient she fitted up, with the help of the Red Cross organisation, a car which put radium at the command of any of the hospitals round Paris who might be in need of it. It was an ordinary touring car arranged for the transport of a complete radium apparatus, with a dynamo worked by the engine of the car and furnishing the electric current necessary for the production of the rays. Madame Curie for a long time drove the car herself. It was soon discovered that radium itself was not necessary in the work of the hospitals, but that its emanations would suffice. The demand for these emanations was enormous, and Madame Curie prepared them for the use of all the war hospitals on the French front.

The Curies are a beautiful example of true idealists. Not for a moment did either try to draw from the great discovery any material profits. They published the process of the preparation of radium freely to the world. They took out no patent and reserved no advantage in any industrial exploitation. By freely offering their hard-won secret for the benefit of sufferers all the world over they sacrificed a considerable fortune.

Chapter 20

Eve Lavalliere

1868–1929 A.D., France

She found fame and gave it up for happiness, a fair exchange.

Born in Toulon in 1868 as Eugenie Feneglie, she was orphaned and tried to earn her living as a singer in cafes.

People liked her singing, and told her she should try her luck in Paris. She went to Paris poor and nameless. A manager gave the little provincial girl a part, and all Paris loved her. Fame and fortune paved her way with gold and flowers.

Distinguished people cultivated her friendship. Great men begged her to interpret their plays. There was hardly anything the world can give which was denied her.

French actress Eve Lavalliere

She was very beautiful, with a crown of curls and great shining eyes. She had grace of body and movement, and was extremely intelligent.

Admiration followed her everywhere. Her photographs appeared constantly; articles were written about her clothes by one type of scribbler, and about her art by another. As an actress she was called Eve Lavalliere.

Suddenly Eve Lavalliere disappeared.

Her dazzling life had brought her no happiness. At first, like every stage-struck girl, she had thought it would be splendid to be famous. She had been as

pleased with her jewels as a child with its toys. But soon she was asking: “Is this all? I am not happy. When shall I begin to be happy?”

In the end she left the world and set out in quest of happiness. She found it in a village of the Vosges, where she lived a life of poverty, prayer, and service. If a poor man needed nursing, or a sick woman wanted her house scrubbed, or a dying child wanted comfort, Eugenie Feneglie placed herself at their beck and call.

After much searching her brilliant friends found her. They begged her to return to the world, but all they could say was in vain. “It will not last,” people said, but years went on. For fifteen years the famous actress was the servant of the poor in her mountain village. Then, in 1929, she passed on to that world where heroes are and people knew that though fame had brought her little happiness she had found the secret in living for others.

Chapter 21

Gilbert Talbot

1891-1915 A.D., England (Buried in France)

Unknown to the world, he has come into the lives of a mighty multitude. He lies in the battlefields of France, but everywhere his spirit moves and shapes the ways of men.

He was the son of that humble scholar and noble spirit Bishop Talbot, at whose firesides at Rochester and Winchester many of the greatest men of our time, statesmen, physicists, and writers, sought intelligent delight and spiritual refreshment. Gilbert grew up in that household with such a joy in his soul that he could not keep it to himself; it flowed out of him at school; it flowed out of him at university; it flowed out of him when he resolved to be a servant of his faith and bring religion into the service of the State.

He was little more than a boy when all the beautiful and gracious things of his civilisation were suddenly challenged by war. His heart went out to the young men of these islands called upon to leave their homes, cross the sea, face death on a foreign shore, and make their bodies a shield between the abomination of war and the loveliness of our English countryside.

Gilbert Talbot

Out he went too, carrying the message of his faith, to share the life of the soldiers of the British Empire; and in Flanders he found a way of living the life of the Good Samaritan with the shells of war spreading death and destruction about him.

Gilbert Talbot was killed. He was only 25, and so modest that the world had never heard of him. You would have said, "Well, that is the end of him. He may have influenced a few men in his short life, but at 25 he could not have done much." But Gilbert Talbot's influence flowed into the lives of those who worked with him, and in particular into the heart and soul of a chaplain named Clayton.

This chaplain it is who has become the life and soul, as he was actually the founder of the great movement named after Gilbert Talbot. Tubby Clayton, as he is known in every country of the world, met Talbot only once in his life, but he has told us that he can never forget his manliness and his inspiration.

