

Sundays Of A Bourgeois

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PREPARATIONS FOR THE EXCURSION

M. Patissot, born in Paris, after having failed in his examinations at the College Henri IV., like many others, had entered the government service through the influence of one of his aunts, who kept a tobacco store where the head of one of the departments bought his provisions.

He advanced very slowly, and would, perhaps, have died a fourth-class clerk without the aid of a kindly Providence, which sometimes watches over our destiny. He is today fifty-two years old, and it is only at this age that he is beginning to explore, as a tourist, all that part of France which lies between the fortifications and the provinces.

The story of his advance might be useful to many employees, just as the tale of his excursions may be of value to many Parisians who will take them as a model for their own outings, and will thus, through his example, avoid certain mishaps which occurred to him.

In 1854 he only enjoyed a salary of 1,800 francs. Through a peculiar trait of his character he was unpopular with all his superiors, who let him languish in the eternal and hopeless expectation of the clerk's ideal, an increase of salary. Nevertheless he worked; but he did not know how to make himself appreciated. He had too much self-respect, he claimed. His self-respect consisted in never bowing to his superiors in a low and servile manner, as did, according to him, certain of his colleagues, whom he would not mention. He added that his frankness embarrassed many people, for, like all the rest, he protested against injustice and the favoritism shown to persons entirely foreign to the bureaucracy. But his indignant voice never passed beyond the little cage where he worked.

First as a government clerk, then as a Frenchman and finally as a man who believed in order he would adhere to whatever government was established, having an unbounded reverence for authority, except for that of his chiefs.

Each time that he got the chance he would place himself where he could see the emperor pass, in order to have the honor of taking his hat off to him; and he would go away puffed up with pride at having bowed to the head of the state.

From his habit of observing the sovereign he did as many others do; he imitated the way he trimmed his beard or arranged his hair, the cut of his clothes, his walk, his mannerisms. Indeed, how many men in each country seemed to be the living images of the head of the government! Perhaps he vaguely resembled Napoleon III., but his hair was black; therefore he dyed it, and then the likeness was complete; and when he met another gentleman in the street also imitating the imperial countenance he was jealous and looked at him disdainfully. This need of imitation soon became his hobby, and, having heard an usher at the Tuilleries imitate the voice of the emperor, he also acquired the same intonations and studied slowness.

He thus became so much like his model that they might easily have been mistaken for each other, and certain high dignitaries were heard to remark that they found it unseemly and even vulgar; the matter was mentioned to the prime minister, who ordered that the employee should appear before him. But at the sight of him he began to laugh and repeated two or three times: "That's funny, really funny!" This was repeated, and the following day Patisot's immediate superior recommended that his subordinate receive an increase of salary of three hundred francs. He received it immediately.

From that time on his promotions came regularly, thanks to his ape-like faculty of imitation. The presentiment that some high honor might come to him some day caused his chiefs to speak to him with deference.

When the Republic was proclaimed it was a disaster for him. He felt lost, done for, and, losing his head, he stopped dyeing his hair, shaved his face clean and had his hair cut short, thus acquiring a paternal and benevolent expression which could not compromise him in any way.

Then his chiefs took revenge for the long time during which he had imposed upon them, and, having all turned Republican through an instinct of self preservation, they cut down his salary and delayed his promotion. He, too, changed his opinions. But the Republic not being

a palpable and living person whom one can resemble, and the presidents succeeding each other with rapidity, he found himself plunged in the greatest embarrassment, in terrible distress, and, after an unsuccessful imitation of his last ideal, M. Thiers, he felt a check put on all his attempts at imitation. He needed a new manifestation of his personality. He searched for a long time; then, one morning, he arrived at the office wearing a new hat which had on the side a small red, white and blue rosette. His colleagues were astounded; they laughed all that day, the next day, all the week, all the month. But the seriousness of his demeanor at last disconcerted them, and once more his superiors became anxious. What mystery could be hidden under this sign? Was it a simple manifestation of patriotism, or an affirmation of his allegiance to the Republic, or perhaps the badge of some powerful association? But to wear it so persistently he must surely have some powerful and hidden protection. It would be well to be on one's guard, especially as he received all pleasantries with unruffled calmness. After that he was treated with respect, and his sham courage saved him; he was appointed head clerk on the first of January, 1880. His whole life had been spent indoors. He hated noise and bustle, and because of this love of rest and quiet he had remained a bachelor. He spent his Sundays reading tales of adventure and ruling guide lines which he afterward offered to his colleagues. In his whole existence he had only taken three vacations of a week each, when he was changing his quarters. But sometimes, on a holiday, he would leave by an excursion train for Dieppe or Havre in order to elevate his mind by the inspiring sight of the sea.

He was full of that common sense which borders on stupidity. For a long time he had been living quietly, with economy, temperate through prudence, chaste by temperament, when suddenly he was assailed by a terrible apprehension. One evening in the street he suddenly felt an attack of dizziness which made him fear a stroke of apoplexy. He hastened to a physician and for five francs obtained the following prescription:

M. X-, fifty-five years old, bachelor, clerk. Full-blooded, danger of apoplexy. Cold-water applications, moderate nourishment, plenty of exercise. MONTELLIER, M.D.

Patissot was greatly distressed, and for a whole month, in his office, he kept a wet towel wrapped around his head like a turban while the

water continually dripped on his work, which he would have to do over again. Every once in a while he would read the prescription over, probably in the hope of finding some hidden meaning, of penetrating into the secret thought of the physician, and also of discovering some forms of exercise which, might perhaps make him immune from apoplexy.

Then he consulted his friends, showing them the fateful paper. One advised boxing. He immediately hunted up an instructor, and, on the first day, he received a punch in the nose which immediately took away all his ambition in this direction. Single-stick made him gasp for breath, and he grew so stiff from fencing that for two days and two nights he could not get sleep. Then a bright idea struck him. It was to walk, every Sunday, to some suburb of Paris and even to certain places in the capital which he did not know.

