

**JULES DE GONCOURT,  
EDMOND DE GONCOURT**



**GERMINIE  
LACERTEUX**

**Jules de Goncourt, Edmond de Goncourt**

# **Germinie Lacerteux**

**Enriched edition.**

*Introduction, Studies and Commentaries by Ava Marley*

EAN 8596547232353

Edited and published by DigiCat, 2022



# Table of Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Synopsis](#)

[Historical Context](#)

**[Germinie Lacerteux](#)**

[Analysis](#)

[Reflection](#)

[Memorable Quotes](#)

[Notes](#)

# Introduction

[Table of Contents](#)

In this stark portrait, the urge to be seen collides with the demand to remain invisible. *Germinie Lacerteux*, a novel by Jules and Edmond de Goncourt, emerges from mid-nineteenth-century France, during the Second Empire, and stands as an early experiment in rigorous realism that anticipates naturalism. Set in Paris, it turns from salons and battlefields to the cramped rooms and errands of domestic service. The authors concentrate on ordinary life with an almost documentary patience, insisting that a servant's inner world deserves the same narrative gravity as any aristocratic crisis. The book's method and subject align to test the limits of sympathy, description, and social candor.

At the center is a young working-class woman employed in a respectable household, whose days of dutiful attention and nights of private longing gradually converge. The novel follows her routine—shopping lists, stairwells, pay packets—as well as the impulses and anxieties that accumulate beneath those surfaces. The narration is predominantly close and observational, favoring exact description over overt authorial judgment, while allowing a steady undertone of pathos. Readers encounter a voice that is cool without indifference and compassionate without consolation, a tone that heightens the tension between social role and interior desire and lets consequences take shape with unnerving inevitability.

Paris is more than backdrop here; its streets, markets, staircases, and rented rooms form a living mechanism that channels energy, temptation, fatigue, and secrecy. The city of the Second Empire, with its new rhythms of work and leisure, presses on a servant's schedule and solitude, exposing how little space exists between duty and desire. Transactions of food, clothing, and rent mark time, while distances measured in streets and weary journeys translate into moral distances between classes. The Goncourts render these environments with studied precision, so that objects and routines—aprons, coins, ledgers, keys—become agents in the story of a life under pressure.

From this compressed world arise the book's central themes: the ethics of attention, the burdens of class, the constraints placed on women's bodies and choices, and the fragile border between self-control and self-abandonment. The narrative resists melodrama, preferring to trace how small decisions accumulate when money is scarce and respectability must be maintained at any cost. It contemplates how shame tightens when privacy is impossible and how affection can be entangled with dependency. The result is a sober meditation on responsibility without moralizing, showing how social structures shape personal fates while leaving enough mystery to prevent any single cause from explaining everything.

Formally, Germinie Lacerteux blends an almost clinical regard for detail with a supple narrative movement that keeps psychological currents in view. Scenes are often built around concrete tasks and settings, whose textures anchor

the reader even as emotions edge toward crisis. The brothers' prose favors concision and accumulation: gestures recur, objects return, and patterns of labor and spending become a kind of pulse. Yet the book also allows for moments of stillness and intimations of yearning. This combination of restraint and intensity makes the reading experience exacting but absorbing, inviting readers to observe closely without presuming mastery over the character's motives.

Appearing in the 1860s, the novel occupies a crucial threshold between high realism and the fuller statement of naturalism associated with later decades. By placing a servant's life at the center, Jules and Edmond de Goncourt broadened the novel's social canvas and unsettled conventional hierarchies of interest. Their insistence on material conditions and causality helped chart a path that other writers would explore with different emphases. Today, the book can be read both as a landmark in the history of the French novel and as an argument about what counts as worthy subject matter, presented without ornament or apology.

