

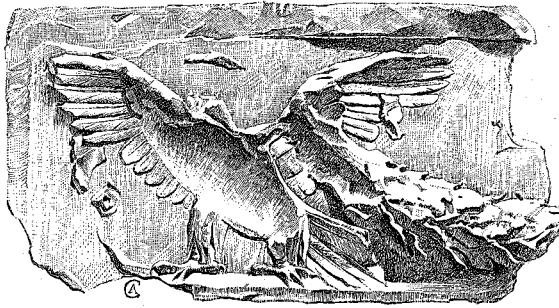
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AN EMBASSY TO PROVENCE.

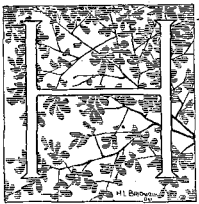
BY THOMAS A. JANVIER, SÒCI DÒU FELIBRIGE,

Author of "Stories of Old New Spain," "The Uncle of an Angel," "Color Studies," etc.,

WITH PICTURES BY A. CASTAIGNE.

PART FIRST.

I.



HAD we not gone roundabout through devious ways in Languedoc,—being there—to beguiled by the flesh-pots of Collias, and the charms of the ducal city of Uzès, and a proper desire to look upon the Pont du Gard, and a longing for the shade of an illusive forest,—we might have made the journey from Nîmes to Avignon not in a week, but in a single day. Had we made the journey by rail, taking the noon express, we could have covered the distance in three minutes less than a single hour.

The railroad, of course, was out of the ques-

tion. Geoffroi Rudel, even in the fever of his longing to take ship for Tripoli, and there breathe out his life and love together at his lady's feet, never would have consented to travel from Bordeaux to Certe by the *rapide*. To me, a troubadour's representative, the accredited Ambassador of an American poet to his friends and fellows of Provence, the *rapide* equally was impossible. Strictly, the nice proprieties of the case required that I should go upon my embassy on horseback or on foot. Consideration for the Ambassadors, however, forbade walking; and the only horses for hire in Nîmes were round little ponies of the Camargue, not nearly up to my weight—smaller, even, than El Chico Alazan: whose size, in relation to my size, was wont to excite derisive comment among my friends in Mexico. The

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outcome of it all was that—compromising between the twelfth and the nineteenth centuries—we decided to drive.

By a friend in whom we had every confidence, we were commended to an honest livery-man, one Noé Mourgue. It was ten in the morning when we went to the stables. Outside the door a lithe young fellow—a Catalan, with crisp black hair, a jaunty black mustache, and daredevil black eyes—was rubbing down a horse. To him we applied ourselves.

"M'sieu' Noé is absent upon an affair," the Catalan replied. "He is a witness at the Palais de Justice. It is most provoking. But he surely will return at noon. That is of necessity—it is his breakfast-hour. Even a court of justice is not so barbarous as to keep a man from his breakfast. Is it not so?"

We looked at carriages in the *remise*,—it all was delightfully like Yorick, and the "desobligeant," and Monsieur Dessein,—but found nothing to serve our turn. The Catalan cheered us with the assurance that precisely what we wanted would come in that very night. At the moment, a commercial gent had it upon the road. It was a carriage of one seat, with a hood which could be raised or lowered, and in the rear was a locker wherein m'sieu'-madame could carry their samples with great convenience. It was in constant request among commercial folk, this carriage—not because of its elegance, but because of its comfort: it ran so smoothly that driving in it was like a dream!

A little after noon we returned to the stables. The Catalan had vanished, and the only live thing visible was a very old dog asleep on a truss of straw in the sun. The dog slowly roused himself, and gave an aged bark or two without rising from his place; whereupon a woman came down the spiral stair from the dwelling-place above. She was in a fine state of indignation, and replied to our question as to the whereabouts of the proprietor hotly. "The breakfast of M'sieu' Noé is waiting for him," she said. "It has been waiting for more than a quarter of an hour. If he delays another instant the whole of it will perish! What are these judges thinking of that they keep an honest man from his breakfast? It is an outrage! It is a crime!"

Even as she thus wrathfully delivered herself, Noé returned; but with so harried and hungry a look that 't was plain this was no time to make a bargain with him. We assured him that our matter did not press; bade him eat his breakfast in peace, and to take his time over it; and to come to us, when it was ended, at our hotel—the Cheval Blanc.

When he presented himself, a couple of hours

later, he was in the most amiable of moods, and our bargain was struck briskly. Provided, he said, that we took the horse and carriage for not less than a week—here I interpolated that we should want it for a considerably longer period—we should have it for six francs a day; and, also, monsieur was to pay for the food of the horse. Nothing could be more reasonable than these terms. We accepted them without more words.

"And what sort of a horse does monsieur require?"

Monsieur replied that he required simply a good average horse; neither a sheep, nor yet a wild bull.