For a whole week his mind was occupied with thoughts of the equipment which you need for these excursions; and on Sunday, the 30th of May, he began his preparations. After reading all the extraordinary advertisements which poor, blind and halt beggars distribute on the street corners, he began to visit the stores with the intention of looking about him only and of buying later on. First of all, he visited a so-called American shoe store, where heavy travelling shoes were shown him. The clerk brought out a kind of ironclad contrivance, studded with spikes like a harrow, which he claimed to be made from Rocky Mountain bison skin. He was so carried away with them that he would willingly have bought two pair, but one was sufficient. He carried them away under his arm, which soon became numb from the weight. He next invested in a pair of corduroy trousers, such as carpenters wear, and a pair of oiled canvas leggings. Then he needed a knapsack for his provisions, a telescope so as to recognize villages perched on the slope of distant hills, and finally, a government survey map to enable him to find his way about without asking the peasants toiling in the fields. Lastly, in order more comfortably to stand the heat, he decided to purchase a light alpaca jacket offered by the famous firm of Raminau, according to their advertisement, for the modest sum of six francs and fifty centimes. He went to this store and was welcomed by a distinguished-looking young man with a marvellous head of hair, nails as pink as those of a lady and a pleasant smile. He showed him the garment. It did not correspond with the glowing style of the advertisement. Then Patissot

hesitatingly asked, "Well, monsieur, will it wear well?" The young man turned his eyes away in well-feigned embarrassment, like an honest man who does not wish to deceive a customer, and, lowering his eyes, he said in a hesitating manner: "Dear me, monsieur, you understand that for six francs fifty we cannot turn out an article like this for instance." And he showed him a much finer jacket than the first one. Patissot examined it and asked the price. "Twelve francs fifty." It was very tempting, but before deciding, he once more questioned the big young man, who was observing him attentively. "And--is that good? Do you guarantee it?" "Oh! certainly, monsieur, it is quite good! But, of course, you must not get it wet! Yes, it's really quite good, but you understand that there are goods and goods. It's excellent for the price. Twelve francs fifty, just think. Why, that's nothing at all. Naturally a twenty-five-franc coat is much better. For twenty-five francs you get a superior quality, as strong as linen, and which wears even better. If it gets wet a little ironing will fix it right up. The color never fades, and it does not turn red in the sunlight. It is the warmest and lightest material out." He unfolded his wares, holding them up, shaking them, crumpling and stretching them in order to show the excellent quality of the cloth. He talked on convincingly, dispelling all hesitation by words and gesture. Patissot was convinced; he bought the coat. The pleasant salesman, still talking, tied up the bundle and continued praising the value of the purchase. When it was paid for he was suddenly silent. He bowed with a superior air, and, holding the door open, he watched his customer disappear, both arms filled with bundles and vainly trying to reach his hat to bow.

M. Patissot returned home and carefully studied the map. He wished to try on his shoes, which were more like skates than shoes, owing to the spikes. He slipped and fell, promising himself to be more careful in the future. Then he spread out all his purchases on a chair and looked at them for a long time. He went to sleep with this thought: "Isn't it strange that I didn't think before of taking an excursion to the country?"

During the whole week Patissot worked without ambition. He was dreaming of the outing which he had planned for the following Sunday, and he was seized by a sudden longing for the country, a desire of growing tender over nature, this thirst for rustic scenes which overwhelms the Parisians in spring time.

Only one person gave him any attention; it was a silent old copying clerk named Boivin, nicknamed Boileau. He himself lived in the country and had a little garden which he cultivated carefully; his needs were small, and he was perfectly happy, so they said. Patissot was now able to understand his tastes and the similarity of their ideals made them immediately fast friends. Old man Boivin said to him:

"Do I like fishing, monsieur? Why, it's the delight of my life!"

Then Patissot questioned him with deep interest. Boivin named all the fish who frolicked under this dirty water--and Patissot thought he could see them. Boivin told about the different hooks, baits, spots and times suitable for each kind. And Patissot felt himself more like a fisherman than Boivin himself. They decided that the following Sunday they would meet for the opening of the season for the edification of Patissot, who was delighted to have found such an experienced instructor.

FISHING EXCURSION

The day before the one when he was, for the first time in his life, to throw a hook into a river, Monsieur Patissot bought, for eighty centimes, "How to Become a Perfect Fisherman." In this work he learned many useful things, but he was especially impressed by the style, and he retained the following passage:

"In a word, if you wish, without books, without rules, to fish successfully, to the left or to the right, up or down stream, in the masterly manner that halts at no difficulty, then fish before, during and after a storm, when the clouds break and the sky is streaked with lightning, when the earth shakes with the grumbling thunder; it is then that, either through hunger or terror, all the fish forget their habits in a turbulent flight.

"In this confusion follow or neglect all favorable signs, and just go on fishing; you will march to victory!"

In order to catch fish of all sizes, he bought three well-perfected poles, made to be used as a cane in the city, which, on the river, could be transformed into a fishing rod by a simple jerk. He bought some number fifteen hooks for gudgeon, number twelve for bream, and with

his number seven he expected to fill his basket with carp. He bought no earth worms because he was sure of finding them everywhere; but he laid in a provision of sand worms. He had a jar full of them, and in the evening he watched them with interest. The hideous creatures swarmed in their bath of bran as they do in putrid meat. Patissot wished to practice baiting his hook. He took up one with disgust, but he had hardly placed the curved steel point against it when it split open. Twenty times he repeated this without success, and he might have continued all night had he not feared to exhaust his supply of vermin.

He left by the first train. The station was full of people equipped with fishing lines. Some, like Patissot's, looked like simple bamboo canes; others, in one piece, pointed their slender ends to the skies. They looked like a forest of slender sticks, which mingled and clashed like swords or swayed like masts over an ocean of broad-brimmed straw hats.

When the train started fishing rods could be seen sticking out of all the windows and doors, giving to the train the appearance of a huge, bristly caterpillar winding through the fields.

Everybody got off at Courbevoie and rushed for the stage for Bezons. A crowd of fishermen crowded on top of the coach, holding their rods in their hands, giving the vehicle the appearance of a porcupine.

All along the road men were travelling in the same direction as though on a pilgrimage to an unknown Jerusalem. They were carrying those long, slender sticks resembling those carried by the faithful returning from Palestine. A tin box on a strap was fastened to their backs. They were in a hurry.

At Bezons the river appeared. People were lined along both banks, men in frock coats, others in duck suits, others in blouses, women, children and even young girls of marriageable age; all were fishing.

Patissot started for the dam where his friend Boivin was waiting for him. The latter greeted him rather coolly. He had just made the acquaintance of a big, fat man of about fifty, who seemed very strong and whose skin was tanned. All three hired a big boat and lay off almost under the fall of the dam, where the fish are most plentiful.

Boivin was immediately ready. He baited his line and threw it out, and then sat motionless, watching the little float with extraordinary concentration. From time to time he would jerk his line out of the water and cast it farther out. The fat gentleman threw out his well-baited hooks, put his line down beside him, filled his pipe, lit it, crossed his arms, and, without another glance at the cork, he watched the water flow by. Patisot once more began trying to stick sand worms on his hooks. After about five minutes of this occupation he called to Boivin; "Monsieur Boivin, would you be so kind as to help me put these creatures on my hook? Try as I will, I can't seem to succeed." Boivin raised his head: "Please don't disturb me, Monsieur Patisot; we are not here for pleasure!" However, he baited the line, which Patisot then threw out, carefully imitating all the motions of his friend.

