

The
Seventy-Three
Revolutionary Days
of the
Paris Commune

Catulle Mendès

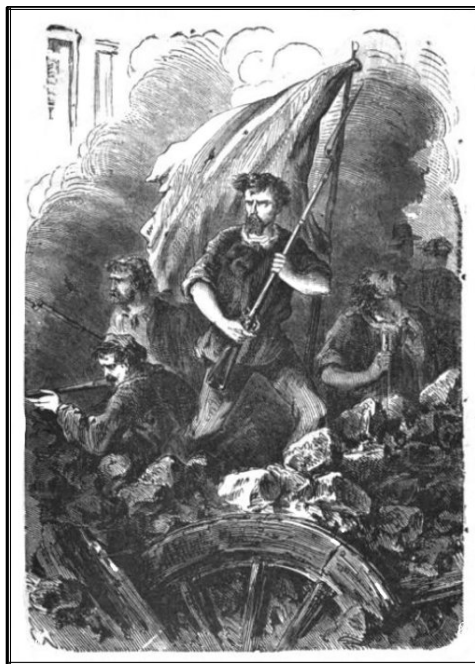
translated from the French

by

Janine C. Hartman

Catulle Mendès

The
Seventy Three Revolutionary Days of
the Commune
(from 18 March to 29 May 1871)



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1871.

by

Janine C. Hartman

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To The Reader

A Parisian remained in Paris despite the Commune, writing each evening what he had seen and heard during the *journée* [revolutionary day]. He watched events, questioned opinions, observed the town, then he would write. From a great enough number of notes, reports, and reflections, hastily done. I have joined them into this volume. It has been possible, after comparing and condensing notes, to make a true book; I would have preferred to simply publish a journal. From someone else, or me, there will be a big, definitive volume, [but] you will find here day to day miseries, images changing hourly, of Paris during the Commune, the thoughts of a sincere soul who did not take part.

30 May 1871 C.M.

The Seventy-Three Revolutionary Days of the Paris Commune

I. The morning of 18 March---Cannon--Movement in the Air-- Who is at fault--Impasse

What does one want today? Where are we going? What leads us? Where is the wind blowing? Is it a tempest to profoundly upend all; or a sudden squall, not lasting long? In a word, is a revolution enacted, or simply a disturbance?

Today, the 18th of March, at four o'clock in the morning, I was roused by the noise of a multitude. From my window, I saw, through fog, between the jammed houses, a squad of soldiers. They marched slowly, enveloped in gray capes, some even scraping the walls; a fine rain fell. Quickly descending, I questioned the recruits.

"Where are you going?" I demanded,

"We don't know," one responded.

"It seems we are going to Montmartre," said another.

In effect, they were going to Montmartre. The 88th Line unit occupied a small plateau in the neighboring streets at five in the morning. More than one of these poor line soldiers knew the streets from climbing Sundays with some apple-cheeked maid from a local bourgeois house. Having strolled the Place Saint-Pierre, stopping before a shooting booth, admiring the style or maladroitness of others. If he had two sous, he [would have] pitched a great ball into the monstrous painted mouth on the hanging [street carnival] board. The maid found the macaroons excellent. This morning there are no girls, no games, no macaroons on the Place Saint-Pierre. A guard stands, armed, in the mud. These poor devils of the line proceed stolidly.

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Ah! National Guard cannon, these damned cannon! They served very well against the Prussians, according to those who cannot know. Quiet during the siege. We haven't heard them speak since the day they were loaded and baptised. Nine, elegant, sent into the world to nourish themselves on powder. One could at least hope they would always retain their peaceful attitude, and being useless, never be dangerous!

Oh well; the evil is not Prussian, but from France. Cruel irony! These cannon were Paris itself, entire, made in bronze for self-defense. The pieces were made from seven, eight, sixty. American machine guns, with the savings of rich and poor homes, with the gold of the opulent and pennies from the starving; artists offered their talents, poets their verses, merchants their receipts, to pay for cannons, cannons again.

For these mouths of fire, mouths went without bread. Now these engines of war, that did not serve natural war, caused civil discord, they ruined Paris instead of saving it. These are the cannons that the 88th Line seek in Montmartre. They will take them or see them rendered up. To who? To the mad, women, children. As to leaders, no one knows. It is said that General Lecomte was taken prisoner to the Chateau-Rouge. At nine in the morning, Place Pigalle, the African chasseurs charged forcefully enough; the National Guard replied with fire in the public space.

A chasseur officer advanced, he fell, struck by a bullet. His soldiers fled, mostly to wine shops, to fraternise with patriots offering them drinks. I was told that the moment General Vinoy was taken, from horseback, near the Place Pigalle. The women surrounded him, yelling. A child threw a stone, another threw his helmet at his head. The general disappeared. National Guard soldiers marched, arms down, arms grounded to Montmartre from exterior streets. They started to return to Paris. I saw them pass by amicably. All in all, it seemed a little like those duels that end with breakfast.

What was coming of this? None knew what to say. Why? Clumsy.

Certainly the National Guard of Montmartre had no more right to guard the cannons than the full National Guard; they had no right to disturb the renewed tranquility, the commerce flourishing anew, the returning visitors, Paris [gleaming] bronze house ornaments, government, in all justice, could stop that state of things. But was force indispensable to bring this result? Can't one again, hope again, through inactivity, Montmartre's citizens would end by abandoning the cannon they guarded, tired, abandon their barricades, reset

the pavers into their squares and streets? M. Thiers and his shifted this, they prefer to act, and to rage. Verywell. But when one has taken such resolutions, be sure to accomplish them. In such grave circumstances, if success is not likely, one is wrong to try for it.

It is said that government supposes the line soldiers can move strongly after losing an officer, never dreaming of retreating, all the regulars' exploits, while hearing the bombast of the insurgents?

Could government for a single instant suppose this, but one cannot conceive the absolute hope that it would not end thus. How! After days of prideful soldiers in the streets with the National Guard; lodging among the Parisians, eating their soup, courting their women or their goods. Not in the habit of discipline after the defeat, disillusioned of the leaders' prestige, those who tried in vain to regroup after the disasters; importuned by uniforms not commanding [their] spirit, incapable of leading the populace, directionless, humiliated by defeat without battle. The defeated soldier wanted to sink himself within the citizen. Besides, generals, colonels don't know troop morale? Could one admit to having been grossly cheated, or want the government? There, possibly are the results of repression.

Perhaps there is a right to rage, but power could also ignore it. Now one hundred thousand guns, chassepots, snuffboxes (pistols), press around the wine and drinksellers. Will government accept the impasse, or make the head fall?

II. General Lecomte--Clement Thomas--Double Assassination

Three o'clock, a considerable crowd, soldiers, Guards, women, children-in the streets neighboring Elysee-Montmartre, no one could tell me the exact street name. Lively speeches, grand gestures. It was unquestionably General Lecomte, accused for the third time of ordering his troops to open fire on civilian militia.

"Good job"-said an old man, listening. A tempest of words and imprecations followed these words.

He had received word from his superiors to move the cannon and disperse the emplacements, replied the elder calmly; one must obey. The accusations redoubled. One woman, a camp cook, approached him amid the claque, looked and said "It's Clement Thomas!"

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It was General Clement Thomas, not in uniform. A hundred more voices, greatly offended, the group's anger. One could barely hear one man's cry:

"Ah! You defend the wretched Lecomte? All right, we're going to put you with him. That will be a pretty pair of..."

This plan was approved and Clement Thomas was conducted without further insult to Chateau-Rouge, where General Lecomte was detained that morning.

From that moment the summary I received differs little from the different versions circulating about town.

For four hours the two generals were imprisoned by some National Guardsmen. They tied General Lecomte's hands, not those of Clement Thomas. They were led to Montmartre's summit. They stopped at Number 6, Rue de Rosiers. It is a little house I have seen, with a garden in front, and a bourgeois air. What happened in that house perhaps can never be known. Was it there that the National Guard committee tribunal sat? The entire Committee could not be found, or did a few members represent it?

Some people supposed the house unoccupied, and the guards made entry with the prisoners, the mob belief proceeding to judgment, giving a legal appearance to the execution that they premeditated.

It must be added, from certain testimonies, that certain regular soldiers surrounded the generals. The trial--supposing there was a trial--did not last long.

At the end of the street, near a walled corner, they were led and condemned. They halted, a National Guard officer violently collared M. Clement Thomas, repeated his remarks, and then put a revolver to his throat.

"Admit it," he said, "You have betrayed the Republic."

M. Clement Thomas answered with no more than a shoulder movement. The officer stepped back.

The general stood alone at the wall. Who signaled? No one knows. Twenty shots rang out. M. Clement Thomas turned and fell, face forward.

"Your turn," an assistant said to General Lecomte.

At the same time, the rankers jammed the body of Clement Thomas into the wall and waited.

- "Fire" cried an officer.

An hour later I met an old woman at the Rue de Acacias, who offered for three francs a bullet recovered from the wall of the Rue de Rosiers.

III. This and That - M. Picard's Proclamation-Inactions: Motifs

Ten o'clock in the evening. Without a goal, I would go to the Hôtel de Ville. It is said that the National Guard secured the 18th of March a continuation of 31 October. But these hundred days have horribly fatigued me, I must force myself to write, and I want to see and to hear.

The outer streets show the repayment drunks have made to liquor. Fools regard drinking as having made a revolution. When the "coup" succeeds, there is always a crowd of worthless folk saying "I made the coup."

Do, laugh, sing. At every step [celebratory] shots and piled arms. At the corner of Elysee-Beaux-Arts, where I pass there are heaps of grumbling men, recumbent. Much later, I saw a whole battalion, armed, set to march. At the entrance of Rue Blanche and of Rue Fontaine, some pavers were set one upon the other apparently wanting to have the air of a barricade. Rue des Abbesses, I counted three cannon, one machine gun menaces the Rue des Martyrs. Rue des Acacias, a man has been arrested and conducted to a post by a National Guard patrol; I heard it said that he had stolen. Arrest one or two thieves, it's one of the event-traditions of Paris. Besides, the disorder is not excessive. If all the men were not in uniform, one could believe it was the evening of a popular fete; the winners amuse themselves.

Few soldiers tonight among the Federals; perhaps they have returned to the casernes, from habit, to eat soup.

On the grand boulevards, tumultuous groups comment on the day's events. At the corner of the Rue Drouot, an officer of the 117th battalion, read in a high voice, or recited (having the air of knowing it by heart!) the proclamation of M. Picard, put up this afternoon:

"The government calls you to defend our city, your halls, your families, your property.

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Certain devious men, putting themselves outside the laws, will not obey obscure leaders, directing against Paris the guns which have been trained upon Prussians.

Before they resist the National Guard and the army.

Do you want to suffer?

Under the eyes of the foreigner taking profit from your discords, do you want to abandon Paris to sedition?

If you do not extinguish this germ, it is the [fate of the] Republic, perhaps France!

It is in your hands.

The government wants you to leave off your arms.

Sustain the resolution to re-establish the rule of law, saving the Republic from anarchy; form up behind your leaders. It is the sole means of escaping ruin and foreign domination."

Minister of the Interior

Ernest Picard"

The group listened attentively, crying out two or three times:"To arms!"and fell away. For a moment I thought they were going to arm themselves. But they simply joined another group formed on another path. Such inaction among the friends of order, one must note, is general today. Paris is divided this morning between two halves: the one acts and the other allows it.

Truthfully, no matter what one would have wanted it is unlikely that the peaceable Parisian population could have resisted the uprising. "Group under your leaders" counseled the proclamation. Good! Easy enough to say, less easy to do. In order to form behind one's leaders, one must know where they are. Where were they today? The schism produced today in the National Guard by the coup de état of the Central Committee first had the consequence of disorganizing command. How to distinguish, where to look, where to find the captains, the commandants, the colonels, and those remaining faithful to the cause of order? On has heard, true, the general beat to quarters (caqlled up men) in Paris quarters. But which general summoned, and who heard? The regular Government, or the Central Committee? More than one bourgeois, keen

to do his duty--to Paris, not dispirited--arming, buckling his belt--and cannot decide whether to obey the trumpet or the drum, from fear in the probable confusion that he might join the forces of the uprising instead of the defenders of the law. It is natural to remain, when one does not know where to go. Besides, the army lacks mora. Bad examples are contagious. Is it fair to demand of fathers of families, bankers, of bourgeois, efforts from sometime soldiers from which true soldiers recoil? Add to these considerations that the Government fled. Perhaps some ministers remain in Paris, but, some hours after, the better part of our governors are rejoining the Assembly at Versailles. I don't blame their precipitous departure, perhaps it was indispensable, but what do you want? It goes ill for the absent to defend the cause.

Meanwhile, in the Madeleine to the Gymnase, the cafes burst with light women and fribbles (idle men). The exterior boulevards are empty, the great boulevards go gray. Such are the different qualities of drink. Good God, what people we are!

IV. White Posters

Afternoon today. I am avid to know what happened last night, Parisian attitude after the initial surprise. The night perhaps brought counsel. The Government and Central Committee have perhaps made up their differences: it could all be over.

In the morning streets all was peaceful. The boulevards are open as usual. Food hawkers and vendors come and go. I encountered a brave man whom I knew from nights on guard, from when I went to the ramparts.

-Eh-bien! he demanded,"What news?

-News? I don't know. Ah, yes it appears that something happened here at Montmartre.

I responded that [it was] the same in town, in the street of Grange-Bateliere. In Paris there was prodigious indifference. I looked a little and found in a remote quarter a man who believed that Napoleon III still governed and had not heard of the Prussian war as other than an improbable eventuality.

In the boulevards, small agitations. Newsboys sell journals. I do not love being informed by public press. Whether impartial or sincere in their reporting

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they cannot present the facts without their own impression. It is almost impossible to evaluate the importance of a fact from foreign impressions.

I walk to Rue Drouot, seeking wall posters. What posters! White, I want to claim! This one indicates that Paris has government, the white was the official color, same under the red Republic.

I took a pencil and copied the proclamations of our new masters. I believe I acted prudently. Proclamations and men are quickly forgotten! Where are the previous postings?

RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

LIBERTÉ, ÉGALITÉ, FRATERNITÉ

To the People,

Citizens

"The people of Paris have thrown off the yoke that was being imposed."

This yoke, gentlemen of the Committee, pardon, citizens? I assure you that I, part of the people, I know of no means in the world to begin to impose a yoke. The action, if I remember, was over some cannon, and had not the least yoke in all of that affair. As for that expression: "the people of Paris" is singularly exaggerated. Certainly the inhabitants of Montmartre and their brothers of ex-center quarters form part of the people, but not all, and I examine the sane part not less deserving of interest. (I have always preferred the charcoal burner of Clignancourt way to a fribble of the Rue Taitbout), but they also are not the whole people. Thus, our phrase means no great thing; on the other, an unfashionable metaphor, the rhetoric of the haymow. I believe it better completely simply to say:

"Citizens, the inhabitants of Montmartre and Belleville have guarded the cannon from those who wanted to take them."

But that does not have the air of a proclamation. Extraordinary thing! Having overset the entire country, the official style remains unchanged. One can triumph over governments, not the commons.

Continuing to read:

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"Calm, impassable by force, without fear and provocation, the mad want to touch the Republic."

The Republic? Again an inapt expression, it is cannons that they want to touch.

"This time, our brothers of the army..."

Ah! Your friends of the army! They are your brothers because they fired into the air. In families, there is no parent who would not have done the same.

"This time our brothers of the army do not want to raise a hand to the holy ark of our liberties."

"Go, good! cannon are "the holy ark"now! A biblical metaphor for men who don't love priestlings.

"Thanks to all that Paris and France make the basis of a Republic acclaimed with all consequences, the sole government that always the point of invasion and civil wars."

"The siege of Paris is lifted."

"The people of Paris is convoked in its sections for communal elections. The National Guard assures the security of the citizens."

"Hôtel de Ville (City Hall) of Paris, 19 March 1871.

"The Central Committee of the National Guard"

"Assy, Billigray, Ferrat. Labitte,Ed. Moreau,Ch.
Dupont.Varlin,Boursier,Mortier,Gouhier,Lavallette, Fr.
Jourde,Rousseau,Ch. Lullier,Blanchet,G. Grillard.Barroud, H.
Geresme.Fabre.Pougeret"

One reproach one cannot level at the new Parisian uprising; that of having at its head men of demonstrated capacity. Who would dare affirm, that each of the personages named has not the genius to save two or three nations,[it] startles me considerably. It is said in a drama of Hugo's that a child with unknown parents, is supposed genteel; an unknown can, by the same, pass for a man of genius.

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But the walls of the Rue Drouot proclamations again:

RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

LIBERTÉ, ÉGALITÉ, FRATERNITÉ

To the National Guard of Paris.

"CITIZENS,

You are charged to organise the defense of Paris and of our rights."

"Ah! for that, a thousand times no! I have accorded--because you must insist--that the cannon were a holy ark, but under another pretext, I cannot avow being charged with organising anything of matter! I do not know and never heard anyone speak of you, there is no person in the world one cannot ignore in the world other than Ferrat and Labitte, if it is not Grillard and Pougeret (when I was in the National Guard I knew no other catching a cold on the ramparts than another, for the king of Prussia), I don't know what you want nor where you conduct those who follow and I affirm that in Paris there are certainly a thousand men, who also, perfectly caught colds and at the same hour, and absolutely are in the same case as your servant."

"We are conscious of having taken up this mission."

Good that you have taken this pain, but devil if I recall you ever having had another mission of any sort!

"Aided by your courage and your cold-blood!..."

Ah, monsieurs, you flatter me!

"We have driven this government that you would betray..."

"At this moment, your mandate has expired"

The mandate you have been given, is eternal?

"And we [whom] you call, do not pretend to take the place of those the popular sentiment overthrew."

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"Prepare for communal elections and give us for recompense only what we have ever hoped; seeing you establish the true Republique.

"Now, in the name of the people, Hôtel de Ville.

"Hôtel de Ville, Paris, 19 March 1871

"The Central Committee of the National Guard,

"Assy, Billigray, etc...etc...etc..."

On the edge of the poster, and on another not signed by citizens Assy, Billioray and others, [were] announced communal elections would take place next Wednesday March 22: That is, within three days.

There is the result of that passing here, and the revolution of the 18 March could be recounted in these words:

There were some cannons in Montmartre; the Government wanted to take them back but could not, thanks to the cowardly fraternity of line soldiers. A secret society, composed of delegates from certain regiments, profited from the occasion to haughtily affirm that they represented the entire population, and ordered, whether they desired it or not--the Commune of Paris.

Where is Paris going, between dictators from I know not where, and the government refugeed to Versailles?

V. Paris Hesitates-Reasons for Hesitation

Paris did nothing. It regarded events as one would look at a waterfall. Whence this indifference? Surprise, the disappearance of capable leaders, here excuse inaction. But one night has passed. Each man interrogated his conscience and got a response. One had the time to think, to consider, to act. Why do anything? Why not do nothing at all? Generals Clement Thomas and Lecomte have been assassinated, that is incontestable and odious. Can all of Paris take responsibility with the criminals? Regular government is hunted; did Paris consent to its expulsion? Men without mandate, or less than sufficient mandate, have usurped power. Does Paris abandon itself to the point of not challenging that usurpation? Certainly not; it execrates the crime, it does not approve of the expulsion of the government of the Republic; and does not know

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what gives the members of the Central Committee the right to impose their wills. Why does she remain immobile and patient? Does she fear to apply the proverb: By what word did I consent? As for me, instead of writing fleeting impressions, why do I not take up a gun to punish the criminals and to resist despotism? Ah! That is the situation, we all feel it is exceedingly complex. The government retired to Versailles had its faults, and it is difficult to take their side without later thought. The weakness, clumsiness during the siege by the better part of those which composed it, in the opinion of legitimate voices of the capitol, [was] ill disposed to defend a state of things which was impossible for us to approve without reservations. In sum, these unknown revolutionaries made a coup, culpable, sincerely, revindicating for Paris those rights that Paris entirely claims.

It is impossible for us to know the municipal franchises that are desirable and necessary. Then there [it was], proven by excesses committed and to be committed again by the dictators of March 18th, revolted by the single idea of blood flowed, and that which would flow again,--there we would cry off without taking part. The ancient torts of the legitimate government in Versailles chilled our zeal, and some just ideas formulated by the illegitimate government of the Hôtel de Ville would diminish our horror at their crimes and our apprehension of its forfeits.

Until-why not dare say it?-Paris, impressionable, nervous, romantic, admires all those audacious, and [has] moderate sympathy for prudence. One can laugh, as I would for a half an hour, at the emphatic proclamations of the Central Committee, but this did not begin to show if this power was real, and by what lame fashion it would be revealed, not unmarked by a certain character of grandeur. One can remark with more malignity than patriotism, this evening, on the exterior boulevards to the edges of the

Hôtel de Ville,[they] had drunk more than was reasonable in honor of the Republic and of the Commune; not that does not begin to prove the next surprise of the street, admiration for some quarters almost by invisible signal, and, definitively, taken to kill in defense...why? For cannon, but cannon in their eyes, were the palpable symbol of their rights and liberties. During this time, the legitimate national Assembly at Versailles replied. [But] Paris would not follow those who had fled.

VI. On the Montmartre Butte

The Montmartre butte is celebrating. The timing is admirable: one can go see the cannon and look over the barricades. Men, women, children clamber the streets up to the peak; everyone appears very joyous...for what? No one knows. To Paris, the sun is irresistible; when it rains, the town can go to the devil. Close your shops, put on your best clothes, go eat in a tavern. What causes that? Born enemies of disorder, the small merchants, the petty bourgeois. Odd contradiction! But what do you want, a fine deed! One doesn't work because of insurrection; it was Sunday. Today is Monday to make an uprising.

VII. A Possible Issue--Mayors -and Paris-Approve

Again, in the milieu of these troubles, where everyone goes looking without knowing where, between the Central Committee that made the proclamations and the government at Versailles which has put out certain reasonable words.

These men, presently, so often certain of obedience and approval from Paris --by honest and intelligent Paris, Paris who will favor which of the two parties that proves just with her.

The deputies and mayors of Paris put up the following poster:

RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

LIBERTÉ, ÉGALITÉ, FRATERNITÉ

"CITIZENS,

Pierced by the absolute necessity of saving Paris and the Republic from collision, and convinced that the best means of this supreme end and giving satisfaction and legitimate voice to the people, we resolve to demand today that the National Assembly adopt two measures, which, we hope, if adopted, will restore calmness of spirit.

"These two measures are, election of all National Guard leaders and establishment of a municipal council chosen by all citizens.

We want to reclaim the public good, under all circumstances, and the present situation makes this more indispensable than ever, order in liberty and by liberty!

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"The representatives of the Seine"

"Louis Blanc, V. Schoelcher, Edmond Adam, Floquet, Martin Bernard, Langlois, Édouard Lockroy, Farcy, Brisson, Greppo, Millière.

Mayors in and adjoining Paris:

1st Arrondissement: Ad. ADAM, MELINE, adjoints.-

2nd Arrondissement: TIRARD, mayor, representative of the Seine; Ad. BRELAY, CHÉRON, LOUISEAU-PINSON, adjoints-

3rd Arrondissement :Bonvalet, mayor; Ch. MURAT, adjoints

4th Arrondissement: VAUTRIN, mayor; LOISEAU, CALLON, adjoints.

5th Arrondissement: JOURDAN, adjoint.

6th Arrondissement: Hérisson, mayor: A. LEROY adjoint

7th Arrondissement : ARNAULD (de l'Ariège), mayor, representative of the Seine

8th Arrondissement : CARNOT, mayor, representative of the Seine

9th Arrondissement : DESMARET, mayor

10th Arrondissement : DUBAIL, mayor: A. MURAT, DEGOUVES-DENUNQUES, adjoints

11th Arrondissement : MOTU, mayor, representative of the Seine : BLANCHON, POIRIER, TOLAIN, representative of the Seine

12 Arrondissement : DENIZOT, DUMAS, TURILLON, adjoints

13th Arrondissement : Léo Meillet, COMBES, adjoints

14th Arrondissement : HÉLIGON, adjoint

15th Arrondissement : JOBBE-DUVAL, adjoint

16th Arrondissement : HENRY MARTIN, mayor and representative of the Seine

17th Arrondissement : FRANÇOIS FAVRE, mayor; MALOU, VILLENEUVE, CACHEUX, adjoints

18th Arrondissement : CLÉMENCEAU, mayor and representative of the people; J-B. LAFONT, DEREURE, JACLARD, adjoints.

Two hours after the proclamation was posted, I don't believe I met a single person who agreed with the whole of it. The deputies of the Seine and the mayors of Paris, after the flight of the Government to Versailles, were naturally, our legitimate leaders. We chose them, they direct us. It is their part to reconcile the Assembly with the City: it appears that has taken the better means to effect that conciliation, detaching from the exaggerations of the uprising all that is practical and legitimate. They are to be commended for that truly patriotic tentative move! And they will hasten to obtain from the Assembly the knowledge of our rights. In acceding to the demands of our deputies and of our mayors: the Government will not be complicit with insurrection; on the contrary, it will have triumphed radically, clearing away all existing pretext and distancing itself, in definitive fashion [from], the justice of some of the program closing all eyes to the illegal and violent means wherein the program was formulated.

If the Assembly consents, 18 March will be remembered, culpably doubtless, a bloody day, and a great ill leading to a great good.

When that occurs, we resolve--we, that is to say those who, without having followed the Government to Versailles and not having taken an active part in the insurrection, desire equally the re-establishment of legitimate power and the development of municipal liberty--we are resolved to follow where our deputies and mayors lead. They represent the only legal authority that equitably appreciates the difficulties of the situation, and if the hope of conciliation is lost, they tell us to take up arms, we will.

VIII. Paris hopes-Meeting of the Friends of Order--First Demonstration

This evening, 21st of March, Paris has a certain air of contentment; it hopes, it hopes in its deputies and in its mayors, it hopes also in its National Assembly. There is talk of the demonstration of the Friends of Order, approving talk. A foreigner, a Russian, M.A.J. has lived in Paris ten years and is consequently a Parisian, offered the following lesson when I noted the last:

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"Today, at one thirty, I took part in a group that formed at the Place de Nouvel-Opera. We were twenty or so, we had a flag upon which was written the words "Union of the Friends of Order" This flag was carried by a line soldier, employed, it is said, at the Siraudin house. We mounted the boulevards to the Rue Richelieu; windows above us opened: someone cried: "Long live order! Long live the National Assembly! Down with the Commune!" A very little bit after we started, our thread became three hundred, then five hundred, almost a thousand. Our troop followed Rue Richelieu, ever growing. At the Place de la Bourse, a National Guard captain, at the head of his company, wanted to stop us. We pass out; the company presents arms to our flag and the drums beat down the street. We processed, growing more and more numerous; the streets neighboring the Bourse, the boulevards, ring with the most enthusiasm. Before the Rue Drouot we halted; the mayor's office of the IXth Arrondissement was occupied by a battalion affiliated with the Committee, the 229th, I believe. A collision was possible, we could engage them in the street resolved to do our duty, which was to protest against the reversal of order and established law, but we met with no resistance. The guards at the door presented arms and we were allowed to go on our way, one remarking that our flag, reading, as I said "Meeting of Friends of Order" could make us mistaken for reactionaries, and that we should add the words : "Long Live the Republic!" The leaders at the head of the file called a halt; some went into a cafe, borrowed chalk, and wrote on the flag "Long Live the Republic!" Then, we return to the march, following the strongest voices; more and more numerous, acclaiming louder. Fifteen minutes later we arrived at the Rue de la Paix, then the Place Vendôme, where joined, the Committee battalions, and where during the siege, it is said, the major staging area of the Guard. Like the Rue Drouot mayoralty, the drums beat, arms were presented: even more, an officer came to conduct the leaders of the demonstration to a Central Committee delegate. That was me, at that moment, I took the flag. We advanced in silence. When our band arrived under the balcony, surrounded by National Guard, a calm young general appeared, out of uniform but with a red [command] sash and surrounded by other superior officers; he took the floor and said: "Citizens! In the name of the Central Committee..." He was interrupted by innumerable whistles and cries of "Long live order! Long live the National Assembly! Long live the Republic! With hearty cries, not the least menace or violence we toured the column, regained the boulevard and headed to the Place de la Concorde. There we, neared Admiral Saisset's house, on Rue Paquet, the Champs-Élysée quarter. A grave grey-haired figure observed that Saisset was at Versailles.

--But, joining you from admirals..."

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He named himself, Admiral De Chaille. At that moment he went to the head of the demonstration crossing the Place de la Concorde bridge to the Faubourg Saint-Germain.

"Always hailed, ever growing, we passed successively through the principal streets of the quarter. Each time we passed a post the guards saluted."

"Place Saint-Sulpice, a battalion formed to aid us to pass."

"Down we went past the Boulevards Saint Michael and Strasbourg. There another numerous group joined up carrying a tricolor flag on which one read "Long live the National Assembly!"The two flags fluttered one before the other in the forefront of the reinforced demonstration."

"Coming down the Boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle, a man dressed in a riding coat, wearing a grey felt hat, flung himself on my standard "Friends of Order."A black man, dressed in a National Guard uniform marching beside me, repulsed hiM. Then Grey Felt Hat turned on the other standard bearer and put his knee into the staff."

"Tumult ensued. The man was seized, sacked, and sorted off. I fear that he hadn't been treated forcefully enough. We continued down the boulevards."

"The enthusiasm of the marchers was really excessive, without exaggeration, there were three or four thousand people when the column returned to the Place de Nouvel-Opera and separated."

"A Zouave (African uniformed soldier) climbed a tree in front of the Grand-Hôtel and attached our flag to the tallest branch."

"It was agreed to unite the following morning, in uniform, but without arms, at the same place."

This story differs little from those published in the journals; but I have excellent reasons for considering it absolutely true.

What produced this demonstration? The people who desire:"order by liberty and in liberty,"and succeeding in gathering a large enough group to call reason without force, [were these] the numerous and powerful partisans of the future Commune? Whatever happened, the demonstration proved that Paris would not see itself disposed, without its own consent. The National Assembly, from this, for the deputies, saw that a pacification would be useless. Among other groups, I know not, [resulted] what hopes of concord and calm.

IX. Gunfire-What I Saw-What I Heard- The First shot?-The Victims

Gunfire! At whom? At the Prussians? No, the French, at passersby, at people who cried:"Long live the Republic and order!"men wounded or fallen dead, women fled, shops shut at the first fusillade, Paris shut down, I see and hear! What has done it this time? Let us bolt down the streets of bleeding barricades noting sinister powder stains on hands, each woman will cry, this evening when a husband returns late and mothers fear. France, huh! France, dolorous mother always succumbing, killed by her own children.

I leave down the passage Choiseul. With a friend, to the Tuileries [palace], occupied by a Central Committeebattalion. At the corner of Saint-Roch and Neuve-des-Petit-Champs, we saw a compact noisy group.

My friend asked--"Where are you going?"

--"I believe, he told me, there is a demonstration without arms returning to Place Vendôme. AT the same time, another passed, crying "Long live order!"

As we spoke, we reached the Rue de la Paix. A terrible clatter. It was a fusillade! White smoke rose the length of the walls, on all sides, cress, dismay, flight, a hundred paces in front of me I see a woman fall. Is she wounded, or dead? What is this massacre? What is happening, in Paris, in daylight, under this great joyous sun? It takes time to gain a cross street, and following the crowd, the closed shops, the sinister news upsets all parts of Paris

Reports with extraordinary speed [come in], but very differently; heard, heeded, further on, exaggerated.

"There were a hundred victims,"said one. "There was no more ammunition in the guns"said another. Opinions varied singularly as to the cause. Perhaps no one would know what happened for certain at the Place Vendôme and in the Rue de la Paix. I was near and far from the theater of action: near enough that I could have been killed: far enough that I had not seen the powder smoke, or the panicked flight..

For certain, there was a demonstration here, uniting a very large number of citizens under their flag, today, who wanted to renew tentative peace. Three or four thousand people marched two hours in the afternoon in the Rue de la Paix yelling:"Order! Order! Long live order!"The Central Committee had doubtless given serious order to the primary sentries to present arms to the demonstration as previously, and then refusing to allow them to continue their

route. What happened then? Two mobs were there, one under arms, one another army, both supremely excited, the one wanting to go forward, the other determined to block the road. A pistol shot rang out. That was the signal. The chassapots [were] aimed. The armed mob fired upon the unarmed, which dispersed in a desperate flight, leaving dead and wounded on the road.

But, who fired the pistol? "One of the citizens in the demonstration", and another, one, leveled guns at the sentinels,"affirmed the partisans of the Central Committee, and produced, among other witness, a foreign general, from a window on the Rue de la Paix,[who] had assisted the episode. His assertion is little sustained. What serious mind admits that a peaceful crowd commits a stark act of aggression? What man had been stupid enough to expose a number of unarmed people, and himself, for criminally useless defiance and inevitable reprisal? The story is that the pistol was fired at the Place Vendôme, at the foot of the column, by an officer of the Federal Guard, giving the signal, under orders, to open fire on citizens, his story, is so improbable it appears an excess of chilly barbarity, that is more likely.

And now, women cry for their husbands, their sons, dead, wounded. How many victims? One does not know the exact number. A National Guard lieutenant, M. Barle, received a bullet in the stomach. M. Gaston Jollivet, who in other times did the crime, grave to our eyes, of publishing a comic ode where he railed at my illustrious and beloved master Victor-Hugo, but he wasn't among the number reclaiming order and sustaining peace, but had, it is said, his left arm broken. M. Otto Hottinger, one of the regents of the Bank of France, fell, struck by two balls, at the very moment where he was aiding the wounded.

One of my friends confirms, a half an hour after the fusillade, he sustained fire from two National Guardsmen in ambush, when he emerged from a carriage bay.

At the corner of the Rue de la Paix and of the Rue Neuve-des-Petits-Champs, bearing again, a four o'clock, an old man, his blouse fallen across the corpse of a cantinière (female army vendor), and a line soldier, in his dead, crisped hand, the stub of a tricolor flag.

That soldier, would be spoken of by my friend M.A.J, in his summary of the first demonstration, and he was said to be an employee of the Maison Siraudin?

Again, other victims! M. de la Pene, director of the Paris Journal, dangerously wounded by a ball that crossed his thigh: M. Portet, lieutenant of the Franchetti scouts very gravely wounded in neck and right foot; M. Bernard, a banker, who is dead, M. Giraud, an exchange agent, also dead. Every minute, new names join the funeral list.

Where do we lead a revolution, that begins by the murder of two generals and continues by assassinating passers-by?

X. A Wedding

In the midst of these horrors, I saw a sad, also laughable thing. Imagine an idyll that will be an elegy. Three carriages descended the street of the Rue de Notre-Dame-de-Lorette; it was a wedding. In the first carriage, the bride, pretty enough and young, crying. The husband, in the second vehicle, looked discontented. The horses slowly came down the defile and I asked the best man. Something disagreeable had happened. They had gone to the mayor's office, but there was no mayor, or adjoints, only a National Guard post. The sergeant offered to bring the municipal magistrate, the parents would not consent to that arrangement; the fiances returned as before. Unfortunate.

--Bah! said a gossip passing by, they can marry later. There is always time to put the noose round the neck.

Doubtless, they would marry later; but they had wanted to be married today, these children. They don't notice revolutions. What would it have mattered to the Commune if these lovers had been spouses today? Ah! That uprising, haste to cadavers and widows; I want to champion pretty eyes crying beneath a crown of orange blossoms.

XI. Organizing Resistance-The Resistance--An Alarm

The Second Arrondissement mayoral office seemed destined to become the center of resistance to the Central Committee. The Federals could not, and dare'd not occupy it. [At the] Place de la Bourse, Rue du Quatre-Septembre, Place des Victoires, assembled the National Guards of the quarter, friends of order. Not very numerous that morning, they had been reinforced 23 March, by battalions coming from all points of Paris. They said that they would obey

Admiral Saisset, who had been elevated to the supreme command of the National Guard of the Seine. They believed there were two machine guns in the Bourse palace, and Court of Messages. The Rue de la Paix massacre had been decided the more fearful. It proved, really, definitively, a desire by un-representative tyrants, part of the Parisian population wanted to dominate the entire city, by any means. The defense preparations at the Hôtel de Ville, where the Committee members sat, formidably defended, and the Place Vendôme, was overrun with insurgents. Is the civil war, the dreadful civil war beginning? A marching company is joining the battalions of order. The students of the École Polytechnique want to come, and do come to the mayor's office and the Grand-Hôtel, where, it is said, they find Admiral Saisset and his executive officer. A tripe row of National Guard, at the edge of the boulevard, defend the entrance of the Rue Vivienne with [parked] cabs and all persons foreign to the quarter. Meanwhile, for many, curiosity triumphs. At the Place de la Bourse, a crowd strolls, talking, gesturing past lines of arms where bayonets gleam in the sun. I remark the singularly distended pockets of the National Guard; a considerable amount of cartridges have been distributed.

The orders are precise; No one is to leave his post. Some men have been there, without sleep, for twenty four hours. The same for dining, they will not leave the camp of the Friends of Order. They eat where they can. Those without money receive food, or eat on the mayor's office's account at a restaurant in the Rue de Filles-Saint-Thomas. Soup, beef, a plate of food, vegetables, a bottle of wine. "When the Federals' smoke [deduce] that not only one we not getting paid but are dining like princes," one said, "they'll tack to us wholesale."

It is definitely decided to obey mayors and the deputies of Paris. Striking that one does not see Admiral Saisset yet. Until he accepts command, he will not show himself. Some alarmists insinuate that he is hesitating to organise resistance. But I have not heard this. In sum, great resolution and a certain confidence. "We are numerous, have our rights, we will triumph."

Four o'clock, very urgent alarm. The cry: "To Arms! Everyone, the drum beats, the trumpet sounds, companies form up. One hears the cric-crac of barrels charged, then the ball where the hammer will descend. The moment of combat has arrived. "We are more than ten thousand, well-armed, determined men." No one will draw back. The mobiler units company backs the line of National Guard defending the entry to the Rue Vivienne.

Who wants to pass? The insurgents seem to hesitate before the Rue Vivienne when directed to halt. In the blink of an eye, formerly clogged with simpletons, the way is empty, not a single cafe open.

At that moment a gun misfired--that happened two of three times that morning; at the corner of Rue Saint-Marc; a woman opening a window was nearly killed by someone maladroit;--An inopportune cry; a gesture of menace [would] suffice for battle to burst out. People neither stirred nor spoke; it was a living silence; I sensed the rustling possibility of irreparable disaster. A moment, I affirm, terrible and solemn.

But the Belleville battalion continued its way, presenting arms as from the first; we rendered them the same honors. They passed, the danger with them, a sigh of relief from every chest; two seconds later, the crowd was in the streets.

XII. Night-Military Placements-The Wait

Two o'clock in the morning. The long boring hours, I write these lines lit only by faint reflection through the door in front of the Catelain restaurant.

When night fell, I took precautions. Who commanded us? No one exactly knew, but it seems that there was a serious plan prudently followed. Is Admiral Saisset our head? I hope so, Parisians, so often cheated by their leaders, consequently have an irresistible need to repose confidence in the M. This evening, believe in the admiral. From time to time, battalion chiefs mass in the mayor's office and return with specific orders. We are a real army, centered at the Bourse and the roads extending into surrounding streets. The National Guard lines bar all; sixty paces in front of them, sentries pace ready to reply at the first alarm and give the alarm. Behind the lines defending entry, there is no one: silence, solitude. But the houses are occupied; first floor windows half-open. Each company, divided into four squads commanded by sergeants, secures a house. At the first sign the doors will close and from the windows they will fire upon assailants. A battalion head told me: "In the possibility of attack, take cover. At the enemies' approach, guards at the street edge will return fire and find cover in the houses. At the windows, fire without let, forcing the insurgents to attack the doors of the houses facing you. Then, the greater part of our forces will menace them coming to your aid, preceded by machine guns sweeping the street." We listened calmly enough, resolved to obey, but beseeching God,--one remembers Heaven in these terrible hours---to

not have to use our detested arms. It is a fine night. Some speak quietly at the door, others sleep in the openings, on the floors, stair landings. On upper levels some householders are still curious, one sees lights behind white curtains; other houses are shadowed. In the street, the sound of a cart--perhaps a canon is being trained--not far from us the sound a gun on the wall falling upon the stones. Hour to hour, regular pacing; our guard company, patrolling, when they return, I ask.

--No news.

-Nothing

-Where have you been?

-- To the Rue de la Paix,

---Do you believe they will attack?

And the patrols pass, idlers continue talking, sleep return to sleep. Always waiting. Pray Heaven that this is in vain!

XIII. Morning-A Prudent Person-Escape plan-A Brave Poltroon

Never have I seen the day begin with more joy. Everyone, in the wake of a great ill luck, had passed a lugubrious night, when fear felt eternal, and a desire for clarity brought despair. But dawn felt the sweeter for having survived that horrible night. Had all danger of collision faded with the shades? Not sure. It could be that the Federals had waited to attack at dawn, the hour of greatest fatigue and almost invincible somnolence consequently made us less active. Still, the day reassured us; the crime of civil war would not dare manifest in plain view. We were afraid in the night; the night was past; we felt tired, but fortunate.

Not all the world shared our confidence. I remember an incident which made me laugh. A bit before dawn, a companion sleeping beside me, rose. He walked a hundred steps, like one chilled by morning. For distraction, I watched; he marched along the walk of the houses in back near the passage to the Panoramas [theater] . From time to time glancing in open doors. I saw him enter one house and return discontented; he repeated this three or four times. Again, after some seconds in the restaurant corridor, he repaired to the street washing his hands with a satisfied air and came my way.

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--"Monsieur ",he told me in a low voice, to not be overheard by our neighbors,"do you approve of a battle plan that will consist, in case of attack, of opening up windows upon our assailants?"

--"It is street warfare", I respond, hoping we don't have to do it.

--"Yes, we hope"he sighed."I would prefer another way."

--"And what would that be?"

--"Damn, you understand, when we're shut up in the houses the insurgents will try to break in."

---"Probably"

--"And when they break through?"

--"Reinforcements should arrive from the Place de la Bourse before they can force the doors."

--"Doubtless, doubtless, but sometimes reinforcements come too late, and if the Federals have time they will shoot us like dogs in dead end rooms."

--"That will be very disagreeable. But what do you want? Take heart; when they hit, they risk being killed."

----"You think, monsieur, that it would be the act of a poltroon to find a point of exit, in case the insurgents breach the houses?"

--"Not a poltroon,but a very prudent man."

--"oh good! monsieur, I am prudent!" my comrade cried triumphantly; "and I believe that I have found..."

--"A point of exit?"

--"Just so. You see the corridor facing us? At the back, there is a door leading--guess where?"

--"Into the Panorama [theatre] passage, I think."

--"Yes, monsieur, in the passage. You get the rest?"

--"Basicly."

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--"I will explain. The insurgents arrive; we pelt down the corridor, shut the street door, gain our post at the first floor windows, where, by my faith, we will fire on the Federals until the last cartridge. But during that time, those devils, begin to batter down the door. It is not a very strong door there are more of them than there are of us, they want in, they come in. Then, what do we do?"

-Place ourselves at the top of the stairs, and if we have no more cartridges, receive them with bayonets."

-Ah! You believe we could do that?"

-We must."

-Oh! I believe, he continued a little shamefully, that we could, by the passage door..."

-Flee?"

--Oh no, put ourselves in safety."

-If it comes to that, you act on your fantasy. But permit me to tell you that your plan is useless; the passage is occupied by a hundred of ours, and all the ways out are closed."

-Not all."

-Not all"

-No, and it is that which I want to tell you. You're a journalist, right?"

-Oh! A bit"

-But you are?"

-True."

--"And you know actors, you visit them sometimes in their dressing rooms, when you go to the comedy?"

I view my brave comrade with genuine stupefaction.

-You know theater interiors, passages, trap doors?"

-Assuming I know all this, in what science could this be useful to you?"

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- "You will save me, monsieur! We'll cross the passage, the gallery and find the artists' entrance to the Varieties theater; the concierge knows you, we enter, you guide me to the stairs, through the passages, to stage machinery, a trunk, it does not matter, we hide within, and when it's all over..."

-- "We leave by the front door on the boulevard and go tranquilly to breakfast where, the stairs of the house we were detailed to defend as massed with the bodies of our comrades!"

- The poor man looked at me in an instant of consternation, and a moment later I did not see him. I understand that I had made him feel pain. I had perhaps made him feel those for making me culpable in his project. I knew him several months; he lives on my street and has a wife and children. Hadn't he the right to dream of protecting his life? I dreamed a bit too, but I did not dream that far.

At four in the morning there was another alarm; in the twinkling of an eye everyone was up; jammed in the stairs and hanging out the windows. The house to which my squad was assigned was suited to inspire my comrade's evasion project.

I found he had arrived before me in the room where I was to shoot.

"- "Ah! You know what I did?"

- "No"

"Oh! The door I spoke of, the one that opens on the passage, you recall?"

- "Perfectly"

- "I have a key to that door; it took two trips to the locksmith, and I am going to throw it in a hole in the sewer, those who want to go know the joke."

I shook the hand of a brave man; he was happy, and contented. So profound is the momentary abasement of France; [but] it would be absurd to despair of a country where even the poltroons are brave!