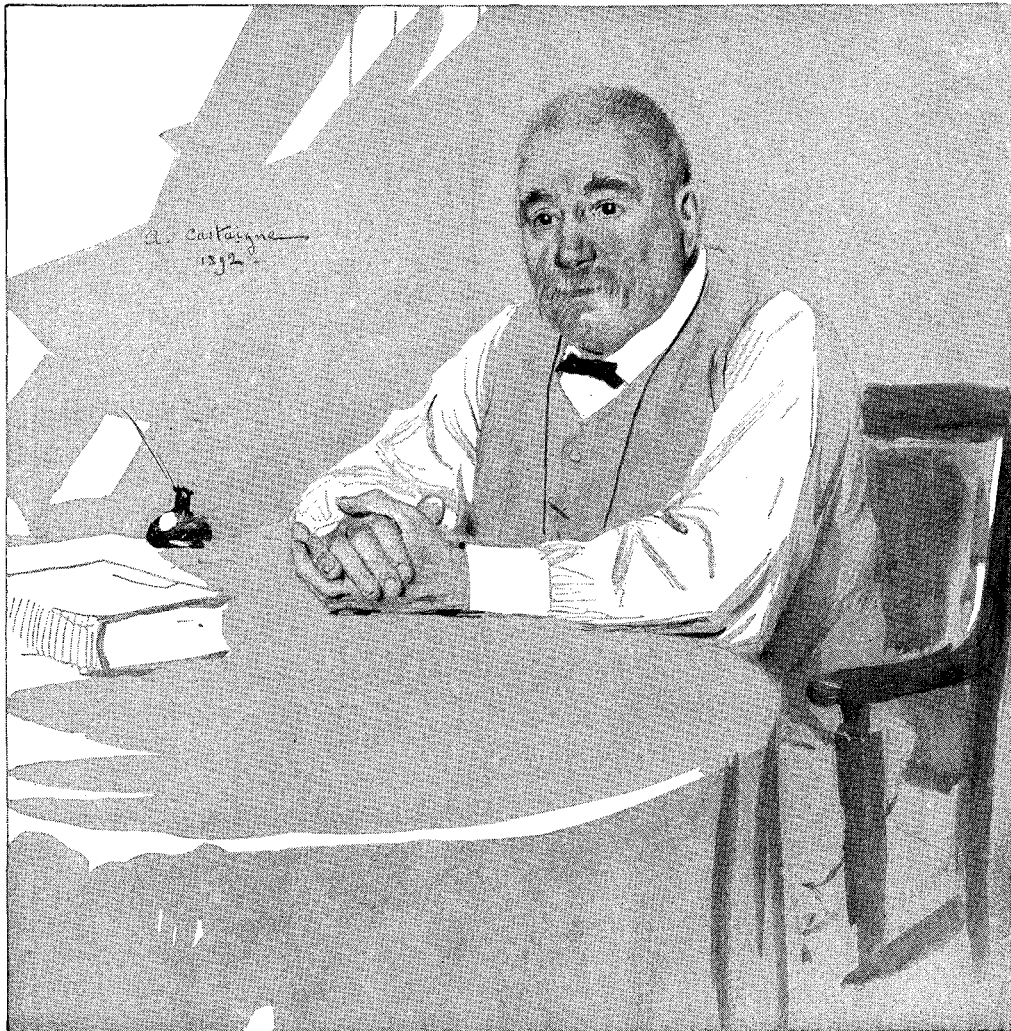
"Ah, the Ponette is precisely the animal suited to monsieur's needs. She is a brave beast! Perhaps monsieur will not think her handsome, but he will acknowledge her worth—for she is wonderful to go! He must not hurry her. She is of a resolute disposition, and prefers to do her work in her own way. But if monsieur will give her her head, she will accomplish marvels—forty, even fifty, kilometers in a single day." And as to the carriage, Monsieur Noé declared briefly that it was fit for the Pope.

The excellent Noé, be it remembered, came to us fresh from the Palais de Justice, and the strain of delivering himself under oath. We caught his veracity, as it were, on the rebound. There was truth in his statement, but the percentage of this element was not high. The Ponette, stocky, stolid, did have a considerable amount of dull endurance; but she was very much lazier than she was long. The carriage did run easily, for its springs were relaxed with age; but it was quite the shabbiest carriage that I ever saw. Indeed, when this odd outfit came to the door of the Cheval Blanc the next morning, I had grave doubts as to the fitness of associating the Embassy with a conveyance so utterly lacking in dignity.

Fortunately, one of the troubadours of Nîmes happened along just then, and put heart into me. He had come to see us off upon our journey, and had brought to each of us, for a farewell offering, a poem in Provençal. They were exquisite, these little lays; and especially did the soul of thirteenth century song irradiate the one entitled "*Uno responso*"—which was addressed in what I am confident was purely imaginative reply to a strictly non-existent "Nourado," on the absolutely baseless assumption that she had asked him, "What is Love?" I state the case with this handsome series of qualifying negations because—this troubadour being a stout gentleman, rising sixty, most happily married to a charming wife—the inference that his verses indicated a disposition to emulate the divided allegiance of Bernard de Ventadour is not tenable. But that Bernard would

have been proud to own this delicately phrased and gracefully turned poem will surprise no one learned in the modern poetry of Provence and Languedoc when I add that its writer was Monsieur Louis Bard.

nicety. "Take care never to wear a ripped garment," wrote the Sieur de Sescas; "better is it to wear one torn. The first shows a slovenly nature; the second, only poverty." Applying this rule to the carriage, Monsieur Bard pointed out