For contemporary readers, *Germinie Lacerteux* remains urgent because it insists on visibility for those whose labor underwrites other people's comfort yet rarely earns narrative attention. Its insights into precarious work, social surveillance, and the psychology of scarcity illuminate pressures that still govern urban life. The book also invites reflection on how empathy is practiced: not as pity, but as close listening to experience ordinarily dismissed as trivial or shameful. Without revealing outcomes, it is fair to say

that the novel's steady gaze asks what happens when private need meets public duty—and why that collision continues to shape lives today.

# Synopsis

[Table of Contents](#)

Germinie Lacerteux, published in 1865 by brothers Jules and Edmond de Goncourt, advances their realist-naturalist project by following the hidden private life of a Parisian domestic servant. The novel centers on Germinie, a conscientious maid in the household of the austere Mademoiselle de Varandeuil, and contrasts the immaculate order of service with the unruly currents of feeling that Paris awakens. Through methodical observation and psychological detail, the authors propose a sober study of passion among the lower classes, asking how desire, poverty, and urban anonymity deform individual destinies. The book's inquiry is both social and intimate, tracing a secret history alongside everyday propriety.

At first, Germinie appears as the model servant: punctual, attentive, and fiercely loyal to her employer. Her days are governed by routine—errands, cleaning, meals, small economies—and her position gives her identity and pride. Yet the same regularity breeds solitude. Cut off from family ties and respectable leisure, she begins to crave recognition and warmth beyond the apartment's closed world. The city's streets, shops, and cheap entertainments present possibilities that hover at the edges of her duty. Gradually, the narrative shows the quickening of sensibility: glances extended a moment too long, small indulgences, and the first excuses that create space for an unacknowledged life.

Her longings find an object in a younger man from a shopkeeping milieu, whose charm seems to promise tenderness and rescue from solitude. Affection moves quickly toward infatuation, and with it comes secrecy. Germinie spends savings on outings and gifts, draws closer to his family circle, and accepts their small requests that soon become obligations. The clandestine nature of the relationship forces her to invent alibis and juggle schedules, sharpening a double existence. What begins as a release becomes a dependency, and the imbalance of power—age, class, security—tilts against her. The Goncourts chart each compromise with clinical patience, avoiding melodrama while tightening the noose.

As the attachment grows unequal, Germinie experiences delays, evasions, and unkindnesses that she explains away to preserve hope. To sustain appearances, she parts with belongings, borrows, and stretches her wages, always promising herself a final settlement just ahead. The narrative lingers on the paperwork of debt, the weariness of late returns, the mounting strain of lies told for the sake of love. Signs of exhaustion and illness creep in, but she insists on flawless service at home, fearing discovery more than fatigue. The tension between faultless performance and private collapse becomes the structure of the book, an everyday tragedy measured in bills, errands, and missed appointments.

Demands from the lover's circle intensify, now framed as necessities that only her devotion can satisfy. Locked into secrecy and ashamed of scandal, Germinie finds few allies, for the social world of servants offers companionship yet

also gossip and exposure. In cramped rooms and crowded streets, she searches for moments of release that only deepen her entanglement. The Goncourts emphasize constraints rather than blame: a woman's earnings, the precarity of service, and the stigma attached to desire. The moral dimension emerges less as sin than as erosion—of judgment, of self-respect, of health—while the practical mechanics of Parisian life grind steadily forward.

Mademoiselle de Varandeuil, stern yet not unfeeling, remains largely outside these currents, satisfied by Germinie's competence and blind to the warning signs. The novel sets her orderly bourgeois codes against the chaotic pressures acting on her servant, creating a quiet dialogue about responsibility and ignorance. The Goncourts' technique—minute inventories, medicalized metaphors, and attention to habit—frames Germinie's passion as a case study shaped by environment. Urban rhythms, inherited ideas about honor, and the economics of small debts exert deterministic force without erasing individual agency. What results is neither indictment nor alibi, but an anatomy of how a private fissure widens under public conditions.