XIV. What happened?-Opinions of Some Federals?

Friday 24th March, nine o'clock in the morning, again we are in the Bourse quarter; some men still have not slept after forty eight hours. Tired but ever resolute. Our numbers expand by the minute. I see arrive, in succession three battalions, almost total, buglers at the head. Now the National Guard with the longest hours [in] can take some rest. What is happening? We know nothing specific. The Federals have further fortified the Hôtel de Ville and Place Vendôme. They are numerous and have much more artillery. Why do they not attack us? Do they, like us, sense [that it is] a defensive post? Certainly, but our hands were not the first to shed French blood. During the common hesitancy, the hours flow, quieting the spirit. The deputies and mayors of Paris interceded with the National Assembly to inform them of our municipal franchises. If the Government is wise enough to make concessions, legitimate as well as urgent, and doesn't immobilize itself due to conviction of being in the right; in a word, remembering the maxim "Summum jus, summa injuria"[theological and political usages"Legal rigor is height of wrong"], the civil war could be ended. I have heard it said that the Federal National Guards do not consider the adventure poised without dread. Leaders are also disquieted. Those claiming to be the most irreconcilable in the daze of triumph perhaps would respond to a little graciousness from the Assembly offering a pretext to disengage from further rebellion. The guards of the 117th battalion, affiliated with the Central Committee, [would] come out lucky and think of the future. Direct civil war does not appear to be their most ardent desire. Some said:

"I fought, I came. Pay me, I obey."

Were they sincere? Will they rally, or spy? Besides, more or less resolute, or deceitful, say freely:

"We want the Commune; we will have it any any price."

But these are not numerous. If the majority of the insurgents think like the small number with whom we conversed, one can believe, without illusion, that an agreement is possible. Someone told me an incident which confirms that hope:

The Comptoir d'escompte (Office of government receipts) was occupied as a Federal post. A company of the IXth Arrondissement that remained faithful to the Government came to relieve them.

--"You've been here two days; go and rest."They refused to leave their place.

- "We are from the quarter, you are from Belleville; it falls to us to guard the account office.

They would not hear of it.

_ "Go: we will give you 100 francs".

They did not have to repeat it twice: the silver was accepted and the Guard departed. The gentlemen who could sell their conscience to the reason of two francs per head,--there were fifty.--have no formidable political convictions. I forgot to note that this post of Federals was commanded by the Italian Tibaldi, the same who was arrested in the halls of the Hôtel de Ville, during the excitement of 31 October.

XV. Vice- Admiral Saisset's Proclamation--New Hope-Paris Content

Everything went well for a few hours, and perhaps was going to get better. Rejoining to advance a probable pacification, almost certainly. The sun was up: the boulevards were covered with promenaders, male and full-figured female. Where did this contentment come from? A poster was at that moment on all walls of Paris. I took my copy with joy and copied it out twice.

"Dear fellow citizens,

I bring to your knowledge that, in accord with the deputies of the Seine and the mayors of Paris, we have obtained from the government of the National Assembly:

1. Complete knowledge of your municipal franchises;
2. The election of all officers of the National Guard, including the chief general;
3. Modifications to the law of expirations;
4. A bill upon the rents, favorable to renters, limited to rents of 1,200 francs.

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"Awaiting your confirmation of my nomination, or my replacement, I remain at the post of honor to execute the laws of conciliation that you bring and contribute to the affirmation of the Republic!

Paris, 23 March.

"Vice-Admiral, Provisional Commandant,

"SAISSET"

What a good hour, opportune, complete! The National Assembly had understood that in a city like Paris where a third of the population participated in a revolution one cannot have as a goal to kill and devalue it; and [deal with] the complaints of the crowd, even illegitimate or premature, nonetheless it is reasonable to set law. Paris is never completely wrong. Certainly, while the authors and manuevers of sedition of 18 March are most culpable. It is necessary to seek and punish the assassins of General Lecomte and General Clement Thomas.. On the massacre of the Rue Vendôme, all honest men will require a serious and meticulous inquiry. But, it must be said, one cannot count the drunks and the frenzied, among the Federals, soldiers and leaders. Some men were weakened by an excess of liquor---it is perhaps wrong to insist on the term "drinking bout" in these notes on insurrectional movement--that some men were drunk does not authorize us to treat as drunk one hundred thousand men, among whom certainly are honorable men convinced of the justice of their complaints. Improvised, unknown leaders, are all unworthy of respect and devoid of capacity? Among these lively and new leaders, maybe it was be just, and useful to employ them. The ideas that they represent must be studied, and if seen to be good, put into practice. This is what the Assembly has understood and has done. These concessions, far from diminishing their prestige, augment it for all hearts and honest souls--soldiers or leaders--rallying them. Those who refuse after Vice-Admiral Saisset's proclamation again to recognize the Government, will not be men acting in favor of Paris or the Republic, but culpable rioters following more criminal voices, and satisfying unstated passions. Thus the wheat will be separated from the chaff. Chaff, we will sort out without pity. Here, before, in the Place de la Bourse, Place des Victoires, the whole Bank quarter was resolved to resist--to resist only even unto taking unprovoked blows from rifles,--but that same resolution led to a horrible sadness--and also a little hesitation.. We knew that the bullets--had we been attacked--would heedlessly have struck innocents, doubtless in error, but innocents; perhaps at that supreme moment the gun would fall [from their hands]. Today nothing. In realizing our rights, the Assembly puts itself in the

right; we will consider all rebellion against its thus accrued authority, as a crime worthy of immediate punishment. Besides, fearing its abandonment or compromise, we plan to obey mayors and deputies who were freely chosen by us. When they command, we shall obey.

Truthfully, this revised attitude by the Assembly is also singularly lucky. They speak now in another style. The reception our mayors have received from the majority would [suggest] hope for an outcome favorable to the interests of all. Has what happened been important? No recriminations. It is best to return to the present without dreaming of ill fortune that may appear imminent. One hears on all sides that the deputies of the Seine, and the mayors, with full municipal powers, rule now in conditions of agreement. Municipal elections are set for 2 April, promptly dissipating all cause for dissidence. Marvelous! Paris is content. The shops have re-opened. People stroll. The Place Vendôme guard retains his sullen aspect, but all that will end. Such good times! One can speak freely, smile, embrace. Today is Friday, no, Sunday! Brave Assembly!

XVI. A Widow

In the building where I live, near the front there is a carpet workshop. The owner left this morning to report on the work and has not returned. Disquieted, his wife sought all over town. She found him, dead, in the Morgue. One hears that he was shot in the head,, the other day while passing the Rue de la Paix,; he passed by chance. The *Journal Officiel* of Paris, confirms that this poor man was one of the National Guardsmen assassinated by the pistols of the demonstration. Where is the truth? What is clear is that he will be buried later, and that his wife is a widow.

XVII. Paris Wrongly Content--Central Committee Triumphs--Sunday, 20 March

What does all this mean? Who cheats and who is cheated? We await in vain the effect from the promises of Vice-Admiral Saisset. When it was officially announced that the Assembly had ceded just powers to mayors and deputies-- it was hoped deeds would follow hopes? It is certain, the Government did not

make a conclusion, but on the whole a proclamation, that the National Guard provisory commander had led us into error--perhaps with honorable intention--or had like us, been deceived. The apathy of the Assembly had wrecked all the efforts of the deputies of the Seine and the mayors of Paris. In vain Louis Blanc begged France's representatives to approve conciliatory conduct of the Parisian representatives.

"Will you take responsibility when they come!" M. Clemenceau wrote.

He was right. A little condescension could have saved all; a bit of obstinacy lost all. Deprived of Assembly support and left to themselves, the deputies and the mayors of Paris, trying to avoid civil war, had to give in the Central Committee's demand for immediate municipal elections. This was a good move, but humbling themselves before force, their authority was singularly compromised. The Assembly, representing the whole of France could have acted, and reconquered, in on the contrary, with all its power, they did not want to risk compromising their influence; having made one honorable concession, coming from them, a dangerous [but] necessary submission. The Committee had been annulled, thanks to the Assembly's consent to municipal elections; it triumphed, thanks to those elections suffered by the deputies and mayors of Paris. The result was the of the entire Government constraining our representatives, who had no other means to avert bloodshed, than the abdication of all authority into the hands of the Central Committee, which became the Commune; into the hands of Commune members who would be chosen within the hour. Stripped of government by the departure of the ministers and executive power, but grouped around our representatives, unsupported by the Assembly and were forced to submit to the revolutionaries. We have no choice between anarchy and the Commune. Today Sunday 26 March most Parisians are watching. In vain some journals said: Don't vote! In vain, elections today, citizens don't have time to organize and chose who they want, they must vote. Those who don't follow the suggestions of the Central Committee chose the departing mayors, the deputies too, but they are not standing for election. The expectant attitude of the regular Government favored revolution. The twists of the Assembly disarmed the horror felt at the horrors of the uprising. In those groups there was ceaseless condemnation of the double death of Generals Clement Thomas and Lecomte, but some people also observed, without interruption, that the Central Committee declared that it had had nothing to do with the executions. The report that the two prisoners had been shot by line soldiers seems less unlikely. The Rue de la Paix massacre, an event remaining obscure, with contradictory accounts...etc.. etc.

a movement of reaction in favor of partisans of the Commune. Without approving their acts, their activity was uncontested still. Very little ado made in a little time. Some said: "They are [merely] men": that attitude profoundly frightened those faithful still to the Assembly, despite its errors, to France herself, legally represented. Cruel situation! Paris was obliged to chose between a regular government it wanted to obey, who may respect impossible by its failings, a legitimate power, culpable of crimes, but who represented in some of its crises the republican majority. When they left, the Commune came into being! "Oh!"some said,"they exist by action, not by right!"Doubtless the partisans thought avenues like elections demonstrably void, until they were against the national will as represented by the Assembly. They were placed. An act never without importance, in two hours the executive power of the Republic would count up, wanted or not, with are force acquiring the semblance of legality possible in the circumstances.

XVIII. Paris Votes

Crowds in the streets, crowds on the walks. All the while, voting. The Theaters open their doors. In the IInd Arrondissement, M. Tirard, mayor, has good prospects. A sunny day, I mingle with the strollers. A minute later I am stopped by a line of comedians lined in front of the fountain. They are nimble! In this district the Central Committee candidates are certainly lost! The women are dressed for spring; light dresses and hats. There are many cannon at the Hotel de Ville, it is said. In the Square Arcs-et-Metiers, two friends meet: "Are you alone, madame?" "Yes, madame, I am waiting for my husband who has gone to vote." Children jump the rope and ask "Maman, what is a Commune? Cabdrivers take the revolution to boost their prices; they don't begin to have political opinions. I did not meet anyone favorable to the Central Committee.

- "Cabby, how much for the trip?"

- "Five francs, monsieur."

- "All right, to the Drouot mayor's office!"

- "Excuse me, monsieur, are you voting?"

- "Yes"

- "Oh, then it is ten francs!"

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I agree and we depart. On the Boulevard de Strasbourg, many bourgeois are in Sunday mode, at sellers of books, oddments, perfumes, open menus, and bare of beggars. In this quarter, the revolution resembles a madhouse.

At the XXth Arrondissement mayor's office, very few people. I ask an office worker. "Never," he answers, "does one vote under duress"

I ask a friend returning from Belleville.

"One votes in good order, like going to battle. But one chooses not to obey this [order]. "

"The Central Committee?"

"Yes, but the Committee obeys."

"Who?"

"The International, of course!"

At the corner of the Rue Drouot there was a group before a poster. I believe it commented upon a candidate's proclamation. Later I saw it was for the theater. The crowd is compact and lively. All the cafe tables are ornamented with red women. That is, [wearing] Garibaldian red. Like poppies among the wheat. Dispatch riders, pass and pass again, going from section to section. Some results are coming in. At Montrouge, to Bercy, to Batignolles, to the Marais, the Committee members are winning, with a very strong majority. "Tell us the great conspiracy of M. Thiers against the Republic," cried one hoarse gamin. Another yelled "Who will laugh? Ask what great whores want to join you?" It is probably that M. Desmarests will be returned in the IXth. It goes on, the sun sets. Those left in the city decide. A passing gentleman tells me "It seems that Lesueur had a little success in the Party of Picketers." Ah, Paris, Paris!

XIX. The Commune Exists-What Will It Be?

It is done! We have a "Municipal Council" said one, "a Commune" said others. Regularly returned? No, but returned. Eighty councilors. Among them, sixty unknown. What recommends their imposition upon the electors? Has a truly occult power acted under cover of the of ex-Central Committee? Are we in the presence, not of a municipal movement, but of political or social revolution? I heard these words from a partisan of new ideas. "The proletariat

will claim its rights unjustly taken by the aristocratic bourgeoisie. Here is the 89 of the workers!"89 or 93? Another person, expressing exactly the same thing is a different form told me:"It is the revolt of the low against all superiority, superiority of fortune and of intelligence. They proclaim the equality of men before the law; they will proclaim the equality of intelligences. The universal vote will be replaced by chance. There was a time in Athens when one chose from a bag, like playing a lotto game, the names of those who would be archons."The revolution waits to reveal its tendencies, what do unknowns think that they are representing? I have the greatest confidence in one man, who has spent his entire life studying social questions, another who is in all the revolutionary groups and knows the better part of their bosses, said, in speaking of our councilors"It will be an Assembly composed of the most diverse elements. It is not all bad, but not all good. A dozen serious men are affiliated with the International, who have thought, worked, who perhaps can act; some foreigners among them. Some inexperienced and fiery young men, imbued with Jacobin theories. The third group, the largest, is composed of dried leftovers from prior revolutions; journalists, orators, conspirators, they are restless, burning, but transient. They would have hardly a place among them, other than their absence of ideas held in common with the two other parties of the Assembly, and they even contend one with the other. Only the members of the International have any real political value; they are socialists. The Jacobin element is dangerous. So, the composition of the communal Assembly, what can its actions be? A more troubling situation could hardly be possible? That, and the Prussians?

XX. At The Hôtel de Ville

Defend yourself from submission to the irresistible enthusiasm of crowds! I am not a political man, just a passer-by, who sees, listens, tests.

I was at the Hôtel de Ville at the hour where they proclaimed the names of the Commune members and later wrote these lines.

How many men were there? Maybe one hundred thousand. From all points within the city. The neighboring streets spewed armed men, with bayonets set, glittering in the sun, resembling a row of lightning flashes. At the front of the hotel is a stage dominated by a bust of the Republic with a Phrygian bonnet; flags sail atop the bronze Henri IV Lively groups in the

windows. Women and children crouching atop the building's sculptures, or mounted, in the medallions, on the busts' necks. One battalion was placed there, musicians at its head.

They played the *Marseillaise*, in a choir of fifty thousand resolute voices; a voice resounding in all souls, past it due to our misdeeds, in an instant recovered its antique energy.

The cannon, sounds, everywhere. The formidable song renewed; an immense surge of standards, bayonets, kepis (uniform hats), came, went, moved, doubled back in front of the stage. The cannon sounded, but one only heard in the intervals of the song. All shouts merged in unique acclamation, the universal voice of an innumerable multitude, and all men had but one heart and one voice.

On the stage, the members of the Committee came into place, they produced a tricolor. One proclaimed the names of the elected councilors.

The cannon redounded, punctuating the joyous voice of the crowd, shaking the windows and filling the space.

Ah, people of Paris! You, one day "cross in the air" make yourselves drunk in the Monmartre cabarets, you have supplied the assassins of Thomas and of Lecomte, on the Rue de la Paix, you shot at passersby, extraordinary people, often execrable, how many of you are also, in magnificent days, finely powerful beings, a volcano of generous passions burning among you, the same hearts like those you condemned to be devoured and purified by flames!

XXI. The First Decrees--Law on Rents--Small Chat With a Landlord-- After the Chat--Commissions

"Citizens," said the *Official Journal* of Paris, "your Commune is constituted."

And, immediately, decrees upon decrees. You love white posters? They've been placed everywhere. At the Hotel de Ville, what more have you not to decree?

Conscription is abolished. Never again will you see, coming in to the town, [unit] numbers on hats, poor young men drunk on patriotism, who have drunk

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the most debilitating of liquor. More soldiers! In revenge, we will all be National Guardsman. There is a glorious decree! as written by Edgar Poe.

Another decree: "The sale of objects pledged to the Mont-de-Piety [state pawn shop] is suspended."Very well. ""But me, how am I to make a profit,"one poor devil said to me. What do you want? One cannot please all the world.

Then see the landlords: their intoxication is not a small thing. The renters themselves appear less satisfied than expected. To not pay one's rent. Admirable luck! But they do not believe their luck. "So, when Orpheus tried to rescue Eurydice "to gloomy empire,"interrupted by harmonious voices,"the punishments of the damned, Prometheus cannot mount to the joy he would feel with the vulture's beak not longer shredding his liver; he would say "It cannot last."Orpheus, it is the Commune; Eurydice, it is liberty; Prometheus the renter; and the vulture, that is M. Vautour.

No irony,-hah-begin, there to see the joke;--the decree that remits renters to the terms of October 1870, January and April 1871, appears completely absurd; and in good faith, I have little taste for the lines preceding it:"Considering that the work, industry and commerce have supported all charges of the war, it is just that proprietors render to the country their share of sacrifices..."Let us reason a bit, monsieur, dear proprietor. You have a house, a house where I live. It is true that the chimneys smoke and you have energetically refused to remedy it. But, even though the chimneys smoke, you own it and have the right to profit. Note well that I do not contest your right. Me, I own little furniture, but I have one tool--pen, switch, or drill--that in ordinary times would mean I make a living and with relative regularity, pay rent. If I had not that tool, you would not cede me part of your house, as you would not judge there was much possibility of my rent being paid. During the war, how would my pen work? A bit, incontestable. It remains perfectly hateful to decry it to feather one's own nest. Not only can I not act to make my own subsistence, but am out of the habit of work, it will take a week of work to be paid, and to pay rent. I don't work, and consequently, eat little? Doubtless, you are not as lucky as you were in the days of the [Second] Empire. But I have not amassed a number of landlords dead on hunger in the neighborhood corners, and I fear I did not mark your assiduous presence in the municipal soup lines. By the same token allow me to recount some of your comfres, who undertook the defense of Paris, besieged by the Prussians; and have been sustained most ardently for the country's health in the shade of Touraine, on the docks of Normandy, or in the plains of Beauce, while, I and others paced

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the hundred steps on the cold nights in the muddy fortifications. I do not blame the émigrés, each is free to act. I do blame, now, you say: "For seven or eight months, you have not worked, and pawned your mattress to feed your wife and children. Poor man! My heart fills out of friendship, pay me only three months." No, a thousand times no. This exigency is absurd, culpable, grotesque, and I declare there is no compromise possible between the law strictly executed by the Commune decree, yes, I would prefer to see a bit of want, of misery, if you will, temporarily replace the long ease of a group, a few individuals, who would sell that goods, at a vile price, the last armoire, the last buffet, than five, a hundred, a thousand dead of hunger.

But there has to be a means to reconcile the interests of renters and owners. Accord a delay to the first, force the second to wait, would that be enough? I don't believe so. Give me three years to pay off three months, and the financial embarrassment would be less. The artisan's tools are not like the peasant's fields, time does not make a yield. During the sad months when I have not worked, I have endured, to live, pledging my future work, and the future is uncertain, a future where I will be likely incapable of sustaining daily needs, let alone to acquit the debts of my past? Pure illusion. You can sell my furniture, if the law permits but I will not pay you more.

The only possible solution is to remit the entire sum. But it cannot be done in a general fashion. To whom does one pay: the renters are displaced by the war had nowhere to remove, even if evicted? To those who have suffered grievously, accord remittances in proportion. But those who invasion is not seriously injure, nor ruin; they are numerous: commodities merchants, cafe owners, wealthy men, make them pay, without mercy! By that arrangement the landlords would be less wronged than they imagine, than the most humble sites where they have lost profit. The Commune decree rests upon a just principle, and the harm would not be general.

But the new government--assuming it is a new government--will not support that decree. It installs and constitutes itself. In a few hours it organized no less than ten commissions: executive commission finance, work, foreign relations, public service, education, food, military, justice, general safety.

What commissionaires! Who knows what good will be done?

XXII. Weddings and Parties

Let us get on. Who are you? We hardly know you. Thus far, those present [from the Commune] have absolutely ignored and not conjoined to inspire general confidence in future, or other matters. To judge, we await your acts. You risk to defy. You have made decrees, that could perhaps be criticized, but not absolutely culpable, though your object and particular mission is to defend the interests of your [lower class] constituents. Pass decrees, if you can do nothing more serious. Yesterday, 30 March, at night--what at night?-a personage decked in a red scarf, followed by armed men, presented himself at the UNION insurance office. The office clerk on duty did not want to give him the keys to the cashbox, the door was battered, seals affixed to the strong box, and the employee doing his duty was arrested. What does this mean? Have you been sent to force cashboxes and seal up safes? Same night, nearly the same time, one of my friends returned home, and saw from his windows, across the water, the Hôtel de Ville brilliantly lit. "Oh, a ball?"he said. He found out. It was not a ball, worse. Three or four Belleville National Guards had invaded the Hôtel salons and were dining. The company was legitimate, or not. They drank, they laughed, they sang. Is this what you intended, gentlemen of the Commune? Have you done this to cater, then write on the municipal building's front "Rooms for weddings and parties"above Liberty, Equality, Fraternity?

XXIII. Story of a Move

--You're leaving!

--I am

--You, yes, the furniture, no.

--And who impedes moving my furniture?

--Me!

--Go then!

--Swindler!

--Thief!

The insults double. A removal van fills up at the door, almost fifty gossips avid for detail, all the people of the quarter fidgeting at the windows, and passersby laughing at the attitude on offer.

A partisan of the Commune profited from the decree. At first things were peaceful enough. The concierge surprised by the sudden arrival of the van and quick loading, did not dare resist, but the owner, perhaps by premonition, arrived, and the quarrel ensued.

The renter was a tenacious guy. On his own shoulders--the movers prudently neutral--he carried out the last piece, a night table. The linens disappearing, the owner, apparently a miser despoiled of his treasure, dashed and grabbed. The renter grabbed back and put them in the cart. The owner repeated, so did the renter. Amid swelling laughter, these two fought over the object in question, jostling, and the table fell open, fragile objects spilling, the Rue Rocher regulars could well believe they were assisting at a scene from the pantomime, at the Funambules theater. The renter was a resolute fellow! Benefiting from the owner's surprise, a virile arm threw it into the cart, bounded up, beat the horses, and disappeared at the gallop of three nags, followed by cheers from the crowd, the mover's yells, and curses of the landlord, who halted at his door, fists clinched, and muttered "Brigand!"

XXIV. Departing--Must one leave?

On trunks! The same people who assisted the movements of brave men before the siege, could never dream that they would haul the trunks of Paris. Big coffers with convex lids, trunks of black wood. moldy horsehair, leather boxes, cardboard boxes, nightbags and valises overloaded ten thousand vehicles,rolling incessantly to railroad stations. Hurry up--make--haste--we're sure that tonight, this morning, the Commune--horrible Commune--has not decreed that no one may leave Paris? The prudent flee, their bankbooks or their actions, in their luggage.

I encountered a friend, anxious, walking very fast, and followed him.

--Where are you going?

--Ah! my dear,you don't know?

--What?

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--It is unbelievable! I have been condemned to death.

--You?

--Me.

--For what?

--Because I wrote for *Figaro* [newspaper].

--You wrote in *Figaro*?

--Oh, a bit! But last year I wrote a letter to Jules Prevel to declare that my vaudeville "My Aunt's" I decided to not renounce my title (pretty good,eh?). My letter has been published, and all the people at the Hotel de Ville have condemned to death all collaborators of *Figaro* . . . understand?

--I understand! You must leave a good long time. And you are going to Versailles?

--Naturally.

--By railroad?

--Why not?

--Of course! In your place, I would hesitate. A machine jumps (the track), a collision, its possible. The Commune is capable of all to disembarass itself of a dangerous adversary.

--You think that it could go that far...? Oh, you exaggerate. All the same, I'll take a cab.

Your friend leaves precipitously. You encounter another. One finds so many friends onthe boulevard Montmartre!

--What! You wrote, you are again in Paris?

--I returned this evening.

--And why have you condemned yourself to death?

--Enough. I will judge that tonight.

--Devil! You will write for *Figaro*?

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Commune

--No, no, it's an adventure. imagine that for three years I saw, a day in the rain, a bus, a blonde, oh, my dear, a blonde!...

--I see.

--First, frivolous conversation; offer a cab, dine at Maire; boxstall seats at the Folie-Dramatiques, sup at Brebant; in brief, I loved.

--I make you my compliments.

--Listen, she was married.

--Ah!

--I did not propose to trouble the household peace, and after eight days of guilty happiness, I let her know my remorse, and undertook to reintegrate the conjugal domicile.

--There was a noble heart!

--Isn't it? On well, the husband was not that shrewd. He would not even believe that Clementine--that was her name, Clementine--had waited for the bus for eight days on a corner by the Opera.

--These husbands are extraordinary.

--He investigated, he discovered, and. ..

--And you look for a quarrel?

--No, he's a hosier. But he guessed, my most bitter enemy.

--That is most disagreeable; but, I do not see why the enmity of a merchant obliges you to leave Paris.

--You will understand. This hosier has a cousin who was named a member of the Commune.

---I conceive your disquiet. You're afraid of being shot?

--I have been judged this evening! But, in reality, it is not death that above all I fear.

--Bah!

--No. I'm still afraid. The men of the Hôtel de Ville are political radicals (enragés). I am assured that they want to decree divorce. I know that Clementine's husband, my friend! He is capable of forcing me to marry his wife!

Others had other pretexts. Until, they all left. Me, toughened Parisian, I stay, the soles of my boots are glued to the asphalt of the boulevard. Did they have a reason? Am I wrong? Is there really danger in Paris for a man not ardently affiliated with the Commune? I don't know. There have been armed searches, arrests and other illegal acts, culpable.

But will these things last? One can hope that the rough element of the Commune--the elections were so quick, almost by chance--will readily nourish the more intelligent and serious--if there is one--in the municipal council? I want to believe that a revolution accomplished by a third of the people of Paris, and tolerated by another third--the last third took the train--is named to emit some truly useful and generous idea and will not accept the boxes put under seal, or the innocents put under lock and key. Besides, that same Commune,--far from seeking to forget the bloody circumstances preceding its establishment, far from seeking to repair the grave faults making herself culpable--will indulge in new excesses and will reconcile Paris again for its loss, its sadness, if bowed, if conquered, I will not leave; like those sailors, remembering the long fortunate voyages of the good ship will not leave when it founders and cling during the storm to its dismasted hull.

XXV. General Garibaldi

They're awaiting Garibaldi. Why is he coming? To be put at the head of the National Guard. Heaven forbid that he does not come! Firstly, because his presence will be, at this hour, a further danger, and because that old man--that admirable and venerated old man--will uselessly compromise his glory in our base discords.

If I, unknown citizen, had the honor--of being one of those who attend the liberator of Naples, without hesitation I would--after bowing as I would to some antique hero who had left his sacred tomb, I would say:

"General, you have delivered your country. At the head of some hundreds of men, you have won battles and taken towns. Your name is thought of like that of William Tell. Where you have gone chains were broken, yokes shattered, you have hastened. Like the heroes vaunted by Victor Hugo in *La*

Legende des siecles, you have been the champion of justice. You have been the knight errant of liberty. You appear to us, victorious, in a distant vision; you are legend. Very well! It comes, for the glory of this century, which devours heroes, it happens you will dwell among us. Stay afar, remain grand. Your glory is not to the nature of those who will not see it, who lose by your proximity. No, you will be a spoilsport among us. There will not be a space for you to freely draw your sword. We are competent, complicated, bizarre men. You are simple: you are your grandeur. We are of our time, you have the honor to be an anachronism. You will be useless to your friends, harmful to yourself. What can a giant who fought with swords do against dwarves with cannon? You are courageous, they are clever, they will vanquish you. It matters to the nineteenth century that you not be vanquished. Do not come, you will be taken, naive, you, in the spider's web of adroit mediocrities, and your great efforts will lead to laughter. Great man, you betray yourself by goodness."

But it is likely that if I have this discourse with General Garibaldi, that General Garibaldi will escort me politely to the door. Other counselors, more powerful, are inspired by other convictions. Dangerous friendships! It is profoundly sad that such a man--as intelligent and great as he is--cannot discern the line where the mission Heaven gave him ceases, and disdaining all celebrity foreign to his true glory, consented to be admired by the future.

XXVI. Monday, 3 April--the Matinee--Flights--Seeing the Arc de Triomphe--First Shot--Passing Battalions--Royalists attack.

Monday, April 3rd. Dreadful day! I had pursued this and that, watching, asking, reading. It is ten o'clock in the evening. What do I know? Nothing exactly, nothing, if not that, which is horrible; it has struck

Yes, as the gates of Paris, Frenchman against Frenchman, under the binoculars of the Prussians who watch the field of battle like crows, they strike! I seen passing cabs, ambulances full of National Guardsmen. Who wounded you? Zouaves. Is that believable, possible? Ah! These guns, cannon, machine-guns, why are the foreigners hot, not the Parisian soldiers? But that would not serve the great thing. It had been decided--by some monstrous will--that we will roll to the base of the precipice. That Frenchmen who want to kill Frenchmen will not be halted by the absence of arms. If they could not shoot, they would strangle one another.

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True, it is unforeseen. A revolution is feared, yes; one thinks of the June Days. This evening the battalions devoted to the National Assembly will camp in the Bank quarter, they understand the horrible possibility of guns pointed from the stones of barricades, blood flowing in the streets, men killed, women in tears. But could one really be surprised that a new species of civil war would appear? Paris, separated from France, would be besieged by Frenchmen? That a second time it would be cut off from communication with the departments, perhaps a second time starved? that there would again be thousands of men fighting to the death in one of the quarters of the town, but in the presence of armies, with two leaders, fortifications, cannon; hat Paris would be besieged anew? Surprisingly bad luck!

In the morning, one heard the canon. Oh, the noise!, that during the siege had battered the heart of hope,--yes, of hope, that had made the hope of deliverance possible----that noise, that morning, was dreadful! I went down the Champs-Elysee. Paris, was veritably deserted. Understand then, that revolution, was honor, was the same existence gone, or simply was it closed again? Down the boulevards the battalions defiled again, the music in one's head. Going down the place Vendome, they sang. The camp-followers carried guns. Someone told me that they had worked all night in front of the Hôtel de Ville and that all the neighboring streets are traversed with barricades. Besides, no one knew if they had struck Neuilly, that the "royalists" had attacked and "massacred our brothers." Some groups on the Place de la Concorde. Nearing me, asked the question of rents, yes, rents! Ah! Certainly who kills at this moment will not pay their landlords. At the top of Rond-Point I distinctly saw a mob compact enough around the Arc-de-Triomphe and some tired National Guards returned from the battle. They are bleak, ragged, gunpowdered.

--What happened?

--We are betrayed, said one.

--Death to traitors, said another.

On the champs of battle, another new certainty. A straggler, at table in a cafe among the curious, recounted that the barricade at the bridge of Neuilly had been attacked by town police disguised as gendarmes and by pontifical Zouaves preceded by a white flag.

---A parliamentary flag? demanded one.

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--No, a royalist flag, responded the guard.

--And the barricade was taken?

--We had no more cartridges; hadn't eaten in seventeen hours; it was necessary to decamp.

Later, a lineman affirmed to me that the barricade had been retaken; the cannon boomed always; that is to say, from Mont-Valerien taking out a barracks of Courbevoie, where there was a battalion of federal national guards.

--But they left the day before, the lineman said.

I continued down my way; the swerving groups became more and more numerous; I raised my head; I [heard] clatter the box of a machine-gun at the avenue of the Grand-Armee. White smoke hung some seconds; a scrap of snow detached by the air.

Always I went forward. The upper level of the Arc-de-Triomphe is covered with the curious; many of them women and children. Climbing the stones, clinging to the projections of the monument, dyeing the sculptures of the bas-reliefs. One man thought to pose on one plane between three chaises, and the gapers hoisted themselves onto it, meaning a later retribution. From that observatory, one saw a long crowd, watchful and immobile, decking entirely the avenue of the Grand-Armee; further, the Porte-Maillot, where rose, moment by moment an immense white smoke, preceded by a loud detonation--it is the cannon of the rampart from the rond-point of Courbevoie,--and below, the avenue of Neuilly, a deserted length, gunpowdery in the sun, and crossing it, hastily, a human form, then, after the Seine, after the avenue of the Emperor, also deserted, the height of the Courbevoie, where a Versaillais battery was set. But, opening my eyes, I could not distinguish the cannon, seeing some men, doubtless sentinels. They are policemen, said the man on my right; but the one on my left said; they are pontifical Zouaves. At that distance, one certainly had a good view to recognize the uniforms. At the bridge barricade, the most contradictory rumors circulated; it was impossible to know if it remained in the power of the soldiers or of the federals. Besides, after I arrived, the firing lessened. After a bit the fusillade stopped completely; it is noon. But the rampart battery continued to attack Courbevoie, and on Mont-Valerien, fell, moment to moment, the projectiles from Neuilly Every frightening hit, coming to the Porte-Maillot, renewed the multitude's fear, redoubled effort, prolonged, exasperated, and everyone ran, cried, fled, in terror. A shell, it is said, fell on

the avenue of the Grand-Armee. On the Arc, not a single person. Neighboring streets throbbed with people looking for an exit. Then, little by little, they were reassured; the rout stopped; laughter at a moment of panic, retracing one's steps. Fifteen minutes later, the crowd was everywhere, and as dense as before.

Meanwhile, this spectacle--combatants and onlookers--depressed me. Despairing of learning anything, I went back through the town. At some distance from the theater of events, one is better informed, one is at least, most informed. Imagination, far from events, has the better. I recall a hundred new absurdities. It appeared certain, that the Federals had suffered a check, of mediocre importance overall, until the Versailles troops had advanced, but the check could have some influence upon the resolve of the National Guard. It was said: "The army will not strike further the linemen will aim for the air, in Neuilly, as they did in Montmartre." They began to believe that the army had struck, and the people who have most repeated that policemen and the Zouaves of Charette were the sole attackers, in a way cheering themselves by self-delusion.

But who fired first? On that point, each had his word, and no one knew. One heard the official news with impatience. The normally gossipy walls, are mute. The least improbably versions in circulation are: at daybreak, some fire was exchanged between advance National Guard posts and those of the gendarmes. No dead or wounded, less powder, lucky. A little later, General Vinoy arrives at Mount-Valerien, preceded by a parliamentarian, accompanied by two policemen (always), with trumpets, at the bridge of Courbevoie. One must name the parliamentarian: M. Pasquier, surgeon-general of the mounted police regiment. Two national guardsmen come before him; after some words are exchanged, one of the guardsmen had blown out the brains of M. Pasquier with a revolver; and ten minutes later, hearing the news, Mont-Valerien began firing, with a furor that four hours later, did not relent.

Meanwhile, the general struck. On the Boulevard Montmartre, a considerable number of battalions filed past; more than twenty thousand men, said someone who pretended to have counted. Passing by, they sang, or cried out "Long Live the Commune! Long Live the Republic!" Some responded to the acclamations; not only the Federals of Montmartre or of Belleville; beneath the kepis (soldier's hats) the peaceable figures of the bourgeois and of merchants; many hands are white, not the hands of workers. They marched in good order; they are calm and resolute; they believe they are men chosen to die for a cause

they believe just: I life my hat; One must salute, however guilty or fatal, those who can expose themselves to death for their convictions.

But what convictions? What is the Commune? The men who besieged the Hôtel de Ville, have not published a single program; nevertheless they go to kill and be killed for the Commune. Ah! Words, words, what power in them heroic and naive people!

Again, this evening, a proclamation! Such folly in the posters I have had the leisure to copy. They were conceived a bit on these terms:

"Citizens,

"This morning the royalists have ATTACKED.

"Impatient before our moderation, they have ATTACKED.

"We cannot oppose French bayonets, they are employed against the imperial guard and the pontifical Zouaves.

"They have bombarded Neuilly, an inoffensive village. The (partisan) Chouans of Charette, Vendeeans of Cathelineau, the Bretons of Trochu, the gendarmes of Velentin are rushing among us.

"There have been dead and wounded.

"Against the renewed aggression of the Prussians, all Paris is in risk.

"Thanks to the concourse of the national guard, victory will remain!"

Victory! What victory? O profound sadness! Paris shedding the blood of France, France shedding the blood of Paris? From what perspective would this triumph not be abominable?

XXVII. To Versailles!--Mont-Valerien-M. Thiers, Prisoner--New Decrees

What do you hear? Believe? It would take a hundred pages at least to report the different rumors that circulate today, Tuesday 4 April, the second revolutionary day of this horrible struggle. Note that the hastiest affirmations are the most persistent; later I'll put in order the pell-mell of news.

All night, in all quarters, the drum, in general. Companies form quickly and move out, towards the place Vendome; then the Porte Maillot, crying: "To Versailles!

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At five in the morning, General Bergeret occupies the round point of Courbevoie. The Assembly troops have evacuated the position. Why? The federals have not struck them in the previous day?

A grave choice of the general's tonight for his troop's morale; he is going to combat in a cab.

The troops form in columns. No more than sixty thousand men are under his orders; two batteries of seven sustain the infantry; the omnibus follows, filled with munitions. March on Mont-Valerien; after taking the fort, they will go to Versailles by Rueil and Nanterre.

Take Mont-Valerien? One does not doubt for a moment the success of that enterprise."We've been told, said one Federal, that the fort, when it sees us, will open its gates."But that is not counting upon Colonel Challeton, who defends the fortress. The advance guard of the Federals encountered a formidable volley of bullets and shells. Panic, cries of rage, rout, every man for himself. "We are betrayed!"The army of the Commune is split by machine gun fire from two positions ;one-three battalions--flees in the direction of Versailles, the other regains Paris with praiseworthy speed. What is the cause of these disintegrations, Parisian combattents accused of poltroonery? No, they were not surprised, just not expecting their reception at Mont-Valerien; warned, there would have been less. Besides, in that affair; it was more fear than bad, the colossal fortress would have annihilated the Communards; better to disperse them.

But what of the three battalions who went past Mont-Valerien? They went bravely forward.

At this time, another movement towards Versailles worked by Meudon and Clamart. A small enough number of battalions left during the night, and massed at the opening of the forts of d'Issy and of Vanves. They came and put a battery of some pieces at the back of the glacis of Fort Issy, at the summit of a wooded hill; they attack the Versaillais batteries of Meudon;who respond with furor. An artillery duel like prior times, like good times! of Prussians.

Until that moment the news seems accurate enough, probably enough, and one has some idea of the respective situation between the two belligerents. But by two hours later in the afternoon, reports contradict and interfere.

A courier, coming through the Maillot gate, brings to a group formed by the New-Opera:

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--We are conquerors! Flourens is entering Versailles at the head of forty thousand men. A hundred deputies are taken. M. Thiers is a prisoner!

In the first place, this morning, in the rout before Mont-Valerien, Flourens had disappeared, Where could he find forty thousand men to conduct him to Versailles?

At the same time, it was rumored that General Bergerat had been wounded by a shrapnel fragment.

-Pure exaggeration, someone said! The general had only two horses killed underneath him.

Before him, he was in a cab.

It appeared a certainty, that there had been a blow with fury between Sevres and Meudon. I heard it said that the 113th regiment had fired in the air, and the Parisians had rained twelve machine-guns on the Versaillaise.

At Chatillon, they had also struck. The Communards reported great advantages. Nonetheless, it is curious that, on the other hand, it was announced that three battalions entered with an un-triumphant air, and the other battalions, forming in reserve, refused to march.

A hurly-burly of contradiction, where the better part of news has no source but opinion, and the hopes which one supports. As a result, one only knows that it is over. But the minute I renounce informing myself; but I keep asking; the desire to know for certain what one cannot know.

I head to the Champs-Elyées; cannon sound; the ambulance vehicles descend upon the palace of Industry and in front of the Guignol Theatre, where normally public laughter sounds. Ah, wretched time! Wretched fratricidal struggle! Damnation upon all those and upon their cause!

While the killing and the murder continues, the Commune renders it's decrees: The walls are white with official posters: MM. Thiers, Favre, Picard, Dufaure, Simon and Pothauu are accused; their goods are confiscated and sequestered, until they come before the justice of the people. "This charge, this sequestration, what does it mean to widows deprived of their husbands, to orphans their fathers? "The Commune of Paris adopts the families of citizens who fell and died responding to the criminal aggression of royalists conspiring against Paris and against the French Republic."Having sent the fathers to death, you must needs adopt the children. Ah! Laughable decrees! You

separate Church and State? You suppress the budget of churches? You confiscate the goods of the clergy? Acting on these matters, at this hour? It is necessary, indispensable, it is calming, these are avoidable massacres these are hatreds satisfied. You will not decree that! No, no, what has passed, you willed, you will more, you profit from provocations--and I do not deny-- to bring on the most striking conflict in historical memory of our unfortunate country, you will persevere and revive the tottering courage you devote to a defeat and inevitable trespass, you use all the hypocrisies with which you reproach the enemy! "Bergerat and Flourens had joined: they are marching on Versailles. Certain success." You post that dispatch--false news, isn't it? But one must deceive men to lose them ---and you add "The Versailles army's fire did not affect us appreciably." Ah! For this point, ask the opinion of the women watching the town gates for their soldiers' return, the better part escorting, bleeding, on bloody stretchers!

XXVIII. General Duval-Tenacity of the Federals-Order in Disorder-- Neuilly--Paris that Kills--Paris that Amuses Itself-A Philosophe's Opinion--Fusillade to Fusillade

The hours flow darker. They have struck at Clamart, they have struck at Meudon, likewise Neuilly, like Courbevoie. Machine-gun bursts, cannonades, fusillades, the victories of the Communards, dreams. The day is made with pretended triumphs; besides, wouldn't victory be as detestable as defeat?

General Duval has been made a prisoner and put to death.

--If you have taken me, General Vinoy demanded of him, would you shoot?"

--Without hesitation, responded Duval.

And Vinoy commanded:

-Fire!

But that anecdote, often repeated, it [is] false. It is hardly probable that a commandant in charge of Versailles troops would consult an "insurgent" in such a dialogue. As to Flourens, he is also dead. Oh? How? Again, it is not certain fact. Here are some versions: He took a ball in the chest, or the back, or in the head; a current rumor has his skull cut in two by a sabre blow. The more reactionary groups are preoccupied by Flourens. That singular man

inspired little antipathy, but those who detested him did so most violently. I will try one day to count up the partiality of opinion in favor of that romantic rioter.

Duval killed, Flourens killed, Bergeret in agony, the Federal enthusiasm is considerably chilled. Oh well! There it is. The battalions that filed down the boulevard with a most resolute air, singing and crying "Long live the Commune" are duped by their leaders to the point of believing pompous dispatches on the hour announcing the linemen made prisoner, attacks repulsed, redoubts taken? Improbable. Besides, in the quarters the guards see the return of those who have been in combat and wait with the disquieted women at the gates; there they learn from them the forward marches were diverted, and of the dead and the wounded which the bulletins of the Commune register as "relatively unimportant." Will the ardor of the first dash survive? From the full spill of stories true or false of Versaillaise cruelties what is so? "The assassination" of Duval, assassination: of Flourens, the prisoners shot, the campfollowers raped, all culpable inventions--are these inventions? Ah! Civil war makes us barbarians--naturally good to supremely excite the enthusiastic hatred, and then march to probably defeat with the air of going to certain victory. Ah! error or not, guilty all the same, and those agreeing with the theme that they sprout, they are brave! and as they pass, they are fine. Yes, despite the great gaping uniforms on most of them, despite the tipsy walk of some, they are, in a group, superb! --Even the coldest partisan, for that reason cannot resist that which inspires men who go to die!

It is known also, that there is less disorder in the commands than there could have been. All the bataillons have an air of knowing whom they will obey. They are, the ones from the Hôtel de Ville, others from the place Vendôme, some in the forts, some with advance guard; they march and counter-march without confusion. In general, the combatants do not lack ammunition. They passed muster. If in the remote past one discounted the Federal chiefs, one must agree that there is something very remarkable in that rapid organization of the whole army, in a completely upset political milieu. Who commands? Who organizes? The members of the Commune, divided by opinion, don't appear to be a condition, due to their number and their incontestable inexperience, to imprint a direct impression in military policy. Among them, after them, who knows to think and to act? Is it Bergeret? Is it Cluseret? Perhaps in future we will learn. Meanwhile, in spite of the checks sustained by the Federals these last days, the whole of Paris is amazed the regular function of administrative wheels of the War, all the more astonishing

as during the siege, our "legitimate" chiefs, with more disciplined soldiers under their orders, could not obtain more striking results.

But can one not wish a hundred times more that this order had not been established? Wishing that one was not directed by precise orders, those ordering a death without glory? Neuilly, after some days, Neuilly, so happy in other times with busy boutiques, popular cabarets and its princely parks, Neuilly, dominated on one side by the Versailles batteries, on the other by the Parisian cannon, and incessantly overhung with shells and machine-guns emplacements of Valerien. Neuilly's bridge, taken and retaken, with barricades abandoned and reconquered, and after some days, like a vast hole or abyss, one after the other, taken from on high, Federal battalions, accommodated as in a region of hell, in the folly of blood and of death, the damned of the Commune. Each house is a fortress. The gendarmes came here to advance to the market of Sablonville; this morning they have been repulsed beyond the church. On that church, a child, M. Leulier's son, planted a red flag under a shower of projectiles. "That child will be a man," said Cluseret, deputy for war. Yes, unless he is a corpse. Windows fired upon windows. One must assault a house; meet on the stairs; these are pitiless struggles, day and night, at every hour. The rage of one side for the other is prodigious. These men, friends eight hours before, have but one desire; to kill. An inhabitant of Neuilly I who had successfully left, told me this: Two enemies, a line soldier and a Federal, met in a bathing establishment found on the avenue Neuilly, a bit below the Rue de Huissiers. Bayonets fixed on their guns, sometimes fleeing, sometimes pursuing, they arrived at the housetop, where frantic, they threw down their arms and fought hand to hand. Hanging on the rooftop, rasped by the bricks, a hundred feet above the ground, they fought mercilessly, without pause, of the two, the lineman felt himself weaken and wanted to escape his enemy's grip. Then the Federal--the person who told me this was in a window facing the two and did not miss a movement--then the federal took a knife from his pouch, and prepared to hit the lineman in the back: seeing that he was lost, he flattened onto the roof; seized his enemy by the leg, and in a quick move, both rolled and fell into the gutter. Neither one was killed, the the lineman had a bloodied and dusty face, and the Parisian fell straddling his enemy, managing a knife blow to the skull!--such is that infamous struggle, such is that pitiless struggle! Will it not stop until there is no more blood to flow?