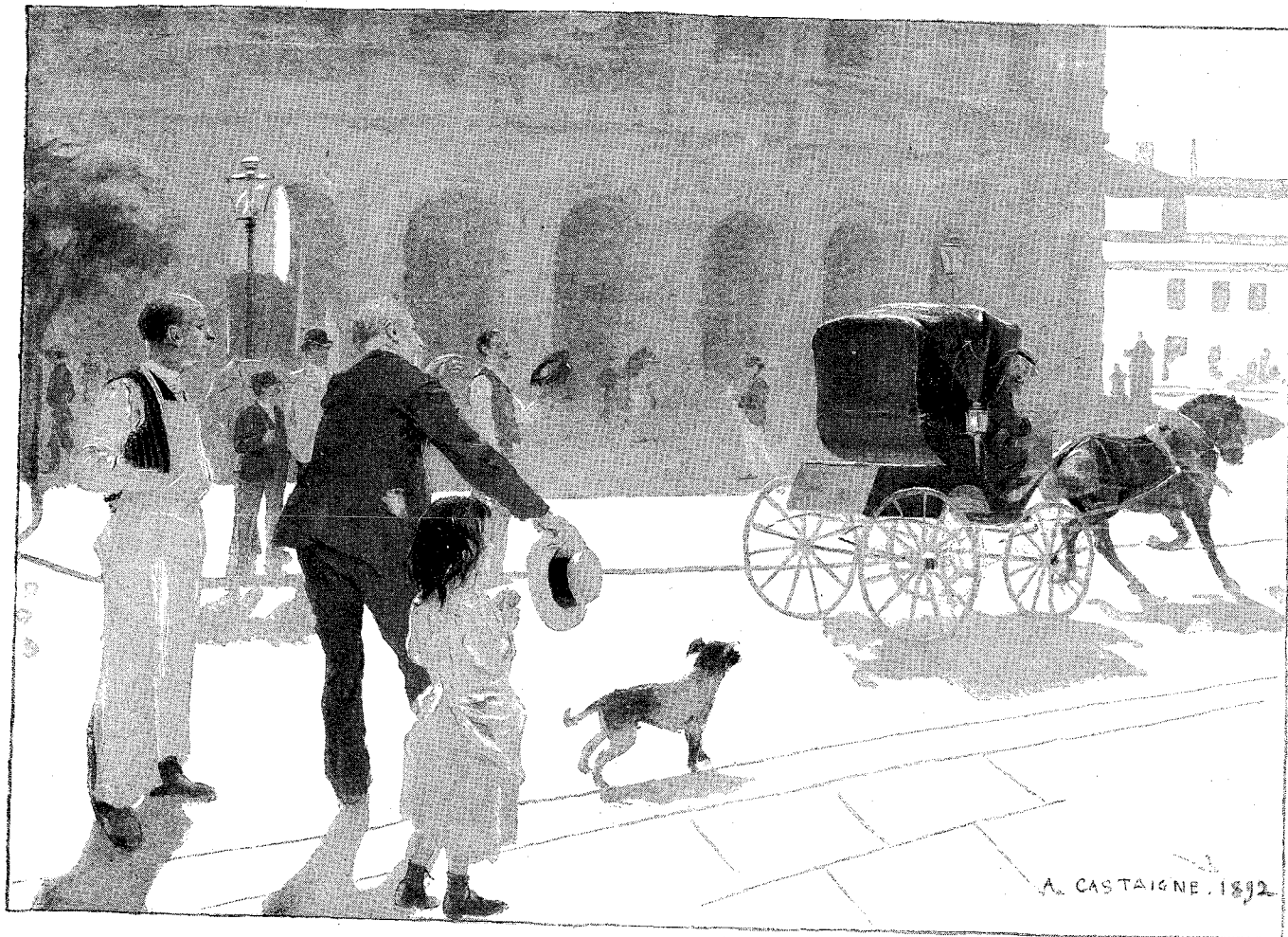


LOUIS BARD.

When we had accepted gratefully his offering of lays, I opened to him my doubts in regard to the fitness of our equipage; which doubts he resolved promptly by quoting from the rules laid down for the guidance of troubadours (and, therefore, for the ambassadors of troubadours) by Amaniéu de Sescas, a recognized past-master in the arts of love and war. A proper troubadour, according to this Gascon authority of the thirteenth century, must have "a horse of seven years or more, brisk, vigorous, docile, lacking nothing for the march." Monsieur Bard declared that the Ponette fulfilled these several conditions, excepting only that of briskness, to a

that while the slits in the leather were many, the rips were insignificantly few. And in triumphant conclusion he quoted: "There is no great merit in being well dressed when one is rich; but nothing pleases more, or has more the air of good breeding, than to be serviceably dressed when one has not the wherewithal to provide fine attire."

As our friend knew, this summing up of the matter fitted our case to a hair. More than satisfied with his reasoning, I ordered the valise to be stowed in the locker (in lieu of the samples which the Catalan had expected us to carry there); we mounted into our chariot; our poet



THE DEPARTURE FROM THE CHEVAL BLANC, NIMES.

bade us God-speed; the Ponette moved forward sluggishly—and the Embassy was under way!

II.

OUR first intention had been to drive direct to Avignon; and we did, in fact, go out from Nîmes by the Avignon road. But there was not the least need for hurry. The troubadours of Provence did not even dream that an American embassy was on its way to them. There was no especial reason why we should be anywhere at any particular time. And out of these agreeable conditions came quickly our decision to drift for a while along the pleasant ways of Languedoc, taking such happiness as for our virtues should be given us, before we headed the lazy little Ponette eastward, and crossed the Rhône.

The tiny ducal city of Uzès seemed to be a good objective point; and it was the more alluring because on the way thither—at the village of Collias, on the Gardon—was an inn kept by one Bargeton, at which, as we knew by experience, an excellent breakfast could be obtained. It was the breakfast that settled matters. At St. Gervasy we turned northward from the highway into a cross-country road, a *chemin vicinal*; passed through the rocky *garrigue* region, and down to the river through a cañon that seemed to have gone adrift from the Sierra Madre; crossed the Gardon by a suspension-bridge, and so came into Collias an hour after noon.