The final movement gathers the consequences of secrecy into a painful clarity, drawing together accounts, rumors, and the sudden visibility of what was long concealed. Rather than a sensational revelation, the book offers a sober reckoning with the costs of a passion lived in the shadows. Germinie Lacerteux endures as a foundational work of naturalism, notable for bringing the servant's inner life to the center of the novel and for scrutinizing the moral comfort of the bourgeois home. Its enduring resonance lies

in the compassion of its observation and in its unsparing portrait of how love and want can bind a life to its fate.

# Historical Context

## [Table of Contents](#)

Germinie Lacerteux appeared in Paris in 1865, under the Second Empire of Napoleon III, amid sweeping urban works and a booming print culture. Jules and Edmond de Goncourt framed the novel as a clinical study of a servant's inner life, prompted by the revelation of their maid's secret hardships; her death in 1862 catalyzed their project. Set among boarding houses, shops, parks, and hospitals of mid-century Paris, the book observes the city's new rhythms after Baron Haussmann's boulevards and markets reshaped everyday movement. Its focus on a working woman's psychology explicitly challenged elite-centered fiction then dominant in France.

Domestic service was one of the largest female occupations in Paris in the 1860s, sustained by placement offices, parish networks, and provincial migration enabled by expanding railways. Servants commonly lived in employers' households, with long hours, few legal protections, and dismissal at will under the Napoleonic Code's master-servant framework. Urban institutions structured survival: the Mont-de-Piété pawned belongings, hospitals ran under the Assistance publique (created in 1849), and Saint-Lazare functioned as a women's prison-hospital. The novel's milieu moves through such spaces, recording the economic precarity, moral scrutiny, and vulnerability to illness and debt that shaped the lives of Paris's working women.

In mid-nineteenth-century France, realism had displaced romantic idealization with documentary detail and social analysis. The Goncourt brothers pushed this further toward what later critics called naturalism, adopting medical vocabulary, slang, and minute observation to trace causality in behavior. Their preface announced a psychology of a woman of the people, aligning with contemporaneous positivism and case-study method. Thinkers such as Auguste Comte and psychiatrists like Bénédict Morel shaped debates on heredity, degeneration, and environment. By relying on notebooks, street observation, and records, the authors positioned fiction as a kind of report, contesting polite conventions about suitable subjects for the novel.

The book also arrived in a literary climate sensitized by recent prosecutions for immorality. In 1857, courts tried Gustave Flaubert for *Madame Bovary* and condemned Charles Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du mal*, signaling official concern with representations of sexuality and vice. Under the Second Empire, press controls and moral policing could affect publishers and theaters, even as enforcement ebbed in the 1860s. *Germinie Lacerteux* provoked controversy for portraying a servant's desires and degradation without euphemism, yet it was not banned. The scandal helped define its stance: realism need not flatter decorum, and stark subject matter could serve social observation.

Paris itself was undergoing radical reconstruction. Baron Haussmann's works from the 1850s to late 1860s carved boulevards, built sewers, created parks, and raised uniform facades that displaced many poorer residents and pushed lodging houses to peripheral districts. New markets,

including the iron-and-glass pavilions of Les Halles, concentrated commerce and night labor. Rail lines brought provincial youths seeking service or shop work, while rising rents and seasonal unemployment intensified insecurity. Against this backdrop, the novel's street-level itinerary—omnibus routes, cheap eateries, furnished rooms—registers how modernization altered rhythms of work, leisure, and surveillance for the urban poor, especially solitary women.

Parisian medicine and welfare were reorganizing during these decades. The Assistance publique centralized hospitals and hospices after 1849; new facilities such as Hôpital Lariboisière (opened 1854) embodied hygienist design, while the Salpêtrière gathered women suffering from chronic illness, poverty, or mental distress. Medical journals debated hysteria, alcoholism, and nervous disorders, and social surveys tabulated working-class budgets. The Goncourts absorbed this empirical temper. Their narrative borrows the language of symptoms and observation, placing desire, fatigue, and relapse within a matrix of labor, diet, and urban stress. The result mirrors contemporary case history, but applied to a domestic worker's life.

