

***PAUL  
BOURGET***

***COSMOPOLIS  
- COMPLETE***

**Paul Bourget**

# **Cosmopolis — Complete**

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# PAUL BOURGET

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Born in Amiens, September 2, 1852, Paul Bourget was a pupil at the Lycee Louis le Grand, and then followed a course at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes, intending to devote himself to Greek philology. He, however, soon gave up linguistics for poetry, literary criticism, and fiction. When yet a very young man, he became a contributor to various journals and reviews, among others to the 'Revue des deux Mondes, La Renaissance, Le Parlement, La Nouvelle Revue', etc. He has since given himself up almost exclusively to novels and fiction, but it is necessary to mention here that he also wrote poetry. His poetical works comprise: 'Poesies (1872-876), La Vie Inquiete (1875), Edel (1878), and Les Aveux (1882)'.

With riper mind and to far better advantage, he appeared a few years later in literary essays on the writers who had most influenced his own development—the philosophers Renan, Taine, and Amiel, the poets Baudelaire and Leconte de Lisle; the dramatist Dumas fils, and the novelists Turgenieff, the Goncourts, and Stendhal. Brunetiere says of Bourget that "no one knows more, has read more, read better, or meditated, more profoundly upon what he has read, or assimilated it more completely." So much "reading" and so much "meditation," even when accompanied by strong assimilative powers, are not, perhaps, the most desirable and necessary tendencies in a writer of verse or of fiction. To the philosophic critic, however, they must evidently be invaluable; and thus it is that in a certain self-allotted domain of literary appreciation allied to semi-scientific thought, Bourget stands to-day without a rival. His 'Essais de Psychologie Contemporaine (1883), Nouveaux

Essais (1885), and Etudes et Portraits (1888)' are certainly not the work of a week, but rather the outcome of years of self-culture and of protracted determined endeavor upon the sternest lines. In fact, for a long time, Bourget rose at 3 a.m. and elaborated anxiously study after study, and sketch after sketch, well satisfied when he sometimes noticed his articles in the theatrical 'feuilleton' of the 'Globe' and the 'Parlement', until he finally contributed to the great 'Debats' itself. A period of long, hard, and painful probation must always be laid down, so to speak, as the foundation of subsequent literary fame. But France, fortunately for Bourget, is not one of those places where the foundation is likely to be laid in vain, or the period of probation to endure for ever and ever.

In fiction, Bourget carries realistic observation beyond the externals (which fixed the attention of Zola and Maupassant) to states of the mind: he unites the method of Stendhal to that of Balzac. He is always interesting and amusing. He takes himself seriously and persists in regarding the art of writing fiction as a science. He has wit, humor, charm, and lightness of touch, and ardently strives after philosophy and intellectuality—qualities that are rarely found in fiction. It may well be said of M. Bourget that he is innocent of the creation of a single stupid character. The men and women we read of in Bourget's novels are so intellectual that their wills never interfere with their hearts.

The list of his novels and romances is a long one, considering the fact that his first novel, 'L'Irreparable,' appeared as late as 1884. It was followed by 'Cruelle Enigme (1885); Un Crime d'Amour (1886); Andre Cornelis and Mensonges (1887); Le Disciple (1889); La Terre promise; Cosmopolis (1892), crowned by the Academy; Drame de Famille (1899); Monique (1902)'; his romances are 'Une Idylle tragique (1896); La Duchesse Bleue (1898); Le Fantome (1901); and L'Etape (1902)'.

'Le Disciple' and 'Cosmopolis' are certainly notable books. The latter marks the cardinal point in Bourget's fiction. Up to that time he had seen environment more than characters; here the dominant interest is psychic, and, from this point on, his characters become more and more like Stendhal's, "different from normal clay." *Cosmopolis* is perfectly charming. Bourget is, indeed, the past-master of "psychological" fiction.

To sum up: Bourget is in the realm of fiction what Frederic Amiel is in the realm of thinkers and philosophers—a subtle, ingenious, highly gifted student of his time. With a wonderful dexterity of pen, a very acute, almost womanly intuition, and a rare diffusion of grace about all his writings, it is probable that Bourget will remain less known as a critic than as a romancer. Though he neither feels like Loti nor sees like Maupassant—he reflects.

JULES LEMAITRE  
de l'Académie Française.

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# AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

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I send you, my dear Primoli, from beyond the Alps, the romance of international life, begun in Italy almost under your eyes, to which I have given for a frame that ancient and noble Rome of which you are so ardent an admirer.