On a very small amount of structural capital, the inn at Collias supports no less than three names. Along the end of it is painted in large letters "Café du Midi"; along the front, in larger letters, "Hôtel Bargeton"; over the main entrance is the enticing legend "Restaurant Parisien." Our previous visit had been upon a Sunday. Then, the establishment was crowded. Now it was deserted. As we drove through the arched gateway into the courtyard the only living creatures in sight were a flock of chickens, and two white cats with black tails. All the doors and windows were tight shut—for breakfast long since was over, and this was the time of day divinely set apart for sleep.

The noise of our wheels aroused Monsieur Bargeton. Presently a door opened, and he slowly thrust forth his head, and stared at us drowsily and doubtfully. Then, slowly, he withdrew his head and closed the door. From the fact that some minutes elapsed before he came forth in his shirt-sleeves, we inferred that at his first semi-appearance his attire had been even less complete.

"Yes, yes," he said, speaking in an injured tone, "breakfast can be had, of course. But it will not be a good breakfast, and it will not be

ready soon. The time for breakfast is long past. Everything must be prepared."

Fortunately, the end was better than this bad beginning promised. As he unharnessed the Ponette and stabled her, he shook off a little of his slumbrous heaviness, and his disposition toward us grew less severe. The old woman whom he summoned to his counsels, from some hidden depth of the house, put still more heart into him. After a conference with her, while we sat on a stone bench beneath a tree in the courtyard, he came to us with a statement full of encouragement. It was all right about the breakfast, he declared. Monsieur and madame should be well served with an omelet and sausages and fried potatoes; and then he came again to say that monsieur and madame should have a good cutlet and a salad; and yet later, with triumph, he announced that there was a melon for the dessert.

It was our fancy to have our breakfast served on the great stone table in the courtyard. Monsieur Bargeton did not approve of this arrangement,—the table, he said, was only for teamsters and such common folk,—but he yielded the point gracefully. Over one end of the table he spread a clean white cloth; set forth a service of clean, coarse chinaware; brought us very fair wine in a wine-cooler improvised from a watering-pot, and then the omelet was served, and our feast began.

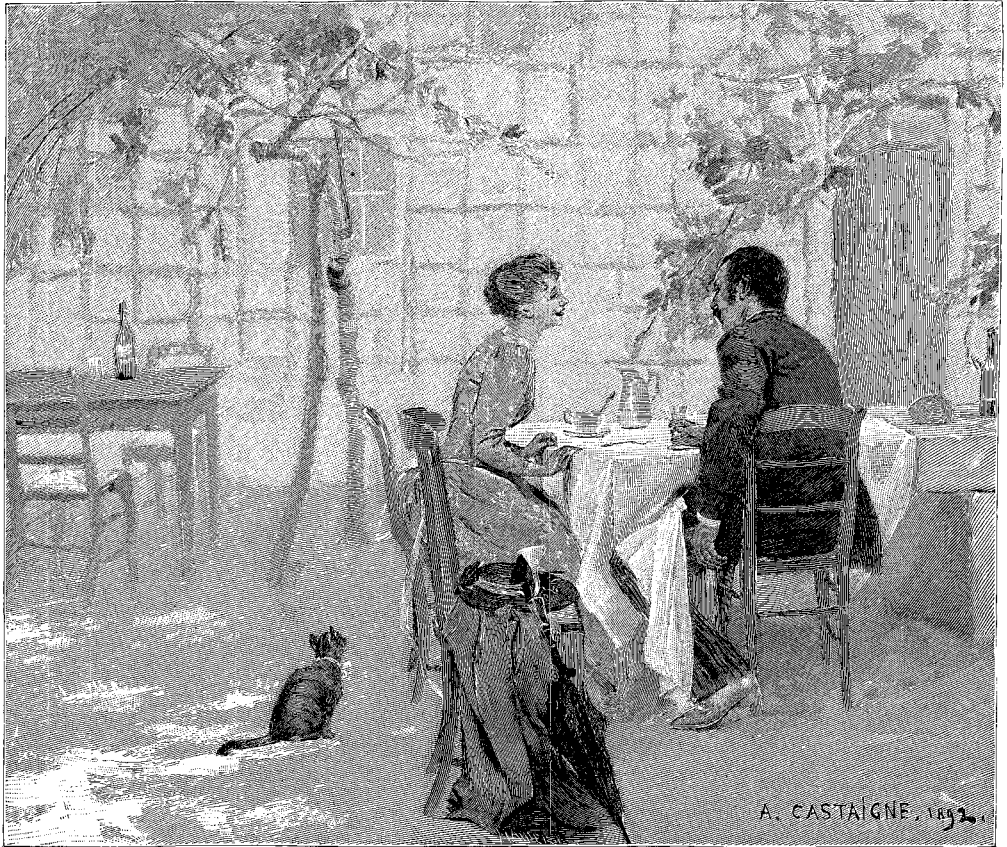
No teamsters came to interfere with us. The only suggestion of one was a smart black wagon, on which, in gilded letters, was the legend: "Entrepôt de Bières, Uzès." While we were breakfasting, the beer-man came out from the inn, hitched up his horse, and drove away. He seemed to be surprised to find us eating there beside his wagon—but he said never a word to us, and never a word did we say to him. The black-tailed white cats breakfasted with us, the boldest of them jumping up on the far end of the table, beyond the limits of the cloth, and eating a bit of cutlet with a truly dainty and catlike grace; and while our meal went forward a delightful old woman in a white cap and a blue gown made a pretext of picking up sticks near by that she might gaze at us with a stealthy wonder. It all seemed like a bit out of a picture; and when Monsieur Bargeton, thoroughly awake and abounding in friendliness, came flourishing out to us with the coffee, we assured him that never had a breakfast been more to our minds.

Not until four o'clock—after an honest reckoning of eight francs and fifty centimes for our own and the Ponette's entertainment—did we get away; and evening was close upon us as we drove slowly up the hill whereon is the very high-bred and lovable little city of Uzès.