Meanwhile Paris of the elegant boulevards, Paris lives to promenade and to smile. Despite numerous decamped, there are enough idle dandies and happy pretty girls for the honest man passing by to blush with anger. the theaters

are open. One plays "Duck with Three Beaks." "Do you know "Duck with Three Beaks"? It is a piece made to distract people from the care of civil war. You know, one must laugh a little. Die there, laugh here. . In the boxstalls they whisper, between scenes crunch sugared violets; all is for the best. Mlle Nunuphar, also named by paradox, has the most beautiful eyes in the world. We note the handsome fellow who jokes to his companion, compared to those seen before, ravaged beneath machine-gun emplacements. One is not more gallant. This is a spiritual and an actual moment. Ah! There are those struggling at this hour, those who, by their cannon and guns, expose Paris to frightening reprisals, these men are certainly culpable, but I prefer them again to those who guffaw with laughter while the whole city despairs, who haven't the discretion to conceal their joys to our distresses, and who paw their girls while mothers cry over their children!

On the boulevards; again stirs prostitution, triumphantly on show. True, a poor young man told me, a student, bitter philosopher: "When Paris will be entirely destroyed, when its houses, its palaces, its monuments, overturned, wasted, strewn in its own damnation, and no more, under heaven, than an excessive ruin. then, from than formless heap, one will see depart, from an immense sepulchre, a a phantom of woman, a skeleton dressed in a glittering robe, cut to the limit, a skull coiffed in a hat; an this phantom, flowing from debris to debris, turning its head to see if some libertine follows in the solitude, this phantom, will be the hideous soul of Paris."

When the time approaches, the cafes close. The deputy at the former prefecture has taken the habit of sending companies of National Guards who hasten and observe the closing of public establishments. But that precaution, like all others, is useless. They have secret doors that open with the most basic investigation. When the shop windows are closed, one sees clearly through the lattice. Come, glue your eye to the luminous slits, hear the cannon, the machineguns cough horribly, the crackling fusillade, and look inside the closed establishments. Chattering, eating, smoking, men come and go. Women go from one table to another, offering themselves here, selling themselves there. The men are beasts and marry. one uncorks a bottle of champagne: "Ah! It is a fusillade!" "These men are everyone's lover, the women everyone's mistress! I tell you that this orgy is the worst result of a milieu is a town scored with curses, a line of battle where the bayonet pierces, or the machinegun tears! And later, with a good laugh, a good song, a good drink, like a fine night, one takes a discovered cab, to the Champs Elysees, hitched onto

the siege, at the side of the cabby, to try to see the combat, to see if "these people" know how to die for those others who know how to amuse themselves.

More discreet, other pleasure seekers take refuge on the first floors of houses, in the circles. They are betrayed by the splendor of the light piercing the thick curtains. Go along the walls, you hear the conversation of gamblers and joyous clicks of gold pieces.

Ah! Wickedness of the lucky! Excusable anger of starvation!

XXIX. Monsignor Darboy--Citizen Rigault

Returning for one of these excursions where I observed Paris by night, today, the fifth of April, at one in the morning I went down the rue du Mont-Tabor after reaching the boulevard and the quarter where I live. Walking the Rue Saint-Honoré, I saw a National Guard group standing around the gutter. When I meet those who are Commune, I don't interact. In the Rue du Mont-Tabor, nobody, silence. At one swoop, a few steps before me, a door opened, a man left and moved precipitately in a direction opposite the church. It looked like flight. I halted, listening. Then, same door, two National Guards rushed, they looked about, pursuing yelling, after the fugitive, who had a head start, they overtook him easily, and easily brought him back, while the guards I had seen before in the rue Saint-Honore hastening to the noise. The yells, the abuse, it appeared to me that the man arrested and retaken was M. the abbé Deguerry, vicar of the Madeleine church. Returning to the house, the door was shut, silence re-established.

This morning I had heard that M. Darboy, Archbishop of Paris, had been arrested and taken at the same time under analagous circumstances.

Other arrests were made in the religious world. The vicar of Saint-Severin, the vicar of Saint-Eustache, had been apprehended, the first in his domicile, the second, upon the moment of leaving his church. The vicar of Our Lady of Victories had also been arrested; before then, he had been secure.

Conducted to the ex-prefecture of Police (why ex-prefecture? It seemed to me that it did not function any better than when it was simply a prefecture?), Monsignor Darboy was interrogated by Ciitizen Delegate Rigault. Rigault began speaking to him after several days. He is a man who evidently had a sincere vocation for his chosen metier, by arrest, arrest, arrest. One does not dispute

the vocation nor his colors. Young, cold,, collected, bitte,besides. But his calm did not exclude, as one would see, a certain friendly cheer of manner.

That is Citizen Rigault who had been interrogating the Archbishop of Paris. I was not overly curious, but I wanted to know what a member of the Commune could ask Monsignor Darboy. Having apparently committed a crime and doubtless a desire to deceive, one cannot very well explain what he could ask. One must imagine that M. Rigault found in his imagination particular resources to sustai the inquiry, and his vocation of investigating judge is no less real than his vocation as policeman. What is known, from the Commune journals registering little disguised admiration, this bit of dialogue:

"My children!"said white-haired Archbishop of Paris.

--"Citizens,"interrupted Delegate Rigault, who is not yet thirty years old, "you are not before children, but before a magistrate."

It was a slap, that! and I conceive that enthusiasm that M. Rigault inspired among members of the Commune. But that excellent citizen would not brook interruption. I can affirm (with the best reasons to think myself well-informed) that he added:

"Besides, it is very old that is eighteen hundred years that you are fleeing!"

It is not the most spiritual or elegant way, but it explains the delegate, who another day, having authorised, in a moment perhaps of exaggerated clemency, an abbé visiting a prisoner at the Conciergerie, to give him as a password:

"Pass the name X, servant of someone named God."

Ah, thank that wit!

XXX. Accessories at Versailles

Hell! I cannot continue without venturing some disquiet. The Commune's new decree seriously put in danger those people unfortunate enough to be at odds with their concierges, or those who had had words with the corner commissionaire. Let's crib Article one of those rude decree:

All persons presumed in complicity with with the Versailles government will be immediately declared accused and jailed."

Damn! not by mortmain [the deadhand of law]! It is clear the first mischief comes--from someone whom, at seven years, I would have refused to take one hundred cents--could visit Citizen Rigault and affirm that I had the following relations with the government of Versailles; and be immediately incarcerated. Note, complicity is not necessary "with traitors" to be proven. . . It suffices to preview the blue sky on the way to the cells of the Conciergerie. Besides, these words are enough "complicity with the government of Versailles"? It all depends upon the way one wants to apprehend things. I am not certain of being innocent. Frequently enough I pass for an honest man--I say, honest, because hopefully some notes won't fall under the gaze of the delegate of the prefecture of police--an honest man, who when I wrote this, was capable, the rogue! of dining at the Hotel de Reservoir, with some members of the National Assembly. See now why I am not tranquil! Knowing a man who knows deputies, that constitutes--or I am indignant to live under the paternalist government of the Commune --a good and fine complicity with the men of Versailles. I believe that one would act more prudently slipping away from Paris in a coal sack, like one of my friends, by another playful means. Thus, bow to those compromised men!

XXXI. Flourens--Flourens and Rochefort

Flourens is dead, this evening, it is certain. A National Guardsman returned from Bougival the colonel's horse, but after a few hours, the summary details, apparently true [became known].

He was a prisoner at Rueil.

"Report!" He said to a gendarme, who replied with a pistol blow. Another gendarme gave him a saber blow in the stomach--a third gendarme, another saber blow--that cracked his skull. Some pistol blows made an assassin. From these obscure events it isn't clear what is true. What one knows is, he is dead. His body was recognised at Versailles by an employee of the Garnier Brothers house [bank]. His mother went this morning, looking for the body of her son. What trespass led this man to all these revolutionary shocks and these last years that all men of peace and order especially loathe, sadden?

General Duval, killed, stirs us; Flourens dead, saddens us. Ah! That is because he was an ardent soul and convincing, sincere! He was a believer. Who knows religion, the apostle inspires respect, and the martyr compassion. That apostle, that martyr, was born rich, was the son of an illustrious savant,

one could almost say that he was born a savant. Still young, he adventured in politics. If Crete fought, he left for Crete. There he rebelled against the insurrection himself, jeered at the gendarmes, was taken, evaded, was retaken, and in a word a legend was invented, a novel created. Because it was romantic it was interesting. He returned to France. Full of generosity, prodigious with his money as well as with his blood, he succoured the miserable of Belleville during winters without fire and bread. He truly went, from house to house, questioning, consoling, reviving. Remember what Victor Hugo recounted of the sublime Pauline Roland? The soul of Flourens resembled the soul of Pauline Roland. That patriot was a sister of charity. Besides, fevered politics, seeker of a social eldorado, he took violent arms in service of the most desperate causes; no one was less prudent than he; he was activity itself, errant, disordered, he captivated everyone. Immobility was forbidden for him, when he could not visibly act, he acted in shadow, but he always acted. His friendship with Henri Rochefort was intimate. The two "turbos" one by the pen, the other by arms, would both dream. Rochefort's excessive invective called back Flourens' excess fervor. The two natures countered, and paralleled one another. Have you ever seen, in some workshop, two young men, enact the farce where, behind a cloak, one gestures; Rochefort and Flourens did that farce in politics one other's speech, one speaking, the other struggled; then they separated. That day was the funeral of Victor Noir. That day, Henri Rochefort--one must count him--preserved from a terrible danger a multitude of men. Flourens, following, wanted to take the body to Père-Lachaise--on the way they would fight, would act: it was the will of an agitator. Beaten, the word won, a hundred thousand cries for "vengeance" echoed through the space, but fell broken through the Neuilly cemetery. Flourens waited for the best time, waited and acted. He was the man of the barricades. Pavement march is incomprehensible; according to him, pavers were not made for the streets and refereeing with armed patriots. All the same, it was good that he constantly wore a black coat, not later blackened by gunfire or barrage.; he defended the barricades he had been ordered to raise; ; wherever he could die, he went, to the milieu of perpetual insurrection that was all to him, preserving the placid and sweet air of a nice young man, the exquisite courtesy of a gentlemen, a child's surprised eyes. With that sweet, collected, charming, air, that he fell beneath the gendarmes' saber. Now he is dead. Judge, blame, one cannot hate. Folly makes a hero. The Commune--such as were its real masters--did not deserve this martyr.

XXXII. A Sad Spirit

In a milieu of horrid events involving the entire country, where can one place a sadness which bruises only one sad heart? Yes, the smallest detail is not without importance in the vast tableau. It was a child's funeral procession. The coffin of ashwood, partly covered by a small black flag, like Théophile Gautier said, no bigger than a violin cover. Few were in the cortege: an old woman, doubtless the mother, in a black wool dress, and fluted white bonnet; she had by the hand a little boy not old enough to cry; after her; two women, doubtless neighbors, bawling. The procession followed a long street under an admirable sun.

When they arrived at the church, it was a closed church. Meanwhile, the older women, had paid for the Mass, and the time for the ceremony was set. A neighbor detached herself from the cortege and went to the sacristy side door; she was received by a National Guard who yelled "No one admitted!" He deigned to inform her that the priest, the sacristan, and all the j...f.... of the church had been locked up to no longer pollute patriots with b....b..... The mother drew near.

"-Eh, well," said she "who will bury my child, if you have put the priest in prison?" And the poor old woman sobbed [never] dreaming that no priest would be able to throw holy water on the little box.

My God! yes, gentlemen of the Commune, she cried, she cried more, much later, at the cemetery, when she saw lowered into the grave a dear body that had not been commended to the good God. What do you want? It was not necessary to require this of her, a sad soul, a poor woman with limited ideas. These mothers, unworthy, I realize, to offer to the country's citizens, don't want to enwrap and bury their children like a dog; they don't know that praying is criminal, that kneeling is a fine, and saying to God "I adore you" is an offense against the whole of humanity; they are weak enough to want to place a cross on the tombs of those for whom they weep. A cross to the nineteenth century! Red flag, premature.

XXXIII. Communal Brotherhood--Citizen Lhuillier and Mont-Valerian-- the Prisons of Lhuillier--Lhuillier-Latitude-Marionettes and Puppets

Definitely, communal fraternity is more and more affirmed; put in practice that admirable precept: "Arrest one another." They speak of M. Delescluze sent

to the Conciergerie. Here, they arrested Lhuillier, today arrest Assy. It is not enough to exchange the executive Commission like currency, dare I express it, like a nightcap; the Commune conducts itself, in regard to those members who displease it, absolutely as though they were mere archbishops.

What! Assy, Assy to Creusot, Assy who signed Central Committee proclamations at the head of all his colleagues not by celebrity, but alphabetical order, no longer sits at the Hotel de Ville? Who will propose more decrees? Who will debate with F. Cournet? Who will respond to G. Tridon? Why this? Who wants such a fall from glory? It is rumored about that Assy, judged it prudent to put to one side some banknotes found in Versailles government desks. So, I ask you? When one is in politics, money is like having affairs? Pure peccadillo, gentlemen of the Commune! Ah, if Citizen Assy were convicted of having in 1843 undertaken relations with a woman who gave him a son, today he would be the cousin of M. Thiers' footman, if he had been seen in church and it was definitely proven that his sole end was "to steal"the faithful, I would understand your indignation. But to arrest a man because he secured the fruit of treachery and rapine! it cuts, and if you continue, take care, one would believe that you are prejudiced.

Citizen Lhuillier, who had been one of the first victims of the "brotherhood" was incarcerated because he did not succeed in taking Mont-Valerien. I dreamed with terror if I had been in his place, I would certainly have incur the rigors under which he has fallen, but by the devil I could not be taken for supporting the Hôtel de Ville, upon the table of deliberation, the great stronghold. You are Swiss, you see Mont-Blanc, you see a child pass by:"Go find me Mont-Blanc,plays ball in the nearest gutter, and on his return, he has not the least Mont-Blanc under his arm. Then, what do you do? You beat bloody the unfortunate agent. But it seems that M. Lhuillier does not wish to continue being beaten, I kid myself, to being imprisoned, and no less doughty ruse, he left, without drums or trumpets, his undeserved cell. "My dear Rochefort,"he wrote to the editor of the Mot d'ordre (Order's Word) "you probably know, but I am constrained to avow complete ignorance, more than M. Lhuillier's "machination"the order than he had given to put Mont-Valerien in his pocket. "Arrested, without reason, by order of the Central Committee, I am flung... (Flung! There was a writ of flinging M. Lhuillier"...to the Depot of the prefecture of Police."(from the ex-prefecture, if you please).. and put in seclusion at the very moment when Paris has need of men of action and military practitioners."Fie! Gentlemen of the Commune, you have under your hand a man of action--who does not know the noble actions of Citizen

Lhuillier?--you have under your hand a military practitioner--all the world knows the profound experience of the matters of war that M. Lhuillier has acquired in his numerous campaigns? and you have, I say, thrown him in the Depot of the Prefecture? That is bad, very bad. "The Depot is transformed into state prison and the most rigorous precautions are taken among the detained." That is good to note. It appears that the prisons of the Commune do not exactly lead to a life of plenty." Nevertheless, followed by my secretary, I find occasion to tranquil weather..." Tranquil is adorable: tranquility never abandons the great souls--"the threshold of my cell, from the guard's port, I saw two yards with a dozen guards, opened onto three closed doors, and the prefecture functionaries presented arms to me." Sublime evasion! Prison lag-Latitude! What a chapter the regretted and ingenious Alexandre Dumas would have written upon that admirable gift! The cell threshold opens under the jailer's nose, doubtless M. Lhuillier sleeps there in drunken torpor, thanks to his long voyages, in the far Indies, the secret of calm, twelve yard guards sized by the throat, bound, unable to give the alarm with twelve gags [poires d'angoisse, literally "pears of anguish", medieval torture devices] crammed into twelve mouths, and the three doors opened by enormous false keys made by a Commune member, a locksmith remaining faithful to the cause of Lhuillier, and again, those factionaries, plunged into ecstasy in a single glance at the glorious fugitive, and presenting arms, what drama! Not without contest, the best is the secretary! I love him, this secretary, while M. Lhuillier accomplishes these miracles, I see him readily writing in the milieu of danger, a sure sketch of these noble adventures, that they not perish! "At that time, continued the ex-prisoner of the ex-prefecture, I had two hundred men determined to serve me as escorts and three good loaded revolvers in my pocket. I had had for a long time the simplicity of travel without arms and without friends; today, I decided to talk to exhaustion the first who came to arrest me." Ah! My God! thus wrote a brave bourgeois--the bourgeoisie are ferocious--to the reader of that letter, if all the Commune members could come to arrest one another!" I am not imprisoned but move freely on the boulevards." What pride! What grandeur of soul! Ah, puppet government, pantomimes, marionettes! I am afraid of being unjust and want to believe, yes, I want to believe again--despite armed requisitions, despite the arrests, despite the thefts, that those who ordered the thefts, despite the decrees, useless and grotesque--I want to believe that we have not been uniquely seized and transported the theater Guignol [Horror theater] to the Hôtel de Ville to play a sinister farce; I want to hope that you again have honorable ends, avowing for your natural inexperience, joined to the difficulties of the moment, is the sole cause of your excesses and folly; it pleases me to

think to annoyed by the successive abdications of your most estimable colleagues, again honest men, serious men who groan at the evil which has been done would want to mend and do your best to forget the crime and horror of civil war by the good deeds that sometimes appertain to revolutions; yes, I who have in my time fed upon illusions, I want to think that; but, in good faith, what confidence do you imagine can be inspired in people, perhaps more in favor of innovators, see you arrest each other, and are obliged to recognize among you generals like Bergeret, honest men like Assy, the fugitives from the Bicetre [prison] like Lhuillier?

XXXIV. Struggle Always

Always the struggle continues. It is an effort, if, at rare intervals, the cannonades stop. The results are little noticed. Today, the 7th of April, things are at the point where Bergeret rested and Flourens was killed. The forts of Vanves and Issy bombarded the Versailles batteries, who bombarded the forts of Vanves and Issy; the curious, clumped at the Trocadero, see afar white smoke rise. Each morning, Citizen Cluseret, Delegate for War, announces that an assault, undertaken by gendarmes, has been gallantly repulsed by the forts'; garrisons. It will be certain that if the Versaillais attack, they are repulsed, until they do not advance. But are they attacking? I am vaguely inclined to believe one implies attack in order to be able to announce victories. It seems evident that the generals of the National Assembly-- currently occupy themselves establishing batteries and grouping forces--will act in a serious fashion believing themselves certain of success. Waiting, they content themselves with completing the ruin of the forts dismantled by the Prussians.

Between Courbevoie and Maillot port, the battle continues. Terrain lost, terrain gained. This house the Versaillais occupy an hour, now is occupied by the Federals. There is never triumph, always struggle. What!.Can no one raise their voice to cry: "Enough! Enough of blood and of tears! Enough of the French killed by the French, and of republicans killed by republicans!"When men fall on one side or the other with the same cry upon their lips! When will this dark misunderstanding stop!

XXXV. Funerals

Thirty muffled drums, thirty trumpets draped in mourning march at the head of an immense cortege: the drums, for a moment, sound a sad roll, sustained and dying away; the clear trumpet grieves.

Detachments, numerous, come once more, battalions again, marching slowly, guns to the ground; mourning cockades on all their buttonholes, the cockades are red. Is this a show of a political sentiment? Is it the symbol of bleeding death?

Advancing, pulled by four black horses, a vat wagon, draped in black, covering a catafalque of black velvet spangled with silver stars; from the four corners flutter in the wind somber red flags.

Another wagon appears, then another, another again; in each of these mortuary cabs, there are thirty two corpses

After the wagons march members of the Commune, heads bared, sashed with red scarves. Ah! Always red.

Again, between an infinite double line of national guardsmen, a narrow mob of numberless men, -

The long cortege follows the boulevards. It comes to the Beaujon Hospital, goes to Père Lachaise, all along its passage heads are bare. One man, at a window, keeps his hat on; there is a cry; he is discovered. Proud to not salute those who are dead for a cause that they believed just! Think no more before the bodies drawn past, or the ill caused by the men that were, they are dead, they are sacred. But think on--oh yes, think on--that it is a crime that some pay the death of so great a number, and hurry the hour when your voices will weigh upon the guilty, such as are, whose actions have the inexorable obloquy that precipitates human destinies.

XXXVI. The Post and Citizen Theiz--To the water, Informer--That is Prudent Advice

More letters! During the siege, if one absolutely had to obtain news of mother or wife, it was necessary, if you complained, to address yourselves to the sleepwalkers or a fortuneteller. The matter is not as complicated as you would believe; you don't have a ribbon, a lock of hair, nothing appertaining to

the absent person? It is enough. You could be informed, hour by hour, what they said, where they went, what they thought. You object that you prefer an older method, and find it more agreeable to receive a letter than to consult a charlatan. Ah! Really? Very well, I do not need counsel from on high. One would take you in effect, for a reactionary, and you could be sorry for it. In a street demonstration here, a young man was walking down the Champs-Elysees. A National Guardsman approached him and demanded a light.

"I am sorry, said the stroller, but my cigar has gone out"

"Ah! Your cigar is out? Ah! You blush to render a service to a patriot? Reactionary, go!"

Insults rained, and a group formed, and a woman--a good amiable person--yelled "He is an old police officer"

"Yes, yes, he is a disguised gendarme."

"He resembles Ernest Picard!"

"He must be thrown in the water!"
"To the water! the Seine, the informer!"

The poor young man was surrounded, seized, swept up; the group became a mob, guards, women, children, repeating not knowing why: "To the water! He should be shot! Hanged!" Superstitious persons insisted on hanging, wanting the rope {reputed to have magical powers} Whence this came, no one longer knew. A man told me:

"It appeared that it stopped where they went to set alight the ambulance at the Palace of Industry. Was he hanged, shot, drowned? I hope not. What is known is that one would do well to avoid an analagous adventure, and, those disquieted by your family or your affairs, I suggest you carefully dissemble. Let us suppose that you meet one of your best friends.

--Ah! Dear friend, he says, are you disquieted?

--Disquieted, me? Not a bit of it. On the contrary I have never had a more peaceable feeling.

--I believe that your aunt was ill? And, at the moment, you are not receiving letters...

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-Me not receiving letters? Who told you that, good God! I receive more than ever, more than I want. No letters, what an idea!

-You must be favored, because after Citizen Theiz was put at the Postal office, communications are interrupted.

--But not all, not all! That is a report that reactionaries are circulating. Oh! Those reactionaries! They don't just imagine that the Commune is imprisoning priests, has arrested journalists, and suppressed newspapers?

--You have heard the proclamation that citizen Theiz himself announced that communications with the Departments (provinces) would not be re-established for some days.

--Pure modesty upon his part! It appears he must reorganize the service compromised by those beggars the reactionaries.

--How often do you have news of your aunt?

-Daily.

--Very good! I am envious. One of our friends who arrived from Marseilles told me that your poor parents had died.

--Dead! On my God! What are you telling me? Listen well now, I dreamed this morning that I had not received a letter.

-There, you see!

But you must not be carried by grief to imperil your personal safety and respond:

--I perceive that that monsieur, extraordinarily, I have had no news today, that excellent man citizen Theiz wanted to spare my misery!

XXXVII. Don't Touch the Queen--Suppressed Newspapers-Dangers in Private

Don't touch the queen. The queen, in these times, is the press. A queen fallen, degraded, but always queen. In vain the press abases itself in the opinion of honest people by consenting to excess, approved falsehoods, and applauding crimes; vain that certain journalists have discredited the paper, the press, august daughter of human thought, it has lost neither its power nor its

prestige. Poorly constituted, poorly used, it can nourish, but no person can mistake the grandeur of the service it can render, nor the nobility of its mission. If her voice sometimes lies she has also been the voice that instructs and encourages.

When you go in the night, making a false blow--and you have made it--when you stop the presses of the Journal de Débats, of Paris-Journal, of Constitutionnel, do you know what you have done? You believe perhaps that such an action is not a violent suppression of personal property--it is a theft--it reduces to misery--it is a crime--all those who live by the journal, the journalists, typesetters, folders and porters?

Again, you have barred also what was in your power [to circulate] the current of human progress. The most noble right of man, said to be the highest that we possess ou have suppressed like a pickpocket "lifts" a pocket handkerchief, and you have taken by the collar that holy thing, the independence of thought, and said "Embarrass me, I strangle you."

And why have you done that? To shut the mouths of those who disagree, it is acknowledgment that you are not sure of your reasoning. Suppressing newspapers, avows what you fear. You fear that apprehension of the light inspires other whispers upon what you do in the dark. Close the windows when you do not want to be seen. Closed doors inspire little confidence. Your seances in the Hôtel de Ville have taken place in private, like a sad trial whose details would be dangerous for public morale. What is the mystery? Have you odd projects? Are you confabulating amongst yourselves so blameworthy that decency constrains you to deliberate in secret? That fear of publicity, or discussions, is proved again by the squads of national guards stationed at the printshops, like claws in a solitary house. And we are reduced judging by your actions, to knowing the bloody actions of this civil war, solely to your affirmations or those of your complicit journals? You are determined to be culpable, and certainly obligated to lie, until you disembarrass yourselves of first those who could judge and those who could deny! You have not only committed a crime, but a blunder. One does not with impunity touch the freedom of the written word. The press, persecuted, exercises a day of terrible reprisals. Look behind you. Observe the long years of imperial government, the few long months pf the government from September 4th. Of all the crimes committed by the first, of all the faults committed by the second, the finally most hated faults, is that to which the press has been the victim. Was not one of the most valid excuses of the insurrection of March 18th the suppression of

some journals by General Vinoy, with the consent of M. Thiers? Are you imprudent enough to commit the blunder that lost the preceding governments, and insufficiently careful enough of your own honor to commit the crime with which you reproach your enemies?

Ah! Truly, those whom you observe with patience and impartiality, those who at first could perhaps have inclined to favor you, because you seemed to represent some of the legitimate aspirations of Paris, those who could see you acting in careless tyranny, would know the impossibility of retaining illusion of your account; and having initially estimated you by your love of liberty, will, by love of liberty, obliged to scorn you once more!

XXXVIII. Paris Bombarded--A Walk Down the Champs-Élysées--Continued Walk-- Some Shells--Going to Porte-Maillot--What what saw from the Window--The Dice--Women and Children--Mistake of the Cannon--What remains for Victory?

What was true? I could not believe. Was it possible that Paris, for a second time, was bombarded? And bombarded by whom? By Frenchmen. Despite the reported danger, of going to Neuilly, I wanted to see things with my own eyes, and that morning in April, I went down the Champs-Élysées.

Until a roundabout, nowhere in particular maybe [it was] more solitary than in the previous days. The omnibus stopped at the top of the Avenue Marigny. An Englishwoman, handed down by the conductor, asked me the road; she wanted to go to Rue Galilee, but did not dare follow the main avenue; I pointed out a lateral road and continued my way. Here was a cordon of National Guards; stationed every ten paces, they were stopping traffic.

-No passage!

--But, I replied....

And I stopped myself, seeking a plausible reason to justify my insistence. I had no great need to insist, but the functionary judged the expostulation enough, replied :

--That's different, pass.

As I mounted the steps the avenue became more and more deserted. The shutters of all the houses were closed. From place to place, a passerby

prudently ranged along the walls, taking refuge in the coach entrance doors open by order, from the whistle of a shell. Before the shop of a carriage maker, hermetically sealed, the runs are arrayed in fasces [bundles]; the better part of the guards sleep in the gutter; others paces the hundred paces, pipes in mouths; some play with corks. I heard it said that a shell was heard, on the quarter-hour, in the corner of the avenue and street of Morny. A captain lay there, covered by dirt, at his side of his wife, who had come to bring him breakfast; the captain literally had been cut in two; they moved the woman, gravely wounded, to a pharmacy by the omnibus office. Assuring my self that she was all right, retracing my steps,. I went to the perimeter. There was a small group before the shop. I attempted my reconnaissance, but could see nothing, but the wounded, taken into the laboratory. I learned only that she had received a shell fragment in the neck and had been treated by a doctor from one of the La Presse {newspaper sponsored} ambulances. I retraced my route. The cannonade, that appeared interrupted, renewed with rare vigor; white smoke rose at the Porte-Maillot; from machine guns, deployed at Mont-Valerien; clattering below the Arc de Triomphe. Always, I advanced, on the right, and on the left, companies of Federals. Further on, a more complete battalion, arms right-shouldered, bundles on their backs, bread stabbed on their bayonets, moving off in the direction of the Porte-Maillot. Beside the captain of the first company marched a woman in a singular uniform; the jacket of a cantinière, a variant of National Guard, a above it, a Phrygian bonnet; she had a rifle on her shoulder and a revolver in her belt; she appeared to me young and pretty. I asked some Federals; it appeared that she was the wife of citizen Eudes, a member of the Commune; another assured me that that she was a newspaper hawker from the Avenue de Ternes, where her son, a little three year old boy, had been killed that evening, here on the Rue of Acacias, by a shell fragment, and she had vowed to avenge her child. I learned also that the battalion was reinforcing the fighters at Neuilly, who were at that moment weakening. According to the rumors circulating, the gendarmes and the town police would be advancing to the Rue de Huissiers I believe well enough that the generals of the National Assembly have not neglected to employ the town police and gendarmes, who are, first, old soldiers, and second, good soldiers; but in truth; if one had the imagination of the Federals who persist in sighting them, they must be more numerous than the sands of the sea, or their leaders have succeeded in giving them the gift of ubiquity. Meanwhile, I am with the battalion and we find ourselves fifty meters in the vicinity of the Arc de Triomphe. A quick whistle, piercing, tortuous, begins from afar, increasing as it comes; a little distant to be the report of a bomb, going off. Beware the shell!

cries a town police sargeant, and in the blink of an eye the battalion bellies to the ground, with a clatter of bayonets that crumples the furled knapsacks. There was some danger after all. The projectile fell and flashed, with a formidable report, a little way from us, in the gutter, before the last house on the avenue, to the left. I have never before seen such a bright shell burst. One can get some idea of the spectacle, seeing naive paintings that show, hanging, blinded beggars, and those that represent a mining disaster. Besides, I don't believe that anyone had been hit, and the damage materials tore a great trough in the asphalt and a sunken door. The battalion was relieved, and some guards broke out to collect the shards; they had gone a few steps, and the alarm sounded a second time; preceded by a terrible hiss, and now, we all fell there. A Second projectile detonated, but we had not seen it fall, we saw, only, the top floor of a house had been hit, a window was briskly opened on the squares of broken glass jutted into the street. It is likely that the shell fell upon the housetop and collapsed it. Was there anyone under the roofs? We get up, and return to the Arc de Triomphe. I adroitly insinuate myself into the confidence of the rear guard, and hope that I am strong enough to go as far as I please. Singular thing! I vow with a naive vanity; I am not afraid of anything. A different shell vector by a centimeter, and I could be chopped up into bits ; doesn't matter, I am marching forward. I begin to believe that it is not very difficult to be brave. --when not a poltroon. Under the immense arch of the monument, about a hundred curious dare the opening, and from time to time, stick up their heads to inspect the debris from three successive shells at the group of sculptor Étex. But on the avenue of the Grand-Armée, hardly a federal is seen, and I am perhaps the only man without a uniform allowed to go there. I see a small barricade distinctly, raised before the Porte-Maillot, beside the ramparts. The bastion of the right shelled vigorously the heights of Courbevoie; enormous puffs of smoke, almost immediately followed by frightful detonations, certifying the zeal of Commune artillerymen. Below, the avenue of Neuilly extends, long, solitary, dusty; besides the sun blinds me, and I can distinguish objects imperfectly. But the fusillade becomes very distinct; it strikes at Saint-James--I remember the little house where I used to live, facing the Boulogne woods,--and in the ancient park of Neuilly. I wanted to follow the battalion through the gates, but an officer saw me, and with scant politeness, intimated I should go back. He did me a service; an instant later fire from Versailles batteries had diminished in intensity, the place was not going to be tenable long, if one judged by shell debris and litter, the sun here and there, by the stretchers carried [past] where one perceives blankets reddened by blood, by the stations, almost completely collapsed, and by the neighboring houses,

almost all with great gouges in their facades. Besides, the Federals do not appear to realise a measure of their delicate situation. Great gales of laughter emit from the casement of a smoking chimney, and the guards, who want this and that, sigh the song "Song of Departure", with the most satisfied air in the world. I gain the Rue de Débarcadère, very close to the rampart. One of my parents lived at No. 4; she had left, but the concierge recognized me and allowed me to install myself at a window. In the neighboring house, there was a corner, a shell at the wine merchant's, which could pass inspection, and offered a little- appreciated lesson, shattering the glasses, mangling the tables, breaking the counter, but neither killing or wounding anyone. In the crossfire, I could not see the bastion, which had collapsed the stations; but in the distance, on the left, below the Bois de Boulogne, where it seemed I could perceive troop movements through the branches--are they Versaillais? Are they Parisians? =the sun rises, enormous and, the Mont-Valerien. The sparks, in the full light of day pales to silver, is rapidly succeeded with echoing detonations, and a giant has a tiara of smoke. I believe that pulls in the direction of Levallois rather than upon the Porte-Maillot. The Federals do not dream of responding. Turning a little to the right, I dominate entirely the Avenue of Neuilly. The bare terrain that forms the area called the military zone is almost absolutely deserted; some shells fall, evidently meant for Porte-Maillot, or the bastion. My place at the window is not exempt from peril.; I am justly behind the bastion. After the military zone, the houses seem abandoned, but I see distinctly National Guards eating in the gutter of the Gilet restaurant. I was well set to judge the debris from the projectiles, I have heard it said that the housetops, by the side, walls ollapsed and overturned. All that I could see of the Place de Marché was deserted, but the sound of the fusillade and smoke rising from the sides showed me the Federals and in sufficient number. Again, further, I see guns in the windows, smoke mounting; instantly the groups of combatants cross the street and disappear into the houses. Regarding the bridge, a somber line is a barricade, very confusing, thanks to blinding sun and perhaps also the emotion that makes me desire at times, and fear to see. Surprising, at the battle where I assisted, is the small number of combatants visible. But here at one fell swoop--two hours later--the Versaillais batteries of Courbevoie, silenced long enough, opened up with fury. The horrible cough of machine guns over the sighs of shells; all the length of the avenue is bathed in white fog. The bastion ripostes energetically; I feel racking disdain for the ear, and hear the brusque dull, dry, report, enormous, heard again, and I felt the house tremble. The National Guards on the ramparts erupt in great yells; I think that a volley of projectiles had ripping the bridge

supports of the Porte-Maillot. Meanwhile, below, the smoke descends in snow, and the most intense fusillades also appear the closest. I have the sense that the most powerful comes from Courbevoie. The Versaillais are marching forward? Shells shred the gate near the Champs-Élysées. I distinguish a tumultuous teeming march, in the smoke, the dust, under the sun. The bastion resounds with a crossfire rage. I no longer doubt, the Versaillais do advance; they have red trousers; they are linemen. The houses of the avenue barrage along the way. I see a troop stop, hesitate under the balls emanating from the Place du Marché, until they withdraw. Then, from the houses the Federals, in large number, thread along the walls, doubtless to strip the machinegun of Courbevoie, and following the enemy's retreat. But soon, and at the distant point where I can readily distinguish, they are stopped in their turn, until they retrace their steps, and den in the houses, the Versaillais battery fire relents, while the bastion's continues its furious attack.

I am helped to one of the tree lines and venues under the machine gun and gunfire, common from one part to the next, under the horrible civil war which centers on Neuilly. As it would be supremely imprudent to make one's way by train, or the avenue of the Grand-Armée where the Versaillais projectiles fall ceaselessly, I am on the Rue du Debarcadère, by Rue Saint-Ferdinand, and thence the Place de Ternes, ahead of the church. The quarter is funereal. Very near the ramparts, it is very exposed, and suffers greatly. Almost all shops are closed; food and wine sellers' doors are half open on many shopfronts are chalked words "Go to the gateway." I mark an open church, these days, a rare thing. What! The Commune committed the unqualified imprudence of failing to arrest the vicar of Saint-Ferdinand church? Can it be so long suffering?--have they not repented of this weakness?

Then is it permitted that inhabitants of Ternes to be baptised, married, buried, according to the deplorable usage and customs of Catholicism, fortunately fallen into desuetude in the rest of Paris? I am more startled by the fierceness of the shelling in this poor quarter; the anger of the goddess of Reason--that is if we would have a goddess Reason?--it weighs upon these quarters, shame of the capital, or again the air of believing in the good God. Meanwhile, I enter the church. There are many devotees, and some devout too. The priests say of the dead on the belt of a woman, who, according to what I was told, received here a ball in the chest, while crossing the Avenue des Ternes, a little before the railroad way. A ball, that is odd, but everyone confirmed it. One must then believe, that the Versaillais are a little closer than official dispatches deign to tell us.

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I turn in the street, moving towards Rue de Eylau. Two national guardsmen pass, carrying a stretcher. I approach them.

--Oh! You can look, one of them says.

I tear open the drapes of blue and white netting, swooping on. The mattress bears a little bourgeois lady and a child of two or three years old, lying on her chest. Both are very pale, the arm of the mother hangs, sleeve red, the hand wounded.

-Oh! are they wounded? I ask.

--Wounded? They are dead. This is the wife and child of the bicycle merchant on the Avenue Wagram. If you go there and tell him, you would do us a favor

True, certain, incontestable. The balls, and the shells of the Versaillais are not content with killing combatants who struggle in the breach of forts and ramparts. They kill women, children, people passing by, and not only those whose imprudent curiosity puts them where they need not go but those who indispensably must, in order to buy bread, must chance a moment in the streets of their quarters. It is not only the buildings nearest the town wall that the National Assembly's shells affect; they overshoot the defensive lines, they collapse inoffensive houses farther away, they crumble the sculptures of monuments. One cannot respond, no, to that affirmation. I say, I have seen, hour upon hour the shells arriving more in advance. Here they fall upon the avenue of the Grand-Armée; today they pass through the Arc de Triomphe; they fall on the Place de Eylau and Avenue D'Uhrich; who knows if they will attain the Place de la Concorde; if, the day after tomorrow I will not be killed by a burst from a shell while crossing the Boulevard Montmartre? Paris bombarded! Take care, gentlemen of the National Assembly! What the Prussians did--which triggered the just complaints to government of 4 September--it would be infamy and repair. Kill all the French who fight the French, until that is that! Horrible law of civil war, but spare the lives and houses of those who have not taken arms against you, who perhaps are your allies. You will object that cannons are not endowed with either intelligence or mercy, and have not done all that they could have done. Eh! You have marvelous artillerymen, who during the siege, frequently demolished the enemy into pieces, disturbing their [breast] works with precision, and from a distance of seven kilometers, were capable of placing a ball balanced atop a Prussian's helmet? Are they maladroit after they have returned to those batteries? Without

irony and in one word as much as a hundred, you do greater crime by a useless cruelty, and a shell, falling awry over the ramparts of Paris, is the same time a crime, a blunder. Dream on this, that in the ghastly struggle to which we all assist, the victory will rest not with that of the two parties who triumphs over his adversary by force--that triumph you will certainly obtain--but he who, by his conduct, succeeds in proving to a neutral population, who observe and judge, that right was on his side. I do not contest that your cause is the better--but if you can reproach the imprudent resistances, clumsy attacks, and a culpable obstinacy to not demolish all that which is legitimate and honorable in the voices of Paris, one is obliged to agree that you represent, legitimately and legally, all the France--I do not contest that law is in effect on your side, but hope that you will rally the considerable number of Parisians who, at the moment, defy you, having massacred pedestrians and breaching the stones? If the bombardment will continue, if this bombardment redoubles in violence, as it seems like to do, you become odious, a hundred times, a hundred crimes. Thus, it is urgent, if please, to order the artillerymen of Courbevoie and Mont Valerien, to moderate their zeal--if you do not wish Paris--neutral Paris--to make dangerous comparisons between the National Assembly who sent the shells and the Commune that imposed the decrees, and say one day that the decrees were less evil than the shells. Of the legality, in sum, we do not concern ourselves, we've seen governments, one more legal than another, but we are blasé at this point, and a few million votes will not make us find the machine gun agreeable. Certainly, that the men at the Hôtel de Ville made, and make us smile at mediocrity. It arrests priests, it suppresses newspapers, hopes to incorporate whim, or force into the National Guard. It loots a bit, it says the least, lies mostly, that is incontestable, and most awkward! But, what do you want, human nature has its weaknesses, one likes more being scammed than bombarded.

XXXIX. Disappearance of Bergeret--Bergeret's Plan

Where is Bergeret? What has Bergeret done? Bergeret has deceived us, [but] one has not the right to suppress Bergeret, who, according to the official announcements was "himself" at Neuilly, Bergeret went in an open carriage to the battle, Bergeret brought a bit of gaiety to our distress. When he reversed his command, I saw well; to whom he gave it did not matter, I did not oppose it; but took the liberty of smiling; Zounds, these occasions are rare enough! The curt rumor that he had been sent to the Conciergerie [prison], that excellent

Bergeret. and because he had made an plan of sorts? Because he had wanted the Federal army to take Versailles.

Oh well, citizens, if I dare give my humble opinion at this point I would dare insinuate a plan to citizen Bergeret--who has completely failed, I realize,- that was in the present case, the only one possible, the only good, sole one capable of transforming the insurrection of Montmartre into triumphant revolution of the Paris Commune.

Think as little, if you please. Is the struggle of solitary Paris against the whole of France possible? No. And certainly, today, after the disasters of the communal insurrections in Marseilles, in Lyon, in Toulouse, disasters that your official dream-mongers fail to spin into success; I tell you today, you cannot keep you illusion of agreement with the countryside. In a few days, before your ramparts, you will have your fortresses dismantled, the whole country before you, you will be lost, yes, lost, despite the undeniable heroism of seduced Parisians whom you lead to certain massacre. The only hope you could reasonably conceive is this; profit from the first moment of surprise, of disarray, of victorious emotion in the few hesitant soldiers then in the whole of the French army, to Surprise Versailles, again ill-defended, and take, if possible, the Assembly and the Government. It would have meant your rough uprising continued into a strategic stroke. A bit of hope, uncertain, I admit, Bergeret's plan, justly from his daring, from his violence, not rendered by you, who do not succeed by violence or daring, and success cannot continue than by the same means. Now, what will you do? Resist? The whole of France? Interior enemies? Towards external enemies whose number grows by the day? Your defeat is certain, just a matter of time. It was definitely criminal putting Bergeret "in the shadows" as they say at the Hôtel de Ville--firstly because you amused us, then because he had attempted the only thing likely to save you. One must be a fool for folly to succeed.

XL. Apotheosis of Cluseret--All Soldiers!--Informers and Recruiters-- Who is Monsieur Cluseret?--93 and America

Who replaced Bergeret? Dombrowski. Who had also wanted this? Cluseret. There has been the Central Committee, there has been the Commune, now there is Cluseret. Cluseret inhaled the Commune who had inhaled--and badly enough digested, it seems to us--the Central Committee.

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Cluseret is great, Cluseret is strong, Cluseret will save Paris. Cluseret makes degrees, Cluseret will execute them.

--The Commune said: We want,

--but Cluseret said: I want.

He has conceived and promulgated that admirable law:

"Considering the patriotic claims of a great number of national guards who have, while married, the honor of defending their municipal independence, even at the price of their lives..."

So I would like to know, those national guards who attach so little importance to their skins! If one can find two, I consent to being the third. But let us not interrupt the dictator Cluseret. "...The decree of April 5th is modified." You note that said decree was rendered by the Commune than in truth Cluseret subjects himself to anxiety!

"...thus modified: from seventeen and nineteenth years, service in combat units is voluntary, and for those nineteen to forty national guard service is obligatory, married or not."

"I enlist good patriots to themselves police their arrondissement and to force the refractory to serve."

Ingenious arrest! Note how the logic flows from considering what passed before? After some patriotic declamations from some number of National Guardsmen, who would have joined Cluseret at the expense of their lives? They had promised their services, with thanks. Cluseret has done it, more or less. Some want to kill, it is said: therefore it is necessary that everyone be made to kill! Justice in such reasoning! My neighbor has an ardent fever and wants to throw himself out of the window What does the doctor do? He indicates that I fling myself instantly, headfirst, from the fourth floor to the paving stones in the street.

--But doctor, I don't have an ardent fever.

--Doesn't matter, doesn't matter! Your neighbor has, that is more than sufficient, and besides, if you say one word more, I will seize you by all four buttons.

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As to the last paragraph of the Cluseret's decree, it is impossible not to laugh, while still odious. The exhortation to the craft of the recruiter, the counsel to inform the wording is: make themselves the police of the arrondissement.

Renewed with anger and distaste. What is there to say? I will pass down the street, going about my affairs, here first encountered is a Federal, it does not matter that his hands are dirty--a villain leaves, certainly, but an honest man will obey the counsel of Cluseret?--A scoundrel collars me and says:"You! You are going to come and kill for my municipal independance."This evening, I will be in my bed, tranquil, sleeping, as is my right, I suppose and four or five fellows, drunk on patriotism, will force my door if I tarry obeying domesticity, at the first ring of the bell, willy-nilly-I remove my self to the forward pot, in underwear, my shirt, a nightcap, like a brave san-culotte? Of course! monsieur delegated to the war, to support that, it is necessary I swear to you that famished, in the last days of the siege, I was constrained to sell to some second hand dealer, our colleague today in the Commune, the revolver that I had hoped--naive fool that I was--to use against the Prussians! A revolver has six shots, if you please, and I never even shot it, alas!