To be sure, the drama of passion which this book depicts has no particularly Roman features, and nothing was farther from my thoughts than to trace a picture of the society so local, so traditional, which exists between the Quirinal and the Vatican. The drama is not even Italian, for the scene might have been laid, with as much truth, at Venice, Florence, Nice, St. Moritz, even Paris or London, the various cities which are like quarters scattered over Europe of the fluctuating 'Cosmopolis,' christened by Beyle: 'Vengo adesso da Cosmopoli'. It is the contrast between the rather incoherent ways of the rovers of high life and the character of perennity impressed everywhere in the great city of the Caesars and of the Popes which has caused me to choose the spot where even the corners speak of a secular past, there to evoke some representatives of the most modern, as well as the most arbitrary and the most momentary, life. You, who know better than any one the motley world of cosmopolites, understand why I have confined myself to painting here only a fragment of it. That world, indeed, does not exist, it can have neither defined customs nor a general character. It is composed of exceptions and of singularities. We are so naturally creatures of custom, our continual mobility has such a need of gravitating around one fixed axis, that motives of a personal order alone can determine us upon an habitual and voluntary exile from our native land. It is so, now in the case of an artist, a person seeking



for instruction and change; now in the case of a business man who desires to escape the consequences of some scandalous error; now in the case of a man of pleasure in search of new adventures; in the case of another, who cherishes prejudices from birth, it is the longing to find the "happy mean;" in the case of another, flight from distasteful memories. The life of the cosmopolite can conceal all beneath the vulgarity of its whims, from snobbery in quest of higher connections to swindling in quest of easier prey, submitting to the brilliant frivolities of the sport, the sombre intrigues of policy, or the sadness of a life which has been a failure. Such a variety of causes renders at once very attractive and almost impracticable the task of the author who takes as a model that ever-changing society so like unto itself in the exterior rites and fashions, so really, so intimately complex and composite in its fundamental elements. The writer is compelled to take from it a series of leading facts, as I have done, essaying to deduce a law which governs them. That law, in the present instance, is the permanence of race. Contradictory as may appear this result, the more one studies the cosmopolites, the more one ascertains that the most irreducible idea within them is that special strength of heredity which slumbers beneath the monotonous uniform of superficial relations, ready to reawaken as soon as love stirs the depths of the temperament. But there again a difficulty, almost insurmountable, is met with. Obligated to concentrate his action to a limited number of personages, the novelist can not pretend to incarnate in them the confused whole of characters which the vague word race sums up. Again, taking this book as an example, you and I, my dear Primoli, know a number of Venetians and of English women, of Poles and of Romans, of Americans and of French who have nothing in common with Madame Steno, Maud and Boleslas Gorka, Prince d'Ardea, Marquis Cibo, Lincoln Maitland, his brother-in-law, and the Marquis de Montfanon, while Justus

Hafner only represents one phase out of twenty of the European adventurer, of whom one knows neither his religion, his family, his education, his point of setting out, nor his point of arriving, for he has been through various ways and means. My ambition would be satisfied were I to succeed in creating here a group of individuals not representative of the entire race to which they belong, but only as possibly existing in that race—or those races. For several of them, Justus Hafner and his daughter Fanny, Alba Steno, Florent Chapron, Lydia Maitland, have mixed blood in their veins. May these personages interest you, my dear friend, and become to you as real as they have been to me for some time, and may you receive them in your palace of Tor di Nona as faithful messengers of the grateful affection felt for you by your companion of last winter.

PAUL BOURGET.

PARIS, November 16, 1892.

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# COSMOPOLIS

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# **BOOK 1.**

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# CHAPTER I. A DILETTANTE AND A BELIEVER

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Although the narrow stall, flooded with heaped-up books and papers, left the visitor just room enough to stir, and although that visitor was one of his regular customers, the old bookseller did not deign to move from the stool upon which he was seated, while writing on an unsteady desk. His odd head, with its long, white hair, peeping from beneath a once black felt hat with a broad brim, was hardly raised at the sound of the opening and shutting of the door. The newcomer saw an emaciated, shriveled face, in which, from behind spectacles, two brown eyes twinkled slyly. Then the hat again shaded the paper, which the knotty fingers, with their dirty nails, covered with uneven lines traced in a handwriting belonging to another age, and from the thin, tall form, enveloped in a greenish, worn-out coat, came a faint voice, the voice of a man afflicted with chronic laryngitis, uttering as an apology, with a strong Italian accent, this phrase in French:

“One moment, Marquis, the muse will not wait.”

“Very well, I will; I am no muse. Listen to your inspiration comfortably, Ribalta,” replied, with a laugh, he whom the vendor of old books received with such original unconstraint. He was evidently accustomed to the eccentricities of the strange merchant. In Rome—for this scene took place in a shop at the end of one of the most ancient streets of the Eternal City, a few paces from the Place d’Espagne, so well known to tourists—in the city which serves as a confluent for so many from all points of the world, has not that sense of the odd been obliterated by the

multiplicity of singular and anomalous types stranded and sheltering there? You will find there revolutionists like boorish Ribalta, who is ending in a curiosity-shop a life more eventful than the most eventful of the sixteenth century.