III.

WE had hoped that three days of absolute rest in Uzès would have put a trifle of spirit into the Ponette; but this hope was not realized. She came forth from her pleasant pastime

ran west again—afforded a circuitous line of approach to the Pont du Gard that was much more to our liking. Naturally, after having carefully looked out this route upon the map, and after having decided considerably to follow it, we abandoned it for something that we



BREAKFAST AT COLLIAS.

ENGRAVED BY M. HAIDER.

of eating her head off in Monsieur Bèchard's stables in precisely the same dull, phlegmatic condition that she went in. It was impossible to force her to a faster gait than a slow jog-trot. Left to herself—in accordance with her owner's fond suggestion—she instantly fell into a lumbering walk. But her loitering disposition was so well in accord with our own that we found little fault in her monumental slowness. There could be no greater happiness, we thought, than thus to go idling along through that lovely country in that bright weather while our hearts were as light within us as the summer days were long.

The highway leading eastward from Uzès served our purposes far too directly for us to follow it. A minor road—going around by the northeast to another road, which ran south to a third road, which, doubling on our course,

believed to be better before we had gone half a dozen miles.

Near the hamlet of Flaux we began the ascent of low mountains: a very desolate region of slate-gray rock, with here and there patches of scrub-oak (*chêne-vert*) growing in a meager soil. Beyond Flaux, off to the right among the oak-bushes, went a most tempting road. According to the map it was a *chemin d'exploitation*. Precisely what meaning attached to this term I did not know (I found out a little later); but the road possessed the obvious merit of leading directly across the mountain to the village of Vers, and thence the highway went onward to the Pont du Gard. Setting aside as irrelevant the fact that we had come out of our way for the express purpose of prolonging our journey, we decided to commit ourselves to this doubt-

ful pathway for the good reason that it was a short cut.

We had gone but a little way along it when we met a carter (a treacherous person, whose apparent kindness cloaked a malevolent soul) whose deliberate statement that the road was passable set us entirely at our ease. He himself had but just come from Vers, he said; and he gave us careful directions that we might not miss the way: We were to ascend the mountain, and to continue across the little plain that there was on top of it, until we came to a tall stone post at a fork in the road. This was a sign-post, but in the course of years the inscription upon it had weathered away. At this post we were to take the turn to the right—and then we would be in Vers in a twinkling.

After we left this betraying-beacon of a carter, the road rapidly grew rougher, and the growth of scrub-oak on each side of it became so thick as to be almost impenetrable. The four or five bare little stone houses of Flaux were the last which we saw in a stretch of more than six miles. It was a most dismal solitude, having about it that air of brooding and portentous melancholy which I have found always in rugged regions desert even of little animals and birds.

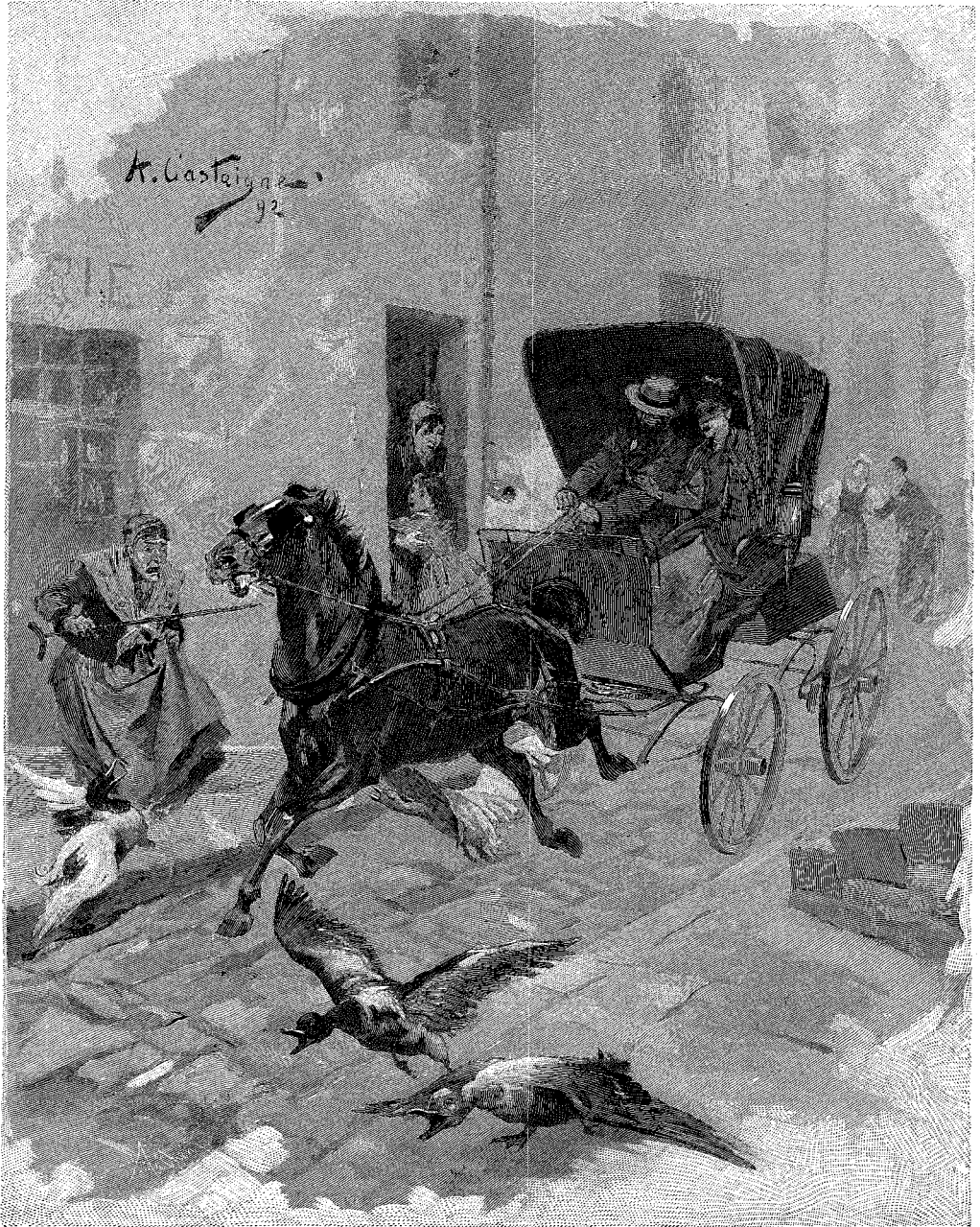
We came slowly to the plain upon the mountain-top, and to the sign-post whereon there was no sign; and there we took, as the perfidious carter had directed, the turning to the right. The road ran smoothly enough across the plain, but the moment that it tipped downhill it became very bad indeed. Before we had descended a dozen rods it was no more than the dry bed of a mountain stream, cumbered with boulders and broken by rocky ledges of a foot high, down which the carriage went with a series of appalling bumps. To turn about was impossible. On each side of the stream—I prefer to speak of it as a stream—the scrub-oak grew in a thick tangle into which the Ponette could not have thrust so much as her snubby nose. So narrow was the watercourse that the oak-bushes on each side brushed against our wheels. We were in for it, and whether we wanted to or not our only course was to keep on bumping down the hill. In my haste, I then and there cursed that carter bitterly; and I may add that in my subsequent leisure my curse has not been recalled. That he counted upon finding our wreck and establishing a claim for salvage I am confident. He may even have been following us stealthily, waiting for the catastrophe to occur. It is a great satisfaction to me that his pernicious project was foiled. By a series of miracles we pulled through entire; on the lower reaches of the mountain the stream became a road again; and as we swung clear from