The brothers worked at the center of Parisian letters, keeping a meticulous Journal that records salons, studios, and disputes of the 1850s–60s. They admired Flaubert's rigor and would later be read alongside Émile Zola, whose naturalist cycle extended their attention to the urban poor. Critics in 1865 recognized *Germinie Lacerteux* as audacious; some praised its documentation, others decried coarseness. Reviews split along moral lines, yet the book's method—slang glossed by observation, scenes built from notes—

would prove influential. It marked a turn from high-society intrigues toward working-class interiors, helping broaden what counted as serious subject matter in French narrative.

Read against the Second Empire's glitter and inequality, *Germinie Lacerteux* functions as a social lens. It exposes how domestic service, charitable oversight, and modern consumption entangled a poor woman's dignity with dependence and surveillance. Without relying on melodrama, the narrative tracks the costs of respectability and the thin margin separating stability from ruin in a rapidly modernizing capital. Its insistence that a servant's inner life merits serious inquiry critiques hierarchies of attention in both society and literature. The book thus crystallizes a historical moment when realism sought to measure private suffering against public institutions and urban change.

# **GERMINIE LACERTEUX**

## **Main Table of Contents**

I

II

III

IV

V

VI

VII

VIII

IX

X

XI

XII

XIII

XIV

XV

XVI

XVII

XVIII

XIX

XX

XXI

XXII

XXIII

XXIV

XXV

XXVI

XXVII

XXVIII

XXIX

XXX

XXXI

XXXII

XXXIII

XXXIV

XXXV

XXXVI

XXXVII

XXXVIII

XXXIX

XL

XLI

XLII

XLIII

XLIV

XLV

XLVI

XLVII

XLVIII

XLIX

L

LI

LII

LIII

LIV

LV

LVI

LVII

LVIII

LIX

LX

LXI

LXII

LXIII

LXIV

LXV

LXVI

LXVII

LXVIII

LXIX

LXX

## Table of Contents

"Saved! so you are really out of danger, mademoiselle!" exclaimed the maid with a cry of joy, as she closed the door upon the doctor, and, rushing to the bed on which her mistress lay, she began, in a frenzy of happiness and with a shower of kisses to embrace, together with the bed covers, the old woman's poor, emaciated body, which seemed, in the huge bed, as small as a child's.

The old woman took her head, silently, in both hands, pressed it against her heart, heaved a sigh, and muttered: "Ah, well! so I must live on[1q]!"

This took place in a small room, through the window of which could be seen a small patch of sky cut by three black iron pipes, various neighboring roofs, and in the distance, between two houses that almost touched, the leafless branch of a tree, whose trunk was invisible.

On the mantelpiece, in a mahogany box, was a square clock with a large dial, huge figures and bulky hands. Beside it, under glass covers, were two candlesticks formed by three silver swans twisting their necks around a golden quiver. Near the fireplace an easy chair *à la Voltaire*[1], covered with one of the pieces of tapestry of checker-board pattern, which little girls and old women make, extended its empty arms. Two little Italian landscapes, a flower piece in water-colors after Bertin, with a date in red ink at the bottom, and a few miniatures hung on the walls.

Upon the mahogany commode of an Empire pattern, a statue of Time in black bronze, running with his scythe in

rest, served as a watch stand for a small watch with a monogram in diamonds upon blue enamel, surrounded with pearls. The floor was covered with a bright carpet with black and green stripes. The curtains at the bed and the window were of old-fashioned chintz with red figures upon a chocolate ground.

At the head of the bed, a portrait inclined over the invalid and seemed to gaze sternly at her. It represented a man with harsh features, whose face emerged from the high collar of a green satin coat, and a muslin cravat, with waving ends, tied loosely around the neck, in the style of the early years of the Revolution. The old woman in the bed resembled the portrait. She had the same bushy, commanding black eyebrows, the same aquiline nose, the same clearly marked lines of will, resolution and energy. The portrait seemed to cast a reflection upon her, as a father's face is reflected in his child's. But in hers the harshness of the features was softened by a gleam of rough kindness, by an indefinable flame of sturdy devotion and masculine charity.

