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THE PARIS COMMUNE OF 1871
IN SELECTED TEXTS OF FRENCH PROSE FICTION

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ABSTRACT

The thesis consists essentially of a consideration of the Paris Commune of 1871 as represented in the following texts: l'Apprentie by Gustave Geffroy; l'Ami de l'Ordre by Jérôme and Jean Tharaud; Bas les Coeurs and l'Epaulette by Georges Darien; la Colonne and Philémon vieux de la vieille by Lucien Descaves; les Massacres de Paris by Jean Cassou. With two exceptions (Bas les Coeurs (1889) and les Massacres de Paris (1935)) these works appeared during the opening fifteen years of the twentieth century.

In addition to its obvious function of introducing the principal authors discussed, the Introduction provides background information to (and attempts to set the tone for) material examined in the main body of the thesis. Chapters One and Two, devoted to Gustave Geffroy and the Tharaud brothers respectively, consider the Commune primarily in terms of its effects upon, and consequences for, individuals and families at the time. Georges Darien's savage denunciation of the bourgeois order - an indictment in which the Paris Commune serves an essential purpose - is considered in Chapter Three. The fourth chapter (centred upon la Colonne by Lucien Descaves) entails discussion of the Commune's repudiation - through the toppling of the Vendôme Column - of warmongering and chauvinism. In Philémon vieux de la vieille, the Commune is seen essentially in terms of its continued significance for former Communards looking back, during the early 1900's, to the 'seventy-two days' and the years of exile. Jean Cassou's characterisation of leading participants in the Commune - notably Louis Rossel, Louise Michel and Jaroslaw Dombrowski - provides the principal focus for discussion in Chapter Six. Sources used by both Descaves and Cassou are considered in the relevant chapters.

To complement material in Chapters One to Six, appendices relating to three texts (Un Communard by Léon Deffoux; le Mur by Maurice Montégut; la Commune by Paul and Victor Margueritte) are included. Throughout the thesis, references are frequently made to, and comparisons drawn with, other writers who have portrayed the Commune: notably Emile Zola, Léon Cladel and Jules Vallès.

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INTRODUCTION

May 1871 was in its closing days. Formally proclaimed two months earlier on 28 March, the Paris Commune had now been crushed, in a context of blood and fire, by the Versailles 'Forces of Order'. Amidst the blackened ruins and heaped corpses of a city vanquished, the republican daily l'Opinion nationale (unlikely, in view of its suppression during the Commune, to observe any moderation of tone now),(1) lent its voice to the chorus of revilement levelled against the Paris insurgents at this the conclusion of what was to be known as the semaine sanglante:

Le règne des scélérats est fini. On ne saura jamais par quels raffinements de cruauté et de sauvagerie ils ont clos cette orgie du crime, de la barbarie. Deux mois de pillage, de vols, d'assassinats et d'incendie.(2)

Representative of so much of the material appearing during and in the wake of the insurrectionary period, such phrasing, in its extravagance, provides substantial indication as to why the Commune met with such widespread and virulent condemnation in possédant circles. To the 'respectable' classes of France and Europe, the encounter of Versaillais and Communard(3) during the week of 21-28 May seemed a battle between, on the one hand, the valiant defenders of Law, Order and Civilisation, on the other the diabolic forces of Criminality, Communism and Proletarian Barbarism. It was widely believed outside Paris that the insurrection of 18 March - marked by the shooting of the two generals Lecomte and Clément Thomas, in the rue des Rosiers, on the butte Montmartre - had ushered in a heinous, protracted Saturnalia during which almost every human law had been grossly and repeatedly violated.(4) In the correspondence or journal entries of the well-to-do, the Commune was described, typically, as '*cette horrible bagarre*',(5) '*(cette) farce horrible et grotesque*',(6) '*cette sanglante saturnale*':(7) the Communards themselves were '*énergumènes*', '*fauves*',(8) '*abominables révolutionnaires terroristes*',(9) '*incendiaires, (...) brigands (...) cannibales*',(10) '*sanglants imbéciles*'.(11). If some

inside the city acknowledged the exaggerated nature of accounts reaching the outside world, men and women elsewhere - influenced as they were by propaganda from Versailles - had no way of knowing that murder, mayhem and plunder had not in fact been rife in the traditional capital from the Commune's beginning to its horrific end. Even when some distortion of fact was recognised by those in a position to judge, the insurrection appeared blameworthy on such a variety of grounds that the precise degree of its supporters' guilt was, in the final analysis, immaterial. The crowning abomination, it was generally lamented, lay in the fact that this uprising had taken place in the presence of the victorious Prussian adversary. In a letter to his friend Madame Raffalovitch written on 22 March 1871, Claude Bernard expressed the view that would still be echoed in references to the Commune long after other reproaches had abated in vehemence:

Un peuple qui donne le spectacle de la guerre civile à ses vainqueurs me paraît tombé bien bas. Quelle décadence effroyable!
(12)

A week after outbreak of insurrection the writer and painter Eugène Fromentin was informing a correspondent that if he (Fromentin) were unmarried, he would leave France forever (*'Je me sens délié de tout ce qui m'attachait à mon pays, par le dégoût, la honte de lui appartenir et le mépris'*).⁽¹³⁾ Others expressed similar sentiments.⁽¹⁴⁾

The cascade of literature issuing from conservative presses in France and elsewhere after the Commune⁽¹⁵⁾ was in obvious keeping with the mood of a readership relieved unquestionably at the defeat of Satan's emissaries, but still gripped by shock and outrage at the events of recent months. The fires of the semaine sanglante (essentially the work of the Communards,⁽¹⁶⁾ and inviting parallel, to the minds of contemporaries, with Biblical apocalypse or the destruction of Nero's Rome) were perceived inevitably as an horrendous culmination to the excesses supposedly typifying the Commune's reign. To some, the Dantesque visions which imprinted themselves upon the consciousness of witnesses seemed so frightful as almost to defy evocation.

Edmond de Pressensé (at a loss, he claimed, to capture the nightmarish effect of the incendiarism) wrote graphically nonetheless of:

...ces nuits où l'on croyait voir au travers des flammes de l'incendie colossal une ronde de démons promenant la destruction dans notre malheureuse cité, acharnés surtout à ce qui en faisait la parure et l'honneur. (...) Il faudrait le pinceau de l'Apocalypse pour représenter de telles scènes, qui rappellent la chute des Ninive et des Babylone. La raison se trouble devant elles; elles sont dans l'histoire ce que furent dans la nature les convulsions de la terre avant une nouvelle époque géologique.(17)

The views of others, if expressed in at times less evocative phrasing, concurred however with the spirit of Pressensé's message. For the vicomte Edouard Ferdinand de Beaumont-Vassy, the incendiarism constituted '*...le plus affreux drame que l'histoire ait jamais enregistré...*'(18) Ludovic Hans seemed equally certain that the horror of these days had had its like nowhere else in place or time ('*...jamais telle horreur ne fut soulevée dans l'âme humaine; car jamais rien de plus terrible n'épouvanta les yeux*').(19) If damage to or destruction of public buildings,(20) and the barely averted loss of the Louvre's artistic treasures elicited widespread anguish and dismay, revulsion at such apparent crimes against Civilisation and Humanity was compounded in no small degree by the execution during the semaine sanglante of some sixty-seven hostages, twenty-four of them priests.(21) Pressensé, referring to the '*abominable massacre*', followed this with the somewhat tendentious affirmation that the history of France '*...n'a pas de page plus affreuse.*'(22) The murder of Georges Darboy, Archbishop of Paris, was seen by many believers as an inexpugnable affront not merely to Law and Order, but to the Almighty himself: Friedrich Engels received a sound rebuke from his mother for his avowed support of a movement capable of such godless atrocity.(23) Denunciation of the executions was forthcoming from a hardly unforeseen quarter outside France. Pius IX (who had regarded Darboy - an opponent of the doctrine of papal infallibility - with a less than total benevolence) referred affectingly nonetheless in an encyclical to the events of the Commune and to '*...l'attentat proprement impie et parricide accompli sur Notre*

Vénérable Frère l'Archevêque de Paris...(24) Receiving a French delegation in June 1871, the Pope made further reference to '*la Commune avec ses hommes échappés de l'enfer, qui ont promené le feu dans Paris...*'(25)

To the idea of innumerable conservatives - not least France's leader - any exercise of clemency during the semaine sanglante would have been not merely undesirable, but a positive outrage to the Civilised Order. '*Le sol de Paris est jonché de (...) cadavres...*', Adolphe Thiers telegraphed to departmental prefects on 25 May:

Ce spectacle affreux servira de leçon, il faut l'espérer, aux insurgés qui osaient se déclarer partisans de la Commune. La justice, du reste, satisfera bientôt la conscience humaine, indignée des actes monstrueux dont la France et le monde viennent d'être témoins.(26)

Now was the time, le Figaro asserted, to rid Paris of

...la gangrène morale qui le ronge depuis vingt ans... Les Parisiens doivent subir les lois de la guerre, si terribles qu'elles puissent être. Aujourd'hui, la clémence serait de la démençe.(27)

Leconte de Lisle, who in letters from the strife-torn city painted a hair-raising and fortunately exaggerated picture of ravaging animals looting, slaying, putting everything to the torch and driving whole families at bayonet point into the flames,(28) described himself on 29 May as having been delivered from a nightmare. At last the horrendous episode was concluded, he wrote to José-Maria de Hérédia:

J'espère que la répression sera telle que rien ne bougera plus et pour mon compte je désirerais qu'elle fût radicale...(29)

The repression carried out with such chilling thoroughness was, to many in the conservative camp, a source of encouragement on another basis still: for was it not clear now that a nation whose troops had performed so remarkably in vanquishment of enemies of the status quo

need not, despite her humiliation at the hands of a foreign power, yet despair of herself? 'Notre armée...', it was said in the Journal des Débats, '...a vengé ses désastres par une victoire inestimable.'⁽³⁰⁾ 'Quelle admirable attitude...', le Figaro enthused, '...que celle de nos officiers et de nos soldats. Il n'est donné qu'au soldat français de se relever si vite et si bien.'⁽³¹⁾ Edmond de Pressensé, who had felt his powers to be unequal to the description of the horrors of incendiarism, was no more competent, he claimed, to express the debt owed these valiant champions of the Civilised Order:

Nulle parole ne peut rendre ce que nous avons éprouvé de gratitude pour ces nobles soldats de la France, représentants d'une armée déjà régénérée, alors qu'ils plantaient sous nos yeux le drapeau de la patrie sur les barricades conquises par leur vaillance et l'habile direction de leurs officiers.⁽³²⁾

Frenchmen everywhere might then draw pride from the feats of their heroic soldiery, who after this expeditious settlement of scores with the dregs of society, could feel just cause for self-congratulation. In the mind of the vicomte de Beaumont-Vassy, there was little doubt that the fate of his own nation had not hung alone in the balance during the week of combat ('...ce n'est pas seulement la partie de la France qui s'est jouée sur ce brûlant terrain, c'est celle de la civilisation, de l'humanité.')(³³) The Versailles officer H. de Sarrepont (alias Eugène Hennebert) was, understandably, even less of a disinterested commentator than others in the conservative camp:

Nous avons sauvé Paris, la France et, nous pouvons le dire hautement, le monde! Honneur à l'armée qui vient d'accomplir ces prodiges!⁽³⁴⁾

To mark the regeneration of the army which had just defeated the communard rebels, a march-past of 100,000 men took place at Longchamp on 29 June 1871, in the presence of Adolphe Thiers. Tributes at the time to the revival of fighting spirit on the part of France's defenders ring slightly false, perhaps, when it is remembered that large numbers of French prisoners-of-war had been repatriated from

Germany - after negotiations between Jules Favre and Bismarck - to lend a hand in repression of the socialist menace.(35)

It is an even greater irony of history that the massacres conducted within Paris in the name of Humanity and Civilisation seem today the ultimate in barbarism. However reprehensible one might consider the incendiarism practised by the insurgents (and writers sympathetic to the Commune have argued in defence of the firing),(36) however blameworthy the execution of hostages, revulsion greater still will be aroused now, in all probability, by the full-scale massacre of thousands; not merely tolerated by so many at the time, but glorified all too often as a manichean triumph of Good over Evil. The number executed during the semaine sanglante will never be known: no credence however need be given the official figure of 17,000, supplied by General Appert, head of Military Justice, and corresponding to the number of burials paid for by the City of Paris. A total of between 20 and 30,000 is certainly closer to the truth, and the figure may have been in excess of that, perhaps as high as 35 or even 40,000.(37) While conservatives were wont to liken insurgent excesses to the barbarities supposedly practised in African or Asian territories,(38) a reader today will probably feel there to be greater validity in the parallels made by the Communards Prosper-Olivier Lissagaray (*'Les grandes tueries de la Bible, les fêtes sanglantes du roi de Dahomey, peuvent seules donner une idée de ces boucheries de prolétaires...'*)(39) or Gustave Lefrançais (*'Paris n'est plus qu'un vaste abattoir où le roi de Dahomey lui-même deviendrait bientôt fou de terreur'*).(40) It is true, as Armand Lanoux has pointed out,(41) that the Paris insurgents were perceived as criminals and traitors to be crushed in the interests of Order and for whom the conventions observed between warring states need not apply: it is true also that the life of the worker in nineteenth century Europe was considered to be of little consequence by the majority of his social superiors. Even when allowances are made however for the changes in perspective brought about by time, there can be no defence of the indiscriminate ruthlessness of the repression, nor of the many instances of Versailles sadism, even indecency, noted by

observers, and corroborated by too many sources to be seriously in question.(42) The journalist Sutter-Laumann, who had served as a fédéré during the Commune, was hardly a committed revolutionary and cannot be accused of hagiographic representation of the insurrectionary period in his Histoire d'un trente sous:(43) there seems then little reason to doubt the veracity of references by him to some of the Versailles soldiers ('...ivres à ne pas se tenir debout...'),(44) nor the sincerity of this denunciation:

Moi qui, pendant toute la durée de la Commune, n'avais éprouvé aucun ressentiment, aucune colère contre les soldats de Versailles, je les haïssais depuis la prise de Paris. Avant, (...) ils obéissaient à la discipline (...). Mais après, ils s'étaient comportés avec trop de barbarie, au point que des Prussiens n'auraient pu faire davantage, et l'on ne pouvait que les voir avec horreur, à la pensée des abominables massacres qu'ils avaient commis.(45)

The period of Versaillais retribution did not of course conclude with the semaine sanglante: summary executions continued in Paris until mid-June. Some 39,000 prisoners taken during the repression were held by their captors in appalling conditions; either in various localities at Versailles, or on pontoons or fortified islands along the west coast of France. Twenty-six court martials pronounced judgement upon over 36,000 Communards: 270 received the death sentence (many in absentia); twenty-six executions were carried out. The most common sentence passed was that of deportation; this meaning essentially, after the Commune, transportation to New Caledonia.(46) Those who had managed to escape the repression sought refuge for the most part in England or Switzerland, where they remained until the granting of amnesty (partial then total) in 1879 and 1880.

The insurrection of 18 March had been sparked of course by an attempt on the part of Government troops to take possession of cannons held on the butte Montmartre. This was, as it were, the match to the powder keg: the portents of rebellion had been apparent for some time.(47) Thwarted patriotic sentiment was determinant in engendering

the Commune: fury within Paris at the news of capitulation to Prussia, and at the humiliating terms of the Treaty of Frankfurt; German occupation of the city from 1 to 3 March: such developments, potentially explosive in themselves in the climate born of the siege, were exacerbated further by the insensitive measures of the predominantly monarchist National Assembly elected on 8 February. Many possédants offering explanations for the Commune referred to the state of volatility brought about by the months of siege:(48) Louise Colet - who displayed more comprehensiveness and humanity than many another - recognised the ineptness of the National Assembly as an essential factor in generation of an atmosphere for revolt.(49)

In view of the consternation with which society's moneyed reacted to the 'seventy-two days', it is not surprising, however, if various external influences were suspected of or perceived as having been instrumental in engineering the supposed 'coup' of 18 March. The question asked by one C. Jannet (*'M. de Bismark n'a-t-il pas prévu, favorisé et soudoyé l'insurrection du 18 mars?'*)(50) was manifestly a rhetorical one: and the assertion by another writer (*'Qu'aux yeux de tout Français intelligent et conservateur, Prussiens et pétroleux soient synonymes: car ils sont amis et frères'*)(51) apparently admitted of no contradiction as to the hand-in-glove relationship between the two camps. To others, it seemed probable that somewhere, somehow, Bonapartist forces had been at work.(52) The most widespread assumption (one that did not automatically exclude the other two)(53) was that the organising force behind the insurrection had been that dreaded vehicle for socialism the International Working Men's Association, viewed with increasing disquiet over the years since its foundation at St Martin's Hall in London on 28 September 1864.(54) Even had there been no question of a nefarious international network intent on destruction of the Established Order, nor of an alien enemy recently victorious and rejoicing now in the internecine wranglings of a nation defeated, the working-class character of the Commune would have sufficed to engender major indignation and alarm among society's nantis. In a letter to his mother written in April 1871, Matthew

Arnold noted aptly if inelegantly:

...There is no way by which France can make the rest of Europe so alarmed and uneasy as by a socialist and red republic. It is a perpetual flag to the proletarian class everywhere - the class that makes all governments uneasy...(55)

It should hardly be a source of wonder if those to whom chance had allotted money and the attendant opportunities for education, comfort and leisure saw little reason to query the injustices of a social order which was generous to some, less than kind to many. Even when there was genuine ignorance as to the plight of the less fortunate, such unawareness on the part of the well-to-do would have been coupled in most cases with an unavowed reluctance to proceed beyond ready-made defences within possédant consciousness. Those of a mind to might have invoked the supposed impossibility or undesirability of greater economic equity. Others might have sought refuge in belief that the lot of the poor was less bleak than agitators represented it as being; and that if such were not the case, the fault could be imputed essentially to idleness or inherent vice on the part of the workers themselves. No less determinant, of course, was the traditional Catholic persuasion that the individual was born to a station designated by the Almighty himself. Whatever the view taken, there could be no doubt as to the chasm separating the working-class world from that of the French possessing classes.(56)

To the mind of not a few nantis, the Commune illustrated the dangers and absurdities inherent to ballot-box democracy. Reflecting the idea of more celebrated compatriots (among them Flaubert, Goncourt and Renan) Charles Aimé Dauban wrote that universal suffrage had made 'la foule' all-important ('...ce qui reste en dehors d'elle ne compte que comme appoint. Aussi l'art de gouverner est-il surtout l'art de lui plaire').(57) The philosopher Elme Caro deplored the erosion of beliefs which might have given the people an appropriate understanding of their place in the order of things. Never, he claimed,

...on n'avait si perfidement et sous des formes si diverses travaillé à démoraliser le peuple, à détruire en lui toute foi, tout idéal, à faire le vide dans son âme inquiète sans savoir comment le remplir, si ce n'est d'appétits et de jouissances malsaines. (58)

It was time, Caro continued, for those so foolish and irresponsible as to glorify the plebeian to receive the excoriation that was their due:

Il faudrait (...) démasquer sans pitié tous ces courtisans et ces flatteurs de la puissance populaire, qui ne cessent dans leurs journaux, dans leurs livres, dans les conférences, dans les clubs, d'exalter le peuple, le noble peuple, le généreux peuple, et de le griser de leurs vains louanges partout où ils peuvent entrer en communication avec son coeur héroïque, avec sa grande âme: adulation fatale qui n'a pas contribué médiocrement à démoraliser la foule en la persuadant de l'infailibilité de ses passions. (59)

Others too deplored the noxious literature which had supposedly encouraged revolutionary propensities on the part of the lower orders. H. de Sarrepoint would have liked to see outlawed:

...cette littérature malsaine qui commence aux Misérables de monsieur Hugo et aux demoiselles de la Quintinie de madame Sand, pour aboutir à la Lanterne de Rochefort, au Père Duchesne de Vermesch, au Salut Public de Maroteau, aux lâchetés épistolaires de M. Louis Blanc. (60)

To the idea of Armand de Pontmartin, writing in July 1871, the events of preceding months had been brought about significantly by the efforts of Balzac, Eugène Sue and

...le Victor Hugo des Misérables, gigantesque arsenal qui aurait droit à ce sous-titre: "Le Prologue de la Commune". Là, pas un chapitre qui ne soit une préface d'insurrection. (61)

The tenor of sermons delivered after the Commune both in Luxembourg and in England seemed to be, Hugo learned, that his writings had been directly responsible for the excesses of the Paris insurgents,

the incendiarism within the city, and the shooting of Archbishop Darboy.(62)

In his book les Membres de la Commune et du Comité central, Paul Delion wrote of the dangers of a lower-class discontent fanned by arrivistes and proponents of pernicious socialist doctrine:

L'envie dort au fond du coeur des pauvres et leur remettra les armes à la main sitôt qu'un intrigant excitera cette envie. (...)

(Les idées socialistes) fomentent des haines entre classes sous prétexte de fraternité, démoralisent le peuple sous prétexte de moralité, et sous prétexte de droit au travail et d'affranchissement du travail détournent les ouvriers de ce travail en le leur montrant comme un esclavage exploité par le capital. Ces idées ont pour complice l'envie des richesses et sont la cause des révoltes contre les lois sociales. Donc, ce sont ces idées qu'il faut détruire; ce sont les hommes qui les répandent qu'il faut combattre. Voilà la tâche de la classe menacée: la bourgeoisie.(63)

If it was commonplace among possédants to dismiss the working classes as inflammable, barely civilised, incapable of reason and susceptible, in their ignorance, to the unsound influences which opportunists might exercise upon them,(64) the so-called 'meneurs' who had held power during the 'seventy-two days' were reviled with a lack of restraint that can at times afford the reader of the 1980's considerable entertainment.(65) A particularly striking range of epithet and insult would be apparent in the preface to le Pilori des communeux by one Henry Morel, for whom '*Ecrire l'histoire des hommes de la Commune, c'était se vouer volontairement à une asphyxie morale, tant le borbier où grouillaient ces êtres immondes était lourd de vapeurs pestilentielles et chargé de miasmes délétères.*'(66) As the subtitle of his book indicates (Biographie des membres de la Commune. Leurs antécédents - Leurs moeurs - Leur caractère. REVELATIONS) Morel was planning to disclose - in the public interest of course, and in as near to entirety as space would allow - the worthlessness, ineptitude and iniquity of those who had held sway in Paris during the opprobrious

interlude not long past. Thus, he hoped, might the future emergence of such reptiles be impeded.(67) While dedication to duty and assumption of responsibility are ever commendable, one can only feel wonderment at the extent of Morel's self-inflicted martyrdom as one reads his initial appreciation of the species he had taken it upon himself to investigate:

Un scorpion, ce Rigault, foetus avorté de l'accouplement bizarre du serpent qui tue par colère et de l'écrevisse qui recule par ignorance et bêtise.

Une vipère, ce Félix Pyat, à la peau noire et visqueuse, autant anguille que couleuvre, sifflant contre tout principe honnête, mordant tout pied qui le frôle, échappant à toute main qui le saisit. Né dans le cloaque, vivant dans la sanie, qui sait dans quel égout il mourra?

Courbet, cet hippopotame soufflé d'orgueil, engraisé de sottise, affolé d'eau-de-vie...

Un caïman, ce Delescluze, à la mâchoire aiguë, aux dents formidables, aux ongles terribles, mais aux instincts plus terribles encore, traînant son corps écailleux et cuirassé au milieu des roseaux, à la recherche de chair fraîche ou de charogne indistinctement.

(...)

Vallès, cette sangsue littéraire, gonflée de pus...(68)

The animal parallel dear to the anti-Communard heart was then adopted here with turgidly comic effect. Morel wanted his readers to be in no doubt: the Commune's dirigeants were monsters incarnate.

Beset by internal division, preoccupied with hostilities against Versailles, the Communal Council was hardly in a position to plan and put into effect any far-reaching legislative programme or radical economic overhaul. In some respects (most notably its failure to take possession of the Bank of France) it displayed what many have seen as foolhardy caution or criminal scruple. If such an omission goes no small way towards nullification of a charge such as that laid by Paul de Saint-Victor (*'L'insurrection du 18 mars n'a (...) pour programme*

que le lazzaronisme armé, l'expropriation de toutes les classes par une seule, l'égalité des parts dans la mangeoire humaine, la curée de la fortune publique et privée jetée en proie aux appétits et aux convoitises du prolétariat...'), (69) the whole ethos of the Commune was indeed one according the interests of the underdog a priority seldom received hitherto. Nantis, after 18 March, might well lament what was perceived by them as a sickening manifestation of lower-class rancour, envy and covetousness:(70) for the man or woman whose life was played out in a milieu of hardship and drudgery, and who was all too aware of his or her near animal status in the minds of social superiors, legislation passed during the insurrectionary period seemed a long overdue recognition of proletarian entitlement to some happiness, wellbeing and self-determination. The decrees issued by the Communal Council might not have been invariably produced on the inspiration of members of the working class; they represented nonetheless the aspirations cherished by the worker, his desire to free himself from the slough of poverty and to ensure a better and happier life for himself and his kind. The cancellation of rent; the three-year moratorium on debt repayment; cessation of night work in bakeries; the intended occupation of abandoned workshops with the idea of setting up workers' cooperatives; the opportunity provided to reclaim possessions pawned at the *mont-de-piété*; measures of this type, often regarded by the bourgeoisie as a dangerous and absurd infringement of property rights or as an intrusion into rapports between worker and employer,(71) were clearly a boon to those who had known little other than hardship. For at least a portion of the Commune's ephemeral lifespan, it may well have seemed to the Paris worker that anything was now possible: that he had, at last, attained his 'place in the sun'.

The courage of insurgent combatants during the week of 21-28 May was generally conceded even by those most hostile to the Commune. Ernest Daudet, it is true, sought to depreciate such bravery by stating that the Communards had fought not with '*la mâle vaillance du lion*', but with '*la férocité désespérée du tigre*':(72) others (among them Edmond de Goncourt and Catulle Mendès) acknowledged the valiance of combatants

whose energies had been directed, as they saw it, to such contemptible end.(73) A reporter for l'Etoile belge questioning Versailles soldiers who had played a direct part in the massacres stated that all his sources were unanimous in recognition of insurgent unflinchingness and defiance before the machine-guns and rifles of their adversaries. One soldier, telling him of the execution of some forty 'canailles', described how

Les uns croisaient les bras et gardaient la tête haute. Les autres ouvraient leurs tuniques et nous criaient: "Faites feu, nous n'avons pas peur de la mort!"

The Catholic, royalist Count Albert de Mun - who served as a Versailles officer during the semaine sanglante - was struck by the fervour of the insurgents in combat, and the 'insolence' with which they died. The defiant shout of a mortally wounded Communard ('*Les insurgés, c'est vous!*') brought home to him with particular keenness the fact that this was, indeed, a war between social classes. The accusation, in the words of John McManners, '...seemed to echo across an abyss, from another world. It was the beginning of his "social vocation".'(75) Six months afterwards, de Mun and Maurice Maignen (who belonged to the order of Saint Vincent de Paul) stood looking out from de Mun's office in the Louvre at the blackened ruins of the Tuileries. Turning to the officer, Maignen commented that the true authors of this tragedy were not the people; and that if a gulf existed between rich and poor, the fault lay with the former:

Les vrais coupables, c'est vous, ce sont les riches, les grands, les heureux de la vie qui se sont tant amusés dans ces murs effondrés, qui passent à côté du peuple sans le voir, sans le connaître, qui ne savent rien de son âme, de son histoire, de ses souffrances.(76)

In one sense, of course, the Versaillais were doing the Paris worker a horrible service: for the mass slaughter of the insurgents could have provided no more sound a basis for heightened class awareness, and for evolution of a proletarian legend. Signs that the

spirit of rebellion was not extinguished were apparent even in the days following the semaine sanglante. During a visit to Belleville on 1 June, Edmond de Goncourt (who had written the previous day that society could probably look forward to twenty years' calm '*...si le pouvoir ose tout ce qu'il peut oser en ce moment*'), (77) observed the workers drinking in taverns '*...avec des visages malheureusement muets.*' (78) Similarly, the artist Jean-Louis Forain heard insurgent prisoners at Satory camp crooning: '*C'est pas toujours les mêmes, qu'auront l'assiette au beurre.*' (79) Perhaps the words of 'l'Internationale' - written by the Communard Eugène Pottier in early June 1871 - provide the most effective translation of working-class mood in the wake of the repression. Then in hiding within a city torn apart by slaughter and destruction, Pottier (in what was tantamount to a declaration of war upon the possessing classes) set down this call to the oppressed the world over ('*les damnés de la terre*') to have done forever with the fetters of servitude. (80) Elsewhere in Europe, intellectuals perceived themselves with good reason as dangerous to the established order paid tribute to the Commune and its defenders. In his address to the International's General Council in London on 30 May 1871, Karl Marx extolled the Paris uprising as '*...the glorious harbinger of a new society*'. Its martyrs, he continued, '*...are enshrined in the great heart of the working class*'. (81) Mikhail Bakunin too expressed his admiration for the Commune,

...qui, pour avoir été massacrée, étouffée dans le sang par les bourreaux de la réaction monarchique et cléricale, n'en est devenue que plus vivante, plus puissante dans l'imagination et dans le coeur du prolétariat de l'Europe. (82)

If, for the time being, the workers' movement had been quashed in France, (83) the working classes themselves continued to cherish the memory of the Commune's dead. During a train journey to Paris from the Haute-Garonne in 1878, Jean Jaurès (who had been eleven at the time of the Commune) listened with interest as a group of workers spoke reverentially amongst themselves of the insurgents fallen under Versailles bullets. (84) In an article for l'Egalité of 24 March 1878,

Jules Guesde - on whose initiative the Congrès ouvrier socialiste de France was to meet at Marseilles between 23-30 October of the following year - recognised that the importance of the Commune in furtherment of proletarianism lay far less in its concrete achievements than in its potential as a source of inspiration:

C'est surtout dans ses conséquences historiques, c'est surtout dans son lendemain qui dure encore, dans les espérances et les terreurs qu'il a éveillées d'un bout du monde à l'autre, que le 18 mars a donné sa véritable mesure ouvrière et socialiste. A peine le drapeau rouge, son drapeau, tombé dans le sang de son dernier soldat, que voyons-nous, en effet? Ce drapeau ramassé et arboré par le prolétariat de tous les pays qui en fait son signe de ralliement.(85)

In view of the climate prevailing in France during the 1870's, it is hardly surprising that the Paris Commune should have remained a potentially dangerous subject for treatment in fictional literature if presented in other than a negative light. As portrayed or referred to in such works as Une Idylle pendant le siège by François Coppée (1872),(86) Alphonse Daudet's Contes du lundi (1873),(87) Madame et Monsieur Cardinal by Ludovic Halévy (1873)(88) or les Désirs de Jean Servien by Anatole France,(89) the insurrectionary period was a crime in the presence of the German enemy, a period of ruffianism, irresponsibility and drunkenness. In apparent reflection of the times, the adjective 'communard' could seemingly be used in reference to anything considered distasteful by the speaker or writer. On reading the manuscript of Huysmans' Drageoir d'épices in 1874, the publisher Hetzel told the twenty-six-year-old would-be author that his style was abominable, '*...qu'il recommençait la Commune de Paris dans la langue française.*'(90) The Impressionist painters were said to be producing 'communard' art:(91) and in the Gazette de France of 19 April 1876, Zola was termed '*le chef de la Commune littéraire*' by a certain Dancourt appalled at the tenor of l'Assommoir.(92)

For his short story 'Une Maudite', in which the poverty-stricken wife of a deported Communard is forced into prostitution to keep her

two small children from starvation, Léon Cladel was sentenced on 15 April 1876 to one month's imprisonment, and to a fine of 500 francs.(93) Depiction alone of the less advantaged in society was a likely source of conservative unease. On 26 August 1876, a sentence similar to that Cladel had received was incurred by Jean Richepin for poems in his collection la Chanson des gueux (written substantially in argot and composed in tribute to society's deprived, '*les petits, les va-nu-pieds, les meurt-de-faim*').(94) Had Victor Hugo's prestige been less than it was, it is not improbable that publication of Quatrevingt-treize two years earlier, in February 1874, would have provided example of the risks then inherent to a favourable evocation of Revolution. The book was said to reflect a credo containing '*...l'écume de tous les lieux communs socialistes.*'(95) The extremist political persuasion of its author '*...s'étale à chaque chapitre, elle crie à toutes les pages.*'(96) Some critics supposed the novel to be a deliberate attempt on Hugo's part to reopen barely healed wounds ('*Un livre d'apaisement? Non! Non! Non!*').(97) Hugo, that incorrigible champion of the underdog, was even (Firmin Boissin of Polybiblion held) hoping so far to weaken his readers' moral sense that an amnesty of the Communards might seem to them desirable.(98)

Quatrevingt-treize attracted some interest in Communard circles in London: Hugo had, after all, in June 1871, offered his home in Brussels ('*place des Barricades, N^o 4*') as an asylum for insurgent refugees.(99) An article by Jules Vallès devoted to the novel was published first in English in the Examiner on 7 March 1874, then in French (in slightly attenuated form, and under the name of Louis Colomb) in the Brighton periodical the Revue anglo-française.(100) If, in Vallès' view, Hugo had been less total in his condemnation of the Royalist cause than was desirable, there remained much about the book that the réfractaire considered deserving of admiration:

...il faut saluer tout de même, chapeau bas, cet homme de génie qui, à l'automne de la vie, se penche songeur et triste sur les tombes où gisent les sacrifiés de l'humanité, bourreaux ou victimes, dans les grands cimetières de l'histoire. Il va de préférence du côté où sont les morts dont l'agonie fut horrible, et dont la mémoire est maudite. (C'est que pour lui pareilles hécatombes ne peuvent être sans raison sociale.) Il donne l'exemple de l'impartialité aux historiens de l'avenir. Il s'arrête pensif en face des révolutions ou des déroutes; il étudie 93; il écrit en juin 1871, qu'il ouvrira sa maison à ceux de la Commune qui n'ont pas trouvé un asile dans la mort. Oui, saluons, chapeau bas!(101)

The publications by Communard refugees in England, Belgium or Switzerland were a cause of considerable vexation, of course, among conservatives in France aware of such writings. Referring to Prosper-Olivier Lissagaray's les Huit Journées de mai derrière les barricades(102) and to Benoît Malon's la Troisième défaite du prolétariat français (both of which appeared in late 1871, in Brussels and at Neuchâtel respectively), Henri Baudrillart of the Revue des deux mondes gave vent to what might be described as a metaphorical howl of displeasure:

A les en croire, c'est au nom d'idées pures que le sang a coulé; ils invoquent la théorie du progrès. Des récits affectant une couleur dramatique, des épisodes parfois émouvans, où, par un travestissement perpétuel des intentions et des actes, les insurgés ont presque constamment le beau rôle, tandis que nos soldats sont traités de démons de l'assassinat, d'affreux incendiaires, de misérables et de scélérats, à cela se réduisent ces plaidoyers, qui font prendre à l'histoire, à une histoire qui date d'hier à peine, un caractère déjà légendaire (...). Sous la plume des panégyristes, tout est justifié, sinon glorifié dans les horribles excès qui marquèrent la fin de la lutte.(103)

Lissagaray's work on his major Histoire de la Commune de 1871 - of which les Huit Journées de mai can be considered the embryo - continued well beyond publication of the Brussels edition of 1876: it was, indeed, twenty years after this that the definitive version appeared. The history, according to Lissagaray himself, had been written with painstaking attention to accuracy; for error or distortion in such a work would be noted with glee by 'le vainqueur', and used to further

vilify those Lissagaray was seeking to exonerate.(104) Furthermore, it was not in the people's interest to be lied to:

L'enfant a le droit de connaître le pourquoi des défaites paternelles; le parti socialiste, les campagnes de son drapeau dans tous les pays. Celui qui fait au peuple de fausses légendes révolutionnaires, celui qui l'amuse d'histoires chantantes, est aussi criminel que le géographe qui dresserait des cartes menteuses pour les navigateurs.