the bushes,—getting at last safe sea-room off that desperate lee-shore,—we saw the houses of Vers before us, not a mile away.

IV.

VERS is a very small town, certainly not more than a hundred yards across, but in the course of our attempt to traverse its tangle of streets—all so narrow that our carriage took up almost the entire space between the houses, and all leading down-hill—we succeeded in getting hopelessly lost. We descended upon the town at about five in the afternoon; at which peaceful hour the women-folk were seated before their house doors, in the shade of the high houses, making a show of knitting while they kept up a steady buzz of talk. Many of them had helpless babes upon their laps, and innocent little children were playing about their knees.

Our passage through the town even at a walk would have occasioned a considerable disturbance of its inhabitants. Actually, we spread consternation among them by dashing through the narrow streets almost at a run. This extraordinary burst of speed on the part of the Ponette—the only sign of spirit that she manifested during our whole journey—was due to extraneous causes. Just as we entered the town a swarm of vicious flies settled upon her sensitive under-parts, biting her so savagely that they drove her quite wild with pain. For a moment she stopped, while she made ineffectual kicks at her own stomach; then she darted forward, and all my strength was required to keep her off a run. The women and children shrieked and fled from our path; bolting into their houses and, most fortunately for all of us, taking their chairs in with them and so leaving us a clear course. At the little *grande place* I took what looked like the right turn, but it really was a doubling upon our course—and in a minute more we were charging down the very same street again, scattering the crowds assembled to talk about the cyclone and to gaze in the direction in which it had gone. As these people had their backs turned toward us, it was only by a miracle that they escaped alive. This time I took another turn from the *grande place*—grazing a young woman carrying a baby as I rounded the corner; skilfully swinging the Ponette away from an open door that she seemed bent upon entering; and then forward among a fresh lot of women knitting and talking at their ease. The Ponette seemed to be quite crazed. Twice I succeeded in almost stopping her, while I tried to ask my way out of that little devil of a town; and each time, in the midst of the answer, she made vain kicks at her luckless stomach, and then dashed forward



IN VERS.

ENGRAVED BY P. AITKEN.

like a simoom. Had I been driving a nightmare the situation could not have been worse.

A brave old man rescued us. While I held in the Ponette hard, he seized her bridle; and when he had calmed her by brushing away the tormenting flies, and I had explained that we were lost and had begged him to guide us to the highway, he smiled gently and in a moment had led us out from that entangling maze. The distance to the highway

proved to be less than two score yards—but then he knew what turns to take in that most marvelously crooked town!

In my gratitude I offered the old man money. He refused to accept it: "I cannot take monsieur's silver," he said politely. "Already I am more than paid. In all the seventy years of my life here in Vers, monsieur is the very first who has been lost in my little town. It is most interesting. It is enough!"

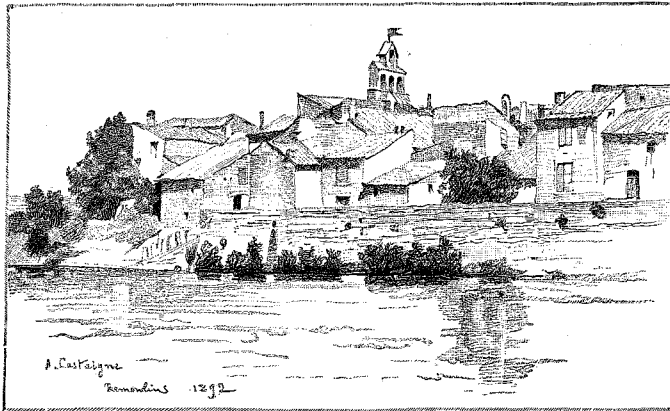
In this position he was firm. I thanked him again, warmly, and we drove away. When we had gone a short distance, I looked back. He was standing in the middle of the road gazing after us. His face was wreathed in smiles.

v.