The boat was tossing wildly, shaken by the waves, and spun round like a top by the current, although anchored at both ends. Patisot, absorbed in the sport, felt a vague kind of uneasiness; he was uncomfortably heavy and somewhat dizzy.

They caught nothing. Little Boivin, very nervous, was gesticulating and shaking his head in despair. Patisot was as sad as though some disaster had overtaken him. The fat gentleman alone, still motionless, was quietly smoking without paying any attention to his line. At last Patisot, disgusted, turned toward him and said in a mournful voice:

"They are not biting, are they?"

He quietly replied:

"Of course not!"

Patisot surprised, looked at him.

"Do you ever catch many?"

"Never!"

"What! Never?"

The fat man, still smoking like a factory chimney, let out the following words, which completely upset his neighbor:

"It would bother me a lot if they did bite. I don't come here to fish; I come because I'm very comfortable here; I get shaken up as though I were at sea. If I take a line along, it's only to do as others do."

Monsieur Patissot, on the other hand, did not feel at all well. His discomfort, at first vague, kept increasing, and finally took on a definite form. He felt, indeed, as though he were being tossed by the sea, and he was suffering from seasickness. After the first attack had calmed down, he proposed leaving, but Boivin grew so furious that they almost came to blows. The fat man, moved by pity, rowed the boat back, and, as soon as Patissot had recovered from his seasickness, they bethought themselves of luncheon.

Two restaurants presented themselves. One of them, very small, looked like a beer garden, and was patronized by the poorer fishermen. The other one, which bore the imposing name of "Linden Cottage," looked like a middle-class residence and was frequented by the aristocracy of the rod. The two owners, born enemies, watched each other with hatred across a large field, which separated them, and where the white house of the dam keeper and of the inspector of the life-saving department stood out against the green grass. Moreover, these two officials disagreed, one of them upholding the beer garden and the other one defending the Elms, and the internal feuds which arose in these three houses reproduced the whole history of mankind.

Boivin, who knew the beer garden, wished to go there, exclaiming: "The food is very good, and it isn't expensive; you'll see. Anyway, Monsieur Patissot, you needn't expect to get me tipsy the way you did last Sunday. My wife was furious, you know; and she has sworn never to forgive you!"

The fat gentleman declared that he would only eat at the Elms, because it was an excellent place and the cooking was as good as in the best restaurants in Paris.

"Do as you wish," declared Boivin; "I am going where I am accustomed to go." He left. Patissot, displeased at his friend's actions, followed the fat gentleman.

They ate together, exchanged ideas, discussed opinions and found that they were made for each other.

After the meal everyone started to fish again, but the two new friends left together. Following along the banks, they stopped near the railroad bridge and, still talking, they threw their lines in the water. The fish still refused to bite, but Patissot was now making the best of it.

A family was approaching. The father, whose whiskers stamped him as a judge, was holding an extraordinarily long rod; three boys of different sizes were carrying poles of different lengths, according to age; and the mother, who was very stout, gracefully manoeuvred a charming rod with a ribbon tied to the handle. The father bowed and asked:

"Is this spot good, gentlemen?" Patissot was going to speak, when his friend answered: "Fine!" The whole family smiled and settled down beside the fishermen. The Patissot was seized with a wild desire to catch a fish, just one, any kind, any size, in order to win the consideration of these people; so he began to handle his rod as he had seen Boivin do in the morning. He would let the cork follow the current to the end of the line, jerk the hooks out of the water, make them describe a large circle in the air and throw them out again a little higher up. He had even, as he thought, caught the knack of doing this movement gracefully. He had just jerked his line out rapidly when he felt it caught in something behind him. He tugged, and a scream burst from behind him. He perceived, caught on one of his hooks, and describing in the air a curve like a meteor, a magnificent hat which he placed right in the middle of the river.

He turned around, bewildered, dropping his pole, which followed the hat down the stream, while the fat gentleman, his new friend, lay on his back and roared with laughter. The lady, hatless and astounded, choked with anger; her husband was outraged and demanded the price of the hat, and Patissot paid about three times its value.

Then the family departed in a very dignified manner.

Patissot took another rod, and, until nightfall, he gave baths to sand worms. His neighbor was sleeping peacefully on the grass. Toward seven in the evening he awoke.

"Let's go away from here!" he said.

Then Patissot withdrew his line, gave a cry and sat down hard from astonishment. At the end of the string was a tiny little fish. When they looked at him more closely they found that he had been hooked through the stomach; the hook had caught him as it was being drawn out of the water.

Patissot was filled with a boundless, triumphant joy; he wished to have the fish fried for himself alone.

During the dinner the friends grew still more intimate. He learned that the fat gentleman lived at Argenteuil and had been sailing boats for thirty years without losing interest in the sport. He accepted to take luncheon with him the following Sunday and to take a sail in his friend's clipper, Plongeon. He became so interested in the conversation that he forgot all about his catch. He did not remember it until after the coffee, and he demanded that it be brought him. It was alone in the middle of a platter, and looked like a yellow, twisted match, But he ate it with pride and relish, and at night, on the omnibus, he told his neighbors that he had caught fourteen pounds of fish during the day.

TWO CELEBRITIES

Monsieur Patissot had promised his friend, the boating man, that he would spend the following Sunday with him. An unforeseen occurrence changed his plan. One evening, on the boulevard, he met one of his cousins whom he saw but very seldom. He was a pleasant journalist, well received in all classes of society, who offered to show Patissot many interesting things.

"What are you going to do next Sunday?"

"I'm going boating at Argenteuil."

"Come on! Boating is an awful bore; there is no variety to it. Listen -- I'll take you along with me. I'll introduce you to two celebrities. We will visit the homes of two artists."

"But I have been ordered to go to the country!"

"That's just where we'll go. On the way we'll call on Meissonier, at his place in Poissy; then we'll walk over to Medan, where Zola lives. I have been commissioned to obtain his next novel for our newspaper."

Patissot, wild with joy, accepted the invitation. He even bought a new frock coat, as his own was too much worn to make a good appearance. He was terribly afraid of saying something foolish either to the artist or to the man of letters, as do people who speak of an art which they have never professed.

He mentioned his fears to his cousin, who laughed and answered: "Pshaw! Just pay them compliments, nothing but compliments, always compliments; in that way, if you say anything foolish it will be overlooked. Do you know Meissonier's paintings?"

"I should say I do."

"Have you read the Rougon-Macquart series?"

"From first to last."