The light in the room was the light of an evening in early spring, about five o'clock, a light as clear as crystal and as white as silver, the cold, chaste, soft light, which fades away in the flush of the sunset passing into twilight. The sky was filled with that light of a new life, adorably melancholy, like the still naked earth, and so replete with pathos that it moves happy souls to tears.

"Well, well! my silly Germinie, weeping?" said the old woman, a moment later, withdrawing her hands which were moist with her maid's kisses.

"Oh! my dear, kind mademoiselle, I would like to weep like this all the time! it's so good! it brings my poor mother back before my eyes—and everything!—if you only knew!"

"Go on, go on," said her mistress, closing her eyes to listen, "tell me about it[2q]."

"Oh! my poor mother!" The maid paused a moment. Then, with the flood of words that gushes forth with tears of joy, she continued, as if, in the emotion and outpouring of her happiness, her whole childhood flowed back into her heart! "Poor woman! I can see her now the last time she went out to take me to mass, one 21st of January, I remember. In those days they read from the king's Testament. Ah! she suffered enough on my account, did mamma! She was forty-two years old, when I was born—papa made her cry a good deal! There were three of us before and there wasn't any too much bread in the house. And then he was proud as anything. If we'd had only a handful of peas in the house he would never have gone to the curé for help. Ah! we didn't eat bacon every day at our house. Never mind; for all that mamma loved me a little more and she always found a little fat or cheese in some corner to put on my bread. I wasn't five when she died. That was a bad thing for us all. I had a tall brother, who was white as a sheet, with a yellow beard—and good! you have no idea. Everybody loved him. They gave him all sorts of names. Some called him Boda—why, I don't know. Others called him Jesus Christ. Ah! he was a worker, he was! It didn't make any difference to him that his health was good for nothing; at daybreak he was always at his loom—for we were weavers, you must know—and he never put his shuttle

down till night. And honest, too, if you knew! People came from all about to bring him their yarn, and without weighing it, too. He was a great friend of the schoolmaster, and he used to write the *mottoes* for the carnival. My father, he was a different sort: he'd work for a moment, or an hour, you know, and then he'd go off into the fields—and when he came home he'd beat us, and beat us hard. He was like a madman; they said it was because he was consumptive. It was lucky my brother was there: he used to prevent my second sister from pulling my hair and hurting me, because she was jealous. He always took me by the hand to go and see them play skittles. In fact, he supported the family all alone. For my first communion he had the bells rung! Ah! he did a heap of work so that I should be like the others, in a little white dress with flounces and a little bag in my hand, such as they used to carry in those days. I didn't have any cap: I remember making myself a pretty little wreath of ribbons and the white pith you pull off when you strip reeds; there was lots of it in the places where we used to put the hemp to soak. That was one of my great days—that and the drawing lots for the pigs at Christmas—and the days when I went to help them tie up the vines; that was in June, you know. We had a little vineyard near Saint Hilaire. There was one very hard year in those days—do you remember it, mademoiselle?—the long frost of 1828 that ruined everything. It extended as far as Dijon and farther, too—people had to make bread from bran. My brother nearly killed himself with work. Father, who was always out of doors tramping about the fields, sometimes brought home a few mushrooms. It was pretty bad, all the same; we were