Misrepresentation or denigration of the 1871 insurgents was seemingly an ill-advised pursuit if contact with Lissagaray was even remotely probable. On a visit to London in 1873, René de Pont-Jest of le Figaro was challenged to a duel for having written ill of the Commune; and if, on that occasion, Lissagaray received a fine from a London court and was required to provide an assurance that no further quarrels of this nature would be sought so long as he remained on English soil, he was not of course deterred from again seeking Pont-Jest out upon his own return to France in July 1880. While this second attempt at provocation came to nothing, Lissagaray made his views on the matter plain when writing in le Rappel on 25 July:

Voilà la canaille littéraire qui, pendant tant d'années, seule maîtresse des journaux et des librairies, a fait la légende des choses et des hommes de la Commune, égaré l'opinion des départements, fourni aux enragés de modération un prétexte pour ajourner l'amnistie et multiplier les morts au bagne et dans l'exil.(106)

The four volumes of a work that might be considered the point culminant in anti-Communard production appeared between 1878 and 1880. Maxime Du Camp's les Convulsions de Paris ('Pour faire horreur, l'histoire de ces incendiaires et de ces assassins n'a pas besoin d'être racontée avec exagération, car elle est naturellement exécration...')(107) was seen as so significant a publication by bien-pensant opinion that its author was elected to the Académie Française in 1880. If Lissagaray's writing would always find particular favour among admirers of the Commune; and if, on the other

hand, les Convulsions de Paris became almost the touchstone for conservative reference with respect to the insurrectionary episode, (108) it is to be noted that neither author was regarded as out of bounds by writers of unlike persuasion seeking documentation for a work on the Commune. There will be occasion to note in the course of this study that Lucien Descaves, for instance, saw no reason to disdain Du Camp's volumes when compiling information for la Colonne; and that Maurice Montégut (to whom the Commune was anathema) did not feel Lissagaray to be entirely beneath notice.

With the arrival of the 1880's, there was scope, if not always for favourable, at least for less hostile portrayal of the Commune. The decade saw then the publication of Vallès' l'Insurgé in 1886; (109) le Bilatéral by J. H. Rosny (1887); (110) Jean Richepin's Césarine (1888); (111) and Bas les Coeurs by Georges Darien in 1889. The writer to have first planned sympathetic representation of the insurrectionary period in a work of fiction was in all probability - as Eugène Schulkind points out - Léon Cladel. (112) While the latter had begun writing his novel I.N.R.I. in September 1872, the fact that a publisher would then have been almost impossible to find (113) resulted in his long-term abandonment of the project. Developed and brought to a stage approaching completion between 1 October 1886 and April 1887, (114) I.N.R.I. finally appeared in 1931, almost forty years after Cladel's death.

In addition to publication of novels or memoirs by former participants in the Commune (Histoire d'un trente sous by Sutter-Laumann (1891); Un Exilé by Georges Renard (1893)) - there was, in the early 1890's, a resurgence of anti-Communard representation in fictional literature. The insurrectionary period, as depicted in Maurice Montégut's le Mur in 1892, was a gigantic ripaille, a horrid travesty of the Terror, characterised by murder, folly, promiscuity and constant alcoholic satiation. (115) It is to be noted, however, that the savagery of the Versailles repression was condemned in the novel. (116) In the opening chapter of les Oiseaux s'envolent et les

fleurs tombent (1893) Elémir Bourges includes an account of orgiastic merrymaking by Communards in the Père-Lachaise; in the course of which a group of prostitutes tear one of their number to pieces...(117) A novel more celebrated than either of these appeared in 1892 also. While less extravagant than the representations found in the two texts contemporaneous with it, Emile Zola's portrayal of the Paris Commune in la Débâcle (and in the nouvelle Jacques Damour, first published in 1880),(118) is one of the elements in his production most often found wanting today.(119) It is of interest, therefore, to note the at times violent criticism of Zola in traditionalist quarters during the 1890's for having failed to provide an even more unequivocal condemnation. In a work entitled Gloria Victis (published anonymously in 1895 by 'un capitaine de l'armée de Metz') it was claimed that la Débâcle's final two chapters were no less than a defence of the 1871 insurrection:

Ce qu'il y a de certain, c'est que jamais les faits n'ont été mieux groupés pour bien faire ressortir le beau rôle des révoltés et l'horreur de la répression; pour ceux qui apprendront l'histoire de la Commune dans la Débâcle, Thiers et Mac-Mahon resteront les assassins de Paris, les soldats français seront des bouchers qui n'ont retrouvé un peu de virilité que pour égorguer leurs frères.(120)

The abbé Théodore Delmont (writing for l'Université catholique of 15 December 1892, and in whose view la Débâcle was 'un cauchemar, un hideux cauchemar, aussi malsain qu'antipatriotique')(121) accused Zola of having 'amnestied' the 'scélérats' and the 'meneurs' of the Commune.(122)

As is clear from its title, this study does not purport to be an exhaustive examination of the fictional literature relating to the Paris Commune. The field is not, of course, unexplored: one may cite the work of Eugène Schulkind, Jean Fréville and Henri Mitterand; and that of Madeleine Rebérioux, Gérard Delfau and Anne Roche.(123) Paul Lidsky's les Ecrivains contre la Commune, published in 1970, discusses the salient features of fictional material hostile to the Commune

published during the last three decades of the nineteenth century; with reference to, among others, Alphonse Daudet, Anatole France, Emile Zola, Maurice Montégut and Elémir Bourges.(124) Jules Vallès - regarded by Paul Bourget as a revolutionary prototype,(125) and whose name comes immediately to mind when the Paris Commune is under consideration - is now widely read and studied, and has been (particularly since the centenary of the Commune) the focus of significant critical attention.(126) It is true, nonetheless, that a study undertaken within this general domain still yields the possibility of fresh observation and further discovery: and a substantial proportion of the analysis undertaken in this thesis is carried out to our knowledge, either for the first time or in greater detail than has been the case elsewhere. While a number of other works and writers will be referred to or considered throughout the study, or in appendices, the following texts each provide the basis for a chapter or half-chapter: l'Apprentie by Gustave Geffroy (1904); l'Ami de l'Ordre by Jérôme and Jean Tharaud (1905); Bas les Coeurs and l'Epaulette by Georges Darien (1889 and 1905); la Colonne and Philémon vieux de la vieille by Lucien Descaves (1901 and 1913); and les Massacres de Paris by Jean Cassou (1935). In contrast to much of the fictional material published relating to the Commune, it might be noted in passing that each of the works referred to possesses some literary merit.

Born in 1855, 1861 and 1862 respectively, Geffroy, Descaves and Darien were all three of an impressionable age at the time of the Commune: the insurrection of 1871 might be viewed, in the words of Gérard Delfau, as '*...l'événement de leur enfance.*'(127) Little detail is available as to Geffroy's experiences during the insurrectionary period; he was, however, to write in later life of the impact of the months of siege upon Parisians in childhood and adolescence at the time.(128) Containing in its opening chapter an evocation of atmosphere and conditions in the popular districts of Paris during late 1870 and early 1871, l'Apprentie enables some attention to be given (essentially from Geffroy's perspective) to the events leading to 18

March, and to the role of the siege in triggering the 'seventy-two days'. It is significant, furthermore, that Cécile Pommier - the central figure of the novel - should be only seven years old at the time of events. Lucien Descaves, who was to produce two landmarks in the domain of fictional literature relating to the Commune, had apparently little personal recollection of the insurrectionary period. If he came in time to a deeper awareness of the events which had taken place in the Paris of his childhood, this was essentially as a result of contact on his part with former Communards. It is almost certain that Georges Darien was portraying something of his own experience during the 'terrible year' through twelve-year-old Jean Barbier of Bas les Coeurs and nine-year-old Jean Maubart of l'Epaulette. As Christopher Lloyd has written, '*...les événements de 70-71 restent chez (Darien) une véritable obsession, une blessure profonde.*' (129)

In l'Apprentie as in Bas les Coeurs, events are then presented - substantially, on the one hand, exclusively on the other - from a child's viewpoint. If the Commune is in neither novel the sole focus of the writer's attention, it is seen nonetheless to be of major importance in the context of each study. The nouvelle l'Ami de l'Ordre, by Jérôme and Jean Tharaud, offers the possibility for consideration as to how an actual episode taking place during the Commune could serve years later as the starting-point for fictional development on the part of writers who had had themselves no personal experience of the insurrectionary period. The text is of interest because, as we shall demonstrate, its fundamental elements have an identifiable basis in fact; in its portrayal of the revolutionary Bégis, reminiscent in several respects of other, better-known fictional characters committed to social or political change; and in its depiction (no less effective because the result of reading on the authors' part rather than of actual observation or experience) of the horrors of the semaine sanglante. Both l'Apprentie and l'Ami de l'Ordre - neither of which can be viewed as a 'pro-Communard' text - portray family and individual suffering resulting from the Commune and its repression.

In one significant respect, la Colonne and l'Apprentie might be considered to represent a 'new departure' in fictional literature relating to March-May 1871. Until the opening years of the twentieth century, realistic depiction of proletarian involvement in the Commune, or of the repercussions of the 'seventy-two days' upon the lives of the working classes of Paris, seemed essentially lacking in the material pertaining to the subject. Members of the proletariat considered within the context of the insurrectionary period may, before 1900, have formed the basis of a number of short stories or novels: it is debatable, however, how far the workers appearing in Léon Cladel's production, in Jacques Damour or in the writings of Alphonse Daudet or Maurice Montégut are truly convincing, or whether they appear to the modern reader to provide an authentic impression of the aspirations or fears, during these months, of ordinary members of the working class. In la Colonne and l'Apprentie - as indeed in Philémon vieux de la vieille - such objectives, one might feel, are substantially realised. Focusing upon two former participants in the insurrectionary interlude and their years of exile in Switzerland, Descaves' second major work on the Commune provides a somewhat different perspective for consideration of March-May 1871: for it is from the temporal vantage point of the early 1900's that Etienne Colomès and his wife Phonsine look back to what is said to have been for them a kind of halcyon springtime. The two novels by Descaves offer an infinitely more detailed portrayal of the Commune than does l'Apprentie: either could almost qualify as 'required reading' for a would-be historian or student of the period. It will be substantially through examination of la Colonne and Philémon that something of the nature of the Commune, its strengths and its deficiencies will be gauged in this study: Descaves' texts, furthermore, enable the reader to appreciate the exaggerated, often slanderous nature of the possédant representation indicated earlier in this introduction. Both Geffroy and Descaves convey the importance of the ordinary man's or woman's involvement in the insurrectionary episode: as victim in l'Apprentie; as unsung hero in la Colonne, and more particularly Philémon vieux de la vieille.

In discussion of les Massacres de Paris, attention will be concentrated primarily upon Cassou's characterisation of major figures in the adventure: among them Louis Rossel, the Commune's second Delegate of War; Louise Michel, the movement's most celebrated female participant; and the Pole Jaroslaw Dombrowski, generally considered to have been the Commune's ablest commander. Such a focus, which presents considerable interest in itself, also allows us to highlight the extent to which material published years afterwards by, or on behalf of, leading actors in the drama could help a writer sympathetic to the Commune to achieve greater nuance or effect in his depiction of actual historical figures. Consideration of documentary sources, it may be noted in passing, will be a not unimportant feature of the two chapters devoted to Lucien Descaves.

The story of the Commune is not limited, all too obviously, to events taking place within Paris itself. The representation of the Versailles bourgeoisie found in Bas les Coeurs might be considered overdrawn: it is nonetheless a necessary, arguably indispensable complement to material examined elsewhere in the thesis. Another aspect of Darien's social portrayal invites attention also. Certainly of significance in its own right, the vitriolic depiction of army attitudes in l'Epaulette is in accord with la Colonne's essential theme, discussed at some length in the fourth chapter of the thesis.

A reading of l'Epaulette (and of la Colonne) allows further understanding of the extent to which the Commune can be considered to exemplify standing truths in nineteenth and early twentieth century French - and European - society. The army - through which, by one means or another, greater national glory might be achieved - was also, in the eyes of the prosperous, the executor of a dual defence function: against the foreign enemy on the one hand, the malcontent within France on the other. Darien's novel presents the parallel between colonial policy of the late nineteenth century, when African and Asian peoples were subjugated in furtherment of the all-important extra-territorial gain; and suppression of 'disorder' such as took place during the

semaine sanglante and (on an incomparably smaller scale) in the industrial town of Fourmies on 1 May 1891. Those perceived by respectable opinion as of inferior, barely human status were treated with equally summary brutality, it might be suggested, both at home and abroad. Our earlier consideration of attitudes to the army in May-June 1871 will be seen to acquire particular significance in the light of the portrayal of bourgeois and soldier found in Bas les Coeurs and l'Epaulette.

The fact that the Paris Commune was a movement for the downtrodden, an ephemeral triumph of the oppressed, marks it then as reflective of, and a reaction to, a perpetuating aspect of the general human condition; as one element only in a large and complex social and historical mosaic. Often regarded today as annunciatory of a new social dawn, the Commune was no less, of course, a further manifestation of the insurrectionary pattern exemplified already in the nineteenth century by such episodes as 'les Trois Glorieuses' of 27-29 July 1830 and the 'June Days' of 1848. The tenor of possédant observation subsequent to the June uprising was often, it may be noted, almost identical to that following the Commune. The massacre of insurgents revolting against closure of the National Workshops was said to signal the triumph of '*la France honnête*' over '*la France anarchique et corrompue*'.⁽¹³⁰⁾ In the interests of civilisation, there should be no holds barred in repression of this nefarious element: as le Correspondant noted righteously: '*Ce n'est pas nous qu'une sentimentalité peu chrétienne poussera à retenir le bras de la justice.*'⁽¹³¹⁾ Alexis de Tocqueville deplored an insurrection aiming not merely, he wrote, at a change in regime or government but at a total transformation of society: '*une sorte de guerre servile*'⁽¹³²⁾ attributable to the envy felt by an entire social class. The violence of this uprising had been such (again in Tocqueville's view) that the possessing classes had but one avenue available to them: '*...vaincre ou (...) périr.*'⁽¹³³⁾ Paris on 24 June 1848 recalled '*...ces villes de l'antiquité dont les bourgeois défendirent les murailles en héros parce qu'ils savaient que la ville prise, ils seraient entraînés eux-mêmes en*

esclavage.'(134) It is through such fictional characters as père Pommier (l'Apprentie), Mazoudier (la Colonne) and Siffrelin (les Massacres de Paris) that the significant proportion of sympathisers with or combatants for the Commune who had taken part in the June revolt of 1848 finds representation in relevant literature.

To us in the late twentieth century, the events of March-May 1871 might well seem of course an anticipation of later movements. Jean Cassou's portrayal of the Commune in his novel of 1935 was inspired significantly, one might assume, by personal allegiances dear to him at the time of writing, and relating to the contemporary European political and social scene. The date of publication of les Massacres de Paris serves then as a further (indirect) reminder that the seventy-two day period of 1871 was but one episode in an ongoing process. Regarded by Lenin as a foreshadowing of October 1917, the Commune can also be viewed as a movement allied to the Republican struggle in Spain, or to the French Popular Front.

This thesis has three appendices. In the first, a short text published the same year as Philémon vieux de la vieille is considered. Un Communard by Léon Deffoux (1913) provides a character study of a Commune veteran who may have been based upon somebody in real life. Joseph Burtau, it might be noted, is another insurgent who has fought both in June 1848 and in December 1851. A second appendix examines Maurice Montégut's representation in le Mur of various actual Communard figures. The D...s, F...s and R...s featuring in the pages of the 1892 text are for the most part brutes and fiends who might not have been out of place in a Gothic spine-chiller. They differ markedly, in short, from their counterparts in a novel such as les Massacres de Paris.

In the third appendix, some indication is provided of the portrayal of a working-class family in la Commune, published by Paul and Victor Margueritte in 1904. The representation of the Simons serves as a useful supplement to those depictions of working-class characters found in l'Apprentie and in Descaves' two novels; the

approach is - in contrast more particularly to that adopted in la Colonne and Philémon - distinctly paternalistic in nature. The conjunction of love and death (important in the Margueritte brothers' novel as in l'Ami de l'Ordre and les Massacres de Paris) is also considered in the appendix. If discussion of these various elements makes for a segment of some length, the purpose of its inclusion is essentially to provide further dimensions to material considered in the main body of the study.

While both chronological and thematic considerations have been taken into account in the ordering of the chapters comprising the thesis, there has been no rigid observance of either. Respective publication dates would be, if listed in the order in which principal texts are considered: 1904, 1905, 1889, 1901, 1913, and 1935. In Chapters One and Two - dealing with l'Apprentie and l'Ami de l'Ordre - attention is concentrated particularly upon the cost, for individuals and their families, of involvement in the Commune. Neither text can be considered supportive of the insurrectionary period: neither condones the Versailles repression. Chapter Three, devoted principally to two novels by Georges Darien published sixteen years apart, serves what is almost a conjunctive role. Focusing as it does essentially both upon Darien's portrayal of attitudes at Versailles in 1870-1871, and his representation of the army's social function during the last three decades of the nineteenth century, the chapter might be viewed not merely as complementary to the two preceding it, but as a forerunner to the discussion of la Colonne in Chapter Four. Chapters One and Three (and, to a lesser extent, Chapter Two) deal with works in which there is little detailed portrayal of the Commune itself, however indisputable the importance of the period in each case.

March-May 1871 receives more specific attention than in Chapters Four, Five and Six of the study. There is with Philémon vieux de la vieille - under discussion in Chapter Five - a temporal distancing from the Commune in terms both of publication date and of the perspective adopted in the book with regard to the insurrectionary months. While our consideration of les Massacres de Paris provides, one might say, a

return to novelistic portrayal of the Commune itself, the text's publication twenty-two years after Philémon necessitates examination of it in the final chapter of the thesis. In addition to the works discussed in the three appendices, there will be references throughout the study, as mentioned earlier, to various other authors portraying the Paris Commune: notably Emile Zola, Léon Cladel and Jules Vallès.

NOTES

1. On the subject of newspaper suppression during the Commune, see Jean Bruhat, Jean Dautry, Emile Tersen, la Commune de 1871, Paris, Editions sociales, 1970, pp. 173-179; Bernard Noël, Dictionnaire de la Commune (2 vols.), Paris, Flammarion, 1978, Vol. II, pp. 168-169; Emile Andreoli, 1870-1871. Le Gouvernement du 4 septembre et la Commune de Paris, Paris, A. Bocquet, 1871, pp. 274, 323-324, 332, 346, 351-352.
2. See P.-O. Lissagaray, Histoire de la Commune de 1871, Paris, François Maspero, 1976, p. 377; A. Dupuy, la Guerre, la Commune et la presse, Paris, A. Colin, 1959, p. 137.
3. The term most widely used at the time to refer to those associated with the Commune was, in fact, communeux. In English publications, the insurgents were generally described as 'communists'. One finds, therefore, in the 1874 'Handbook for Travellers' published by Karl Baedeker (Paris and its Environs, with Routes from London to Paris, and from Paris to the Rhine and Switzerland), references to 'the Communist reign of terror' (pp. 61, 156); 'the Communist usurpers' (p. 139); 'the Communist rebellion (...), a period of horrors almost without parallel in the chequered annals of Paris' (p. 169). See also, in the 'Handbook for Travellers', pp. 65, 70, 71, 73, 75, 83, 116-117, 122, 140, 155-156, 167-168, 179, 180, 182-183, 207, 217.
4. See, for instance, Ernest Daudet, l'Agonie de la Commune - Paris à feu et à sang, Paris, E. Lachaud, 1871, p. 149:

'Rien ne fut respecté, ni Dieu, ni la société, ni la religion, ni la famille, ni la propriété. La violation de toutes les lois divines et humaines, de tous les droits, de tous les devoirs, fut accomplie avec fanatisme, par des furieux exaspérés jusqu'à la rage la plus folle.'
5. Georges Bizet writing to Léonie Halévy on 27 May. See Michel Cardoze, Georges Bizet, Paris, Mazarine, 1982, p. 145.
6. Jules Verne. See M. Allotte de la Fuye, Jules Verne, sa vie, son oeuvre, Paris, Hachette, 1953, p. 134.
7. Alexandre Dumas fils in one of his 'Lettres à Junius' (that of 18 April 1871). See 1871. La Commune de Paris (Collection 'les Reporters de l'histoire'), Textes réunis par Nicole Priollaud, Paris, Liana Levi/Sylvie Messinger, 1983, p. 22.
8. Jules Verne. See Jean Chesneaux, Une Lecture politique de Jules Verne, Paris, François Maspero, 1983, p. 13.
9. Claude Bernard writing to Madame Raffalovitch in April 1871. See Jean Fréville, 'la Commune et la littérature', Europe ('la Commune'), April-May 1951, p. 100.

10. Georges Bizet writing to Léonie Halévy on 27 May. See Michel Cardoze, op. cit., p. 144.
11. Flaubert writing to George Sand in October 1871. See his Oeuvres complètes, Vol. 15, Paris, Club de l'Honnête homme, 1975, p. 53.
12. See Jean Fréville, op. cit., p. 100.
13. See 1871. La Commune de Paris (Collection 'les Reporters de l'histoire'), p. 178.
14. Cf. Hippolyte Taine's letter to his wife written on 26 March 1871:
'Il est dur de penser mal de sa patrie; il me semble qu'il s'agit pour moi d'un proche parent, presque d'un père, d'une mère, et qu'après l'avoir jugé incapable, je suis obligé de le trouver grotesque, odieux, bas, absolument incorrigible, et destiné à la prison des malfaiteurs ou au cabanon des fous.'
 See H. Taine, Sa Vie et sa correspondance, Paris, Hachette, Vol. III, n.d. [but 1905], p. 75.
15. The tenor of such literature is indicated by the following titles: le comte A. de La Guéronnière, la Commune sanglante, ou le Legs incendiaire. Complément de l'Homme de Sedan. Histoire et tablettes du sang de la Commune de Paris. L'Internationale (1871); Fortuné de Lille, la Fausse Commune, ou la Mascarade furieuse de 1871, cauchemar politique en vers infiniment libres (1871); le vicomte de La Vausserie, les Martyrs de la seconde Terreur ou Arrestation, captivité et martyre de Mgr Darboy, archevêque de Paris, de M. Deguerry et des autres prêtres et religieux incarcérés avec eux (1871); Léon de Villiers/Georges de Targes, Paris sauvé!!! ou la Débâcle de la Commune (1871); Wilfrid de Fonvielle, la Terreur, ou la Commune de Paris en l'an 1871 dévoilée (1871); The Insurrection in Paris, related by an Englishman. An eye-witness of that frightful war and of the terrible evils which accompanied it (Anonymous) (1871); Histoire du capitaine fédéré Révol, par l'abbé Crozes, ou Arrestation, captivité et délivrance de l'abbé Crozes, aumônier de la Grande-Roquette, otage de la Commune (1872); Jules Lacroix, l'Année infâme, 1870-1871. L'invasion, Paris pendant la Commune, Paris après la Commune. N'oublions pas (1872); Trahison et défection au sein de la Commune. Le coin du voile (Anonyme) (1872).
16. The Communards were not exclusively responsible for destruction of this sort effected during the semaine sanglante. The Ministry of Finance had been set alight in the first instance by Versailles incendiary shells; which wrought extensive damage elsewhere in Paris and the suburbs. The Versailles publication le Siècle wrote on 27 May, with respect to the working-class district of Belleville: *'Le maréchal Mac-Mahon a exécuté sa menace contre*

Belleville. Toute la nuit, on a tiré à boulets rouges sur le quartier. Un grand nombre de maisons sont en flammes.' (See Bernard Noël, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 17.)

17. Edmond de Pressensé, 'Le 18 mars', Revue des deux mondes, 15 June 1871, p. 588. Cf. Léonce Dupont, Souvenirs de Versailles pendant la Commune, Paris, E. Dentu, 1881 (second edition), p. 235: 'Emportée dans l'extase poignante de ce cataclysme, l'imagination évoque les époques bibliques où la justice du ciel, sous forme de soufre et de feu, détruisit Sodome et Gomorrhe.'
- Ccf. Emile Zola's letter of 25 May (published in le Sémaphore de Marseille, 28-30 May 1871):
 'Je renonce à vous peindre l'aspect de Paris. On a passé la nuit dans une sorte d'aurore sanglante. Le ciel était livide, comme cuivré par l'approche d'un terrible orage et traversé par des éclairs rouges qui l'éclairaient largement. Et la fusillade ne cessait pas. On se battait dans cette épouvante, sous ce ciel diabolique qui faisait rêver à toutes les horreurs d'un enfer dantesque. Non, jamais pareil cauchemar n'a secoué un peuple, l'imagination des poètes les plus sombres est pauvre à côté de cette réalité, de cette bataille enragée dans la lueur fauve des incendies.'
- Quoted in Henri Chemel's article 'Zola Collaborateur du Sémaphore de Marseille' (1871-1877)', les Cahiers naturalistes, no. 14 (1960), p. 561.
- See also Jean Richepin, Césarine, Paris, Maurice Dreyfous, 1888, pp. 307-308:
 'Il faisait aussi clair qu'en plein jour; mais c'était une clarté sinistre, d'un rouge intense et sombre. Sur ce fond de pourpre infernale, les tours de Saint-Sulpice, toutes noires, ressemblaient à deux grands bras suppliants dressés vers la nue, une nue telle qu'en rêvent les Apocalypses pour la monstrueuse apparition d'un météore exterminateur.'
18. Le V^{te} de Beaumont-Vassy, Histoire authentique de la Commune de Paris en 1871. Ses Origines - son règne - sa chute, Paris, Garnier frères, 1871, p. 209.
19. Ludovic Hans, Second siège de Paris. Le Comité central et la Commune. Journal anecdotique, Paris, A. Lemerre, 1871, p. 240.
20. Among the buildings destroyed or damaged as a result of Communard incendiarism may be numbered the Tuileries, the library of the Louvre, the Court of Accounts, the Council of State, the Legion of Honour, the Ministry of Finance, the Hôtel de Ville, the Prefecture of Police and a part of the Palace of Justice. For a complete list, see Stewart Edwards, The Paris Commune: 1871, London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1971, p. 324.

21. The figures are those indicated by Jacques Rougerie in his Procès des communards, Paris, Julliard, 1964, p. 54: there is no uniform estimate among historians. It should be said that the Communal Council did not itself order the executions of any hostages.
22. Edmond de Pressensé, op. cit., p. 587.
23. See W. O. Henderson, The Life of Friedrich Engels, London, Frank Cass, 1976 (2 vols.); Vol. II, pp. 522-523, 566.
24. See Bernard Noël, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 158.
25. Ibid., p. 158.
26. See [H. de Sarrepoint], Guerre des communeux de Paris, 18 mars - 28 mai 1871. Par un officier supérieur de l'armée de Versailles. Paris, Firmin Didot, 1871, p. 261.
27. See Bruhat, Dautry, Tersen, op. cit., p. 286.
Cf. Sarrepoint, op. cit., p. 364: *'Tous ceux qui ont été pris les armes à la main ont été fusillés! Bien. Tous les incendiaires, pétroleurs, allumeurs, mineurs embrigadés, ont également été passés par les armes! Fort bien. C'est la loi de la guerre, et l'on ne saurait s'apitoyer sur le sort des communeux maudits. Maudits soient à leur tour ceux de nous qui se sentiraient au coeur quelque commisération pour ces indignes!'*
- Comment on the other side of the English Channel was sometimes no less savage. Horror-stricken at the destruction (planned or effected) of so many of Civilisation's riches, Algernon Swinburne wrote to Dante Gabriel Rossetti on 1 June:
'I may say to you (...) that so far from objecting to the infliction of death on the incendiaries of the Louvre I should wish to have them proclaimed (...) not merely 'hors la loi' but 'hors l'humanité', and a law passed throughout the world authorising any citizen of any nation to take their lives with impunity and assurance of the national thanks - to shoot them wherever met like dogs.' See Cecil Y. Lang, The Swinburne Letters, Vol. 2 (1869-1875). New Haven/London, Yale University Press/Oxford University Press, 1959, p. 146.
- The Army and Navy Gazette called for the vivisection, without benefit of anaesthetic, of the roughs of Paris; while the Liberal Daily News of 25 March 1871 (having referred to the insurgents as 'cowardly ruffians') added: 'It is (...) no less certain that the most humane among us would not be too scrupulous about the repressive measures which might be necessary to secure (the defeat of Paris).' See Royden Harris (editor), The English Defence of the Commune 1871, London, Merlin Press, 1971, pp. 23, 26 (n. 35).
28. Letter of 2 June 1871. See 1871. La Commune de Paris (Collection 'les Reporters de l'histoire'), p. 199.

29. Ibid., p. 199.
30. See P.-O. Lissagaray, op. cit., p. 378: A. Dupuy, op. cit., p. 137.
Cf. a further extract from the Versailles press (appearing 30 May):
'Soyez salués comme des triomphateurs et aimés comme des frères, soldats du devoir qui avez relevé l'honneur terni du drapeau tricolore. Puissions-nous apprendre de vous ce qui nous manque le plus, le respect de l'autorité et le sens du devoir civique! (...) Puissions-nous surtout être unanimes à répéter dans six mois - quand on aura oublié! - comme nous le faisons maintenant: Vive l'ordre! Vive l'armée qui en est le seul soutien et la seule garantie!'
Quoted by J.-P. Azéma/M. Winock, les Communards, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1964, p. 165.
31. See P.-O. Lissagaray, op. cit., p. 378.
32. Edmond de Pressensé, op. cit., p. 587.
33. Beaumont-Vassy, op. cit., p. 228.
34. Sarrepoint, op. cit., p. 323.
35. See the comment by Léonce Dupont, op. cit., pp. 141-142:
'M. Thiers se hâte de passer sous les fourches caudines de M. de Bismarck. Il obtient, en cinq jours, à Francfort, la paix qu'il a marchandée, un mois, à Bruxelles; il l'obtient en accédant à toutes les conditions que nos plénipotentiaires ont eu mandat à refuser. Grâce à cette soudaine soumission aux exigences du vainqueur, (...) l'Allemagne nous rend les prisonniers de guerre sans lesquels peut-être le maréchal de Mac-Mahon eût tardé longtemps encore à pénétrer dans Paris.'
36. See, for instance, in Chapter Five of this study, the arguments put forward by Jules Vallès and Lucien Descaves.
37. See the various figures quoted by Bruhat, Dautry, Tersen, op. cit., p. 289.
38. See Flaubert's letter of 31 March 1871 to George Sand: *'La nouvelle Athènes me semble dépasser le Dahomey en férocité et en bêtise'* Oeuvres complètes, Vol. 14, Club de l'Honnête homme, 1975, p. 633); cf. letter of 30 March to Madame Roger des Genettes, *ibid.*, p. 631; letter of 27 April (?) to Madame Roger des Genettes, p. 639; letter of 10 May to Ernest Feydeau, p. 647.
See also Sarrepoint, op. cit., p. 13: *'Ces Peaux rouges qui nous brûlent...'*; p. 267: *'...ces Malais internationaux...'* Henry Morton Stanley, who was of course in Africa at the time, heard belatedly of the developments in France and noted in his diary (according to Maxime Du Camp, les Convulsions de Paris, Vol. I, Paris, Hachette, 1878, p. 432) that such excesses were unknown even on the continent he was exploring!

Ccf. Arthur de Gobineau's letter of 28 May 1871 to Zoé Dragoumis: 'Je me demande (...) si on n'est pas plus en sûreté dans le quartier le plus sauvage de l'Acarnanie que dans les rues de Paris.' (See Lettres à deux Athéniennes (1868-1881), Athens, Kauffmann, 1936, p. 174.)

39. Lissagaray, les Huit Journées de mai derrière les barricades, Brussels, Bureau du Petit Journal, 1871, p. 156. Cf. Lissagaray's Histoire de la Commune de 1871, p. 381: 'Il n'y a rien de pareil dans l'histoire de nos guerres civiles. (...) Les hécatombes asiatiques peuvent seules donner une idée de cette boucherie de prolétaires.'
40. Gustave Lefrançais, Souvenirs d'un révolutionnaire (texte établi et présenté par Jean Cerny), Paris, Société encyclopédique française; Editions de la Tête de feuilles, 1972, p. 433.
41. Armand Lanoux, le Coq rouge, Paris, Bernard Grasset, 1972, p. 525.
42. See, for instance, Lissagaray, les Huit journées, passim.; Maxime Vuillaume, Mes Cahiers rouges au temps de la Commune, Paris, Albin Michel, 1971 (facsimile of the 1909 edition), 'Une Journée à la Cour martiale du Luxembourg'; Victorine B[rocher], Souvenirs d'une morte vivante, Paris, François Maspero, 1976, Chapters XXV-XXVI; Paul Ginisty, Paris intime en révolution - 1871, Paris, Eugène Fasquelle, 1904, Chapter XX.

The Times wrote on 29 May of 'the inhuman laws of revenge under which the Versailles troops have been shooting, bayoneting, ripping up prisoners, women and children during the last six days', adding 'So far as we can recollect, there has been nothing like it in history.' (See Stewart Edwards, op. cit., p. 345; also Roger Magraw, France 1815-1914. The Bourgeois Century, London, Fontana, 1983, p. 201.)