But one must hope again in Paris--at the same hour when the insurrection left the shadows and the lower reaches whence the rips and the cowards, mount like froth to the surface in a shaken wine--hopefully no one will find the craft of tout or policeman, and the decree of M. Cluseret will stay a dead letter like all Commune decrees. I don't want to believe what I was told last night, of men, without specific orders, or legal character, simple guards, intruding themselves into families, watching the children, rousing the sleeping wife, and seizing the husband like a thief or a convict violating parole. Tell me,who can confirm this?About fifty similar actions can be produced in Montmartre, at Batignolles, at Belleville. No matter! I say nothing. I would rather love to believe that these stories are "inventions of Versailles,"than admit the possibility of such an infamy! Now, see this M. Cluseret, delegate for war, dictator, what do you want, what? Where do you come from? What have you done? and in such service take the right to impose your sovereign will upon us?

French? No: American? not likely. But, for the honor of my country I love American more than French. His past ? short and glorious. He served in the French army; he left; why? It is not known. He fought, in America, during the war of succession. His enemies assert that he fought for the slavers, his

friends say the contrary. It is not known which was General Cluseret's side, perhaps both sides. Ah! Because American, taken, not protected. Cluseret comes to us from there with the glory of having denied France. So the revolutionaries accepted him with open arms. An American, think on it! You love Americans? Put it everywhere. The modern Republic has two redoubtable enemies: American and 93. We are parodists! We can be free in our fashion, and duty bound, we are obligated to imitate those who have been, or those that are? One time and one country urging another time and another country? I shall return to this subject. Besides, that America which we extol and I would admire would not dream of remaking France in its image, one must be truly blind to not see that weakness in the face of genuine grandeur. Some tell me: "The American spirit can be compared to a blended liquor, formed by the yeast of Anglo-Saxon beer, from the froth of Spanish wine, and the dregs of little blue French ; shake violently, heat to sixty degrees by the congratulations and admiration (remote, certainly) that combines the detritus of true pale ale, the true Ceres and authentic Chateau-Margaux. From time to time the cauldron bubbles, and wood fire spits into our good old world, yielding to pure sources, original crus their decayed products. ! Ah! many lamentable changes have fallen in that lamentable fashion to our dear French wine! Scandal, doubtless exaggeration, but I want American to have sent Cluseret to France, as I want the Commune imposed on Paris. That last is an admissible excuse; among true Frenchmen perhaps there is a man sufficiently criminally ambitious to set his voice towards the destruction of Paris by Paris, of France, by France.

XLI. The Amazons of the Commune-Children leading

It was not enough that men are pitted with bullets or shredded by machine guns. A strange enthusiasm seized the women in their turn, and here they fall also on the field of battle, victims of an execrable heroism. They are extraordinary beings who abandon the household broom and the workers' needle for the chassepot; who leave their children and go to be killed beside their lovers or their husbands? Amazons-hooligans, magnificent and abject, they have an element of Penthesilea [queen of Amazons in Greek myth] and of Theroigne de Mericourt [French Revolutionary}. One sees the camp followers pass, among those going to fight; the men are furious, they are ferocious, nothing disturbs them, nothing discourages them. At Neuilly, a canteen-keeper, with a head wound, tended her wound, and returned to take her post in battle. Another, in the 61st Battalion boasted of having killed several

gendarmes and three police officers. At Chatillon plateau, a woman, placed with a National Guard unit, fired her gun, reloaded and fired without interruption; she then fell back, turning at each moment to return fire. The camp follower of the 68th battalion fell, killed by a shell burst that broke its drum and lodged into the window frame in bits. After the engagement of the 3rd April, nine bodies were brought to the Mayoral office of Vaurigard. The householders of the quarter are there, moaning and talking, seeking a brother, a husband, a son; they dangle a weak lantern as they approach these pale faces, discover the body of a young woman literally riddled with bullets. What is the furor moving these furies? Do they understand why they die? Here, in a shop on the Rue de Montreuil, between a woman, the gun on the shoulder and blood on the bayonet--Why is it that you won't stop and wash your eyeglasses?-a peaceful lady told me. From a furious altercation; the virago came to such a point that she leapt upon her adversary, deadly force to the neck, until, moving some paces, she seized her gun and fired, meanwhile, she blanched horribly, let her arm fall, and collapsed; she was dead, her temper had caused an aneurism. Such are a fine hour or the women of the people. In 71 the camp followers like 93 had their tricoteuses [knitting furies]; but these have more value, they are horrible in a sort of savage grandeur, outrageous because they fight the French, these women, against foreigners, would have been sublime.

The very children themselves have not remained neutral in this frightful war. The children! you say. One of my friends saw a poor young man whose eye had been burst by a nailpoint. It is not over. It was Friday evening, in the great Rue de Reuilly; two hundred children--the oldest were scarcely twelve years old --met there; they shouldered arms with sticks knobbed with knife points or nail points. They wheeled and counted off; their chiefs--they had chiefs--ordered them to form into half sections then march, in the direction of the Charenton barrier; a little child trailed after them; tooting on a horn bought from a toy merchant; a young camp follower also, six years old. Presently they encountered another troop of children approximately the same amount in number. Was the encounter prearranged? Had they decided to fight? No one knows. They did not halt, but engaged, one side as the Versailles army, the other, the Federal army. Yes, combat, real combat; that the quarter's inhabitants stopped with the greatest difficulty; and they had dead and wounded; said the official dispatches of the Commune: Alexis Mercier, aged twelve years, elevated by his comrades to the rank of captain, was killed with a knife blow to the lower stomach.

Ah! Believe it, the women drunk on hate, the children play at murder, these are terrible symptoms. A few days more and the dizzy slaughter will engulf Paris.

XLII. Conciliation-Why This is impossible

Reconciliation, can one hope? Helas! I think not. Our bloody situation will have a bloody end. It is not only between the Commune of Paris and the Versailles Assembly that a chasm [stretches that] only corpses could fill; Paris herself, at that hour, Paris, one hears, is sincerely desirous of peace, not France; some days of separation have led to a divorce of spirits; one would say that the capital does not speak the language of the countryside; Timbuktu is less isolated from Peking than Versailles from Paris. How can one hope, in such conditions, to halt the ill will, the unique cause of these dreadful misfortunes? How can one believe that the government of M. Thiers will listen to the propositions advanced by the members of the Republican Union of the Rights of Paris, by the delegates of Parisian commerce, by the missionaries of Freemasonry, when the principal end is the permanent establishment of the Republic and full and complete acknowledgment of our municipal votes? The National Assembly is where it was the 18th of March; it misunderstands today, as it misunderstood then, the legitimate voices of the population, and again, does not reckon upon the deeds of a triumphant insurrection--in default of excess deplored by the entire world--has naturally joined the validity of our just claims. The "commons" have offended, but the Commune, the true Commune was right; that is what Paris thinks; and unfortunately Versailles does not want to understand; they want to delay, the forming of government, in the most juvenile status quo; they made a municipal law, which would be judged insufficient, and obstinate in old fashioned error for months [and is] mystifying today, it will not stop to consider the "conciliators" mean while ideas have to the contrary progressed daily, they will not halt to consider the true agents of insurrection, and not simply give them the gate. While the desire to see the fratricidal war end is so great, so burning, and in general, all are convinced the uselessness of these efforts, we admire and encourage those who undertake with persistent courage, an improbable pacification. Honest Paris today, has no flag, neither a red rag, nor the tricolor standard, it is the white {Bourbon} flag of the parliamentarians.

XLIII. The Abbey of Saint Pierre--The Portable Guillotine--Burning the Guillotine

Do you know what is or rather was, at the Abbey of Cinq-Pierres? You have read correctly, Cinq-Pierre, not Saint-Pierres. Gavroche, (street urchin from Hugo's Les Miserables) who loved puns and speaking slang, designated a stone block behind the Roquette prison, upon which she would customarily stand to hiss the guillotine on execution morning. The hangman was the abbot of Cinq-Pierres, for Gavroche, logically ingenious. Oh well, the abbey no longer exists, and there are no more stones on the way before the la Roquette prison. That is excellent. As for the guillotine itself, you know that one it made. Ah! We heard aright! Imagine that infamy, that abominable government of Versailles, had prudently, as it was besieging Paris, had constructed by anonymous carpenters, a new deliciously perfected guillotine; absolutely, I have the honor to inform you. It would take pleasure in convincing you upon reading the proclamation of the "Sub-Committee in Practices." "What is the "Sub Committee on Practices"? Upon this subject I avow profound ignorance, but what does it matter? In a time when committees sprout like mushrooms it would be absurd to be startled by one committee, and a subcommittee more or less. Here is the proclamation: "Citizens, be informed that we have at this moment fabricated a new guillotine..." "My God,, while you slumbered, another disturbing [notion] has been sent to the Conciergerie by the members of the Commune, who have fabricated a guillotine. Luckily, the sub-committee is not sleeping." "Paid and ordered..." "And have they paid? Certainly, oh good sub committee? This government had certainly the habit of harm for the wretched world! "...by the odious government fallen (a more portable and speedy guillotine) What are you saying? Can you not kill chickens? Quicker! Understand, in a single morning, that guillotining twelve or fifteen hundred patriots was a game for the abbot of Cinq-Pierres. And portable! When government members toured the provinces [in 1793], they had a guillotine in their luggage, and if say, Lyon, or Marseilles, or some great town, then encountered a number of fine scoundrels in the blink of an eye, chop! no more fine scoundrels! Scum, get on! But read on! "The sub committee of the twelfth arrondissement"... Ah! There is a subcommittee in each arrondissement? "has satisfied the servile instructions of monarchist dominion..." "Joke, monsieur Thiers!"...and having voted eternal destruction "Well-intentioned, O subcommittee, but literal of you. Consequently the combustion will be in front of the Mayoral Hall, to purify the arrondissement and to conserve our new

liberty." And, in effect, they will burn a guillotine, the 19th of April, at ten o'clock in the morning, before Voltaire's statue.

The ceremony, it remains, will not lack a certain strangeness. In the atmosphere of a small crowd, men, women, children, will mount the pulpit of the odious machine, the 137th battalion of the National Guard will throw into vast flames the guillotine fragments; all that sparkling, crackling, flaming; and the statue of the defender of Calas, enveloped in smoke, will take pleasure in breathing the incense.. When it is no more than a red brazier, the crowd can cry with joy, and for my part, I would approve completely what they do, and the approbation of those assisting. But, between us, among those there, there were more than a few, and with those not drafted, were ranged about the guillotine with an intention differing from those seeing it burn? And then, if reducing to cinders that instrument of death, one wanted to remember that the times where men killed men were again past, it seemed to me that they have not. While we are at it, do you want to burn the guns?

XLIV. A Visit to the State Cemetery

I come to a horrible thing. Oh! Startling spectacles have been offered and would be offered again. I accompanied to the Eastern cemetery a poor old woman whose son had not returned home in five days. He had left in a Federal battalion. He could have been killed. Someone said to the mother: "Go to the Eastern cemetery; many bodies were taken there."

Imagine, in a vast ditch, about thirty coffins placed a slight distance between one from the other. Many people come with the goal of recognizing the dead. To expedite the congestion, the National Guard organized a line. All around, crosses and tombs.

The old woman and I followed everyone else. From time to time, I heard a short sigh. It was when someone has recognized a relative.

Meanwhile, we walked slowly, in very short steps, as though we were taking a place in the level of a theater. We came to the first coffin. The poor mother whom I accompanied is very sad, very weak. I raise the lid of the funeral box. There lies dead a graybeard; his stomach a mass of rags, flesh, scraps, congealed blood. We walk more. The second coffin also is an old man; one can see by his wounds he was killed by a bullet. Always, we advance. I remark that there is a much greater number of old than young men. The

wounds are extreme, there are faces entirely mutilated. When I drop the lid of the last coffin, the mother can sigh [her] relief; her son was not there! As for me, I was dazed by horror. It did not occur to me that I could ever feel like one of the men behind me, who wanted to see in their turn. One of them said to me: "Oh well, when it's over, that's it. One could say that for him."

XLV. Paris Laughing-Paris Flaneur

Truly stupefying in this environment, is the element of laughter in the streets, boulevards, promenades. The ever outward crossing emigration did not detract from the great number of street women and dandies; enough remain to fill the cafes and entertain the boulevards. It could be said that Paris was in its normal state. Each morning, on the Champs-Élysées, from Ternes, from Vaurigard, they circulated here and there, in a town of families escaping from bombardment, when when M. Jules Favre had anathematized the barbarism of the Prussians; some in a cab, others afoot; sadly preceding a cart loaded with mattresses and household goods; all, when asked, recounted that the Versaillais shells had destroyed their houses, killing women and children. No matter! Go on as usual, to your affairs or your pleasures. The Commune suppressed the newspapers, jailed the journalists--here M. Richardet, of the *National*, he was conducted to the Depot, for the sole reason that he was going to demand a passport of the unsociable M. Rigault--the Commune put away priests, evacuated women from the convents, arrested M. Oyan, one of the directors of Saint-Sulpice, flung an arrest warrant against M. Tresca; when he escaped, they wanted to arrest M. Henri Vrognault, who had successfully posted bond; the Commune carried out armed searches in the banking houses; in order to seize titles and monies; it made cooperative officers open the vaults; and when the officers tired, it motivated them with blows; worse, the Commune with all the certainty of the all-powerful could counsel nouveau depots, and daily sent to their deaths brave fathers of families who believed that they were killing for an idea and dying for the good pleasure of M. Avrial or M. Billoray. Oh well, what did Paris do? Paris read the newspaper, sauntered, chased after the news and said "Ah! Ah! Have they have arrested Amouroux? The Archbishop of Paris is being transported from the Conciergerie to Mazas? A thousand francs have been stolen at M. Denouille's? Devil! Devil!" and Paris continues to read its journal, to saunter, to chase after news. Never is there the appearance of interruption or of change. The same proclamation of the redoubtable {General} Cluseret, which menaced us all with active service in infantry companies, did not succeed in disturbing the quiet indifference of the

greater number of Parisians. They noted what was happening as a spectacle which held just enough interest to entertain. Evening, doubled cannonades,, and one could hear with some persistence, individual fire; Paris took its bock at the Cafe Madrid or Cafe Riche. Sometimes, almost midnight, when the sky cleared, they went to the Champs-Elysées, to see the latest detritus; to promenade under the trees, light a cigar and to say "Ah! There are the machine guns" They compared the noise of today's battle to that of yesterday. Walking almost under the shell, Paris exposed itself voluntarily to grave dangers, but, it is indifferent. Paris is not cowardly. Until sleep, they read the evening papers. Yawning, they demand "How the devil is this going to end? Conciliation? The Prussians perhaps? "And they sleep, rise later, wash up, fresh and cheery, and go about their affairs or their pleasures, as though Napoleon III were again emperor of the French by the grace of God, and by national will.

XLVI. The Independent Press-Real News

A note in the *Official Journal* from Versailles is indignant to the the just title of the better part of Parisian journalists. Here is this note "The most false and audacious news is in Paris, where no independent journal can appear." From these few lines, one concludes that in the eyes of the Versailles government, all the journals where the editors in chief have not abandoned their posts, are entirely submissive to the Commune and neither thinking nor saying that which they are permitted to say or to think. That is a most culpable calumny. No, thanks to God, the Parisian press has not renounced its independence, and if fair, one can count a number of little journals born and dying and some magazines redirected by Commune members,--and be forced to recognize to the contrary that since the 18th of March, the great majority of journals have proven high independence and great bravery. Each day, without allowing themselves to be intimidated by menaces, army suppression, arrests, they had their say to Commune members, without reticence or paraphrase. Certainly the French press, in general, has committed grave offenses these past years; they have not been irresponsible for the misfortunes that come to oppress the country but they have repaired these crimes in this hour, making us forget by their closed and dangerous attitude to the men of the Hôtel de Ville. Yes, they judge, condemning what is to be condemned, resisting violence, enlightening the population. Sometimes also-- and perhaps that is the great crime in the eyes of the Versailles government--

they allow themselves to not fully approve of the acts of the National Assembly.; some journals insinuate that the government is not perhaps completely innocent of real calamities--but is that proven? That the press is neither any more the servant of the Assembly than the slave of the Commune; in a word; it is independent.

What are the false reports the Versailles *Official Journal* speaks of, and against whom must we warn? Do you believe that we are naive enough to join in the morning victory cries of the Commune bulletins? You think that we see the deputies as anything more than simple cannibals, eating all day at the buffet of the Hotel de Reservoirs [site of Versailles offices], the beefsteaks of the commons and the chops of the Federals? Past that, we fully demolish the exaggerations of the men of the Hôtel de Ville, stand with the journals that the *Official* accuses so inconsiderately.

Perhaps it is not only false news that the Versailles Assembly dreads; perhaps it could be anxious that we ignore the real news as well; and if they could, would not fail to suppress the ill informed journals--without being the least like the Commune journals--allow themselves to affirm that the last six days Versailles shells have fallen upon Ternes, upon the Champs-Élysées, upon the Avenue of Wagram, and have cost us as much blood and tears as the Prussian shells, of horrid memory!

XLVII. Following Days and How They Seemed

Wednesday the 12th of April

Another street day, like those before, like those after. The Versaillais attacked the forts of Vanves, and d'Issy, and are repulsed. They struck at Neuilly, they struck at Bagneux, they struck at Asnières. In town, [there are] house searches and arrests. A National Guard squad occupied the Gare du Nord train station. They came to apprehend the company director; but a director at this point, did not exist. Embarrassing case. The National Guard could not be deployed for nothing. Deciding to arrest someone, they led away M. Felix Mathas, chief of operations, and M. Coutin, principal inspector. An hour later, other National Guardsmen imprisoned at the Depot, the former prefect of police, M. Lucien Dubois, Inspector of markets and streets. Here and there some journalists are collared, without motive, for example, and some priests sent to Mazas, among others M. Lartigues, vicar of Saint-Leu. Here, one can read the following bulletin posted on the closed church doors, at

Montmartre: "Know that priests are bandits and that churches are the lairs where they have morally assassinated the masses HAVING BOWED FRANCE BENEATH THE TALONS OF THE INFAMOUS BONAPARTE, FAVRE AND TROCHU, undertaken from the ex-police prefecture ordered that the Saint-Pierre church (and not Cinq-Pierre, this time) are closed and the arrest decreed of priests and of the ignorant. Signed LE MOSSU" Today, it is the church tower of Nôtre-Dame de Lorette. There are a great number of the faithful in the temple. Watched by the National Guard, backed by men in plainclothes. Under the Empire, these men were called police informers. They chased the crying women, and hit them if they did not leave quickly enough. After that, the Guardsmen left. Why had they come? Nobody knows. This we know well; it will begin all over again later, in the same church, or another. These days we seem like children of a cursed family. What wretched catastrophe will deliver us from this hateful monotony?

XLVIII. The Vendôme Column Will Be Demolished--Walking Down the Champs-Élysées--Walking On--Some Shells--Going to Porte Maillot--Seeing a Window--Ternes--Women and Children-- Cannon Misdirected--What Will Remain Upon Victory?

Huh? How? It is not possible, is it? Have you lost your wits again--gone from the good --is this some lame joke shifted, printed, posted as an unimaginable decree? But no, the form is good, the usual print. Ah! of course! Gentlemen of the Commune, that devolve to the limits of the absurd, and perhaps, that time, count a bit upon the complicity of one and upon the patience of others. Here is the Decree:

"THE COMMUNE OF PARIS'

"Considering that the Imperial column at the Place Vendôme is a monument to barbarity, a symbol of brute force, and of false glory, an affirmation of militarism, a negation of international law, a permanent insult of conquerors to the vanquished, a perpetual blow against one of the three great patriotic principals of the French Republic, Fraternity,

"DECREE'

First Article-The Vendôme column will be demolished." Oh well! You are odious and grotesque! This sinister farce acts against what you fear, and as all the Versailles newspapers recount, you will truly have done what you would

have never dared to imagine. What! It was not enough to violate temples, to suppress all liberties; the liberty of writing, the liberty of speaking, liberty of departure, the liberty to not be killed; there was not enough blood foolishly spilt, women [made] widows, children orphaned, industries dead,; it was not enough to be dignified in debate--the only glory that remained!--vanished in the hateful disaster of civil war; it did not suffice that, in a word, destroyed the present and compromised the future, you want again to annihilate the past! Funereal joke! But the Vendôme column, it is France, the France of another time, France no more, ah! In acting against Napoleon, acting against our victorious father, who, superb, crossed the world to plant the tricolor flag where the lance is a branch of the tree of liberty! It acts against that interminable set of triumphs that made the country so radical and Paris itself so flamboyant, after years of obscurity,, their sway was uncontested, big enough during the last year, when during a siege, when a rainbow appeared in the heaven, the people of Berlin, grouped on high to admire the celestial phenomenon; writing with a naive terror" Oh! It is Paris that burns!" Demolish the Vendôme column do not believe that you are only overthrowing a column of bronze topped by a statue of the Emperor [Napoleon I]; disinterring your fathers, to howl at their fleshless skeletons and tell them: "You were criminal being brave, being faithful, being great! You committed the crime of conquering towns, of winning battles , you have committed the crime of amazing the world by the vision of a dazzling France 'Throw heroes' ashes to the four winds! Tell old men that you see about the town--where are you now? No longer met with; you kill them, or their glory will rub shoulders with your infamy?-say to he old soldiers of the Invalides:"You are old fools and brigands! You lack an arm, a leg? Tough for you, scum! See, those rascals crippled the honor of your country!" Snatch their old cross of honor, and throw it is the streets with punk obscenities calling:"Heroes! "Dogrags" Yes, I agree, there is the greater grandeur, less costly than those that result in war and conquests. You are free to dream for your country a different glory than ancient glory; but that is the heroic past, you cannot suppress, above all, you have no basis yet for the pride of the present!

Oh well! Go on, continue, follow your road. Demolish the Vendôme column, its begun, it must be logical. I propose the following decree:

"THE COMMUNE OF PARIS.

"Considering the church of Nôtre-Dame of Paris is the monument of superstition, a symbol of divine tyranny, an affirmation of fanaticism, a

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negation of human law, a permanent insult of believers to atheists, a perpetual blow to one of the great principles of the Commune: the good pleasure of its members,

"DECREED:

"The church of Nôtre Dame will be demolished."

What do you think of my proposition"Does it not conform to your dear desires? But there is even more;--like Nicollet:--it is necessary to have the courage of his opinions, I think.

"COMMUNE OF PARIS,

"Considering that the Louvre Museum contains a great number of pictures, of statues and other objects of art, which, by the subjects that they represent, incessantly remind people, of the actions of gods, of kings, and of priests; that these actions, represented by a brush or courtly engraving, often made in a fashion to diminish the hate that priests, kings and gods inspire in the good citizen; besides, admiration of the works of human genius is a perpetual blow to one of the great principles of the Commune: imbecility.

"DECREED"

"First article: The Louvre museum will be burned.

And do not retort that despite the memories of religion and despotism, attached to these two monuments, you wish to conserve intact the Louvre Museum and Nôtre Dame because of their artistic importance. And you need not suggest that you would have respected the Vendôme column, if it had the same merit from the artistic view point. Respectively, what are the masterworks of the human genius? Why? When? And by what right? Go on, if you can shoot those known-to- be masters, if you known enough to know one: I name M. Lefrancais--who wanted, in 1848 to put the small Salon [exhibition] to the torch; recognizing another of you--I name also M. Jules Favre--who affirmed that Homer was an old beast, It is true that M. Jules Valles is Minister of Public Instruction. If you have until this hour spared Notre-Dame and the Louvre Museum, it is that you do not dare touch them, that then,it is a proof not of respect, but of poltroonery.

Ah! Then open our eyes. Don't allow us to dazzle ourselves with the chimeric hope -- that you had for a moment--of obtaining, thanks to you, our liberal commons. You endorse our opinions to cheat us, like the crooks who

wear a house's livery in order to gain entrance to the owner's room and steal his money. We see what you are. We had hoped that you were revolutionaries, truly ardent, foolhardy perhaps. Acting again nobly with a noble care; you are naught but rioters, and the principal end of rioters is to pillage and to sack, disturbing the night. If there were among you honest men, they would be distant, frightened. Count, no more than a handful. If you had two or three colleagues among you not completely devoid of feelings of [that which is] just and unjust, they would open the door and flee. And now these thirty imbeciles govern us again! While you send to death whom you want? How will this last? Is it for this that you have exhausted our guns? Did we succeed, last month, in the Bank quarter? We cannot prevail again, and notwithstanding the Versailles army, can we do justice to ourselves?--Ah! It is well to recognize now, that the mayors of Paris, and the deputies of the Seine, cheated like us, have criminally contracted with riot. They wanted to avoid war in the streets. Eh! Is the struggle we now undertake more horrible than that which we avoided? One day of combat and everything has been said. Yes, we committed the crime of downing arms, but despite what you would have us believe--the excess of these first days can surpass the sad results of popular effervescence to premeditated crimes--who could have believed that the insurrection leaders would lie with the impudence so evident today, and that shortly the Commune would be the first to ravage the liberties that it would have protected and developed? There, ha! The countrymen are right, who have so criminally given no heed to the equitable pleadings of a people avid for liberty; they are correct to avoid the nullity and wickedness of these men. Ah! If the National Assembly wants, they will again save Paris. If you truly want to establish a definitive republic and accord to the capital of France the right to freely and entirely chose, as an independent municipality, all will range themselves with enthusiasm again to the legitimate government, and the Hôtel de Ville will be delivered from the grotesque fools who swagger there! But does the National Assembly understand us? Will it consent to give, by these honorable concessions, liberty to Paris, and rest to France?

XLIX. The Negotiators Return-- M. Thiers' Reply-- Reply to the Reply-- -Paris and France

The delegates of the *League of Republican Union for the Rights of Paris* returned from Versailles today the 14th of April and here publish their report:

"CITIZENS"

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"The undersigned, charged to go and to present to the Versailles government your program and offer the good offices of the League to conclude the armistice, have the honor to offer the following report of their mission.

"The delegates, having given M. Thiers an understanding of, the League's program, he responded that, as leader of the only existing legal government in France, he had not discussed the basis of a treaty, but was disposed to talk to persons considered representative of the republican principle, and make known to them the intentions of the executive power.

"Given these observations, that made up the true character of our missions, M. Thiers made the following observations upon different points of our program:

"Touching upon the recognition of the Republic, M. Thiers vouched for the situation under which he had come to power. He received a republican state, and puts his honor to conserving that state."

Eh! That should suffice for Paris, to Paris that wants peace and liberty. We have complete confidence in the honor of M. Thiers. We are convinced that while he remains in power, we will read "French Republic" atop all government posts. But M. Thiers sometimes leaves, or is removed from power--sometimes national assemblies are capricious--can he assure us that we will not be the prey of a restored monarchy, or the same Empire? There are more ghosts in French history than in the {gothic} novels of Anne Radcliffe. The effort to regard those skulkers in session at Versailles as sincere republicans strains our credulity. See, M. Thiers himself dare not what he thinks, in case he leaves power. It was proviional before, is provisional now, and just as was feared. We ask the Assembly: "You were republicans before, are you Republicans now?" The Assembly did not hear and contented itself singing "We don't want the white cockade [restored Bourbon kings] and others "Leave for Syria..." Naturally we are not satisfied. M. Thiers said, it is true, that he would as he could, maintain the form of government established in Paris; but he did not commit himself, clearly showing that we will not long keep the Republic, so long as its definitive establishment relies upon the Assembly, which is royalist, and in part, imperial (Bonapartist)--but continue reading the report:

"Touching upon the municipal franchise (home rule) in Paris, M. Thiers revealed that France would grant this conditional with municipal franchises for all towns, from common law, as elaborated by the Assembly representing all of France. Paris would have common law, nothing less, nothing more."

Again,[this is] not very satisfying. What would be common law? What elaborate common law would the representatives of all France want? Again, we do not have full confidence in M. Thiers. But don't we have the right expect a law consistent with our voices, from a group of men who, on the most important question, the form of government, have opinions radically opposed to one another?

"Touching the Paris Guard, exclusively entrusted to the National Guard, M. Thiers declared that a reorganization would proceed, but did not know whether in principle the army would be excluded."

In my personal sense, M. Thiers had great good reason. But from the *Republican Union* delegates' point of view, was that third declaration more evasive than the two first?

"Concerning the real situation and the means of ending bloodshed, M. Thiers declared that not knowing the degree of belligerency in the combatants' struggle against the Assembly, he feared he could not negotiate an armistice; but said that if the Paris National Guard had neither fired guns or cannons, then the Versailles troops would not have fired guns or cannons, until the unknown moment where the executive power settled the matter and began the war."

Ah! Words! Words! We know well that legally M. Thiers had the right to speak, and that all the combatants are not belligerent. But, what? Is it also just that is is regarded as legal to take the lives of all men, and a small grammatical concession is so grave that it weakens, exposes the saddest feelings possible for even the most legitimate conqueror upon seeing an embattled street?

"M. Thiers added: Whoever renounces armed struggle, that is, goes home and abandons the attitude of hostility, will be protected from all inquiry."

Is M. Thiers that certain that he will not be abandoned by the National Assembly where he proposes the voice of clemency and forgetfulness?

"M. Thiers excepts only the murderers of Generals Lecomte and Clement Thomas, who will be judged, if found."

There are a hundred reasons. We weren't blind the day of that double crime, nor sought the men who, if they neither committed nor caused commission, had at least neglected to seek its authors.

M. Thiers, recognizing the impossibility for the unemployed population to live without the designated subsidy, would continue it for some weeks.

"Thus, citizens, etc. This report is signed by A. Dessonaux, A. Adam and Bonvallet."

So! We foresaw what would be the result of the honorable gesture taken by the *Republican Union* delegates. What does it prove, if not that it was not only battle between the National Guards of the Commune and the regular troops, but persistent opposition between the more politically sound Parisian people and the National Assembly of Versailles? And the Assembly represents, in effect, France: it speaks and acts, having been charged to speak and to act. There is the truth: Paris is republican; France is not Republican; there is a divorce between the capital and the country. The actual collision, occasioned by a brain-fevered group, efficiently split the feelings. What will happen? Paris, vanquished another time by universal suffrage, bowing its head and receiving the judgment of provincials and of farmers? The right is incontestable, but will it prevail--by force of numbers--our right, is it less incontestable? Obscure questions, suspending one's wits, because, of our natural desire to lead our National Assembly where the better part of the members cannot go without betraying their mandate, and despite the distaste the sinister stunts of the men of the Hôtel de Ville inspire, would we support again their insupportable tyranny.

L. Caricatures

These times the walls laugh. Paris- gamin, Paris-loafer, Paris-hooker, splits its sides laughing before the caricatures that clever sellers nail up before shops or on house doors. Who has designed these strange images, vilely colored, gross, rarely pleasing, ften obscene? They are signed with unknown names, doubtless pseudonyms; their probable authors--sadly among them one must count talented artists--dream of high-ranking libertine women in orgies, naked, but masked, or of satyrs wearing only a vine wreath on their faces.

These are criminal images. These caricatures, sometimes bitter, must be entertaining, but are made by crude spirits, from contemptible thoughts of malice and ill will. The laughter is not always innocent. The passerby does not think of that when the contents are Jules Favre's head, represented by a radish, or M. Ernest Picard's stomach, represented as a pumpkin. Where will these dangerous grotesqueries be, in a few days"Sent, dispersed? Some

collectors are tearing out their hair at the impossibility of recovering these frivolous witnesses of our misfortunes. I take some notes of despair, they'll be gone in a month.

Green sun, pink sky. In a darkish coffin, a lid is being lifted, [disclosing] a half-naked woman, wearing a Phrygian bonnet (Revolutionary headgear). Thin, small, dressed in black, with an enormous head, with a thick and dangling tongue, hair spiked like willow in a storm, a nail in his left hand, a hammer in his right, Jules Favre kneels on the coffin box, and would close it despite the natural protests of the half-naked woman. Further on, hurries a great bespectacled face and an arm with a hammer: it is M. Thiers. Below one reads; *If one heard, these satanic republics, no one would ever die!* the whole is signed Faustin.

Same author. The same woman. But, this time, she is lying in a bed draped with the red flag. Decolletage (low neckline) for a Republic, all right; but must one portray the Republic attracting its good friends the Federals? Aft the bed is a picture of Rochefort; it appears that Rochefort is the particular companion of this lady. In her place I would counsel dressing a bit more decently. And here are three black men, with bandit hats, flailing, grinning, approaching the bed singing, like comic opera characters: "Let's go...forward... with...prudence..." The premier, M. Thiers, holding a big club and a dark lantern; Jules Favre, the second, brandishes a dagger; the third has nothing at all, but a feather in his hat and another feather from a peacock. I have never seen Ernest Picard; I am told that it is he.

Always décolleté, the young Republic--the head of a little lady of rue Neuve-Bossuet--petitioning M. Thiers, a tinsmith, restaurateur; from a sign "place where the unemployed; change their old boots for new at a fairer price," petition M. Thiers to mend their shoes. "*Listen, listen, said the cobbler, I see him making it no longer possible to walk.*"

Perched on the slender point is a microscopic podium, here is a green ape. The end of the queue carries a crown; a Phrygian bonnet is on the head. It is M. Thiers, naturally. "MY good men, I want to assure you that I am a good republican and I adore your vile multitude." But, underneath, one reads "You're going to get plucked, poor Gallic cock." Again, this image is from M. Faustin. I must say that to the blamable characters of these follies and sad days, I would add a special reproach: I do not like the style that the author renders M. Thiers' head; he forgets the former and criminal resemblance to the executive chief power with Joseph Prudhomme, or, same thing, with Henri Monnier One day

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Gil Perez met Henri Monnier on the boulevard Montmartre "Oh well, my mate. have you returned? What are we going to do, huh, in this bad weather?" Henri Monnier was shocked: it was M. Thiers.

Those that are signed Pilotel! Pilotel, the awkward official, who arrested M. Chaudey, and who took custody of 815 francs in M. Chaudey's desk. Ah, Pilotel, if, in this unfortunate adventure, you died a day later on a barricade, you could write, like Nero: "What an artist perishes!" But we forget the author, in order to appreciate the work. It is Gavroche, but not the Gavroche of *Miserables*, but the urchin of Belleville; chewing [tobacco] like a sailor, drunk like a Federal; purple shirt, green pants; hands in pockets, cap pushed back, squat, violent, bestial. Raised head, he says "I don't want a king, me!" That is not completely without merit, that possibility though.

About face! "Council of the Reorganization of the Seine Amazons," said the caption. O formidable monstrosities! If these are, in effect, our brave Amazons, it should suffice to put them in battle, the first row, undressed, and I vow that not a lineman, not a policeman, no, not even a gendarme, would falter at that aspect; but, on the street, all without exception would flee with haste so striking that they wouldn't or raising arms! Why-- because of my sympathy for sewer workers that I would undertake to describe as plain women without veils--one...oh well! no, I don't allow myself to imagine that Himalayan pile of flesh and pyramids of bone, that make up the Penthesilea [Amazon queens]s of the Commune of Paris!

Ah! it is b... in anger, the Père Duchesne (reference to French Revolutionary newspaper). The short legs, bare arms, red face, pride of place of an enormous red cap, a powerful look of a little M. Thiers, and looking fair to choke a frail person. This design does not content itself with being vile, it is bestial.

This time, she is completely naked. True, it is not the Republic, but France. While the Republic is décolleté, France can take off its chemise; her sole garment, a dove pressed to her chest. On the left, a portrait of M. Rochefort. Again! So, Lovelace (English fictional libertine) himself, that skinny journalist? And there, by roof dormer, perceive two cats with sharp claws, M. Jules Favre and M. Thiers. "Poor dove." says the caption.

A holy Family, after the fashion of Murillo. Jules Favre-Saint-Joseph conducts the bride on the donkey, and the nursling in her arms in the Count of Paris (Bourbon pretender to throne) in place of the Baby in other times; I

remember with charm some "The Flight . . . to Versailles." Ah, bah! Caricaturists, don't you know how to be absurd without being foul?

And here is another, dated from the days where Paris disembarassed itself of Empire, and base to the point, that by a natural revulsion it inspires a certain respect for those who would outlaw it; others, that everyone saw during the siege, are less vile, patriotic hate being their excuse; odious still! My faith, what a pity for the garbage collectors who must gather the unsold flyers, disgust all the while that I denounce them to my readers--if these pages filled day to day, fixing my ideas to others, ever become a book--my readers won't know the full degree that I did not follow to that purifying end.

LI. M. Courbet--The Artistic Commune--Free Art-Assembly of Design Artists

What is M. Courbet doing with these men? He is a painter, not a political man. Some rants, some beer-soaked rants at the Hautefeuille brasserie do not constitute a revolutionary past. A ribbon (government decoration) refused for the simple reason that a buttonhole unadorned by a red border, while it is well established as a misfortune that others would envy--a red ribbon refused in a mediocre title. In your booth Jolly Napoleon; to your old maid, Billoray; to your brushes, Gustave Courbet! And if I say that, it is not only for fear that the economic luminaries of the Master of Decorations are inadequate and pull the Commune back from regrettable acts--what folly, that! The Commune could do more?--it is above all because in sum M. Gustave Courbet is a good painter and I am afraid the painter will be followed by the ridicule affrayed from a false political. Yes, such is my horror for the naked women and other smutty monstrosities with which M. Courbet has honored the *Salon*; remembering the spell of some landscapes so profoundly true, with their lush trees so full of the rays of a sun rise, with their springs murmuring freshly among the pebbles, rocks gripped with tenacious roots; I compare this with that, beyond the landscapes, some well-done tableaux, if not the hand of the artist--by this word, for my sense, a higher value--less the hand of a worker; and I curse the presence of the Hôtel de Ville from a painter who, with the spring should be rising in the plain and the woods, and would do much better to go into the woods, to Meudon or Fontainebleau, study the budding boughs and the enormous battered oak trunks, than to replicate M. Lefrançais--another platonic iconoclast--and to M. Jules Valles, who has read Homer in Madame Dacier's translation, or he has not read it at all. Who does a bit of that, and

also political, when he is capable of nothing, if that is not excusable, it is at least understandable; but when one can make excellent boots like Jolly Napoleon, or good paintings like Gustave Courbet, but feeling obliged to dedicate himself deliberately to ridicule and perhaps to eternal execration, that cannot be admissible. M. Courbet will reply: These are artists whom I represent, I formulate the claims of modern art. We must have a 93 in painting; we federate! I want; tickets on the heads of Titian and to Paul Veronese, these aristocrats; let us establish, in place of {an artistic} jury, a revolutionary tribunal designed to condemn to immediate death any man who troubles himself about the ideal, this fallen king, a tribunal where I would be at times accuser, advocate and judge. Yes, painters, my brothers, line up beside me and we will die for the artistic Commune! As for those not with me, I feel trepidation as much as for someone...on the outskirts. "As to the last traits, M. Gustave Courbet's friends will recognize that I am not without some experience of that conversation. Oh well, Master of Decorations, I don't know what you said and true artists will send you to the devil, you and your federation. An artistic association, such as you understand, who knows where it will lead? Serving the petty ambition of a boss--a boss, you would be a boss, would you not monsieur Courbet?--and the petty rancours of a set of nameless and valueless daubers. Oh! I don't have the honor of being a painter, and when I venture, from the margins, to design a mosque, I confess that my mosque had the appearance of a camel, and that Polonius himself would take it for a whale. But in a way, I am an artist, and I assure you if I introduced such a poet, had he composed superior works in the style of *Battle of the Deer* or *Woman (in peace, monsieur federation! I am a dreamer, a worker; when I've written a poem, I publish it, if I encounter an editor who has the power to distribute a few thousand copies without reducing himself to the most irreparable begging. That done, I don't worry about what comes from my work; the indulgence of some readers, agreement of some friends, the anger of some fools, that's all I hope for, that's all that I ask. Me federate? Why? With whom? Do I need this, if it bad, will become good by connection with that society? Who else will gain anything by that association? Rejoin with us, gentlemen artists, close the doors we say to the staff--if you have staff--that we are not it, and, after having trimmed your best pen or set your best brush, work in solitude, without relaxing, with no care than to do the best we can, with no other note than our artistic conscience, and the work sold, freely give our hand to the our beloved comrades, help them, as they help us, but freely, without obligation, without assessment, without rules. We do not have to set up these freemasonries, absurd to the intellect, where one can place one or two hundred that isn't made, from the first, which isn't*

connected with what is not,, novel, ignored here, important later, quickly done, in the snout of all the world's association! "Naively, there it is, I reply to M. Courbet, if he were a poet and so ill advised as to offer me such a deal.

Artists have done better again than I would have thought; not everyone responds; one cannot really say really what was a union of French artists, which that "general assembly of all design artists"presided over by M. Gustave Courbet, the 13th of April 1871, in the great hall of the School of Medicine. I know some illustrious painters, I haven't seen them. Citizens Potier and Boulaix were named stewards. I wish them well; that high distinction could cause them to be named if someone has good need of a poor base. And are the sculptors less? I have seen some great beards, beards absolutely unknown to me. These were perhaps the beards of sculptors. But, in default of artists what of bores? There are no more tireless orators than those people who do not know what they want to say. And the interruptions, the yelling, the apostrophising, often imagined, rarely quick! What an incredible taking.

--No jury!--Yes, yes, a jury!

-Reactionary!

-Down with Cabanel!

--And women? Will there be women on the jury?--No women, no invalids!

And M. Gustave Courbet desperately ringing his presidential bell, from time to time flings some dominant remark. But all the *quos ego* ("remember who I am") in the world could not bring reason to that appalling tempest. And what came, from all of that? Nothing at all.

Ah! So if there had been some laws proposed-of course! the sculptors!-and it was enormously amusing.

--Oh well! So what, said someone; it was a laugh and harmed no one.

--I beg to differ, it very much did harm...to M. Gustave Courbet.

LII. Lady in the Red Stockings--Camp at the Place Vendôme-- Indifference to the Column

It is forbidden to cross the Place Vendôme; there must be a strong reason to forbid where one walks. After three days I went prowling very afternoon to

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the sentinels, at the beginning of the Rue de la Paix, hoping a lucky chance would allow me to brave the notice; I had just stepped off: "Walk on!" vigorously accented, but I did not pass.

Today, while I watched for a favorable moment, a little lady who lifted her skirt to walk revealed stockings red like the flag at the Hôtel de Ville--a lady communist--approached the sentinel and addressed him with the most gracious smile. See, Federals! What followed, the officer, forgetting his duty, engaged the stroller in a conversation that seemed intimate enough for discretion to detour me a half-turn to the left, and five minutes later, paced the forbidden spot.

The place, one must call it a camp. A mob of little white tents,, that would have been white if they had been bleached, were erected here and there, and gave way to scattered straw. Under the tents were some National Guardsmen; who went by, they gave no notice; they snored. Remember the absurd syllogism frequently repeated in philosophy class? It could be modified thus: Those who have a good conscience sleep well; as good as Federals sleep well; thus, Federals have a good conscience. Other guards come and go, pipes in their mouths. If I would tell you that these honorable communists revealed, by their irreproachable turnout, their distinguished appearance and their pleasant remarks, which form part of the fine flower of Parisian society, you would probably be impertinent enough to not believe a treacherous word of mine; it would better to tell you the contrary. Bad cigars and wine corks in the gutters of the place. Cigars and corks! Those who want to write the history of the National Guard from the siege's beginning to the present day, could headline it, and to the cork, add the bottle, and vaunt a truly complete title. Other things occur; the hungry wife, the children are hungry, but the father of the family has drink. Manage thirty cents; do what with it? Go drink; charity begins with one's self. When he has drunk, what remains? a few pennies, an empty bottle and a cheap cigar. Very well: bet a few pennies to a cigar, and this evening, upon return, he brings home, what? An empty bottle.

On the place, two barricades, one at the edge of the Rue de la Paix, the other beside the Rue Castiglione. "Two formidable barricades" the newspapers said. Read "A thousand paving stones [piled] to the left, a thousand paving stones to the right. I told myself that two bits of real estate, one in placed at the New Opera, the other at the Rue de Rivoli, would not stop anyone with good reason to pass the two barricades, in default of some cannons ranged there, with newly -coppered necks.

Definitely, the Federals are brave. About twenty young women, and not pretty women, turned over the National Guard in the cafe, accepting with come-hither smiles the money they handed over.

As far as the column, no one in the world had the least air of fright from the Commune decree that menaced and premature reversal. As always, it was a giant of bronze: the Emperor, is the I. Surrounded by four eagles, surmounted by four immortal crowns, on the four corners of its pedestal, the dual red flags floating on high from the balcony, did not seem disquieted by the measure. The Column signifies the antique honor of France, and is intimidated by neither decrees nor bayonets, and maintains, in a milieu of menace and troubles, its haughty serenity.

LIII. The Commune Embarrassed--Elections Sans Voters

Who would doubt it? Vote. When I say: vote, I want to say: "one could vote" but to the glance, Paris does not have an air of concern. The Commune was truly embarrassed. Remembers the song the seafarers:

"Going to the Otranto Gulf,

We were thirty,

When we arrived in Cadiz

We were ten."

The personnel at the Hôtel de Ville would have been able to sing that refrain, introducing some late modifications. There is no gulf of Otranto, but parties, that of Montmartre; but, in revenge, there were twenty-four, Arriving at...no, I lie, on the decree upon the Vendôme column, there were a little more than ten, but not many more. Some charming lines parodied from Victor Hugo's lines, it will be from Theodore de Banville or Albert Glatigny with successive desertions of Commune members! First the mayors of Paris move, in disarray sent by the vote of their fellow citizens in a company not there; and it would appear, making up the ideal municipal council. And as to that, Messieurs Desmaret, Tirard and others, would they permit me to address them an unimportant question? By what law do they tell us, their voters, after the elections of the Commune of Paris was resolved, while the votes of the friends of order would have helped them, they decline all responsibility? Would not their presence at the Hôtel de Ville have been--as we hoped it would--a possible

moderating force in a milieu of excess that could have been foreseen? When I said to people: "Be electors!" have we not the right to consider that feasible? In a word, because we committed ourselves to select the Commune of Paris, if the Commune of Paris became a bad thing; and if it was a good thing, how have they agree to form a party? Who knows, once gone, even resigned. Until the reluctant disappear, one after the other, the timid haven't the courage of absurdity to that end. Add arrests worked for its own purpose by the Hôtel de Ville, and explain your difficulty. In a few days, the Commune stops, so much for Commune supporters. There, look, Parisian citizens! And the white posters announce, and set again complementary elections on Sunday, the 16th of April.