hungry oftener than anything else. When I was out in the fields myself, I'd look around to see if anyone could see me, and then I'd crawl along softly on my knees, and when I was under a cow, I'd take off one of my sabots and begin to milk her. Bless me! I came near being caught at it! My oldest sister was out at service with the Mayor of Lenclos, and she sent home her wages—twenty-four francs—it was always as much as that. The second worked at dressmaking in bourgeois families; but they didn't pay the prices then that they do to-day; she worked from six in the morning till dark for eight sous. Out of that she wanted to put some by for a dress for the fête on Saint-Remi's day.—Ah! that's the way it is with us: there are many who live on two potatoes a day for six months so as to have a new dress for that day. Bad luck fell on us on all sides. My father died. We had to sell a small field, and a bit of a vineyard that yielded a cask of wine every year. The notaries don't work for nothing. When my brother was sick there was nothing to give him to drink but *lees* that we'd been putting water to for a year. And there wasn't any change of linen for him; all the sheets in the wardrobe, which had a golden cross on top of it in mother's time, had gone—and the cross too. More than that, before he was sick this time, my brother goes off to the fête at Clefmont. He hears someone say that my sister had gone wrong with the mayor she worked for; he falls on the men who said it, but he wasn't very strong. They were, though, and they threw him down, and when he was down, they kicked him with their wooden shoes, in the pit of the stomach. He was brought home to us for dead. The doctor put him on his feet again, though, and told us he was cured.

But he could just drag himself along. I could see that he was going when he kissed me. When he was dead, poor dear boy, Cadet Ballard had to use all his strength to take me away from the body. The whole village, mayor and all, went to his funeral. As my sister couldn't keep her place with the mayor on account of the things he said to her, and had gone to Paris to find a place, my other sister went after her. I was left all alone. One of my mother's cousins then took me with her to Damblin; but I was all upset there; I cried all night long, and whenever I could run away I always went back to our house. Just to see the old vine at our door, from the end of the street, did me good! it put strength into my legs. The good people who had bought the house would keep me till someone came for me! they were always sure to find me there. At last they wrote to my sister in Paris that, if she didn't send for me to come and live with her, I wasn't likely to live long. It's a fact that I was just like wax. They put me in charge of the driver of a small wagon that went from Langres to Paris every month, and that's how I came to Paris. I was fourteen years old, then. I remember that I went to bed all dressed all the way, because they made me sleep in the common room. When I arrived I was covered with lice."

---



## Table of Contents

The old woman said nothing: she was comparing her own life with her servant's.

---

Mademoiselle de Varandeuil was born in 1782. She first saw the light in a mansion on Rue Royale and Mesdames de France were her sponsors in baptism. Her father was a close friend of the Comte d'Artois[3], in whose household he held an important post. He joined in all his hunting-parties, and was one of the few familiar spirits, in whose presence, at the mass preceding the hunt, he who was one day to be King Charles X. used to hurry the officiating priest by saying in an undertone: "Psit! psit! curé, swallow your *Good Lord* quickly!"

Monsieur de Varandeuil had made one of those marriages which were customary enough in his day: he had espoused a sort of actress, a singer, who, although she had no great talent, had made a success at the *Concert Spirituel*[2], beside Madame Todi, Madame Ponteuil and Madame Saint-Huberty. The little girl born of this marriage in 1782 was sickly and delicate, ugly of feature, with a nose even then large enough to be absurd, her father's nose in a face as thin as a man's wrist. She had nothing of what her parents' vanity would have liked her to have. After making a fiasco on the piano at the age of five, at a concert given by her mother in her salon, she was relegated to the society of the servants. Except for a moment in the morning, she

Bourbon monarchy was reinstated in France after Napoleon's defeat.

**8** Louis-Philippe I was King of the French from 1830 to 1848 (the July Monarchy); he was deposed during the 1848 revolution.

**9** A 19th-century Parisian theatre known for staging historical dramas and popular entertainments of the period, frequented by working and middle-class audiences.

**10** A parish church in Paris (in the 9th arrondissement) dating from the 19th century and named after the Italian shrine of Loreto; it was a noted local place of worship and confession.

**11** A commercial name associated with colonial goods (such as coffee and chocolate) sold in France; here it denotes branded imported products displayed in a shop window.

**12** French for a woman who runs a dairy or cream shop; in 19th-century Paris a *crémière* sold milk, cream and simple comestibles from a small neighborhood shop.

**13** A hot beverage of coffee mixed with hot milk, commonly served at breakfast in France; the phrase literally means 'coffee with milk.'

**14** A historic thoroughfare leading up toward the Montmartre area in northern Paris; in 19th-century descriptions it denotes the busy street and ascent toward the open outskirts.