Paul Bourget, who was later to be one of traditionalism's leading advocates, wrote to a friend soon after the semaine sanglante: 'Crois-tu que je pardonnerai jamais à Versailles les fusillades qui ont couvert de morts la Place du Panthéon? J'ai vu de mes propres yeux des officiers exécuter de pauvres bougres, sans jugement, là, devant moi: "Ceux-là, pris les armes à la main. D'où êtes-vous? - De... - Votre nom? - ... - Ecrivez, adjudant: Un Tel, pris sur la barricade. Tournez-vous, prisonnier." Le capitaine faisait un geste, un soldat cassait la tête, d'une balle, au malheureux. Tu ne saurais imaginer la boucherie. Le sang coulait dans les rues; au Luxembourg, les chassepots crépitaient sans interruption; on a même eu recours à des mitrailleuses. Tu ne saurais croire le dégoût que m'a inspiré ce spectacle. On reproche aux Communards d'avoir supprimé des otages; mais ils n'ont pas tué le centième de ce qu'on leur a fusillé!' (See Michel Mansuy, Un Moderne: Paul Bourget; de l'enfance au Disciple, Paris, les Belles Lettres, 1968 edition, p. 121.)

- For further indications, in Bourget's writing, of Versailles summariness, see Un Crime d'amour, Paris, Alphonse Lemerre, 1886, pp. 49-50; Recommencements, Lemerre, 1897, p. 302 (in story 'Pendant la Bataille').
43. Sutter-Laumann, Histoire d'un trente sous (1870-1871), Paris, Savine, 1891.
Sutter-Laumann, who was a contributor to la Justice and to l'Intransigeant, was born in Paris in 1852 and died there forty years later.
 44. Ibid., p. 327.
 45. Ibid., p. 355.
 46. For the figures supplied, see Jacques Rougerie, op. cit., pp. 19-20; Bruhat, Dautry, Tersen, op. cit., p. 292. Cf. Alexandre Zévaès, Histoire de la Troisième République, Paris, Editions de la Nouvelle Revue Critique, 1938, p. 52; Bernard Noël, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 165.
 47. Writing to Hippolyte Rodrigues on 3 March (the day Prussian troops withdrew from Paris) Georges Bizet was in no apparent doubt as to the requisite approach should an uprising ever take place:
'Les émeutiers ne peuvent être que des canailles ou des fous. Nous les tuerons...'
(...)
(...) *Puisque ces malhonnêtes gens sont un obstacle au progrès, à la liberté, aux réformes sociales, à l'instruction, à la sécurité de tout et de tous, supprimons-les, et vivons, et marchons!*
(...) *si nous devons avoir la douleur de voir encore la sang répandu dans les rues de Paris, l'ordre sortira de cette épreuve plus solide que jamais.'*
See Michel Cardoze, op. cit., pp. 136-137.
 48. See Flaubert's letter of 30 April to George Sand (Oeuvres complètes, Club de l'Honnête homme, Vol. 14, p. 641); Ernest Renan's letter of 17 July 1871 to Doctor Suquet (Vol. 10 of the Oeuvres complètes de Ernest Renan, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, n.d., pp. 570-572); Louise Colet's letter of 13 June 1871 (supplied in 1871. La Commune de Paris (Collection 'les Reporters de l'histoire'), pp. 102-111). In his letter for the Sémaphore de Marseille published on 28 April 1871, Zola referred also to the Commune's fighting forces, *'...encore tout secoués par les émotions du siège...'* (see Roger Ripoll, 'Zola et les Communards', Europe ('Zola'), April-May 1968, pp. 16-26; p. 21).
 49. See her letter of 13 June 1871, op. cit., in particular pp. 107-110.
 50. Quoted by J. M. Roberts, The Paris Commune from the Right, The English Historical Review, supplement 6, London, Longman, 1973, p. 13.

51. Ibid., p. 14.
52. Hippolyte Taine had been reliably informed (he wrote to his wife on 28 March) that '*...les menées et l'argent bonapartistes sont pour beaucoup là-dedans*' (H. Taine, op. cit., pp. 76-77). Louise Colet, in her missive of 13 June, maintained that several of the Commune's leaders had been the dubious creatures of the fallen ruler: '*...ils s'étaient formés dans la presse gagée par Napoléon III, et à coup sûr plusieurs étaient restés les agents secrets de l'ex-Empereur*' (1871. La Commune de Paris, p. 106).
53. The newspaper le Soir, in its issue of 2 April 1871, revealed on good authority that Karl Marx, leader of the General Council of the Association, had served Bismarck as private secretary in 1857, remaining in contact with the statesman even after quitting his employ. The story gained ground, and the 'facts' seemed to speak for themselves: Marx was a Prussian agent, and Bismarck the actual leader of the International! See Boris Nicolaievsky and Otto Maenchen-Helfen, Karl Marx: Man and Fighter, Penguin Books, 1976, p. 356.
54. '*L'Internationale, cette franc-maçonnerie du crime, dont le drapeau n'a d'autre couleur que celle du sang, trônait et régnait à l'Hôtel de Ville. Elle avait recruté les routiers et les malandrins de l'Europe entière*' (Paul de Saint-Victor, Barbares et bandits. La Prusse et la Commune, Paris, Lévy frères, 1871, Chapter XVII, 'L'Orgie rouge'; quoted by Jacques Rougerie, op. cit., p. 57); '*L'armée de l'émeute (...) s'était recrutée à l'étranger autant qu'en France. On y comptait des forçats, des repris de justice, toute la tourbe misérable qui grouille dans les profondeurs des sociétés modernes*' (Ernest Daudet, op. cit., p. 7; cf. pp. 148-149); '*Ils ont avec eux beaucoup d'étrangers, Italiens, Anglais, Allemands même et d'autres affiliés de la Jacquerie universelle*' (H. Taine, letter of 5 April to his wife, op. cit., p. 93; cf. p. 105); '*Tous les vagabonds, (...) tous les gens sans aveu, (...) tous les repris de justice, (...) tous les vauriens de l'Europe (...) se sont rués sur Paris comme sur une riche proie à piller*' ([Emile Chevalet], Mon Journal pendant le siège et la Commune. Par un Bourgeois de Paris. Paris, Librairie des contemporains, 1871, p. 278).

In a despatch sent on 6 June 1871, Jules Favre advised French diplomatic representatives to emphasise the dangers of the International to foreign governments (see Jacques Rougerie, op. cit., pp. 33-34). On 14 March 1872, the loi Dufaure was passed in the National Assembly, outlawing membership of the Association internationale des Travailleurs or of any similar organisation '*...qui aura pour but de provoquer à la suspension du travail, à l'abolition du droit de propriété, de la famille, de la patrie, de la religion ou du libre exercice des cultes.*'

On the actual extent of Internationalist influence during the Commune - the stories in circulation among possédants were of the stuff of myth - see Jacques Rougerie, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-39. For information respecting the Commune's sizeable foreign contingent, see Bruhat, Dautry, Tersen, *op. cit.*, pp. 234-235; also Bruhat, Tersen, Gosset, Soukhomline, 'Le mouvement ouvrier international et la Commune de Paris', Cahiers internationaux, no. 16, May 1950, pp. 31-62.

55. See Christophe Campos, The View of France (from Arnold to Bloomsbury), London, Oxford University Press, 1965, pp. 43-44.
56. The appraisal of the situation in Paris offered by the Comtesse de Ségur after 8 February would suggest that the masses were so far removed from herself and her kind as to be of another planet:
'Paris l'aura bien mérité! On sera tranquille au moins pour délibérer, sans crainte d'un envahissement par l'émeute. Les élections ont été par trop mauvaises: plus de 200.000 voix données à un bandit comme Garibaldi! Les affaires de Paris vont horriblement... On a eu l'imbécillité de laisser ces sauvages s'emparer des hauteurs, des canons, des mitrailleuses, des forts, des mairies, de l'état-major, des casernes, des gares; on ne sait plus par où, ni comment les prendre.' (See Jacques Chenevrière, la Comtesse de Ségur, Paris, Gallimard, 1932, p. 205.) Cf. Edmond and Jules de Goncourt, Journal (4 vols.), Paris, Fasquelle/Flammarion, 1956; Vol. II, p. 753 (entry for 28 March).
 For a consideration of the manner in which the people were regarded by their social 'superiors', see Paul Lidsky, les Ecrivains contre la Commune, Paris, François Maspero, 1970, pp. 22-26 and *passim*.
57. C. A. Dauban, Le Fond de la Société sous la Commune, Paris, Plon, 1873, p. 5.
58. E. Caro, les Jours d'épreuve. 1870-1871, Paris, Hachette, 1872, p. 246 (in article 'la Fin de la Bohème').
59. *Ibid.*, p. 253.
60. Sarrepoint, *op. cit.*, p. 366. *Ibid.*, pp. 8, 255 ('...ce peuple en faveur duquel M. Hugo puise en son coeur des trésors d'indulgence').
61. See A. Dupuy, *op. cit.*, p. 172. Cf. Edmond Biré, Victor Hugo après 1852, Paris, Perrin, 1894, p. 252: 'Ses écrits socialistes, ses appels révolutionnaires, sa glorification à outrance de Paris ne laissaient pas d'être pour beaucoup dans l'insurrection parisienne. Il avait, pour sa part, attisé l'incendie.'

62. See Victor Hugo, Oeuvres politiques complètes - Oeuvres diverses, Paris, Jean-Jacques Pauvert, 1964, pp. 1454 (entry for 15 June), 1468 (entry for 19 October).
63. Paul Delion, les Membres de la Commune et du Comité central, Paris, Alphonse Lemerre, 1871, p. 111.
64. '*... (L)es absurdes théories pour lesquelles des dupes, égarées par des ambitieux, combattent et meurent, en croyant combattre et mourir pour le salut de la patrie et le bonheur de leurs enfants!*' (Beaumont-Vassy, op. cit., p. 88; cf. Edmond de Pressensé, op. cit., p. 563); '*... les pauvres diables qu(e la Commune) envoyait aux remparts, enfiévrés de faux patriotisme et de faux vin, mi-héros et mi-ivrognes qui mouraient inconsciemment d'insolations et d'éclats d'obus*' (Ludovic Hans, op. cit., p. 190); '*... c'était le despotisme de la foule que l'on espérait mettre à la place du pouvoir détruit. On pensait régner par elle et avec elle; ne tenait-on pas dans ses mains le coeur de la populace? Serait-il donc si difficile de la diriger au gré de ses convoitises?*' (E. Caro, op. cit., p. 220).
65. For further instances of this, see Paul Lidsky, op. cit., pp. 156-158 and passim.
66. Henry Morel, le Pilori des Communeux, Paris, E. Lachaud, 1871: Avant-propos, v.
67. Ibid., vi.
68. Ibid., viii-x.
69. From Barbares et bandits. La Prusse et la Commune. Quoted by Jacques Rougerie, op. cit., p. 56.
70. See for instance E. and J. de Goncourt, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 769-770 (entry for 16 April 1871): '*Ne vois-je pas, déjà, (l)es hommes (de la Commune) assis avec leurs épouses sur mon boulevard et disant tout haut, en regardant nos villas: "Quand la Commune sera fondée, nous serons joliment bien là-dedans?"*'
71. See Flaubert's letter of 31 March to George Sand (op. cit., Vol. 14, p. 633): '*C'est carré, la question des loyers, particulièrement, est splendide. Le gouvernement se mêle maintenant de droit naturel, il intervient dans les contrats entre particuliers. La Commune affirme qu'on ne doit pas ce qu'on doit, et qu'un service ne se paie pas par un autre service. C'est énorme d'ineptie et d'injustice!*'
72. Ernest Daudet, op. cit., p. 151.

73. See E. and J. de Goncourt, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 808-809 (entry for 23 May); Catulle Mendès, les 73 Journées de la Commune, Paris, E. Lachaud, 1871, pp. 311; 325-326. Cf. Louise Colet's letter of 13 June 1871 (*op. cit.*, p. 102).
74. See Bruhat, Dautry, Tersen, *op. cit.*, p. 287.
75. John McManners, Church and State in France, 1870-1914, London, S.P.C.K., 1972, p. 81.
On de Mun's life and career, see Benjamin F. Martin, Count Albert de Mun, Paladin of the Third Republic, Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1978.
76. See Adrien Dansette, Histoire religieuse de la France contemporaine, (2 vols.), Paris, Flammarion, 1948-1951; see Vol. I, p. 465.
77. E. and J. de Goncourt, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 819 (entry for 31 May).
78. *Ibid.*, p. 820.
79. See Léon Daudet, Panorama de la III^e République, Paris, Gallimard, 1936 (23rd edition), p. 15.
It may be noted in passing that one of the titles Zola considered as a possibility for the novel eventually entitled Germinal was, in fact, l'Assiette au beurre. In view of the argument, frequently expressed, that much of Germinal can be read as a 'post-Communard' text (see Roger Ripoll, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-24; Paul Lidsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 93, 110-111, 114-115; Henri Mitterand, 'les Ecrivains et la Commune', la Nouvelle critique, December 1971, pp. 54-61, see p. 60; Colette Becker's introduction to the edition of Germinal published by Garnier in 1979 - lv), Forain's anecdote acquires a particular interest. An eventual evening of scores on the part of the working classes is, of course, suggested in Germinal's concluding pages.
80. Poems written by Pottier during the 1880's convey in essence, if not quite in spirit, the message of Germinal's final chapter. In one of two poems composed in tribute to Jules Vallès, Pottier (writing probably in 1886) heralded the coming of Germinal '...ce mois subtil / Où dans le sang la sève bouge' ('A Jules Vallès'; Eugène Pottier, Oeuvres complètes, Paris, François Maspero, 1966, pp. 164-165). Elsewhere, the fiery apocalypse to one day engulf the nantis was anticipated: 'Il vient le jour de l'action, / Où la féroce Bourgeoisie / Entendra, Révolution, crépiter ton vaste incendie' ('Jules Vallès', *Ibid.*, pp. 159-160; cf. 'Elle n'est pas morte', pp. 165-166).

81. Karl Marx/Frederick Engels, Collected Works, Volume 22: Marx and Engels: 1870-71. London, Lawrence & Wishart, 1986, p. 355.
82. See Charles Rihs, la Commune de Paris, 1871. Sa Structure et ses doctrines, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1973, p. 19.
83. See, with respect to the political and social climate in France during the 1870's, Bruhat, Dautry, Tersen, op. cit., pp. 353-360; Henri Mitterand, 'Littérature et société en 1875', Europe ('1875'), November-December 1975, pp. 14-30; Jean-Marie Mayeur, la Vie politique sous la Troisième République: 1870-1940, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1984, Chapters 1-3.
84. See Jean Bruhat, 'la Commune et les origines de la III^e République'; in Europe ('1875'), November-December 1975, pp. 6-14; see p. 10. Cf. Marcelle Auclair, La Vie de Jaurès ou la France d'avant 1914, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1954, pp. 49-50.
85. See Alexandre Zévaès, op. cit., p. 55.
86. Une Idylle pendant le siège, which was serialised in le Moniteur universel in 1872, appeared in book form in 1875. See M. de Lescure, François Coppée, Paris, Alphonse Lemerre, 1889, pp. 384-391.
87. The contes dealing solely or partially with the Commune are: 'Paysages d'insurrection'; 'la Mort de Chauvin'; 'le Turco de la Commune'; 'la Bataille du Père-Lachaise'; 'les Petits pâtés'; 'Monologue à bord'; 'les Fées de France'; relevant also are 'Arthur' and 'les Trois Sommations'.
88. See, in this collection of stories, 'Monsieur Cardinal', 'Histoire d'une robe de bal', 'l'Insurgé', 'Mistingue et Lenglumé'. Cf. Ludovic Halévy, Notes et souvenirs 1871-1872, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1889.
89. France, in his preface to the original edition of the novel (published by Calmann-Lévy) stated that a version of les Désirs de Jean Servien had been written ten years before (see Anatole France, Oeuvres I, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, Gallimard, 1984, pp. 429-430). In an important study devoted to Anatole France, Jean Levaillant provides convincing evidence that while an outline of the book may have been prepared in the wake of the Commune, the principal composition must have taken place between 1878 and 1881 (see Les Aventures du scepticisme. Essai sur l'évolution intellectuelle d'Anatole France, Paris, Armand Colin, 1965, pp. 124-143; in particular pp. 124-125, n. 104). For a full consideration of the novel's genesis and sources, see the 'Notice' and 'Notes' supplied by Marie-Claire Bancquart in the Pléiade edition cited above (pp. 1184-1221).
90. See E. and J. de Goncourt, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 550-551 (entry for 23 March 1886).

91. See Maria and Godfrey Blunden/ Jean-Luc Daval, Journal de l'impressionnisme (translated by Margaret and André Chenais), Geneva, Skira, 1973, pp. 107, 110, 113. Cf. George Slocombe, Rebels of Art. Manet to Matisse, Port Washington, New York, Kennikat Press (1969 reissue), p. 101; Guy Chapman, The Third Republic of France. The First Phase, 1871-1894, London, MacMillan, 1962, p. 190; F. W. Hemmings, Culture and Society in France 1848-1898, London, Batsford, 1971, p. 202.
92. Similarly, the legitimist Armand de Pontmartin (also a collaborator for the Gazette de France) wrote that while he had little choice but to accept the advent of Republic and Democracy, toleration of Zola and the '93 littéraire' was more that he could endure:
'Mais L'Assommoir! mais M. Zola! mais les romans de M. Zola! Encore une fois, non, non! Un 93 politique peut me guillotiner, jamais le 93 littéraire ne me fera dire que l'ordure est une beauté, que la puanteur est une baume.' See Alexandre Zévaès, A la Gloire de... Zola, Paris, Editions de la Nouvelle Revue Critique, 1945, p. 61.
93. See Alexandre Zévaès, les Procès littéraires au XIX^e siècle, Paris, Librairie Académique Perrin, 1924, pp. 189-197. For a contemporary report on the hearing, cf. Fernand de Rodays' column 'Gazette des Tribunaux' in le Figaro, Sunday 16 April 1876, p. 2. De Rodays' comments on the subject of 'Une Maudite' are of course sarcastic and dismissive.
94. Quoted by Alec Craig Above all Liberties, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1942, p. 151.
95. Armand de Pontmartin, le Correspondant, 94 (March 1874), p. 1183. Quoted by Max Bach, 'Critique littéraire ou critique politique? Les Derniers romans de Hugo vus par les contemporains', The French Review, October 1954, pp. 27-34; see p. 31.
96. Amédée Achard, le Journal des Débats, 8 March 1874. Quoted by Max Bach, op cit., p. 30.
97. A. Grenier, Paris-Journal, 28 February 1874; see Max Bach, p. 31.
98. Polybiblion, XII (August 1874), pp. 69-70; see Max Bach, p. 31. Quatrevingt-treize (as Jean-Bertrand Barrère writes) '*...est directement rattaché au choc émotif qu'ont produit sur Hugo les événements de 1870-1871*' (J.-B. Barrère, Victor Hugo, Paris, Hatier, 1967, p. 256). See also Guy Rosa, 'Massacrer les massacres', in l'Arc (N^o 57, 'Victor Hugo'), 1972, pp. 72-80.
99. For the complete text of Hugo's letter to l'Indépendance belge, see the Oeuvres politiques complètes - Oeuvres diverses, Jean-Jacques Pauvert, 1964, pp. 705-706; and for Hugo's account of the incident outside, and attack upon, his home, *ibid.*, pp. 1451-1452, entry for 27 May.

To be noted in passing are the comments of Louis Etienne in a review of *l'Année terrible* (*Revue des deux mondes*, 15 July 1872, pp. 439-456, see pp. 440-442):

'...cette balance qu(e Hugo) s'imagine tenir entre le gouvernement de la république et la commune, comme s'il pouvait y avoir une balance entre l'état et des rebelles, entre la nation indignée et des insurgés pillards et sanguinaires.

...sa prétendue impartialité entre les révoltés coupables de meurtres, d'incendies et les soldats frappant au nom de la loi...

...ses complaisances ou ses faiblesses envers le parti de l'insurrection...'

There is no dearth of material relating to Hugo's view of the Commune. One may cite, however, Pierre Albouy, 'Victor Hugo et la Commune', *la Pensée*, N° 35, March-April 1951, pp. 59-65.

100. See Gérard Delfau, 'De la Terreur à la Commune: Jules Vallès, lecteur de "Quatrevingt-treize"'; in *les Ecrivains français devant la Guerre de 1870 et la Commune* (Colloque - 7 novembre 1970), Paris, Armand Colin, 1972, pp. 137-152; cf. Gérard Delfau, *Jules Vallès, l'exil à Londres 1871-1880*, Paris, Bordas, 1971, pp. 353-359; also Hedia Balafrej, 'Hugo lu par Vallès', *les Amis de Jules Vallès*, *Revue littéraire* N° 2 - octobre 1985, pp. 273-280, see pp. 279-281.
101. See Gérard Delfau, 'Jules Vallès, lecteur de "Quatrevingt-treize"', op. cit., p. 143. The sentence in brackets was removed from the French version of the article published in the *Revue anglo-française*.
102. A further text by Lissagaray relating to the Commune appeared in 1873. *La Vision de Versailles* (Brussels, Librairie socialiste, 31 p.) recounts the terror of the deputies of the National Assembly - gathered in rancorous dissension one chill December afternoon in 1872 - as the spectres of some of the thousands slaughtered during the *semaine sanglante* rise before them in grim, hardly silent accusation. The 'case for the prosecution' concluded, the deputies scuttle from the Chamber only to find, closing in menace about them, the ghosts of many more of the thirty thousand victims of the repression. The fictional (or supernatural) element in the text serves as little more than a framework for justification or explanation of the Commune, and for attempted rectification of the myths so freely propagated in France. Within the context of this openly fantastic piece of writing, exaction of vengeance could also be contemplated by Lissagaray. As the story ends, these men who had applauded the persecution and massacre of the Communards eighteen months previously are being herded through the still night...
103. See Henri Baudrillart, 'les Papiers de la Commune', *Revue des deux mondes*, Vol. I, 1874, pp. 887-913; see p. 887.

104. P.-O. Lissagaray, Histoire de la Commune de 1871, Paris, François Maspero, 1976, p. 14 (Préface de la première édition (1876)).
105. Ibid., p. 14.
106. Ibid., p. 7 (mentioned by Jean Maitron in his foreword).
107. Maxime Du Camp, les Convulsions de Paris, Vol. II, iii.
108. Anatole France was clearly drawing upon les Convulsions de Paris for certain episodes in les Desirs de Jean Servien (see L. J. Levaillant, op. cit., pp. 124-125, n. 104; 129, n. 126; 141, n. 187; also Anatole France, Oeuvres I, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade; 'Notes', pp. 1219-1220). Similarly, Paul Bourget - in those passages of Nos Actes nous suivent in which Georges Fresnelay is describing his work as a scientist for the Commune - may be seen to have borrowed a number of effects from les Convulsions (Hachette, Vol IV, 1880; chapter 4, section i). Fresnelay's explosive is intended to kill 'vingt mille Versaillais à la demi-heure' (Nos Actes, Paris, Plon, 1927, Vol. I; cf. les Convulsions, IV, p. 296). References to Parisel (head of the scientific delegation) and to Avrial and Assi (NA, I, p. 34; Convulsions, IV, p. 298); mention of the accident befalling Alexandre Décot (NA, I, p. 34; Convulsions, IV, p. 302) and of 'la science révolutionnaire' (NA, I, p. 34; Convulsions, IV, p. 304) are further elements common to the two texts. When, twenty-five days after commencing research, Fresnelay returns to the offices of le Cri du Peuple with a chemical formula, Vallès is momentarily suspicious at Fresnelay's apparent open-mindedness on the question of the name to be given his discovery ('(Vallès savait sans doute qu'au même moment un savant de premier ordre, M. Borme, était fortement soupçonné de mystifier Raoul Rigault qui lui avait commandé, sous la menace de lui "faire passer le goût du pain", de découvrir le moyen de "rostopchiner" Paris!...' (NA, I, pp. 34-35); and in this Bourget's reading of les Convulsions de Paris is again apparent, albeit with distortion in one instance (cf. Convulsions, IV, p. 307). An inventor referred to by Du Camp ('Un Suisse exerçant illégalement la médecine à Paris, et dont la Commune avait fait un colonel directeur d'arsenal, avait inventé des bombes asphyxiantes qu'il avait fait adopter par la délégation scientifique' (Convulsions, IV, pp. 302-303)) seems to present some parallel with Fresnelay (in neither case is the particular invention actually made). When endeavouring in the United States to cut all ties with his past, Fresnelay claims to be of Swiss birth (NA, I, p. 60).
109. An early version of l'Insurgé had appeared in Juliette Adam's la Nouvelle Revue in 1882. Vallès himself died on 14 February 1885; his protégée Séverine carried out a revision of the text, which was published in book form in May 1886.
110. Le Bilatéral. Mœurs révolutionnaires parisiennes (Paris, Savine) was one of many novels written in collaboration by Joseph Henri

Boex (1856-1940) and his younger brother Séraphin Justin (1859-1948). Works written conjointly appeared under the name 'J. H. Rosny'. Le Bilatéral consists substantially of often tedious conversations in which workers representing a variety of political tendencies debate social issues.

111. See Howard Sutton, The Life and Work of Jean Richepin, Geneva/Paris, Droz/Minard, 1961, pp. 258-262.
Cf. Adolphe Brisson, 'Livres et Revues', les Annales politiques et littéraires, 27 May 1888, pp. 348-349; Maxime Gaucher, Revue bleue. Politique et littéraire, 2 June 1888, pp. 701-702; Gustave Kahn, 'Chronique de la littérature et de l'art', Revue indépendante, June 1888, pp. 535-537.
112. See Eugène Schulkind, 'la Littérature de la Commune'; unpublished thesis submitted for the degree of Docteur ès lettres at the University of Paris, 1951; p. 227.
113. See Lucien Descaves' preface to I.N.R.I., Paris, Librairie Valois, Collection 'Romans du nouvel Age', 1931; p. 8.
114. The text of I.N.R.I. as reproduced in the sole edition of the novel is riddled with inaccuracies, inconsistencies and repetitions that would in all probability have been removed had Cladel been in a position to review the work before its publication. A number only are indicated here. Errors in proper names ('Herpin, Lavoix, Verdagne et Lagrange' (p. 166) instead of Herpin-Lacroix, Verdagner, Lagrange; Chalin for Chalain (p. 178); Billot for Billet, Zeutz for Zentz (p. 210); elsewhere Courmet for Cournet, Milière for Millièrre, Baboeuf for Babeuf, Mallet for Malet) can sometimes be explained, one presumes, by faulty decipherment of Cladel's handwriting. We are told (p. 200) in the account of the sortie of 3 April, of the activities of the 9th (not the 91st) battalion; similarly, Orsini's attempt on the life of Napoleon III is said to have taken place not in 1857 but in 1867 (p. 191). Other mistakes (the Hungarian Léo Frankel is said (p. 178) to be German; Wroblewski, born in 1836, is described on p. 243 as '*le sincère socialiste qui n'avait pas encore atteint sa trentaine*') might be attributed, conceivably, to the fact that available information concerning the backgrounds of leading Communards tended sometimes to be inaccurate in such matters. Inconsistencies as to time are evident when the events of 22 January are reported ('*Donc, à l'aurore, ce matin, nous nous dirigeâmes vers Mazas (...). ...le soir, assemblés, nous décidâmes de renverser le lendemain ceux qui depuis le 4 septembre ont commis toutes les fautes, tous les crimes. Aujourd'hui donc, ainsi que nous nous l'étions proposé la veille, nous allâmes, à midi, visiter les Autorités en leur palais qu'ils nous ont volé...*' etc. (p. 130); similarly, in the account of developments on 18 March (pp. 149-150). It was clearly Cladel's intention at the outset to have Urbaine's father die at the

barricades in December 1851 (p. 37); her mother is said (p. 35) to have been the widow of an insurgent. Fifty pages later, however, Urbaine's parents have both given their lives... in June 1848.

For a consideration of some important themes in I.N.R.I., see Anne Roche, 'Le Chiffre effacé. Note sur la représentation de la Commune dans "I.N.R.I." de Léon Cladel', in les Ecrivains français devant la guerre de 1870 et la Commune, Paris, Armand Colin, 1972, pp. 173-180.

115. The following might be considered one of the novel's milder passages:

'...on buvait partout, l'air sentait le vin. Ce peuple grisé croyait prendre possession du pouvoir, et pour l'éternité. Enfin, on avait le droit de gueuler son enthousiasme au plein soleil, de casser des litres à la gloire de la République, de baiser sur la bouche, bon gré, mal gré, les filles qui passaient.

(...) Qu'est-il au monde de meilleur que de brailler en liberté, le ventre plein, le coeur à l'aise; vive les dimanches perpétuels, les rires de la place publique, les tapes dans le dos, la gaieté franche! Vive la Commune!

(...) C'était la revanche idéale de vingt siècles de servitude. La bourgeoisie horrifiée se terrait dans ses repaires. Le peuple avait à lui, la rue, la ville, Paris. Demain, il aurait la France, et, bientôt, l'Univers...

...ces pourceaux enragés, livrés à eux-mêmes, célébraient la gloire du prolétaire en bavant aux goulots des bouteilles. (...)

...sur les escaliers, dans les caves, sous les combles, la fête plébéienne détonnait ses chants immondes, ses hoquets d'ivresse.' Maurice Montégut, Le Mur. Mars - avril - mai 1871, Paris, E. Dentu, 1892, pp. 145-147.

Cf. Paul Lidzky, op. cit., p. 123.

116. *'On reprochait à Paris ses hécatombes; Versailles les quintupla, avec, en plus, l'appareil d'un spectre de Justice aux oreilles bouchées'* (Le Mur, p. 311).

'Tuerie infâme, - vengeance honteuse, égarée, stupide, - stigmaté d'un temps, lâcheté d'une nation, - semence à pleines mains jetée des révoltes futures, - fossé de sang! En avaient-ils tant fait, ces soutiens inconscients d'une révolution qui n'était pas la leur? Puis, quand même, les pires criminels torturés de la sorte, se survivent martyrs! C'est ta peur qui les tue, ô Société! Le juste est obligé de pardonner leur vie, en racontant leur mort' (Ibid., p. 407).

117. Elemir Bourges, les Oiseaux s'envolent et les fleurs tombent, Paris, Mercure de France, 1964, p. 37.

118. Inspired almost certainly by the return of such exiles as Jules Vallès (who crossed from London following declaration of the total amnesty on 11 July), Jacques Damour appeared in August 1880 in the Saint Petersburg journal le Messager de l'Europe. Zola planned to republish the story (under the title 'Un Communard') later the same year, in a newspaper Joris-Karl Huysmans was hoping to establish. Huysmans' venture foundered, and it was only in 1883 (when le Figaro serialised Jacques Damour from 27 April to 2 May) that the French public had the opportunity to read the story. Word of its content had evidently reached certain circles in France soon after its publication in Russia; for the socialist Intransigeant (founded by Henri Rochefort on his return to Paris in July 1880) had criticised Jacques Damour in its number of 23 September as a slanderous caricature of the Paris Communard. (See Emile Zola, Correspondance, Vol. IV, Montreal/Paris, 1983, pp. 113, n. 5; 116.)
119. See for instance, with respect to la Débâcle, Henri Guillemin, Présentation des Rougon-Macquart, Paris, Gallimard, 1964, pp. 385-387, and in Vol. V of les Rougon-Macquart, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, pp. 1417-1420 (a letter to Zola from the former Communard Paul Martine) and pp. 1550-1560 (the 'Notes et variantes' relating to the novel's final chapters).
- If, in his penultimate Rougon-Macquart text, Zola does not camouflage the savagery of the Versailles repression, the sentence '*Combien de braves gens pour un gredin, parmi les douze mille malheureux à qui la Commune avait coûté la vie!*' might be considered to provide incisive illustration of his seemingly limited sense of equity where the Commune was concerned.
120. Gloria Victis. L'Armée française devant l'invasion, et les erreurs de la Débâcle, par un capitaine de l'armée de Metz, Paris, Lavauzelle, 1895, p. 158. Quoted by Helen Rufener, Biography of a War Novel. Zola's La Débâcle, New York, King's Crown Press, 1946; p. 85.
121. See les Rougon-Macquart, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, Vol. V, p. 1449.
122. *Ibid.*, p. 1449.
123. In addition to titles already quoted elsewhere, one may note: Eugène Schulkind, 'la Commune de 1871 à travers sa littérature', published in two parts in la Pensée, No. 35, March-April 1951, pp. 29-47; No. 36, 1951, pp. 70-82; M. Rebérioux, 'Roman, Théâtre et Chanson: Quelle Commune?', la Commune de 1871, Colloque de Paris (mai 1971), Paris, les Editions ouvrières, 1972, pp. 273-292; Anne Roche/Gérard Delfau, 'la Commune et le roman français', *ibid.*, pp. 293-318; Anne Roche, 'le Roman et la Commune. Jalons pour une description', in 1871. Jalons pour une histoire de la Commune de Paris, Paris, Presses universitaires de France, pp. 552-583. See also J. S. Wood, 'la Commune dans le roman', in

- Images of the Commune/Images de la Commune, (editor J. A. Leith), Montreal/London, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978: pp. 69-81.
124. See Paul Lidsky, op. cit., passim.
125. In his article 'Psychologie d'un révolutionnaire' (le Parlement, 19 May 1881) Bourget wrote: 'Sainte-Beuve disait que dans les lettres on ne dure qu'à la condition d'être un type. A ce compte-là, l'écrivain âpre et violent qui a écrit [Jacques Vingtras et le Bachelier] durera - car il pourrait signer la Révolte.'
126. Titles devoted to Jules Vallès abound. The existence of the literary journal les Amis de Jules Vallès (the first number of which appeared in December 1984) would seem to provide further evidence of the interest generated by his writing.
127. Anne Roche/Gérard Delfau, 'la Commune et le roman français', op. cit., p. 296.
128. See Gustave Geffroy, Notre Temps I: Scènes d'histoire, Paris, Georges Crès, 1918, pp. 98-99.
129. Christopher Lloyd, 'Jules Vallès, Georges Darien et le Roman contestataire', les Amis de Jules Vallès, Revue littéraire n^o. 2, October 1985, pp. 239-250; see p. 241.
130. Le Correspondant, 25 June-2 July 1848. Quoted by Henri Guillemin, Histoire des Catholiques français au XIX^e siècle (1815-1905), Geneva/Paris/Montreal, Editions du milieu du monde, 1947, p. 201.
Cf., in translation, this extract from le National of 29 June 1848: 'The struggle these last few days (...) has been clearly and forcefully delineated. Yes, on one side there stood order, liberty, civilisation, the decent Republic, France; and on the other barbarians, desperados emerging from their lairs for massacre and looting, and odious partisans of those wild doctrines that the family is only a word and property naught but theft.' See Roger Price (editor), 1848 in France (Collection 'Documents of Revolution'), London, Thames & Hudson, 1975, p. 117.
131. Henri Guillemin, op. cit., pp. 202-203.
132. See Alexis de Tocqueville, Oeuvres complètes, Vol. XII: Souvenirs, Paris, Gallimard, 1964, p. 151.
133. Ibid., p. 158.
134. Ibid., p. 166.