Descended from a Corsican family, this personage came to Rome when very young, about 1835, and at first became a seminarist. On the point of being ordained a priest, he disappeared only to return, in 1849, so rabid a republican that he was outlawed at the time of the reestablishment of the pontifical government. He then served as secretary to Mazzini, with whom he disagreed for reasons which clashed with Ribalta's honor. Would passion for a woman have involved him in such extravagance? In 1870 Ribalta returned to Rome, where he opened, if one may apply such a term to such a hole, a book-shop. But he is an amateur bookseller, and will refuse you admission if you displease him. Having inherited a small income, he sells or he does not, following his fancy or the requirements of his own purchases, to-day asking you twenty francs for a wretched engraving for which he paid ten sous, to-morrow giving you at a low price a costly book, the value of which he knows. Rabid Gallophobe, he never pardoned his old general the campaign of Dijon any more than he forgave Victor Emmanuel for having left the Vatican to Pius IX. "The house of Savoy and the papacy," said he, when he was confidential, "are two eggs which we must not eat on the same dish." And he would tell of a certain pillar of St. Peter's hollowed into a staircase by Bernin, where a cartouch of dynamite was placed. If you were to ask him why he became a book collector, he would bid you step over a pile of papers, of boarding and of folios. Then he would show you an immense chamber, or rather a shed, where thousands of pamphlets were piled up along the walls: "These are the rules of all the convents suppressed by Italy. I shall write their history." Then he would stare at you, for he

would fear that you might be a spy sent by the king with the sole object of learning the plans of his most dangerous enemy—one of those spies of whom he has been so much in awe that for twenty years no one has known where he slept, where he ate, where he hid when the shutters of his shop in the Rue Borgognona were closed. He expected, on account of his past, and his secret manner, to be arrested at the time of the outrage of Passanante as one of the members of those Circoli Barsanti, to whom a refractory corporal gave his name.

But, on examining the dusty cartoons of the old book-stall, the police discovered nothing except a prodigious quantity of grotesque verses directed against the Piedmontese and the French, against the Germans and the Triple Alliance, against the Italian republicans and the ministers, against Cavour and Signor Crispi, against the University of Rome and the Inquisition, against the monks and the capitalists! It was, no doubt, one of those pasquinades which his customers watched him at work upon, thinking, as he did so, how Rome abounded in paradoxical meetings.

For, in 1867, that same old Garibaldian exchanged shots at Mentana with the Pope's Zouaves, among whom was Marquis de Montfanon, for so was called the visitor awaiting Ribalta's pleasure. Twenty-three years had sufficed to make of the two impassioned soldiers of former days two inoffensive men, one of whom sold old volumes to the other! And there is a figure such as you will not find anywhere else—the French nobleman who has come to die near St. Peter's.

Would you believe, to see him with his coarse boots, dressed in a simple coat somewhat threadbare, a round hat covering his gray head, that you have before you one of the famous Parisian dandies of 1864? Listen to this other history. Scruples of devoutness coming in the wake of a serious illness cast at one blow the frequenter of the 'Cafe

Anglais' and gay suppers into the ranks of the pontifical zouaves. A first sojourn in Rome during the last four years of the government of Pius IX, in that incomparable city to which the presentiment of the approaching termination of a secular rule, the advent of the Council, and the French occupation gave a still more peculiar character, was enchantment. All the germs of piety instilled in the nobleman by the education of the Jesuits of Brughetti ended by reviving a harvest of noble virtues, in the days of trial which came only too quickly. Montfanon made the campaign of France with the other zouaves, and the empty sleeve which was turned up in place of his left arm attested with what courage he fought at Patay, at the time of that sublime charge when the heroic General de Sonis unfurled the banner of the Sacred Heart. He had been a duelist, sportsman, gambler, lover, but to those of his old companions of pleasure whom chance brought to Rome he was only a devotee who lived economically, notwithstanding the fact that he had saved the remnants of a large fortune for alms, for reading and for collecting.

Every one has that vice, more or less, in Rome, which is in itself the most surprising museum of history and of art. Montfanon is collecting documents in order to write the history of the French nobility and of the Church. His mistresses of the time when he was the rival of the Gramont-Caderousses and the Demidoffs would surely not recognize him any more than he would them. But are they as happy as he seems to have remained through his life of sacrifice? There is laughter in his blue eyes, which attest his pure Germanic origin, and which light up his face, one of those feudal faces such as one sees in the portraits hung upon the walls of the priories of Malta, where plainness has race. A thick, white moustache, in which glimmers a vague reflection of gold, partly hides a scar which would give to that red face a terrible look were it not for the expression of

those eyes, in which there is fervor mingled with merriment. For Montfanon is as fanatical on certain subjects as he is genial and jovial on others. If he had the power he would undoubtedly have Ribalta arrested, tried, and condemned within twenty-four hours for the crime of free-thinking. Not having it, he amused himself with him, so much the more so as the vanquished Catholic and the discontented Socialists have several common hatreds. Even on this particular morning we have seen with what indulgence he bore the brusqueness of the old bookseller, at whom he gazed for ten minutes without disconcerting him in the least. At length the revolutionist seemed to have finished his epigram, for with a quiet smile he carefully folded the sheet of paper, put it in a wooden box which he locked. Then he turned around.