"That's enough. Mention a painting from time to time, speak of a novel here and there and add:

"'Superb! Extraordinary! Delightful technique! Wonderfully powerful!' In that way you can always get along. I know that those two are very blase about everything, but admiration always pleases an artist."

Sunday morning they left for Poissy.

Just a few steps from the station, at the end of the church square, they found Meissonier's property. After passing through a low door, painted red, which led into a beautiful alley of vines, the journalist stopped and, turning toward his companion, asked:

"What is your idea of Meissonier?"

Patissot hesitated. At last he decided: "A little man, well groomed, clean shaven, a soldierly appearance." The other smiled: "All right, come along." A quaint building in the form of a chalet appeared to the left; and to the right side, almost opposite, was the main house. It was a strange-looking building, where there was a mixture of everything, a mingling of Gothic fortress, manor, villa, hut, residence, cathedral, mosque, pyramid, a, weird combination of Eastern and Western architecture. The style was complicated enough to set a classical architect crazy, and yet there was something whimsical and pretty about it. It had been invented and built under the direction of the artist.

They went in; a collection of trunks encumbered a little parlor. A little man appeared, dressed in a jumper. The striking thing about him was his beard. He bowed to the journalist, and said: "My dear sir, I hope that you will excuse me; I only returned yesterday, and everything is all upset here. Please be seated." The other refused, excusing himself: "My dear master, I only dropped in to pay my respects while passing by." Patissot, very much embarrassed, was bowing at every word of his friend's, as though moving automatically, and he murmured, stammering: "What a su--su--superb property!" The artist, flattered, smiled, and suggested visiting it.

He led them first to a little pavilion of feudal aspect, where his former studio was. Then they crossed a parlor, a dining-room, a vestibule full of beautiful works of art, of beautiful Beauvais, Gobelin and Flanders tapestries. But the strange external luxury of ornamentation became, inside, a revel of immense stairways. A magnificent grand stairway, a secret stairway in one tower, a servants' stairway in another, stairways everywhere! Patissot, by chance, opened a door and stepped back astonished. It was a veritable temple, this place of which respectable people only mention the name in English, an original and charming sanctuary in exquisite taste, fitted up like a pagoda, and the decoration of which must certainly have caused a great effort.

They next visited the park, which was complex, varied, with winding paths and full of old trees. But the journalist insisted on leaving; and, with many thanks, he took leave of the master: As they left they met a

gardener; Patissot asked him: "Has Monsieur Meissonier owned this place for a long time?" The man answered: "Oh, monsieur! that needs explaining. I guess he bought the grounds in 1846. But, as for the house! he has already torn down and rebuilt that five or six times. It must have cost him at least two millions!" As Patissot left he was seized with an immense respect for this man, not on account of his success, glory or talent, but for putting so much money into a whim, because the bourgeois deprive themselves of all pleasure in order to hoard money.

After crossing Poissy, they struck out on foot along the road to Medan. The road first followed the Seine, which is dotted with charming islands at this place. Then they went up a hill and crossed the pretty village of Villaines, went down a little; and finally reached the neighborhood inhabited by the author of the Rougon-Macquart series.

A pretty old church with two towers appeared on the left. They walked along a short distance, and a passing farmer directed them to the writer's dwelling.

Before entering, they examined the house. A large building, square and new, very high, seemed, as in the fable of the mountain and the mouse, to have given birth to a tiny little white house, which nestled near it. This little house was the original dwelling, and had been built by the former owner. The tower had been erected by Zola.

They rang the bell. An enormous dog, a cross between a Saint Bernard and a Newfoundland, began to howl so terribly that Patissot felt a vague desire to retrace his steps. But a servant ran forward, calmed "Bertrand," opened the door, and took the journalist's card in order to carry it to his master.

"I hope that he will receive us!" murmured Patissot. "It would be too bad if we had come all this distance not to see him."

His companion smiled and answered: "Never fear, I have a plan for getting in."

But the servant, who had returned, simply asked them to follow him.

They entered the new building, and Patissot, who was quite enthusiastic, was panting as he climbed a stairway of ancient style which led to the second story.

At the same time he was trying to picture to himself this man whose glorious name echoes at present in all corners of the earth, amid the exasperated hatred of some, the real or feigned indignation of society, the envious scorn of several of his colleagues, the respect of a mass of readers, and the frenzied admiration of a great number. He expected to see a kind of bearded giant, of awe-inspiring aspect, with a thundering voice and an appearance little prepossessing at first.

The door opened on a room of uncommonly large dimensions, broad and high, lighted by an enormous window looking out over the valley. Old tapestries covered the walls; on the left, a monumental fireplace, flanked by two stone men, could have burned a century-old oak in one day. An immense table littered with books, papers and magazines stood in the middle of this apartment so vast and grand that it first engrossed the eye, and the attention was only afterward drawn to the man, stretched out when they entered on an Oriental divan where twenty persons could have slept. He took a few steps toward them, bowed, motioned to two seats, and turned back to his divan, where he sat with one leg drawn under him. A book lay open beside him, and in his right hand he held an ivory paper-cutter, the end of which he observed from time to time with one eye, closing the other with the persistency of a near-sighted person.

While the journalist explained the purpose of the visit, and the writer listened to him without yet answering, at times staring at him fixedly, Patissot, more and more embarrassed, was observing this celebrity.

Hardly forty, he was of medium height, fairly stout, and with a good-natured look. His head (very similar to those found in many Italian paintings of the sixteenth century), without being beautiful in the plastic sense of the word, gave an impression of great strength of character, power and intelligence. Short hair stood up straight on the high, well-developed forehead. A straight nose stopped short, as if cut off suddenly above the upper lip which was covered with a black mustache; over the whole chin was a closely-cropped beard. The dark, often ironical look was piercing, one felt that behind it there was a mind always actively at work observing people, interpreting words,

analyzing gestures, uncovering the heart. This strong, round head was appropriate to his name, quick and short, with the bounding resonance of the two vowels.

When the journalist had fully explained his proposition, the writer answered him that he did not wish to make any definite arrangement, that he would, however, think the matter over, that his plans were not yet sufficiently defined. Then he stopped. It was a dismissal, and the two men, a little confused, arose. A desire seized Patissot; he wished this well-known person to say something to him, anything, some word which he could repeat to his colleagues; and, growing bold, he stammered: "Oh, monsieur! If you knew how I appreciate your works!" The other bowed, but answered nothing. Patissot became very bold and continued: "It is a great honor for me to speak to you to-day." The writer once more bowed, but with a stiff and impatient look. Patissot noticed it, and, completely losing his head, he added as he retreated: "What a su--su --superb property!"