But, that's the devil of it; if there had been elections, there weren't more voters available. Candidates--one has found--one always finds candidates--from ballots where the names of candidates are written, the urns--not ballot boxes,--in order to receive the ballots, one finds it, but of the voters who put ballots in boxes and in order to choose the candidates vainly sought. It is something like in the Sahara, seen at the moment where another caravan passes the horizon, one of the locales destined to welcome an eager mass of voters, but in perfect solitude they triumph. Are we far from the day where the Commune of Paris --in default of numerous abstentions--was formed thanks to relatively few voters? Ah, that was a time when we still retained some illusions, while now...Have you ever assisted at the second performance of a comedy, when the first was not a success? Before it was a mob, now nothing more than a clique. What do you want? You know you want the play. But in the hall, peopled by silence and solitude, the clique does not neglect its duty--there are cheap cigars after all--and that is why one sees that in the battalions that voted in lockstep when they went to the Porte Maillot, and returning, yelled, "Citizens, vote! but never with the same enthusiasm." But, backstage, I want to say to the Hôtel de Ville, again, low-voiced comedians: "Decidedly, its a flop."

LIV. The Bourse During the Commune--Specters and Ghosts

And what of the Bourse (banking exchange)? What happened, what was said, what of the milieu of the Bourse all this time? For the first time I addressed these questions, because normally of all the things under the moon that occupy me, the Bourse is precisely least among them. I am one of those extremely naive people who absolutely ignore the three hours, every day, when the men in suits come and go under the colonnade of the "Temple of Pluto". I

knew quite well that the moneychangers and players existed; but if someone asked me what the players and moneychangers do, I could not volunteer a single word. We all have a special ignorance. I have, it is true, heard of the - circle; but I ingeniously imagine that famous basket, made of woven reeds, containing a fragrant mess of notes and flowers, and that the men of the Bourse, gallant like all Frenchmen, pass the time making up significant bouquets to offer again to their special girl friends. How much will they deceive? A friend disabused me, and when I had been set straight, somehow or other, on what the Bourse had been in other times, I am going to see what happens today. First, recognize that now, using the old metaphor: "the Temple of Pluto" I did not know what I was saying. The Bourse is not a temple; if it were a temple, it would be a church, where of course, it would long ago have been closed by order of our gracious sovereign, the Commune.

So it is open; but to what good? The people haunting today know well and reluctantly enter the surly doors and rude grills, see specters, phantoms and other supernatural beings, with no difficulty could weave into the keyholes or slip between the rails. Poor phantoms! Thanks to the weakness of our governors who neglected to seal the Bourse doors, they are obligated to come and go like ordinary people, and a Parisian not long closely connected to the works of [E.T.A] Hoffman and Edgar Poe, know to distinguish the dead from the living or would take for simple bankers these ghosts of speculation. Thanks God, I am not the man to allow himself to be abused to this point by specious appearance, and I know on the street with who I do business.

There, on the great staircase, four or five specters, like vampires who have not drunk blood for three months; they would stroll in silence with them or hesitant step of apparitions walking amid the yews of cemeteries. Sometimes one pulled up a phantom vest or the specter of a file, and apparent notes formed in a shade of pencil. In groups, one could distinctly hear the clicking of their skeletons under their faint overcoats. Speaking in inarticulate voices that only the comrades of Mage Eliphaz Levi [occultist] could understand, and would remind themselves of the events of another time, the triumphant Austrians, the stock to 70 ("How changed from what he once was!" Vergil quote), the city-bonds 1860 and 1869, and the fugitive apotheosis of the Suez [bonds] actions. They would sigh: "Remember the bonuses? In other times we would fill out reports, in other times at the end of the month the files, well-filled, resembled the lucky stomach of Charles Monselet; but not, we roam amid the debris of our dead splendor, like the shade of Diomedes walking through Pompeii's ruins to his house. We are those that went; the imaginary coasts of

disappeared value are the vain epitaph upon tombs, despairing specters, we die of sadness a second time; permitted to gain, appear one more time in the deserted palace and remembered past. Again the defunct bankers speak, and add: "Ah! Commune, Commune, return our end of the months (billing dates). Sometimes a phantom, his haughty look remembered, will recognize a death of distinction, passing among them. In the time of Napoleon III and the Prussians, he was an agent of change; he passed by, a portfolio under his arm. So Hamlet's father, after the tomb, kept his helmet and his sword. Through the palace, going into the [banking] cage, venture two or three calls, only the echoes of solitude respond, and in turn welcome other phantoms down the halls. While they would suffer a bit of bombardment followed by a fortunate assault, seven or eight hundred houses burned by the shells from Versailles, or seven or eight thousand National Guard shots, some women disemboweled, some children killed on the way, to give life or joy to these desolate specters! But, yes! All hope is fled; the last bulletin of M. Thiers announced great military operations would not commence for some days. They must wait, after having waited. The people who pass by the place of the Bourse swerve with religious terror from the necropole where sleep the three-per-cent obligations of the Credit Foncier, and more, unlike the churches--those debauched places-- were not shut, one could go to light a taper to appease the spirits of desperate brokers.

LV. Examining Lost Gains--Parody of Universal Suffrage--Mardi-Gras Carnival--Ash Wednesday

The tour is done, the Commune is complete. First arrondissement: registers votes 21,260, voting 9; Vesinier has 2 voices, Vesinier is gone. Lacord, cleverer, did not vote at all. Vanquished by voter unanimity, the Commune of Paris will be henceforth by presided over by Lacord. That is logical. For all serious souls, it is evident that the legislators of the Hôtel de Ville have promulgated *in petto* (privately) a law that no one has judged suitable for us to know, but it nonetheless exists, and can be conceived in these terms: *First article.* Elections will not be deemed valid unless turnout is one thousandth of turnout of registered voters in past elections.--*Second article.* All candidates who obtain less than 15 votes will be eliminated; if they obtain 16, there is matter for discussion."You could call it the examination of lost gains. See here the possible benefits of such a law. Let us think a bit. Because France has been led to a loss by two fingers? By Napoleon III. How many votes did Napoleon III receive? Seven million and more. For delivering Paris to the

Prussians? By the dictators of September 4th who succeeded from the Paris vote? More than three hundred thousand. *Ergo*--or Cluseret is not a great man of war--*ergo* the candidates who get the greatest number of votes are fools or naifs. The Commune of Paris does not want to sustain such abuse; she retains universal suffrage--august base of republican institutions--but she reverses it. Michon got half a vote, we will obey Michon! If not trembling and crying, you would laugh too! What is this parody of the universal suffrage? It is the violence of all, expressed by a half-dozen electors? Are we really going to validate these grotesque elections burdened by an exaggerated insufficiency? To be a member of the Commune, unknown, triumphing by the good will of his concierge and his water carrier? I would be governed by Vesinier, aided from Briosne and Viard? Do you not see some men dowered with a modicum of reason supporting again, who refuse to present themselves as candidates, and while they aren't made enough to declare their eligibility, they could today contest the validity of these elections? No, you don't see it, or cry blind. The import of right and justice! "We rule, we govern, we decree, we triumph, there it is. Rogeard, cry we, pronounce Rogeard. If the people do not want Rogeard, so much for the people! "A marvel. But why do we not freely express this thought? There were, in the Papal States, honest brigands (*par pari refertur* "Nameless folly"), who perhaps have more value than you, but haven't the pretention to legality, and enact, without hypocrisy, their villainy. When, owing to various adventures, the troop is incomplete, they don't put up wall posters inviting their. .. applicants,, but simply chose, among vagabonds and others, those most capable of a dagger blow or robbing a traveler, and the troop, readily reinforced, returns to its earlier occupations. Gentlemen, why the devil do you not call things by their names? Call a cat a cat and a Pilotel a thief. The time for illusion is past; your masks do not fool; we have seen you faces. After the Mardi-Gras of the Commune, here is Ash Wednesday. You were disguised, gents! You have been looking for the vestments of the old defrocked revolutionaries, men of 93, to which you have added some ornamentation from the real--vests called Commune, hats called Federation--and above all, swagger. To tell truth, one would believe that these clothes, made for giants, were very large for you, pygmies; they flutter abaft your little forms like deflating balloons; but, roused, you would say: "These are persecutions that we have starved! "Remark too, from the first days, some red ink like blood, completely fresh, upon your old clothes."Pay no attention, you said, to the red flag that we have in pocket and ready!"And now it comes as some of you thought. Some of us, though suspicious, allowed ourselves to take those grand gestures of sleeves reaching longer than your arms. And you could talk of such

fine things: liberty, the emancipation of the workers, associations of the work force; and one said:"See the work, before definitively condemning it. Now we have seen the work, and now we know how you all work, we don't want to give you any more. Take off the masks! I say to you, let's go, false Danton, owed by Rigault; Saint-Just mask, indebted to the face of Serailleur! You, Napoleon Gaillard, sometime cordwainer, you are not the same as Simon. Figment of Robespierre, Rogeard! To the devil with you defrocked, imprinted with great and sinister days! You will appear weak and puny burlesques; you know, it would be easier for everyone, for you to be contemptible, and us for scorning you. What I say here, Paris says. Why the almost general abstention from voting, compared to nautical impressment, if not proof of the error of your travesties; what does it prove, if not the resolution to no longer mix with your carnival? We see clearly, I tell you. Saturnalia is reaching its end. It is true that the orchestra of machine guns and of cannons, under the direction of master of the chapel Cluseret continue to rage and to invite us to the fête, it is done, no one wants to dance.

But what! Paris has had it? That would be fatal. Scorn is not sufficient, one must also hate, and act against those who one hates. It is not enough to desert the ballot-boxes; in doubt, we abstained, we don't doubt more when we act. Shouldering arms while others have evil necessity, is a form of complicity. Dreaming that after more than two weeks of unceasing gunfire, then Neuilly is a cemetery, that Asnières is a cemetery, that husbands fall, that wives cry, that children suffer; we dream that here, the 18th of April, the chapel of Longchamps in succession was the amphetheater of ambulances of the Presse, so that the dead from the journées (street actions) could be counted; we dreamed the law of hostages, the law of refractory priests, to requisitions, to theft, to filled prisons, to empty workshops, to possible massacre and certain pillage; again we dream our own honor compromised, and there remains to those who reside in Paris during these sad hours, a unique placement to see it falling and dying.

LVI. Paris Decadence--London Modes

Ah! This time I defy you, Paris, to remain indifferent; these days you have supported evils; I have said: "You will not pray further"you have not prayed more; "you cannot read the newspapers that please you,"you have not read, and you continue to laugh, despite the craters, it is true, you walk about the boulevards. But here is something that I suppose will make you shudder. You

know what I read in *Belgian Independance*? Ah, poor Paris, your glory days are past, your antique posterity is destroyed, your old laurels cut, go no longer upon the Bois! What has happened? It is known that you are replaced upon the throne of fashion. Unquiet world sporting hats of this sad year, and preoccupied with intestinal discords, it addresses itself to London to learn, and London dictates the laws to all the dressmakers of the universe. The *Belgian Independence* brings the news. Oh desolate town, I cry! It is no longer you who will impose upon humanity the sovereign laws "follow me, young man, "and decree dogskin gloves. It is no longer you who will see false collars and the coming Wellington boots, with the force of popularity, to ornament the bare inhabitants of the Marquesas islands. Profound and select humiliation, it is your old rival, you emaciated big sister, that dark town of London that takes up your spangled cap and bells and transforms it into one of those loaded batons that police carry in their left pockets. You are destined to see, in your own walls --if they remain walls--your wives and your daughters, promenade slowly in English leather, heads under clinched round hats, surrounded by crinolines and hoops, and arrayed in all parties in the color violet, that abominable fusion of blue and red, always a horror, remember? Until, add to the Parisian appearance with London, or cockney (It is time to learn the English fashion language Indubitably it will be sold at the dentist's--where everyone is curbed--with racks of false teeth, allowing one to don the palettes or previously natural teeth, besides teeth gapping in from the adjoining impression. Equally offered to ladies; approval would be corsets called Longfellows, having the goal of expanding one's rear as long as possible, and returning the most rebellious breasts to themselves. Ah well, Paris, what do you say? What, afraid? When these horrid days arrive, you will see that you have not only renounced your pride, but your vanity, then you will be well convinced that the Commune has not only rendered you odious, but ridiculous--yes, when you wear hats that you have not designed-how you will regret not having revolted the day the archbishop of Paris was locked up in a cell in the Mazas!

LVII. The Little Sisters of the Poor

I want to tell you, I have read a touching story. Here is what I remember. There is in the faubourg Saint-Antoine a community of women who give aid to wretched old people; the infirm, men or women, senile, they are received gratefully. In this lodging, they are nourished, dressed and prayers said on their behalf. The elderly are contented, and God too.

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On evening, as the community began to prepare to sleep. The elderly poor had retired, done their duty, and slept, when a bolt of fire echoed to the house door.

Imagine the terror. The Little Sisters of the Poor are not accustomed to the noise that met their ears. There was a tumult, a bruhaha, they arose hastily, and in the great dormitories, the elderly put their heads under the covers and looked one to the other with a stunned air.

Meanwhile the door was opened. A hundred menacing men erupted inside; they had sabers and guns; they had the aspect of demons. The leader had a great beard and spoke in a terrible tone. The Little Sisters gathered around their superior.

-Shut the doors, cried the captain, and if a single one of these women want to yell, one, two, three, fire!

Then the good Mother--that is what the Mother Superior is called--stepped forward and demanded:

-What do you want, gentlemen?

--Say citizens, Holy Blood!"

The Good Mother made the sign of the cross and repeated:

--What is it that you want, my brothers?

Ah! If citizen Rigault had wanted to have M. Darboy remit his spiritual place, he would find it there, shortly responding to this folly:

"You are not brothers, but the National Guard! But he cannot be found anywhere

--We want to see your cashbox, replied the officer

The Good Mother signed to him the following, and designated an armoire, opened it, pulled open a drawer and said:"There is what we have."

There were twenty two francs.

--Is that all you have? The captain demanded in a defiant tone.

--No more than that, she said, monsieur, you can search everywhere

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Then the National Guard repaired through the house, coming and going, opening the rooms, rummaging among the furniture, and arrived, having found nothing, in the dormitory where the elderly slept. The the old men and women stood up, full of shock and dread, and, stammering and trembling, began to chatter all at once:

--What are you doing here? Do you want to do ill to the good sisters, or what? This is unworthy, it is shameful, wicked what you are doing; my good sir, what shall be do if you take them away?

The old men were furious and the old women lamented. The guard and the office had probably not expected a scene. They hesitated continuing the seizure.

--No, no, good people, said an officer who had been most violent and the most curt, no, we are not taking the sisters; we're doing no harm; now are you contented?

The National Guard went back down the stairs. They passed before the armoire:

--Sister, you have not closed the drawer, the captain said.

--True, sir. I have not the habit. Among us, you know, it is little use.

--That does not matter! Shut it today. Understand, I cannot vouch for the men I have with me.

So speaking, he retraced his steps, shut and locked the drawer without touching its contents and gave the superior the key, He seemed very embarrassed, and ended by saying:

--We did not know...if had known it was like this...we would have said... it is very good to succour the elderly poor

Seeing him troubling and of goodwill, a Little Sister, no longer afraid, approached and ventured to speak to him:

--We have been frightened for a month, sir officer. It was said that the reds wanted to take our house. It is horrible! You will protect us, right, sir?

--Certainly, the captain bravely responded, give me your hand, and if anyone wants to do you harm, it will be my concern.

A moment later the National Guard had departed, the Little Sisters and the elderly returned to bed, and the house was peaceful, absolutely as it not been an abominable refuge of church goers and conspirators.

Oh well, were I the Commune of Paris, I would shoot that captain!

LVIII. New Embarrassment of the Commune--Expedient--Declaration to the French People--Commentaries

The people of the Hôtel de Ville are saying: We have done and said well, Delegate Cluseret and Commandant Dombrowski have addressed most encouraging dispatch. We will not persuade the Parisian population that our struggle against the Versailles army is not a long set of decisive victories; what we do, will end by becoming aware that the Federal battalions are singularly slack before hardened machine guns. The day before yesterday, at Asnières, and would believe with difficulty that we would occupy again that village celebrated for its fried potatoes and loose women, at least we will succeed in admitting as perfectly valuable something reasonably frivolous; we have evacuated Asnières, there we now have force. So that things for us have come to a bad enough turn. How does one remedy the inconvenience of being conquered? What can destroy the bad impression produced by our dubious triumphs? And so the members of the Commune dream. "Oh! Of course, they cry after some seconds of reflection--but in a second the "evaders of Paris" reflect that the deputies of the National Assembly aren't capable of doing anything in the last three years--oh! Rather! We decree, we proclaim, we post! By what means have we succeeded in imposing on us these Parisian simpletons? Decrees, proclamations, posters. We persevere. Ah! Villains have taken the chateau of Becon and have seized Asnières, which does not matter! Quick, sixty pens and sixty inkwells! Work, men of letters, painters and shoemakers! Franckel who is Hungarian, Napoleon Gaillard, who is a cobbler, Dombrowski, who is Polish, and Billoray, who wrote omelet with two H's, would be enough of a mediocre job. But, thanks to Heaven, among us we have our Felix Pyat, a great dramatist; Pierre Denis who wrote as bad a verse as he could, and in revenge, wrote good prose, and also Vermorel, the author of "These Ladies," a little book ornamented with photographs like the high school students, and of *Heartbroken*, a novel which had the value of keeping Gustave Flaubert awake. Write, our Benjamins! It was a long time that we waited to hear these words the Commune." say if you know, write it, proclaim it, and we will post it! When you do not know, say so; the great art of great cooking consists in making a rabbit

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stew without spices."And there appeared that morning on the walls a huge white placard where the words appeared in enormous letters: "Declaration to the French people."In twenty days perhaps one could have noted that long proclamation that pretends to explain and begin to define the tendencies of the revolution of the 18th of March. Today we return to the benefit of illusions, and the fine phrases of the world would not prevail against our irreconcilable differences. Let us read and comment.

"In the sad and terrible conflict that imposes again on Paris the horrors of siege and bombardment, which makes French blood flow, by which our brothers perish, our children erased under shells and machine gun fire, it is urgent that public opinion be undivided, that the national conscience not know trouble."

In a good time! I know everyone's opinion; effectively, it is very urgent that public opinion is not divided. But you see a bit how you can gain so desirable result.

"It is necessary that Paris and the entire country known what is natural; reason, the end of the revolution is accomplished."

Doubtless; but it that which is indispensable today, was no less useful the same day of the revolution, and we cannot see the good because you have made us wait so long.

"Again, the responsibility for the mourning, the suffering and the misfortune which victimizes us again, upon those who, after having betrayed France and delivered up Paris to the foreigner, pursuing with blind obstinacy the ruin of the capital, before interring, in the disaster of the Republic and of liberty, the double witness of their treason and their crime."

What! Some phrase! It is you, Felix Pyat, that phrase so precise, so quick and clarifying to the darkness of the real situation,--the Commune has said: "*Pyat lux*"and there was light,-or you, Pierre Denis, or you, Vermorel? I admire particularly the double gloom buried in the disaster of the Republic. Happy metaphor!

"The Commune has the duty to affirm and to determine the aspirations and the voices of the population of Paris to summarize the character of the movement of the 18th of March; misunderstood, unknown and slandered by the political men who besiege from Versailles."

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Ah! Yes, the Commune has that duty; but, yes, thanks to it, we need not languish. You see we are dying of impatience.

"Another time, Paris works and suffers for the whole of France while it prepares by its combats and sacrifices for intellectual regeneration, moral, administrative and economic, glory and prosperity."

True, under the Commune as it exists in Paris, the workshops are closed, the factories shut down, and France, for whom she sacrifices herself, loses something like 500 millions daily. Results, it seems, and I don't see the point often countering the traitors of Versailles."

"What does Paris want?"

Ah! yes, what does it want? We don't really grieve to know that. Rather. What do you want?

As Louis the Great had the right to say "The State is me," you can say, "Paris is us." It is demanded that the Republic be recognised and consolidated, as the sole form of government compatible with the rights of the people and the regular and free society."

This time, you have reason. In effect, Paris demands a Republic, and necessarily must desire her with a love so strong, until neither your excess nor your folly could succeed in changing the union.

The absolute autonomy of the Commune extended for all locales in France is demanded, and assurance to each of the centrality of their laws, and to all France, the full exercise of each man's faculties and aptitudes, as a man, citizen and worker. The autonomy of the Commune is not limited by the equal autonomy of other communes adhering to the contract, giving France unity by association."

A little obscure. I understand a bit of this; you want to make France a federation of Communes, but what do these words mean: adherents to the contract?"You admit that some Communes would not adhere? In that case, what would be the situation of the rebels? Would you allow them to be free, or would you constrain them to obey the conventions of the greater number? Imagine that a town like Pezenas, refused to join, in order to not completely associate, that says that French unity does not exist. Are you sure of Pezenas? When you say that Pezenas does not conceive of independence in the same way, and you are not certain on the matter of Pezenas wanting to choose

a duke who raises armies and strikes coinage? Duke of Pezenas! That has a strong sound. Note too that "localities" could follow Pezenas' example, and perhaps, suffering the assured autonomy of the Commune, have sagely demanded to do what they want. So, what do you mean by "localities?" Marseilles is a locality; an isolated closet near a field is also a locality. There France is divided into an extraordinary number of communes. Allowing them form, are they innumerable petty States? Supposing all the same that all adhere to the contract, it is impossible that rivalries hobbling some, even fights; a trial over a wall could degenerate into a civil war. By what plan will you reduce the reasons of recalcitrant communities, until, admitting that communes have the right to conquer other communes, the rebels could always declare others were no longer adhering to the social pact? From that sort of split produced not only by the vanity of one or some little villages, but by the pride of one or more great towns, France would find herself denuded of her most important cities. Ah! Gentlemen, that part of your program truly gleams as a desired object, and I advise you to revise it, if you would not suppress it entirely.

"The inherent rights of the Commune are "the vote of the communal budget; setting and apportioning taxes; direction of local services; the organization of the magistracy, local police and education; the administration of goods belonging to the Commune

That paragraph is deceptive. In the first place, it does not appear, but if you will look, the most Machiavellian ruse presided over its editing. Its consistency places it squarely on the side of the laws incontestably pertaining to the Commune, from laws that do not appear to pertain to the rest of the world, and does not appear to attach more importance for one than the other, in order to convince the reader, carried away by the evident legitimacy of some of your justifications: "But, in effect, it is most just, totally!" Clearing up, you can braid that self-tangling hank of red wool. The vote for the communal budget, receipts and expenses, fixing and distributing taxes, administration of communal goods, are rights indubitably pertaining to the Commune; without them, it would not exist. And why do they appertain? Because, only it can know, one these matters, what is good, and here can take such action that wills that without the support of the entire country. But it is not just matters concerning the magistracy police and education. Ah well, one fine day, a commune will say "Magistrates? I do not want them, not I. Those black-robed people serve nothing, free my sisters from supporting those idlers, brave swindlers and honest assassins to the galleys. I love the assassins and I honor

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the swindlers, and henceforth, the most culpable will judge the attorneys of the Republic."If a commune said that, or something approaching it, what could you reply? Absolutely nothing; according to your system, each locality in France has the right to organize its magistracy on its own terms. And concerning the police and education, it would be easy to make analagous hypotheses and demonstrate again the absurdity of your communal pretensions. From now on, no one will be arrested, and it will be defended, upon pain of death, to learn by heart the fable of *The Wolf and the Fox*."What can be said to that? Nothing, if not that you are cheated hourly in affirming that the autonomous Commune has no legal limit in relation to the equal autonomy of all other communes. Another limit exists, and that is the general interest of the entire country, the country which cannot suffer another one of these parties polluting others by bad example, or any other fashion; the central power has the sole capacity to understand questions deriving from a single absurd measure--more than one "locality" is likely to be guilty--compromising the honor or the interests, of France, and the magistracy, the police, education from the evidence in all such matters.

Other rights of the Commune are; always after Declaration to the French people:

"choice by election or nominating convention, with responsibility and the permanent right to control and to recall magistrates or communal officials of all orders,

"The absolute guarantee of individual liberty, of liberty of conscience and liberty of work.

"The permanent intervention of citizens in Commune affairs by open demonstration of their ideas, the free defense of their interests; guarantees given to these demonstrations by the Commune, charged only with watching and assuring freedom and the just exercise of the right of assembly and of publicity.

"The organization of urban defense and of the National Guard, which chooses its bosses and alone watches to maintain order in the city."

Regarding the affirmation of these rights, we can repeat what we have said above, that is, that some will pertain to the Commune in effect, but the better part pertain nowhere."

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"Paris wants no more title to local guarantees, well intended, conditional upon recovering the greater central administration..."

Note what is not said:"government,"but that would be the same thing under another name, yes?

"...In the great central administration, delegation of federal communes, the realization and practice of the same principles."

In other words, what you want to say is that Paris will consent voluntarily to being advised by others, even if the whole world were its counselor

"But, favoring its autonomy and profiting by liberty of action, Paris retains the right to act as it wishes, with economic and administrative reforms that recover hits population; to create and to develop its own institutions and propagate instruction, production, exchange and credit; to make universal power and property..."

Huh? Universalize property? What does that mean, what are you asking? "Communalism" here seems singularly to resemble "communism."

"...And property, according to the moment's usage, or point of view, and facts furnished by experience."

"Our enemies deceive themselves , or the country when they would accuse Paris of wanting to impose its will or supremacy on the rest of the nation, and pretend to a dictatorship that would be a true blow against the independence and sovereignty of other communes.

"They deceive themselves or the country when they accuse Paris of pursuing the destruction of French unity, constituted by the Revolution, with acclamation from our fathers speeding the festival of federation of all points of old France.

"Political unity, such as has been imposed until now by Empire, monarchy and parliamentarism, is only centralization, despotic, intelligent, arbitrary, or onerous.

"Political unity, such as Paris wants, is the voluntary association of all local initiatives, the spontaneous and free [use] of all individual energies in view of a common end, the well-being, the liberty and the security of all.

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"The communal revolution, inaugurated by the popular initiative of the 18th of March, inaugurated a new era of experimental, positive and scientific politics."

It doesn't seem to us that despite some paragraphs, the tone of the declaration is a bit modified. It seems like Felix Pyat, tired, gave his pen to Pierre Denis or to Delescluze. After communalism, socialism.

"The communal revolution is the end of the old world, governmental and clerical, of militarism, of bureaucratism (this new editor appears to love words ending in ism), or exploitation, of speculation, of monopolies, of privileges, to which proletariat owes its servitude, the country its misfortunes and its disasters."

Eh! My God, I cannot ask less, I ; but if I were certain that citizen Rigault, by means of a perfected magnifier that allows him to observe some kilometer' distance without leaving his office or armchair, if I weren't certain that citizen Rigault is not in a way to read over my shoulder, what I am now writing, I would permit myself to insinuate that the revolution of the 18th of March, on the contrary appears to me, until that hour, the striking triumph of the better part of the crimes it pretends to have suppressed.

"That this dear and great country, deceived by dreams and falsehoods, reassures itself."

Tell me! What is it that reassures it, by what means, go on!"

"The struggle underway between Paris and Versailles is of those who cannot themselves end it by illusory compromise. The issue is not known to be in doubt. (Oh, no, it is not in doubt!) Victory is pursued by the indomitable energy of the National Guard restoring ideals and rights."

"We call to France!"

Very good, until you have the indomitable energy of the National Guard?

"Be warned that Paris in arms possesses the calm of the brave..."

That is something of which you would persuade France with difficulty!

"That order will be sustained with the energy of enthusiasm..."

Order! Order! Doubtless, that which reigns at Versailles, the order that has reigned since the 4th of December.

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"That which sacrifices itself with the reason of enthusiasm..."

Yes, the reason of a man who throws himself from the fourth floor in order to prove to the street that his head is harder than the paving stones.

"...that it has armed itself from devotion to the glory and liberty of all.-- That France must cease this bloody conflict!"

It will stop, become tranquil, but not in the way you intend.

"It is France that will disarm Versailles..."

Let us agree that at the present she has done precisely the contrary.

"...by demonstration of her irresistible will. Called to benefit from our conquests, she will declare solidarity with our effort, will disdain this combat that can only finish by the triumph of the communal idea or the ruin of Paris..."

The ruin of Paris, that is, I suppose, a figurative expression?

"Regarding us, citizens of Paris, we have the mission to accomplish the largest and most fruitful revolution of all those that have illumined history.

"We have the duty to struggle and to conquer!"

-The Commune of Paris-

Such was the long, emphatic, and often obscure declaration. It did not lack a certain eloquence; and while it sullied every minute with exaggerated manifestos, it contained some just ideas or at least conformed to the voices of the greater majority. Will this destroy the ill effect produced by the successive defeats of the federals at Neuilly and at Asnières? Will it restore to some favor the Commune for those spirits, who daily, distance themselves from the men of the Commune? No, it is too late. Posted fifteen or twenty days [ago], the proclamation would have been approved by some parties, and would have been discussed by the others. Today, it passed, with a smirk. Ah, after three weeks, it is good that they have passed something, The acts of the Commune of Paris do not permit us to that their proclamations seriously, and we think its members very foolish--if not worse,-for believing that by chance they could be reasonable. These men have finished by rendering execrable what had been good in their idea.

LIX. Commandant Girod--Complaints of the Martial Court

We have a martial court; citizen Rossel presides over it; he is minister of state for war. He wants to condemn to death Commandant Girod, who refused to march against "the enemy"; "but the executive commission has [reason to] thank Commandant Girod. Let us think a bit; if the executive commission spent the time undoing what the court martial had done, I cannot readily explain to myself why the executive commission had instituted the court martial. Having that last place, I would annoy myself: "What, say I, I've installed myself in the council of war, Rue du Cherche-Midi, given to the guards, and my president has the right to cry: Guards! Bring in the accused. Again, it seems to resemble less a genuine tribunal than a parody resembles the work parodied; then, the court martial, I want to profit from the laws my comrades have made, in order to shoot Commandant Girod, and oppose a justice that would assure the life of the man I have condemned would be saved? Absurd! Odious! I have fondness for the commandant, and I want to kill him with my own hands!"

Go on, go on, calm yourself, court martial. You can take your revenge before long. There are no less, at the hour I write this, than sixty three clerics in the prisons of Mazas, of the Conciergerie and the Sante. Good thing that you are not precisely military, who are given you to judge, and you can do all that you want, without an executive commission interposing its veto. The refractory [priests] also are given to you from necessity and you can rage against them in your role. With Commandant Girod, you understand, it is was different; he is the friend of citizen Delescluze. The Commune members have not enough friends to allow them to suppress everyone else. But console yourselves, a dozen vicars match a commandant of the National Guard.

LX. Heroes!

Hah! Justly, because the men sent to their deaths fought with heroic courage, which we have wanted from Commune members. Damn them for the squandering the moral richness of Paris! They are cursedly employed in the service of a bad cause, with the luck of a triumphant revolt disposing them. Let me tell you what happened here, the 22nd of April, on the Boulevard Bineau, and we recognize with joy that France--which has lost so many things--could count again upon the brave smile that had been its ancient honor. A sixteen year old child, bugle in hand, marched at the head of his company

charged to occupy a barricade abandoned by the Versailles. When I say that he marched, I deceive myself; the truth is that, a hundred preceded the National Guard, they were the street, the perilous skipping and other exercises familiar to clowns and to street children. They arrived before the barricade, one raised up a foot, tensed, and in four long bounds, flipped to the other side, on his hands. But the barricade was not abandoned! The bugle boy immediately was circled by a great number of linemen, concealing aft the pavers and sandbags enveloping the company when desired, without defiance, to occupy the position. The guns were leveled to the poor street arab and a sargeant told him:

--If you take a step, make a sound, you will be killed!

What did the bugler do? He jumped atop the barricade and yelled with all his might of his lungs:

--No one shall pass!

He fell, pierced by four balls; but his company was saved.

LXI. The Ingenuity of Shells

On another corner, a horrible tableau. It was the avenue of Ternes. A mortuary convoy passed. One coffin, carried by two men, was very small; a child's coffin. Behind it walked a worker in his blouse, doubtless the father, and some friends. Very sad, but what followed was abominable. A shell fired from Mont-Valerien fell upon the little funeral box, and, exploding, [was] the face of the father, from the debris of planks, of bone, and of flesh. The body was crushed. Massacring death! It must be admitted that the gunners are ingenious and refined destroyers!

LXII. Neuilly's Respite--Death in the Cellar--The Porte-Maillot--The Ruins of Neuilly--Exodus

Again the wretched inhabitants of Neuilly were able to leave their caves! For three weeks, waiting every minute to receive on their backs the shrapnel of their shattered houses, waiting one minute at ease in the fury of the cannonade, next procuring in haste what is needed to not die of hunger, three weeks of terror endured, all in the danger of battle and bombardment. Many dead, all believe themselves certain of death. Note now the dreadful details.

Two old people, husband and wife, lived a little below the Gilet restaurant, the house where the office of the Louvre-Courbevoie bus is located. From the first days of the war, their little lodging was ravaged by three guns which shattered, blow after blow. The poor elders were ruined, and no longer owned anything to carry away, they took refuge in a cellar, according to custom. There, the husband died, after several hours of horror.

He was sixty two years old, and could not resist the blast. The wife, a little younger, was stronger. When the struggle halted--rarely--she left, and said to her neighbors heading into their cellars:

--My husband is dead. He must be buried; tell me what I should do?

Taking the body to the cemetery was not possible. At that sad moment, this sad need must be served. Besides, en route the pallbearers would probably encounter some ball or bullet, and find other people to carry [their bodies]. Once the old widow hazarded to the Porte-Maillot, and summoning the force of her voice, cried:

--My husband is dead in the cellar. Come, look, and let us re-enter Paris.

The bureaucrat was facetious--we would hope that he was not that--he went to sleep, and she fled. It had been four days since her husband became a corpse. That night, she slept with the corpse. With the clarity coming with day, she looked at the body, and sobbed with sadness and with horror. Then decomposition began. Oh! She could not further endure any more. She left, crying to her neighbors"

--Bury him! If not, I am going to bury him in the avenue, for dying here.

Some took pity upon her. They descended into the cellar, brought a box and laid out the body. She remains, after fifteen days, on the scattered ground. Today, when the search began, she was mad. In the inadvertent ditch, legs protruded from the body.

The morning of 25th of April, nine in the morning, an innumerable crowd mounted the Champs-Élysées; pedestrians of all ages and classes, and in carriages of all kinds. The respite, obtained by the members of the *Republican Union of the Rights of Paris*--took place to recoup the inhabitants of Neuilly. Advancing with caution, neither cannonade nor fusillade had ever ceased before, each instant they feared a projectile falling upon the dense crowd. Upon the avenue of the Grand-Armée, a shell incinerated the house known as

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Chateau del'Etoile. Meanwhile, little by little, the artillery duel diminished in violence, until it stopped altogether, and one pelted towards the ramparts.

The Porte-Maillot, it may be truly said, no longer exists. For a long time, despite the assertions of the Commune, that the walls are overturned, that the ditch is filled in. At the station there remains a drift of black rock, crumpled rocks, of broken glass and of twisted iron; the cut where the trains passed, is full of debris from the walls; to get by, one must detour.

Judge the embarrassment produced at the site by the swarm of people, or carriages, the moving vans converging at the same point. The whole world wants to pass at the same time, yelling, jostling, choking. In vain the National Guard attempt to establish a little order. Add that, just to aggravate difficulties, there are certain formalities to pass through. I succeeded in crossing to a cart that is certain to leave Paris and after a thousand spurts and a thousand stops, I entered, coat in rags, Neuilly.

The spectacle is shocking. First appears a vast circular space called the military zone. It is a pocked desert, a single house standing, the chapel of Longchamps, it was an ambulance station; and I saw a white flag ornamented with a red cross. To tell the truth the wounded could not be sure that this was not a grave just in range of shellfire. To the left stretches the Bois des Boulognes, or where the Bois de Boulognes was. I saw very few trees, and the forest spread into desolate open clearings.

I hastened forward. Besides, the crowd shoved. Here, Neuilly, again; disaster is complete. The reality was more than I could have imagined. The housetops collapsed through the windows. Some walls are crumbling; in those remaining there are enormous dark gouges. It is the entrance way of the shells, that then exploded the interior, smashing, dislocating, splitting the furniture, the tables, the windows, and scoring the men as well. Every minute a morsel of glass splintered from the passing (shell); until no window was intact. From afar, a house which bullets struck, stands stubborn, is no more than a pile of debris, where one can remove a dust of brick and plaster.

Oh well, Parisians, what do you say to that? Is it not that citizen Cluseret, sometime American, is an excellent Frenchman, and is it not time to render up a decree also concluding: "Considering that Neuilly is in cinders, and France sees the lucky result of the glorious resistance organized by the delegate for war, decreed: *Unique article*: citizen Cluseret, destroyer of Neuilly, has merited well from France and the Republic."

Meanwhile, of all the houses, or what remains of all the houses, fall upon people in charge of tables, clocks, moneyboxes. Parents embrace parents; no one any longer believes that they will meet again. Go, come, cut short. Think that all was lost; desire to forget nothing. One sees a great van leaving Paris of orphans; a sister is assisting them to board. After the displaced people leave with the greatest promptitude, gaining the Porte-Maillot. Who will give them hospitality in vast Paris? Can one dream that? The immense removal of men and things is almost joyous under the clear sun. Time passes; one must make haste; in an instant the short respite will expire. The tardy cram their bundles, loading their backs. At the gates of Paris, a new tangle, more inextricable than that of the morning, cabs, overladen, can only advance slowly and tipping over easily. One yells more, struggles, meanwhile passing surely, on all the streets full of emigrant carriages. It is an exodus. But Paris is a sad promised land!

And now, one to the other, it recommences, cannon and gunfire, until again that horrible quarrel will be ended by the destruction of one of the two sides. Kill one another, as you want, combattants born under the same sky; and at least a few women will sleep in peace this night.

LXIII. The Freemasons--The Cortège and the Crowd--In the Court of the Hôtel de Ville--Discussion--Opinion of Gavroche--Simple Reflections--Sacrilegious Bullets--A Freemason's Account

I had almost decided to not continue these notes. Tired, heart-broken, I remained two days without going out, wanting to not see, to not know, sinking into my reading, reprising favorite works; but I could not longer hold. It is ten in the morning I see, I walk, I inform myself. What things have happened in two days!

A very agitated crowd is stationed at the corner of the streets going into the Rue de Rivoli, not far from the Hôtel de Ville. Waiting, doubtless. For what? Vague rumors, but almost all imprint a hope of peace and of conciliation, spreads among the groups, where the women are the most numerous.

"-- Ah! They have met, we are saved!" said one workgirl who had by the hand a little boy dressed in National Guard uniform.

"--What is it?" I demand of him.

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"--Oh, sir, they are the Freemasons who are set from the Commune. Since the world began, they are never on display, and then they are going to cross Paris in front of us! The Commune must have a reason, to put itself out for them."

"--There they are! There they are!" cried the little boy, dragging his mother with all his might.

The cabs file past, the crowd presses closer and closer as they advance; the drums beat far down the street, brass music intones the *Marseillaise*, and [following] after appear five major officers of state, then six members of the Commune, cinched with red sashes edged in gold fringe. I believe I recognize among them citizens Delescluze and Protot.

"-- They want to go to the Hôtel de Ville," said a young butcher, balancing a one hand on a basket of food on his head, while the other made enthusiastic signals to his comrades placed on the other side of the street. "I saw them gather this morning at the Place du Carrousel, with their banners, it was beautiful, go! And then, the battalion that you see, with the music, came to take them. At the moment, they want to salute the Republic; they must follow it. Onward, forward, march! "

And the young butcher, the Parisian freemasonry filled up the Rue de Rivoli.

In the front of the cortege I noticed a crowd of people not carrying arms, dressed in a type of Zouave (African troops) pantaloon in deep blue cloth, with white patches, and white belts with blue vests. Almost all are bare-headed. I am told that they are the "skirmishers of the Commune."

I see floating before we, the curious, a great white banner, bearing an inscription distance makes me unable to read: but the butcher I'd seen in the street; "Love one another" is what it appears to say to him. Lucky Freemasons! They retain such illusions! "Tolerate one another" would be difficult enough!

Always we go forward. As the parade passes, there are many cries, few "Long Live the Commune!" but very many "Down with the murderers! Death to assassins! down with Versailles!" A Freemason responded to one chant and took off his hat:

--"Long live peace. It is what we all seek."

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To tell the truth, I am not all that certain what passed, and what was underway; but patience, at the Hôtel de Ville all will be explained. We arrive. The National Guard makes haste, the cortege files into the court of honor. Carried away by the crowd I end up near the gate, and can see what happens inside. The entire Commune is on the balcony, forming on the stairway of honor in front of the statue of the Republic, draped, like everyone in a red sash. The trophy red flags flutter on all sides. The banners are placed by the marchers: upon each appears in striking letters a humanitarian maxim. The Grand-Orient, Scottish Rite and Misrâim (lodges) are represented in the great conclave. The dean of the Freemasons, leading a venerable line, has arrived by cab. His descent is assisted with marks of greatest respect; the Freemasons nearest take off their hats. The court is full. An immense cry of "Long live Freemasonry! Long live the Universal Republic!" left all chests, and citizen Felix Pyat, member of the Commune, came forward across the balcony to speak. I see what he will be doing. But no! I can to such an extent that at times I must defend my cane, my hat, my purse, my cigarcase, and my breath. I know all about citizen Pyat! Yes, meanwhile; here is something of a précis. "Universal country...liberty, equality, fraternity...manifesto to the heart...(what would that be?)...humanity's flag, ramparts..." "My God, if I could understand""homicidal bullets...fratricidal bullets...universal peace...." "For this all the Freemason lodges have come to the Hôtel de Ville?" "Go and take a unarmed hand...and many other phrases which escape me and an explosion of yells: "Long live the Commune! Long live the Republic!" But significantly, I want to understand, at the finish.

--"They are going to draw lots to know who is going to kill M. Thiers" said a red street boy.

--"No, idiot, not until they have "disarmed hands", responded another street arab, less red.

--"Listen and you will know."

The advice is good and I forced myself to follow it. But more and more I had to restrain myself. Before all, a break! caused by the probable asphyxiation of a bald-headed bourgeoisie who collapsed before my eyes. Well, breathe, and understand a bit.

"The Commune has decided that it will chose five members for the honor of accepting your escort, and it has been justly proposed that this honor makes good fortune. "

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--"You keep well," yelled a red street arab with a strangled voice "I know well that they come to bring us good fortune!"

A vigorous punch from another gavroche responded to that judicious perception.

"Fate has named five among you to follow, to escort your glorious and victorious acts."

The rhyme is fortunate; but what of the act itself?

"Your action, citizens, will remain in the history of France and of humanity."

--He speaks of humanity, I say they are going to kill M. Thiers!"

For the punch, the second gamin hit the first gamin, jostled by the crowd, he struck his head against the curb of the gutter, and finally finished the day crossing the crowd, thrashing.

In my mind, resignation began to replace burning curiosity. What the Commune's will saw done! I know when I fell back.

Another member of the Commune, citizen Beslay, I believe, expressed his regret at not being named to aid the accomplishment of that "heroic act" which [act] I could not arrive at or conceive its nature; he also spoke of leading destiny. My head began to ache. Were they, in effect, going to act against poor M. Thiers?

"What can I say to you citizens, after the so eloquent words of Felix Pyat? You will undertake a great act of fraternity... (Then it is going to be horrible!) setting your flag upon the ramparts of our town, and lead us in our ranks against our enemies from Versailles."

The day began to weigh upon my spirit. At the same time that citizen Boslay embraced the nearest Freemason, and another Freemason claimed the honor of planting the first banner on the ramparts, that of *Perseverance*, that floated from the year 1790, and the music played--horribly false--the *Marseillaise*, and they gave a red flag to the Freemasons, followed by a discourse, and citizen Terifocq took up the red flag and made another speech, and the same citizen Terifocq waved the flag while yelling "Now citizens, no more words; action!"

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Thus, we summarise. The Freemasons are going to plant their banners upon the walls of Paris, in company with the oriflammes [sacred banners] of the Commune. I do not believe that it will be easy to persuade people whose brains are [already] well organized by shells and bullets doubtless having effected certain homicides,fratricides and infanticides, and their undoubted other explosive qualities,have enough tact to dispatch them to their fate with the standards of freemasonry, and make more holes than those of the Commune. As the Versaillais projectiles have no other end than to atomise Parisians and their flags, naturally if the Parisan flags and the Parisians are disintegrated, it is probable that the Masonic banners will be equally shredded, when they find themselves in a dangerous neighborhood. What will happen then? According to citizen Terifocq, "The Freemasons of Paris will call vengeance to their aid; the Masonry of all France will follow their example; at each point of the country where the brothers see troops directed towards Paris, they will go before them to fraternize. Oh well, if Versailles does not take out the Masons, and the National Guard (sic!); then the Freemasons will join companies of war leaving for battle and encourage by their example these glorious soldiers, defenders of our town."

That all seems very complicated. It seems to me that this plan is that if the Paris Freemasons intend conciliation, they would be more likely to simply take their guns and say to the Federals "Here we are."

But here we march. It is necessary to everyone advance.we reach, followed by an ever increasing crowd, the place of the Bastille. Some speeches are declaimed at the foot of the July column. The shout, the jostle, the dust have distracted my attention. I cannot understand another word. For the rest, it is always the same thing, the same yells responding to the same orator's gestures.

We head on, descending the boulevards: an immense cortege, gaudy with banners and insignia, saluted in passing by popular curiosity.