CHAPTER ONE

GUSTAVE GEFFROY

In a review for the Gil Blas of 29 February 1904, Léon Blum wrote of l'Apprentie's opening pages:

Je ne crois pas qu'on ait jamais fait sentir avec autant de justesse - et sans phrases, sans développement oratoire, par la peinture précise des faits et des êtres - comment vécut, ce que pensait l'élite de la population ouvrière pendant les dernières années de l'Empire, le siège et la Commune de Paris. Le tableau, dans sa concision, est achevé. L'oeuvre d'art enferme une grave et solide étude de psychologie sociale.(1)

The highly effective sobriety of expression and emotion characterising the initial chapter will indeed be one of the features of Gustave Geffroy's novel most likely to be appreciated by a reader today. While the remainder of l'Apprentie - consisting of evocations of working-class life during the 1870's - presents at times rather less interest, Geffroy could have claimed with some justification to be breaking new ground insofar as the aftermath of the Commune, and its effect on the Paris proletariat, had received hitherto only limited attention in literature.(2)

The germ of l'Apprentie had been in the writer's mind ('...vaguement lié aux songeries de (sa) vie')(3) for many years before its eventual composition, as is apparent from a journal entry by Edmond de Goncourt for 19 August 1885. Over dinner that evening (Goncourt wrote) Geffroy had spoken of

...un livre qu'il se prépare à faire et qu'il veut me dédier, où il veut suivre et étudier une fillette du peuple jusqu'à l'âge où j'ai mené ma fillette du monde, Chérie.(4)

Goncourt by 1904 had been dead eight years, and the novel when

published would bear the dedication '*Aux Filles de Paris en témoignage d'une époque barbare*'. Such a choice, revealing of course of Geffroy's attitude to the siege and the Commune and to those he felt to have borne the chief burden of suffering during those months, is indicative also of the evolution undergone since 1885 (and outlined by Geffroy in his preface of 2 November 1918) in plans for the work. There can be little doubt that the dedication fixed upon constitutes a more pertinent reflection of the spirit of the novel than acknowledgement of literary indebtedness or affiliation would have done; and while Blum might have been correct in his view that Geffroy, '*...en tant qu'écrivain, procède évidemment de Flaubert et de Goncourt, c'est-à-dire du naturalisme artiste...*',⁽⁵⁾ other features of *l'Apprentie* invite ready comparison with Zola's work. The book would in fact be considered by such critics as Paul Flat and Léon Daudet to be not merely the most successful portrayal of French working-class existence since *l'Assommoir*, but in certain features superior to the more celebrated novel.⁽⁶⁾

Geffroy, who had lived for some years in Belleville, was able to draw upon substantial direct observation of the popular environment, and of the working man's mentality during the months in question. He had in earlier writing referred to the decisive impact of the siege upon all Parisians, in particular those in childhood or adolescence: and while he was himself fifteen at the time and able, one may assume, to assess the reality of the situation rather more lucidly than Cécile Pommier (the 'apprentice' of the title, aged seven when the novel opens in December 1870), the little girl's impressions during this period are almost certainly to a considerable degree those of her creator.⁽⁷⁾ For Geffroy, as for many other writers, representation of the events preceding and culminating in 18 March is seen to be inherent to portrayal of the Commune; it is indeed impossible, in a consideration of the insurrectionary theme in *l'Apprentie*, to divorce the sixteen pages relating to the Commune itself from the greater portion of the chapter. The entire period, as Geffroy's choice of dedication shows, is portrayed in the novel as a time of acute suffering and tragedy; and its influence, both immediate and enduring, on individual lives and

on an entire social class, will be apparent both in the opening chapter and thereafter. Cécile Pommier - whose initiation to awareness will occur appropriately enough during the turmoil of 1870-1871 - provides not infrequently, in fact, little more than a means to an end, as Geffroy would himself indicate in his preface to the 1919 edition of the novel:

...la petite Cécile Pommier a été choisie comme tenant à un groupement de famille dont elle est inséparable, à la vie sociale du faubourg de l'immense ville où elle est née, et aux immenses cataclysmes des guerres qui bouleversent les nations et changent le destin de tous les êtres. J'ai été alors conduit à la faire entrer dans la vie par la sombre porte de 1870, comme j'y suis entré moi-même, et à décrire comme scène de ses jeunes années le faubourg de Belleville, dont je crois connaître le décor et la signification. La guerre étrangère et la guerre civile font voir leurs flammes et font entendre leurs voix violentes aux premières pages de ce livre, qui en garde les reflets et les échos jusqu'à la fin...(8)

For the Pommier family the legacy of the siege and the Commune will be cruel indeed. At the conclusion of the first chapter, both sons are dead, Justin the elder slain by a Prussian bullet at Buzenval, Jean (by true nature '*si bon, si tendre*') shot '*comme un chien enragé*' (A 380) in the Père-Lachaise. The wall of the cemetery (before which he has, in all probability, met his end) is seen to loom ominously at intervals in the course of the novel and with particular significance in its final pages. The decline into alcoholism of père Pommier - a good-hearted though unremarkable individual who had been one of the thousands to play a role in February and June 1848 - is attributable in substantial measure to his inactivity during the months of siege, to a consequent disinclination to work on a return to normal circumstances, and - far more decisively - to the loss of his sons, '*...ces deux grands enfants sur lesquels il faisait reposer naïvement et tranquillement son avenir*' (A 63-64). By his death eight years later - in a fit of alcoholic raving at the Sainte-Anne asylum - père Pommier is seen like Zola's Coupeau to be representative of many in a milieu in which the grog-shop offers an all-too-ready balm for the disappointments and privations of life.(9) While one might quite plausibly argue that the

old worker's alcoholism is attributable largely to weakness of character, there can be no doubt, in the context of Geffroy's novel, that this personal deficiency has been greatly accentuated by the sense of hopelessness the tragedies of 1870-1871 have bequeathed the working classes. It is in part Geffroy's objective throughout l'Apprentie to point to iniquities in the social environment of which the Pommiers are representative; and the cataclysm of the siege and the Commune is seen to have weakened even further the defences of those for whom life would in any case present innumerable temptations, dangers and hardships. Mère Pommier - who by her silent courage in the face of adversity assumes an almost martyr-like role in l'Apprentie - will watch the gradual disintegration of her family circle with the tragic awareness of how different life might have been had the siege and the Commune not occurred.

Lucien Descaves, who was on terms of close friendship with Geffroy, regarded him apparently as something of a kindred spirit (*'Il montrait le même goût que moi pour les indépendants et les révoltés...'*);⁽¹⁰⁾ and Geffroy, in the course of his career as a journalist, author and art critic was to give more than one indication of a certain independence of attitude. He was from July 1880 a collaborator for the radical newspaper la Justice, founded by Clemenceau and Camille Pelletan in January of that year, and to count also on its staff Charles Longuet, a former participant in the Commune. The journal had contributed vigorously to the campaign in favour of a general amnesty for the Communards, and, indeed, serialised Vallès' novel les Blouses from 21 June until 28 July 1880, at which point alternative material (and the promulgation of the amnesty eighteen days previously) made continued publication less imperative.⁽¹¹⁾ On one occasion - soon, no doubt, after Vallès' return from exile - Geffroy apparently glimpsed the former Communard without actually making his acquaintance: an opportunity to do so was never again to present itself. The future author of l'Apprentie would seem to have admired Vallès' writing, for he recommended les Blouses to Descaves, whom he had met in 1879. It may be noted that thirty-nine years after the

general amnesty, both Geffroy and Descaves suggested that the Académie Goncourt (of which they were members) arrange for the publication of the works of certain little read authors of literary worth, notably Vallès himself.(12)

Perhaps best remembered today for his studies in art, Geffroy acquired some notoriety as a champion of Impressionism at a time when the movement was viewed with general incomprehension and distaste. With a very few others, Jean Vallery-Radot wrote:

...il partage l'honneur d'avoir dessillé les yeux de ses contemporains, contribuant, pour une large part, à ruiner les réputations usurpées et à remettre à leur place, la première, les artistes incompris ou méprisés de son temps...(13)

Geffroy was also one of the fifty-four writers to sign a petition in 1889 calling for Descaves' acquittal on charges arising from an unflattering portrayal of army life in Sous-offs. He applauded the verdict (in Descaves' favour) when it was announced in court on 15 March 1890; thus incurring - unwittingly no doubt - the risk of a two-year prison sentence.(14) Rather more significantly, he took up the cudgels for the dreyfusard cause, writing seventeen articles for l'Aurore between 24 November 1897 and 27 July 1906. Geffroy's most important single contribution to literature was perhaps l'Enfermé, a study of Auguste Blanqui published in 1897, and to which ten years of research had been devoted. Blanqui, for many Frenchmen in the nineteenth century, seemed the epitome of revolutionary spirit; and while Geffroy may not have admired unreservedly this all-important aspect of his subject's life, there can be no doubt either of his deep fundamental sympathy for a man who had spent nearly forty of his seventy-six years as a prisoner of succeeding conservative regimes.

The compassion for the working classes apparent throughout l'Apprentie would perhaps alone prevent categorisation of Geffroy as a writer unequivocally hostile to the Commune. It cannot be claimed, on the other hand, that he was in any way advocating the legitimacy in the

circumstances of violent social upheaval. It is of course in portrayal of Jean Pommier (who after his brother's death will succumb totally to revolutionary fever) that the essence of Geffroy's message with respect to the Commune is conveyed; and much of the dramatic interest of the first chapter lies in the anguished and unavailing struggle by mère Pommier - whose attitude to violence is a reflection of Geffroy's own - to dissuade her second son from a foreseeably tragic course. Geffroy implicitly deplures in l'Apprentie the fact of civil war waged in the presence of victorious German forces; and while the wrong-headed bellicosity of young Pommier (supposedly representative in his creator's view of the better type of federate) is seen to be largely pardonable given the hardship, injustice and deception to which he and thousands like him have been subjected over preceding months, the Commune is nonetheless portrayed as a time of madness, an aberration defended by misguided 'exaltés'. There is furthermore on Geffroy's part no explicit censure - in l'Apprentie at least - of the Government of National Defence, the National Assembly or of Adolphe Thiers himself.

Notwithstanding the apparent cautiousness of the opening chapter (a cautiousness which might almost be felt at times to verge on connivance with the bourgeois order) there can be little doubt, as will be seen, as to Geffroy's abhorrence of the Versailles repression. The restraint evident in his evocation of the semaine sanglante - and to be maintained in subsequent depiction of various iniquities characterising the popular environment - is seen in fact to be highly effective not merely in literary terms. A review of l'Apprentie by Maurice Hamel (a critic for les Arts de la Vie) concurs with the views expressed by Léon Blum and contains furthermore what may be considered a not inapt appraisal of the tone and approach manifest throughout the novel:

Le haut esprit d'amour et de sympathie humaine qui anime l'Apprentie d'un bout à l'autre lui imprime une allure calme et puissante, également éloignée des trémolos du mélodrame et de la romance, de la sensiblerie pleurarde et de la déclamation vaine. Geffroy ne s'indigne pas, ne démontre pas, ne se pose pas en moraliste amer ni en réformateur sûr de son fait. Dans sa pure conscience d'artiste, il se défend tous les effets gros et faciles.

(15)

Geffroy will never allow his reader to forget the insignificance in social terms of those he is portraying in the novel: it is probably not without intention that *mère* and *père* Pommier (members of the faceless, anonymous masses) are never referred to by Christian name.⁽¹⁶⁾ The traditions, tastes and aspirations of the three Pommier males are seen naturally enough to be in accordance with their function as representative members of the Paris working classes. *Père* Pommier, for all his ineffectuality, has before the defeat of the Commune been as sincere as any other in his commitment to the revolutionary ideal. His role in the struggle for an eventual betterment of society has never of course been a prominent one (*'Il avait été un simple soldat de la grande armée en marche, il avait, lui aussi, fourni son étape, obscurément, sans gloire visible'*)(A 64); but the enthusiasms of young manhood remain precious to him, and he has, not surprisingly, imparted his beliefs to his sons:

Quand les idées d'affranchissement traversèrent l'espace, il entendit leur vol, planant au-dessus de la masse humaine. En 1848, son coeur de jeune homme tressaillit, et il cria les grands mots et chanta les hymnes d'espoir. Vainqueur de Février et vaincu de Juin: il avait cela dans ses états d'humble prolétaire. Et le temps eut beau s'écouler, il sut garder sa foi juvénile, la communiquer à ses fils, se lever encore comme un combattant, lui, le déjà vieux, entre les deux jeunes, aux jours du Siège et de la Commune. (A 64-65)

The loss of the two young men in whom he had placed all hope for the future will of course provide the death blow to such faith; and the destruction of optimism and hope in like circumstances must indeed have been common to a significant proportion of working class households in the wake of the Commune. Indications as to the three Pommiers' preferences in literature and song are also of a sort probably conforming to the reader's expectations. Often, as he works, *père* Pommier - who is a house-painter by trade - will give a hearty rendition even after the Commune of one of the songs of Pierre Dupont or Béranger, both of whom had been in vogue in 1848. Les Misérables (which had of course enjoyed enormous popularity in working class

circles on its publication in 1862) has pride of place on the Pommiers' bookshelf, together with les Mystères de Paris and le Juif errant by Eugène Sue (both of strongly humanitarian and democratic bent) and the incomplete works of Proudhon.

Geffroy recounts early in the first chapter a typical evening in the Pommier household (and, it may be assumed, in many another working-class home) during the period of siege. Father and sons return from guard duty (*'Depuis le 4 septembre et le commencement de l'investissement (...) au long des rues de la montagne faubourienne qui domine la vallée de Paris, le père et les fils marchent comme trois soldats'*)(A 17): as the family partakes of its evening meal - food of course is now scarce and of inferior quality - the distant thundering of cannonfire can now and then be heard. After the meal (and conveniently perhaps, for the uninformed reader) *'les hommes parlent politique, commentent la situation'* (A 13). It is of course through the conversation of père Pommier, Justin and Jean (in this household politics is an exclusively male preoccupation) that Geffroy conveys something of the position in December 1870, and of the Paris worker's appreciation of events: the Pommiers' assessment of the current situation provides some insight also into the characters of Justin (lucid and earnest) and père Pommier (blustering and commonplace):

On a élu les maires. La question de l'armistice a été agitée. La Prusse a repoussé la demande de ravitaillement. Les bataillons de marche de la garde nationale sont enfin formés, composés de volontaires, de célibataires, de veufs, et, s'il le faut, d'hommes mariés âgés de vingt à quarante-cinq ans. En somme, tout va pour le mieux. Gambetta est plein d'ardeur. La province s'organise. On fera la trouée, on reconduira les Allemands de l'autre côté du Rhin.

- Oui, si nous avons de vrais chefs qui le veulent! - dit Justin, qui écoute son père et son frère s'enflammer d'espoir et se griser de paroles. - Mais croyez-moi, on perd du temps tous les jours. Les approvisionnements sont mal faits. Les Allemands sont nombreux, et les choses n'iront pas si vite que ça en province! Gambetta est jeune, c'est vrai, et il secouera les gens, fera une espèce d'armée. Tout de même, depuis que les Allemands ont pris Metz, toutes leurs forces sont disponibles, et nous sommes fichus.

- *Ta ra ra ta!* - interrompit le père, - *tu n'es jamais content, mon fiston... Si les chefs ne marchent pas, nous les changerons: on mettra le vieux Blanqui à la place de Trochu, on fera ce qu'il faudra.*

- *Il est certain que Blanqui vaudrait mieux. Lui seul voit clair et dit la vérité. Mais qui le croira? Il n'est pas militaire, il a été en prison, c'est un rouge. Jamais l'armée, ni la garde nationale des boutiquiers, ni même celle des ouvriers, ne lui obéiront.*

- *Nous l'imposerons, nous en ferons un dictateur,* - proclame Jean berçant Cécile.

- *Oui, pour trois jours, et puis on nous fusillera et on nous coffrera avec lui après.*

- *Ta ra ta ta!* - dit encore le père, - *nous saurons bien régler nos comptes avec le gouvernement.*

- *On les réglera plus tard, trop tard,* - dit Justin, - *et ça ne sera pas drôle. Rappelez-vous ce que je vous dis,* - affirme doucement le jeune prophète ouvrier. (A 13-15)

While the impassioned discourses of père Pommier and Jean (not recorded but easily imaginable), their idea of the ease with which victory can be achieved and their assumption as to the worker's control of his destiny are substantially indicative of the mentality prevalent in the city at this time, such confidence, in view of the course events will subsequently take, can only seem cruelly ironic. It is Justin (described elsewhere as '*le renseigné, le donneur d'avis, le devineur d'avenir*') (A 37) who is able to assess with some perspicacity the situation at that point and who, furthermore, will foresee an ill-timed attempt by the Paris worker to settle scores with those in power.⁽¹⁷⁾ The tragedy of course for the Pommier family lies in the fact that the full import of his words will be apparently unappreciated both now, and in the future.

Recognition by Justin of Blanqui's lucidity and far-sightedness is perhaps less reflective of a general attitude on the part of the Paris populace than a further indication of the young man's own intelligent

understanding of current realities. It might also be regarded as a fleeting tribute by Geffroy himself to a man whose life held immense interest for him. The veteran revolutionary - who was of course advocating during the siege all-out resistance against the Prussians - had early proposed in his journal la Patrie en danger what had been considered a competent and potentially effective strategy.(18) The Government's intention not to offer serious resistance had been apparent all too soon to Blanqui, who repeatedly forecast eventual capitulation in the face of a continuing widespread belief in Trochu's good faith. The regime instituted on 4 September had indeed been described by Blanqui not long afterwards as '*...une pâle contrefaçon de l'Empire (qui) à son tour (...) craint plus la Révolution que la Prusse, et prend ses précautions contre Paris, avant de les prendre contre Guillaume.*'(19)

Any predictions on Blanqui's part remained of course unheeded. The revolutionary may have been to the tremulous bourgeoisie a legendary, terrifying embodiment of the Red Spectre; he had had in fact little direct contact with the working classes of the capital, and a limited awareness of him on their part was coupled with the fact that his style in la Patrie en danger was at times too recondite to hold strong appeal for the common man.(20) When his journal (appearing from 7 September to 8 December 1870) had to cease publication, the reason advanced (a lack of funds) was attributable, as one might expect, to a rather too limited readership.

Blanqui (in the hope of a government that would effectively set to the task of combat) had played a major role in the events of 31 October. It is to be noted however that he at no time advocated civil war in the prevailing circumstances, regarding armed conflict between compatriots of opposing camps as an ineffaceable humiliation when carried on in the hated German presence. To Adolphe Thiers (engineering a military occupation of Paris some months later) Blanqui seemed too dangerous a personage to remain at liberty: the old revolutionary was arrested, therefore, on 17 March. His place of

imprisonment was unknown to the members of the Commune, who proposed to Versailles the liberation of all hostages held in Paris in return for Blanqui alone. Despite his absence from the city, 'le Vieux' (as his followers termed him) was elected to the Communal Council in both the 18th and the 20th arrondissements.

Geffroy emphasises of course in the opening pages of his novel the toll taken in Paris by a hunger, cold and isolation endured for several months now and resulting not surprisingly in a heightening of the mood of bellicosity to fanatical pitch. The city ('*délirante et crédule*')(A 22) is seen to be in the grip of a fièvre that clearly bodes ill for the future. When Geffroy writes that warfare alone provides the current focus for action and conversation ('*C'est le seul métier du moment, faire la guerre et en parler*')(A 17), he is expressing an idea found in other works portraying the siege, notably Zola's la Débâcle: and his descriptions of this beleaguered, febrile populace (of a sort to have occurred in his earlier writing)(21) underscore the reality of an approaching doom:

Pour ces gens qui s'agitent dans le Paris neigeux de décembre, l'agonie a commencé, et ils ne le savent pas. Ils se croient encore vivants, et déjà le froid et l'inertie les gagnent, sans qu'ils le sachent. Ce qui les sauve du doute sur leur sort, ce qui leur fait illusion, c'est qu'ils parlent. Leur besoin d'agir, leur ardeur patriotique, leur fureur contre l'incapacité, leur méfiance de la trahison, s'exhalent en mots, partout, en marche, au corps de garde, au rempart, au coin des rues, où ils s'attardent à lire et commenter un journal sous la clarté d'un réverbère, et chez eux, à table, au lit, tout le temps, jusqu'à ce que le sommeil vienne enfin apaiser et reposer ces assiégés fiévreux.(A 21-22)

Zola - relying heavily upon Théodore Duret(22) - had of course provided a highly evocative account of the atmosphere in the capital during the siege, stressing the extreme volubility of the Paris crowds obsessed with ideas of continued resistance ('...il ne restait qu'une passion, la volonté de vaincre, l'unique sujet dont on parlait, qui enflammait les coeurs et les têtes...')(23) and the wild fancies and

illusions to which this same populace ('...hallucinée de souffrance et de faim')(24) was by now so prone. For all this, the two portrayals might be considered fundamentally dissimilar in tone and spirit. Geffroy's account is characterised by a concision and starkness that is arguably more effective in literary terms than Zola's emotive and substantially unjust description of the overwrought state of the populace, the fevered insanity of its hopes, the inactivity and drunkenness widespread during the siege and the Commune. The ineluctability of insurrection (which assumes a leitmotif significance in l'Apprentie) had been no less reinforced by Zola: but while Geffroy will indeed present the mental and physical state of the besieged multitude as annunciatory of major unrest (women queueing for food are described also as 'exaltées', 'guerrières') (A 17), he does make plain (as Zola had not) that forewarnings of popular revolt had been clearly discernible some years before hostilities with Prussia. A consideration of the three Pommiers' revolutionary enthusiasms enables him to provide a synopsis of plebeian aspiration in the closing years of the Empire, and to underscore - in accordance with a design stated elsewhere(25) - the blending of individual identity and collective impulsion. Since the Great Universal Exposition of 1867, popular energy is said to have been channelled towards insurrection; and the three men talking in December 1870 have of course participated in each of the demonstrations against the bourgeois-dominated order:

Les Pommier furent (...) du Paris de la rue et des réunions publiques. Ils vécurent avec les faubourgs en délire, firent partie des torrents humains charriant le fiacre de quelque journaliste ou de quelque orateur de violente opposition, des groupes passionnés autour d'une affiche rouge ou d'une lecture de journal à haute voix. Ils furent des parcelles de cet orage en formation qui emplissait parfois la ville de sa chaude haleine électrique, qui se déplaçait comme un courant vertigineux, le jour, par exemple, des funérailles de Victor Noir, qui créa l'image d'un Paris vidé de sa population, partie tout entière pour Neuilly, un Paris de rues désertes, extraordinairement élargies, où semblait devoir résonner bientôt le bruit crépitant des coups de fusil.

Ces fiévreux liseurs d'affiches, ces hommes aux visages résolus et menaçants, qui apparaissaient au seuil des couloirs des réunions

publiques, ces énergiques enthousiastes, qui se précipitaient vers le fiacre de l'orateur et du journaliste, c'étaient ceux-là qui avaient changé leur casquette en képi, et qui étaient devenus des porteurs de fusil.

A les voir, à les entendre, les trois Pommier et leurs pareils, on ne pouvait douter du désir qui les animait, et qui était le désir de se battre contre les Allemands. Ils avaient été surpris par la guerre, eux qui croyaient travailler à une transformation sociale. C'était l'imprévu. Leur volonté d'action, exaltée, accrue, avait donc forcément changé d'objet: l'ouvrier de Paris trouvait devant lui un adversaire qu'il n'attendait pas et qui était le soldat allemand. Va pour l'Allemand! On verrait ensuite. En attendant ce lendemain, l'énergie restait la même.

*Les trois Pommier étaient ainsi: ils enrageaient de sentir leur ardeur se consumer inutilement, auraient voulu se lancer vers l'ennemi, libérer la France, préparer l'avenir. (A 18-20)
(My underlining)*

Again the Pommiers' representative function is underscored, the fusion of their respective individualities in an anonymous throng consisting for the most part of beings akin to themselves in attitude and aspiration. The effect of a crowd on the processes of history clearly held a certain fascination for Geffroy; the mergence into a genuine force of scores of humble identities which could assume significance in social terms only when thus united. The irony however - Geffroy evidently considers - is that these same individuals may be trapped unknowingly in a situation from which they will be powerless to break free once a sequence of events has been set in motion; and the surge of history which a multitude may well unleash will sweep to oblivion so many of the human atoms who have en masse precipitated it. The Pommiers, in the description quoted above, are merely atoms among thousands, having in effect as much personal identity as Justin and Jean will later possess when they lie with innumerable others in unmarked graves.

Indicated also in the above passage (and to recur often throughout the opening chapter) is the symbolic presence of the rifle. The weapon's menacing significance in events slowly shaping had been underscored even more saliently by Geffroy in an earlier reference to

the Pommiers' abandonment of workers' attire for the uniform of the National Guard:

...le képi de garde national diffère de la casquette de l'ouvrier, la bande rouge du pantalon, le liseré rouge de la vareuse sont cousus aux étoffes sombres qui remplacent les vêtements d'atelier. Le fusil, surtout, marque le changement survenu, signifie la tragédie militaire, et, en même temps, une tragédie parallèle, révolutionnaire, qui s'annonce comme certaine, fatale. (A 17-18)
(My underlining)

The expected opportunities to confront the invader are not forthcoming under the Government of National Defence, although vanquishment of the Prussian would (to the idea of the Paris worker) constitute little more than a diversionary interlude before the serious task of setting the social order to rights. On 31 October, (26) the three Pommiers had been among the thousands to hasten from the working-class districts to the Hôtel de Ville, '*...espérant la Révolution et le Salut public*' (A 20). Events of this day were of course a foreshadowing of later developments: and of the calls from the multitude on this occasion, that of 'Vive la Commune!' had been among the more persistent. Justin, following this abortive uprising, had been in little doubt as to the true attitude of the Government; and (expressing a view held by many like himself) he had reaffirmed his certainty that German forces could be successfully routed, were Trochu and his colleagues only to place trust in the militia at their command:

- Ils ne savent rien, - disait Justin. - Ils nous prennent pour des flemmards et des braillards, et voilà tout... Et puis, des gardes nationaux, ça ne compte pas pour eux. C'est bon pour garder les fortifs qui ne sont jamais attaqués... Nous sommes des escargots de remparts, nous ne sommes pas des soldats... On nous occupe en nous faisant coucher dehors, en nous faisant jouer au bivouac... Quand ce sera fini, nous nous figurerons que nous avons fait la guerre... Ils ne nous connaissent pas: s'ils voulaient marcher tout droit devant eux, on les suivrait. Et ça serait bientôt fait de culbuter Guillaume et Bismarck dans Versailles!

Justin traduisait ainsi le sentiment de beaucoup. Si Trochu, Vinoy et Ducrot étaient venus tous les trois, un soir d'octobre ou de novembre, rôder incognito par la ville (...) ils auraient

découvert une population qu'ils ont ignorée jusqu'à la fin, singulièrement confiante et espérante, très déterminée à faire crédit aux chefs militaires. Parmi les ouvriers du faubourg, il n'en manquait pas qui affirmaient la possibilité de chasser l'Allemand dès la première sortie. Ces Parisiens sont vraiment, comme on dit, assez contents d'eux-mêmes, assurés qu'ils viendront facilement à bout de difficiles besognes: ils ne doutent pas un instant de leur victoire, hommes, femmes, enfants. Dans les rues sombres, aux portes des boulangeries et des boucheries, les faces pâles, les paroles criées de voix colères ou gouailleuses, affirment le triomphe immanquable. C'est une force qu'une telle exaltation, mais cette force meurt sur place, car les chefs ne croient pas à la possibilité de l'employer. (A 20-21)

Geffroy may indulge here in a discreet mockery of Parisian optimism; he does acknowledge nonetheless that this populace, *'singulièrement confiante et espérante'*, *'assez contents d'eux-mêmes, assurés qu'ils viendront facilement à bout de difficiles besognes'*, might indeed have proved a force to be reckoned with if afforded the opportunity to meet the Prussians in battle. While Justin is undoubtedly correct in his appreciation of the manner in which the National Guard was viewed by the Government, it is perhaps interesting that Geffroy neglects to specify that fear substantially motivated any decision by those in power not to draw upon these working-class battalions. The Bellevillois were indeed seen at this time as a potential menace to the Established Order, and hardly considered trustworthy in an actively militaristic role; but Geffroy, in view of his earlier discussion of the revolutionary aspirations surfacing in the closing years of the Empire, may have felt further elaboration on this score to be superfluous.

The innocence of Cécile herself in the face of events taking shape will be emphasised on several occasions in the course of the first chapter. *'Le petit être, spectateur inconscient de ce grand drame...'* (A 6); *'C'est parmi ce fracas de guerre que l'intelligence de Cécile s'éveillait'* (A 23); *'La petite Cécile (...) assistait (...) à ce drame comme si elle avait dormi tout éveillée'* (A 25) - statements such as these provide indication of the limited direct role the little girl will

play at the outset. Whatever her ignorance of the current situation, she can scarcely remain immune of course to the prevailing atmosphere of tension and nervous excitement. In her child's imagination, the Prussians not unnaturally assume the role of bogeymen; and it is ironic - given the tragic fate each will meet, and the limited role in defence the National Guard is in fact permitted to play - that her father and two brothers should appear to Cécile in the light of unconquerable heroes able to protect her from any possible adversity. As Geffroy writes of her:

Lorsque les trois hommes revenaient tout de sombre vêtus, avec leurs bandes rouges et leurs képis numérotés, et qu'ils posaient tous trois, du même mouvement, leurs lourds fusils dans le coin de la chambre, il lui semblait qu'elle voyait entrer des tout-puissants, des invincibles. Elle se jetait à leurs jambes, à leurs mains, se sentait enlevée par leurs bras vigoureux; son anxiété se calmait alors comme par enchantement...(A 24-25)

A passage of this sort - paralleled by a number of others in the chapter - serves of course to underscore the contrast between the cruel or potentially alarming reality of a situation, and a child's innocent interpretation of it. The rifle - seen by the little girl as a further proof of invincibility - will be presented before long by Geffroy as the source of untold misery for Cécile and her kind when used in conflict between compatriots. Later, as mère Pommier bids a final farewell to Justin (shortly to meet his end at Buzenval) attention will again be focused on the instrument of death. Both mother and son (endowed as they are with a clear-sightedness lacking in other members of the family) are intuitively aware that they are seeing each other for the last time. As they approach the spot where soldiers are assembling, '*le fusil tremble dans la main de Justin*' (A 32); and once more, at the moment of leave-taking, the rifle is evoked in what seems an almost cruelly ironic touch:

Ils s'embrassent (...) en se souriant héroïquement. Pris d'une frénésie, il lui baise les cheveux, les yeux, les joues, les mains. Elle aussi embrasse sa face d'honnête homme, ses mains d'ouvrier, sa vareuse de soldat, et son dernier baiser s'égaré, est pour l'arme de mort, le fusil qu'il a mis sur son épaule. (A 33)
(My underlining)

The impression of foreboding created in the course of the chapter has been suggested in fact from the novel's initial page. Aptly, given the omnipresence of death and hardship in l'Apprentie, the book will open in the snow-blanketed Père-Lachaise cemetery on a sombre evening in December as Cécile and her older sister Céline wander amongst the tombs. Paris has been under siege for some months now; indicative however of the child's present lack of awareness is the fact that, on hearing the ominous rumbling of cannonfire, she will imagine the sound to be thunder. The cemetery (in which the action of the first chapter both begins and ends) is described with even greater truth than is immediately apparent as '(une) sombre colline (...) d'une mélancolie farouche et grandiose'(A 3-4), as 'cet effrayant domaine des morts'(A 4), 'la ville des morts'(A 5), 'la colline mortuaire'(A 6). It is appropriate in the prevailing climate of gloom and oppression that the city of Paris itself, stretching below and shrouded in mist beneath a dull sky, should seem to Cécile as mournful as the hill on which she is standing:

...la ville trempée de brume, couverte d'un ciel morne, une singulière ville qui semble prolonger le cimetière jusqu'à l'horizon. Cécile retrouve les dômes et les clochetons des mausolées et des sépulcres aux faîtes et aux aiguilles des palais et des églises.(A 5) (My underlining)

All too obviously a city in its death-throes,(27) Paris will in fact remain thus (Geffroy would probably have us understand) even during the spring days of March-May 1871. As is further befitting no doubt (for she is as yet unschooled in the sorrows of life) Cécile appears unaware of the nature of the place in which she finds herself ('...ces routes et ces ruelles bordées de tombeaux qu'elle prend pour des maisonnettes...')(A 4). The funereal imagery is continued when the sky is specifically likened to a shroud ('Le ciel s'abaissa encore, blanc comme un suaire (...) ensevelit Paris')(A 5). Everything, indeed, contributes to the impression of mournfulness, not least a flock of crows taking wing for the church tower at Ménilmontant ('...ce passage d'oiseaux noirs, c'était tout le mouvement de l'espace, un funèbre

sillage dans l'atmosphère d'un champ de bataille')(A 5-6). The sole note of freshness and innocence in the wintry wilderness of death's domain is provided by the two little girls: Cécile, for her part, is obliged reluctantly to abandon a futile search for flowers:

Non, il n'y a pas de fleurs. Tout est blanc et noir autour d'elles, la neige resplendit à travers le dur treillis des arbres et des grillages. Il n'y a de roses que sur leurs joues, de tendres corolles que dans leurs yeux. Seuls, leurs regards palpitent et vivent parmi cette nature glacée, dans cette mort universelle. (A 8)

The young apprentice's first direct contact with death takes place soon after this walk in the cemetery, on the passing of an ailing neighbour in the tenement building where she lives. The little girl will next visit the Père-Lachaise in the wake of the carnage of 27 May; and while the horror of events then far exceeds that prevailing in December, Cécile will be astonished, ironically, to find herself in a place that is, in contrast to earlier times, of a springtime loveliness:

La mère conduisit ses deux filles en face du mur où se trouvaient les traces de la fusillade. Mais elle ne parla pas à leur sensibilité, ne leur demanda même pas de serments. (...) ...Cécile, étonnée, ne reconnaissait pas en cet endroit verdoyant, plein de chants d'oiseaux, le cimetière qu'elle avait vu aux jours de décembre, tout blanc de neige et tout résonnant du grondement de la canonnade. (A 59-60)

The baneful atmosphere of the Père-Lachaise and the Mur des Fédérés is seen then to permeate the novel. The following year - and ever thereafter - during the final week of May, the workers of Paris are said by Geffroy to set forth in pilgrimage towards the cemetery, towards '*le grand spectacle de la douleur*'(A 103). The glaring disparity between the wealthy quarters of Paris and the drabness and poverty manifest in other districts of the city is perpetuated even in the cemetery (in the point he makes that among the dead - as among the living - social distinctions are strongly in evidence, Geffroy is using an idea found also in Léon Cladel's short story '*Chez ceux qui furent*'

... and in Lucien Descaves' la Colonne). (28) The grandiose tombs of the highborn and the celebrated dwarf the lowly graves of the unprivileged: it is indeed, as Geffroy writes, '*sous la terre seulement (que) le niveau est le même*' (A 104). This is not to say however that the social struggle inherent to existence ceases in this final resting-place. '*Le cimetière a aussi ses faubourgs, ses charniers*' (A 105), and in the area of the communal graves, where both Justin and Jean lie buried:

...la cohue des morts s(e) bouscule, des cris, des plaintes sortent de la terre toujours fraîchement remuée. L'idée d'un champ de bataille, d'une cité révoltée, d'un enfer social qui continue, d'une lutte sans fin, s'exhale frémissante de la fosse commune, de la foule anonyme des morts. (A 106)

The stark grimness exuded by the Wall itself conveys as nothing else can the message of class warfare:

Encore quelques pas, la signification se précise plus tragique encore. C'est devant le mur des fusillés. Aucune autre manifestation que le silence. Aucune couronne à la muraille, aucun drapeau. Les emblèmes sont proscrits, la parole et le cri sont interdits. La confrontation des vivants et des morts n'en est que plus émouvante. La foule vient, s'arrête, regarde, voit distinctement. Le mur est couvert de cicatrices, d'entailles sanglantes, de noirceurs de poudre. Ces coups qui ont porté sur la muraille ont traversé des coeurs et fait sauter des cervelles. Des cris que tout le monde écoute ont retenti. Des râles sortent du silence.