“What do you desire, Marquis?” he asked, without any further preliminary.

“First of all, you will have to read me your poem, old redshirt,” said Montfanon, “which will only be my recompense for having awaited your good pleasure more patiently than an ambassador. Let us see whom are you abusing in those verses? Is it Don Ciccio or His Majesty? You will not reply? Are you afraid that I shall denounce you at the Quirinal?”

“No flies enter a closed mouth,” replied the old conspirator, justifying the proverb by the manner in which he shut his toothless mouth, into which, indeed, at that moment, neither a fly nor the tiniest grain of dust could enter.

“An excellent saying,” returned the Marquis, with a laugh, “and one I should like to see engraved on the facade of all the modern parliaments. But between your poetry and your adages have you taken the time to write for me to that bookseller at Vienna, who owns the last copy of the pamphlet on the trial of the bandit Hafner?”



“Patience,” said the merchant. “I will write.”

“And my document on the siege of Rome, by Bourbon, those three notarial deeds which you promised me, have you dislodged them?”

“Patience, patience,” repeated the merchant, adding, as he pointed with a comical mixture of irony and of despair to the disorder in his shop, “How can you expect me to know where I am in the midst of all this?”

“Patience, patience,” repeated Montfanon. “For a month you have been singing that old refrain. If, instead of composing wretched verses, you would attend to your correspondence, and, if, instead of buying continually, you would classify this confused mass.... But,” said he, more seriously, with a brusque gesture, “I am wrong to reproach you for your purchases, since I have come to speak to you of one of the last. Cardinal Guerillot told me that you showed him, the other day, an interesting prayer-book, although in very bad condition, which you found in Tuscany. Where is it?”

“Here it is,” said Ribalta, who, leaping over several piles of volumes and thrusting aside with his foot an enormous heap of cartoons, opened the drawer of a tottering press. In that drawer he rummaged among an accumulation of odd, incongruous objects: old medals and old nails, bookbindings and discolored engravings, a large leather box gnawed by insects, on the outside of which could be distinguished a partly effaced coat-of-arms. He opened that box and extended toward Montfanon a volume covered with leather and studded. One of the clasps was broken, and when the Marquis began to turn over the pages, he could see that the interior had not been better taken care of than the exterior. Colored prints had originally ornamented the precious work; they were almost effaced. The yellow parchment had been torn in places. Indeed, it was a shapeless ruin which the

curious nobleman examined, however, with the greatest care, while Ribalta made up his mind to speak.

“A widow of Montalcino, in Tuscany, sold it to me. She asked me an enormous price, and it is worth it, although it is slightly damaged. For those are miniatures by Matteo da Siena, who made them for Pope Pius II Piccolomini. Look at the one which represents Saint Blaise, who is blessing the lions and panthers. It is the best preserved. Is it not fine?”

“Why try to deceive me, Ribalta?” interrupted Montfanon, with a gesture of impatience. “You know as well as I that these miniatures are very mediocre, and that they do not in the least resemble Matteo’s compact work; and another proof is that the prayerbook is dated 1554. See!” and, with his remaining hand, very adroitly he showed the merchant the figures; “and as I have quite a memory for dates, and as I am interested in Siena, I have not forgotten that Matteo died before 1500. I did not go to college with Machiavelli,” continued he, with some brusqueness, “but I will tell you that which the Cardinal would have told you if you had not deceived him by your finesse, as you tried to deceive me just now. Look at this partly effaced signature, which you have not been able to read. I will decipher it for you. Blaise de Mo, and then a c, with several letters missing, just three, and that makes Montluc in the orthography of the time, and the b is in a handwriting which you might have examined in the archives of that same Siena, since you come from there. Now, with regard to this coat-of-arms,” and he closed the book to detail to his stupefied companion the arms hardly visible on the cover, “do you see a wolf, which was originally of gold, and turtles of gales? Those are the arms which Montluc has borne since the year 1554, when he was made a citizen of Siena for having defended it so bravely against the terrible Marquis de Marignan. As for the box,” he took it in its turn to study it, “these are really the half-moons of the Piccolominis. But what does that prove? That after the siege,

and just as it was necessary to retire to Montalcino, Montluc gave his prayer-book, as a souvenir, to some of that family. The volume was either lost or stolen, and finally reduced to the state in which it now is. This book, too, is proof that a little French blood was shed in the service of Italy. But those who have sold it have forgotten that, like Magenta and Solferino, you have only memory for hatred. Now that you know why I want your prayer-book, will you sell it to me for five hundred francs?"