Arriving at the place of Concorde, I dally in back. There are groups here and there. I would not be chagrined to know the opinion clubs concerning Masonic public demonstrations.

But presently people regain the Champs-Elysées and yell loudly "What horror! What an abomination! They respect nothing! Vengeance" I ask, and one replies that his brother had been killed by a shell before the Rue of the Coliseum. Another added that the white flag had been disregarded, that

between the Freemasons upon whom the Versaillais had fired *directly*, there are many dead and wounded. In a bit, this horrible news, expanding and exaggerating every minute, spreads and fuels indignation in all quarters of Paris. I return home in a perplexed enough situation, from which I am drawn off by the arrival at five in the evening of one of my friends, a Freemason, and consequently well-informed. Here is what happened:

"At the moment of his arrival at the avenue of Champs-Elysées, the parade split into several groups which each chose a route into an adjoining avenue or adjacent street. They followed the Faubourg Saint-Honoré and the Avenue Friedland to the Arc de-l'Etoile, where it reaches to the Porte-Maillot; another gained the gates of Ternes by the Avenue of Ternes, a third the gate Dauphine by the avenue Urich. During that transit, no other Freemason was wounded, despite the shells that fell, time after time. The VV [?]. of each lodge marched with the masonic standards before.

"The the white flag floated upon the bastion to the right of the Porte-Maillot, and the Versaillais batteries suspended their fire. The Brothers oiled past the ramparts, and marched towards Neuilly. There, they were received coldly enough by the colonel commanding the detachment. All the officers, as was their chief, were most irritated against Paris. But the soldiers resembled those of the war.

"After some discussions, the demonstration obtained clearance to send a certain number of delegates to Versailles, to attempt a new tentative conciliation with the government."

This new effort will be more fortunate than those preceding! Will Freemasonry obtain what the Republican Union could not? I want to believe, and I do not believe that. The obstinacy of the Versailles Assembly derives from deafness. We assert also that the Freemasons' approach to arriving at concord is singular enough, and it will have the air of putting a gun to the throat of M. Thiers and yelling: "Peace, or your life!"

LXIV. The Prudence of Felix Pyat--Unlucky Pyat!--the Commune Obligés

Ah! not you, not that, Monsieur Felix Pyat, leave it, if you please! You have been, you are, you will be. It is good that you talk all the time. It is more

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striking to me, seeing how ill things are turning out, a man more competent than you would have judged it proper to tender his resignation. When the house burns, jump out the window. But you have been clever to no purpose, as your amiable friends await in the street below while you remain in full flame. It is in vain that you wrote the following letter, a masterpiece, to the president of the Commune:

"Citizen President, if I had been retained to the Ministry of War the day when the question of elections was argued, I would have voted with the minority of the Commune.

"I believe that the majority, this time, has triumphed."

"This time" is elegant.

"I doubt that he wants to revisit his error."

Of course! If he revisits each time he deceived, he'll hardly advance!

"But I believe that the elected do not have the right to replace the electors. I believe that the executive does not have the right to substitute itself for the sovereign. I believe that the Commune cannot of any of its members either make, or finish them; likewise its chief cannot furnish a pretext that renders their nomination legal."

Oh! Legality, Monsieur Felix Pyat, out of fashion, and good for Versailles, that.

"I believe, then, until war changes the population..."

Oh! yes, the war changes the population, if not as you understood, less in the sense that many reasonable people, I don't count you among them, are sorted from fools, and good to sort the living from the dead!

"...I believe that it was just to change the law rather than to violate it. Born from the vote, to complete self without it, the Commune commits suicide. I do not want to be complicit in the mistake."

We do not believe that; it is well enough known that he was complicit in crime.

"I am sufficiently convinced of these truths to the point that if the Commune persists in what I name a usurpation of elective power, I cannot reconcile the

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respect given to majority vote to my conscience; and then I would be forced, to my great regret, to give, before the victory, my resignation as a Commune member."

"Health and Fraternity,

"FELIX PYAT"

"Before the victory,"that infinitely wit! But, impelled by the desire to allow everyone to see such wit, M. Felix Pyat, has not perceived that his irony was a little bit transparent, that "before the victory"very evidently meant "before the defeat,"and that, consequently without reviewing the excellent reasons detailed in his letter to the President of the Commune, content oneself with recalling that rats know when a ship is about to sink. This time, the rats will remain in the bottom of the hold. Your colleagues, M. Pyat, will not permit you to solely divest yourself of honor, until you have been condemned, with them, to punishment. Not daring to flee, you will remain. Vermorel will take you by the coat collar, at the moment when you open the door to escape, and M. Pierre Denis who has been the poet of the times as cobbler, will murmur in your ear, that verse of Victor Hugo which, with modifications, adapts very well to your case:

Now it is said: the Empire is reeling;

Victory is hardly certain.

He seeks to leave, furtive and recusant.

Stay in the hovel!

You say: The shell crumbles; it wants, if it comes,

To prevent my departure.

Not daring to remain or flee; look at the rooftop,

Look at the door.

Timidly you place your hand on the latch:

Stay in their funeral rank

Stay! The law that buries you in a ditch

Is in the shadows.

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Stay! There he is, his side pierced by their knives,
Recumbent, and upon his bier,
Is placed a tile, a flap of your mantle
lay under that stone
You will not go! What! Leave your house!
And flee your destiny!
What! You would betray til treason's self
is indignant!
What! have you not in full connivance had the color of these fools?
Thieves' bag empty, you reply,
you sewed it up in advance?
Dreams, hatred's cold and oily dart.
inhabit that den;
You are going! From what right, more of a fox,
than a viper?

And M. Felix Pyat will stay, despite all the good reasons there would have been for him to repair to a tower in Belgium. His colleagues will seize him, if necessary, by blandishments. "You are good, you are great, you are pure; what would we do without you?" and again, it will not be allowed, like those poltroons who, in great danger, fasten upon their companions, yelling hotly: "We are all going to die!" and embrace one another because they cannot leave.

LXV. Colle and the Commune--Resources of the Commune--Exporting the Museums--Austerlitz to bid

Anonymous, another, [rumor] says, that citizen Delescluze wants to print this: "The Commune is assured receipts of 600,000 francs daily,--18 millions a month."

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There was, at that time, a con-man named Colle, celebrated for the number and importance of his deceptions, and he possessed, it is said, a great fortune. When asked as to this, he replied:

"I am assured receipts of ten francs daily,-three thousand francs a month."

Between Colle and the Commune, there are only two differences: Colle loved the clergy and frequently wore their various costumes, and the Commune cannot suffer priests; the second difference is that Colle, assuring himself of receipts of three thousand francs a month, had all that he could achieve, while the Commune, which has barely 18 millions, would rather claim that. It is remarkable, and I give little credit, that it contents itself with so little. Ah! You are very modest! It is not victoriously to embarrass all, 18 millions, a misery! Could you explain your reserve if you were scrupulous in choice of means: Thank God, it is nothing [at all]. Then, a little more energy, you cry!

"But, sighs the Commune, it seems to me that I've done all that I could. Thanks to Jourde to forget [John] Law, and to Dereure who was a cobbler,--the shoemaker and the financier-I deposit daily the set price for tobacco sales, a fine enough speculation, until I can neither pay the first, or the full work. On the other hand, I have, thanks to what I call "Regularly produced public services"a good number of small revenues which cost little and are greatly reported. There is, for example, the Post! I take great care to speed every letter entrusted to me, and I pay postage, which consists of initialing by one of my employees. That is easy enough, I suppose. Again, today I humbly asked the railroad companies who want to carry my mail, the sum of two million francs; the North company offered me three hundred thousand francs; the Orient company offered two hundred and seventy five thousand francs; the East Company three hundred and fifty four thousand francs; the Lyon company six hundred and ninety two thousand francs, the Orleans company, three hundred and seventy seven thousand francs. My delegate for Finance, M. Jourde, the strong head of the group imagined that combination. And in truth, I found it was all that I could do, you want to humiliate me, to compare to Colle who did well, but, finally, cannot compare!"My God, dear Commune, I note that you have excellent arrangements: I approve the tabacconist, and the production of public services, which you see, but is that all? The benefit of night calls upon [bank] vaults and your fruitful visits to church collection boxes. While the railroad tax does inspire me with admiration bordering on enthusiasm. But for the love of God, have you nothing else? Nothing remains to be done. What! Waste time counting up revenue, while there might be a pretext to add to it?

Are there any bankers in Paris? No money to change? No notaries? Send me the brave patriots amongst all these reactionaries. A hundred thousand francs on one side, two hundred thousand francs on the other, always. Little streams become great rivers. In your place I would no longer neglect the cashboxes of the shopkeepers or the accounts of the landlords. These people are the bourgeoisie, and the bourgeoisie are your enemy. Prevail, zounds, prevail! Deceive with skeleton keys, perchance? Bah! you have done it; among your members, there are one or two locksmiths, Consider Pilotel! There is a true man. He knew there were eight hundred francs in M. Chaudrey's secretaire; he took eight hundred francs. That is what makes good houses and good governments. And where there is no money, take the merchandise, the furniture, everything! You cannot cheat a receiver of stolen goods, I think. It is reported here that you have sent to London the Titians and the Veroneses from the Louvre, after you received the money. That was a good con, and it better explains to me why M. Courbet had good cause to disembarass himself of one or two painters from whom he has shown a profound and rightful hatred. But then! That was a false rumor you were going to put up for sale the materials from the Vendôme column divided into four lots; two lots of materials and two of metals. Only two lots? You do not know how to value merchandise. Another time a crowd of imbeciles called those materials and metals the glory of France. When the sale ended it was a pretty spectacle, the dealers carrying under their arms, a bit of Wagram, a bit of Jena! Who would have believed that you could buy a kilo of bronze acquired by the First Consul at Arcola, or the Emperor at Austerlitz? Enraging that you had not foreseen the highbidders for the value of the object up for auction; the speculation would have been the best. Commune, you are maladroit, you do not know how to profit from the situation. Fix your failures! Tax, take, steal! It is all the same to you, you disdain nothing, fear nothing that resists you; the whole world fears you. I have five francs in my pocket, do you want them?

LXVI. Proudhon's Prophecy

"Social revolution cannot come about in immense cataclysm, where the immediate effect would be:

"To sterilize the land:

"To enclose the society in a straight jacket;

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"And if it were possible that an unrivaled state of things would only last some weeks.

"To cause a sudden famine for three or four million men.

"When the government will be without resources, when the country shall be without production or commerce;

"When Paris starved, blockaded by the provinces, not paying, not trading, remaining without shipments.

"When the workers, demoralized by the politics of the clubs and the workshop layoffs look for a way to live, no matter what;

"When the state requires silver and jewelry from citizens to send to the Mint;

"When household confiscations will be the only way to collect taxes;"

"When starving bands, roam the countryside, organised for raiding;

"When the peasant, gun loaded, guards his hovel and abandons his fields;

"When the first seed is stolen, the first house forced open, the first church profaned, the first torch lit, the first woman raped;

"When the first blood will have been spilled;

"When the first head falls

"Then desolation and abomination shall be all of France,

"Oh! Then, that will be social revolution:

"A multitude unchained, armed, drunk with anger and vengeance:

"Pikes, soldiers, bare rooms, blades and hammers:

"The city bleak and silent: the police in the hallway of a family, suspect opinions, words overheard, tears notes, sighs counted, silence espied, espionage and denunciations:

"Inexorable requisitions, forced and successive printing, paper money depreciating.

"Civil war and the foreigner on the border."

"Pitiless proconsuls, a supreme committee, with a heart of bronze.

"And that is the fruit of a revolution termed democratic and social."

Who wrote this admirable page? Proudhon.

Just God, take pity on France! That sums us up.

LXVII. Apostle Balloons-Indifference to Manners-Good Trip!

A balloon! Quick, a balloon! There is not a minute to lose. The inhabitants of Brive-la-Gaillarde and the mountaineers of Savoy are starved for truth; let us offer them the healthy manna. Turn, Pierre Denis! Inflate emulate Godard! And the four winds of heaven send our "Declarations "to the four corners of France! Ah! Ah! The Versaillais--clutch of traitors--they will not wait. They will muster soldiers, imbeciles! They will bombard our forts and our houses also, naifs! We proclaim and distribute our proclamations to the entire country by means of an infinite number of revolutionary airships. They will be steered by the wind to traverse the Mountain! If they are lucky, the brave farmers, the good middle class, the fiery workers of the departments, will then collect, fallen from the sky, these pages inscribed with the rights and the duties of modern man! They will not hesitate for a moment. They will leave their streets, houses, workshops. "My gun, my gun!" will be the cry, without dreaming that they leave behind husbandless women and fatherless children, they will join us, fortunate to conquer or die for the glory of citizen Delescluze and of citizen Vermorel! Ah! What ardor! Such patriotism! They are underway, they approach. Those who do not have guns have taken pikes and ploughshares. Hurrah! Forward, march! To arms! Citizens. Salute France who comes to the aid of Paris!

Oh well! Nevertheless, the inhabitants of Brive-la-Gaillarde and the mountaineers of Savor, goiters or not, don't in the least dream of taking up arms. They have never been more tranquil nor more determined to remain at peace. When they see one of your balloons --supposing that the Balloons pass the Versaillais lines and uniquely transport to a certain spot for repentant communalists--when they see one of your balloons, they will simply yell: "Gosh! There is a balloon! Where the devil did that come from?" If some printed leaflets fall from the heavens, they will gather them up, then say: "I will have my son read these tonight, when he returns from school." That evening, the son spells it out, the father listens. The son does not understand it, the father falls

asleep."Ah! These Parisians!" said the mother. What do they want! There are people born to live and die without knowing that which is so admirable in the men of the Hôtel deVille. They are stupid enough to live their lives as others have. There is no killing among them, they are savages! And you cannot succeed in persuading them, when they have paid their taxes, supported their wives and children, that duty remains to be accomplished, more holy and imperious than those; that of coming to the Porte-Maillot and getting a ball in the stomach or concussion from a shell.

But the balloons could still be useful. Let's choose the largest and strongest, best rigged. Fill it with citizen *Felix Pyat--who would not be last to seat himself--and citizen Delescluze, not omitting citizen Cluseret*, nor any of the other citizens, who at the moment, are the font of joy of Paris and the tranquility of France. Look at the subtle inflations on that admirable airship that bears all our hopes. And now, wind blow! Oh! Terrible wind, a furious wind! They leave! Abandoning us! The balloons sometimes have whims; you have read the story of Hans Pfaal? [Edgar Allen Poe short story] My God, if the ice could bring them to the moon, or very much further!

LXVIII. Examination of Conscience

Re-reading these preceding pages, it strikes me that one encounters strange contradictions. In the first days, I was almost favorable to the Commune, I waited, I hoped; today it is completely different. While I wrote this evening what I had seen or thought in the day, I allowed myself to blame truly blame men who a short time ago inspired in me a sort of sympathy. What happened? Have I changed my opinion? I do not believe so. Besides, as for opinion, in reality, I did not have one. I proved this, and say that I proved this, without taking part, without afterthought. If these scattered notes are ever gathered into a book, it would have the rare merit of being a truly sincere volume. Is my nature modified? No more. If I was indulgent for a month, it is because I do not know those of whom I am speaking, and naturally, I am disposed to benevolence and hope. If I am more severe at this hour, it is because--like the whole of Paris--I have learned to know them.

LXIX. Journals of the Commune--Sensational News--the first Paris-- Basic article--Various deeds

The Commune, naturally, birthed an infinite number of journals. Attempting to count, if you absolutely want, the leaves of the forest, the grains of sand, the stars of the heavens, but never dream of enumerating the gazettes which saw daylight after the lucky day of the 18th of March. Felix Pyat had one journal *The Avenger*. Vermorel had a journal: *The Cry of the People*. Delescluze had a journal: *The Awakening*; each member of the Commune was given the luxury of a cartload of paper to daily to speak ill of his colleagues. It is necessary to avow that these gentlemen had a serious ill-opinion of one another. I defy the *Gaulois* of Versailles, yes the *Gaulois* itself, to treat Felix Pyat as he treated Vermorel, and if one considered on the one hand what Felix Pyat said of Vermorel, one would find *Gaulois* singularly benevolent. A long time ago Napoleon said,: Wash our dirty laundry in the family."But good patriots cannot profit from a lesson from a tyrant. Daily the Commune journals are dedicated to "the huddle"where members of the Commune reciprocate; but where will these journals be in six months, in a month, in eight days perhaps, these ephemeral journals? The wind that brings the rose and laurel leaves does not bring less cruelty to political leaflets. Let us offer to posterity a model of what it said well today "of that which was."--The Communalist press. Whether edited by Marotteau, by Duchesne, by Paschal Grousset or by another imitater of Paul-Louis Grousset, these fine journals valet themselves (?), and a single example, shows all.

First, and generally in huge letters, there is THE LATEST NEWS, the news from the Porte Maillot, where the friends of the Commune and Versailles are fighting; where the enemies of the country besiege; conceived in these terms:

"It is more and more confirmed that the Assembly of Versailles, encircled by the returned troops of Germany, is a prisoner. The Generals have proclaimed the new Napoleon III Emperor."

"Following a lively quarrel among some National Guards, on the subject of Marshal Macmahon having made them shoot, but omitting all soldiers being able to eat, M. Thiers has sent two seconds, these second were none other than the Duke of Chambord and the Count of Paris (Bourbon heirs to the throne). Macmahon chose for his second the ex-emperor and M. Paul deCassagnac. The encounter took place on the Rue de Reservoirs, amidst and immense crowd. The Marshal was killed and was obligated to announce that he

renounced command of the troops; but the Assembly would not accept his resignation."

"We are in a position to affirm that a company of the 132nd battalion was surrounded this morning, in the park of Neuilly, fifteen thousand gendarms and police. Seeing that all resistance was useless, the henchmen of M. Thiers are left to discretion. They have among them seventeen members of the National Assembly who, not content with giving orders for the throatcutting of our brothers, had wanted to assist in the massacre."

"A person worthy of trust has told us the following; A campfollower of the 44th Battalion (Batignolles quarter) was bringing a drink to an artilleryman at the Vauves fort, when he was completely cut in two by a Versailles shell. The brave campfollower had drunk a glass of brandy, and took the artilleryman's place. She acquitted herself well in her new duties, twelve seconds later, there was not a single cannon intact in the Meudon batteries. The battery men had all been downed, by well-directed bullets, to a distance of some kilometers, reconnoitering among them--but we give this news with extreme caution--M. Ollivier, the Emperor's ex-administrator, Count Bismarck (First Minister of Prussia), who wanted to verify for themselves the cannons had been taken to the good friends of Versailles."

"According to the LATEST NEWS, First-Paris, the daily bulletin, reported. Here the talents of the editor in chief, a member of the Commune, are revealed. We hope that the following specimen is not beneath the signature of M. Felix Pyat or of M. Vermorel:

Paris, 29th, April 1871.

We are waiting, tigers altered by blood!

"There, these vandals who have made an oath that not a single man nor stone shall be left undisturbed!

"But we have not done that; no, never!

"The old National Guard, [is] victorious and sublime. They are not breasts of flesh among them, they are of bronze, from which the balls bounce!

"Ah! They would say, these Jules Favres crybabies, these fat Picards, they would say: "We will take Paris, level the city, and distribute the women to the policemen!

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Everyone is beginning to understand the madness of the project. It is Paris that will take Versailles, who will take all in the blink of an eye, who, because they cannot look M. Thiers in the face himself, imagine that he is the sun.

"In vain the deceived soldiers binge on wine and blood; the moment is near where they will not consent to march against the town fighting for them. Yesterday below, the Fort de Vauves, one distinguishes a *melée* from a battle; the men of the line went hand to hand with the gendarmes of Valentin and the Zouaves of Charette. Courage! Paris, in a few days, you will triumph over all the infamous who dare hinder the march of the triumphant Commune.

"But it is not enough to vanquish the enemies from outside; it is also necessary to relieve oneself of the enemies within.

More procrastination! The peoples' justice is exhausted by formalities and wants satisfaction! Death to spies! Death to reactionaries! Death to priests! Why does the Commune feed the imprisoned remaining malfactors, while the daily cost would be useful to the women and children of those who fight for the health of Paris? It is said that the ex-archbishop of Paris yesterday ate half a chicken at his evening meal: what good patriots would be saved from misery by the sum given to that orgy to strip the Republic's coffers! Now is not the time to hesitate: The Versailles shoot and mutilate our prisoners, let us avenge! Telling example, not far from our ramparts sleep the heads of their ignoble accomplices, the traitors of Versailles, confounded by the magnanimity of the Commune, folding their arms and offering restraint..

"As for refractory Parisians, we don't have the words to express the shock inspired by the weakness with which they conduct themselves.

"What! We allow wickedness into Paris again? I thought that they were all at Versailles. We allow men unlike us?

"That state has lasted a very long time. Some took up their guns or they died. Shoot those who do not want to march. They are women, children, fathers of families, they say: good reason! The Commune before all! Besides, one need have no pity for the wives of of reactionaries and for the children of informers!"

The daily bulletins are sometimes conceived in less sweet terms, but we have chosen an honorable middle between the tepid and extreme journalists.

Next the foundation article arrives, the serious article, ordinarily written by a well-known pen and duly authorised, by the wisest head in office. The subject varies according to circumstances, but most often demonstrates that Paris has never been as rich, as free, as fortunate, as under the Commune, and in truth, it is not very difficult to prove. The power to live without working, is that not the best proof of the richness of people? Well, look at the National Guard; it has been more than a month since they have touched a tool, and they have money, they are obliged to cede to wine merchants for a limitless number of liters and cellared bottles. Free, who could say that we are not? Those journals allowing themselves to say the contrary have been prudently suppressed. Besides, is it not the free men who have gotten rid of the hateful yoke of men who sold France, no longer submitting to the oppression of "priestheads", of reactionaries, of traitors? And what good luck, we have, incontestably, taken in our stride, that we are free and rich men.

Again, after the official dispatches edited in a style you know, and the tales of the last battles, there appear various items. Here is the ingenuity of editors.

"Yesterday evening, at ten o'clock, in the rue Saint-Denis, the attention of passersby was claimed by cries apparently coming from a four story house, in the corner of the Rue Saint-Apolline. These cries were those of despair. Reconnoitering from the nearest post, four National Guards, preceded by their corporal, penetrated into the house. They arrived on the fourth floor, guided by the cries, and forced the door. There, for their eyes and later spectators was a horrid spectacle. Three very young children crawled on the floor of the room where disordered furniture showed a recent struggle. The poor little ones were without clothes, and their bare limbs showed traces of blows; two had a frontal wound. The National Guards, with almost maternal care, interrogated the victims. These children had not eaten in four days, and due to their youth, were in such a physical and moral state that cannot be rendered exactly. The corporal talked to the neighbors, and later a part of the ghastly story was known.

"There lived in that room a poor female worker, young and pretty enough. Reporting to work at her shop, she remarked that she was followed by an attractive man, but his appearance revealed the basest passions. Approaching her, he made infamous propositions. First she repulsed them with energy, but he redoubled his efforts and increased his suggestions. She remembered that she was poor, and not working, would lose all! Don't blame her, complain, but reserve all our anger for the villain who seduced her! After three years that

were remorse and anguish for her, with her only consolation the smiles of the children she regularly brought into the world, she had partially accustomed herself to the sadness of her existence when her lover all of a sudden stopped coming to see her.

"That disappearance coincided with the glorious revolution of the 18th of March, and the poor working girl, a good patriot, found some solace to see that day, though unlucky for her, was at least fortunate for France!

"Two weeks went by. The mother no longer allowed herself to hope that she would see the father of her three children, until that evening--it was last Friday--a man, wrapped in a black cloak, entered her house and demanded the concierge--a good patriot, commandant of the 114th battalion--if Miss C....was her. When the heroic defender of Paris' rights said yes, he went up to see the girl. It was him, the seducer! The concierge had recognised him. What passed between the executioner and his victim? Perhaps it can never be known. It is certain an hour later, he left, always wrapped in his black mantle.

"The next day, and following three days, the concierge was startled to miss her neighbor from the fourth floor, who had the custom of stopping in her cubby when going to buy cream for her café au lait. But the feeling of duty occupied the commandant, who paid little attention to the incident. He took no notice of the sighs or blood that descended from higher floors. He would have known that he would be blamed for that negligence: he prepared a theory.

"Again, the fourth day, the cries were so violent as to disquiet passersby, as as we have recounted, the four men and corporal were sent to investigate.

No one knew where she had gone and what had occurred: the neighbors' explanations clarified nothing in the most sinister aspect of this mystery, and perhaps the full truth would never have been known, if the corporal had not had the idea to look beneath the bedcovers.

"Upon the bed, there, a dagger in the heart, the corpse of the unfortunate mother! and clasped in the body's hand, was found a paper; before rendering up her soul, the victim had time to write these few lines: ""I am killed by the wretch who seduced me; he was going to likewise knife the three children that I had given him, but a sound in the room next door made him take flight. He returned from Versailles specifically to accomplish this quadruple crime, and by these means to make disappear all trace of the last three years' connection to me. His name is Jules Ferry![Communard leader] Reader, avenge me!"

LXX. Fort Issy--Tears of a Drunkard

--It is taken!

--It is not taken.

--Mégy has been delivered

--Occupied again.

After this morning I cannot recall the contradictory rumors.

Fort Issy, is it, yes or no, in the power of Versailles? Hoping to be better informed on the approaching combat, I am going to the porte of Issy. I have returned, and know nothing.

Few on my side: some National Guardsmen, reinforced by a casemate and some women watching for the return of their husbands or sons. The cannonade was furious; in less than a quarter of an hour, I had heard five shells whistle past my head.

At noon, the bridge had been opened, and I saw advance sixty soldiers, dusty, sad, slow, preceded by two officers on horseback. These were the "avengers of the Republic."

--Where do you come from? They asked them.

--The trenches. We were four hundred, these remain.

But when they were asked: "Is the Fort of Issy taken?" They did not respond. After them marched four men carrying a stretcher with a body. That was the last of the sad cortege I saw return in Paris. From time to time the porters set down the dead upon the ground, to drink at a wine merchant's shop. I profited from one of these moments where the stretcher was abandoned to twitch the mantle cover: dead was a young man, nearly a child, I could not see his wound but his shirt was reddened to the neck. When the porters returned the third time, they were drunk. They raised the sad burden with difficulty, and lurched on. At the turn of one street, the body fell: I caught up. One of the drunks explained his tears, saying: "My poor brother!"

LXXI. Arrest of Cluseret--Epaulettes and braid--Reconassiance of Rocinante

More Cluseret! Cluseret is removed, Cluseret is imprisoned. What did he do? Was he the cause of Fort Issy? One hears the biggest crime, thus, then, if the Fort Issy had been evacuated today by the Federals, was reoccupied this morning, and we note in passing that no one has explained why the Versailles troops abandon it, after taking a position to which they appear to attach a certain importance. If it is not concerning the Fort Issy that Cluseret has been forcibly then to keep company with M. Darboy (Archbishop of Paris), why then? I remember hearing rumor and counter rumor on the subject of a letter from General Fabrice in which that excellent Prussian invited, it is said, General Cluseret to intercede with the Commune on behalf of the incarcerated priests. Is it likely that the delegate would risk being taken for a priestlover, would have dared the requested intervention! Huh! M. Cluseret, it would be good for him to be arrested and to be shot. But no, we cannot have another step of that sort, and for the excellent reason that General Fabrice would not dream of writing to you that you render up Alsace and Lorraine. What is the theme of that sudden decadence? A quarrel with Dombrowski is being discussed. It appears that this concluded with unauthorised truce with Cluseret. What does Dombrowski want, perchance, that he finds that he must kill everyone? Above all, Cluseret blew his top, but his rival had had him detained. So! If one is an American, the other is a Pole; the heart of the Commune can be balanced between two foreigners.

But no, neither the evacuation of Issy--covered in the *Journal officiel*,- Neither Monseignor Darboy nor the quarrel with Dombrowski --are the true causes of the fall of Cluseret. Cluseret was destined to fall, Cluseret has fallen, because he didn't love braid (institutionalized rank). Such is the cause, as Shakespeare said, and the other reasons without pretext.

Ah! The delegate for war imagined that each morning he could post proclamations wherein he ordained officers ordered to face disintegration, gold or silver ribbon, showily ornamenting their sleeves or hats? He believed that his staff officers would renounce epaulets and gold braid and other military charms? But it was all simply part of the madness. Eh! I ask you a bit that you would have told Armentine or Cora, this evening, at the Swedish cafe or Cafe de Madrid, the lover would not remark the military light that distinguished the general of apes, in the boats at the Neuilly past festivals, alas! What festivals and when has one been to Neuilly. Demand of whichever soldier, Federal or

other, who has renounced his pay, keeping his great saber,, to the same grade, perhaps he will surrender, but renounce braid, never! How can you want a serious man to consent to resembling an acrobat?

Another prescription, analogous besides, has considerably harmed Citizen Cluseret. On a good day, he passed by at the head of the defending men of war galloping upon the boulevards and streets. And then, under the frivolous pretext of the intense allure of of coursers could lead to accidents. Accidents?

Oh well, then after? Is the that a staff captain takes pleasure caracoling under the gaze of strolling women, in order to not imperil a few old women or three little children from being thrown upon the asphalt? General Cluseret did not know what was said. It is certain that if the good general had the heart to prevent these accidents, he would begin by banning rifle salutes at Courbevoie, which are more dangerous than a horse galloping down Montmartre boulevard. But the galloping and the braid-wearing continued, under the nose and beard of the delegate for war, who, himself, stoically walked the boulevard, affecting the dress of a bourgeois. But not everyone has obeyed him, having read the orders he has given them. An opposition hatched, poised to explode. The Fort of Issy has offered a pretext, and Cluseret has succumbed, victim of his taste for simplicity; but it fosters regret--sweet recompense for his solicitude,--the captures the regret of all the draft horses who replace the pure blood horse of our brave staff officer, and they, poor beasts, are no longer made to gallop.

LXXII. Parody of the Terror

A disguised man entered the Opera Ball; he is drunk, he comes, goes, stops, plays, insults the women, mocks the men, shakes the chandeliers, set fire to tapestries, made so much noise, scolding, then the whole world cried: "Out the door!" What made the man mask? He returned, replacing his pierrot costume with a straw costume from the costumer on the corner, returned to the ball, and resumed his previous follies, and said: "I changed my dress, you do not recognize me." He deceived himself: there was no way to mistake the way he comported himself. The crowd circled, yelling to him: "I know you, fine mask!" and finally, he had the imprudence to shut the door, and was thrown out the window.

We do not know you, executive Commission! It is in vain that you have taken up the bloody rags of the Committee of Public Safety, you are the same, you again are Felix Pyat, you are always Ranvier, you have not ceased to be

Gerardin: you hoped for better obedience to this lugubrious travesty? You deceive yourselves. You order us to strike ourselves; we will not stir; follow us, we flee pain; send us to prison, we shake with laughter. You are no more the Terror than Gil-Perez is Talma. Gusts on the painted paper nose; you have well outlawed, stolen, jailed, you are very droll for being terrible. So what, the parody could be extreme, you could set up the guillotine, and sharpen the blade, but you know perfectly well that you will not be taken seriously, and when we see, one after the other five hundred heads fall in the basket, we will still persist in believing that your blade is wooden, and your guillotine in the box.

LXXIII. Tribunal Competency

One reads in the *Journal officiel* "The Commune members cannot be translated to another jurisdiction than (that of the Commune): Oh really? You imagine that, Gentlemen of the Hôtel de Ville? Oh yes! In the Court of Cassation?"

LXXIV. Moulin-Sacquet Affair- Treason

N. Roussel has no luck! Who is M. Roussel? The provisional successor of Citizen Cluseret. Oh! Provisional is the word. The Commune itself has disclosed military data, and that is accepted, but with an air of hauteur. That "communards": does not have an aristocratic air. What do you have, if not luck? At the point of being charged with the health of Paris, Moulin-Sacquet was surprised by the Versailles. This failure does not relieve the courage of the Federals. Besides, the matter is half-fitted and obscure, and my concierge, who was there, told me some strange things.

--Imagine, Monsieur, that I am going to play a hand of piquet with the captain, more than twelve hours in the evening, and I stood to make a sum, when I heard something like the sound of a marching troop. I looked around to see if the others had heard anything; they were asleep, and I saw a line of shoes in a circle before the little tents. The captain told me:

--That sound was a patrol that came to the street of Villejuif (Jewish Town).

--Ah! Yes, I said, at the the barricade.

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And I fell asleep without disquiet. In effect, there was no way to be disturbed. The Moulin-Saquet dominates the plain that extends from Vitry to Choisy-le-Roi, and from Villejuif to the Seine; it was not possible for a man to approach the redoubt without being seen by the sentinel. I was asleep but a moment, when awakened by this dialogue:

--Halt! Who goes there?

--Patrol!

--Corporal, recognize the patrol.

--Good, I told myself, our friends are coming to pay a visit; drink a liter at least.

--And I got up to say good evening to comrades. The captain went, and himself recognized the troop.

--Advance in order, he cried!

--The chief of the patrol advanced and responded:

--Avenger!

--Had, I thought, why speak so high giving orders?

I had not finished saying that when I saw three men shoot the captain and turned round. At the same time two or three hundred National Guards threw themselves across the camp, bayonetting the artillerymen whose pieces roared, and the squad fired into the tents where our comrades slept. They were simply poor town sargeants who were dressed as National Guardsman! Gawd! You understand, in that moment, everyman for himself, the great road for all. When I said: the great road, it is a manner of speaking. I felt a stomach ache and rolled into the trench. There was no more danger, when I heard the sound of my fall near the fusillade. I hid took cover, better safe than else, in a sort of hollow there, doubtless made by a shell. From my hole, I could see nothing, but I heard very well. Click! Clack! Click! The gun made all the noise of a great lash. And the cries rend the soul! Also the grating of the axles and the rumblings of the street; it was our cannon carried away, the swindlers! Then, I no longer heard the pleas of the wounded, and hazarded a reproof. Ah! Monsieur, I was the only one who was in a state to stand upright; the Versaillais had led away all those weren't in flight or weren't out of combat; and

there, a pack of scoundrels flowed in the direction of Vitry, who ran, as in fear of thieves returning. "

--And don't you know, lieutenant, I asked the conceirge, how the Versaillais took the word of order?

--My faith, no, only, the commandant is a brave man, but his defect is a red (drinker's) nose.

--Red?

---Yes, in a glass of wine.

--Ah! I understand.

--Ah well, the commandant went, in the evening, on the way to the road to Orleans; not distracted by the cabarets on the way..

--And you suppose that, while drunk, he gave the password to a spy?

--I would not swear to the contrary; but it is certain, we were betrayed!

Then! Yes, poor people, you are betrayed, not in the way you understand, but betrayed in effect. They deceive, the fools, or those criminals who make decrees at the Hôtel de Ville, while you die at Issy, at Vauves, at Montrouge, at Neuilly, at Moulin-Saquet; they deceive, when they speak of royalists and imperialists, telling us that victory is certain and the defeat would be glorious. Victory is impossible and defeat is without honor; while you fall, crying: "Long live the Commune! Long live the Republic!" The Commune, is Felix Pyat, the Republic, is Vermorel.

LXXV. Rest in Peace

Damned be the man who conceived the decree, damned be the assembly that approved it, and bad luck to the arms that first, break a stone of that tomb. Ah! Believe you me, I am not one of those who regret the time of royal pleasure, and for all who would go to the best of times in the best of all possible worlds, I Louis XVII had succeeded to the throne of France after his father Louis XVI, crushed from nullity. The author of the bloody tragedy of 1793 multiplied terrible catastrophes; that author being, infallible necessity. Besides I am compelled to confess that the indolent husband of Marie Antoinette never had any of the qualities which make a great king, and will add, if pressed, that

the sole act of being king constitutes a crime deserving a thousand deaths. While Marie-Anotinette herself, the Austrian, as le *Père Duchesne* called her, I would agree that, in implacable history she was not as amiable as in the novels of Alexandre Dumas, and had the same parent as Queen Caroline-Marie who knew the little suppers, at Naples, in the company of Lady Hamilton {British Admiral Nelson's miustress}, who suffered similar strange calumnies. And enough has been said, in the case of a Bourbon Restoration, to never pay another fee upon the particular coffin of our lord the king? Yes. Oh well! Despite what I have said and despite what I think, I repeat: "Do not touch the tomb!" Like the Vendôme column is it is a symbol of an heroic and terrible epoch, the Expiatory Chapel [reburial chapel of royal family) recalls all the past monarchy of France; all that has passed has not been without sadness, but it has not been without honor. Be republicans without suppressing our history which was royalist. All the ashes of monarchy repose in peace under this monument; you owe equal respect to the ancestors who honered it; and breakers of images, profaners of dead glories, do you not fear, executing your decree, to produce an effect diametrically opposed to that which you want? To prosecute kings tol their last sanctuary, can you not push the plaints, to regret, perhaps, again for hesitant consciences? In the same interest of the Republic, take care! The dead easily leave opened sepulcures!

LXXVI. The Decree of Mont-de-Pieté (Pawnbrokers)--Restitution is Theft!

Rejoice, poor householders, who, in a day of dearth, were obliged to take to the pawnbrokers your wedding dress or your husband's overcoat; rejoice, artisans, exhausted at night, when you regain your hard bed as your last mattress has been returned, Rue de Blancs-Manteaux, your last pair of sheets. The Commune has decreed that "all the objects pledged in pawn for a sum of twenty francs or less, will be restored free to persons who establish their legitimate ownership of the deposant's aforesaid objects." Thanks to this beneficent decree, you can hope the pledged objects will be returned before three or four hundred days.

Count on your fingers, if you please: there are 1,200,00 articles under that measure of the Commune. Only three warehouses, the pledges cannot be in three offices, and counting up the difficulties inevitably present in proving identity of each claimant, I do not think it would be possible to restore more than three thousand objects daily. The Commune said it would restore four thousand: but the Commune does not know what it is saying. While we admit

four thousand restitutions; how much time is the pledge term? Ten or twelve months.

During that time, men and women, on the long road to the sad pawnbrokers, all the days and most morning hours, you neglect your ordinary work, the source of your living, and you go, sweating the summer, freezing the winter, standing in line; sometimes you will obtain what you want in a bare grand salle, and when you have waited long enough, a very longtime, your number arrives, time to leave, you must return the following morning, the next day, during a month, then two months, then possibly a year.

To tell the truth, it would be unjust to blame the Commune for the matter of the longwait; shortening is absolutely impossible.

One thing is not impossible; that is to compensate the administration of the pawnbrokers for the free remission. Citizen Jourde, delegate for finances, said: "I will give 100,000 francs a week." Without losing the time to ask that economist where he will find 100,000 francs weekly, I will content myself with remarking that these disbursements are not at all sufficient to disinterest the pawnbroker, and the Commune is acting as almoner with the money of others.

And, if after this decree, some wretches return in possession of the poor rags that they had pledged in their moment of distress, there will be no place for their plaint. The Mont-de -Pieté did good business, and public misery there will always be, taken to enrich others. Besides, we note all the unfortunate who have been reported in Neuilly, d'Issy, wounded, cut to bits, dying, the Commune would do well to give them a mattress where they could die in peace.

LXXVII. Picpus to Saint-Lazare (Nunnery to Prostitutes Prison)

They have been put in Saint-Lazare. Who? The nuns of Picpus. They have been put there because they have been arrested: but why have they been arrested? That is what M. Rigault himself could not clearly explain. Some of them are old; they have lived, cloistered, for a very long time; they have changed cells, and after having been taken prisoners of God, they are the prisoners of Citizen Mouton. In that abject place, these holy women! Victor Hugo has said:

Saint-Lazare! The building must be crushed.

Yes, later, when there is time. Also important, demolish the Vendôme column, and demolish the Expiatory (Bourbon) chapel. Waiting, they are sad. One of my friends went to visit them; they have neither books, nor priests, nor a crucifix. They have taken medals which they have round their necks. My God! You citizens of the Commune, you spoke well to your cabinet. Such strong spirits! You care about a crucifix as though it were a poisoned apple, and you have good reason. You have studied, you have foretold, and said this evening, regarding the stars: "There is no more God than in your hand." But, understand this, these poor nuns, are not the same thing. They have not read the philosophers. They believe that God created the world in six days and the Son died upon the cross for the good of the world. When they are free--free from the captivity of this--they pray in the morning, they pray during the day, they pray in the evening, and if not interrupted from that blameworthy occupation, I am convinced that they teach poor young girls that it is good to be virtuous, honest, recognising that Heaven rewards people who do good. That is what they did, poor simple souls! You have put them in Saint-Lazare for that. You could have chosen another prison, where their presence would not be disagreeable to those (already) there before them, for different reasons. But, besides, they are not complaining; they only want a book of hours and a wooden crucifix. Let us go, citizen delegate, to the ex-prefecture, quickly, and unless the future of the Republic is not compromised by this concession, give them a crucifix. What is a crucifix? Two bit of wood, one upon the other. It remains to be known if there are enough canes in the forest for the day where the vengeance of honest people [to express] on your back in prison.

LXXVIII. The Defection of M. Rossel

After Bergeret, Cluseret; after Cluseret, Rosse. But Rossel gave his resignation. I propose something: recover Cluseret whom we will replace again with Bergeret--unless you prefer at the hour throwing yourself into the ever-open arms of General Lhuillier. Besides, Besides, the the care of confiding the defense of Paris has no importance that a adventurer general would regard, and the Commune, sultan without a favorite, can throw, if you cry, the handkerchief to the seeking Delescluze, if one takes the intention; I would not go to another ill. Why would not Delescluze be an excellent general? Was he not a journalist? And what journalist, I ask you, does not know more on matters of war than Napoleon I or M. de Moltke (Prussian commander)? Waiting, we are in mourning for the third delegate for war, and M. Rossel will

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no longer gallop on the bay horse, from the Place of Vendôme to the fort of Montrouge. He addressed the following letter to members of the Commune:

"Citizens, members of the Commune,

"Charged, by you to the provisional position of delegate for war, I am no longer capable of taking command responsibility where the whole world deliberates and where no one obeys."

"While the artillery must be organized, the Central Committee for Artillery has deliberated, and determined nothing. After two months of revolution, the service of our cannons remains upon the energies of some volunteers, whose number is insignificant.

"When I arrived in the Ministry, while I favored the concentration of arms, the requisition of horses, the pursuit of refractory priests), I demanded that the Commune use the neighborhood municipalities.

"The Commune deliberated and resolved nothing. "Much later, the Central Committee of the Federation came offering almost imperiously its assistance in the administration of the war. Consulted by the Committee for Public Safety, I accepted the assistance and the quickest way, and gave up, in favor of the Committee members, all the claims that I had on the organization. After that, the Central Committee deliberated, and again, did not act. During this delay the enemy surrounded the Fort d'Issy in an ambitious and imprudent attack that I would punish had I the least military force available.

"The garrison, ill-commanded, took fright, and the officers deliberated, expelling from the fort Captain Dumont, an energetic man who had arrived to command, all having deliberated, they evacuated their fort, after having stupidly spoken of blowing it up, a thing more impossible for them even than defending it.

"That was not all. Here, while everyone was working, or under fire, the legion of bosses deliberated to substitute a new system of organization over the one that I had adopted, to complete the improvidence of their authority, ever moving, and not obeyed. It resulted in a secret meeting, a project at a moment requiring men, and declaration of principles, at a moment that required action.

"My indignation recedes from this to other thoughts, and they promised me today, like their last terms, an organized force of twelve thousand men, with whom I engaged to march against the enemy. These men would be assembled

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at twelve thirty; it is one, and they are not here: in their place about seven thousand. It is not at all the same thing."

"In this way, the nullity of the Artillery Committee impeded the organization of artillery; the uncertainties of the Central Committee of the Federation halted administration; petty preoccupations of the legion bosses paralysed troop mobilization."

"I am not a man to recoil before repression, and here, while the legion bosses discussed, a firing squad awaited in the court. But I do not want to take the sole initiative for an energetic step, endorsing only the odious executions which must sort out the chaos of organization, obedience and victory. Again, if I were protected by the publicity of my acts and of my impotence, I could keep my mandate!"

"But the Commune has no courage to outrage the public. Twice I wanted to give necessary clarifications, and twice, wretched me, you wanted secret proceedings.

"My predecessor committed the crime of debating in the milieu the absurdity of the situation.

"Instructed by his example, knowing that revolutionary force is not consistent in the urgency of the situation; I had two choices of action; break the obstacle that obstructed my inaction, or leave.

"I cannot break the obstacle, because the obstacle is you, and your weakness; I don't want to wait for public sovereignty [an election].

I resign, and I have the honor to demand from you a cell in Mazas.

ROSSEL

Oh well! Certainly I do not love the Commune of Paris that has made the men of the Hôtel de Ville. Abusive from commencement, deceitful in tenacious delusions; I feel, I know, I see today, can not longer entertain madness after madness, than blow after blow [attentats, revolutionary blow]. I hate the cause of suppressed newspapers, imprisoned journalists, priests detained in Mazas like assassins, nuns imprisoned in Saint-Lazare like prostitutes; I want this because this hope forced the crime of civil war from men who are not and will not strike against Prussians, but want to strike against the French; I hate the cause of fathers of families sent into battle; say death, because our ramparts are dismantled, because our forts are ruined, where each falling stone injured

someone wounded, or made a wound, made children fatherless and women widows, who took their men and the rents will not be paid despite all decrees: I pardon neither the forced strongboxes, nor the pressured railroads, neither the titles and imprint sold to the Liege [money] changer; I mistake the cause of Clemence who had been a beggar and I laugh at Alix who is mad; I am sad when I dream of possibly two or three brains among the elite foregathered among the members, and follows an irremediable fall, and I abhor above all the cause of the idea represented instantly, the admirable and fecund idea of municipal independence, a just validation that was not formulated with honesty or clarity, and which, thanks to the excesses which have been committed in its name, has been lost a long time, perhaps all chance of respect and triumph!