Les Pommier sont au premier rang. Est-ce là que Jean a été fusillé? Le père regarde fixement, la mère clôt les yeux, serre plus fort la main de ses petites filles. (A 106-107)

The shrine-like status the Wall has assumed for the working class is of course further underlined by an earlier reference to the crowd, '*(des) fidèles réunis par un acte de foi commune*' (A 103). In a book hardly characterised by vehemence of tone, indignation at a social order condoning a slaughter such as that of the semaine sanglante does seem implicit in the passage quoted above. Geffroy's contempt at the often vulgar ostentation of some of the wealthier tombs in the cemetery

is thinly veiled; mention will be made of the names in gold lettering engraved on mausoleums, '*... (qui) font briller la vanité de la richesse sur les restes auxquels ils servent d'enseignes*' (A 103); and when describing the part of the cemetery which is seemingly '*... le faubourg Saint-Germain de la nécropole*' (A 104), he will refer to '*(ces) monuments (qui) affectent la morgue des aristocraties doublement défuntes*' (A 104). While these few pages do serve to underscore the entire question of social injustice and cruelty, it should be said that a pilgrimage to the cemetery of the sort recounted here is unlikely to have taken place as early as 1872, when any manifestation of sympathy for the Commune was totally prohibited. It was only from 1880 that collective tribute to the Commune's dead became a feature of working-class tradition; although tokens of remembrance left clandestinely at the sites of certain massacres were indeed a source of some irritation to Authority during the 1870's. Geffroy - for whom this visit to the Père-Lachaise is clearly of considerable significance - had probably chosen to sacrifice historical accuracy to literary considerations, and he protects himself in some measure by stating that all emblems or public eulogies could not - because forbidden - form a part of the homage described.

The Wall - symbol of the oppression of an entire class - will loom again at the conclusion of the novel, during the first 14 July festivities to take place under the Third Republic. The year is 1880, and Cécile, whose mother has been laid to rest that same day on '*la colline funèbre*' (A 377) is now quite alone in the world. In the evening, as light-hearted crowds celebrate in the streets, the young girl makes her way towards the cemetery whose wall rises in bleak reminder of atrocities past:

Les drapeaux, les lanternes, les musiques et les danses ne s'arrêtent qu'au mur du Père-Lachaise. De sa ligne rigide il barre la route à la joie. (A 379)

Before the '*sombre muraille*' (A 381) representing such sorrow for Cécile and her kind, the former apprentice (now truly initiated into

the adversities of life) will paradoxically perhaps find strength to face whatever lies ahead ('A regarder (...) dans le passé, Cécile se trouva subitement grandie et changée')(A 380).(29) It is of interest to recall that only three days before on 11 July, the total amnesty for participants in the Commune had been declared; and this, if borne in mind, may well add even greater significance to the novel's concluding pages.

The seemingly inexorable sequence of events which will bring Jean to his death in the cemetery has its origins in the hardships of the siege; or even, it might be ventured, in the closing years of the Empire. It is however from the sortie of Buzenval of 19 January 1871 - during which his older brother will lose his life - that the young man's fanatical dedication to an evening of scores with those in authority may be dated. The question of duplicity on the part of the Government of National Defence (treated at length by Cladel in I.N.R.I.) is suggested rather more obliquely in l'Apprentie. While it is of course clear from a reading of the opening chapter that the Parisians believed genuinely in the possibility not merely of defence but of victory, and that subsequent 'excesses' were substantially the result of military inaction, and of rage and despair at an increasing impression of betrayal, it may be noted that Geffroy (who will describe Justin as '*une des victimes offertes à l'esprit guerrier de la garde nationale*')(A 34) will himself offer no outright censure of Trochu and his cohorts, anxious to capitulate as soon as possible and to destroy once and for all any illusion of possible victory on the part of the Parisians. Implicit condemnation later by mère Pommier (whose point of view is essentially Geffroy's own) is of course uttered by one who has herself suffered during the siege. Reference to Justin as a victim of the National Guard's bellicose spirit could only be seen normally as a condemnation of the obstinacy with which the Parisians clung to an idea of continued resistance, and might even be interpreted, furthermore, as a condonation of the probable decision by the Government of National Defence to send the battalions forth with the deliberate intention that they be slaughtered. Military advantages

gained were not backed up by the command: Lissagaray has written that *'des bataillons en revenant criaient de rage. Tous comprirent qu'on les avait fait sortir pour les sacrifier.'*(30)

As mère Pommier and her second son look upon the young man's corpse (carried to the Père-Lachaise with the many other victims of combat) Jean, kneeling to embrace *'le jeune prophète ouvrier'*(A 15) for the last time, will murmur in the ear of this brother who can hear him no longer a pledge of vengeance upon those he holds accountable for the slaying. Because no background information is supplied relating to the sortie, the full significance of this gesture may escape the reader. Geffroy makes no mention either of the fact that the question of capitulation had been raised with the mayors of Paris directly following Buzenval, nor of the outraged incredulity of the Parisians whose sufferings over four months seemed to them to have been to no purpose. It might therefore be assumed by a reader unaware of these facts that if Jean now embarks upon a course that can only entail further tragic and futile loss of life, his reason for so doing lies exclusively in an overwrought state of mind engendered by siege fever ... and not in any more immediate provocation.

Condemnation of a civil war fought in presence of the enemy is implicit from this point, for Jean - guided by his brother's conviction formed before French defeat that the rifles and cannons of the people should not rust in disuse after the reckoning with the Prussians - will be unmindful, in his unreasoning obsession with revenge at any price, of Justin's warning against inopportune attempts to even internal scores. Arriving at the Hotel de Ville too late on 22 January to take part in *'une tentative désespérée et inutile pour changer le destin'*(A 36), young Pommier returns to Ménilmontant in a state of extreme nervous agitation. From this day, his personality will undergo a dramatic change; the behaviour of a young man formerly *'si placide, si doux'*(A 37) and who had liked nothing better in his spare moments than to play with the child Cécile, is marked by violence of word and manner and a nervous tension manifesting itself in sudden bursts of rage or

irritation. Deeply affected as is his father by the loss of Justin ('(enfoui) maintenant, avec (...) toute sa sagesse (...) dans la terre de la fosse commune')(A 37) Jean's countenance is all too clearly revealing of *'une violence concentrée: l'idée fixe lui barre le front, rend sa bouche mauvaise, sa parole brève'*(A 37). He will refer to the ineptitude of the Government of National Defence with a hitherto uncharacteristic fury; his hand trembles on occasion with nervous agitation, and he can at times appear distraught, wild-eyed. It is essentially through appeal to Jean's family sense that his unhappy mother - terrified at the probable consequences of this transformation - will attempt to deflect her son from what is presented as a potentially calamitous course:

- Vous ne changerez rien par la violence, - dit la femme du peuple qui se force à parler politique pour convaincre son fils. - Rien ne vous empêchera, après, de refaire ce que vous faisiez, de lire les journaux, de vous réunir, de voter.

- Pendant que nous avons un fusil, nous devons en profiter.

- Avec un fusil, on se fait tuer, et voilà tout. Vous serez bien avancés. Et si tu crois que tous iront jusqu'au bout! Les exaltés comme toi, oui. Les autres lâcheront, et même vous dénonceront. Je t'en prie, mon enfant, prends la place de ton frère ici, ne nous quitte pas. Tu m'aideras à élever tes soeurs, tu te marieras, tu auras des enfants qui seront peut-être plus heureux que nous, un jour.(A 40)

Victor Hugo's assessment of feminine valiance during the siege ('*Le fond de l'âme de la femme française, c'est un mélange héroïque de famille et de patrie'*)(31) is clearly true only partially of *mère Pommier*. Her heartfelt advice to Jean is that he should endeavour to calm the fervour of fellow combatants, for:

Ils ont tous des femmes, des enfants, des mères, des soeurs. Ils doivent rester près d'elles. C'est leur premier devoir. Les autres devoirs après celui-là.(A 40)

The reader - who has learnt in the opening pages of the novel that *mère Pommier* is originally from Brittany (A 9) - might imagine this to

explain in some degree also her aversion to social upheaval. Geffroy was of course aware of the intensely conservative Breton character: his parents had themselves arrived in Paris from the province in 1854 (the year preceding his birth) and he would feel throughout his life a strong affinity with the region's inhabitants while remaining conscious of their frequent dislike of progress.⁽³²⁾ It is not however his intention here to establish a contrast between enlightened Parisian and ignorant, reactionary provincial, as Cladel for example had done. *Mère Pommier*, Geffroy writes, has a typically feminine horror of bloodshed (A 50), and she would prefer to see disputes solved '*sans coups de fusil*' (A 50): it is an attitude to violence that provides some reflection of Geffroy's own (more sophisticated) pacifist sentiment.⁽³³⁾ She is certainly able to identify with the prevailing mood of fury about her ('...*j'entends les gens, et je comprends ce qu'ils disent, je comprends leur rage (...)* *Le pauvre monde a été trompé, comme toujours, et il en veut à ceux qui l'ont mené là. Moi aussi, je suis comme ça...*') (A 38-39): but the consequences of revolt by Jean and those like him are to her idea all too easily foreseeable:

C'est affreux de nous rendre, après tant de misère, et j'en supporterais bien encore autant et plus, s'il le fallait. Mais nous n'y pouvons rien. Vous vous révolterez. Et après? Vous serez vaincus encore. (A 39)

It could well be argued of course that *mère Pommier*'s governing impulses are - however defensibly so - selfish in origin. The future without a strong male in the household fills her with trepidation; for *père Pommier* ('...*âgé (...)* *faible comme un enfant*') (A 38) and whose resistance has been visibly weakened by the privations and disruptions of the siege, will, she foresees, be of little help to her in the task of bringing up her two younger children. Responsibilities on this score promise not to be easy ('*Céline me donnera bien du mal, je le devine. Et Cécile est si jeune!*') (A 39). While she herself may well find work, poverty will still be inescapable, and

...la pauvreté, ce n'est encore rien... c'est la tristesse pour toujours. C'est assez, c'est trop que j'aie perdu mon pauvre Justin. S'il pouvait parler, il parlerait comme moi.(A 39)

Incomprehension of a cause transcending personal or family concerns may not in itself seem to the reader to be deserving of commendation. It is less than certain, however, whether Geffroy - given his overall portrayal both of the Commune and of mère Pommier - was intending to imply even mild personal disapproval. Her words to Jean provide an accurate forecast of the tragedy that must ensue when (as Geffroy clearly believes) men in a state of semi-delirium are carrying arms; her appreciation of the calibre of some currently spoiling for battle will, furthermore, be accurate. The course of events after the Commune will again be as she had predicted, for both père Pommier and Céline in time fall victim to their respective temperamental deficiencies. One may well in fact understand Geffroy to be implying that the Government of National Defence was at fault during these explosive weeks for having failed to dispossess the National Guard of its rifles: for such weaponry was tantamount to an invitation to civil war given the state of mind of those so armed.(34)

Jean (to the end fundamentally decent but simply a victim of a force he is powerless to resist) will on this occasion as on others find himself torn between insurrectionary fever and a concern for his family that, notwithstanding the indications to the contrary, remains a part of him. His mother's evident anxiety as she looks to a precarious future, her well-loved, careworn face on which the traces of recent hardship and sorrow are unmistakable, awaken a responsive chord in the young man and, *'impuissant à retenir ses larmes'*(A 41) he will vow to do what he can to provide support and comfort. The all-pervading atmosphere of near-insanity outside the home will prove ultimately stronger, however, than family ties.

The contrast between the unhealthy mental climate in Paris and the relative happiness and stability of elsewhere is further apparent when Cécile and Céline are taken by their brother soon after the end of the

siege to visit an aunt in Andilly, a village near the city. Here, despite German occupation, health and good humour seemingly prevail with the approach of spring:

Les lilas bourgeonnaient dans les jardins, un souffle de printemps caressait les visages, amollissait les rancunes, annonçait le lendemain paisible des horreurs guerrières.(A 43)

Further irony is of course apparent in this, for the reader is only too aware of the horrors soon to blacken the local scene. An underscoring of the contrast between nature's springtime glory and the barbaric proportions human conflict can assume is almost a commonplace in fictional literature relating to the Commune:(35) Geffroy will, of course, draw attention to it even more markedly in his account of the insurrectionary period. For the present, however, his implication is that acceptance of defeat, and the laying aside of hostility or disagreement must precede replenishment of the nation's forces: and mère Pommier on listening to Jean's feverish declaration of the need for immediate social reckoning had expressed almost exactly this idea ('- *Mieux vaudra rester tranquille, travailler, refaire sa vie*')(A 38). In Paris itself (Geffroy makes clear) the lifting of the siege seems to entail a release from the living nightmare of preceding months:

...ce fut l'animation d'autrefois, la rue respira plus à l'aise, délivrée du cauchemar de la canonnade, de l'anxiété d'une ville prisonnière, enfermée par une armée, privée de nouvelles. Les victuailles revenues, c'était de la santé qui remontait aux joues des femmes, des enfants. On oubliait déjà les souffrances de la veille, même tant de morts accumulées.(A 42)

Jean's participation at the end of February in the abortive attempt to prevent Prussian entry into Paris had of course been for mère Pommier a tragic confirmation that appeals to her son's family spirit were insufficient to counter the lure of battle. Increasingly moody and preoccupied in his own home, the young man when out of doors will be intoxicated by the inflammatory speeches he will hear and by the feverish excitement of his comrades-in-arms: his attitude both in

the family circle and away from it can leave no doubt as to his dominant preoccupation:

Il était sobre, mais se grisait de paroles, et rentrait muet, gardant comme les autres les allures d'un soldat de la révolution possible, attentif à son fusil, à ses cartouches, montant ses factions. (A 44)

The fateful moment - so dreaded by the mother - is nigh. Jean's mood of exultation on learning of the events of 18 March will of course be that of the populace at large on finding itself in control of Paris ('*Cette victoire sans bataille du 18 mars fut un enivrement*')(A 45). In a passage that may seem reminiscent of a not dissimilar one in la Débâcle, (36) Geffroy provides a nutshell account of the situation:

Le branle-bas de combat était donné, une armée d'insurgés était toute formée, avec ses cadres et ses chefs d'occasion. Les uns occupaient les postes et les carrefours. Les autres descendaient sur Paris, prenaient enfin l'Hôtel de Ville, qu'ils avaient manqué deux fois, en octobre et en janvier. C'en était fait. Le siège avait sa suite fatale. Toute une population, déçue dans ses espérances de victoire, animée de l'esprit de révolte sociale, avide d'une revanche où il y aurait la vengeance d'hier et la préparation de demain, allait courir les risques de la plus sombre aventure. Le même optimisme qu'aux jours du siège gonflait les coeurs et enfiévrant les cervelles. (A 44-45)
(My underlining)

The situation for the inhabitants of Paris is reversed from that of December in that defeat of 'le père Thiers' (epitome of the bourgeois order) will be followed in no time, it is imagined, by vanquishment of the Prussian. In the story of the siege and the Commune as portrayed by Geffroy, misplaced optimism is of course a tragic determinant: and the soldiers of the Revolution look now to the unchallenged accomplishment of their objectives:

"Nous n'aurons jamais - disaient-ils - la partie plus belle. Nous sommes armés et maîtres de Paris, ce qui ne s'est jamais vu depuis la grande Révolution. Nous serions stupides de ne pas profiter de l'occasion!..."

(...) La troupe était partie sans combattre, retirée à Versailles.

"C'est là que nous irons la chercher, - disaient encore les gardes nationaux, devenus les fédérés. - On n'a pas su nous y mener pour y saisir Guillaume et Bismarck. Nous irons tout seuls y enlever le père Thiers. Et après, nous saurons bien aussi régler leur compte aux Allemands!"

Jean disait comme eux.

Rien ne put le persuader. (A 45-46)

Although Geffroy does not say as much, an offensive launched without delay from Paris might in fact have succeeded given the state of confusion in Versailles immediately after 18 March. Following the sortie of 3-4 April, Jean returns to his family:

...noir de poudre, ayant en lui la folie du danger, parlant avec rage de ses amis capturés ou tués, de Duval fusillé, de Flourens, la tête fendue d'un coup de sabre. Sa mère comprit qu'elle devait gravir un nouveau calvaire. Sans cesse maintenant, la même anxiété, la même triste prévision de la fin. (A 46)

'De plus en plus fébrile, emporté sans arrêt vers le péril' (A 49), young Pommier is in fact powerless now to deviate from his ruinous course: it will be as though *'une force invincible entraînait le jeune garçon à la bataille'* (A 47). Stubbornly impervious to any plea, he will pay no heed when his mother talks of the inevitable entry of Versailles troops (*' - Tant mieux! - dit-il. - Paris sera leur tombeau: la guerre des rues, voilà notre affaire!'*) (A 46): and mère Pommier trembles as she envisages the almost inescapable sorrow before her.

The good humour of the crowds in the sunny April weather would seem to belie any suggestion of imminent disaster. Père Pommier, who is normally on guard duty at the place Vendôme, will take his wife and daughters one Sunday to admire the barricade on the place de la Concorde (as Geffroy writes with grim significance: *'Le décor du massacre s'édifiait chaque jour'*) (A 47). Jean for his part will be much of the time at the outposts at Neuilly. If on his return to

Ménilmontant he is, symbolically, altered almost beyond recognition ('...la barbe longue, les gestes décidés, l'air d'un homme qui ne veut rien entendre')(A 47), a few hours in the family atmosphere will help him to regain something of his former good-natured placidness. The fact that Jean's now characteristic bellicosity does not reflect his true self is indicated by Cécile's attitude towards him (and by his towards her) once the calming influence of home has worked its effect:

Il jouait avec sa Cécile comme autrefois, et la petite, qui avait peur du gaillard lorsqu'il entrait d'un pas lourd, retrouvait bien vite son Jean qui lui faisait des risettes et des chatouilles, et gazouillait de la même voix qu'elle, comme s'il avait eu sept ans, lui aussi...(A 47)

Mère Pommier can only pray now that the thought of Cécile will keep Jean from definitive and fatal commitment to the Commune. In a further desperate attempt to remove her son from the pernicious insurrectionary climate, she will urge him to take his two sisters to the safety of Andilly. The young man gives vent to a feverish denunciation of Versailles, declares his determination never to betray his comrades, and to avenge Justin whatever the cost:

- Et moi, je serai en sûreté aussi à Andilly?...(...) Eh bien, et les autres, qu'est-ce qu'ils diront?

Il lui nomma les gens de sa compagnie, des gars décidés comme lui à faire leur devoir jusqu'au bout.

- Je suis sûr que nous serons vainqueurs. Paris mangera l'armée. Et les soldats tourneront pour nous comme au 18 mars.

- Tout de même, - objecta la mère, - il y a plus d'un mois que ça dure...

- Et puis la question n'est pas là. Non, non! le vin est tiré, il faut le boire, il faut aller jusqu'au bout. Justin serait là qu'il irait avec moi. Rappelle-toi tout ce qu'il disait. Et rappelle-toi sa mort. Je l'ai toujours sur le coeur, sa vie donnée pour rien. C'est lui qui me pousse à me battre.

Il s'exalta, invectiva les Versaillais. Il était visiblement en proie à l'idée fixe. A la fin, il prit sa mère par les épaules,

l'effrayant de ses regards fous, lui criant ses paroles et sa rage:

- Voudrais-tu me voir trahir mes camarades, qui comptent sur moi, comme je compte sur eux?

La pauvre femme ne sut que pâlir et soupirer. (A 48-49)

It may be considered ironic that Justin, himself an essentially stabilising influence when alive, should in death be the cause of major disharmony within his family circle. Closed now to any argument that does not concur with his obsession, Jean's recollection of his brother's words and advice during the siege seems - in the context of the novel - tragically imperfect; and the fixation with this life given in vain blinds him (Geffroy would have us understand) to the all too obvious fact that thousands more can only be lost to no avail on the entry of Thiers' troops. For all this, it must be said that Jean's attitudes are determined by loyalty; in the first instance to his dead brother, in the second to those of like mind to himself under the Commune. Mère Pommier, moreover, is aware in her heart of hearts not only that Jean has been caught up in a tide of events too strong for him to resist, but also that his rancour and inner suffering are anything but unwarranted:

Elle voyait bien que c'était un honnête homme, qu'il ne pouvait faire autrement que de marcher vers le rendez-vous tragique qu'il avait accepté. Elle comprenait bien ce qui souffrait et s'encolérissait en lui, car elle avait ressenti toutes les tristesses qu'il voulait venger. (...) "Pourvu qu'il soit prudent, au moins! - se disait-elle, - et qu'il sache revenir ici quand il verra tout perdu!" (A 50)

Geffroy's depiction of the events of the semaine sanglante contains descriptions inevitably found in many another text: those of shellfire, of crowd frenzy as hostages are led by and of Versailles soldiers displaying varying degrees of humanity or inhumanity. As one might expect, the writer focuses primarily - and movingly - on mère Pommier's anguish as her son is irretrievably lost to her. Jean disappears on Sunday 21 May when Thiers' troops enter Paris, and the

following day his mother will set forth on one of several unavailing attempts to find him:

C'était la solitude, les boutiques fermées, les maisons muettes, ou bien c'était la rue barrée par un bivouac. Le tocsin sonnait. Des fédérés couraient derrière des chefs galonnés, des cantinières à cheval. Des galops, des piétinements, tout le tumulte de la fureur après le morne silence de la mort. Elle ne put découvrir aucune trace de la compagnie de son fils. Bientôt on l'empêcha de continuer sa route. "On se bat par là," lui dit-on. Elle revint, pour repartir le lendemain mardi, après une nuit mortelle, passée à la fenêtre. (A 50-51)

Freedom of movement is of course minimal now, and mère Pommier will be unable to extend her search beyond the district (under bombardment from neighbouring Montmartre which is already occupied by Versailles forces). The tenants of the apartment building are of course obliged to go down to the cellar, where several days will be spent *'ainsi qu'en un village souterrain'* (A 51). Céline, as she returns from the bakery on the Wednesday, is nearly killed by an exploding shell; and the constant imminence of death is immediately after recalled to the others:

Elle avait à peine achevé son récit qu'un autre obus éclata dans la cour avec un fracas épouvantable, démolit un hangar, projeta des pierres et des gravats jusqu'au soupirail de la cave. (A 51)

The mother will brave the shellfire, continuing her search for Jean insofar as she is able to do so. It is thus that she will witness on the Friday a scene that might be considered further reflective of the atmosphere of the week:

...un brouhaha sauvage emplit subitement l'air. Il y eut le piétinement et les vociférations d'une foule en délire, des hommes, des femmes hurlant à la mort autour de prisonniers marchant d'un pas égal, gendarmes, gardes de Paris, ecclésiastiques, - les otages que l'on mène rue Haxo. La pauvre femme reste adossée à une boutique pendant que l'ouragan humain passe. Heureusement, Jean ne joue pas de rôle dans ces scènes sanguinaires. Mais elle voit Paris en feu, un brasier allumé sur toute la courbe de l'horizon. "Jean est là-dedans," pleure-t-elle. (A 51-52)

The savagery of a mob unleashed is captured by Geffroy in an evocation all the more vivid for the economy of its phrasing. While the reader is again reminded of Jean's essential soundness of character even when in the grip of revolutionary frenzy, his mother of course can hardly know for certain that he has not been involved in any excesses to have taken place. That evening, the young combatant makes a brief and final reappearance:

Il était dans la folie de la bataille, incapable de rien écouter, envahi tout de même d'une frénésie de tendresse à la vue de ces êtres qui espéraient son retour, embrassant sa mère, son père, ses soeurs, rudoyant les voisins qui voulaient le retenir, les menaçant de les dénoncer, croyant encore à la victoire chimérique, prédisant l'armée engloutie dans les ruines de Paris en feu, proclamant la vengeance certaine, racontant ou annonçant, on ne savait au juste, des drames épouvantables, la fusillade des otages, la ville réduite en cendres par les canons du Père-Lachaise. C'est là qu'il se précipitait de toute son ardeur de combattant. Il partit comme il était arrivé, après avoir pris dans ses bras la petite Cécile, l'avoir regardée de ses yeux de feu, et remise dans les bras tendus de sa mère... (A 52-53)

The conflict within Jean of love for family and a febrility that seems now overtly destructive and pernicious is manifest during the feverish precipitateness of this visit. Cécile's role in the first chapter - important through her largely unconscious potential influence - is indicated a further time by this final burning gaze Jean will fix upon her. Again, mère Pommier tries in vain to reach her son as he hurls himself towards his last battle: the desperate futility of the attempt on her part is however all too quickly apparent:

Des marins de la Commune, des femmes brandissant des fusils, tout un flot de monde l'empêche d'atteindre la chair de sa chair qui s'en va vers le carnage. (A 53)

It may be seen as symbolic that Jean (swallowed up in the anonymity of battle) will be now totally lost to his mother. Mère Pommier during these days of horror finds herself torn - for perhaps the first time in her life - between her responsibilities to her family and the

tragic call of events without: Jean, of course, whom she so longs to find has been impelled by fate to a definitive abandonment of his loved ones. On the Saturday morning at dawn, the mother will climb to the top storey of the house, there to look again - the verb is significant, for she can herself now influence events not at all - in the direction of the fighting:

Par une lucarne, elle regarde, et elle voit. Elle voit, dans la lumière de mai, dans l'ivresse du printemps, la bataille préparée au cimetière. Sur le versant qui fait face à Montmartre, devant le tombeau de Morny, les batteries de la Commune répondent aux batteries de l'armée régulière. Elle voit les fins canons de bronze neuf qui n'avaient pas été utilisés pendant le Siègle, les pièces de "sept" éclatantes sous le soleil, le va-et-vient des artilleurs, l'éclair et la fumée des coups de feu. Sans doute, son Jean est là parmi les ombres qui s'agitent autour des pièces.
(A 54)

Jean is in effect now little more than a shadow without identity, merely one of the countless thousands to fight and die during these tumultuous days of radiant sunshine. Discreet attention is again drawn, furthermore, to the weaponry acquired only months before in readiness for the Prussian... and put to use now in hostilities between compatriots.

The Pommiers' district will soon be occupied by Versailles troops; and Geffroy, by continuance of the sober, matter-of-fact style that has been his throughout, undoubtedly creates here a more telling effect than would be achieved by excessive detail or emotionalism:

Le bombardement a cessé: bientôt on annonce les soldats, les lignards qui s'avancent sur deux files, au long des maisons, le fusil en garde, le doigt sur la détente. Il ne se passe rien: la barricade la plus proche n'était pas défendue. La troupe continue sa route vers le Père-Lachaise, pendant que des postes s'installent, que des patrouilles fouillent les maisons, ordonnent d'ôter les rideaux des fenêtres, de laisser les volets ouverts. Le caporal qui entre chez les Pommier saisit le fusil du père, l'inspecte, le flaire... Tous les fusils sont amoncelés au coin de la rue. Des hommes sont arrêtés, emmenés, parce qu'ils ont les mains noires, ou qu'ils répondent mal. Le père Pommier, qui a

repris ses habits d'ouvrier, ne prononce pas un mot, et les soldats, petits campagnards à l'air tranquille, ne disent rien à cette barbe grise.

Le quartier est occupé militairement. Il y a des silhouettes de cavaliers aux carrefours, des casques qui brillent, des mousquetons appuyés à la cuisse, des chevaux qui piaffent. Des groupes de soldats bivouaquent, en tenue de campagne. Les ouvriers contemplent sans mot dire ces fils de la terre et du faubourg, revêtus de l'uniforme, chargés de leurs vivres et de leurs cartouches.(A 54-55)

There will soon be direct evidence of the summariness practised by the troops; exhausted, it is said, their nerves raw from battle, and in no state of mind to disregard expressions of hostility. Inhabitants of the street, père Pommier and his daughters among them, have begun to stir out of doors; before long bugle-calls sound the arrival of a further unit '*... enfiévrée de la chaleur, de la marche et du combat. Des fatigués, des blessés sont irrités, prêts à toutes les représailles*'(A 56). An onlooker rash enough to shout '*A bas la troupe!*' is seized by an officer, forced to the ground and shot through the head: small wonder that this should produce a subduing effect on the crowd:

Les gens rentrent chez eux tout pâles. Céline est nerveuse. Cécile a peur. Le père tremble de rage, mais reste muet. Un grand silence se fait dans la rue. Le cadavre reste là, près des lignards et de leurs faisceaux.(A 56)

Meanwhile, mère Pommier is herself experiencing something of the arbitrary and deplorable manner in which thousands met their death during the repression. In the Père-Lachaise, where she has gone hoping to discover trace of her son, the ghastly aftermath of battle is everywhere apparent:

C'est la fin de la bataille. Une affreuse odeur de poudre flotte dans l'air. Les sépultures sont saccagées. Par les portes brisées des chapelles, on aperçoit des fédérés qui s'étaient réfugiés là, et qui ont été tués dans leur cachette. Partout des cadavres, comme si les tombes avaient vomi leurs morts. Partout des soldats.(A 57)

A young lieutenant 'au visage de collégien'(A 57) who seems admirably suited to the grisly work in which he and his kind have been engaged, sees in this lonely woman another prospective victim:

- *Qu'est-ce qu'elle veut, celle-là?*
 (...) *Et, toisant la pauvre:*

- *C'est une pétroleuse. Allez! Au mur, avec les autres!*

Son geste indique le fond du cimetière où retentissent des détonations précipitées, des feux de salve.

La désespérée se jette vers le lieutenant:

- *Oui, avec les autres, avec mon fils, mon Jean!*

Ses gestes sont égarés, sur son visage passe un frisson d'agonie.

- *Au mur! - dit encore le lieutenant.(A 57)*

Amidst the savagery of the slaughter taking place, a note of humanity is nonetheless sounded. The intervention of a captain ('...grand, maigre, la moustache grise, les yeux réfléchis et résolus, figure grave et triste de soldat vieilli dans le métier')(A 58) will prevent the summary execution of one who is for the present indifferent to everything but the need to find her son, and who wishes almost, it would seem, to join him in death:

- *Qu'est-ce que vous faites? Vous voyez bien ce que c'est...
 Pas d'ordres comme ça... Je vous le défends!*

Le lieutenant eut un visage de chat féroce à qui on enlève un oiseau. Le capitaine, d'une voix redevenue paisible:

- *Allez-vous-en, madame, votre place n'est pas ici.*

- *Mon fils... je veux mon fils... je veux mon fils...*

- *Allez-vous-en, madame, il le faut. Personne ici ne peut rien pour vous. Allez-vous-en, je vous en prie.*

Il la reconduit lui-même, la renvoie doucement, toute pleurante, toute trébuchante.

- *N'avez-vous personne chez vous?*

- *Si, monsieur, mes petites filles.*

- *Vos petites filles sont inquiètes. Allez! allez vite!*

Elle s'en va machinalement. Il la suit des yeux jusqu'à la porte du cimetière, revient prendre sa place au milieu de ses hommes, reste immobile, les mains appuyées sur son sabre. (A 58-59)

The mother has throughout borne her martyrdom alone, and in the face of this major heartbreak she will speak of her grief to no-one. With a renewed courage and energy she endeavours to find out whether Jean is among those taken prisoner - a forlorn hope indeed. There is in time no possible doubt; her son lies in the cemetery.