Then, in the heart of the man of letters, the landowner awoke, and, smiling, he opened the window to show them the immense stretch of view. An endless horizon broadened out on all sides, giving a view of Triel, Pisse-Fontaine, Chanteloup, all the heights of Hautrie, and the Seine as far as the eye could see. The two visitors, delighted, congratulated him, and the house was opened to them. They saw everything, down to the dainty kitchen, whose walls and even ceilings were covered with porcelain tiles ornamented with blue designs, which excited the wonder of the farmers.

"How did you happen to buy this place?" asked the journalist.

The novelist explained that, while looking for a cottage to hire for the summer, he had found the little house, which was for sale for several thousand francs, a song, almost nothing. He immediately bought it.

"But everything that you have added must have cost you a good deal!"

The writer smiled, and answered: "Yes, quite a little."

The two men left. The journalist, taking Patissot by the arm, was philosophizing in a low voice:

"Every general has his Waterloo," he said; "every Balzac has his Jardies, and every artist living in the country feels like a landed proprietor."

They took the train at the station of Villaines, and, on the way home, Patisot loudly mentioned the names of the famous painter and of the great novelist as though they were his friends. He even allowed people to think that he had taken luncheon with one and dinner with the other.

BEFORE THE CELEBRATION

The celebration is approaching and preliminary quivers are already running through the streets, just as the ripples disturb the water preparatory to a storm. The shops, draped with flags, display a variety of gay-colored bunting materials, and the dry-goods people deceive one about the three colors as grocers do about the weight of candles. Little by little, hearts warm up to the matter; people speak about it in the street after dinner; ideas are exchanged:

"What a celebration it will be, my friend; what a celebration!"

"Have you heard the news? All the rulers are coming incognito, as bourgeois, in order to see it."

"I hear that the Emperor of Russia has arrived; he expects to go about everywhere with the Prince of Wales."

"It certainly will be a fine celebration!"

It is going to a celebration; what Monsieur Patisot, Parisian bourgeois, calls a celebration; one of these nameless tumults which, for fifteen hours, roll from one end of the city to the other, every ugly specimen toggled out in its finest, a mob of perspiring bodies, where side by side are tossed about the stout gossip bedecked in red, white and blue ribbons, grown fat behind her counter and panting from lack of breath, the rickety clerk with his wife and brat in tow, the laborer carrying his youngster astride his neck, the bewildered provincial with his foolish, dazed expression, the groom, barely shaved and still spreading the perfume of the stable. And the foreigners dressed like monkeys, English women like giraffes, the water-carrier, cleaned up

for the occasion, and the innumerable phalanx of little bourgeois, inoffensive little people, amused at everything. All this crowding and pressing, the sweat and dust, and the turmoil, all these eddies of human flesh, trampling of corns beneath the feet of your neighbors, this city all topsy-turvy, these vile odors, these frantic efforts toward nothing, the breath of millions of people, all redolent of garlic, give to Monsieur Patissot all the joy which it is possible for his heart to hold.

After reading the proclamation of the mayor on the walls of his district he had made his preparations.

This bit of prose said:

I wish to call your attention particularly to the part of individuals in this celebration. Decorate your homes, illuminate your windows. Get together, open up a subscription in order to give to your houses and to your street a more brilliant and more artistic appearance than the neighboring houses and streets.

Then Monsieur Patissot tried to imagine how he could give to his home an artistic appearance.

One serious obstacle stood in the way. His only window looked out on a courtyard, a narrow, dark shaft, where only the rats could have seen his three Japanese lanterns.

He needed a public opening. He found it. On the first floor of his house lived a rich man, a nobleman and a royalist, whose coachman, also a reactionary, occupied a garret-room on the sixth floor, facing the street. Monsieur Patissot supposed that by paying (every conscience can be bought) he could obtain the use of the room for the day. He proposed five francs to this citizen of the whip for the use of his room from noon till midnight. The offer was immediately accepted.

Then he began to busy himself with the decorations. Three flags, four lanterns, was that enough to give to this box an artistic appearance--to express all the noble feelings of his soul? No; assuredly not! But, notwithstanding diligent search and nightly meditation, Monsieur Patissot could think of nothing else. He consulted his neighbors, who were surprised at the question; he questioned his colleagues--every

one had bought lanterns and flags, some adding, for the occasion, red, white and blue bunting.

Then he began to rack his brains for some original idea. He frequented the cafes, questioning the patrons; they lacked imagination. Then one morning he went out on top of an omnibus. A respectable-looking gentleman was smoking a cigar beside him, a little farther away a laborer was smoking his pipe upside down, near the driver two rough fellows were joking, and clerks of every description were going to business for three cents.

Before the stores stacks of flags were resplendent under the rising sun. Patissot turned to his neighbor.

"It is going to be a fine celebration," he said. The gentleman looked at him sideways and answered in a haughty manner:

"That makes no difference to me!"

"You are not going to take part in it?" asked the surprised clerk. The other shook his head disdainfully and declared:

"They make me tired with their celebrations! Whose celebration is it? The government's? I do not recognize this government, monsieur!"

But Patissot, as government employee, took on his superior manner, and answered in a stern voice:

"Monsieur, the Republic is the government."

His neighbor was not in the least disturbed, and, pushing his hands down in his pockets, he exclaimed:

"Well, and what then? It makes no difference to me. Whether it's for the Republic or something else, I don't care! What I want, monsieur, is to know my government. I saw Charles X. and adhered to him, monsieur; I saw Louis-Philippe and adhered to him, monsieur; I saw Napoleon and adhered to him; but I have never seen the Republic."

Patissot, still serious, answered:

"The Republic, monsieur, is represented by its president!"

The other grumbled:

"Well, then, show him to me!"

Patissot shrugged his shoulders.

"Every one can see him; he's not shut up in a closet!"

Suddenly the fat man grew angry.

"Excuse me, monsieur, he cannot be seen. I have personally tried more than a hundred times, monsieur. I have posted myself near the Elysee; he did not come out. A passer-by informed me that he was playing billiards in the cafe opposite; I went to the cafe opposite; he was not there. I had been promised that he would go to Melun for the convention; I went to Melun, I did not see him. At last I became weary. I did not even see Monsieur Gambetta, and I do not know a single deputy."

He was, growing excited:

"A government, monsieur, is made to be seen; that's what it's there for, and for nothing else. One must be able to know that on such and such a day at such an hour the government will pass through such and such a street. Then one goes there and is satisfied."

Patissot, now calm, was enjoying his arguments.

"It is true," he said, "that it is agreeable to know the people by whom one is governed."

The gentleman continued more gently:

"Do you know how I would manage the celebration? Well, monsieur, I would have a procession of gilded cars, like the chariots used at the crowning of kings; in them I would parade all the members of the government, from the president to the deputies, throughout Paris all day long. In that manner, at least, every one would know by sight the personnel of the state."