He decided that Talbot's influence should not die. It should be immortal, like the words of Shakespeare and the music of Beethoven. As a tribute to Talbot's spirit, and to the memory of him held in such high honour, a little house was taken at Poperinghe and furnished for the use of troops, with Tubby Clayton in charge. This house was destined to play a noble part in the history of mankind.

Down below, mud-stained soldiers from the trenches could rest their bodies, write letters home, and read books and papers.

Upstairs, in a long and narrow room, they could celebrate the Lord's Supper. Strange things happened in that upper room. A private soldier once looked behind him as he was about to take Communion, and saw a General close at his heels. He drew to one side that the General might precede him. But the General took him by the arm and said, "No, my lad; there is no rank in the House of God." Many a man left that room to face death with a joy in his heart that no language can express, and many came back from the jaws of death to that upper room as a child who is hurt goes to its mother.

To the soldiers who visited Talbot House with its sacred upper room it became known by its telegraphic name of "Toc H." Clayton was there, animated by the spirit of Gilbert Talbot, and to everyone who came, to thousands of English boys, he gave the spirit of young Talbot. He was bound to give it for the simple reason that he was overflowing with it.

Some of the men who visited this house said: "This is too good a thing to perish. Let us keep it going when the war is over." They meant, of course, not the house but the undying spirit of the house, the spirit of Gilbert Talbot.

So it came about that Tubby Clayton, who knows everybody, and is beloved by all who know him, started to organise Talbot Houses all over the British Isles, and finally all over the British Empire; and everywhere these Houses stand for the love of brotherhood, service to others, self-sacrifice, remembrance. The members have four compass points for their guidance:

To think fairly
To love widely
To witness humbly
To build bravely

In those four compass points breathes the spirit of Gilbert Talbot, who was never afraid to think fairly, who loved all sorts and conditions of men, who witnessed with great humility to the power of faith, who was so brave a builder that even in the midst of war with all its hatred he built a house of love and prayer.

His influence has not ceased with these Houses all over England and all over the English-speaking world; and it is not restricted to the members of the brotherhood, for it is one of the rules of the Order that every member should express his faith in service to others.

He must not content himself with filling his tumbler half-full, or even up to the brim. His love must flow over into other lives.

That is the whole point of the brotherhood. A boy comes to London to prepare for an examination, or to enter an office. His mother, anxious about him, writes to Toc H. The Jobmaster, as he is called, gets hold of a suitable member, gives him the address of the boy's lodgings, and off goes

the brother, after a hard day's work, to look the boy up, take him out for a walk, and make a friend of him. That becomes his job. He has to pass the influence of Gilbert Talbot on to this boy fresh from the country and overawed and bewildered by London's tremendous clamour and strangeness. The boy has to be convinced that friendship is a real thing, a great thing.

There are lonely blind men in great cities to whom members of Toc H go in their free time, either to talk to them, or to read to them, or to take them out for walks. There are friendless men in hospital on whom they call, and poor, sad, bed ridden people in neglected quarters or crowded cities to whom they go with the deep affection of real friendship. Then are lamps burning in churches all over the world typifying the spirit of this fine movement which has grown out of the life of Gilbert Talbot. It brings companionship into many a lonely life, help when it is needed, sympathy where it makes a life worth living, and earnest service always.

All this is done in Gilbert Talbot's way. One of the things essential in a Toc H man is cheerfulness. He has to see the bright side of things, to keep the flag of good humour flying over his charity and his philanthropy. Never mind how badly life may be going with him, he must never wear a long face or make a song of his troubles. It is the very essence of Toc H to believe that Christ has overcome the world, and therefore to be of good cheer.

They do not talk much about religion in Toc H, for their whole scheme of life is religious. They laugh and sing, and amuse themselves with the zest of youth; they do their jobs of kindness without talking about them.

If we were asked to say whether there is one particular way in which the spirit of Gilbert Talbot is overflowing into the lives of hundreds of thousands of men all over the world we should say that it is in the idea of a return to the simplicity of Jesus, that its main essential lies in looking for the good in men, and loving men deeply and earnestly because in God's own time the good will lift them to the stars. Every Toc H man is an optimist. He believes there is goodness in man, and that goodness is going to win. Sin will pass, but goodness will never pass away. To be on the winning side puts heart into a man.

That is Gilbert Talbot's spirit, now working in the world in a thousand ways, burning brightly like the Toc H lamp.

References

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