...non loin de ce frère auquel il avait parlé bas et fait une promesse, qu'il avait tenue. (A 59)

While in l'Apprentie Geffroy will refrain from explicit condemnation of the massacres and repression carried out by the 'Forces of Order', it is of interest perhaps to note judgements expressed elsewhere in his production which might serve to complement attitudes merely intimated here. The pitilessness of the moneyed classes when material interests seemed threatened had been suggested by him in a reference to the imprisonment and shooting of insurgents in the basements of the Tuileries in June 1848 ('...les insurgés de Juin sont enfermés et fusillés dans le souterrain proche le quai par les Homais, les Bouvard et les Pécuchet de ce temps-là, que Flaubert a montrés pusillanimes et féroces dans un admirable chapitre de l'Education sentimentale.'(37) In a portrait of Thiers in l'Enfermé, Geffroy described the little man as being at the time of the Commune:

...l'homme d'Etat sans scrupules, celui qui incarne le mieux, autrefois au nom de Louis-Philippe, aujourd'hui en un rôle personnel, et toujours pour le compte d'une classe, la bassesse des intérêts, la résistance d'une caste qui a commencé la Révolution, qui ne veut pas l'achever, qui préfère tout perdre plutôt que de rien concéder. Celui-là, c'est l'esprit réfractaire, armé d'obstination et de cruauté, hier le fusilleur de la rue Transnonain, aujourd'hui le bombardeur de Paris. (...) Il est le maître, il va pouvoir refaire en grand l'exemple de 1834. Il organise la répression, décide l'exemple de l'hécatombe, la saignée méthodique de la masse ouvrière.(38)

The suffering borne by mère Pommier in the wake of the Commune is of course common to innumerable working-class women:

Elle regardait autour d'elle, voyait que presque tous ceux qu'elle connaissait avaient été éprouvés de la même façon. Combien de mères avaient perdu leur fils, combien de femmes leur mari, pendant le siège pendant la Commune! Ce jeune homme, qui avait habité huit jours dans la cave, avait été fusillé à l'entrée des troupes parce qu'il était soldat réfractaire. Cette femme, qui logeait en face, avait eu son mari et ses deux fils massacrés dans une chapelle du Père-Lachaise - comme Jean peut-être... - Et d'autres, et d'autres! Toutes les maisons de la rue étaient marquées du même deuil. (A 101-102)

The dedication of the novel to the daughters of Paris assumes of course particular significance in the light of this passage. While in later years the mother will often lament Jean's failure to heed her warnings ('Ah! si Jean, seulement, avait voulu l'entendre, si le dernier jour il ne s'était pas enfui loin d'elle, emporté par la fureur du combat vers ce Père-Lachaise où il devait trouver la mort parmi les morts!...')(A 315) she will each time return to the idea that both her sons were helpless before the cataclysmic forces of destiny:

Les deux pauvres enfants avaient été emportés par le destin, par quelque chose de plus fort qu'eux et qui ressemblait à une tempête chavirant les barques. Ce n'était pas leur faute. Sans ce Siège et cette Commune, ils auraient fait face à la vie honnêtement et fièrement. (A 68-69)

...Justin et Jean (...) ont obéi à une puissance plus forte que leur volonté, à un ensemble de circonstances qu'ils n'avaient pas créées, qui disposaient d'eux, malgré eux, malgré tout. Ils avaient gardé l'idée qu'ils remplissaient leur devoir en obéissant au destin. (A 313-314)

What course might life have taken had Justin and Jean survived? Their mother, not astonishingly, will often ponder this question. If the two young men had escaped to exile in London, Brussels or Geneva (transportation to New Caledonia - 'un pays si éloigné qu'il fallait naviguer trois mois pour y arriver')(A 102) - is of course considered by this working-class woman to be on a parallel with death itself) their

family could perhaps have joined them:

On aurait travaillé, on se serait refait un abri, on aurait été heureux. La patrie pour elle [mère Pommier] c'étaient ses enfants.(A 102)

They might all in time have returned to France, although not to Paris, a city in the mother's eyes - and seen throughout the novel to be - devoid of heart,

...une ville trop terrible, une ville de misère et de crime, une mangeuse d'hommes, une tueuse qui se sert de tous les moyens, du travail et de la révolution, pour en arriver à ses fins.(A 102)

Many of the events and case histories recounted throughout the novel illustrate indeed just how callous the metropolis can be in its treatment of the poor, the defenceless and the weak.(39) It is significant however to note the contrast between a view such as this one (and mère Pommier is almost certainly reflecting Geffroy's own idea in some degree) and that expressed by such writers as Cladel and Vallès, both of whom are aware of, and draw attention to, the poverty and injustice within the City of Light, but who repeatedly glorify the revolutionary tradition of its inhabitants.

The traumatic experiences undergone in the Père-Lachaise cemetery will of course be still vivid years later in mère Pommier's mind. In 1879 the ranks of the family are sadly depleted, the three males dead and Céline, though alive, fallen prey to prostitution. Mère Pommier is now alone with her younger daughter: the two will take frequent walks on the Buttes-Chaumont, listen to the Sunday concerts held there; but the sight of soldiers strolling too is even then unnerving to the mother:

Toujours les scènes du Père-Lachaise se ravivaient en elle, avec l'odeur de la poudre, les mains noires sur les fusils, le petit lieutenant féroce qui avait donné l'ordre de la jeter au mur, le vieux et triste capitaine qui l'avait menée si doucement vers la

porte. Elle raconta cela, qu'elle n'avait jamais dit, et Cécile l'entendit en frémissant, emmena sa mère, comme si ces soldats allaient interrompre le concert paisible, se précipiter sur elles, les entraîner vers quelque muraille sinistre. La nervosité du Siège et de la Commune était restée en elles, elles avaient hérité de leurs morts. (A 354)

The horrors of the 'Terrible Year' have indeed left an indelible trace on people's nervous systems.

Geffroy will never of course suggest *mère Pommier's* view of life to be other than limited. She will be described as '*...une créature ingénue (...) subissant les événements sans trop y rien comprendre que son devoir immédiat (...) (et qui) se serait à peine aperçue que la vie existait, si elle n'avait pas connu le malheur*' (A 350-351); but if a judgement such as this seems hardly laudatory in itself, it needs to be weighed against the overall portrayal of her. Geffroy, as we have noted, had had direct experience of this working class *milieu*; it was seemingly his intention to pay tribute through depiction of the mother to the patient, long-suffering women of such an environment for whom satisfaction and happiness were derived principally or exclusively from attention to their loved ones' needs. The militant virago devoted only to social reckoning (such as Urbaine Hélioiz of *I.N.R.I.*) or even the woman supporting her menfolk in their revolutionary cult, have simply no place in his intended portrayal; and however rudimentary *mère Pommier's* understanding of social or political development, Geffroy makes sure that the course of events after the Commune will prove her advice to Jean to have been sound. The humble credo of this woman, deriving from an unquestioning selflessness and a total devotion to her family, may not strike a responsive chord in the present-day reader; to Geffroy at least, this is a life exemplary in its way:

...elle se survit, plutôt qu'elle ne vit, dans les autres. Elle a voulu, elle veut son homme content, et que ne veut-elle pas pour ses filles! que n'a-t-elle pas voulu pour ses fils!... Au moins, ont-ils su, ont-ils deviné ce qu'elle a été pour eux, par quels héroïsmes de chaque heure, par quelles privations de sa part de bonheur, par quels actes de dévouement farouche, de magie, de

volonté, elle a tenté d'assurer leur bon départ pour la vie?

Ces existences secrètes perpétuent la bonté et la force de la race, assurent le recrutement des énergies et des pensées de l'avenir. Que l'on songe à l'infinie grandeur, à la poésie cachée des jours vécus par cette pauvre femme oubliée d'elle-même!

(...) Si triste, si fatiguée qu'elle soit, elle porte inconsciemment avec elle une certitude, elle a fait sa tâche vivant pour les autres, manifestant une puissance d'âme invincible. L'ardeur et la beauté de sa vie intérieure font de cette créature instinctive un type d'humanité supérieure. (A 72-74)

Following Pommier's death at Sainte-Anne, his wife will often wonder how those of her circumstances and social position might best counter the adversities of their environment. A working class woman of limited education is hardly likely of course to hold carefully reasoned opinions as to the attenuation or removal of social iniquity; yet for all the apparent ingenuousness of mère Pommier's reasoning, her conclusions would seem (in the light of other passages in the novel) to have the at least partial endorsement of Geffroy himself:

Il faudrait que les gens deviennent raisonnables, sachent se contenter de peu, et se plaire chez eux, et puis qu'il n'y ait plus de bouleversements, plus de guerres, plus de misères, plus de comptoirs où l'on boit du poison...

Elle faisait ces réflexions, et parfois elle les communiquait à ses filles, mais elle ne savait, pauvre et ignorante comme elle était, découvrir le remède à tant de maux. Elle ne pouvait que demander aux deux filles d'être comme elle, et, après tout, peut-être n'y avait-il d'autre remède à tous les malheurs que de se bien conduire soi-même.

For mère Pommier, the desirability of an acceptance of lot is coupled then with a vague awareness of the need for change: and such ideas find subsequent reinforcement in the text. Cécile and her mother will in time seek lodging in the rue Secrétan; while the lower portion of the street is said by Geffroy to have been in 1878 '*...un des plus tristes couloirs où ait jamais cheminé la misère de Paris*' (A 330), he will state that:

...l'homme a si bien accepté la vie, dans n'importe quelles conditions, il s'est fait une telle habitude des événements toujours les mêmes de chaque jour, que ce passage et ce stationnement de foule n'étaient pas plus sinistres qu'ailleurs, dans cette sinistre partie de la rue Secrétan, comprise entre le rond-point de la Villette et la rue Bolivar. Sur ces pavés qui semblaient promis à quelque future barricade, dans cette rue faite pour un surgissement de drapeau noir, les enfants des pauvres étaient joyeux, les physionomies des hommes étaient joviales.

(...) Une telle rue faisait comprendre le drame social en suspens, le désespoir et la révolte possibles, et aussi la triste beauté de l'acceptation, la longue sérénité du cheminement à ras de terre (...).

Il n'y a ici aucun blâme. Chômage, misère, inquiétude du lendemain, ne sont pas des vices. Ce sont les injustices du sort et les tares de la civilisation. Le spectacle prend une belle signification par le labeur sans trêve, la gaieté énergique, l'effort pour le lendemain meilleur. Cette rue et bien d'autres sont admirables, non pour leur aspect, mais pour la foule qui donne une telle leçon de courage, qui affiche un tel viril espoir. (A 332-334)

The possible reactions to hardship and injustice on the part of those who endure them are of course two. Revolt, while hardly incomprehensible or inexcusable, is clearly not considered by Geffroy to be positive in itself; whereas resignation to social disadvantage, and optimistic, cheerful endeavours to make the best of straitened circumstances, appear to be advocated. This message presents some parallel with that implicit in the novel's opening chapter as mère Pommier entreats Jean to submit to circumstances. Geffroy in writing the above passage had present in his mind the wave of anarchism of the early 1890's: his reference to the black flag should be considered in relation to a passage by him written on 10 November 1893 following the bomb attack in Barcelona:

...les obscurs, les anonymes, se servent de l'engin obscur et anonyme. Ils ne vont plus poitrine nue aux barricades. Le temps de l'insurrection romantique est passé. (40)

Some pages later in l'Apprentie, a description of Paris as seen from the Buttes-Chaumont is provided. The park (l'oasis de la ville de

travail et de misère') (A 336) provides for the working-class inhabitants of the surrounding district an agreeable contrast to their habitual cadre:

C'est l'apothéose du factice, le règne d'un doux mensonge, une sorte de changement à vue qui se fait dans cette région de négoce et d'usines, bruyante de machines et traversée de fumées.(A 337)

A view out across the expanding industrial area that adjoins Belleville serves indeed to bring home to an observer the illusory nature of this haven of tranquillity. Smoky billows from the factory chimneys waft above the city:

Ces fumées, qui sortent des îlots de bâtisses, et qui semblent se répondre et se combattre, sont tragiques comme les fumées des canonnades et des incendies. On ne voit pas, de si loin, manoeuvrer les troupes et passer les foules, mais elles y sont, on les devine: une humanité haletante court entre ces replis de terrains, dans ces défilés de hautes maisons. De ce belvédère de ce haut observatoire social dressé sur Paris, on aperçoit distinctement, sous le ciel, l'agitation de l'énorme ville en travail, le labeur de ses faubourgs et de sa banlieue. Une histoire nouvelle se fait là, violemment et sourdement, qui ne se révèle que par le bruit des machines et l'essor lent des fumées, - un peuple se forme, s'agrège, s'agglomère, créé de forces venues de partout. On voit monter insensiblement sa vie, on entend sa rumeur, sa voix, à travers le bruit des voitures, des locomotives, des sifflets stridents et des grondements colères des usines.

Désormais l'oasis de verdure perd son caractère d'isolement, apparaît entourée de multitudes, le jardin de repos est traversé de voix qui murmurent et qui crient: "Pas de repos!"(A 344-345)

If attention is drawn anew here to the drudgery and unceasing toil of working-class life, Geffroy seems also to be referring - with the guardedness that is his throughout the novel - to the inexorable development of the proletarian movement. The passage may be said to complement the earlier account of the pilgrimage to the Père-Lachaise, and the impression exuded even within the cemetery of '*...un enfer social qui continue, (...) une lutte sans fin...*'(A 106); and while there is in the above-quoted lines no suggestion of a further evening of scores

or of a radical transformation of society, the reader is no doubt expected to draw his own conclusions. Geffroy may have advocated resignation on the part of the working classes; he was clearly aware that no fund of patience is inexhaustible. The implicit warning of November 1893 as to what might lie in store if social hardships were not alleviated, had been conveyed rather less reticently in a further article written two months later and devoted to the anarchist Vaillant. Geffroy had, furthermore, condemned outright a society which could tolerate blatant injustice and poverty within its fabric.(41) While a decade later the warning signals seemed perhaps rather less urgent, Geffroy would still appear to be reminding his readers (albeit discreetly) that a continued disregard of social inequalities might well, in time, prove disastrous.

If one can hardly draw close parallels between French and Russian society during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, it is of interest nonetheless, in the context of this study, to refer to articles written by Geffroy in 1905 as he followed developments in Nicholas II's empire. On 28 January (only days after the events of 'Bloody Sunday' in St Petersburg) he drew attention to the inevitable consequences of continued repression:

Quand même les ouvriers de Saint-Petersbourg seraient encore décimés, écrasés, quand l'hécatombe serait effroyablement accrue, quand on n'entendrait plus que des appels de blessés, des râles de mourants, quand il n'y aurait demain que le grand silence de la mort, le tsar se croirait-il victorieux? L'avenir le détromperait bientôt.(42)

Eleven months later, as unrest and civil war continued through Russia, Geffroy provided a synopsis of the causes of this turmoil that might be compared with similar passages by Zola (depicting in Paris the French social scene of the early 1890's)... or Jean Richepin, writing soon after the Commune in les Etapes d'un réfractaire:

Là-bas, comme partout, ce seront les dirigeants qui auront voulu quand même et toujours maintenir la triste masse humaine dans la misère et dans l'ignorance. Des hommes font d'autres hommes leurs esclaves, leurs bêtes de somme, les obligent au labeur sans espoir, ne leur laissent qu'un salaire dérisoire pour prolonger en eux la force nécessaire au travail. Et ils s'étonnent qu'un jour le cri de faim, de révolte et de liberté sorte de cette masse humaine terrorisée! Des hommes laissent d'autres hommes dans l'ignorance, ne veulent rien leur apprendre des droits et des devoirs de la vie. Et ils s'étonnent que les misérables, poussés à bout, en appellent à la violence, et se lancent d'une poussée irrésistible sur le vieux monde qui ne leur a offert que l'exemple de ses appétits et de ses iniquités! Quelle folie, et quelle ignorance aussi, hélas! chez ces maîtres de la société, ces gouvernants, ces dirigeants incapables de se diriger eux-mêmes! Ils peuvent encore lancer leurs cosaques sur la foule. Un jour prochain, cette foule sans armes aura raison, par son flot toujours grossissant, des sabres et des fouets levés contre elle. Le seul remède, pour calmer l'instinctive fureur de justice de cette foule révoltée, ce serait de lui donner sa part légitime des biens de la terre et de lui ouvrir l'esprit.(43)

It is to be remembered (although Geffroy does not of course say as much) that the Russian Revolution of 1905 was the first major proletarian movement since the Paris Commune of thirty-four years earlier.

Just as Geffroy's depiction of the siege seems in some respects to recall that found in la Débâcle, the reader might be tempted also to see a parallel between Maurice Levasseur and Jean Pommier, both of whom during the Commune are manifestly in the grip of revolutionary insanity. Such terms as 'folie', 'fièvre', 'affolement' recur repeatedly in the pages relating their state of mind: young Pommier is said to be much of the time '*...dans un état de surexcitation indicible, s'exprimant avec rage sur ce qui se passait...*'(A 36), '*...exalté par la lecture des journaux, les soirées des clubs, les parlotes violentes entre camarades...*'(A 44); and Maurice during the period of siege and insurrection is roused also to fever pitch, '*...le cerveau hanté de violences, prêt aux actes désespérés, pour la défense de ce qu'il croyait être la vérité et la justice*',(44), '*...d'une nervosité ombrageuse, d'une inquiétude qui se tournait en exaspération,*

au moindre heurt.'(45) Both men when they take up arms are motivated (if for different reasons) by vengeful feeling; each, despite a woman's pleading, will obstinately continue his misguided course (for Henriette Levasseur, to whom is attributed also a typically feminine horror of violence,(46) will attempt in vain by letter to dissuade her brother from potential hazard).(47) The destructive urge so pronounced in Maurice will be apparent also in Jean; and both, it might be added, are said to be fighting during April at the Neuilly outposts.

Points of resemblance between the two insurgents are however at least equalled by their differences. Jean the worker, solid and reliable in normal circumstances but caught up in a chain of events beyond his control and dominated to the last by fanatical resolution, has no essential affinity (temperamental or otherwise) with the habitually unstable, highly-strung bourgeois intellectual of Zola's novel.(48) Maurice, embodiment of the nation's decadent element in a text overtly unfavourable to the Commune, will of course experience keen disillusionment with the cause he has espoused, and - in moments of damning self-evaluation during his final days of life - disclaim any positive aspiration on the part of the revolutionaries. While Geffroy will hardly insist upon the Communards' generous ideals, Jean's desire for vengeance (frenzied though it is) does follow the loss of a brother who might be regarded as a victim not merely of the '*esprit guerrier de la garde nationale*'(A 34) but of the egoism and treachery of those in power. Its inopportuneness notwithstanding, the struggle young Pommier and his fellow combatants have undertaken is intended to bring about an order in which the lives of those such as themselves and their kin will no longer count as nothing.

If Geffroy leaves much unsaid in his portrayal of the Commune, certain omissions might be seen as a deliberate avoidance of possible misrepresentation. It will indeed be written of père Pommier that in the weeks preceding the Commune '*... (il) reprenait (...) les allures du flâneur parisien, content de toucher ses trente sous, et de dire son fait au gouvernement*'(A 44): there is no suggestion however (as there

had been in Zola's texts) that the average fédéré was fighting merely for his thirty-sou allowance. The question of inebriation during the siege and the Commune - so dear of course to anti-Communard writers and hardly skirted by Zola(49) - is in Geffroy's novel approached with characteristic circumspection, reference being made simply to impassioned arguments '*chez quelque marchand de vins...*'(A 44) and to père Pommier's rather too frequent state during the Commune ('...*(il) reparaissait un peu troublé par ce qu'il avait bu, dans la journée, de grands et de petits verres*')(A 49). The habit of tippling acquired during the siege and the Commune will, it is true, prove deleterious to the old worker when the dissuading influence of his sons is no more.

A further text by Zola invites comparison with l'Apprentie. While in its open mockery of the Communards Jacques Damour seems again illustrative of a spirit alien to that of Geffroy's novel, superficial similarities between the two stories are apparent. Félicie Damour has little of the courageous self-denegation of mère Pommier, but she too feels anxiety at the possible involvement of her menfolk in insurrection. Damour and his son Eugène (the latter and Jean Pommier, it may be noted in passing, are both nineteen) manifest - again superficially - some of the characteristics apparent in Jean Pommier. The two men, as we remember, allow themselves to be swayed by the preachings of the pseudo-revolutionary house-painter Berru, who despite affirmations of insurrectionary fervour is careful not to be on hand in the final debacle; and indeed, we remember that in mère Pommier's view her son risked involvement with men of precisely this stamp. It seems difficult not to be at least put in mind of Jean when one reads passages such as the following:

"En voilà des cancons! disait Félicie à son fils, quand Berru s'était décidé à partir. Ne va pas te monter la tête, toi! Tu sais qu'il ment.

- Je sais ce que je sais', répondit Eugène avec un geste terrible.(50) (My underlining)

...Damour et Eugène achevèrent de se monter la tête, ainsi que disait la mère. Oisifs du matin au soir, sortis de leurs habitudes (...) ils vivaient dans un malaise, dans un effarement plein d'imaginaires baroques et sanglantes. (...) Quand Damour rentrait avec Eugène, tous deux enfiévrés par le coup de folie du dehors, ils ne parlaient que de tuer le monde, devant Félicie pâle et muette...(51) (My underlining)

Eugène, qui avait voulu voir les Prussiens, donnait des détails; lorsque Damour, brandissant une fourchette, cria furieusement qu'il aurait fallu guillotiner tous les généraux.(52) (My underlining)

When Damour is actively defending the Commune after 18 March, he will find - as Jean Pommier sometimes does - that the atmosphere of his home has a calming effect ('*Quand il revenait, harassé, noir de sueur et de poudre, il passait des heures auprès de (sa petite fille), à l'écouter respirer*').(53) Following Eugène's death at the ramparts near the end of April, he will, however, swear to avenge his son as Jean had vowed to avenge Justin on seeing the latter's corpse in the Père-Lachaise:

...il regarda longtemps, contre la glace, une photographie d'Eugène, où le jeune homme s'était fait représenter en garde national. Il prit une plume et écrivit au bas de la carte: "Je te vengerai," avec la date et sa signature.(54)

On the entry of the Versailles troops Damour will of course throw himself wholeheartedly into resistance:

Il ne rentra pas de deux jours, il se replia avec son bataillon, défendant les barricades, au milieu des incendies. (...) Le matin du troisième jour, il reparut rue des Envierges, en lambeaux, chancelant et hébété comme un homme ivre. Félicie le déshabillait et lui lavait les mains avec une serviette mouillée, lorsqu'une voisine dit que les communards tenaient encore dans le Père-Lachaise, et que les Versaillais ne savaient comment les en déloger.

"J'y vais", dit-il simplement.(55)

Jean Pommier meets his end in the Père-Lachaise; Jacques Damour will be taken prisoner there. Geffroy's character, for all his

misguidedness, displays however none of the ignorance and total naiveté Zola attributes to his hero.

The naturalistic orientation of l'Apprentie is of course unmistakable, and some basic affinity between the novel and various works by Zola (notably l'Assommoir) can hardly be denied. Geffroy too is examining the effects of a working-class environment upon individuals; he will not, in his portrayal of the Pommier family, minimise hereditary factors, for while Justin, Jean and Cécile are said to possess their mother's serious-mindedness, Céline ('...(qui) a le visage moins précis, de contour plus mol, le front, le menton légèrement fuyants')(A 7) resembles her father ('...d'une physionomie indécise et rieuse...')(A 11) both physically and temperamentally.(56) Père Pommier's end cannot fail of course to recall that of Coupeau; and the adolescent Céline might be considered to present superficial analogies with Nana as portrayed in l'Assommoir.(57) Geffroy admired greatly Zola's handling of crowd scenes ('...j'adore les foules de Germinal...');(58) and his own fascination with the multitude (dating from the days of the siege) would be reflected, as we have seen, not merely in l'Apprentie but in l'Enfermé and certain articles of Notre Temps I. Descriptions of the working-class throng at work or at leisure are of course a feature of l'Apprentie that may recall not dissimilar evocations in the seventh Rougon-Macquart novel.

Considerations such as these should not preclude recognition of Geffroy's essential originality. His style is unquestionably his own; and while it may at times be possible to see a given theme or idea in another writer's work as having provided the basis for his inspiration, Geffroy's development or final treatment of this idea provides indisputable evidence of his personal thinking. Speculation may conceivably be justified as to whether a reading of Jacques Damour, for example, had not furnished the nucleus of themes used in l'Apprentie; the resemblances between the two stories (if resemblances there be) are in sum so slight as to invalidate any suggestion of undue influence.

In the opinion of Léon Daudet, Geffroy and Descaves were with his father:

...les deux hommes (...) les mieux documentés sur cet épisode tragique, sinistre et flamboyant du drame de 1870-1871, sur cet essai de guerre civile où se mêlèrent, en un extraordinaire mélange, le communisme et le nationalisme... (59)

It can hardly be said that the portrayal of the Commune found in l'Apprentie provides evidence of extensive research. A study of la Colonne and Philémon vieux de la vieille - each the result of a thorough documentation and of countless hours of conversation with former participants in the insurrectionary period - will allow us, in fact, to further appreciate the limitations of Geffroy's objective in this respect. The opening chapter of l'Apprentie is poignant however precisely by reason of its concision and simplicity; and the reader may well long remember the representation of mère Pommier who struggles unaided (and with an increasing sense of hopelessness and despair) to prevent further tragedy from besetting her family. A film version of l'Apprentie would be made in 1914; even today, the drama evoked in the first sixty pages of the novel might lend itself to a not ineffective screen portrayal. Far less concerned than Lucien Descaves with the incorporation into his text of factual information, Geffroy does succeed - as Léon Blum had noted - in the creation of atmosphere, and in conveying the emotions of simple folk.

Geffroy did not, as we have seen, condemn too harshly the rebellion of a man such as Jean Pommier, judged by him implicitly to have legitimate grievances against the treacherous, incompetent leadership of the Government of National Defence and the National Assembly. Such rebellion in the circumstances is presented however as ill-judged, ill-timed, the work of men mentally and physically debilitated by the hardships they have suffered. Geffroy's horror of civil war (and of violence generally) was expressed more than once in writing both preceding and contemporaneous with l'Apprentie; and the Commune as portrayed in the novel is a period of sombre tragedy and

bleak despair which - taking place when it does - is in no way annunciatory of a better, more equitable social order. Its toll is seen to be one of lasting misery for the working classes; its very character is apparently illustrated by the fact that its chief adherent in the novel is, at the time, half-demented. The use of the term '*chien enragé*' - applied to Jean at the end of the novel - is of course a further concession to the anti-Communard representation of March-May 1871 insofar as this designation, and others similar, recurred constantly in conservative writing during and after the insurrectionary period.(60)

The Commune's importance might be considered undermined in the novel if only by Jean Pommier's principal reason for combat; for if he gives his life during the semaine sanglante he has been fighting in the first instance not for an ideal, or through veneration for a Republic endangered, but out of a desire for revenge. Geffroy's failure even to mention the National Assembly and its role in provoking the Parisians to revolt invites further possible charges of simplism in l'Apprentie's historical portrayal. It should be borne in mind however that aspiration towards social change on the part of the Communards is not ignored in the text: born largely of the frustration of thwarted patriotism, the Commune was nonetheless a manifestation by, and on behalf of, society's 'have-nots'. Attempted betterment of lot had been doomed to failure in the spring of 1871, but Geffroy was aware of the gradual, inexorable move by the working classes everywhere towards eradication of social ills. Of the reality of these ills he was not in doubt; and while change by violent means was never advocated by him, he understood also that perpetuation of injustice entailed a constant invitation to discontent and disorder.

Even when account is taken however of the fact that historical background is not a major preoccupation of Geffroy's part, one may wonder why certain questions important to an understanding of the Commune (and treated by the writer elsewhere in his production) receive in l'Apprentie no consideration at all. For all this, there can be

little doubt as to the sympathy and compassion felt by Geffroy for the social class constituting the exclusive focus of concentration in his novel. The words of Roland Dorgelès concerning the man described by Barbey d'Aurevilly as '*le juste de la Justice*'(61) should not perhaps be accepted unreservedly; they have sufficient truth nonetheless to merit quotation here:

Gustave Geffroy (...) était d'abord sévère mais la tendresse qu'il cachait par pudeur se faisait jour dès qu'il prenait la plume; un livre comme l'Apprentie le révèle à chaque page.

Ce tableau poignant de la vie populaire désignait son auteur pour succéder à Jules Vallès sur la liste des membres de la future académie [Goncourt]. Vallès dédiait l'Insurgé, ce grand livre de la Commune, "à tous ceux qui, victimes de l'injustice sociale, prirent les armes contre un monde mal fait"; Gustave Geffroy dédia l'Apprentie "Aux fils (sic) de Paris, en témoignage d'une époque barbare." Ces deux hommes au coeur déchiré appartenaient vraiment à la même famille.(62)

NOTES

All page references are taken from the edition of *L'Apprentie* published by Georges Crès et Cie, Paris, 1919.

1. Léon Blum, *Gil Blas*, 29 February 1904. Quoted by Paul Dupray, '*L'Apprentie*', *Revue universelle*, 1904, p. 238.
2. Various short stories by Léon Cladel (notably '*Une Maudite*', 1875) recount the poverty and degradation to which the kin of dead or deported Communards were reduced.
3. *L'Apprentie*, 'Préface de l'auteur', iii.
4. E. and J. de Goncourt, *Journal*, Paris, Fasquelle/Flammarion, 1956, Vol. III (1879-1890) - p. 480.
5. Quoted by Paul Dupray, *op.cit.*, p. 238.
6. Léon Daudet, 'A distance d'Histoire', *le Gaulois*, 7 January 1908, p. 1:

'Ce beau livre a la simplicité, la douceur et la cruauté des humbles. Il ne proteste, ni ne crie. Il constate. Ce n'est plus le ton de Zola, qui tient du faux prophète et de l'herboriste, qui embrouille la vocifération et le manuel. C'est l'étude consciencieuse d'un écrivain qui souffre des malentendus sociaux et qui voudrait les dissiper. (...)

*Si vous me demandez pourquoi *L'Apprentie*, qui parut en librairie voici trois ans, n'a pas eu le succès de *L'Assommoir* - malgré tant de qualités éminentes et un intérêt si prenant - je vous répondrai que la chasteté du style et la noblesse de l'intention y sont certainement pour quelque chose. Son violent badigeon et son argot ont fait la vogue des romans de Zola, le seul observé, le seul mûri, d'ailleurs dans la plate, bestiale et monotone série des Rougon-Macquart.'*

Paul Flat, '*L'Apprentie*', *Revue bleue IX* (1908), p. 61:

*'...*L'Apprentie*, le meilleur tableau en raccourci qui nous ait été présenté de la vie populaire depuis *L'Assommoir* d'Emile Zola, le plus franchement conçu et exécuté suivant les données de l'esthétique naturaliste, où l'on sent un admirateur passionné et un disciple du maître de Médan, mais avec quelque chose de plus et d'autre: une sensibilité plus raffinée, plus délicate, s'attachant à des nuances et à des finesses que Zola n'a jamais connues...'*

7. Gustave Geffroy, Notre Temps I: Scènes d'histoire, Paris, Crès 1918, pp. 98-99:

'Personne, de ceux qui ont vécu la vie de cette année 1870, ne peut échapper à ce passé, éviter cette marque. Des hommes faits, les uns ont eu leur énergie brisée, sont devenus des vieillards, d'autres se sont rués au travail, ont eu leur crise salutaire. Pour ceux qui sont seulement aujourd'hui des hommes, qui étaient des adolescents ou des enfants alors, ces quatre mois sont inoubliables, deviennent une période lointaine, mystérieuse, un voyage dans l'étrange, dans l'inconnu. Ceux de sept ans, ceux de quinze ans, ceux qui sortaient de la première enfance, ceux qui allaient entrer dans la première jeunesse, ont connu l'initiation précoce, ont figuré, à l'âge habituel de l'insouciance, dans un drame de l'Histoire, à grand et sombre spectacle.'

Particulars as to Geffroy's life are given by Robert T. Denomé, The Naturalism of Gustave Geffroy, Geneva, Droz, 1963: Chapter One and passim.

8. L'Apprentie 'Preface de l'auteur', iv-v.
9. Ibid., p. 282: '*...le bonhomme Pommier va tout droit vers le décor qui exprime le mieux la halte de la fatigue humaine, la recherche farouche de la diversion et de l'illusion. (...) Quand il est seul par les rues, revenant fatigué, rêvassant vaguement sur son existence laborieuse, sur la misère du monde et sur ses chagrins personnels, son attendrissement sur lui-même ou sa révolte contre le sort se traduisent invariablement par la soif.*'
10. Gaston Gille, Jules Vallès (1832-1885). Ses révoltes, sa maîtrise, son prestige. Paris, Jouve et Cie, 1941: Preface, i.
11. Serialisation of les Blouses (by Jules V...) was announced thus in la Justice three days before commencement:

On a deviné l'auteur: c'est l'écrivain fameux qui raconta la misère avec un style superbement âpre et coloré, et qui peignit, dans un livre d'un grand retentissement, les Déshérités, et les Réfractaires.

Ce livre faisait prévoir la destinée de l'écrivain: mêlé aux événements les plus poignants de l'année terrible, il s'est, comme on sait, fixé quelques années à l'étranger: mais nous comptons revoir bientôt son masque énergique marqué au cachet de son talent.

(...) Le drame de la faim est mêlé, dans Les Blouses, au drame grandiose des mouvements populaires: et les figures de ces nouveaux réfractaires sont éclairées par les éclairs des barricades.

See Jules Vallès, Un Gentilhomme/Les Blouses, Paris, Editeurs Français Réunis, 1955, p. 133.

12. Gaston Gille, *op cit.*, p. 549. See also Préface, i-ii.
13. Jean Vallery-Radot, 'Geffroy, critique d'art', G. Geffroy et l'art moderne, Paris, 1957, p. 13. Quoted by Robert T. Denonné, *op.cit.*, p. 184 n.76.
14. See E. and J. de Goncourt, Journal, Vol. III, p. 1145; cf. Lucien Descaves, Souvenirs d'un ours, Editions de Paris, 1946, p. 113.
15. Maurice Hamel, les Arts de la Vie, March 1904. Quoted by Paul Dupray, *op. cit.*, pp. 238-239.
16. Père Pommier will on two occasions when addressing his wife call her 'Marie' (pp. 202, 304).
17. Cf. Léon Cladel, Petits cahiers, Paris, Ed. Monnier et Cie, 1885, p. 44 (the prediction by 'Paul-des-Blés' in Cladel's story of the same name):

'...une fois les Prussiens partis, il faudra, je le sens, s'arranger avec les réacs qui ne sont pas du tout raisonnables en essayant de nous foutre dans le sac; on en découdra, que voulez-vous si c'est forcé!'

18. See Gustave Geffroy, l'Enfermé (new ed., rev. and enl.), Paris, Crès, 1926 (2 vols.); Vol. II, pp. 75-77. Cf. Samuel Bernstein, Auguste Blanqui (trans. Jean Vaché), Paris, François Maspéro, 1970, p. 314.
19. Samuel Bernstein, *op. cit.*, p. 316.
20. See l'Enfermé, Vol. II, pp. 79-80:

'Il est l'interprète, inconnu, de la population. Ce qu'il dit dans son journal, on le dit dans les groupes de la rue, et dans les chambres, le soir. Jamais il n'y eut unisson pareil entre un peuple et un homme, mais ce peuple ignore cet homme, un abîme de silence est entre eux, une impossibilité de communication. Ces pages, qui auraient dû, qui auraient pu soulever cette masse énorme de Paris, si facilement soumise au fluide, ne dépassaient pas de beaucoup le cercle d'adeptes, ne firent que çà et là des recrues. (...)

Ceux qui lurent ces articles les trouvèrent admirables. Mais l'écrivain ne conquit pas cette foule du Siège, qui voulait la même chose que lui, qui se refusait à admettre la défaite et la reddition de Paris. Dans le mouvement et le bruit de la ville en bataille, la voix de Blanqui est comme une voix dans le désert. On ne l'entendra qu'après, elle deviendra de plus en plus vivante, elle incarnera enfin tous ceux qui jetaient alors leur clameur au vent, et qui n'auront jamais su ou qui n'auront su que trop tard, quel collaborateur s'offrait à eux.'