But one of the toughs near the coachman turned around, exclaiming:

"And the fatted ox, where would you put him?"

A laugh ran round the two benches. Patissot understood the objection, and murmured:

"It might not perhaps be very dignified."

The gentleman thought the matter over and admitted it.

"Then," he said, "I would place them in view some place, so that every one could see them without going out of his way; on the Triumphal Arch at the Place de l'Etoile, for instance; and I would have the whole population pass before them. That would be very imposing."

Once more the tough turned round and said:

"You'd have to take telescopes to see their faces."

The gentleman did not answer; he continued:

"It's just like the presentation of the flags! There ought, to be some pretext, a mimic war ought to be organized, and the banners would be awarded to the troops as a reward. I had an idea about which I wrote to the minister; but he has not deigned to answer me. As the taking of the Bastille has been chosen for the date of the national celebration, a reproduction of this event might be made; there would be a pasteboard Bastille, fixed up by a scene-painter and concealing within its walls the whole Column of July. Then, monsieur, the troop would attack. That would be a magnificent spectacle as well as a lesson, to see the army itself overthrow the ramparts of tyranny. Then this Bastille would be set fire to and from the midst of the flames would appear the Column with the genius of Liberty, symbol of a new order and of the freedom of the people."

This time every one was listening to him and finding his idea excellent. An old gentleman exclaimed:

"That is a great idea, monsieur, which does you honor. It is to be regretted that the government did not adopt it."

A young man declared that actors ought to recite the "Iambes" of Barbier through the streets in order to teach the people art and liberty simultaneously.

These propositions excited general enthusiasm. Each one wished to have his word; all were wrought up. From a passing hand-organ a few strains of the Marseillaise were heard; the laborer started the song, and everybody joined in, roaring the chorus. The exalted nature of the song and its wild rhythm fired the driver, who lashed his horses to a gallop. Monsieur Patissot was bawling at the top of his lungs, and the passengers inside, frightened, were wondering what hurricane had struck them.

At last they stopped, and Monsieur Patissot, judging his neighbor to be a man of initiative, consulted him about the preparations which he expected to make:

"Lanterns and flags are all right," said Patissot; "but I prefer something better."

The other thought for a long time, but found nothing. Then, in despair, the clerk bought three flags and four lanterns.

AN EXPERIMENT IN LOVE

Many poets think that nature is incomplete without women, and hence, doubtless, come all the flowery comparisons which, in their songs, make our natural companion in turn a rose, a violet, a tulip, or something of that order. The need of tenderness which seizes us at dusk, when the evening mist begins to roll in from the hills, and when all the perfumes of the earth intoxicate us, is but imperfectly satisfied by lyric invocations. Monsieur Patissot, like all others, was seized with a wild desire for tenderness, for sweet kisses exchanged along a path where sunshine steals in at times, for the pressure of a pair of small hands, for a supple waist bending under his embrace.

He began to look at love as an unbounded pleasure, and, in his hours of reverie, he thanked the Great Unknown for having put so much

charm into the caresses of human beings. But he needed a companion, and he did not know where to find one. On the advice of a friend, he went to the Folies-Bergere. There he saw a complete assortment. He was greatly perplexed to choose between them, for the desires of his heart were chiefly composed of poetic impulses, and poetry did not seem to be the strong point of these young ladies with penciled eyebrows who smiled at him in such a disturbing manner, showing the enamel of their false teeth. At last his choice fell on a young beginner who seemed poor and timid and whose sad look seemed to announce a nature easily influenced-by poetry.

He made an appointment with her for the following day at nine o'clock at the Saint-Lazare station. She did not come, but she was kind enough to send a friend in her stead.

She was a tall, red-haired girl, patriotically dressed in three colors, and covered by an immense tunnel hat, of which her head occupied the centre. Monsieur Patissot, a little disappointed, nevertheless accepted this substitute. They left for Maisons-Laffite, where regattas and a grand Venetian festival had been announced.

As soon as they were in the car, which was already occupied by two gentlemen who wore the red ribbon and three ladies who must at least have been duchesses, they were so dignified, the big red-haired girl, who answered the name of Octavie, announced to Patissot, in a screeching voice, that she was a fine girl fond of a good time and loving the country because there she could pick flowers and eat fried fish. She laughed with a shrillness which almost shattered the windows, familiarly calling her companion "My big darling."

Shame overwhelmed Patissot, who as a government employee, had to observe a certain amount of decorum. But Octavie stopped talking, glancing at her neighbors, seized with the overpowering desire which haunts all women of a certain class to make the acquaintance of respectable women. After about five minutes she thought she had found an opening, and, drawing from her pocket a Gil-Blas, she politely offered it to one of the amazed ladies, who declined, shaking her head. Then the big, red-haired girl began saying things with a double meaning, speaking of women who are stuck up without being any better than the others; sometimes she would let out a vulgar word

which acted like a bomb exploding amid the icy dignity of the passengers.

At last they arrived. Patissot immediately wished to gain the shady nooks of the park, hoping that the melancholy of the forest would quiet the ruffled temper of his companion. But an entirely different effect resulted. As soon as she was amid the leaves and grass she began to sing at the top of her lungs snatches from operas which had stuck in her frivolous mind, warbling and trilling, passing from "Robert le Diable" to the "Muette," lingering especially on a sentimental love-song, whose last verses she sang in a voice as piercing as a gimlet.

Then suddenly she grew hungry. Patissot, who was still awaiting the hoped-for tenderness, tried in vain to retain her. Then she grew angry, exclaiming:

"I am not here for a dull time, am I?"

He had to take her to the Petit-Havre restaurant, which was near the place where the regatta was to be held.

She ordered an endless luncheon, a succession of dishes substantial enough to feed a regiment. Then, unable to wait, she called for relishes. A box of sardines was brought; she started in on it as though she intended to swallow the box itself. But when she had eaten two or three of the little oily fish she declared that she was no longer hungry and that she wished to see the preparations for the race.

Patissot, in despair and in his turn seized with hunger, absolutely refused to move. She started off alone, promising to return in time for the dessert. He began to eat in lonely silence, not knowing how to lead this rebellious nature to the realization of his dreams.

As she did not return he set out in search of her. She had found some friends, a troop of boatmen, in scanty garb, sunburned to the tips of their ears, and gesticulating, who were loudly arranging the details of the race in front of the house of Fourmaise, the builder.

Two respectable-looking gentlemen, probably the judges, were listening attentively. As soon as she saw Patissot, Octavie, who was

leaning on the tanned arm of a strapping fellow who probably had more muscle than brains, whispered a few words in his ears. He answered:

"That's an agreement."