The bookseller listened to that discourse with twenty contradictory expressions upon his face. From force of habit he felt for Montfanon a sort of respect mingled with animosity, which evidently rendered it very painful for him to have been surprised in the act of telling an untruth. It is necessary, to be just, to add that in speaking of the great painter Matteo and of Pope Pius II in connection with that unfortunate volume, he had not thought that the Marquis, ordinarily very economical and who limited his purchases to the strict domain of ecclesiastical history, would have the least desire for that prayer-book. He had magnified the subject with a view to forming a legend and to taking advantage of some rich, unversed amateur.

On the other hand, if the name of Montluc meant absolutely nothing to him, it was not the same with the direct and brutal allusion which his interlocutor had made to the war of 1859. It is always a thorn in the flesh of those of our neighbors from beyond the Alps who do not love us. The pride of the Garibaldian was not far behind the generosity of the former zouave. With an abruptness equal to that of Montfanon, he took up the volume and grumbled as he turned it over and over in his inky fingers:

"I would not sell it for six hundred francs. No, I would not sell it for six hundred francs."

"It is a very large sum," said Montfanon.

“No,” continued the good man, “I would not sell it.” Then extending it to the Marquis, in evident excitement, he cried: “But to you I will sell it for four hundred francs.”

“But I have offered you five hundred francs for it,” said the nonplussed purchaser. “You know that is a small sum for such a curiosity.”

“Take it for four,” insisted Ribalta, growing more and more eager, “not a sou less, not a sou more. It is what it cost me. And you shall have your documents in two days and the Hafner papers this week. But was that Bourbon who sacked Rome a Frenchman?” he continued. “And Charles d’Anjou, who fell upon us to make himself King of the two Sicilies? And Charles VIII, who entered by the Porte du Peuple? Were they Frenchmen? Why did they come to meddle in our affairs? Ah, if we were to calculate closely, how much you owe us! Was it not we who gave you Mazarin, Massena, Bonaparte and many others who have gone to die in your army in Russia, in Spain and elsewhere? And at Dijon? Did not Garibaldi stupidly fight for you, who would have taken from him his country? We are quits on the score of service.... But take your prayer-book-good-evening, good-evening. You can pay me later.”

And he literally pushed the Marquis out of the stall, gesticulating and throwing down books on all sides. Montfanon found himself in the street before having been able to draw from his pocket the money he had got ready.

“What a madman! My God, what a madman!” said he to himself, with a laugh. He left the shop at a brisk pace, with the precious book under his arm. He understood, from having frequently come in contact with them, those southern natures, in which swindling and chivalry elbow without harming one another—Don Quixotes who set their own windmills in motion. He asked himself:

“How much would he still make after playing the magnanimous with me?” His question was never to be answered, nor was he to know that Ribalta had bought the rare volume among a heap of papers, engravings, and old books, paying twenty-five francs for all. Moreover, two encounters which followed one upon the other on leaving the shop, prevented him from meditating on that problem of commercial psychology. He paused for a moment at the end of the street to cast a glance at the Place d’Espagne, which he loved as one of those corners unchanged for the last thirty years. On that morning in the early days of May, the square, with its sinuous edge, was indeed charming with bustle and light, with the houses which gave it a proper contour, with the double staircase of La Trinite-des-Monts lined with idlers, with the water which gushed from a large fountain in the form of a bark placed in the centre-one of the innumerable caprices in which the fancy of Bernin, that illusive decorator, delighted to indulge. Indeed, at that hour and in that light, the fountain was as natural in effect as were the nimble hawkers who held in their extended arms baskets filled with roses, narcissus, red anemones, fragile cyclamens and dark pansies. Barefooted, with sparkling eyes, entreaties upon their lips, they glided among the carriages which passed along rapidly, fewer than in the height of the season, still quite numerous, for spring was very late this year, and it came with delightful freshness. The flower-sellers besieged the hurried passers-by, as well as those who paused at the shop-windows, and, devout Catholic as Montfanon was, he tasted, in the face of the picturesque scene of a beautiful morning in his favorite city, the pleasure of crowning that impression of a bright moment by a dream of eternity. He had only to turn his eyes to the right, toward the College de la Propagande, a seminary from which all the missions of the world set out.