21. See Notre Temps I, pp. 99-100; cf. l'Enfermé, Vol. II, pp. 97-99.
22. Duret (1838-1927) had accepted the position of deputy mayor for the 9th arrondissement during the Commune, and only narrowly escaped execution by the Versaillais (see Ernest Daudet, l'Agonie de la Commune, Paris à feu et à sang, Paris, E. Lachaud, 1871: pp. 114-115). His Histoire de quatre ans, 1870-1873, appeared in three volumes between 1876-1881: the extent of Zola's reliance on the Histoire for his portrayal of the siege and the Commune is apparent from the 'Notes et variantes' for la Débâcle found in Volume V of les Rougon-Macquart (Paris, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, Gallimard, pp. 1550-1560).
23. Emile Zola, Oeuvres complètes, Paris, Cercle du livre précieux, Vol. VI, p. 1073.
24. Ibid., p. 1077.
25. L'Apprentie, 'Préface de l'auteur', iv-v. Cf. comments made by Geffroy in 1908, on production of his play l'Apprentie, based on the novel:
- 'J'ai vu de près les effets que des événements si tragiques ont eus dans ces milieux populaires, milieux de travailleurs, d'ouvriers, familles d'humbles gens. C'est cette répercussion des événements sur les êtres que j'ai essayé de rendre sensible (d'abord dans un livre, puis dans (une) pièce (...)) L'oeuvre dramatique que j'ai tentée prend ainsi tout naturellement le caractère d'un essai historique. Je pars de ce point de vue: évoquer de grands événements d'existence collective à travers des cas particuliers.'*
(Quoted by Paul Flat, op. cit., p. 61.)
26. The events of 31 October were prompted by news of the defeat at Le Bourget, Bazaine's capitulation at Metz, and the suggestion of an armistice.
27. Cf. l'Enfermé, Vol. II, p. 122:
'Sous la lourde tombée de neige de décembre sur le sol de glace, (Blanqui) voit Paris se coucher lentement au tombeau, aller au sommeil final, à l'agonie prochaine. Tout autour de la ville, tonnent les canons des forts et les canons allemands, et ces salves monotones qui se propagent dans l'atmosphère d'hiver annoncent de leur grand bruit solennel et funèbre la fin et l'enterrement d'une grande chose, le peuple de Paris étendu et expirant dans la profonde vallée de la Seine, sous un ciel opaque et pesant comme une dalle de cimetière.'
28. See Léon Cladel, Petits cahiers ('Chez ceux qui furent'), pp. 76-77; also Lucien Descaves, la Colonne, Paris, Albin Michel, 1931, p. 105.

29. Geffroy was to continue the story of his heroine in Cécile Pommier, published in 1924.
30. P.-O. Lissagaray, Histoire de la Commune de 1871, Paris, Francois Maspéro, 1976, p. 75. Cf. Maxime du Camp, Les Convulsions de Paris, Vol. I, Paris, Hachette, 1878, pp. 15-16:

'La nécessité de la paix, d'une paix très-prochaine et rapide, s'imposait à toutes les consciences; mais nul n'osait en prendre l'initiative, car l'on redoutait fort ce que le conseil du gouvernement appelait volontiers 'la rue', c'est-à-dire la garde nationale. On résolut alors de lui infuser des idées pacifiques, en la jetant tout entière au péril. Le général Trochu dit, dans la séance du 10 janvier 1871: "Si dans une grande bataille livrée sous Paris 20,000 ou 25,000 hommes restaient sur le terrain, Paris capitulerait." On se récria; il reprit: "La garde nationale ne consentira à la paix que si elle perd 10,000 hommes."'

Geffroy refers to the sortie of Buzenval in l'Enfermé, Vol. II, p. 123. With regard to the question of an intended 'blood letting' during the siege, it is of interest to read Henry Céard's 'la Saignée' (Soirées de Médan).

31. Victor Hugo, Oeuvres poétiques complètes - Oeuvres diverses, Paris, Jean-Jacques Pauvert, 1964, p. 737.
32. See l'Enfermé, Vol. II, pp. 141-142.
33. See Notre Temps I, 'Guerre en Mandchourie', passim.
34. Cf. Paul and Victor Margueritte, Une Epoque. Les Tronçons du glaive, Paris, Plon, n.d. [but 1901], p. 459. The historian Thédénat is discussing with Martial Poncet the potentially explosive situation in Paris, and the failure of the Government of National Defence to actively champion resistance elsewhere in France:

'Pour ne pas mécontenter la garde nationale en lui enlevant ses armes, ils sacrifient tout, font tomber celles du pays entier. Croiriez-vous que Bismarck, par trois fois, a dit à Favre: "Vous laissez ses armes à la garde nationale, vous faites une bêtise, vous le regretterez!"'

Et comme Martial, surpris d'entendre Thédénat parler ainsi, s'indignait: Favre avait raison, pourquoi leur prendre leur fusil? l'historien répondait:

- Vous, Martial, vous êtes sage. Mais que d'exaltés! Croyez-moi, c'est de la folie que de leur laisser un tel jouet entre les doigts. La terreur d'une émeute a arrêté Favre: calcul dangereux, que de reculer pour mieux sauter. Une atmosphère de guerre civile pèse sur nous. (...) Le premier sang est versé, d'autre coulera! Un jour, bientôt, les fusils partiront seuls...'

35. See Appendix 3 of this study.
36. Emile Zola, op. cit., p. 1084. '*...une insurrection que les pavés eux-mêmes semblaient avoir voulue, grandie et d'un coup maîtresse dans la fatalité imprévue de son triomphe...*'
37. Notre Temps I, p. 82.
38. L'Enfermé, Vol. II, pp. 146-147.
39. See in particular Chapters Three ('Tragédies et comédies de faubourg') and Five ('Alcool').
40. Notre Temps I, pp. 167-168.
41. Ibid., p. 174: '*Parmi nous, les uns sont hostiles à tout changement, non seulement les bornés, mais ceux qui possèdent, qui savent, qui dirigent. Les autres, même les plus ardents au bien, à la paix sociale, ne sont pas assez ardents. Ils ne font pas assez pour convaincre les sourds, les indifférents, les réfractaires, les satisfaits. Il faudrait amener tout le monde à comprendre ceci: que chaque individu, membre de la société, est un sociétaire; qu'il n'a pas seulement pour rôle de payer l'impôt, l'impôt du sang, du temps, de l'argent, qu'il a droit en échange à la sécurité, à la subsistance, au repos de la vieillesse. Tant que des vieux mourront de faim dans la rue ou chez eux, tant qu'on verra ces groupes sinistres de femmes, d'enfants, blottis sous les portes, par dix degrés de froid, enveloppés de loques, - tant que cela sera, il faudra reconnaître que c'est la société entière qui est anarchique. Anarchie ou harmonie, - il faut choisir, il faut s'orienter. Il est temps.*' (7 janvier 1894).
42. Notre Temps I, p. 374.
43. Ibid., pp. 381-382.
44. Emile Zola, op. cit., p. 1082.
45. Ibid., p. 1080.
46. Ibid., pp. 823-824: '*"Oh! la guerre, l'atroce guerre!" (...)* ...je l'exècre, je la trouve injuste et abominable... Peut-être, simplement, est-ce parce que je suis femme. Ces tueries me révoltent. Pourquoi ne pas s'expliquer et s'entendre?"'
Cf. Ibid., p. 1114.
47. Ibid., p. 1081; pp. 1083-1084.
48. It is to be noted of course that Jean provides a total contrast to Chouteau, the proletarian Communard.

49. Emile Zola, op. cit., p. 1082: '*Paris, alcoolisé, où n'avait manqué ni l'eau-de-vie ni le vin, vivait grassement à cette heure, tombait à une ivrognerie continue*'; Ibid., p. 1090: '*C'était l'épidémie envahissante, la soulerie chronique, léguée par le premier siège, aggravée par le second, cette population sans pain, ayant de l'eau-de-vie et du vin à pleins tonneaux, et qui s'était saturée, délirante désormais à la moindre goutte.*'
50. Emile Zola, op. cit., Vol. IX, p. 826.
51. Ibid., p. 827.
52. Ibid., p. 827.
53. Ibid., p. 828.
54. Ibid., p. 829.
55. Ibid., p. 829.
56. See l'Apprentie, p. 68; p. 317.
57. See l'Assomoir, chapter XI and passim.
58. Quoted by Robert T. Denomé, op. cit., p. 127. On Geffroy's (essentially friendly) relations with Zola, see Emile Zola, Correspondance, Montreal/Paris, Vols. IV & V (published in 1983 and 1985 respectively). In Vol. IV (1880-1883) see pp. 402-432, 470; in Vol. V (1884-1886), pp. 283-284 (the text of a letter sent by Zola in acknowledgement of Geffroy's two-part study of Germinal published in la Justice on 14 and 21 July 1885); pp. 319-320, 396-397.
59. See Léon Daudet, Souvenirs littéraires, Paris, Bernard Grasset, Livre de poche, 1968, p. 363.
60. Flaubert in his correspondence would describe the insurgents at least twice as '*chiens enragés*'. Hippolyte Taine referred to them as '*loups enragés*'; ; Leconte de Lisle wrote to José-Maria de Hérédia on 29 May that the insurgent females, '*des mégères sans nom, were being shot down 'comme des bêtes enragées qu'elles sont*'. Others used similar phrasing in references to the Communards.
61. Lucien Descaves, op. cit., p. 258.
62. Roland Dorgelès, Images, Paris, Albin Michel, 1975, pp. 179-180. Goncourt, planning membership of the academy to bear his name, had indeed replaced the prospective candidate Vallès by Gustave Geffroy following the réfractaire's death in 1885. Geffroy, it might be noted, would in time be president of the body (from 1912 until his own death in 1926).

CHAPTER TWO

JÉRÔME AND JEAN THARAUD

In at least one important respect, the nouvelle l'Ami de l'Ordre by Jérôme and Jean Tharaud, (1) written in 1905, presents analogy with those pages of l'Apprentie devoted to the Commune. Both works, as J. S. Wood points out, (2) portray the effect of the insurrectionary period on a family in which conflicting attitudes are in evidence; and the tragedy, within the context of the semaine sanglante, of personal loss. In a reversal however of the situation in Geffroy's novel, it is in the Tharaud brothers' story the male of the Cadras household who is seen to deplore social upheaval. While Geffroy does not draw a parallel between mère Pommier's Breton origins and her dislike of revolution, it may be noted that both she and the Auvergnat Cadras are provincials whose censure of the Commune places them at odds with the native-born Parisians constituting their entourage. More significantly perhaps, both characters appear to reflect their creators' attitude towards insurrection. Perhaps the dominant impression the Tharaud brothers wished to leave their readers is that revolution can entail a bitter awakening to the insufficiencies, irrationalities and injustices that are, it is implied, its natural accompaniments.

In the 'Lettre à l'éditeur' which serves as a preface to the edition of la Ville et les Champs published by Edouard Pelletan in 1906, the Tharauds suggest that both stories comprising the volume were based upon episodes from real life. (3) It is clear - although there is no specification as to this - that the tragedy involving the school inspector Victoire-Marguerite Tinayre, aged forty at the time of the Commune, has provided the nucleus of l'Ami de l'Ordre. (4) Tinayre's ardent revolutionary convictions were not shared by her husband Jules, an unadventurous solicitor's clerk: similarly, the clockmaker Claude Cadras is seen to be less than sympathetic to the cause believed in and supported by his wife Armande. During the semaine sanglante, Cadras is

nonetheless arrested and executed without judgement at the caserne Lobau, as Jules Tinayre himself had been. As a teacher, Marguerite Tinayre was appointed by Edouard Vaillant on 11 April 1871 to the position of inspector of girls' schools for the 12th arrondissement. Armande is nominated to a like position by the bookbinder Bégis: the disintegration of the Commune will however prevent her from actually serving in such a capacity. Having been taken to the Châtelet as a prisoner, Marguerite Tinayre was released, it would seem, by a colonel stricken with conscience at the shooting of her husband.(5) Armande, for her part, is saved from execution by a young officer distressed at having wrongfully arrested Cadras. Less significantly, it might be noted that both Jules and Marguerite Tinayre were from Issoire in the Auvergne.

Essential elements in the story may then have had a basis in reality: there is no reason to think however that the personalities of Armande and Claude Cadras were modelled particularly on those of the Tinayre couple. Jules would appear to have been of a nervous, depressive temperament, and a far less affirmative personality than his wife.(6) In the solid Cadras there are no indications of depressive tendencies: it is, however, said at the outset that he admires Armande '*...dont l'intelligence le passait*'(VC 19). An all-important component in *l'Ami de l'Ordre* has furthermore no relation to the Tinayre tragedy. The story is centred upon the love of Bégis (an entirely imaginary character said to have been elected to the Communal Council on 26 March) for Armande Cadras, and the fatal consequences - amidst the tumult of the Commune and its repression - of a passion supposedly unrequited. A recurrent linking of love and death is a feature of works relating to the Commune:(7) in contrast with other works, however, love in its negative, destructive form is in this story accorded pride of place.

Born at Saint-Junien in the Limousin in 1874 and 1877 respectively, Jérôme and Jean Tharaud had clearly no direct experience of (nor link with) the Paris Commune. It is more than likely that

Jérôme heard the story of Marguerite Tinayre when serving as a lecteur at the university of Budapest from 1899 to 1903; for the Commune's former school inspector had lived with her children in Hungary from 1874 until late 1879, first at Kassa (now Kosice, in Czechoslovakia), then in Budapest itself.(8) The youngest of her five offspring, André Tinayre, was French vice-consul in the Hungarian capital during Jérôme's period of residence there:(9) it seems reasonable therefore to surmise that the elder Tharaud might have learned of the episode either from Tinayre himself, or from a mutual acquaintance.

Other factors conceivably predisposed the brothers towards treatment of the Commune theme; or more pertinently, perhaps, towards a certain representation of it. The Tharauds were for a time devoted disciples of Charles Péguy, who was Jérôme's senior by only sixteen months, and a fellow student of the latter first at Sainte-Barbe, then the Ecole normale.(10) They espoused (briefly) his socialistic beliefs,(11) were as he was in the Dreyfusard camp, and contributed to the Cahiers de la Quinzaine when these were founded in 1900. As many young intellectuals were to do during the 1890's, the Tharaud brothers even flirted with libertarian theories, adopting as a cult work Jean Grave's la Société mourante et l'anarchie:(12) Péguy, who substantially instigated their enthusiasm for this book, had, it would seem, sufficient faith at one time in their dissident and literary promise to envisage them (Daniel Halévy writes) as '*...troubadours de la Révolution ouvrière*'.(13) Péguy himself, it might be noted, was viewed by friends and acquaintances as a kind of latter-day Communard: the Tharauds in their memoirs recounting the association (Notre cher Péguy, 1926) seemed in no doubt as to where his loyalties would have lain in 1871:(14) nor were they alone in this idea. Romain Rolland after his first meeting with Péguy remarked that this face, revealing a near fanatical resolution and courage of conviction, appeared that of a man marked for a violent, heroic end in the service of an ideal ('*Je l'ai vu tout de suite au poteau de Satory*').(15)

On arrival at the university of Budapest as a lecteur, Jérôme's mind was filled, to his later idea, '*...des plus naïves théories politiques et sociales.*'(16) The years in Hungary apparently brought about a change in perspective; so that by the time they came to write l'Ami de l'Ordre, both brothers, in all likelihood, viewed their ideas of the recent past as '*...rêves généreux un peu vides.*'(17) In the revolutionary devotees of the story one might well see a repudiation of beliefs earlier held, but now considered to be substantially irreconcilable with reality.

L'Ami de l'Ordre has no specifically working-class focus. Nearly all the characters however live at Montmartre; and it is here that much of the action takes place. Deft characterisation is hardly a feature of the story: the thoughts and feelings of the three protagonists - Bégis, Armande and Cadras - are no more than indicated much of the time, often puzzlingly and inconclusively. No physical description is provided of Armande: of Cadras - a former peasant who has been in Paris only a few years - it is said that Armande had found herself gradually drawn by:

...son teint éclatant d'homme nourri de châtaignes et de lait, par ses yeux qui avaient cette douceur sauvage qu'on voit à ceux des bergers... (VC 21)

Bégis, for his part, is described simply but arrestingly on 18 March as '*...jeune encore, la face martelée, rugueuse comme une écorce d'orange.*' (VC 21) While there is an obvious attention to style throughout the story, the general tone is one of matter-of-factness not unreminiscent of les Désirs de Jean Servien by Anatole France (René Johannet, indeed, has mentioned with respect to l'Ami de l'Ordre what does seem the discernible imprint of that author).(18) The apparently objective standpoint is of course effective rather than otherwise when the brutalities of the semaine sanglante are under focus: it seems likely, moreover (as J. Ernest-Charles wrote in an unflattering and factually inaccurate review) that the brothers' intention was to produce '*...des effets d'épouvante aussi forts que possible, dans le*

moins de temps possible.'(19) Recurring references in the nouvelle to darkness, gloomy stairways and eerie settings do little, as one might imagine, to alleviate any foreboding on the reader's part.

Whatever the devices of this kind used in l'Ami de l'Ordre, revolutionary enthusiasm itself is a target for satire. Something of the mindless love of social disturbance for its own sake presented by earlier writers as intrinsic to the Parisian temperament(20) is indicated in the person of Moge the cobbler, a tenant in the same building as the Cadras family. Revolution for this old man is appreciated essentially because it constitutes a break in the monotony of a drab existence:

Les tourmentes d'un siècle orageux lui avaient donné un goût friand de l'émeute; aucune révolution ne l'avait rendu plus heureux; toutes l'avaient enfoncé davantage dans sa misère, et c'était pour cela qu'il les aimait. Il adorait, en elles, des promesses qu'elles n'avaient jamais déçues, parce qu'elles n'avaient jamais réussi; son ventre d'hydropique semblait gros de tous leurs espoirs. Il les chérissait pour elles-mêmes, pour l'imprévu qu'elles donnaient à sa vie, parce qu'elles l'arrachaient à son échoppe et pour le lustre qu'elles jetaient sur la cité. Elles se succédaient, dans sa vie, comme les printemps aux printemps, toujours jeunes et toujours pareilles; il leur dispensait sans partage la tendresse de son coeur amoureux avec l'inintelligence héroïque de leurs génies singuliers. (VC 25)

A further, rather cruel depreciation of rebellion is effected of course by analogy between the old man's inflated stomach and the supposedly inflated, foolish hopes of revolutionaries. Judged from the perspective of developments after 21 May, Moge's predilection for revolt, when presented thus ironically, can only seem all the more misplaced. Nor indeed, for old Moge, will this insurrectionary interlude be like its forerunners: the magnitude of its repression will engulf the cobbler himself, when he is summarily shot during the semaine sanglante.

The daughter of a penniless mathematics tutor enamoured of the revolutionary ideal, Armande, it is said, has grown up amidst

'...d'étranges gueux d'idéologues' (VC 19), humble dreamers giving voluble expression to their various viewpoints but totally disunited, of course, on the all-important question of how best to realise the desired social transformations:

Le feu du poêle de fonte allumé chez son père attirait, hors de leurs froids logis, des disciples sans gloire de Saint-Simon, de Fourier, de Proudhon, de Cabet, de Louis Blanc - redingotes fanées, cervelles pleines de rêves. Tous espéraient dans l'avenir un universel bonheur, mais ils se querellaient sans trêve sur les voies qui menaient à leurs paradis. Quand ils avaient beaucoup discuté, ils se séparaient, maussades, et tiraient chacun de son côté, dans la nuit triste. Le soir d'après, un à un, les voyait revenir... (VC 19-20)

Armande has inherited from these men '*...leur confiance ingénue dans les révolutions*' (VC 20). Bringing to mind the ideologues of l'Education sentimentale, or the arguing conspirators of le Ventre de Paris, this gathering imbued with the legacies of 48 provides nonetheless a foreglimpse of the unending and all too often unavailing discussion to characterise the Commune, and depicted by the Tharaud brothers in a later passage of the story. It is hardly surprising, in view of the formative influences on her, that Armande should have come to see in Bégis (a member of the International, several times imprisoned for his dissident activity, and whose intransigence of temperament recalls that of his hero Saint-Just) not merely a kindred spirit, but something of a notable. While she has formerly, for reasons unexplained, refused his proposal of marriage, a possible, perhaps unconscious ambiguity in feeling is inferable on occasion in the course of the story... chiefly in innocuous references to the taking of his hand as she leads him into her apartment (VC 35), or the placing of her own hand on his shoulder (VC 42).

Stolid, unimaginative, having none of the hopes and enthusiasms of the Parisian characters, Claude Cadras is seen for all that to envisage the corollaries of upheaval with greater perspicacity than do the members of his entourage. He had, during courting days, attended the meetings held in the rooms of Armande's father, remaining untouched

however by the ideological fantasies voiced there:

Les propos l'étonnèrent, mais ne déplacèrent pas une idée dans sa cervelle de paysan. Il avait une supériorité sur ces idéologues parisiens: il savait ce qu'est un village, le village d'Auvergne où il était né. A Aumajour, les gens n'étaient ni bons, ni justes, ni intelligents; ils n'avaient pas de passions complémentaires, créées pour une finale harmonie; ils ne désiraient pas le bonheur universel; le travail n'y était pas attrayant: on n'y connaissait que l'âpre souci de vivre.

(...) pendant que les heures s'usaient en vains discours, son imagination l'emportait au coin d'une cheminée d'Auvergne. Devant un feu de bois, les gens travaillaient de leurs mains aux besognes du soir, repos de la journée; on filait, on chantait, on riait, on faisait éclater des châtaignes sous la cendre et sauter dans la poêle des crêpes de blé noir. Nulle rancune contre la vie.

(VC 20-21)

It would be simplistic perhaps to see in this evocation of rural peasant life, and in the veiled irony of the references to revolutionary aims, an implied commendation of rustic prosaism and common sense as opposed to fanciful, unrealistic aspiration.⁽²¹⁾ A life so totally devoid of intellectual preoccupation can hardly be considered ideal or idyllic: in an environment however where energies must be directed towards wresting a living from nature, men and women have, needless to say, neither the time nor the inclination to bother themselves with what are made implicitly to seem impractical, impracticable humanitarian preoccupations, or with social grievances. There is in this text - given Cadras' relative lucidity as to likely developments during the Commune period - something approaching a reversal of the idea of Parisian superiority conveyed by pro-Communard authors (notably Cladel in I.N.R.I., in which the enlightened proletariat of the capital, and in particular Urbaine Hélioiz, determine the awakening of the Quercynois peasant Jacques Râtâs).⁽²²⁾ No awakening is seen to take place in l'Ami de l'Ordre (we may merely speculate as to whether Armande at the story's conclusion repents of her revolutionary sympathies): but in Cadras - impervious to all argument as to the possibly beneficial sequels to revolt - one is put in mind of another peasant in French literature; Jean Macquart of the

'*épaisse et lente cervelle*'(23) '*...fort de son bon sens et de son ignorance, sain (...) d'avoir poussé à part, dans la terre du travail et de l'épargne.*'(24) In his symbolic contrasting of Jean and Maurice Levasseur, Zola of course describes Macquart further as '*...la partie saine de la France, la raisonnable, la pondérée, la paysanne, celle qui était restée le plus près de la terre...*':(25) and Cadras, for his part, might well be seen as an embodiment of solid, unpretentious virtue in opposition, if not to the decadence and folly of Empire, at least to the flighty, even dangerous fantasies of dreamers. In what can be described as a kind of pastoral flashback, Bégis himself (by then close to mental collapse amidst the charivari and disorder of the Commune) will find fleeting assuagement on 9 May as Cadras describes his peaceful village in the Auvergne.

The dialogue attributed the clockmaker will be composed essentially then of laconic, penetrating comment as to the effects of social disruption. Bégis' recounting on 18 March of developments at the rue des Rosiers draws from him, as one might expect, a sickened condemnation of mob excess ('- *La justice du peuple! fit avec dégoût l'horloger*') (VC 23). He is from the outset in no doubt as to the outcome of the insurrection, his predictions of disaster serving to underscore the ironically grandiose expectations of the Commune's supporters:

- *Toutes les révolutions, dit Cadras, ont fini par des massacres. Quelle date va s'ajouter aux anciennes?*

- *71! répliqua Bégis, le triomphe de Paris!* (VC 24)

It is difficult not to regard Cadras' attitude as a reflection of the Tharaud brothers' own when his forecasts are considered in relation to their portrayal of the semaine sanglante. Revolution (the story would seem somewhat contentiously to suggest) is more often than not doomed to failure: and the atrocities of repression, however iniquitous in themselves, are the inevitable result of social upheaval. The gloomy appropriateness of Cadras' homespun lucidity will be even

more apparent following Bégis' election to the Communal Council on 26 March:

- *Dans huit jours, déclara Cadras, (...) l'armée de Versailles sera aux Tuileries.*
- *Ce jour-là, répondit Bégis, il y aura du sang sur Paris.*
- *Le sang des malheureux que vous aurez trompés, répartit l'horloger; les vrais coupables échappent toujours.*

Le relieur rougit sous l'insulte, et dévisageant l'Auvergnat:

- *Est-ce à moi que vous pensez?*
- *A vous personnellement, non; aux meneurs en général. (VC 27-28)*

The Commune, though ephemeral, will prove a little less so than Cadras supposes, and his generalisation concerning the revolution's leaders - reflecting of course a viewpoint widely expressed in conservative literature - is, while true of some, an affront to not a few. Subsequent events in the story - not least Cadras' own fate - seem confirmation however of the truth of his words. Bégis - who reacts with affronted anger to Cadras' judgement ('- *Adieu, dit-il, vous me connaissez mal!*') (VC 28) - will indeed seek initially to escape the Versailles forces, falling into their hands only after being turned out of the Cadras apartment by Armande. If the clockmaker abhors revolution, he will, on the other hand, offer no advance justification either of such repressive measures as may be undertaken by Thiers' troops. It is in fact from the mouth of this friend of Order that we have the one explicit condemnation of Versailles 'justice' in the story. When Armande's nomination to the position of school inspector appears in the Journal Officiel on 10 May, a desperately anxious Cadras anticipates the consequences of this in the face of half-hearted attempts by his wife to minimise the danger in which publication of her name places her:

- *Allons donc! Puisque je ne retourne pas à l'Hôtel de Ville, puisque je n'ai pas un instant servi la Commune!*
- *J'ai peur de la justice des amis de l'ordre.*
- *Comme tu avais peur de celle des amis du peuple! Tu as peur de tout, dit-elle en s'efforçant de rire.*
- *J'ai peur de toutes les justices, répondit l'horloger. (VC 45)*

These words are a reaffirmation of the Tharauds' indictment in their 'Lettre à l'éditeur' of '*...la justice également atroce du peuple et des soldats*' (VC 14).(26) The very title of the nouvelle is of course not a little ironic in view of the fate met by the clear-sighted (or cynical) Cadras. His viewpoint, and that of the writers, might seem then to be that revolution is bad because in itself violent and disorderly: and because it will be a sure invitation to the most damnable of excesses carried out in the name (and to the shame) of Order. Such a perspective of course would present some parallel with that of Geffroy. It is to be noted in passing that there is in this text no condemnation, implied or explicit, of the Commune taking place before German eyes.

Cadras may inspire the story's title, and his fate provide perhaps the most damning condemnation of the entire revolutionary conjuncture: of the three protagonists it is however Bégis (committed servant of the revolution, and seen as time passes to be in a state of exhaustion and harassment that will dangerously distort his thinking) who presents arguably the greatest interest. In a text where characterisation is little more than rudimentary, Bégis seems almost a revolutionary prototype, inflexible and fanatical (it is suggested) in the manner of Saint-Just his hero; or, as we might think, Hugo's Enjolras and Cimourdain. His affiliations, furthermore, and his revolutionary activity, recall those of Jacqueline (met in the Marguerite brothers' la Commune); and he displays the tendency to dream that is to be noted in more developed revolutionaries or insurgents of nineteenth and early twentieth century literature. In his zeal, his intransigence, and in the implied parallel with Saint-Just, Bégis is an embryonic foreshadowing of Evariste Gamelin: naturally chaste, as are Hugo's revolutionaries and Gamelin himself, Bégis shares also with the hero of les Dieux ont soif the distinction of serving as a catalyst for disaster in the climate of revolution. Though, following his rejection by Armande and her marriage to the clockmaker, he is said to have long avoided the ménage, acute loneliness and a desire unavowed have finally driven him to again seek company there: and when Cadras, in his

straightforward and rather insensitive fashion, states that Bégis' revolutionary convictions result from a frustration that would find purpose and fulfilment in married life (VC 24), such a view may contain sufficient truth to be seen as an implicit denigration by the Tharaud brothers of a certain revolutionary type for whom such involvement serves supposedly as a substitute for fundamental needs and emotions.(27) Be this as it may, it is his love for Armande (culpable in view of her marriage to Cadras, and to become in the fever of revolution a perverted travesty of the sentiment) that will trigger the calamity which overtakes the Cadras household.

Still burning then with an undisclosed passion for Armande, Bégis sees their shared revolutionary faith as providing a kind of spiritual communion from which, needless to say, Cadras the friend of Order is excluded. It is hardly surprising that Cadras should at times regard the bookbinder as his wife's evil genius: on 26 March,

A (...) voir (Armande) aussi ardente, il se demandait si elle n'eût pas été plus heureuse avec un homme de Paris, animé des passions insensées qui soulevaient cette ville... (VC 26)

and when later in the evening Bégis and Armande sit silently exultant at the apparent public support for the Commune manifested by 200,000 votes, Cadras, it is written, cuts brutally into this silence '*...où les pensées de Bégis et de sa femme se mêlaient...*' (VC 27). A few minutes afterwards the bookbinder is taking his leave, offended at Cadras' apparent querying of his soundness of principle: Armande, having lighted his descent of the gloomy stairway, will herself sense once back in the room that horror of revolution does not solely explain her husband's attitude:

Quand elle revint dans la chambre, Cadras lui dit avec amertume:
 - Vous êtes bien faits, Bégis et toi, pour vous entendre; des maniaques de révolte, tous les deux!
 - Ah ça! répondit-elle en levant sur lui la lampe qu'elle tenait à la main, serais-tu jaloux de Bégis?
 L'horloger passa la main sur sa figure comme pour en essuyer la lumière et murmura:
 - Bon Dieu, toutes vos histoires, moi aussi me rendent fou! (VC 28)

Appropriately then, in a story that is nothing if not sombre, Cadras too will be prey on occasion to the dark stirrings of jealousy. While the reader might be tempted to see in this reaction evidence that, in extraordinary times, even the most solid and sensible can succumb to irrationality or confusion, the clockmaker's resentment of Bégis seems, all things considered, not unnatural in the circumstances.

The troubled mind and lack of balance attributed to Jean Pommier in l'Apprentie is apparent too (though in different form) in Bégis himself. Avoiding the Cadras home for some weeks following the clockmaker's comment concerning revolutionary leaders, he will be glimpsed by Armande on 9 May '*...les cheveux grisonnants; vêtu d'une redingote usée, son chapeau haut de forme à la main, les traits tirés, la figure fanée*' (VC 31) at a state funeral for those fallen in battle. Having delivered an oration at the Père-Lachaise in favour of the Cause and those who have given their lives in its service, Bégis - apparently at near breaking point - will call at the Cadras apartment where the clockmaker alone is to be found. The Commune (preceded by years of absorbing - though sterile - ideological debate) seems now to offer for the revolutionary all the attributes of a none too pleasant dream from which there can be no awakening:

Bégis tournait autour de la table, inspectant les murs, le plafond, les meubles, les fenêtres...
 - *C'est étonnant, dit-il enfin, rien n'est changé chez vous.*
 - *Que voulez-vous qui soit changé, Bégis?*
 - *Sais-je, moi! Le papier, ne deviez-vous pas changer de papier?*
Cadras se demanda si le relieur était devenu fou.
 - *Excusez-moi, je divague. En venant ici je pensais n'y plus rien trouver de moi; tout a pris dans cette ville une apparence de cauchemar. Je m'imagine parfois que les choses dansent des rondes... qu'elles se démènent... qu'elles se masquent... qu'elles se... enfin qu'elles se donnent pour me mystifier des airs extravagants.* (VC 33)

Clearly service of the Commune has exacted a considerable toll. For Bégis (as for many others) the interminable discussion of former days has proved, we may understand, futile and unavailing when succeeded by the reality of an unprepared, barely directed assumption

of power. Initial exultation at the apparent chance to translate dreams into effective action has given way all too soon to bewilderment, regret... and an impression of cruel nightmarishness. There is on Bégis' part an unexpressed nostalgia for the voluble inactivity of a former period, when expression of opinion sufficed and the political circumstances essentially precluded any attempted realisation of vaporous schemes:

Dans la chambre (du) père (d'Armande) les belles idéologies se déroulaient comme des fumées. Qui eût songé que l'occasion s'offrirait si vite de réaliser des songes? Il croyait rêver quand il pensait qu'à cette heure il était, lui, un des personnages de Paris. (VC 33-34)

The impression of being caught in a nightmare will be experienced by others in the story; as a direct result, one might feel, of Bégis' decision to publish Armande's name in the Journal Officiel.

Moved to pity as he listens to the bookbinder's semi-delirious muttering, Cadras will suggest that Bégis obtain a passport and escape to Aumajour, where he will at least find an atmosphere conducive to recovery of health and peace of mind. The world represented by the Auvergnat is totally foreign to Bégis, who has never left the Paris region ('...il ne pouvait se représenter aucun de ces innombrables villages de France qui avaient envoyé à Versailles cette assemblée de députés couards, inintelligents et durs') (VC 34): Cadras' description of Aumajour will have on him now however a strangely soothing effect, will give rise to vague contemplation of a way of life hitherto unimagined and to wistful musing, this time of a haven of security:

- Ce doit être plein d'arbres, plein d'eau, chez vous? demanda-t-il brusquement.

Tandis que l'Auvergnat racontait que l'église était au milieu du village, qu'il y avait, autour, des noyers, et que, devant, était une borne de pierre avec un tuyau d'où l'eau coulait sans cesse, le jour comme la nuit, Bégis l'écoutait, bercé par cette voix qui évoquait des images agrestes. Cette intimité était délicieuse; il aurait voulu qu'elle durât un temps infini, que l'horloger ne cessât pas plus de parler d'Aumajour que l'eau de couler de la fontaine. (VC 34)

In this impression of idyllic repose in an atmosphere worlds away from the turmoil of Paris, one might, of course, see a more overt indication of the Tharauds' fondness for rural calm as opposed to frenetic, futile urban pursuit.(28) The return of Armande minutes later, her account of proceedings at the Père-Lachaise, proves also however a balm for the bookbinder, who has as he listens to the loved one '*...la sensation d'une eau fraîche sur son front*' (VC 35). To Bégis' mind (and he may well be right in this) his persona of indefatigable champion of revolution is intrinsic to a continued place in Armande's affections: her presence serves then as a stimulant impelling him to resumption of what is now all too clearly a charade:

Il voulut lui donner une impression d'énergie; il redevint l'homme des paroles confiantes, il se grisa de mots comme s'il eût parlé dans une réunion publique. Il énuméra les services qu'il avait traversés; aux Finances, avec Jourde, à la Préfecture de police avec Rigault; il était aujourd'hui délégué à l'Enseignement.