She returned to the clerk full of joy, her eyes sparkling, almost caressing.

"Let's go for a row," said she.

Pleased to see her so charming, he gave in to this new whim and procured a boat. But she obstinately refused to go to the races, notwithstanding Patisot's wishes.

"I had rather be alone with you, darling."

His heart thrilled. At last!

He took off his coat and began to row madly.

An old dilapidated mill, whose worm-eaten wheels hung over the water, stood with its two arches across a little arm of the river. Slowly they passed beneath it, and, when they were on the other side, they noticed before them a delightful little stretch of river, shaded by great trees which formed an arch over their heads. The little stream flowed along, winding first to the right and then to the left, continually revealing new scenes, broad fields on one side and on the other side a hill covered with cottages. They passed before a bathing establishment almost entirely hidden by the foliage, a charming country spot where gentlemen in clean gloves and beribboned ladies displayed all the ridiculous awkwardness of elegant people in the country. She cried joyously:

"Later on we will take a dip there."

Farther on, in a kind of bay, she wished to stop, coaxing:

"Come here, honey, right close to me."

She put her arm around his neck and, leaning her head on his shoulder, she murmured:

"How nice it is! How delightful it is on the water!"

Patisot was reveling in happiness. He was thinking of those foolish boatmen who, without ever feeling the penetrating charm of the river banks and the delicate grace of the reeds, row along out of breath, perspiring and tired out, from the tavern where they take luncheon to the tavern where they take dinner.

He was so comfortable that he fell asleep. When he awoke, he was alone. He called, but no one answered. Anxious, he climbed up on the side of the river, fearing that some accident might have happened.

Then, in the distance, coming in his direction, he saw a long, slender gig which four oarsmen as black as negroes were driving through the water like an arrow. It came nearer, skimming over the water; a woman was holding the tiller. Heavens! It looked--it was she! In order to regulate the rhythm of the stroke, she was singing in her shrill voice a boating song, which she interrupted for a minute as she got in front of Patisot. Then, throwing him a kiss, she cried:

"You big goose!"

A DINNER AND SOME OPINIONS

On the occasion of the national celebration Monsieur Antoine Perdrix, chief of Monsieur Patisot's department, was made a knight of the Legion of Honor. He had been in service for thirty years under preceding governments, and for ten years under the present one. His employees, although grumbling a little at being thus rewarded in the person of their chief, thought it wise, nevertheless, to offer him a cross studded with paste diamonds. The new knight, in turn, not wishing to be outdone, invited them all to dinner for the following Sunday, at his place at Asnieres.

The house, decorated with Moorish ornaments, looked like a cafe concert, but its location gave it value, as the railroad cut through the whole garden, passing within a hundred and fifty feet of the porch. On the regulation plot of grass stood a basin of Roman cement, containing

goldfish and a stream of water the size of that which comes from a syringe, which occasionally made microscopic rainbows at which the guests marvelled.

The feeding of this irrigator was the constant preoccupation of Monsieur Perdrix, who would sometimes get up at five o'clock in the morning in order to fill the tank. Then, in his shirt sleeves, his big stomach almost bursting from his trousers, he would pump wildly, so that on returning from the office he could have the satisfaction of letting the fountain play and of imagining that it was cooling off the garden.

On the night of the official dinner all the guests, one after the other, went into ecstasies over the surroundings, and each time they heard a train in the distance, Monsieur Perdrix would announce to them its destination: Saint-Germain, Le Havre, Cherbourg, or Dieppe, and they would playfully wave to the passengers leaning from the windows.

The whole office force was there. First came Monsieur Capitaine, the assistant chief; Monsieur Patissot, chief clerk; then Messieurs de Sombreterre and Vallin, elegant young employees who only came to the office when they had to; lastly Monsieur Rade, known throughout the ministry for the absurd doctrines which he upheld, and the copying clerk, Monsieur Boivin.

Monsieur Rade passed for a character. Some called him a dreamer or an idealist, others a revolutionary; every one agreed that he was very clumsy. Old, thin and small, with bright eyes and long, white hair, he had all his life professed a profound contempt for administrative work. A book rummager and a great reader, with a nature continually in revolt against everything, a seeker of truth and a despiser of popular prejudices, he had a clear and paradoxical manner of expressing his opinions which closed the mouths of self-satisfied fools and of those that were discontented without knowing why. People said: "That old fool of a Rade," or else: "That harebrained Rade"; and the slowness, of his promotion seemed to indicate the reason, according to commonplace minds. His freedom of speech often made--his colleagues tremble; they asked themselves with terror how he had been able to keep his place as long as he had. As soon as they had seated themselves, Monsieur Perdrix thanked his "collaborators" in a neat little speech, promising them his protection, the more valuable as

his power grew, and he ended with a stirring peroration in which he thanked and glorified a government so liberal and just that it knows how to seek out the worthy from among the humble.

Monsieur Capitaine, the assistant chief, answered in the name of the office, congratulated, greeted, exalted, sang the praises of all; frantic applause greeted these two bits of eloquence. After that they settled down seriously to the business of eating.

Everything went well up to the dessert; lack of conversation went unnoticed. But after the coffee a discussion arose, and Monsieur Rade let himself loose and soon began to overstep the bounds of discretion.

They naturally discussed love, and a breath of chivalry intoxicated this room full of bureaucrats; they praised and exalted the superior beauty of woman, the delicacy of her soul, her aptitude for exquisite things, the correctness of her judgment, and the refinement of her sentiments. Monsieur Rade began to protest, energetically refusing to credit the so-called "fair" sex with all the qualities they ascribed to it; then, amidst the general indignation, he quoted some authors:

"Schopenhauer, gentlemen, Schopenhauer, the great philosopher, revered by all Germany, says: 'Man's intelligence must have been terribly deadened by love in order to call this sex with the small waist, narrow shoulders, large hips and crooked legs, the fair sex. All its beauty lies in the instinct of love. Instead of calling it the fair, it would have been better to call it the unaesthetic sex. Women have neither the appreciation nor the knowledge of music, any more than they have of poetry or of the plastic arts; with them it is merely an ape-like imitation, pure pretence, affectation cultivated from their desire to please.'"

"The man who said that is an idiot," exclaimed Monsieur de Sombreterre.

Monsieur Rade smilingly continued:

"And how about Rousseau, gentlemen? Here is his opinion: 'Women, as a rule, love no art, are skilled in none, and have no talent.'"

Monsieur de Sombreterre disdainfully shrugged his shoulders:

"Then Rousseau is as much of a fool as the other, that's all."

Monsieur Rade, still smiling, went on:

"And this is what Lord Byron said, who, nevertheless, loved women: 'They should be well fed and well dressed, but not allowed to mingle with society. They should also be taught religion, but they should ignore poetry and politics, only being allowed to read religious works or cook-books.'"