**15** Latin phrase meaning 'within the walls'; in this 19th-century urban context it refers to the built-up zone that lies inside the city limits as opposed to areas outside them.

**16** A 19th-century French term for a certain kind of working-class kept woman or demi-mondaine associated with Parisian neighborhoods (notably around Rue de la Lorette); it denotes women supported in part by lovers rather than by formal employment.

**17** Name of a popular working-class dance-hall/ballroom in Paris mentioned here; such local venues around the city barriers hosted dances, music and inexpensive refreshments in the 19th century.

**18** La Salpêtrière is a large Paris hospital and hospice (founded in the 17th century) that by the 19th century was widely used to house the poor, the chronically ill, and many women confined for mental or social reasons; it was also the site of notable medical and psychiatric studies in that period.

**19** In mid-19th-century Paris 'lorettes' referred to a class of urban women often identified as demi-mondaines or streetwise kept women/prostitutes, typically supported by lovers rather than by formal brothels.

**20** A 'paletot' is a 19th-century French term for a short, loose-fitting overcoat or jacket for men, common in contemporary dress vocabulary.

**21** The 'louis d'or' was a French gold coin first issued under Louis XIII and used in various forms through the 18th and into the 19th century; in literature of the period it often denotes tangible gold coins or substantial sums of money.

**22** An older term for concentrated sulfuric acid; in 19th-century France 'throwing vitriol' referred to violent acid attacks intended to disfigure a person, a crime noted in contemporary press and literature.

**23** A public pawnshop institution (literally 'mount of piety') in France where people could obtain small loans against pledged goods; municipal Mont-de-Piété establishments date back to the 17th century and were common in 19th-century Paris.

**24** Refers to the central food markets of Paris (Les Halles), the city's large wholesale market area where vendors and shoppers dealt in meat, fish and produce in the 19th century.

**25** Likely a reference to the famous French actress Rachel Félix (known as 'Rachel', 1821-1858), a celebrated tragedienne of mid-19th-century Paris whose performances were widely remembered by later writers.

**26** A French phrase meaning 'in the English style'; here it refers to a specific way of making a bed (an 'English' bed-making method) as opposed to other contemporary French household practices.

**27** French for 'tips' or gratuities; in the passage 'demanded pourboires of love' it denotes small payments or extra sums sought in exchange for favors, including sexual favors in some contexts.

**28** A type of oil lamp invented in the late 18th century (patented in the 1780s) featuring a cylindrical glass chimney and circular wick that produced a steadier, brighter flame than earlier lamps and was common in 19th-century lighting.

**29** Originally one of the toll-gates (barrières) on the Thiers fortifications of Paris, located near Montmartre; by the 19th century the name also denoted the surrounding outer-boulevard area used as a local landmark.

**30** Serialized literary installments printed in the lower section of 19th-century French newspapers; feuilletons were a major vehicle for novels and popular fiction published in successive episodes.

**31** A small alcoholic drink taken after coffee or a meal (a digestif), the term also came to mean a final tippie or a light after-dinner liquor in 19th-century France.

**32** A historical Paris street name used during the 19th century (notably under the Second Empire); many such streets were renamed after political changes, so the modern name or exact location may differ.

**33** An extract from the croton plant historically used as a strong purgative and topical irritant in 19th-century medicine; its use declined because of harsh effects and toxicity.

**34** The name of a large public hospital in Paris established in the mid-19th century; it served as an important municipal hospital and continues to be known by that name.

**35** An early photographic process, invented by Louis Daguerre and introduced in 1839, producing a single image on a polished metal plate and commonly used for portraits in the mid-19th century.

**36** A French term for a light, horse-drawn conveyance or open excursion carriage used for short trips in the 19th century; it was a common rural or leisure vehicle of the period.

**37** Lariboisière is a major Paris hospital (Hôpital Lariboisière) serving the 10th arrondissement; in the 19th century it was one of the city's principal public hospitals and