But it was decreed that the impassioned nobleman should not enjoy undisturbed the bibliographical trifle obtained so cheaply and which he carried under his arm, nor that feeling so thoroughly Roman; a sudden apparition surprised him at the corner of a street, at an angle of the sidewalk. His bright eyes lost their serenity when a carriage passed by him, a carriage, perfectly appointed, drawn by two black horses, and in which, notwithstanding the early hour, sat two ladies. The one was evidently an inferior, a companion who acted as chaperon to the other, a young girl of almost sublime beauty, with large black eyes, which contrasted strongly with a pale complexion, but a pallor in which there was warmth and life. Her profile, of an Oriental purity, was so much on the order of the Jewish type that it left scarcely a doubt as to the Hebrew origin of the creature, a veritable vision of loveliness, who seemed created, as the poets say, "To draw all hearts in her wake." But no! The jovial, kindly face of the Marquis suddenly darkened as he watched the girl about to turn the corner of the street, and who bowed to a very fashionable young man, who undoubtedly knew the late pontifical zouave, for he approached him familiarly, saying, in a mocking tone and in a French which came direct from France:

"Well! Now I have caught you, Marquis Claude-Francois de Montfanon!... She has come, you have seen her, you have been conquered. Have your eyes feasted upon divine Fanny Hafner? Tremble! I shall denounce you to his Eminence, Cardinal Guerillot; and if you malign his charming catechist I will be there to testify that I saw you hypnotized as she passed, as were the people of Troy by Helen. And I know very positively that Helen had not so modern a grace, so beautiful a mind, so ideal a profile, so deep a glance, so dreamy a mouth and such a smile. Ah, how lovely she is! When shall you call?"

“If Monsieur Julien Dorsenne,” replied Montfanon, in the same mocking tone, “does not pay more attention to his new novel than he is doing at this moment, I pity his publisher. Come here,” he added, brusquely, dragging the young man to the angle of Rue Borgognona. “Did you see the victoria stop at No. 13, and the divine Fanny, as you call her, alight?... She has entered the shop of that old rascal, Ribalta. She will not remain there long. She will come out, and she will drive away in her carriage. It is a pity she will not pass by us again. We should have had the pleasure of seeing her disappointed air. This is what she is in search of,” added he, with a gay laugh, exhibiting his purchase, “but which she could not have were she to offer all the millions which her honest father has stolen in Vienna. Ha, ha!” he concluded, laughing still more heartily, “Monsieur de Montfanon rose first; this morning has not been lost, and you, Monsieur, can see what I obtained at the curiosity-shop of that old fellow who will not make a plaything of this object, at least,” he added, extending the book to his interlocutor, at whom he glanced with a comical expression of triumph.

“I do not wish to look at it,” responded Dorsenne. “But, yes,” he continued, as Montfanon shrugged his shoulders, “in my capacity of novelist and observer, since you cast it at my head, I know already what it is. What do you bet?... It is a prayer-book which bears the signature of Marshal de Montluc, and which Cardinal Guerillot discovered. Is that true? He spoke to Mademoiselle Hafner about it, and he thought he would mitigate your animosity toward her by telling you she was an enthusiast and wished to buy it. Is that true as well? And you, wretched man, had only one thought, to deprive that poor little thing of the trifle. Is that true? We spent the evening before last together at Countess Steno’s; she talked to me of nothing but her desire to have the book on which the illustrious soldier, the great believer,

had prayed. She told me of all her heroic resolutions. Later she went to buy it. But the shop was closed; I noticed it on passing, and you certainly went there, too... Is that true?... And, now that I have detailed to you the story, explain to me, you who are so just, why you cherish an antipathy so bitter and so childish—excuse the word!—for an innocent, young girl, who has never speculated on ‘Change, who is as charitable as a whole convent, and who is fast becoming as devout as yourself. Were it not for her father, who will not listen to the thought of conversion before marriage, she would already be a Catholic, and—Protestants as they are for the moment—she would never go anywhere but to church... When she is altogether a Catholic, and under the protection of a Sainte-Claudine and a Sainte-Francoise, as you are under the protection of Saint-Claude and Saint-Francois, you will have to lay down your arms, old leaguer, and acknowledge the sincerity of the religious sentiments of that child who has never harmed you.”

“What! She has done nothing to me?”... interrupted Montfanon. “But it is quite natural that a sceptic should not comprehend what she has done to me, what she does to me daily, not to me personally, but to my opinions. When one has, like you, learned intellectual athletics in the circus of the Sainte-Beuves and Renans, one must think it fine that Catholicism, that grand thing, should serve as a plaything for the daughter of a pirate who aims at an aristocratic marriage. It may, too, amuse you that my holy friend, Cardinal Guerillot, should be the dupe of that intriguer. But I, Monsieur, who have received the sacrament by the side of a Sonis, I can not admit that one should make use of what was the faith of that hero to thrust one’s self into the world. I do not admit that one should play the role of dupe and accomplice to an old man whom I venerate and whom I shall enlighten, I give you my word.”