IN going from Vers to the Pont du Gard, and thence to Remoulins, we were compelled to travel by the great highways; but in going from Remoulins to Avignon we fell once more into roundabout courses, taking a *route nationale* north to the village of Valliguières, that thence we might go east by a cross-

crest the sun was hanging low on the horizon above the summits of the Cévennes.

On the hilltop, with a sigh of thankfulness, the Ponette stopped; and for a while we did not urge her to go forward. Below us, in purple twilight, lay the Rhône valley, here widely extended by its junction with the valley of the Durance. On its farther side were the foothills of the Alps, with Mont Ventour standing boldly forward and rising high into the radiant upper regions of the air. Near at hand, down in the purple shadows, close beside the river, was a dark mass of houses and churches, sharply defined by surrounding ramparts, from the midst of which a huge



REMOULINS.

ENGRAVED BY J. NAYLOR.

country road which traversed a forest, according to the map, and therefore promised protection from the blazing rays of the August sun. On the map, this Forêt de Tavel made a fine showing. On the face of nature, the showing that it made was less impressive. In fact, when we reached it we found that we had come a full half-century too soon. For four or five miles we drove across rocky hills more or less covered with oak-bushes, which in time, no doubt, will become trees. But of trees actually grown, we saw in this distance precisely six. Unfortunately, they were scattered at intervals of half a mile or more apart. They would have been more impressive, would better have realized our crude American conception of a forest, had they been in a group.

It was because of our detour in search of the shade of trees which had only a cartographical existence that our coming to the hills bordering the Rhône westward was delayed until late in the afternoon; and the Ponette walked up the long ascent so slowly, and so frequently halted,—with a persuasive look over her shoulder that could not be refused,—that when at last we reached the

building towered to so great a height that all its upper portion was bathed in sunshine, while its upper windows, reflecting the nearly level sunbeams, blazed as with fire. And we knew that we were looking upon Avignon and the Palace of the Popes: and our hearts were filled with a great thankfulness—because in that moment was realized one of the deep longings of our lives.

The Ponette, with the carriage pushing behind her, went down the zigzag road, Les Angles, at an astonishing trot; but pulled up to her normal gentle pace on the level before we reached the bridge, and crossed that structure—over which a sarcastic sign forbade her to gallop—at an easy crawl. We did not try to hasten her pondering footsteps, being well content to approach slowly this city of our love: seeing below us the Rhône tossing like a little sea; on each side of us, in the central portion of the passage, the green darkness of the Isle Barthelasse; off to the left the surviving fragment of the bridge built seven hundred years ago by St. Bénézet of blessed memory; in front of us the high houses of the city rising above their encircling wall. Slowly we went onward, and in the

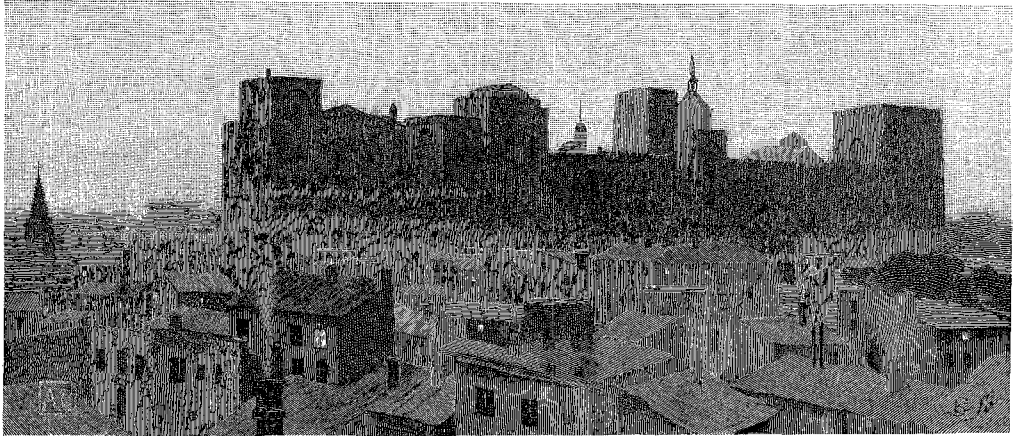
dusk of early evening we entered Avignon by the Porte de l'Oulle.

VI.

WE had intended going to a modest, low-priced hotel—"un peu à l'écart, mais recommandé," as the guide-book put it—in the central portion of the town. The civic guard

lead the Ponette to her quarters, manifested a sense of the indignity put upon the establishment by interrupting my orders as to oats with a curt, "But yes, m'sieu'; I know, I know," and going off with his nose ranged well in air.

It came upon us with a shock, this show of scorn. In the little towns where we had halted during the week that our journey had lasted



THE PALACE OF THE POPES, AVIGNON.

ENGRAVED BY C. SCHWARZBURGER.

who halted us at the gate—to request our assurance that our cargo in the after-hold was of a sort upon which the *octroi* had no claim—gave us with the good will of a true Provençal the most precise directions as to how this hotel was to be reached. Having thus directed us, he said frankly that we probably would get lost on the way thither, but added that anybody whom we met would be glad to set us on our course anew. This warning, and a single glance into the labyrinth before us, determined me against essaying the adventure. After our experience in Vers,—and Avignon was to Vers as a haystack to a wisp of hay,—I had no fancy again to try conclusions with a maze; and I was the more easily seduced from this dangerous endeavor by finding, not a dozen rods within the city gate, the friendly doorway of an inn.