But if my horror today is great for the parody of government we submit completely for two months, I did not read Citizen Rossel's letter without a strong feeling of repulsion. Oh! It is well done, that letter; very quick, very firm, very conclusive, differing essentially from the emphatic and obscure letters that we are accustomed to have set before us from the writers of the Commune, and it revealed to me details previously unknown that permit one to suppose that the reign of these tyrants nears its end. I am lucky to know that the Commune, if it has artillery, has no artillerymen. Sweet to learn that there are less than seven thousand troops; I am afraid they are not in a position to kill; and when Citizen Rossel said that committees and bosses deliberated in place of acting, I am charmed, while convinced that the Commune will be incapable of continuing long a struggle where Paris will again perish; and while I disapprove of the letter of Citizen Rossel, because it is a sort of treason and neither friends nor servants of the Commune reveal its faults or discover its weaknesses. What had constrained chief staff officer Rossel to take the place of his dismissed and imprisoned general? Did he not freely accept a mission whose difficulties had long been known? "My predecessor, he says, committed the crime of floundering in a milieu of absurdity." Why voluntarily place one's self where another fared poorly? If the new delegate for war had hoped, by his ability, to modify the position, it remained what it was, taking no detraction from its insufficiency. In short, concluding from his declaration, he had accepted power, but turned aside to a start, like Cato not assisting at public spectacles, but retiring with a shout when the spectators cry, "The actors are incompetent!" M. Rossel, could not save the Commune or did not want to, wanted to save himself in the the loss. And that wounded his conscience. Note well, I do not in the least believe that M. Rossel was bought by M. Thiers; these stories about the sums offered to the Commune are incredible stories. Do you

know what is said of Cluseret? He habitually breakfasted at the Cafe D'Orsay and played dominoes. One day his opponent said to him:"Do you want to deliver the fort of Montrouge to the Versaillais? I will give you two million."Who would believe such a crazy notion? While Rossel did not sell, for the excellent reason that who would dream of buying. It is his own movement which made this what it is. For the pleasure of being insolent and appearing harsh, they have burned what they adored; what now remains are the most culpable members of the Commune, old crooks and recent jailbirds, can one say to M. Rossel, who is, I am ssured, a man of intelligence and of heart:"You want less than I, whom you have betrayed!"

LXXIX. Breakfast at the Hôtel de Ville-Jourde, Johanard, Rigault

Some seen and heard:

In a small room of the Hôtel de Ville, five people are gathered around a table. They eat. The meal is more than modest: a soup course. a plate of food, a plate of vegetables and of cheese. A bottle of ordinary wine at the head. One thinks that in a two francs restaurant, there was mustard that was not consumed during the siege. What is more, the taste of officialdom, atonement, solemnity, destroyed appetite.

Always the five people ate quickly.

At the head of the table, is Citizen Jourde.

Jourde appears twenty eight years old; his head is fine and mathematical; long knotted chestnut hair, fatigued complexion: a Henri Heine [lyric poet] of finance. Long and large, his red sash about him, he cuts figure like someone from the {Revolutionary} Convention.

First he is quiet and watches. Until, at the end of the first course, Jourde murmurs while examining his spoon:

--As to the silverware, it is real, silver in the Hôtel de Ville: I will take it later.

His comrade responds, laughing:

--Pardon, but I have spoken for it, and will not give it up.

--So, replies Jourde: I will confiscate it for the state.

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--Ah! Provided I am compensated, freely to you.

Then Jourde, in good humor, dreamed further. He discovered while dining 300,000 unexpected francs a day for the purse. He could put four million away by the end of the week. Economies were necessary, but the war devoured his resources. "At the most I can provide three days in advance for payments which surpass a hundred thousand francs!" he said. Then, he criticised Beslay, by shrugging his shoulders. He hoped to amortise the Prussian debt (war indemnity) before a year, if the Commune lasted a year. He listed the rough estimates on the customs, notes, and taxes.

"If not, he said, the bank note for one hundred francs this morning will bring twenty this evening; the currency is timid; it flees. I rarely find a bare sou; but allow me to freely respond to your health!"

He has an air of studied sincerity.

The meal ends, he greets and leaves quickly, not hearing the responses of his fellow diners.

Meanwhile cries rise in the streets and waver, from the last of the somber drapes, the members of the Commune.

A question was put to Johannard:

--Do you think they will enter Paris?

--Bah! You are a man with exalted ideas! he responded.

Delescluze well knows that it is impossible; and Dombrowski, that cold and intelligent youth, laughed while he spoke.

--Is that not so, Rigault?

Nothing that was said until that moment indicated a sign of a thoughtful mind. He appeared very young despite his black beard. His eyes are vacant. He has a crafty and cunning air--and could be grossly cheerful for hours.

Until, a curtain fell, and of that which had previously been heard and seen, there was nothing further.

**LXXX. Caminolus (?)--The refractory priests--The Courage of
Depair--Sweet Means--A Poet's Plan--Trick to Riding in a
Cab--Lucky Outcome**

I miss Cluseret. Cluseret was alive, above all, verbal. He told us: "All are National Guard" but like Heaven, it was with Cluseret's commandments. It sufficed to respond to decrees of the delegate for war: "How then! I don't demand less. I truly go to take the Porte-Maillot." And that concession made, one can go about one's business without disquiet. When leaving Paris, despite the law closing the door to men less than forty years old, nothing was easier. Go to the Gare du Nord (North Railway Station), address a citizen working behind the counter, at the passport office.

--How old are you? He asks.

--Seventy eight years old, answers a guy with his left hand through his fine black hair.

--Only? You look older, citizen.

And the cooperative employee had over a small paper upon which he has written a cabalistic word. The day where the fancy took me to spend two hours at Bougival, my window took two strange letters "Caminolous." Equipped with the mysterious safe-conduct, it did not take long to take a letter from the first and mount the wagon. He was free! Nothing could hinder it, if it is your wish, to proclaim the Commune to Arcachon or Monaco. How times have changed! The Committee of Public Safety and the Central Committee of the National Guard mean to make things hard for refractory priests. I will no longer speak of the no less disagreeable disappointments, until in sum a man can be dumbfounded for nourishing the sweet hope any more that he will not see battle. And it is something that we will no longer demand they be twenty four years old, given a month or two. The home visits go oddly: four National Guardsmen enter the first bourgeois home they encounter, explain politely, or in an altogether different fashion, that it is a strict duty to go to the trenches of Vanves and to kill more Frenchmen as possible. If the bourgeois resists, they announce that he will have the honor of the first row in his company in the next action. Sometimes these visits give rise to noise. It is recounted that, on Rue Oudinot, a young man received a bayonet blow in the stomach because he resisted an inept corporal; and it must be added that deeds of this species are not uncommon, the refractory (reference to priestly opposition) no longer enjoy

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tranquility of soul. Anything startles; observe with terror the grimace of one's concierge, perhaps it is the Commune. Sleep in one's own bed? One must not contemplate it. It is exactly at night when the Commune agents conduct their drafts. That means changing one's domicile, and often, leads to a new industry or adjusting to an old one; on the cards of accommodating young women, underneath these charming names: Amelia or Rosaline, there are four words written in pencil: "In charge of refractories (draft dodgers)." But what of virtuous people unworthy of the solitary aspect of a red chignon? They run from hotel to hotel, defying the staff, giving imaginary names, shuddering at night. in the belief that any minute the guns shadow will fall across their mattress.

Before, a troop of refractories had the courage of despair. There were three hundred. They went to the Porte Sainte-Ouen.

--You want to leave, asked the sentry?

--No, was the response.

Then, in the blink of an eye, they stabbed the captain, disarmed the simple guards, and five minutes later, were running across the street.

First they employed the bribe, or if you wish, corruption. In the cabarets in Belleville, they are amiable and peaceable, nourishing amicable relations with the least rude Federals in the place.

--Are you from the Guard, Tuesday, at the La Chapelle gate?

--My God, yes.

--So it happens you let a comrade leave who have a visit to pay to Saint-Denis?

--But, no matter; the others saw and denounced me to the captain.

--And, with the captain, there was nothing doing?

--Nothing at all. He is a faithful patriot, go on!

--Bit of a bore. I need to find myself at Saint Denis, Tuesday evening! I will give twenty francs from my pocket for a little walk on the other side of the gate.

--Indeed! a good means.

--Which? Which?

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--You have to know exactly from this gate?

--Oh, my God, no; getting on, that is all that I ask.

--Oh well: Listen to me; come to the side of La Chapelle Tuesday evening, and walk the length of the rampart. I will cover it over a bit for eight hours. When you return, come to me, and I won't yell: Who goes there?

--Then simple enough, but after?

--After? I pass under your arms a strong cord that you have carried...

--Ah! Diabolical!--I throw it in the ditch...

--Yokes up!

--But then, carefully, without mistake. I allow you to glide along the wall..

-Ah!

--Wait for sundown, then in two bounds, you will disappear in to the night. What do you think, of my proposition?

--I say, I would love to leave in a cab; but that does not matter, I accept.

Ordinarily, this plan is executed without encumbrance. It is said that the Federals of Belleville and of Montmartre have made themselves a fine revenue source by means of these evasions. Sometimes, contrarily, it does not succeed at all; the the cord breaks, then the Federal, knowing that he can accommodate his interest with his duty, shoots the draft dodger in the back.

Also, there are disappointments. A poet--whose verses have been justly applauded at the Comédie Française, during the siege--stole away thanks to an employee of the Nord railroad, who gave him a uniform tunic and helmet. Another poet--the race is ingenious--conceived a more difficult project. One day on the boulevard, he took the first cab that came along, on only took care to choose a coach of a respectable vintage.

--Coachman, Faubourg Saint-Denis, to the best restaurant in the quarter, go!

--And the cab rolled. On the way, the poet said:"The coachman, like all of them, had a Commune pass that allowed him to leave Paris,and to return the same way; remind us of the fourth act of my last drama and I am saved."

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The cab stopped in front of a restaurant of good enough appearance, not far from the Dubois house. The young man descended, asked for a booth and said to the waiter:

--By the way, tell my coachman to come speak; a street child will watch the horse.

Momentarily the coachman returned where he took his meal.

--Tell me, my man you were careful along the way; will you drink a glass of wine to fortify yourself?

An hour later the poet and the coachmen were dining like old comrades, and six bottles later neither one was resolved to die of thirst.

Rats! Thought the draft dodger, three bottles of Clos-Vouginot, one of Leoville, two of Moulin-a-Vent, and the rogue is not drunk! Come on, the main means! Waiter, champagne!

--Then, youngster, said the coachman, who was not yet drunk, but more familiar; the champagne no more effective than the burgundy; and not counting the passport, my faith, you aren't counting on my boon companion.

--Ah! The devil! Cried the young man, stupefied to see his ruse rumbled and dreaming with alarm of the addition of a useless element to the prodigious total.

--You want me to set you down, but I am alert, my little one!

Until, he added having emptied the last bottle into his glass:

--Give me two louis, ten francs, and I will leave.

--Ah! Monsieur, what an acknowledgment!

But, basically, the poet was humiliated because he was obliged to recognize that his fourth act was worthless.

--Call the waiter and pay the check

The waiter was called and the check paid, with a sigh.

--Give me your jacket.

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--My jacket?

--Yes, that arrangement of velvet that you have on your back.

He gave it.

--Your vest, your trousers.

--My trousers! Coachman!

--More quickly, or I go to the post, wicked draft dodger!

He gave them up.

--Good, now, there are my clothes; put them on in double time and let's go.

While the poet dressed without enthusiasm, the defrocked coachman, donned his clothes, and, obese, split the poet's clothes. That done, they departed.

--Mount the [driver's] box.

--Me?

--Yes, imbecile! (the preserver became more and more familiar) Me, I am inside the cab. Now, drive me where I tell you.

The world walked on. At the gate of La Chapelle, the false coachman showed a pass to the sentry, and the National Guardsman looked inside the cab interior, said:

--Oh, let him by; he is a grandfather!

The cab rounded the barriers; and then M...ah, the devil, I almost gave away his name--that is, I say, that the young poet mocked the Committee of Public Health's orders, and dined the same evening at the Reservoir Hotel, having on his left a deputy from the right and a deputy of the left on his right.

Me, would I leave? Why not? Do I have a desire to be shut up some fine morning in a bunker, or be sent willy nilly to forward posts? Note that my draft situation is singularly aggravated by remarkable surroundings. After several days of strange looks from the second-floor tenant on the stairs, I was strongly intrigued. I asked my maid to inquire deftly. Good heavens! The peevish neighbor, it is Gerardin. Gerardin from the Commune! If reproached for this

peril, my concierge is a lieutenant of the second Federal battalion, indicating that that I have good reason to be more disquieted about draft dodgers. But it does not matter! I will persist and stay! And I will stay until the end, the terrible Pyat and the sweet Vermorel are lodged in my neighborhood, and when I have M. Delescluze himself for my concierge!

**LXXXI. Reappearance of Lhuillier--The Club-Churches--
Immorality of Marriage--Triumph of Lhuillier--Water
Blessed from the Club**

That consoled me, that I have sighted Lhuillier. We have lost Cluseret, lost Rossel, Delescluze does not suffice us, and if Dombroski and Cecilia remain, to the title of professional, the Commune troop will truly be without principals. Fortunately Lhuillier is restored to us. What has happened? To whom will Rochefort and Maroteau daily write seven or eight letters? To whom will he direct his matchless activity, and that of the two hundred friends he has made, with their red Garibaldian costumes and their blue mantles, the most picturesque of the units? They plan some huge enterprise, and the dictatorship that Cluseret had pondered, that Rossel had disdained, usurped for the health of the Republic? I do not know. But, I do know, I have heard, and it was the club of the Saint-Jacques Church.

Ah, bunch of Bible-beaters and inquisitors who, after eighteen hundred years, erase, stupefy, torture the poor proletarians, you thought that you would always fete, monks, vicars, archbishops? Thanks to the Commune in Paris, you preach then in the prisons of the Republic; you can confess, and if you please, the spiders of your prison, and give the holy viaticum to the rats who bite your legs! You will do no more evil to patriots! More churches! More convents! In the convents where lodge the b...b... who have no houses on the Champs-Elysées, and in your churches there are honest assemblies where the people are instructed as to their rights. As to their duties, it was said today that these were invented by reactionaries. No more sermons! Discourse! Like Bossuet, Napoleon Gaillard.

Entering the Church Club, I first was delighted to see the holy water font had been replaced by a tobacco canteen; also, the altar was covered with tankards and bottles. Someone told me: It is a bar."In a small chapel. there is a statue of the holy virgin, got up in a cantiniere's uniform, with a pipe stuck in her mouth. But above all I was charmed by the amiable aspect of the public

whom I saw gathered there. The sex we call the tricoteuses (vengeful knitters) was the great majority. But there we did not see the elegant outfits and frivolous graces which so long has dishonored the better half of the human species. No, thank God. My eyes view with joy the heroic clothes of the women this morning, who dance in the streets of the capital, and some of the proud patriots with nose enough to float upon the crest of the Hôtel de Ville. O glorious red noses, symbolic of the republican soul! Such men, who seem to have been chosen from the most distinguished ranks of the new aristocracy. One must see with what grace the military tip over their ears the swaggering uniform hats!! Their faces, shortly hideous, now illuminated by the joy of being free, and certainly the smoke rising from their pipes is most agreeable to God--supposing that God exists--than the tasteless incense offered lately from the vicars' skullcaps!

--Marriage, gentlemen, is the greatest error of ancient humanity. Being married, you are a slave. Do you want to be slaves?

--No! No! yelled all the assistants, and the orator--another gaunt female, buzzard-beaked, apparently jaundiced--and the orator, flattered by unanimity, reprised:

--Marriage would not be tolerated in a truly free city. It would be considered a crime and repressed by the most severe laws. No one has the right to alienate their liberty, to give a bad example to fellow citizens. The marital state is a perpetual outrage to good behavior. And one cannot say that marriage could be tolerated if given the corrective of divorce. No, citizens, male and female. it is not sufficient to palliate the evil, one must cut it at the roots. Divorce is not only an expedient, and I dare employ that detestable word, an Orléanist (cadet Bourbon party) expedient!

Thunderous applause.

--That is why I dare to present to the Assembly a motion having the goal of modifying the Parisian Commune decree that assures rent to legitimate companies or not from National Guardsmen who died defending the city's municipal franchise. Down with half-measures! We are determined! We, concubines, can no longer suffer that legitimate wives usurp rights that we have never had. So the decree will be modified! All for free women, none for slaves.

The orator descended from the podium to lively congratulations. A neighbor later told me that the wise woman had been a sleepwalker in her youth. Now the crowd makes way for another orator; he mounts the stairs, turns at the chair, runs his hand through his hair, and regards the assembly with an eagle eye: it is Citizen Lhuillier. Truly, this young man has a very agreeable physiognomy to see; intelligent face, good eyes. One is often displeased with the eccentricities of M. Lhuillier (in conflict) with his sympathetic face.

But, what is this? What is happening? What has been done? I heard the name Dombrowski, and that of La Cecilia. All rise, stomp about, yells. The chairs start to rush the orator. They surround me, yelling: "Down with Lhuillier" "Long live Dombrowski!" Some cry: "He's right!" The tumult doubles. Calm amid the furore, Citizen Lhuillier will not leave the tribune, he wants to speak, he wants to explain. Two women--two amiable shrews--fling themselves at him; two men intervene; jumping, yelling, debate, standing on chairs, I hear no more. I see no more. What happened to Citizen Lhuillier?

Oh well! What do you think of that, Catholic gents? Do you miss again the priests and chants who officiated and psalmonised previously in the churches of Paris? What a man, as aspect in public, so tolerant, so intelligent, that makes with recognition of the most noble lessons of morality and politics, could such a man mistake again the fortunate influence of real revolution? Innumerable benefits of the Paris Commune!

As I left, a street arab approached me in benediction, a burning brand in his hand. He took a pipe of tobacco and said:

--In the name of the father!

He drew on his pipe and said:

--In the name of the Holy Spirit!

Faith! I had given a skullcap!

LXXXII. Hunting Draftdodgers--Minos-Eaque and Rhadamante

I naively went home, like a man who does not want to commit a crime in his house. It was a fine sunny day, the street was gay in the way that things often come with the better insurrections, the same as when men are sad. I followed, according to my custom, the Rue Geoffroy-Marie and Rue Grange-

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Basteliere, until they came to Rue Druot. Sorry for the useless details, but I must specify my walk's itinerary for the inhabitants of those streets in question, who can certify that I neither stole bread or books, or forced the cashbox of another shop. I was on the street, when one of four National Guards from the area, I don't know why, on the street corner said to me:

"Do not pass!"

All right, thought I. Is this something new? No, simply that the Commune does not want me to pass; it must have a reason. Let us retrace our steps.

--Do not pass, another National Guard told me, from where I had been and returned.

Singular! The Commune can limit my walk to melancholy allées and going from one gutter to the other. A sargeant approached me: I knew him, he was a Spaniard who during the siege, was in my company.

--Why are you not in uniform? He demanded of me, with a brusqueness doubtless remembering the remarks (londres) I had frequently made during nights on guard.

At that word I concluded that I would act and respond in a yielding fashion:

--Because I am not on service

-- I cannot believe that you are no longer in service. For a long time you have rested tranquilly while others are killed. That's right!

It was evident to me that the Spaniard wanted me because of the cigars I had previously given him..

--Then, what it going on? Let us end!

He did not respond, but he signaled to two Federals to place themselves, one to my right, the other to my left, and said to me:

--March!

I said no more ,but it can truly be said that this was not at all the walk I had planned. On our way a woman said: "Poor young man They have taken him!"We arrived at the church of Nôtre Dame de Lorette, and entered the sacristy, where I found my self among fifty draft dodgers.Behind a table of

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white wood, where there was placed a inkwell in cork, two goosequills, and a small register, sat three young men, almost street arabs, in uniform; something like Minos, Eaque and Rodamante, about old enough to play leapfrog.

--Your name? Rodamante asked me.

I did not stop a minute and gave a false name. Someone, in back of me, rang with laughter. I turned and recognised one of my excellent comrades, a prisoner like me, who I had not seen come in.

--Your profession? Asked Minos.

--Boxing instructor.

Then, fists on hips, I adopted a formidable air, to prove the aforementioned quality that I had usurped. The other questions obtained other less satisfying answers and Minos said to me:

--That is good, go sit and wait.

--Pardon me, my young friend, but I will not sit or wait one minute more.

--You mock us? We are here engaged in a very serious thing; we risk our heads, after all. Go sit down!

--I have the honor to inform you, my dear Rhadamonte {Boastful character from Tasso's *Orlando Furioso*), that I do not want to sit down. Do me the pleasure of allowing me to leave this instant.

--Me?

--You! answer in a firm voice!

The three judges hesitantly looked at me and consulted in low voices. Hmm! A boxing instructor! I thought the moment had come for a grand effect, and took from my pocket a small green card which I threw down before them. Immediately, Minos, Eaque and Rhodamante, rose, saluted with the most profound respect, and called to the two National Guards at the door:

--Allow the citizen to pass.

--What did it say, asked the friend with me.

--Allow the citizens to pass! repeat the triune youngster chorus.

--Marvelous! my comrade said, when we were smoking later. How did you do it?

_I has a pass from the Central Committee

--In your name?

---No, I bought it from the widow of a Federal who was well thought of by citizen Felix Pyat.

--That is a novel.

--Yes, a novel that allows me to live, without further peril, in the real world. All things equal, dear friend, we manage!

LXXXIII. Thier's House--A Pedestrian's Disquiet

It is ten o'clock in the evening; I mount the Rue Nôtre Dame-de-Lorette. Now, the quarter, is a desert at this hour. Opening my eyes, I see flames rising high and illuminating the Place Saint-Georges. I hasten, I am in front of the house of M. Thiers. Near the open grille, there is an official; the National Guard lit a great fire in the forecourt. It was not cold, they lit it for the pleasure of burning the furniture and forgotten goods left by the detractors of the Commune; the right side of the house was being opening by demolition men; I saw a pickaxe whose handle supported a falling tile, The whole roof shook, powder came out of the window, flames mounted. Who would not want to see devoured in a single hour a house erected over long days? There were carts in the court, full of books, boxes and linen. A National Guard approached the fire to examine a small tableau that remained at the gate. I took a look: it represented a satyr playing the flute that is all sad and cruel. These loiterers are an outrage in the foyer that they redden. I turned. I do not dream of the political man. I think of that house where he worked, where now the books are no longer ranged in the library, or arm chair, burned in the same road where it had been carried in years ago; I think of the testimony of a long life, destroyed, dispersed, disappearing, where parents cannot find a trace in the rooms today, all fallen away; again I muse to those who break a falling house. I don't have a house, just some rooms in a "property" that does not belong to me, and had no idea someday that one day I could--these days all is possible--quickly enter one of the poor rooms, remove the mediocre furniture that pleases me, rend the

books, if a little numerous, but if known to eyes and wit, disperse it for the pleasure taken in the making of it, kill all that is my life, no more cruelly than if four Federals had shot me in the corner of the street.--But no, I am not sportive man, who could dream of doing ill? I am not personally pleased with my amorous sonnets, with my mystic poetry--We are such egoists! It is my (own) home that I muse about before the disaster of the Place Saint-George. That great ruin above all effected me because it inspired in me an idea of another ruin more improbable and and miserable besides.

LXXXIV. Filial Love

An anecdote:

Raoul Rigault, the man who was arrested, breakfasted with Gaston Dacoswta, the demolition man. The two friends added up: it was Rigault who had incarcerated the Archbishop of Paris; but it is Dacosta who claimed the honor of the first axe blow to the house of M. Thiers. Besides, Rigault would have demolished if Dacosta had not, and if Rigault would not arrest, Dacosta would.

They breakfasted, they chattered. Rigault numbered the men whom he had sent to the prisons of Conciergerie or to Mazas and dreamed with terror that he could find no more people to arrest. So he flourished his fork in the air, and adopted an air at once saucy and tender.

--What are you doing there? Demands Dacosta, nervous.

--Ha! Rigault said with tears in his voice:"Papa"he is not in Paris.

-So what that your father is not in Paris?

--Huh! responds Rigault tearing up, I would have arrested him!

LXXXV. Hoping For the Best

It is said at sea, when a vessel is about to founder there is a great shaking in the fabric, before the plunge into the abyss, there is no greater presentiment in the fiber of the vessel, than that of the fall of the men of the Commune, the blazing about, contradictory efforts destroying in a hour the government at the Hôtel de Ville. Listen! The vessel founders! All command, none obey. They defy one another; one denounces another, Rigault dreams of arresting the other

two. There is a majority that is not united and a minority that cannot stand itself. Twenty one members resigned: good. Among their names I happily find some men whom Paris whom Paris still likes, and thanks to their retreat, will not learn to scorn them. But what pretext was their resignation? Was it simply that they could no longer conform to the concept of saying flatly: "We are leaving because we now know that it is a bad place; like you we have been abused, but we see clearly in our turn; a good cause has been lost by fools who have served folly; we leave, because remaining one second more, now that our eyes are opened, would make us criminals" These words would have enlightened some of those wretches who want to die and who believe that it is good to die. With those who remain, it is evident that their power is exploded. They cannot arrest or guard Rossel; it is said that they do not dare touch him, because when he had reason he could not say what he thought, but thought about what he said. While they hesitated, Versailles won. Vanves taken, Montrouge dismantled, breaches opened at Point-le-Jour, at Port Maillot, to Saint-Ouen, there will remain not much to choose between choosing flight or the startling excess of a monstrous agony. They can run! When they go, far, from punishment, scorned, spared, then they can be forgotten. Now it is said that the Central Committee is beginning to substitute to the Commune on a volunteer basis. Born among them, the revolution dies with them.

LXXXVI. Fall of the Vendôme Column

It was five o'clock in the evening. The day had been magnificent, and the sun enveloped the Caesar, on the glorious pedestal formed for all his victories. The crowd was placed behind two barricades at the Rue de la Paix and the Rue Castiglione, and widened to the Tuileries and the new Opera; there were twenty or twenty five thousand curious. Chatter, accosting those one does not know as citizen. They talk of the Englishman who paid three thousand francs for the pleasure of being the last to climb to the summit of the column. Everyone complained; the money could have been given to the people. Some pretend that citizen Jourde has not collected in his books--(thirty two thousand francs, that the engineer had demanded to knock down the great trophy)- and it is alleged that the plate (bronze) and stone yielded one of two measures of bronze, that is, from 44 meters of height, it did not mean much more than under. Wits were preoccupied by the money. But principally the fear of shock dominated everyone there.

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The thing itself, emerged very slowly. It was almost solitary in the great place; almost three hundred people or more, all privileged with [admission] tickets, or dressed in masonic cords, or staff officers. Bergeret, at a window, negligently flicked a cigarette ash with his little finger; musicians waited, massed on the four corners of the place; women adjusted their lorgnettes, and their laugh echoed in the embrasures of the windows at the Ministry of Justice. The sentries, impatient, fidgeted; massed rifles gleamed: children danced the length of the gutters. The ceremony was halted; a cable had snapped. Another set of nets threaded the statue, flags the color of vengeance were planted. If the sovereign had not shown up, the people had.

In the crowd, some wretches stamped their feet and cried: "Lights!"

Five and a half hours later, there had been movement from the barricades at the Rue de Castiglione. The red sashes of Commune members appeared. There was a great silence.

An instant later, the cable snapped. The ropes that fell from the summit of the Vendôme column stiffened: in the falling rays, until, brusquely, a great blow shivered through the air moving the flags with an enormous dull, blow, amidst a blinding snow of powder.

Then the musicians broke out, offering the *Marseillaise*, the cry "Long Live the Commune!" advanced some, repeated by terror or indifference of the multitude. There was an explosion distinguished by absurd applause. Then everything calmed almost suddenly, heard a dog frightened and yelping, running about.

Certainly, two Commune members were found to preside over this ritual enduring what was said with a miserable frisson of pride:

"Caesar, those whom saluted you want to live!..."

Now some fragments, relics. As at the time of "souvenirs of the siege" bits of black bread were sold, mounted under glass. The scramble for entrails began: but the National Guard levelled bayonets across the barricades. No one passed. And the crowd dispersed to dine. It fell!" they said to newcomers! The statue is decapitated! No one has been killed. From "hoodlums" would yell: "It is awfully chic all the same!" The best part of the crowd was silent.

There had been a magnificent effect, then night came: it appeared desolation to some, and the same to those who ignored the great murder.

LXXXVII. Concert at the Tuileries

The 16th, I received a prospectus by intermediate means of my concierge. It meant a concert, opened by declamations; a little popular fête offered at the Tuileries, a fine work. Seat prices varied from five francs to fifty cents. Five francs for the Salle of the Marshals, fifty cents for "the parterre"--and he parterre to be illuminated by Venetian lights in the orange tree branches; accompanied by great fireworks; visible near the barricade of Courevoie.

I did not don white gloves, as those in the know, but bought mine near the palace.

It was not ethereal; but there was a sinister insanity. The swarm of louts and of thieves, ragmen, hats, with four or five gold braids on kepis or sleeves, arrayed quarter to quarter on the great stairway of honor. That sputter and mutter of "imperials" amid growling the cliches of 93.

The women--pretty all the same--were a bit repellent. Almost all smirked, with a modest air, with the voice of Markowski. When Mademoiselle Caillot sang an air "Master of the Chapel" others beat the measure with their fans, where they had placed the music.

The festival took place upon a stage, in the Salle of the Marshals; red velvet curtains with gold (Napoleonic) bees, draped the length of the windows. On high, from the gallery one can scan the spectacle. Elbows upon the imperial balcony, I leaned out, a bit touched and looked at the base of the Champs-Elysées, beneath the immense violet heavens m by the gardens and the lights, the Arc de Triomphe of the Star which bent itself towards civil war.

The detonations of Vanves and of Montrouge came just then. When the duet of *Master of the Chapels* ended, they returned to the salle: from afar came the hoarse applause of machine guns of Neuilly, breaking into the breezes of that fine spring night, from the open window milked the applause of the "public."

Ah, that public! The physiognomies, generally, were truly gloomy; some were those of the newly imprisoned; all reflected surprise, the pleasure and fear of Equality. The carpenter Pindy, military governor of the Hôtel de Ville, recounted to a demoiselle of of Philippe's, a member of the Central Committee. The former informer Clemence forced a coarse paw on the shoulder of an old sewerman, who laughed naively, terrified, and likewise shaken. The

shoemaker Dereure, looked over marks with a profound air. The former coachman Brilier, commandant of the staff officers, whistled at the singers, in the belief that he was encouraging them, by an equestrian attitude. Then it was that I fled into the gardens after having heard a strange alexandrine, doubtless addressed to the National Assembly:

Until, how blindly such political nonsense!

There, despite some lamps, it was a dark and somber night. The statues were solitary, after nine thirty. I made a trip through the promenade, the air was cold. I left by the grille of the Rue Rivoli; there was almost a crowd at the gate to see "the great lords leave the fête."

A fête given by the servants in a deserted house.

LXXXVIII. Explosion of the Grenelle Powder Magazine-- The Red Flag

I was at home, writing. Then a great detonation, followed by a hundred explosions after. The glasses trembled. I believe the house staggered. Again, detonations, always! It seemed to me that there were cannon in my ears. It was in the street. Everyone was there suddenly, asking, appalled. It was thought that Versailles was bombarding all of Paris. Upon the boulevard someone said: "It is the fort of Vanves going up." I arrived at the Place Concorde; there people came and went, alarmed. No one knew anything. I opened my eyes. I saw an extraordinary snow fall from a great height. But it was not snow. Again I began to inform myself. It appeared certain that the explosions had taken place at the École Militaire, doubtless the Grenelle powder-magazine. I went up the avenue of the Champs-Élysées. From not so far away came the formidable crackling, I believe produced by a battery of machine guns. White puffs, one by one, they replied to the snow. I did not walk further, but ran. At the round point of the Étoile, perhaps one could see. I came, set myself, looked around. It was appalling and grandiose. Vast sheets of flame, moving and growing, went into the sky. While the wind curved it over half the town, there, the left disappeared under wavy froth of thick vapors. Then, suddenly, a lance of flame, just one, but enormous, intense, direct, like a trap-door had suddenly opened from hell, crossing, licking, reddened, bluing, illuminated by the eruption of fire. Simultaneously, explosions like hundred artillery, fell one after the other. All that splendid hideous deafened and

blinded me. I had wanted to come forward, feel in the nearby burning, fling myself. I had the vertigo of the burnt.

I went towards the quay at Passy. There was a crowd. The cry went up: "Don't go forward! The fire has reached the ammunition." At that same moment a hail of balls fell upon the urchins. Believing themselves wounded, they fled. I did not dream of turning back. Here, again the finest fear. Meanwhile, the crowd, returned from its flight, regrouped again. News circulated. Four houses at been hit, to the fifth floors. One cannot dare prejudge the number of victims. Bodies fell from the windows, horribly mutilated. They collected a bit of an arm, and on the other side a bit of leg. From a magazine it had become a hospital. It had been shaken from the foundations to the roof; in a moment it sook and fell. The sick, the inform, the guards, fled in all directions, yelling, demented, and here and there, horses bloodied, beaten by the drivers, leaping over over the fugitives, or galloping off, maddened by the giddiness of fear.

As to what caused the explosion, opinions varied. Some attributed it to the negligence of employees, the imprudence of workers, others believed that the fire had been set by a shell. A woman arrived in the traffic; she announced that she came from halting in a hut near the Champs de Mars where a man sheltered; he said that he had set off the powder by order of the Versailles government. Oh! Doubtless, I had heard that. The Commune will profit from its ill-luck by blaming its enemies. It will arrest some innocents passing by, judge them in the bad, it will shoot them, and then, there will be more bodies, and they will say: "See, they were guilty, now they're dead!"

Meanwhile dusk fell. I went away. I dreamt that it was done, that enough anger had weighed down the city, that there had been enough of defeat and of civil war, of infamy and of death, this exceeded just punishment. That moment I turned and looked again. Now, in the shadow, the flame is red; it was said that the Commune raised its flag upon inordinate disaster.

LXXXIX. Bleak Paris

To that extent I no longer knew what I had seen. I had assisted at the slow decadence of light, of joy, of good-fortune without realising all that died, little by little around me, like a man in a room at a ball where one by one the candles go out, not noticing the growing shadows. To truly see Paris today, such as the Commune made it, I needed to make an effort. Close my eyes, Call

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upon the vision of old, living Paris, joyous, fortunate, in this sad sight. Done, I remember, I have reviewed. Now, eyes open, look.

In the street where I live, there is not one cab. Men in National Guard uniforms follow the gutters. One householder, beneath the lentel of a door, talks with the concierge. They speak low. The better part of the shops are closed, others partially, some are open. At the corner wine merchant a woman of the people is down in front of the counter and drinking.

The Montmartre faubourg resists the invasion of silence and apathy. That artery moves again. There ribbons trail after some windows, from from passing women laughing, from men who look at them, and, at the corner of the boulevard, a sort of congestion and tumult produced by a considerable number of little girls and boys yelling and shouting the titles of newspapers. But, at this point, the crowd is almost compact, feeling its emptiness. It presents at the same time the spirit of two contrary ideas; multitude and solitude. It is a strange impression. Imagine something like a desert where is contained the whole world.

The boulevard appears very long; In other times, things hindered the view afar, the eye had more distractions, and one looked at that. Meanwhile, some cabs, and the omnibus. The passersby pass, not promenade. One goes out, because one is obliged to go out; otherwise one would remain at home. The ways appear interminable now, and the people who, lately, loitered morning to evening, say at the moment, "It is too far, the Madeleine." Men, whether in riding coats or [workers'] blouses, are hardly seen, only old men venture out not in uniform. In front of the cafes sit federal army officers; often seven or eight to a table. Draw near; they talk, of the resignation of their last commander. There are some women there, high flyers, fast. Somber hats, tinselled dresses. Sometimes, suddenly, rings out the sound of a horse's gallop. Another time that echo would be lost amid the noise. It is a dispatch-rider-- a red Garibaldian or avenger of Flourens--whose horse is a screw of a carthorse, whose two feet moving towards the plank to slaughter. From time to time a company of Federals heads into the Madeleine, with fixed bayonets. Glance to the right or left in the streets, see deserted pavement in solitary length. There are also times where, upon part of the boulevard, not a single person passes. Meanwhile, amid all that, I feel no pulse to reverie, but am crushed, extinguished, by the habit of apathy.

In the evening, revolt. One wants to live. There is a desire to bestir one's self. In eight days; there have been women again, now there are no more; I

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would never have believed it was possible to regret them. They come, go, speak in high voices. But the crowd contracts at the Rue Drouot to the Rue Faubourg-Montmartre. I have a fear of the solitude. I dallied at one of the others for the pleasure of being jostled, in order to believe that it was so numerous. Further on the strollers formed a circle around a barefoot little girl singing. A merchant, seated before a low table, heated incense, another vendor sold apple sugars, another [photo] transparencies. It was enough to be gay. The shops are closed affording, a parsimonious gaze to promenaders.

Some want the theater. The posters display few seductions. Entering, and being seated, in the room is almost empty. The comedians recite a bit, with slow gestures. They are bored, and they are boring. Sometimes, a comic farce is enacted, by a comic actor from habit, they burst out laughing, and what follows, at one fell swoop, most serious. It seems that laughter was a crime. One does not know what to do. Walk in the corridors. Would like to return to the theater, and is deceived finding one's self once more in the boulevard. It is ten o'clock, very late. Some cafes are open. At the windows of Brébaut or of Peters, there is a thread of light. Promenaders are more and more few. There are no more groups of officers, who would remain all evening in some bar. One goes before, calling the others who dally. Often, one of them is drunk. It is not gay. It says: "Go on." In the streets, no one. Farther on a handbell sounds: it is like you, calling return. At the back of the street, a woman looks about, approaches and addresses you. Prostitution survives.

There, Paris Commune, that is what you have made of Paris! The Prussians came, Paris waited for them, smirking. Shells fell upon the houses, they ate black bread, stood in line for thirty grams of horsemeat, stood in line for thirty livres' worth of moldy wood, they fought, were vanquished, you said to them: Come on, it has been delivered up, as said at the Hôtel de Ville, and Paris, shipwrecked, did not stop laughing. That smirk, know it, was its grandeur, was its ancient glory exiled in a last protest against unjust Providence, it was the memory of having been faithful and fortunate, and of hope and renewal, against, it was Paris saying: I am Paris again. Neither defeat, nor hunger, nor capitulation has made us, you have! And now, be damned, as Macbeth killed the sun, you, Commune, have killed the smirk!

**XC. The Troops Have Entered--Face of the Boulevards--Behind a
Barricade--What the Insurgents Said--News and Rumors--Rue de
Rivoli--Near the Hôtel de Ville--The Place of the Hôtel de Ville--
The Teachers--Barricades and Barricades--From the Pont-du-Jour
to the Champs-Élysées--Linemen, burghers and concierges--
Cannon in Paris**

Cannons very near, shell hisses, multiple shots. I am waking up, what happened? I am going out. It was told: "The troops have entered." How? Which side? at what hour? I ask the National Guards who rush into the court of the Drouot mayoral office, yelling: "We are betrayed! They know little. Going to the Trocadero. They have seen the red trousers (Zouaves). There is combat before the Auteuil viaduct. There is fighting on the Champs-de-Mars. Will the assault be this evening, or that night, or this morning? It is impossible to deduce precisely from the diverse responses. I talked to a civil engineer who had signaled to the Versaillais. This was a frigate captain who had entered with the first. Thrity men ran down the streets, yelling: "We must make barricades." I retired for fear of being compelled to carry paving stones. Behind by the head, brusquely, the hiss of a shell. I heard: "The Montmartre batteries are bombarding the Arc de Triomphe." Extraordinary thing: an artistic preoccupation crossed my mind at the moment of panic and horror: I dreamt of those times, the projectiles falling upon Rudé's bas-relief. On the boulevards, no strollers, few passersby, those made haste. The cafes shut, the shops closed. The jerky crackle of the machine guns redoubled and closed in. It seemed that the battle was before me, almosstthere. A thousand speculations assailed and disquieted me, and here, on the boulevard almost deserted, there was no one from whom I could demand the truth. At that moment, turning in some street, I could possible find myself faced with combat. I walked in the direction of the Madeleine, led by a desire stronger than prudence. Joining the Chaussée-d'Antin, I perceived a tumultuous group, of men, women, children, coming and going, taking up the paving stones. They constructed a barricade, nearly a meter high. Suddenly, I heard the rumble of a heavy cab; turning, I saw a strange thing: women, tattered, livid, horrible, and superb, phrygian bonnet upon head, dress kilted and tied in their belt, are harnessed to a machine gun they have taken, other women in back of them have activated the rotation of the wheels. They pass by very quickly, in a raucous and clumsy roar, with somber colors, stained with red. I am a great way from the machine

gun; they stop a little before the barricade, greeted by the joyous clamor of the insurgents. The women unharness themselves as I arrive.

--Hey you, said a young man to me, like he was in the third gallery of the Ambigu-Comique another time, do me the pleasure of not spying upon us, or I will clout you on the head like a Versailles.

--Kid, guard the cartridges, responded an old man whose long white beard was very long--an ancestor, a burgrave of civil war,-guard your cartridges, and as to the spy, take up paving stones. Continuing to address me politely, he said, Monsieur, you could take the trouble to seek some paving stones, which are on the street corner?

I undertook this with good grace, dreaming, not without displeasure, that troops would suddenly appear at that moment, attacking the barricade, taking it, and I could have been shot before there was time to say: "Explain yourself." But the spectacle at which I assisted hardly interested me. These harsh warrioresses, red-hatted, passed quickly between themselves one and another of the stones I brought from the men who pried up the stones, sometimes interrupted by their need to have a cup of coffee presented by a little girl seated upon a zinc box, guns stacked, the barricade rose rapidly, about us solitude, sometimes a window or a door opened, a curious head would appear and disappear, and the increasing noise of the battle, and there, the clarity of a great sun, all that I knew sinister and horribly captivating. Besides, while working, I talked and listened. The Versailles returned during the night. The gate of Murette and Dauphine had been taken by the 13th and 113rd battalions of the first arrondissement. "Those two 13 will take badly," said one woman. Vinoy is established at Trocadero and Douai at Pont-du-Jour, both advancing. The Champs-Élysées had been taken by Federals after a two hour struggle. There was a battery at Arc de Triomphe, that swept the Champs-Élysées and bombarded the Tuileries. A shell fell in the rue du Marche-Saint-Honore. On Course-la-Reine, the 138th battalion sustained fire with great courage. The Tuileries are armed with cannon, and answered Arc de Triomphe. At Avenue de Marigny, the gendarmes shot twelve Federals who had surrendered; they left their bodies in the gutter, in front of the tobacco shop. At the Rue de Sevres, the avengers of Flourens have put to flight a regiment of the line; the avengers of Flourens have vowed to kill to the last. Now, there is struggle at the Champs-Élysées, round the Ministry of War, and upon Boulevard Haussmann. Dombrowski has been killed at the Chateau de la Murette. The Versailles attacked the Saint-Lazare railway station and marched upon the la Pepinière

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barracks. They have been betrayed, sold, surprised, it does not matter! They will win."We have no further need of bosses or generals; behind the barricades the whole world is a marshal."

And that moment, eight or ten fled round the Rue de la Chaussee-d'Antin. They regrouped, and cried:

"The Versaillaise are masters of the barracks. They are establishing a battery. Delescluze has been taken at the Ministry of War."

---That is not true! said a campfollower, we have come from seeing him at the Hôtel de Ville.

--Yes,yes, replied the other women, he is at the Hôtel de Ville. They have given us a machine gun. Jules Valles embraced us, one after the other. That is a fine man! He said to us that all was going well, that the Versaillais would not leave Paris, they would encircle, and that it would all be over in two days.

--Long live the Commune! The insurgents responded.

The barricade is done. They wait for attack one moment from the next. You can draw it out, one sargeant told me, if you have your skin.

I did not answer to obey that advertisement.

I retrace my steps, the boulevard is more solitary. Some groups are talking before the doors. It appears certain that some Assembly troops have gained success in their entry. The Federals, surprised by the speed and multiplicity of attack, have given way first. But resistance is organizing. It is certain at the Place de la Concorde. At the Place Vendôme they are numerous and place formidable artillery. Montmartre echoes with furor.I am on Rue Vivienne; encountering some people seeking news and ask."Two battalions at the Faubourg Saint-Germain are set before the troops, weapons in the air.A National Guard Captain, who, first in the quarter, has hoisted the tricolor flag. A shell fell, firing the Ministry of Finances, but the firemen,under machine gun fire, have begun putting out the fire. Place de la Bourse, two or three hundred Federals raised a barricade; instructed by experience, I hurry my pace to avoid the corvée of paving stones. In the neighboring streets, there is the whole world; Paris hunkers down. The cannonade is more and more furious. I cross the garden of the Palais-Royal. There, some strollers; a group of little girls jump rope. The Rue de Rivoli is full of movement. A battalion defiles down the

way, coming to the Hôtel de Ville. At its head, a very young man, mounted upon a magnificent black horse. It is Dombrowski. I had been told that he was dead. He is very pale. Someone said: "He was hit in the chest by a shell fragment at the Chateau de la Muette, but the bullet did not penetrate the flesh." The batallion passed by, singing the "Song of the Departure." There were some armed women among the insurgents; one marching some paces behind Dombrowski carried a young child in her arms. Glancing down the Place de la Concorde, one could see smoke rising over the terrace of the Tuileries. Before the Ministry of Finance, a little before the barricade; dark masses; I could distinguish the streets. They are cannon or firemen. All around, confusion reigns; the fusillade is heard distinctly but the sound apparently comes from Champs-Elysées; the barricade is not taken. I head towards the Hôtel de Ville. Dispatch riders pass every minute, at the gallop. Companies of Federals, a ways off, are asleep on their stacked guns. At the height of the Rue du Louvre, there is a barricade, further on, another, much further, a barricade again. Women, before Sanit-Germain-l'Auxerrois, occupy themselves demolishing the pews. Children run round the short barricades, carrying sandbags. Along the approach to the Hôtel de Ville, the barricades are higher, better armed, more garnished with defenders. All these men have ardent faces, resolute, wild. They speak little, they no longer yell. Two guards, sitting cross-legged, play piquet in the gutter. I follow my road. They let me pass. Here the barricades are completed; I don't fear paving stone duty. I raise my eyes. All the shutters are closed. A single window is open; two old women begin to place a mattress in the space between the frame and the window. A sentinel, on guard in front of the cafe of the gas company says "You shall not pass." I halt in front of the cafe, still open, doubtless by order, and some tables are occupied by officers animatedly conversing. One of them looks at me. He rudely demands what I am doing there: I repay his audacity; I take my pass from my pocket and show it silently. He says to me "that's good", and stands beside me. I learn, -I know-- that a part of the Left Bank is occupied by the Assembly troops, but there is fighting in all the streets, and that army, for its part, began to fight in retreat. "War in the streets, you see is another affair. In these battles, a Belleville street arab knows more than Mac-Mahon. He adds "This will be terrible. The enemy shoots prisoners. (For two months that the Commune has had that language.) We are not in the quarter." I ask him: Does Delescluze desire the resistance?" He answers me; "Yes, think a bit. You see those three windows to the left of the trophy? That is the room of the staff office. He is there, He gives the orders, signs the commissions. He has not slept in three days. A few minutes before I

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had trouble being recognized, the weariness changed. The Committee of Public Safety is permanently in the next salon, drafting proclamations and decrees.