“And as for this ancient relic,” he continued, again showing the volume, “you may think it childish that I do not wish it mixed up in the shameful comedy. But no, it shall not be. They shall not exhibit with words of emotion, with tearful eyes, this breviary on which once prayed that grand soldier; yes, Monsieur, that great believer. She has done nothing to me,” he repeated, growing more and more excited, his red face becoming purple with rage, “but they are the quintessence of what I detest the most, people like her and her father. They are the incarnation of the modern world, in which there is nothing more despicable than these cosmopolitan adventurers, who play at grand seigneur with the millions filibustered in some stroke on the Bourse. First, they have no country. What is this Baron Justus Hafner—German, Austrian, Italian? Do you know? They have no religion. The name, the father’s face, that of the daughter, proclaim them Jews, and they are Protestants—for the moment, as you have too truthfully said, while they prepare themselves to become Mussulmen or what not. For the moment, when it is a question of God!... They have no family. Where was this man reared? What did his father, his mother, his brothers, his sisters do? Where did he grow up? Where are his traditions? Where is his past, all that constitutes, all that establishes the moral man?... Just look. All is mystery in this personage, excepting this, which is very clear: if he had received his due in Vienna, at the time of the suit of the ‘Credit Austro-Dalmate’, in 1880, he would be in the galleys, instead of in Rome. The facts were these: there were innumerable failures. I know something about it. My poor cousin De Saint-Remy, who was with the Comte de Chambord, lost the bread of his old age and his daughter’s dowry. There were suicides and deeds of violence, notably that of a certain Schroeder, who went mad on account of that crash, and who killed himself, after murdering his wife and his two children. And the Baron came out of it unsullied. It is not ten years since the occurrence, and it is forgotten.

When he settled in Rome he found open doors, extended hands, as he would have found them in Madrid, London, Paris, or elsewhere. People go to his house; they receive him! And you wish me to believe in the devoutness of that man's daughter!... No, a thousand times no; and you yourself, Dorsenne, with your mania for paradoxes and sophisms, you have the right spirit in you, and these people horrify you in reality, as they do me."

"Not the least in the world," replied the writer, who had listened to the Marquis's tirade; with an unconvinced smile, he repeated: "Not the least in the world.... You have spoken of me as an acrobat or an athlete. I am not offended, because it is you, and because I know that you love me dearly. Let me at least have the suppleness of one. First, before passing judgment on a financial affair I shall wait until I understand it. Hafner was acquitted. That is enough, for one thing. Were he even the greatest rogue in the universe, that would not prevent his daughter from being an angel, for another. As for that cosmopolitanism for which you censure him, we do not agree there; it is just that which interests me in him. Thirdly,... I should not consider that I had lost the six months spent in Rome, if I had met only him. Do not look at me as if I were one of the patrons of the circus, Uncle Beuve, or poor Monsieur Renan himself," he continued, tapping the Marquis's shoulder. "I swear to you that I am very serious. Nothing interests me more than these exceptions to the general rule—than those who have passed through two, three, four phases of existence. Those individuals are my museum, and you wish me to sacrifice to your scruples one of my finest subjects.... Moreover,"—and the malice of the remark he was about to make caused the young man's eyes to sparkle "revile Baron Hafner as much as you like," he continued; "call him a thief and a snob, an intriguer and a knave, if it pleases you. But as for being a person who does not know where his ancestors lived, I

reply, as did Bonhomet when he reached heaven and the Lord said to him: 'Still a chimney-doctor, Bonhomet?'—'And you, Lord?'. For you were born in Bourgoigne, Monsieur de Montfanon, of an ancient family, related to all the nobility—upon which I congratulate you—and you have lived here in Rome for almost twenty-four years, in the Cosmopolis which you revile."

"First of all," replied the Pope's former soldier, holding up his mutilated arm, "I might say that I no longer count, I do not live. And then," his face became inspired, and the depths of that narrow mind, often blinded but very exalted, suddenly appeared, "and then, my Rome to me, Monsieur, has nothing in common with that of Monsieur Hafner nor with yours, since you are come, it seems, to pursue studies of moral teratology. Rome to me is not Cosmopolis, as you say, it is Metropolis, it is the mother of cities.... You forget that I am a Catholic in every fibre, and that I am at home here. I am here because I am a monarchist, because I believe in old France as you believe in the modern world; and I serve her in my fashion, which is not very efficacious, but which is one way, nevertheless.... The post of trustee of Saint Louis, which I accepted from Corcelle, is to me my duty, and I will sustain it in the best way in my power.... Ah! that ancient France, how one feels her grandeur here, and what a part she is known to have had in Christianity! It is that chord which I should like to have heard vibrate in a fluent writer like you, and not eternally those paradoxes, those sophisms. But what matters it to you who date from yesterday and who boast of it," he added, almost sadly, "that in the most insignificant corners of this city centuries of history abound? Does your heart blush at the sight of the facade of the church of Saint-Louis, the salamander of Francois I and the lilies? Do you know why the Rue Bargognona is called thus, and that near by is Saint-Claudedes-Bourguignons, our church? Have you visited, you

who are from the Vosges, that of your province, Saint-Nicolas-des-Lorrains? Do you know Saint-Yves-des-Bretons?"