It was the Hôtel de l'Europe, the most magnificent establishment in Avignon; the hotel to which, above all others, we had decided that we would not go. Without a moment's hesitation I drove the hopelessly vulgar Ponette and our shabby carriage through the open archway and across the courtyard to the main entrance. The *gérant* received us coldly; the waiters, in evening dress, regarded us with an open disdain. Even the stable-boy, called to

we everywhere had been well received. At Tavel, where we had breakfasted that very day,—'t was a village that I had hesitated about entering in such poor array because of the sign at its outer limits: "A Tavel la mendicité est interdite,"—our host had volunteered the handsome statement that the Ponette was a *bonne bête* with legs of iron; and he had spoken in tones of conviction which left no room for doubting that his admiration for her was sincere. But at Tavel, and through the whole of that happy week, we had been among the simple children of nature; in coming to the Hôtel de l'Europe, as we now sharply realized, we once more were in touch with that highly conventionalized phase of civilization known as fashionable society, and were subject to its artificial laws.

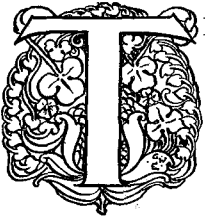
As we were led to our gilded and red-velveted apartment,—with a man in waiting to brush the Ambassador's rusty coat, and a maid to bring hot water for the Ambassadors,—I could not but feel a shuddering dread that my mission might prove a failure after all! What if the Provençal poets should resent—even as the *gérant* and the waiters so obviously resented—the lowly state in which the American Embassy had come?

T. A. Janvier.

BALCONY STORIES.

WITH PICTURES BY A. E. STERNER.

I. MIMI'S MARRIAGE.



THIS is how she told about it, sitting in her little room,—her bridal chamber,—not larger, really not larger than sufficed for the bed there, the armoire here, the bureau opposite, and the washstand behind the door, the corners all touching. But a nice set of furniture, quite *comme il faut*,—handsome, in fact,—as a bride of good family should have. And she was dressed very prettily, too, in her long white *negligée*, with plenty of lace and ruffles and blue ribbons,—such as only the Creole girls can make, and brides, alas! wear,—the pretty honeymoon costume that suggests, that suggests—well! to proceed. “The poor little cat!” as one could not help calling her, so *mi-gnonne*, so blonde, with the pretty black eyes, and the rosebud of a mouth,—whenever she closed it,—a perfect kiss.

“But you know, Louise,” she said, beginning quite seriously at the beginning, “papa would never have consented, never, never—poor papa! Indeed, I should never have asked him; it would only have been one humiliation more for him, poor papa! So it was well he was dead, if it was God’s will for it to be. Of course I had my dreams, like everybody. I was so blonde, so blonde, and so small; it seemed like a law I should marry a *brun*, a tall, handsome *brun*, with a mustache and a fine barytone voice. That was how I always arranged it, and—you will laugh—but a large, large house, and numbers of servants, and a good cook, but a superlatively good cuisine, and wine and all that, and long, trailing silk dresses, and theater every night, and voyages to Europe, and—well, everything God had to give, in fact. You know, I get that from papa, wanting everything God has to give. Poor papa! It seemed to me I was to meet him at any time, my handsome *brun*. I used to look for him positively on my way to school, and back home again, and whenever

I would think of him I would try and walk so prettily, and look so pretty! *Mon Dieu!* I was not ten years old yet! And afterward it was only for that that I went into society. What should girls go into society for otherwise but to meet their *brun* or their blond? Do you think it is amusing, to economize and economize, and sew and sew, just to go to a party to dance? No! I assure you, I went into society only for that; and I do not believe what girls say—they go into society only for that too.

“You know at school how we used to *tirer la bonne aventure*.¹ Well, every time he was not *brun*, *riche*, *avenant*, Jules, or Raoul, or Guy, I simply would not accept it, but would go on drawing until I obtained what I wanted. As I tell you, I thought it was my destiny. And when I would try with a flower to see if he loved me,—*Il m’aime, un peu, beaucoup, passionnément, pas du tout*,—if it were *pas du tout*, I would always throw the flower away, and begin tearing off the leaves from another one immediately. *Passionnément* was what I wanted, and I always got it in the end.

“But papa, poor papa, he never knew anything of that, of course. He would get furious when any one would come to see me, and sometimes, when he would take me in society, if I danced with a “nobody,”—as he called no matter whom I danced with,—he would come up and take me away with such an air—such an air! It would seem that papa thought himself better than everybody in the world. But it went worse and worse with papa, not only in the affairs of the world, but in health. Always thinner and thinner, always a cough; in fact, you know, I am a little feeble-chested myself, from papa. And Clementine! Clementine with her children—just think, Louise, eight! I thank God my mama had only me, if papa’s second wife had to have so many. And so naughty! I assure you, they were all devils; and no correction, no punishment, no education—but you know Clementine! I tell you, sometimes on account of those children I used to think myself in ’ell [making the Creole’s attempt and failure to pronounce the h], and Clementine had no pride

¹ *La bonne aventure* is or was generally a very much battered foolscap copy-book, which contained a list of all possible elements of future (school-girl) happiness. Each item answered a question, and had a number affixed to it. To draw one’s fortune consisted in asking

question after question, and guessing a number, a companion volunteering to read the answer to one. To avoid cheating, the books were revised from time to time, and the numbers changed.