--Ah! Ah! I say, decrees!

--Yes! citizen, heroism is decreed.

The officer gave me some information. I learned between some other matters that Millère, the same morning, had shot thirty refractory priests, and that Rigault was sent to Mazas "to watch the hostages." While speaking, I began to see what had happened at Hôtel de Ville place. Two or three thousand troops, some Federals, slept or sat on the ground. They seemed to be talking bitterly. From time to time the casks that were set on the chairs were reversed. The men frequently got up, approached the casks, and drank, some holding the little barrels in their hands. Gangs of women circled and flung their hands about. The men cried, the women yelled. Dispatch riders left the hotel and pointed their mounts in a line, one to the direction the Bastille, the others in the region of Concorde. The last passed before us, and cried to us: "Everything is good, well!" In a moment a man appeared in a window of the Hôtel de Ville and spoke. All the Federals, in his view, rose up with enthusiasm. "It is Vallès said my neighbor at table. I had difficulty recognising him. I remembered another time, when I was a student, in a little dairy shop in Rue Serpente. He wrote verse then, mediocre enough. I remember one little poem dedicated to praising a green coat. It was said that he was sometimes employed in administering funerary rituals. His face, at this later time, was bitter and violent. He had left poetry for journalism and journalism for politics. Now, he perorated from a window of the Hotel de Ville. I could not hear what he said. But when he retired a great acclamation went up: "Long live the Commune! Down with the Versailles! Conquer or die!" These cries effected me badly. I felt that these men and women wanted to kill and knew how to die. Yie! down there, corpses after! Neither the barrage nor the rifle fire stopped for a moment. A few minutes later a troop of women left the hotel, the mob parted to make way for them. They came to my side. They are dressed in black. They wear a crepe armband and a red cockade in each hat. An officer told me: "These are the teachers who replaced the nuns." When they moved, one went to them and asked:

--Have you succeeded?

--Yes, said one flourishing a bit of paper, there is our commission. The schoolchildren are informed in filling the sandbags with earth. The less

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young will load guns in the back of the barricades. They will collect the living, among the National Guard. The rent of the mothers of those who die will be paid by the Republic. They have a desire for battle, we have worked a great deal in a month: This will be their recreation."

This woman, who is young and pretty, speaks with an almost sweet smile. I shudder. Then two officers, on horseback, come to the Place Vendôme, flinging themselves in a great gallop towards the Hôtel de Ville. A minute later, a bugle sounds. Companies form up. Great agitation appears to rule in the hôtel. Men enter, leave, in circles. The officers beside me in the café rise in haste; they are going to put themselves at the head of their men. The rumor spreads that the Versaillais have taken the barricades at the Place de la Concorde. "My faith", my table neighbor said while buckling his belt, "I believe that you would do well to go home, because it is going to get hot here in an hour." I took a last look at the place. The Federal companies, some by the quais, others by the Rue de Rivoli, left in cadence, calling out: "Long live the Commune!" I did not know the horrible joy that illuminated their faces. A young man, almost a child, hung back a little. A woman bounded up to him, saying to his neck in passing "Oh well! it is because you do not want to kill with the others!:"

I gained the Rue Vielle-du-Temple. At the side someone had constructed a little barricade: I carried a paving stone, and I passed. Meanwhile, I saw shops open, pedestrians, life again. The quarter of active merchants undertook to survive in Paris. One would not dream it was civil war, outrageous and near, from the conversations heard in passing that did not betray the anguish of inhabitants engaged vainly, and the cannon ceaselessly sounding and cry out: "Hear well, Paris? I came in your houses. Hear me? I kill the children."

On the boulevards, barricades again, some made higher, others beginning. Those already constructed, near the Porte-Saint-Martin are redoubtable. The place seems predestined to bloody burst of insurrection and repression. I remember having seen, while a child, in 1852, corpses behind the grilles of two entryways and blood on the pavings. I return to my quarter. Profoundly sad, I am incapable of thinking, cast down, apathetic, sometimes closing my eyes, seeming like a house of mourning where the blinds are drawn.

In front of the Gymnasium, I meet a friend. We shake hands sadly. I had believed him at Versailles.

--When did you return? I asked him.

--Today, after the troops.

And, walking beside me, he recounted what he had seen. He had a pass. He was allowed to enter Paris behind the artillery and the linemen. He came to the Tocadero, always following the troops as they stopped to arrest, or dispose, according to the orders of battle. Firstly, there was not a man along the length of the quai. At the Champs de Mars there were no insurgents to be seen. The fusillade was very violent at the Vaugirard, upon the Pont-Royal and by the Palace of Industry. Shells fell upon the quai, dispatched from Montmartre. Otherwise, it was all that was to be heard, he saw a bit of smoke from afar. About him, absolute solitude. Sound in this desert was a shock. Crossing the quai parapet, he continued along his route. Persisting along the road he met street arabs cutting great gobs of meat from the carcass of a horse fallen in the road. There was evidence of a hit on one side. On the bank a fisherman tended a line. Two shells would fall a few meters along the route, into the water. I went prudently, towards the Palace of Industry. There two more shells hit, falling weakly into the water. The Champs-Élysées had a sad aspect. Not a soul! Alas! It is the right word, that and all. We perceived at the foot of a tree a linemen, with a bloody front. We approached, he cried out, shuddered, opened his mouth, closed his eyes, and died. My friend moved away. We saw the broken trees, the columns of twisted bronze. He ground the glass passing near the windowless kiosks. Turning one's head, from time to time, we saw shells from Montmartre fall upon the Arc de Triomphe and chip it. Near the Tuileries, there was a confused movement of red pants and far beyond, smoke. One heard the hiss of a ball; looked to the right, and saw a tree branch fall. From one end of the avenue to the other, no one. The ground is white under the sun. Here again one sees many corpses. We cross the Champs-Élysées. On the left, all the streets are full of soldiers. The insurgents have fled in the direction of the Madeleine. At windows, some tricolor flags, and women laughing with the military. Seeing the linemen, there is some reassurance. The concierges were sitting in front of their doors, smoking their pipes and recounting to attentive groups the perils to which they have been exposed, balls piercing the mattresses, Federals entering the houses to hide. One said: I have found three who were taking refuge in my court. I informed a lieutenant. He had them shot. But they were not removed. I cannot keep corpses in the house." Another chatted with soldiers and designated a house. Four men and a corporal went towards the indicated building. An instant later, my friend heard the shots. The concierge rubbed his hands and closed his eyes with a tricky air. A third porter recounted: "They respected nothing. During the battle they entered my house to loot. They wanted to take my suits, my linen, all that I had.

I said that they could stay, but that it was not good enough for them, they must go to the primary tenant, where they would find a clock, and silver, and I gave them the key. Sir, you will never guess what they did, the villains! They have taken the key and and taken everything from the tenant." My friend continued to walk. All around him, there was great agitation. The soldiers came, went, struck the doors, went up the stairs, came back down, leading pale prisoners. The householders laughed, with a complaisant air, but a bit of disquiet. There, and there, the bodies, heads in the gutters. A man taking a cab felt a wheel run over a body:"Bah! He will not do ill again."They brought the dead and the wounded. The cannon did not stop pounding. One hit a little in the distance, near the Tuileries, no doubt. Meanwhile the bourgeoisie were calm, and the military disdainful. There was a singular contrast: all the good citizens began to laugh, to joke, to live, and the soldiers appeared more glum than the men that they came to save at peril of life. My friend arrived at the Boulevard Haussmann. The corpses were very numerous. He also saw some in the carriage entrances. A woman, dead, was seated on the first step of the staircase. Near the Church of the Trinity, he saw two cannon, whence the detonations were emanating, and sending projectiles into a bathing establishment sited on the Rue Taitbout, in front of the boulevard. On that same boulevard, there was no a single living being. Dark points , on and on. Corpses doubtless. Meanwhile, as the cannons sent balls, then paused to reload, heads aligned curiously along the doors, watching damage, counting destroyed trees, ditches spolit, kiosks gutted. From windows, here and there, came bursts of fire, and smoke rose. My friend, he lived not far away, went home. He was told that that morning the College Chapel had been vioently shelled. There the Zouaves from the Commune were ambushed. It was not a long struggle. They took some prisoners and shot the rest.

My friend was sickened, but resolved to not leave. But his impatience to know and see countered and he went down to the street. The barracks at the Pepinière was occupied by the line; it had arrived without hindrance by way of the New Opera, passing by the right of the Madeleine where terrible action was engaged. All along the road there were stacked arms, soldiers sitting or lying down, and corpses above all. Now he could, without much trouble gain the boulevards where the insurgents, now very numerous, had not atacked again. He worked a little at barricades and then passed. It was there that we met. At the moment where we entered Faubourg Montmartre, a man reported that the Federals, numbering three hundred, were sheltering in the Church of the Madeleine. "They have been followed by the gendarmes, and were hit an

hour later, in the church. Now, he added, if M. Deguerry returns, he will find the whole world to bury."

Presently, I am home. Evening comes, I write these notes, disorganized, with only the aid of memory, not able to order my thoughts. Always the cannon! Always the rifleshots! I cry for those who kill and for those who die! Oh, my poor Paris!

XCI. Things Seen From My Window-An Arrest

It is impossible to leave: night is almost peaceful, when morning begins, hideous. The fusillade is intense, multiple, interminable, resounding all around me. I believe that the Faubourg-Montmartre was struck. Opening my window, I then retreat before a quick resumption of noise. In the Trevisé development, also passed, all the houses are hermetically sealed. Below me, on the second floor, there is a great pile of furniture, until I distinctly hear a sob, a female sob. I remember that the second floor of my house is occupied by a member of the Commune and his family. I am about to descend to offer help to the women, in case of danger, when from my window, I see entering the area, a man in lieutenant's uniform; I recognise him, he is my concierge. He stops, looks round him, and certain of being alone, takes his gun in both hands and throws it behind a wall formed on the left side of the development. That done, he quickly returns to the house; swiftly I gain the staircase landing, and pricking up my ears, hear the concierge say to his wife: "The barricade is taken, give me a shirt. They are at Montmartre. We are torched. !"

I return to the window; the concierge was deceiving himself; again Montmartre was not taken, I hear the hiss of shells that appear to come from the hill. Besides racket, doubling, on all sides; all the horrid sonorities compound into a perpetual noise that sounds like a thousand hammers striking anvils. Cramped in place, my hand clamps upon the casement window. I lean out to see, see nothing, nothing except a squad of linemen preceded by two gendarmes, who enter the development. They stopped before my door, some men detached themselves, then, I heard on the second landing, the noise of a door quickly opening and closing and closing across the parquet floor. I tremble: they are coming to arrest that man, if so they will shoot him, there, in the house, in his apartment, in front of his wife? No, the two gendarmes reappear in the street, between them a prisoner with tied hands the line reforms and continues the march. Then the man, elevated with anger, raised his fists and said: "I have but one regret, that I didn't overturn the whole

quarter."At the same time, below my window, another window opened, and I saw a grey haired woman appear, raising her arms and crying out "Stay tranquil! I will avenge you." At those words the soldiers stopped and two soldiers returned to the house. I understood that they came to arrest the woman after arresting her husband. I fell upon my chaise, dismayed, stricken, closing my eyes to not see and putting my hands over my ears to not hear the fusillade; but the horrible sharp sound triumphed and pierced my hands.

XCII. XCII Horrible Noise--Episodes

No, those who did not hear--oh, they are lucky--they cannot ever comprehend how striking dark, that enormous noise, continued, prodigious! to tell one's self, each ball menaces a chest,each bullet plows a house! The shock twists the heart, the panic impairs the brain; visions of corpses pass before one's eyes,erasing sleep; men falling and crying out: "mercy!" and the sense of living in the milieu of these madmen who are dying.

I heard some steps in the street: a ball has smashed behind me on the iron bar of a shop window; I hear the panes of glass break. I tell myself:go back.

But passing before a liquor store opened, where men are talking, I stop and receive some news. Montmarte is taken, the Federals had resisted badly, very many have been shot in the lanes and alleys of houses. Said to seven insurgents: "Come out, save your lives." They responded: "We yield." But one of them shot an officer in the leg, with a revolver. Then the soldiers took the seven, threw them in a construction trench before the house, and from above: "they sniped away like [they were] rabbits."Another man reported that he had seen a child dead in the corner of the street at the Rue de Rome,"a very pretty head, said he, and the brains upon the ground next to him."A third said: On the Place Saint-Pierre, everything was over, and I heard a shot and a chasseurs captain fell dead. His commandant raised his eyes and saw a man starting to hide in back of a chimney: the soldiers aimed above, and nailed him in place where he stood. What did the insurgent do? He approached the commandant, laughed, and insulted him. The commandant threw him against the wall and broiled his brain with a revolver shot. Another insurgent, arrested, thumbed his nose at the soldiers: They shot him. But, in other parts of Paris, the military operations were less fortunate. At the Faubourg Saint-Germain, the army advanced very slowly, if it advanced. The Federals fought with heroic brutality; from streetcorners, for windows, from balconies taking fire, rarely useless. That sort of guerilla [warfare] fatigued the soldiers for

whom discipline had not authorised to respond by parallel tactics. At Saint Ouen, equally, the troops' advance is halted: the barricade at the Rue de Clichy has held well and lasted a long time. But in my quarter the Versailles advantage is evident, the barricade at the Drouot intersection has been taken. There is resistance here and there, but in flight.

Is it all that true? Those are the rumors that are circulating. In passing, I sometimes watch. The Rue Geoffroy-Marie, near Faubourg Montmartre; there was a man, a National Guardsman, alone, in the street, nothing protects him, he loads his gun and fires, he loads and fires again, he loads and fires again. He shoots, again and again, thirty-two times. Until, the gun falls, the human reels, and falls as well.

XCIII. The Barricade at Place Clichy--Fusillades

The 23rd, in the morning, after combat for three hours, the barricade at Place de Clichy had not been taken. While two battalions of the National Guard from Batignolles had reversed arms at the beginning of the attack and fraternised with the army near the Mayoral office, it was one hundred and fifty meters from the struggle. The crackle of squads firing, the explosion of bombs and report of machine guns filled the air, the smell of powder [took] the throats of residents. Then cries went up from the wounded, hissing projectiles from the neighboring Montmartre batteries sped rapidly past, by the roofs of all the surrounding streets. "All about, a Batignolles inhabitant told me, detailing the area below, in the town, it was a hurricane of thunder."

The battle struck, mingled, with the echoes of furious trumpets, that monstrous tumult, and at intervals, subsumed into the base of detonation.

After an hour and half, it diminished a bit. The barricade was taken, the insurgents fell back to La Chapelle and Belleville, in disorder; the line spilled into the Avenue de Clichy like a torrent, following after, on the cup of shattered stones, a tricolor flag. Here and there, in the streets, they fired. On Rue Blanche, a shot from a first floor; the man was taken and passed by the arms against his window. Artillery fired by the Rue Chaptal, to Montmartre and La Chapelle. It made a shining sun; we gave a drink to the artillerymen, to refresh them. Returning young men were made provisional prisoners, there is fear of children, petroleum, revolvers, revenges, the delirium of blood. A solitary shot sometimes rang out, in the neighborhood, followed a minute after, by five or six others. Justice was done.

As the Belleville and Clichy quarters half-emptied of troops, after four in the evening, during a moment of silence, two insurgents passed, at the Rue Leonie, one before the other, down the gutter. Behind them one took his gun and fired, randomly, into the windows; the echo resounded, like a shell impact, down the sleepy street; one could hear a pane break.

More redoubtable were the guns in the windows. One saw a wall gouged with a little hard sound. Then the officers adjusted their field glasses: often they could see nothing. But if a shadow shifted behind a shade, the cry: "Shoot that house!" resounded. They never targeted the same apartments. Some inhabitants left, and never returned.

XCIV. First Fires

In the night, I awakened with a start. My glass is completely red. I open the window. The total sky, to the left, is a pell-mell of shadowy smoke and bloody flashes; an immense movement of black monsters stirs, with tongues of fire: it is a fire! The burning of Paris! I leave in haste. At the corner of Rue de Trevisé a sentinel yells: "You cannot pass!" I am so upset that I cannot tell whether it is a Federal or a soldier. What is happening? Where is it going? A few balls hiss by, and in an hour there are armed men. "It is the Ministry of Finance that burns! It is the Rue Royale! it is the Louvre!" The Louvre! I barely repress a cry. In a minute I calculate the enormity of the disaster. Innumerable masterpieces, devoured, consumed, unborn! Walls collapsing, the roof tiles detaching and shriveling up. The Marriage of Cana burning! Raphael twisted in the terrible brazier. Leonardo da Vinci is no more. Ah, that was truly unexpected, and leaves us a set of abominable surprises. But no, these rumors are doubtless false. How would the people who live in the quarter where I live, themselves know what I do not know? Above us, the night is red and black. I breathe in a strange odor, like a lamp and oil that wants to ignite. The word, petroleum, makes me shudder. Once, very distinctly, I heard, a hard sound of a large vessel that rolled and shattered. Who can be informed, notice, be aware! around the fire, during the day, little by little, rise, the cannonade thundered, the fusillade clattered; it is hell that has death for a sword belt. Before me, at a corner of the facade, all white, it clearly is crossed by trebuches of smoke, reflecting combustion. I run. I want to return, hide myself, sleep, forget. In my room, it crosses the white blinds, throwing out

sparks. I am afraid. I watch. They are the golden letters of an order, on the front of my house, which the flames of a red sky tear forth cries of light.

XCV. Monsters

Certainly, I have no more illusions. What you have done, gentlemen of the Commune, has clarified to me your value and the clarity of your intentions. You see lying, theft, killing, I would have said: You are liars, pillagers and murderers,"but truthfully, while citizen Felix Pyat is wicked, and citizen Miot, who is stupid; wily Miliere, who shot the refractory priests, and Philippe, who had the brothels closed to assure a numerous clientele to those who own in the second arrondissement; while Dacosta, who committed the farce of going to tell the Jesuits in the Conciergerie:"Attention! In an hour, you will be shot!, and then an hour later said: "I have reflected, it will be later": while Johannard, who made a child fifteen years old, culpable for selling a suppressed newspaper bear arms,;meanwhile Rigault, while playing with the son of Chaudey, said laughing: "Oh well, little one, later we are going to shoot your father: "while such madmen and frenzied were the Commune of Paris, and whom, after more extravagancies which would have had one committed to Charenton and more villainies that would have opened Saint-Pelagie's [prison] doors, arrived, baseness to baseness, excess to excess, to make Paris--of Paris--a terrified slave of their dreadful power; while all along, I could not believe that these sinister naifs could come to the inconceivable blow of burning Paris after having ruined it. Erostrates of the neighborhood! Sardanapoulos drunk on sulfuric acid! Oh, to be swallowed up, you must have a gulf, and to die, you must grind! In place of torches for your funerary cortege, you want the Tuileries in flames, the library of the Louvre burned, the Palace of the Legion of Honor in flames, the Rue Royale an oven where the walls turn, where women are interred alive in red and smoking debris, and the Rue de Lille seems the interior of Vesuvius! You cry that families are ruined, thanks to papers evaporating in the Ministry of Finance, and in the Treasury, bank deposit records are burned! Seeing the Museum of the Louvre remain intact and the great library preserved, you tremble in rage! How? Nôtre Dame does not burn again? Saint-Chapelle does not burn yet? Have you no more petroleum or incendiary matches? "To arms!" is not enough, you cry "To fire!" Consume the whole city, and shroud yourselves in the ruins, taking pride in your remaining misdeeds, like an aborted birth with the Himalayas for its sepulchre!

Do not say: "It was not us who did it. The people avenged themselves. We have done nothing. We are as sweet as lambs. The strangler will not be undone by a fly!" Do not say that. You were on the balcony of the Tuileries, with your red sashes, giving the orders. The people you deceived did not fail to obey you. In all the circumstances of this prodigious blow, not revealing bit by bit, an elaborate plan determined long in advance? Did we not read, almost daily, in your official newspaper, that the holders of petroleum must immediately declare the amounts in their possession?" Was there not, in the quartier of the Invalides, a match which ignited a fire in the gunpowder barrels placed there long before? Yes, that you put in place, you would place again, what you have wanted. If the disaster is not greater, it is because of the surprisingly quick arrival of the troops, you could not have time to achieve your full preparation. Yes, culpable, that is you. It was Eudes who distributed the petroleum to the petroleuses. It is Felix Pyat who has twisted the wicks. Tridon has said: "It is necessary to not allow vials uncorked. "The committee of public fire has done its duty well. Ah! Wretched criminals! heedless infamous ones; heaven knows my heart I abhor reprisals and am always inclined to pardon, but this time, what punishment would be great enough to exceed justice, and what cry of repentance can you make, falling beneath the bullets, that could be heard by God?"

XCVI. Paris in Eruption--Burning Hôtel de Ville

I watch. With three friends, I am atop a house in the Rue de Labruyere. The spectacle is such that horror paralyses all feeling, the same for self-preservation; it is consternation in the face of a flaming atmosphere of shock. The Hôtel de Ville burns. Smoke, immediately red, prevents one from distinguishing anything more than the immense silhouette of the walls. Until, a puff of wind, a sombre odor--a smell perhaps of burning flesh--gives nausea and vertigo. On the other side, the Tuileries, the Legion of Honor Hall, the Ministries of War and Finance burn like the five craters of a gigantic volcano. Paris is in eruption.

Only, a black mass detaches itself in a milieu of a sinister universe like a curse: it is the Saint-Jacques tower. One of the three friends who are with me on the ridgepole, had been able, in an hour, to approach the Hôtel de Ville.

He told me:

"At the moment when I arrived, the flames surrounded all the windows of the Hôtel de Ville, the most intense heat striking the inhabitants cooped up in the adjacent quarters, well known for some with more than fifty thousand livres' worth of powder in the cellars! The arsonists had to run petroleum by luck in floods in the salons, in the stairs, in the throne room until the currents combined. The fire, like Hell, illuminated Paris in bloody reflection: on the quai by the Institute, one could read a letter as in daylight. It is the end of the old capitol, that the infamous friends of the Committee of Public Safety have ordered, in the wickedness of their agony? Yes, it is the ruin of all that was great, generous, shining, and consoling for Patrie, that they decided to consume with cutting laughter, or the terror and ferocity disputing brutishness."

"Confusing revelations circulated in the realm of the disorder: it was said that the terrain would distribute the head down to the caves. And there, with the whole quarter camped in, upset with its inhabitant and their riches. The heat was insupportable between the Tuileries and the Hôtel de Ville, that is to say a space of about two kilometers. The two street barricades, Rue de Rivoli and Rue de la Coutellerie, there are found the supporting stores of the Hôtel de Ville, the services of bakeries, lighting, of public walks, city tolls, water and drains, etc., will be engulfed much later, in spite of the energy of the army. It is feared that the fire has also gained, by the spark, all the surrounding stores. The quai barricades aren't tamed; perhaps it will take another hour for them to be taken, and besides serving the firepumps, moving on all sides will be insufficient. It would be necessary to project tons of ammonia solution in the Hôtel de Ville to combat the petroleum that flows like lava around it; and, terrible thing, the red reflection of the fire stain the neighboring waters of at the Seine at the Hôtel de Ville, so that the floor seems positively charged with a river of blood and takes the character of clots scouring the bridge arches."

These are the impressions I recall thinking about the disaster. What was said to me, it seemed that I saw. An irresistible desire to be near took me, devoured me. I was never inclined to that previously. I raised my arms, I could fall, it would not matter! My eyes, it seemed, absorbed complete flame.

XCVII. The Petroleuses (Female Firestarters)

They walk quickly, along the walls. They are poorly dressed. They are in general women of forty to fifty years old, forehead clasped by a headband of red fabric, woven in the meshes of their dirty hair. The face is flushed, eyes blinking. They come, looking to their feet. They have a left hand in a pocket or fold of their corsages; others hold in their hand a box of white metal, opening, they take out woolen tender. They put in the petroleum. Passing in front of a linemen sentinel box, they smile and salute. "My good sir" If the street is solitary, they stop, consulting a scrap of paper in hand, halting one moment before a cellar airvent, while others continue their road without much hurry. An hour later, a house is in flames where they passed. Paris calls them the petroleuses. See, on the Rue Truffault, a petroleuse, taken in flagrante delecto, shot five or six revolver bullets at the soldiers, and kills two men before being ended by the army. See, falling before the carriage entrance of the Rue de Buologne, falling, pierced by shots, a young girl; something falls from her hand and strikes; it was a flask full of petroleum. Sometimes they have with them a little boy or girl, hand in hand. In that case, it is the child who carries the incendiary device in their pocket, beside a doll.

XCVIII. Evening in the Streets

One can circulate, until seven in the evening, with extreme difficulty. The streets are striped with patrols. Line regiments camp on the exterior boulevards; they eat, smoke and lounge, drinking, with the townsmen in the shade of the houses. Farther on, one hears the desperate resistance of Belleville, and of Vilette: at every step, another razed building, long white stains and patches appear; they are the sigh of cellars collapsed into piles of rubble. The long files of prisoners, among them women of fury, and children, pass, hands tied behind the back, between the boulevard boundaries, headed towards Neuilly. Night comes. Nothing past the bridge of one's nose is illuminated. The streets are deserted so that the skies seem somber. At nine o'clock, solitude. Later, the sound of a gun firing as it falls into the gutter. That, and the sentry, and the rare lights in the back of windows.

XCIX. Where Are the Bosses?--Fusillades--Agony of the Insurrection--Cemeteries

Hours, days flow and recombine furiously. To write the history of these calamities is not possible Each can see only a corner of the picture, and the stories circulating are indistinct or contradictory. It appears probable that the insurrection is reaching its end. It was said that the Montrouge fort had been taken; shells fell again upon Paris. Some had fallen in the banking quarter. Some struck in les Halles, Luxemburg, at Porte-Sainte-Martin. Neither cannon nor gunfire have ceased, my ears are accustomed to continual thunder. But despite the barbarous heroism of the Federals, the forces of resistance have exhausted themselves. Where have the bosses gone? I write what has been told me. Assy has been taken near the new Opera. They encircled him; he was nearly alone.

--You live? cried a sentinel.

--You should have yelled louder, said Assy, believing he was another Federal.

He was surrounded, seized, disarmed, taken; but that story is a little unbelievable. Assy not knowing that the Opera was in the power of the Versaillais.

It was said that Delescluze had fled; that Dembrowsky was dead in an ambulance; that Milliere was a prisoner at Saint-Denis; rumors running, devoid of proof. It is certain, searching everywhere; first, in the smoking ruin that had been the Hôtel de Ville, citizen Farraigu had been taken; barricade inspector; he avowed that he had received orders from the Committee of Public Safety, particular orders to light the Bon-Diable store Had one of these gentlemen, another time, had some complaint against the proprietor? Farraigu had petroleum in his pocket; he was shot. It is said that a council of war was established at the Théâtre de Chatelet. There come the Federals; score by score; they are condemned, conducted out, hands tied behind backs, told "Turn "A hundred paces on, there is a machine gun; they fall, score by score. Expedient method. In a court, Rue Saint Denis, there is a stable full of corpses; I have seen it with my own eyes. The theater of Porte-Sainte-Martin is a ruin; a post is established near the debris. There were shot there; this morning, three petroleumers; later the bodies were visible on the boulevard. I saw in passing, between four soldiers; two insurgents; one old, the other almost

a child. The old one said to the young: See, all bad luck, we were bearing arms. In Forty Eight (Revolution of 1848) we had no arms, we fought with those taken from the soldiers, then nothing more was done. Today, there is more massacre and less need. After these words, they disappeared down Rue Hausseville; and a short time after, they heard the gunshots. Horrible days! We are prey to a profound erasure; I so wish that it was finished. The town is sad; above all, not a step sounds, where one is secluded; the streets deserted, windows shut, passing creeps by, from time to time, a man between soldiers; it is dreadful! In the streets nearest the struggle the shutters are closed; five times the soldiers have entered the quarter, yelling: "Close the windows, open the shutters." Why not here; if one takes aim, the shutters are open, to see who has shot. As for me, in the realm of sadness, I feel like a madman in the night. The rumor going round is that the [clerical] hostages were shot at Mazas. The Archbishop of Paris has passed by arms; Abbe Deguerry has been assassinated. It is Rigault who presided at those executions. A little after he had been taken, he fell crying: "Down with the Assassins!" That deed moved a Dumollard who said to the sworn: "Scum!" It is also said that Milliere has been shot, at the Place du Pantheon; they wanted him on his knees; he stood up again, proud bully. Extraordinary thing, these wretches are brave.

All the while, the Commune was in agony. Like the dragons of legend, they die spitting fire. La Villette is in flames, the houses burning at Belleville and upon the Buttes-Chaumont. The resistance tends to concentrate itself, on the one part, to the Lachaise cemetery; on the other, the Montparnasse cemetery. The insurrection was mistress of Paris; the army, bit by bit, takes it in long arms, one at the Arc-de-Triomphe to Belleville; the other from Champs-de-Mars to the Pantheon. Restrained in that embrace, the flight begins, fleeing here, resisting there, insurrection returned; she is down now, in two cemeteries; she waits in back of the tombs; she sets her gunbarrel on the arms of a cross, establishes a battery between two sepulcres. The army's shells fall in the funeral enclave, searching for the sun, disturbing the dead. A dark ball rolls down a tree row; it could be a cannonball; it is a skull. What do they think, the men who kill and are killed in these cemeteries? Dying among the dead; that is terrible. But they don't muse upon that; the bloody giddyness of destruction does not allow thought of anything beyond; "Kill." Ah well, they are cheerful, so they are brave. There's the pity, what heartbreak! These wretches are heroic! There had been, behind the barricades, traces of frantic valor. One man, at the Porte SaintMartin; had a red flag; he planted himself before a pile of paving stones; audacious defiance! The bullets rained; -he leaned indolently against a cask behind hiM. "Sluggard!" a comrade yelled to him. "No," he

responded; "I am making sure to not fall when I die." They are here; they have pillaged, burned, killed; but they are brave. They haven't the heart of a drudge. Here again, they laugh while succumbing. The campfollowers embrace before the door of a burial vault; a wounded man drinks with a comrade, pours the wine on his wound and says: "It is good to drink." Meanwhile, in an hour, perhaps, in these cemeteries, the machinegun ends all, the soldiers enter, also drunk with rage, and then, horribly, the bayonet struggle begins, body to body, between the tombs, the the lookout behind the turrets, the flight behind the monuments, and all the profanation and shock to the spirit of that sad idea: A battle in a cemetery!

C. Paris

The fire is over; consider the ruins. The Commune is vanquished: see Paris gloomy, immobile, bare. That is the sum of us. Prostration is upon all spirits, like the solitude of all the streets. We have no more anger or pity; we are rasped, resigned, haggard, we see what passes, without watching, the convoys of prisoners being conducted to Versailles. Not one mouth says: "Wretches!" or "Poor people!." The soldiers themselves are silent. Conquerors, they are sad, they do not drink, they do not sing. Paris has the air of a town taken by assault by mutes; it is not irritated, and cannot weep. The tricolor flags that float at all the windows, take the eye; who knows why flags have been put in the windows. It is not because, in the last time above all, the triumph of Versailles had not been supported ardently by the greater portion of the population; but because there is so much fatigue that there is no leisure to be at peace. Dream there! the siege, the famine, ennui, absent parents, the misery, and then, the insurrection of Montmartre, the surprise, the hesitations, cannon night and day, the relentless fusillade from afar, the mothers in tears, the sons pursued, all these calamities based in the unfortunate city. It was Rome under Tiberius, it is Rome after the barbarians. Cannon drawn into Sybaris. Such emotion and misfortunes, extenuated that voluptuousness in blood, until all is blood, such blood! Corpses in the streets, corpses under the doorways, corpses everywhere! Oh, certainly they were culpable; those men taken, who have killed; they were criminals, those women who poured brandy in glasses and petroleum in the houses! But, in the first moments of zeal, is it triumph"? Were they are guilty, all those who were killed? Until, the sight of punishments, merited or not, is always cruel. The innocent are saddened to see justice done. Oh yes, Paris is tranquil at that hour, like a battlefield after a victory, tranquil like night, and the grave. A horrible lassitude oppresses us.

The Seventy-Three Revolutionary Days of the Paris
Commune

Will this shadow and that apathy depart? Paris, bored, crushed, turns sadly from the past and dares not lift up its eyes towards the future.

End

Translator's Note

Catulle Mendès *The Seventy-Three Days of the Commune* [i.e., seventy-three (from the 18th of March to 29th May 1871, translated from *Les 73 Journées de la Commune (du 18 mars au 29 mai 1871)* (Paris: E. Lachaud) 1871, 3rd edition, 1875. Reprinted from University of California Libraries collections.

Catulle Mendès' 1871 journal of the Paris Commune is unusual among the many memoirs of the last days of that insurgent government and its fiery end, in that he was one of the few who wrote about it while actually remaining in Paris. Many accounts and denunciations exist from French Second Empire writers, but they tend to have been written after the fact, or in rural France or Switzerland while the city burned, then cooled.

Mendès' account was written from notes taken while he continued to reside in Paris, through the rise and death of the Commune in the "Bloody Week" suppression in May 1871. He was a witness and sometime participant in the elections, street rallies, destruction of the Vendôme column, and even unwillingly helped to construct a street barricade before the returning government troops. He saw the French government troops return, heard gun battles, and counted corpses in the streets the morning after the city burned.

A well-known literary figure, Parnassian poet, critic and theater journalist, Catulle Mendès (1841-1909) was known for in 1870 for his ability to write competent verse in the style of many popular poets, and his wide acquaintance in the cultural world, not for any interest in French political life. His marriage to Romantic poet Théophile Gautier's daughter Judith had a role in his receiving a small stipend from Napoleon III's government, a common circumstance in Paris literary life, but he did no political journalism. A personal friend and an early populariser of Richard Wagner's work, Mendès had also studied at the University of Heidelberg, and was familiar with German Romanticism, as well as the Latin classics most educated middle class men knew. His reference for the conflicts of the Franco-Prussian War, and subsequent French civil war known as the Commune was grounded in longtime residence in Paris, connections in the literary and publishing establishments, and an atypical personal experience with cultural worlds outside Paris. Many of his impressions of the events in Paris during the Commune would be similar to those of literary and political writers across the spectrum of shocked middle class Europe,

but unlike most, he wrote from a wider frame of reference, and as a relatively unbiased eyewitness.

The son of a Portuguese Jewish banker, Mendès had written for numerous journals, and was a central figure in the Parnassian poetry movement, and well-known theater journalist before the war. He returned from Wagner's home before hostilities began in order to witness events, and like many artists, served in the National Guard in Paris, until the Bonapartist government accepted defeat from the Prussian army, and dissolved. Having endured the privations of a winter siege, and the loss of employment with the hiatus of cultural life and suspension of many newspapers, Mendès looked forward to the recovery of normal Parisian life, entertainment and employment.

The French Provisional Government, elected largely by the provinces, and led by veteran politician Adolphe Thiers accepted a humiliating peace with the German government, accepting reparations costs, Prussian occupation, and the loss of the provinces of Alsace-Lorraine. Those Parisians who had stayed through the siege, especially the working classes, repudiated the government's capitulation, refused to hand over their cannon, and by extension the city, and demanded fresh elections. Thiers permitted elections, and withdrew the government and what remained of the regular army to the suburb of Versailles, site of the ancient Bourbon royal government. Though a large part of his governing coalition was royalist, Thiers declared a Third Republic as the new government of France.

During the "Great Revolution" of 1789's overthrow of Bourbon monarchy, Paris had declared and dominated France's First Republic, and again, after the overthrow of the July Monarchy in 1848, Paris was central in mounting a Second Republic. This in its turn was ended by a coup d'état, December 2, 1851 from its own elected Prince-President Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, nephew of "the great Napoleon," whose Second Empire would end in defeat in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. In 1871, Paris was poised to take center stage again in the consummation of a Third Republic on revolutionary terms. A number of Frenchmen, lower and middle class, frustrated by a generation's experience of Napoleonic police, press and electoral repression, as well as strict control of urban labor expected to define a prospective Third Republic and new Constitution in radical republican terms. This was not the Republic that Thiers planned, and his retreat to Versailles reflected his own plans, as well as a willingness upon the part of the national French electorate to end Parisian

dominance in national politics. Paris elected a new municipal government which declared itself the Commune (again in homage to 1789's unfinished revolution). Representing factions concerned with re-enacting, or abolishing polities that emerged during that first Revolution, both governments claimed to represent France, censored the press, mutual trade and communication, and disputed over the fate and form of France's future.

Both Mendès and family friend Victor Hugo expected that the nascent Commune would not succeed, but hoped that the National Government would cooperate with the project, and a peaceful conclusion. After the street execution of Generals Thomas and Clement, and the failure to recover Parisian cannon, the National Government refused talks, and demonized the Commune regime. Prussian premier, Prince Otto von Bismarck repatriated captive French armies for Thiers' use in seizing Paris. Heroic Paris of the first, Prussian siege, were now portrayed to France, and the world, as primeval destroyer, of family, government, and religion. In Mendès' opinion, the Commune government's actions against religion and property, taking clergy and political opponents hostage, and insistence upon behaving as though it was a symbolic rebirth of the Commune of 1793 proved Thiers' point, though he did not support Thiers general positions. Closing churches, convents and parochial schools, constructing a guillotine only to burn it symbolically ending capital punishment, and blowing up the Vendôme column honoring the first Napoleon, these Commune actions all seemed counterproductive, and theater, bad theater, to Mendès. He saw a city deprived of life, and a working population desperate for food, and an end to the new {French government] bombardment.

Mendès called himself a republican, at least in the electoral sense. He was alive to the Commune's claims for social justice, but annoyed by its rhetoric, ritualism, and inability to bring a peaceful future. Like other veterans of (two) sieges, he was also an undernourished civilian dealing with sustained bombardment on an unprecedented level, and wrote that he just wished the ordeal to end.

In May the Versailles government broke through the Federal (Communard) line of forts, and the French Army retook the city, street by street. Commune supporters mobilized, built barricades, and prepared to defend their positions. Mendès repeats a later Versailles claim that Commune women and children threw petroleum bombs and fired municipal and residential property. The bombardment also contributed to a conflagration that burned the major government buildings of

the Napoleonic government, including the Tuileries Palace and Hôtel de Ville, and two kilometers of buildings along the Seine River. Mendès particularly feared the loss of the Louvre museum, though it was never ignited. Commune officials and sympathizers also shot 500 hostages, including the Archbishop of Paris, M. Darboy.

General orders to the army, in "Sémaine Sanglante,"(Bloody Week) led to summary executions in the streets, including the death of Mendès' concierge (a lieutenant in the Federal Guard), and his wife. The city of Paris paid for the disposal of 17,000 bodies, but the number of deaths can only be estimated. The immediate repression of the Commune triggered repressive laws, military courts, a suspension of civil rights, mass imprisonments and deportations, censorship and suspect lists that lasted until the final amnesty for Communards ten years later.

The government, dominated by conservative republicans and royalists initially, attributed the Commune to a debased nature in the working classes, and promoted this message in punitive laws and a media campaign. Mendès never wrote about the Commune, after releasing his journal in 1871. His friend, English illustrator James Leighton, who was also present during the siege, acknowledges use of some of Mendès' translated journal essays in his collection *Paris under the Commune: or The Seventy Three Days of the Second Siege; with numerous illustrations, sketches,taken on the spot, and portraits (from the original photographs)*, first printed by Bradbury in London,1871. Numerous Leighton editions, with embellishments and anti "red" presentation followed, with several versions posted online. However Mendès text, released in 1873, has not been previously translated into English in full, and from his published French text.

A number of narratives of his experiences, such as the description of the last Commune party in the Tuileries are often quoted, but seldom attributed to Mendès in contemporary accounts as well as later secondary works. His remarks are often embedded with stock descriptions and narratives of the burning of Paris, or the Commune's politics or violence without differentiation between the author's backgrounds and immediate connection to the events of 1871. Few of the many who wrote about the end of the Commune were present, though most write as though that were not the case. Generic outrage seems the universal response from writers of the Second Empire milieu of French journalism, fiction and poetry, reflecting their middle class perspectives. They seem to have understood the Commune as a violation of art, letters, and architecture, committed by savages as a

personal affront. Official policies of the Third Republic, and press censorship for the next ten years encouraged production and circulation of these opinions. The idea of civilized France versus the revolutionary working classes, by definition not French if criticizing French institutions, was ancillary to the increasing campaign to inflate the fear of Karl Marx's writings, and to continue control electoral mass democratic politics in favor of established elites in the Third Republic.

By education and profession, Mendès was a member of the established cultural elite, though by the turn of the century rising French anti-Semitism would begin to take greater note of his Jewish roots. Mendès, after publishing the journal, returned to journalism, poetry and theatrical writing. Though he enjoyed success founding a number of newspapers and reviews, produced a series of lurid popular sapphic novels during the ascendancy of the Symbolist/Decadent movements, and published more poetry, as well as a *Medée* for his friend actress Sarah Bernhardt, he is largely a forgotten, albeit prolific author, known chiefly from literary memoirs in the 1890's. Mendès continued writing until 1909, dying in a freak railway accident while en route home to correct an article for the next day's press. His death rated notices in the London and New York papers, as well as the Paris press, though again, his works were largely unknown in English. The name "Catulle Mendès" on a computer search is likely to first cite the Renoir painting "The Daughters of Catulle Mendès" as the first cultural reference, aside from Wikipedia, which curiously is more thorough in the Spanish entry than the English. Mendès, whose family originally emigrated from Barcelona, is more likely to be remembered in Spanish literature than in French, or English letters.

His family included five daughters, by his long time mistress, the composer Augusta Holmes. When officially divorced from Judith Gautier after the obligatory twenty year wait, he married writer Jane Catulle-Mendès. No full life of Mendès has been written, though glimpses appear in studies concerning, and the personal letters of, Judith Gautier, Théophile Gautier, Richard Wagner, Victor Hugo, and Colette. His career spanned the literary schools of Romanticism, Parnassian and Symbolist poetry, as well as theater libretto, playwriting and criticism and daily cultural journalism. He was a skilled writer, capable of imitating the style of various poets, but never developed an identifiable individual authorial voice, according to his contemporaries. Most general references to Mendès' many books do not even list *Les 73 journées de la Commune*, though paradoxically, it may have been his most original work.

I have rendered his text in creative translation, attempting to capture the stream of consciousness of a theater critic turned civil war correspondent. Literary and cultural references have explanatory notes, though I have not identified the many political figures cited, who are amply represented in the political histories of the Franco-Prussian war and Commune. His comparisons, invective and apostrophizing in the many reactive journal entries tend to come from plays, usually by Victor Hugo, and some classical Latin tags, familiar from lycée high school texts of the time. Of the many post-Commune reactive texts published by French writers, his is the most likely, after Victor Hugo's, to attempt to view both sides of the conflict. As he held no political office, and did no political writing, Mendès' eyewitness account also can claim greater objectivity.

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Further Reading:

The most thorough treatment of Mendès is Vance Thompson "The Last of the Parnassians" in his *French Portraits: Being an Appreciation of the Writers of Young France* (Boston: Richard G Badger & Co, 1900), 75-84. A retrospective of his work was organized in 2009, see <www.fabula.org/actualites/catulle-mends-et-la-republique-des-lettres.21292.ph>

For the French cultural climate of the Commune, see Colette E Wilson *Paris and the Commune: The Politics of Forgetting* (Manchester: Manchester University Press) 2007 and Paul Lidsky *Les écrivains contre la Commune* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte) 2010.

For response to physical destruction, see Anne Green *Changing France: Literature and Material Culture in the Second Empire* (London: Anthem Press) 2010.

An excellent understanding of the war in nineteenth century context is Stig Forster and Jörg Nadler's *On the Road to Total War: The American Civil War and the German Wars of Unification, 1861-1871* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1997, as well as Alastair Horne *The Fall of Paris: the Siege and the Commune*

1870-1871 (New York: Penguin Books) 1981, and John Merriman *Massacre: The Life and Death of the Paris Commune* (New York: Basic Books) , 2014.

Important sources for politics and memory are Peter Starr *Commemorating Trauma: The Paris Commune and Its Cultural Aftermath* (New York: Fordham University Press) 2006, and Jean T. Joughin *The Paris Commune in French Politics, 1871-1880: The History of the Amnesty of 1880* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press) 2 vols, 1955.