"But," and here his voice assumed a gay accent, "I have thoroughly charged into that rascal of a Hafner. I have laid him before you without any hesitation. I have spoken to you as I feel, with all the fervor of my heart, although it may seem sport to you. You will be punished, for I shall not allow you to escape. I will take you to the France of other days. You shall dine with me at noon, and between this and then we will make the tour of those churches I have just named. During that time we will go back one hundred and fifty years in the past, into that world in which there were neither cosmopolites nor dilettantes. It is the old world, but it is hardy, and the proof is that it has endured; while your society—look where it is after one hundred years in France, in Italy, in England—thanks to that detestable Gladstone, of whom pride has made a second Nebuchadnezzar. It is like Russia, your society; according to the only decent words of the obscene Diderot, 'rotten before mature!' Come, will you go?"

"You are mistaken," replied the writer, "in thinking that. I do not love your old France, but that does not prevent me from enjoying the new. One can like wine and champagne at the same time. But I am not at liberty. I must visit the exposition at Palais Castagna this morning."

"You will not do that," exclaimed impetuous Montfanon, whose severe face again expressed one of those contrarities which caused it to brighten when he was with one of whom he was fond as he was of Dorsenne. "You would not have gone to see the King assassinated in '93? The selling at auction of the old dwelling of Pope Urban VII is almost as tragical! It is the beginning of the agony of what was Roman nobility. I know. They deserve it all, since they were not killed to the last man on the steps of the Vatican when the Italians took the city. We should have done it, we

who had no popes among our grand-uncles, if we had not been busy fighting elsewhere. But it is none the less pitiful to see the hammer of the appraisers raised above a palace with which is connected centuries of history. Upon my life, if I were Prince d'Ardea—if I had inherited the blood, the house, the titles of the Castagnas, and if I thought I should leave nothing behind me of that which my fathers had amassed—I swear to you, Dorsenne, I should die of grief. And if you recall the fact that the unhappy youth is a spoiled child of eight-and-twenty, surrounded by flatterers, without parents, without friends, without counsellors, that he risked his patrimony on the Bourse among thieves of the integrity of Monsieur Hafner, that all the wealth collected by that succession of popes, of cardinals, of warriors, of diplomatists, has served to enrich ignoble men, you would think the occurrence too lamentable to have any share in it, even as a spectator. Come, I will take you to Saint-Claude.”

“I assure you I am expected,” replied Dorsenne, disengaging his arm, which his despotic friend had already seized. “It is very strange that I should meet you on the way, having the rendezvous I have. I, who dote on contrasts, shall not have lost my morning. Have you the patience to listen to the enumeration of the persons whom I shall join immediately? It will not be very long, but do not interrupt me. You will be angry if you will survive the blow I am about to give you. Ah, you do not wish to call your Rome a Cosmopolis; then what do you say to the party with which, in twenty minutes, I shall visit the ancient palace of Urban VII? First of all, we have your beautiful enemy, Fanny Hafner, and her father, the Baron, representing a little of Germany, a little of Austria, a little of Italy and a little of Holland. For it seems the Baron's mother was from Rotterdam. Do not interrupt. We shall have Countess Steno to represent Venice, and her charming daughter, Alba, to represent a small corner of Russia, for the Chronicle claims that she was the

child, not of the defunct Steno, but of Werekiew-Andre, you know, the one who killed himself in Paris five or six years ago, by casting himself into the Seine, not at all aristocratically, from the Pont de la Concorde. We shall have the painter, the celebrated Lincoln Maitland, to represent America. He is the lover of Steno, whom he stole from Gorka during the latter's trip to Poland. We shall have the painter's wife, Lydia Maitland, and her brother, Florent Chapron, to represent a little of France, a little of America, and a little of Africa; for their grandfather was the famous Colonel Chapron mentioned in the Memorial, who, after 1815, became a planter in Alabama. That old soldier, without any prejudices, had, by a mulattress, a son whom he recognized and to whom he left—I do not know how many dollars. 'Inde' Lydia and Florent. Do not interrupt, it is almost finished. We shall have, to represent England, a Catholic wedded to a Pole, Madame Gorka, the wife of Boleslas, and, lastly, Paris, in the form of your servant. It is now I who will essay to drag you away, for were you to join our party, you, the feudal, it would be complete.... Will you come?"

"Has the blow satisfied you?" asked Montfanon. "And the unhappy man has talent," he exclaimed, talking of Dorsenne as if the latter were not present, "and he has written ten pages on Rhodes which are worthy of Chateaubriand, and he has received from God the noblest gifts—poetry, wit, the sense of history; and in what society does he delight! But, come, once for all, explain to me the pleasure which a man of your genius can find in frequenting that international Bohemia, more or less gilded, in which there is not one being who has standing or a history. I no longer allude to that scoundrel Hafner and his daughter, since you have for her, novelist that you are, the eyes of Monsieur Guerillot. But that Countess Steno, who must be at least forty, who has a grown daughter, should she not remain quietly in her palace at Venice, respectably, bravely, instead of holding