Monsieur Rade continued:

"You see, gentlemen, all of them study painting and music. But not a single one of them has ever painted a remarkable picture or composed a great opera! Why, gentlemen? Because they are the 'sexes sequior', the secondary sex in every sense of the word, made to be kept apart, in the background."

Monsieur Patissot was growing angry, and exclaimed:

"And how about Madame Sand, monsieur?"

"She is the one exception, monsieur, the one exception. I will quote to you another passage from another great philosopher, this one an Englishman, Herbert Spencer. Here is what he says: 'Each sex is capable, under the influence of abnormal stimulation, of manifesting faculties ordinarily reserved for the other one. Thus, for instance, in extreme cases a special excitement may cause the breasts of men to give milk; children deprived of their mothers have often thus been saved in time of famine. Nevertheless, we do not place this faculty of giving milk among the male attributes. It is the same with female intelligence, which, in certain cases, will give superior products, but which is not to be considered in an estimate of the feminine nature as a social factor.'"

All Monsieur Patissot's chivalric instincts were wounded and he declared:

"You are not a Frenchman, monsieur. French gallantry is a form of patriotism."

Monsieur Rade retorted:

"I have very little patriotism, monsieur, as little as I can get along with."

A coolness settled over the company, but he continued quietly:

"Do you admit with me that war is a barbarous thing; that this custom of killing off people constitutes a condition of savagery; that it is odious, when life is the only real good, to see governments, whose duty is to protect the lives of their subjects, persistently looking for means of destruction? Am I not right? Well, if war is a terrible thing, what about patriotism, which is the idea at the base of it? When a murderer kills he has a fixed idea; it is to steal. When a good man sticks his bayonet through another good man, father of a family, or, perhaps, a great artist, what idea is he following out?"

Everybody was shocked.

"When one has such thoughts, one should not express them in public."

M. Patissot continued:

"There are, however, monsieur, principles which all good people recognize."

M. Rade asked: "Which ones?"

Then very solemnly, M. Patissot pronounced: "Morality, monsieur."

M. Rade was beaming; he exclaimed:

"Just let me give you one example, gentlemen, one little example. What is your opinion of the gentlemen with the silk caps who thrive along the boulevard's on the delightful traffic which you know, and who make a living out of it?"

A look of disgust ran round the table:

"Well, gentlemen! only a century ago, when an elegant gentleman, very ticklish about his honor, had for--friend--a beautiful and rich lady, it was considered perfectly proper to live at her expense and even to squander her whole fortune. This game was considered delightful. This only goes to show that the principles of morality are by no means settled--and that--"

M. Perdrix, visibly embarrassed, stopped him:

"M. Rade, you are sapping the very foundations of society. One must always have principles. Thus, in politics, here is M. de Sombreterre, who is a Legitimist; M. Vallin, an Orleanist; M. Patissot and myself, Republicans; we all have very different principles, and yet we agree very well because we have them."

But M. Rade exclaimed:

"I also have principles, gentlemen, very distinct ones."

M. Patissot raised his head and coldly asked:

"It would please me greatly to know them, monsieur."

M. Rade did not need to be coaxed.

"Here they are, monsieur:

"First principle--Government by one person is a monstrosity.

"Second principle--Restricted suffrage is an injustice.

"Third principle--Universal suffrage is idiotic.

"To deliver up millions of men, superior minds, scientists, even geniuses, to the caprice and will of a being who, in an instant of gaiety, madness, intoxication or love, would not hesitate to sacrifice everything for his exalted fancy, would spend the wealth of the country amassed by others with difficulty, would have thousands of men slaughtered on the battle-fields, all this appears to me--a simple logician--a monstrous aberration.

"But, admitting that a country must govern itself, to exclude, on some always debatable pretext, a part of the citizens from the administration of affairs is such an injustice that it seems to me unworthy of a further discussion.

"There remains universal suffrage. I suppose that you will agree with me that geniuses are a rarity. Let us be liberal and say that there are at present five in France. Now, let us add, perhaps, two hundred men with a decided talent, one thousand others possessing various talents, and ten thousand superior intellects. This is a staff of eleven thousand two hundred and five minds. After that you have the army of mediocrities followed by the multitude of fools. As the mediocrities and the fools always form the immense majority, it is impossible for them to elect an intelligent government.

"In order to be fair I admit that logically universal suffrage seems to me the only admissible principle, but it is impracticable. Here are the reasons why:

"To make all the living forces of the country cooperate in the government, to represent all the interests, to take into account all the rights, is an ideal dream, but hardly practicable, because the only force which can be measured is that very one which should be neglected, the stupid strength of numbers, According to your method, unintelligent numbers equal genius, knowledge, learning, wealth and industry. When you are able to give to a member of the Institute ten thousand votes to a ragman's one, one hundred votes for a great land-owner as against his farmer's ten, then you will have approached an equilibrium of forces and obtained a national representation which will really represent the strength of the nation. But I challenge you to do it.

"Here are my conclusions:

"Formerly, when a man was a failure at every other profession he turned photographer; now he has himself elected a deputy. A government thus composed will always be sadly lacking, incapable of evil as well as of good. On the other hand, a despot, if he be stupid, can do a lot of harm, and, if he be intelligent (a thing which is very scarce), he may do good.

"I cannot decide between these two forms of government; I declare myself to be an anarchist, that is to say, a partisan of that power which is the most unassuming, the least felt, the most liberal, in the broadest sense of the word, and revolutionary at the same time; by that I mean the everlasting enemy of this same power, which can in no way be anything but defective. That's all!"

Cries of indignation rose about the table, and all, whether Legitimist, Orleanist or Republican through force of circumstances, grew red with anger. M. Patissot especially was choking with rage, and, turning toward M. Rade, he cried:

"Then, monsieur, you believe in nothing?"

The other answered quietly:

"You're absolutely correct, monsieur."

The anger felt by all the guests prevented M. Rade from continuing, and M. Perdrix, as chief, closed the discussion.

"Enough, gentlemen! We each have our opinion, and we have no intention of changing it."

All agreed with the wise words. But M. Rade, never satisfied, wished to have the last word.

"I have, however, one moral," said he. "It is simple and always applicable. One sentence embraces the whole thought; here it is: 'Never do unto another that which you would not have him do unto you.' I defy you to pick any flaw in it, while I will undertake to demolish your most sacred principles with three arguments."

This time there was no answer. But as they were going home at night, by couples, each one was saying to his companion: "Really, M. Rade goes much too far. His mind must surely be unbalanced. He ought to be appointed assistant chief at the Charenton Asylum."