Armande l'écoutait, éblouie; Cadras le regardait avec stupeur. Ce bavard qui allait et venait, en long, en large, si agité, dans la chambre, c'était le désespéré qu'il venait de plaindre! (VC 35-36)

The latent hostility between the two men (dissipated momentarily by bucolic reminiscence on the part of Cadras) erupts now in open conflict. The fact of Armande's marriage to Cadras, the presence of the clockmaker separating Bégis from the woman he loves is suggested moreover in what is in all likelihood an intentional touch of symbolism. Still caught up in his rhetoric, the bookbinder will finally suggest that Armande might herself serve the Commune in an active role:

- ...Les femmes, poursuivait Bégis, perpétuent de génération en génération les croyances surannées. La Commune leur donnera une éducation virile, les affranchira des superstitions. Nous cherchons pour diriger nos écoles des femmes intelligentes et dévouées...

- Bravo! dit Armande.

- J'ai pensé à vous.

- Vos idées sont les miennes, vous avez eu raison de compter sur moi.

- Voilà donc pourquoi vous étiez venu! s'écria l'horloger en posant son poing sur la table, où les outils d'acier tremblèrent. Quand la Commune est vaincue, que les Versaillais sont dans Paris...

Il saisit le relieur par le bras, ouvrit la porte, le poussa dehors. Sur le palier, Bégis se retourna. Les larges épaules de l'Auvergnat lui cachaient Armande; il lui jeta comme un adieu:

- Votre nomination paraîtra à l'Officiel, demain. (VC 36)
(My underlining)

While then Cadras stands literally between Bégis and Armande, the bookbinder's parting call seems a defiant reminder to the husband that he is not the sole, nor even the dominant influence in this woman's life. That same day, in fact, Bégis will find himself truly the arbiter of her destiny. Learning on return to the Hôtel de Ville of the fall of Issy fort to Versailles, he is aware that the Commune faces now imminent defeat and that announcement in the Journal Officiel of Armande's appointment as a school inspector can only imperil her needlessly. He is impelled however, by a bizarre egoism that is the very negation of love, to constitute a bond between Armande and himself by sealing her fate with his own:

La Commune était perdue; il était criminel d'y compromettre Armande; mais à mesure qu'il sentait sa vie plus menacée, il avait un plus grand désir de la voir, de lui parler, de la posséder. Le pressentiment d'une mort prochaine éveillait en lui une ardeur sensuelle, une passion féroce, une envie triste et cruelle de l'entraîner dans sa ruine. (VC 38)

If the awareness of death or danger is seen to heighten emotions considerably in la Commune by Paul and Victor Margueritte and les Massacres de Paris by Jean Cassou, love in both texts (and in others) is an ennobling affirmation of the forces of life as darkness closes in. Bégis may well want to indulge his passion while there is still time: his now selfish, sordid desire operates seemingly however in connivance with, or in acquiescence to, death. When the following day Armande calls at the Hôtel de Ville to discuss her appointment further, Bégis will maintain initially the comedy of formality ('- *Merci d'avoir*

accepté cette place, dit-il en lui tendant la main d'un geste un peu théâtral...') (VC 41). All decisions relating to schools, textbooks or possible syllabuses are futile now;⁽²⁹⁾ but for the simple pleasure of hearing her voice, Bégis allows the woman he loves to talk on, and to set forth her views. Such replies as he gives to her questions suggest to Armande, however, that the bookbinder no longer believes in the survival of the cause. Before long, the weeks of sleeplessness and fatigue that have already clouded his judgement and warped his thought processes result in the abandonment of all scruple or self-control. He wonders whether revolutionary fervour alone explains Armande's presence here in his office: and why, as time is running out for him, should he not possess her while he has the chance?

- *Vous savez bien que dans huit jours je serai mort. Et se penchant sur elle, il l'entoura de ses bras et la baisa sur les lèvres.*

- *Lâchez-moi, lâchez-moi... Vous êtes fou! dit-elle en se débattant. Il desserra son étreinte et la regarda, hébété, reculer jusqu'à la porte.*

- *J'ai honte pour vous, Bégis, lui dit-elle, avec une gravité méprisante. (...)*

Il n'essaya pas de l'arrêter, immobile devant la porte ouverte, confondu par son mépris. Depuis qu'il aimait cette femme, il avait vécu chastement; ses amis le raillaient de sa vertu, dont il était secrètement orgueilleux. Sa vie était pure comme celle de Saint-Just (...). Pourquoi, puisqu'il avait si peu de jours à vivre, s'être déshonoré? (VC 42-43)

Committed, intransigent and chaste, Bégis, as said earlier, has more than a little in common with certain revolutionaries in the novels of Hugo: Enjolras, Cimourdain and (on the first and third counts) Gauvain. In contrast to this rather formidable trio, however, there will not be for him as he faces death the possibility of knowledge that, to the very last, he has remained true to his principles, and to himself. It might be supposed, furthermore, that Armande's parting words do not refer solely to the fact of his having attempted intimacy: she has, in all likelihood, understood something of the tenebrous motives which have resulted in his publication of her name.

In his apparent capacity for reverie, Bégis invites parallel with disparate fictional characters who may nonetheless all be classed as revolutionary: Combeferre of les Misérables; Gauvain; actual or potential insurgents from the pages of Zola's production;(30) Ludovic Charmes of le Mur; the idealists of la Commune. Visibly elated on 26 March at the degree of popular participation in the elections to the Communal Council, Bégis had stood however in sudden abstractedness, '*...abandonné aux souvenirs de cette journée et semblable à un voyageur qui reviendrait de très loin*' (VC 27). Ordered violently by Armande from her apartment where he has sought refuge, the bookbinder stands in an almost trance-like state, untouched now by insult, but apparently arousing himself to consciousness of where his duty lies when offered sanctuary by the American zealot Garden:

Bégis parut se réveiller comme d'un songe, et s'avançant vers la porte:
 - *Merci, Garden, répondit-il, je ne suis ni un lâche ni un cochon. Il sortit. On entendit ses pas sur le trottoir.* (VC 60)

Soon afterwards, as he is interrogated by Versailles troops, Bégis stands again in a dream:

...ses bras pendaient le long de son corps, ses mains étaient ouvertes, ses yeux tournés vers Paris. Une rêverie soudaine l'avait envahi; il paraissait oublier dans quelles mains il était tombé. (VC 61-62)

These sudden lapses into reverie might seem a further (though indirect) illustration of the detachment from, or insubstantial grasp upon reality apparently associated by the Tharaud brothers (and others) with the revolutionary psyche. The Commune's shortcomings, and his own guilt, are clearly in Bégis' mind during his final moments ('- *La Commune (...)* a peut-être commis des fautes; j'en ai commis, moi aussi') (VC 62): there is certainly however no last-minute repudiation of the Cause, nor intimation of some inexpiable feeling of shame. Bégis dies proclaiming his loyalty to the revolution; and no less obviously, his continued belief in himself:

- Crie: "A bas la Commune!" dit le commandant.
- Pourquoi me tutoyez-vous?
- Crie: "A bas la Commune!"
- Vive la Commune! cria Bégis.

L'officier avala une gorgée de café, et fit du pouce un geste dans la direction d'un petit mur gris, qui fermait la place sur un des côtés.

Les chasseurs entraînent l'insurgé. (VC 62)

Those glimpses provided in *l'Ami de l'Ordre* of the Commune and its defenders underscore (as other texts had done and were to do) the turbulence and confusion of the period. When Garden seems to be condemning fédéré drunkenness as the corpses of slain Communards are carried to the Père-Lachaise ('- *Comprenez-vous, Madame, que des hommes qui luttent pour de grandes pensées...*') (VC 29) Armande by her lofty and rather ridiculous condonation of such behaviour succeeds only in revealing the extent of her own bias ('- *Vous ne connaissez pas les Parisiens, Monsieur Garden; leur gâté ne peut sembler de mauvais goût qu'à des puritains ou à des dandys!*') (VC 29). The groups of fédérés evoked in passing are usually in a state of noisy indiscipline or intoxication, drunkenly singing as at the public funeral, consuming saveloys and swilling alcohol in the antechamber of Bégis' office (VC 39), playing cards, smoking and arguing in the Hôtel de Ville, marching forth in disorder on 9 May, '*...tambour en tête, (...) l'arme à volonté, des miches, des saucissons enfilés aux baïonnettes*' (VC 44). Following news of Issy's collapse, total confusion reigns at the Hôtel de Ville, both inside and out. Bégis on arrival there finds fédérés shouting of betrayal '*...au milieu des faisceaux, des voitures de munitions, des canons, des trains d'artillerie, des feux de bivouac...*' (VC 37); while in the Council Chamber, the incessant argument and reprobation that have been characteristic of the Commune throughout reach heights previously unmatched. Billioray tries in vain to restore order ('*...on n'écoutait ni sa sonnette, ni ses appels au silence*') (VC 38): a hoarse, coughing Delescluze entreats his colleagues to lay aside their differences and make a concerted attempt to deal with a critical situation:

- Vous êtes là, à vous injurier, à vous accuser mutuellement de trahison, à discuter, à préparer des décrets, quand le drapeau tricolore flotte sur Issy!

Toute l'énergie de cette assemblée bavarde semblait réfugiée dans cet homme. Bégis sentait la mort sur le vieillard, et il admirait dans ses paroles un défi au désespoir. (...)

Delescluze poursuivait:

- Il faut aviser, citoyens, sans retard. Que fait la Commune? Que fait le Comité Central? Votre Comité de Salut Public est écrasé sous le poids des souvenirs!...

Des mots! des mots! Tout cela ne nous sauvera pas, pensait Bégis; et il quitta l'assemblée. (VC 38-39) (31)

The empty verbosity and argument of the evenings some years before in the rooms of Armande's father finds parallel, one might feel, in the session described. It has been made clear that the utopists gathered for discussion during the Empire were nothing if not talkative: no less so, all too obviously, this garrulous assemblage, whose capacity for fruitless chatter will be deplored further by Delescluze himself. When Bégis later tells 'le Vieux' of his intention to enlist for combat at the outposts, Delescluze comments regretfully that he himself has no choice but to remain till the end, '*...au milieu des bavards...*' (VC 44).

The circumstances of Cadras' arrest and execution are of course fundamental to the story. When on 10 May the clockmaker reads in the Journal Officiel of Armande's appointment as school inspector, it is clear to him that Bégis - who can only have been aware the previous evening of Issy's occupation by Versailles - has nonetheless authorised publication of the young woman's name. After the entry into Paris of Thiers' troops he is in an agony of fear for his wife, accompanying her from room to room or on to the landing in anticipation of the appearance of a patrol, but certainly making little attempt to dispel any uneasiness she may feel ('- *Tu as donc peur que je me perde? lui dit-elle avec impatience. - Non, répondit-il, tu es déjà perdue*') (VC 48). When one morning an officer arrives at the apartment in search of Armande, Cadras will - despite his wife's attempt, on inquiry from the young man, to describe him as a family friend - reveal his true status... and calmly, unprotestingly accept the consequences:

- Ah! c'est vous le mari! répartit l'officier; puis se tournant vers (ses) soldats: Monsieur nous accompagnera.
- C'est indigne! s'écria (Armande), lui arrachant des mains la liste qu'il tenait. Vous n'avez pas d'ordre. Voyez! Mon nom, mon nom seul est écrit. Celui de mon mari n'y est pas!
- Allons, Madame, répliqua-t-il, (...) votre mari n'était pas votre complice?
- Jamais de la vie! répondit-elle. Il était de votre parti.
- En ce cas, fit-il incrédule, il dépendait de lui que vous ne fussiez pas une Communarde.
- L'horloger s'approcha de ce jeune officier de vingt ans, et lui dit sans colère:
- Partons, Monsieur... Vous faites une laide besogne pour un enfant.

En même temps il se livra aux soldats. (VC 49-50)

The frantic attempts by Armande to convince the young lieutenant of his error, '*...d'attendrir sur Cadras son impitoyable jeunesse*' (VC 50) prove of course unavailing. The clockmaker is led away before his wife: once down in the street herself, she will see him moving away, '*dans les derniers rangs d'une colonne en marche...*' (VC 50). As the convoy of prisoners among whom he is placed crosses Paris under a sweltering, merciless heat, Cadras, preoccupied exclusively with thoughts of Armande, remains oblivious to all ironically inappropriate humiliation, insult and attempted injury from soldiers and crowds. On passing before the Hôtel de Ville,

...d'où jaillissaient encore des essaims d'étincelles, un chasseur lui fit lever la tête avec sa latte, et lui montrant les décombres fumants: "Regarde, bandit, ce que tu as fait!" L'Auvergnat regarda sans rien voir et ne répondit pas. (VC 52)

Originally intended for the Châtelet, the convoy (consisting for the most part of insurgents taken in street fighting) has on arrival there been redirected to Lobau... where justice takes the uncomplicated course so frequent this particular week:

La porte de métal de la caserne (...) s'ouvrit devant les prisonniers et se referma sur eux. A coups de crosses on les refoula dans une cour carrée, où deux pelotons d'infanterie attendaient l'arme au pied. Ils demeurèrent là, un moment, tassés

comme des moutons sous l'orage. Une rafale de plomb passa sur eux. Ceux qui n'étaient pas tombés à la première décharge s'enfuirent à travers la cour. Les soldats les tirèrent au vol. Ceux qui, par terre, s'agitaient encore, furent achevés à bout portant. L'Auvergnat, frappé au ventre, tourna sur lui-même et s'abattit. (VC 52)

One might see in Cadras' total lack of resistance in such circumstances an indifference to personal fate if he is to lose his wife. The couple do however have two children: and for their sake if for no-one else's, he might have been expected to offer at least some argument on Armande's or his own behalf. His acceptance of the young officer's aberrant judgement seems indicative then not merely of a wish to share the fate of his wife, but of a likely idea on his part that when decency and common sense have broken down (as is the case during this week of repression) reason and argument count for nothing. Cadras' selfless concern for Armande as he is led across Paris might be considered of course to stand in contrast to the warped egoism dominating Bégis in the feverish climate of revolution.

The brutal efficiency of the slaughter at Lobau(32) has been foreshadowed in l'Ami de l'Ordre by the stark recounting of Moge's summary dispatchment. On 23 May, after the fall of Montmartre to the Versailles forces, some thirty fédérés (among them the old man's nephew) are led up the street past the house in which Moge and the Cadras family live:

Quand son neveu passa devant lui, le garçon détourna la tête, mais le cordonnier le reconnut. Il se jeta dans les rangs. L'autre le repoussait doucement; le vieux, pendu à son bras, voulait le suivre... Ses jambes le trahirent, il resta en arrière. Un soldat le prit pour un traînard qui cherchait à fuir, le mit en joue et l'abattit.

Le convoi tourna au coin de la rue. Armande et Cadras ne virent plus que le corps du père Moge, sur la chaussée déserte, la jambe gauche repliée sous lui, la droite raidie comme celle d'un cheval mort. (VC 47)

Such a passage (the final simile aside) recalls a similar illustration found in l'Apprentie of Versailles expeditiousness.(33) A characteristic absence of emotion when the iniquities of the semaine sanglante are described is broken periodically however in l'Ami de l'Ordre by injection of a less dispassionate note. As prisoners at the Châtelet wait to be led to execution, it is said that:

Le crépuscule (...) ajoutait sa détresse au silence terrifié de ces gens qui allaient mourir, pendant que les clameurs de la foule amassée sur la place et qui criait: "A mort!" entraient par les fenêtres brisées. (VC 54)
(My underlining)

Again, as Armande and Garden return through battle-scarred Montmartre following Bégis' summary execution, one of the sights encountered seems almost to symbolise the emotional legacy of this internecine warfare:

Le corps d'un jeune homme, étendu en travers du trottoir, dans une rue déserte, la chemise relevée jusque sous les aisselles, se raidissait, lamentable comme une injure non vengée. (VC 63)
(My underlining)

As mentioned earlier, darkness and gloom feature prominently in l'Ami de l'Ordre. In a manner vaguely annunciatory of certain Julien Green novels, lanterns penetrate the eeriness of staircases and mysterious settings; characters disappear into darkness or stand half concealed in shadows.(34) Bégis, furthermore, is not the only character to feel he is living (or to actually live) a nightmare. In a curious episode, Armande - who has been taken by the young officer earlier responsible for the arrest of Cadras and herself from the little room at the Châtelet in which she is awaiting execution - is left by him in the relative safety of a dressing-room. When, some time later, he has not returned, Armande will wander through the corridors of the building, climb steep and narrow flights of stairs... and find herself on the giant stage of the Châtelet, '*...béante comme un puits d'ombre*' (VC 54). The creak of a floorboard seconds later announces

the arrival of the young officer, carrying a pass for her and asking that she accompany him. Armande however has only one thought in mind:

- *Qu'avez-vous fait de mon mari? répliqua-t-elle immobile.*

L'officier, impatient, balançait au bout de son bras sa lanterne dont la lumière errait sur d'incompréhensibles décors. Il ne pouvait chasser de sa mémoire la figure paisible de l'horloger, et depuis le matin il traînait le souci que, par sa faute, peut-être un innocent était mort. Pour le sauver il l'avait fait chercher partout où l'on entassait des prisonniers; mais à l'appel de son nom, personne n'avait répondu.

Des rochers peints sur une toile, au fond de la scène, avaient des allures de monstres bondissant dans les hautes herbes d'une forêt primitive, tout cela irréel, fantasque, menaçant. Il se demandait s'il n'était pas la proie d'un cauchemar, s'il ne jouait pas, avec cette femme, sur cette scène, devant ces fauteuils vides, quelque méchant drame, et pressé d'abrégé cet odieux spectacle, il insistait rudement pour qu'elle le suivît. (VC 55-56)

The macabre setting, the illusion the young officer has of taking part in a hateful play, suggest further the 'bad dream' quality of a situation in which many, among them the lieutenant, have been overtaken by events that seem horridly fantastic and unreal. While the likening of the rocks on the backdrop to monsters looming in a primeval forest may have been for the Tharaud brothers purely another sinister effect, one might see in it a further suggestion that during this particular moment in history, barbarity has supplanted civilisation. Human ugliness manifests itself in the savagery of a mob; the cynical imperilment of a woman's life; the arbitrary decision resulting in death for the innocent; the massacres perpetrated in the name of Order; in insanity prevailing over rationality. Men and women are as though deadened to (or forced to abandonment of) better feeling. The captain at the Châtelet before whom Armande appears and who, it is said, '*...avait l'air fatigué, triste et bon*' (VC 53) deals as expeditiously as possible with the vast number of accused he is required to 'judge'. Béguis for his part is interrogated and condemned to death by an officer who, cross-legged on the ground, does not rise or even put down the cup of coffee he is drinking. On those occasions when regret or remorse occur (as with the young officer, or, as we

shall see, Armande herself) such change of heart comes of course too late.

It is only on obtaining a promise from the lieutenant to ascertain the fate of Cadras and inform her of what has befallen him, that Armande will accept the pass brought for her and set out on what is to prove a nightmarish walk through the city. Montmartre is inaccessible to civilians; and though she plans originally to seek shelter in the lodgings of cousins in the rue des Lombards, the thought of their probable terror at the prospect of accommodating her deters the young woman on arrival from actually ringing the bell. Having wandered aimlessly for some time, she pauses a moment at the railings encircling the square Saint-Jacques: what meets her eyes could hardly be more searingly unforgettable:

Les pelouses du jardin étaient bossuées de monticules, d'où sortaient des têtes, des jambes, des bras vêtus; (...) des soldats du Génie creusaient des fosses au pied de la tour, d'autres qui entraînaient avec des tombereaux déchargeaient des cadavres, comme on eût fait d'un charroi de sable. (VC 57-58)

It is to be borne in mind (even if unspecified in the text) that Cadras himself might well have counted among these nameless corpses; for many of the prisoners shot down at Lobau were dispatched for hasty mass burial to the square Saint-Jacques.⁽³⁵⁾ In a daze, Armande walks down towards the Seine '*...enflammée du reflet des incendies*' (VC 58):

Une odeur fade montait des pavés et faisait flageoler ses jambes; elle en fut comme enivrée et se laissa tomber sur la berge entre des corps d'hommes et de femmes qu'elle crut endormis. Au jour, elle s'aperçut que ces gens étaient morts, et que l'odeur qui l'avait surprise était celle du sang caillé. Dans la rivière, coulait, emporté par le courant, un filet rouge qui ne se mêlait pas à l'eau, et qui venait - elle ne put juger d'où - mais de loin. (VC 58)
(My underlining)

Descriptions such as those above - of the burials at the square Saint-Jacques, of the streak of blood flowing along the surface of the

Seine - had featured in newspaper accounts at the time of the repression, and were recorded subsequently by historians such as Lissagaray.(36)

After a morning of wandering haggard and dishevelled, Armande will finally make her way home. Montmartre is still closed off to civilians: it is only because she is conscripted by soldiers to help with the demolition of barricades and the clearing of the roadway that she is able, gradually, to reach her door. The sight to greet her eyes as she enters the apartment astounds, then enrages her: Bégis (who has been turned away everywhere else he has sought refuge) is there feeding the children in what is probably an unconscious usurpation of the absent Cadras' role. Armande violently orders him from her home: protestations from Garden, also present, that to send the bookbinder into the street at midday is to send him to certain death receive the reply '*-Il y en a d'autres qui ont su mourir*' (VC 60). Minutes after Bégis has gone, however, Armande (on a reproach from the American) recalls her own position the previous evening in the rue des Lombards. She and Garden hasten after the bookbinder, arriving in time to see him manhandled by a mob, taken prisoner and interrogated by Versailles officers; then led behind a wall:

*- Où l'emmènent-ils? murmura Armande.
Un feu de salve la renseigna. (VC 62)*

In conformity with their implied intention in the 'Lettre à l'éditeur', the Tharaud brothers provide throughout the story ample indication also of the brutalities of popular justice. Calling at the Cadras apartment during the evening of 18 March, Bégis (who has been at the rue des Rosiers) describes in graphic terms the events of recent hours:

...vers cinq heures, une foule furieuse nous jette dans les jambes le vieux Clément-Thomas tout sanglant. A sa vue les cris redoublent; les fenêtres de la chambre où nous gardions les prisonniers volent en éclats sous les crosses. Deux fois

j'abaisse le chassepot d'un lignard qui couchait en joue son général. Un roulement de tambour fait un moment de silence. Un Garibaldien, debout sur la marquise du premier étage, annonce qu'on va constituer une cour martiale pour juger les officiers; il invite la foule au calme; on ne l'écoute pas. Nous sommes envahis. On arrache Clément-Thomas au gros Mayer qui veut le défendre et on l'entraîne dans le jardin. Avec quelques camarades, nous essayons d'emmener Lecomte, au premier étage, pour le sauver. A ce moment, nous entendons des coups de fusil derrière la maison: c'était Clément-Thomas qui tombait. Sur les premières marches de l'escalier un soldat reconnaît Lecomte, lui met le poing sous le menton et lui crie; "Tu m'as donné trente jours de prison; c'est moi qui te tirerai le premier coup de fusil!" Lecomte y est passé à son tour. (VC 22-23)

This evocation (which in tone could hardly be more different from the pages of I.N.R.I. relating the same episode)(37) finds parallel during the semaine sanglante in the manifestations of crowd ferocity as Commune prisoners are led by (VC 51-52); outside the Châtelet where executions are taking place; and in a rabble's baying for blood when Bégis is recognised in the street. Following his execution away from public gaze,

...la meute, (...) lente à se disperser et chagrine que le plus beau du spectacle se fût passé derrière la toile, appréciait le dénouement: une canaille dont le compte était réglé... (VC 63)

As in other texts, notably la Commune, spring weather and the beauties of nature assume a leitmotif function in the story. While this serves in some degree to offset the gloom, eeriness or downright horror of many passages, there seems not infrequently (as in the Margueritte brothers' novel) an ironic, almost derisive contrast between spring sunshine and what might be viewed as the tastelessness, stupidity or ugliness of human behaviour. On the occasion of the state funeral for fédérés fallen in battle, the brothers write that in the vivid blue of the sky '*...roulaient des grondements de canon qui semblaient bousculer l'hiver et saluer le printemps. Des bandes d'ivrognes en uniforme chantaient*' (VC 29). On the morning Armande wanders through the ravaged city: '*Le ciel redevenu limpide annonçait de beaux jours, et sur les barricades en ruines, les feuilles des*

arbres déracinés bruissaient doucement - printemps abattu et qui ne se résignait pas à mourir' (VC 58). The prettiness or fragrance of nature's emblems stand in delicate contraposition to the excess and folly of man. Bégis when condemned to be shot is led behind a wall '*...au-dessus duquel se balançaient les branches d'un acacia fleuri*' (VC 62): the sun is said shortly afterwards to be gradually sinking in the sky, '*...derrière les branches en fleurs*' (VC 63). When Armande had paused during the night at the railings of the square Saint-Jacques, '*une senteur de chair putréfiée arrivait à ses narines, mêlée au parfum d'une branche de sureau qui lui frôlait le visage*' (VC 57-58). Use is made in the text of vernal or floral simile and metaphor: Bégis, when arriving at the Cadras apartment on 26 May has something of the spring-like glow of youth ('*La révolution qui éclatait comme un printemps précoce jetait une ardeur de jeunesse sur son visage fatigué*') (VC 27). Later, in description of the crowd of prisoners waiting with Armande to be judged at the Châtelet, the assortment of humanity represented in the gathering is thus suggested: '*Regards chargés de haine, pleurs, cris, injures, prières silencieuses, sourires courtisans, orgueils vivaces, courages défaits, toute cette humanité prisonnière était pareille à ces bouquets jetés, un lendemain de fête, au ruisseau, où, parmi les fleurs fanées et pourries, quelques roses gardent encore une suprême fraîcheur*' (VC 53). It may be noted that the Tharaud brothers display throughout the story a predilection for the nature image. The muffled beat of drums as the Commune's dead are carried to the Père-Lachaise recalls, it is said, '*...(le) piétinement, la nuit, sur le pavé d'une ville, d'un immense troupeau de boeufs*' (VC 30). When on the evening of 9 May Bégis looks out into the still night, Notre-Dame seems to resemble '*...un gigantesque oiseau couvant des maisons sous ses ailes ouvertes*' (VC 39): and the following day he will leave the now largely deserted Education Ministry, '*...ces appartements d'où la vie se retirait comme d'un organe inutile*' (VC 44). The repression itself is likened repeatedly to a storm. Cadras, as he follows from his window the progression of Versailles troops and the firing of monuments by the now retreating fédérés, feels in his concern for his wife all the anxiety of a peasant '*...qui voit tourner l'orage*

autour de son blé' (VC 48): the prisoners crowded into the courtyard at Lobau stand, as we have seen, huddled together like sheep in a storm: and with a further analogy of this type, Garden at the story's conclusion will reflect tranquilly that as love is life's governing law, it matters little if a few thousand men have been killed.

On the evening then of the day that has seen, among so much else, Bégis' execution, Garden enjoys an evening pipe in the Cadras apartment, amidst the chaotic chiming of clocks in various stages of repair. His imagination (*'Plus dérégulée que les pendules...'*) (VC 65) carries him back to North America and the natural wonders of the Upper Missouri:

Il avait vu là-bas les saisons se succéder pour le bonheur des créatures; il avait entendu, pendant les nuits de lune, à la fin de l'été, les bramelements des cerfs qui vont couvrir les biches; il avait vu le pollen des fleurs emporté par le vent traverser les clairières; il avait écouté le chant des oiseaux qui s'appellent. L'amour dominait la vie. Pourquoi gémir si quelques milliers d'hommes, ce soir, étaient couchés par un orage? (VC 65)

Said at one point in the story to be from a Quaker family (VC 30), at another to belong to an unspecified religious sect (VC 32), Garden had grandiloquently extolled Paris on an earlier occasion as *'...l'Elu de l'Inconnaissable, l'Annonciatrice d'un Règne nouveau, la Trompette séraphique de l'Amour'* (VC 32). However fundamentally true his view of love as the determinant of all existence, the conclusions resulting from the play of imagination indicated seem of course outrageously misplaced in the climate of the semaine sanglante; and perhaps (on a more individual level) in view of the disaster for the Cadras family that has resulted from Bégis' love for Armande. Whatever his earlier radotage in favour of the Commune, Garden as a foreigner (or as an unhinged fanatic) remains untouched by the horror of this civil war. His wife, for her part, is said to despise the French, regarding them as *'...un peuple de singes luxurieux ou de fous meurtriers...'* (VC 65). She feels a secret pride at the greater 'reasonableness' of Americans.

Armande is by now faced with awareness that the officer to have given her news will never come:

...maîtrisant les larmes qui gonflaient ses yeux, elle dit aux enfants alourdis de sommeil:

- Il faut vous coucher, mes petits.

- Tout à l'heure, répondit Claire, quand papa sera revenu.

- Non, non, il serait trop tard.

Claire se mit à pleurer; Frédéric, pour la faire taire, lui posa la main sur la bouche et dit d'une voix dure:

- Crie pas! ils vont t'entendre à Versailles!

Alors, saisissant Frédéric dans ses bras, le visage perdu dans les cheveux de l'enfant, Armande éclata en sanglots. (VC 65-66)

Frédéric has presumably sensed that his father will never return: and the words of defiance uttered by the little boy ('...chez lequel sa mère retrouvait son âme rebelle et passionnée') (VC 64) trigger within Armande the devastating consciousness of her loss. Her tears are shed all too clearly in grief, and in distress for her fatherless children: given the tenor of l'Ami de l'Ordre, however, might one not suspect another sentiment (perhaps only dimly perceived at this moment) to be struggling in company with these dominant emotions? Frédéric's recommendation to his sister reflects the tragedy of innumerable other families mourning loss on this evening: and in a child as in any other, the spirit of class warfare can manifest itself. However seemingly absolute the vanquishment of the Commune, the flame of resistance is not extinguished (there has been already some intimation of this in the description of a young man's corpse in a deserted Montmartre street): and in Frédéric, who has a father to avenge now, revolutionary fervour has no doubt already awakened. In the writings of Cladel, of course, such a spirit would be warmly commended:⁽³⁸⁾ it is less than certain however whether the Tharaud brothers (who have repeatedly disavowed social disorder throughout the story) would have regarded any such eventuality as a cause for satisfaction, even in 1905. Revolutionary enthusiasm, with its attendants of excess and cruel mischance, lies at the root of Armande's loss: might she not then be lamenting, with so much else, the cursed legacy of insurgent defiance?

The various elements providing the human interest of l'Ami de l'Ordre are bound up of course with developments from 18 March. The differing viewpoints of Armande and Cadras; the emotional undercurrents suggested in the interaction of the three protagonists; the consequences for Bégis and others of his frustrated, exacerbated passion; all these factors assume full significance only when set against the backdrop of ineffectuality, chaos and tragedy seen to characterise the insurrectionary period and its horrific repression.

Not perhaps in itself an important text, l'Ami de l'Ordre nonetheless merits consideration on a number of grounds. The similarities with (and variations upon) themes and elements in other works relating to the Commune do present a degree of interest. The fate of Cadras underscores how in certain conjunctures the innocent suffer along with or in place of the guilty: and the knowledge that an actual episode of the semaine sanglante served as a starting-point for the story is a reminder, if we require it, not merely of the nature of this particular repression, but of repression anywhere and at any time. In their somewhat rudimentary portrayal of Bégis, the Tharaud brothers present a man who though of the Commune has the traits of a certain revolutionary prototype: fanatic, crusader and dreamer.

André Gide, who was an admirer of the Tharaud brothers' output, had however one reservation. A fault one might find with their books, he wrote, '*...c'est de n'être dictés jamais par aucune nécessité intérieure.*'(39) The horror of the repression brought so dramatically into focus would seem to preclude the possibility of such a judgement with respect to l'Ami de l'Ordre: yet a dispassion which is undoubtedly effective in episodes such as those considered is less so, perhaps, when carried over into the story as a whole. The characters remain strangers to us: we learn too little of them to enter into their suffering as we are likely to do for instance when reading of the tragedies to afflict the Pommier family in l'Apprentie. Secondary characters in l'Ami de l'Ordre - Garden the American, or the young Versailles officer - have of course even less substance than the three

protagonists: Garden, indeed, has little obvious purpose in the story.

Born as they were in the Limousin some years after the Commune, the Tharaud brothers, it might be presumed, grew up with no particular awareness of the insurrectionary interlude. Any features of outlook or temperament which might have predisposed them towards identification with the insurgents seem to have been substantially cast off in young manhood: the portrayal of the Commune in l'Ami de l'Ordre is based upon implicit reprobation and a detached, rather supercilious mockery.⁽⁴⁰⁾ Perhaps, when all was said and done, the Paris Commune was for the Tharaud brothers little more than a moment in recent French history which had provided the décor for a tragedy inviting some exercise of literary aptitude. A reading of their letter to Edouard Pelletan would tend, if anything, to confirm such an impression:

Rien n'est moins aisé que de reconnaître les thèmes susceptibles de produire de beaux contes. Il est rare qu'on saisisse d'un coup le bénéfice qu'on peut espérer d'une expérience faite ou d'un récit entendu. Sans cesse l'imagination est dupée sur la qualité de ce que le hasard lui fournit. Tantôt elle se refuse à comprendre la vanité de son travail sur des éléments magnifiques peut-être, mais qui ne sont pas de son domaine; tantôt elle n'a pas su reconnaître les ressources secrètes d'un thème en apparence peu éclatant.⁽⁴¹⁾

In texts considered in the two opening chapters of this study, the concentration has then been essentially upon the negative corollaries of revolution. With Chapter Three, devoted to Georges Darien, there is a move towards a more positive representation of March-May 1871.

NOTES

'L'Ami de l'Ordre' was published with the story 'les Hobereaux' in a volume entitled la Ville et les Champs - 1870-1871 (Editions d'Art, Edouard Pelletan, Paris, 1906). All quotations from the story are taken from this edition.

1. The lifelong literary collaboration of the brothers Jérôme (Ernest) Tharaud (1874-1953) and Jean (Charles) Tharaud (1877-1952) began in 1898 with the story 'le Colporteur débile'. A number of other contes appeared in following years, among them 'la Lumière' (1900), 'les Contes de la Vierge' (1902), 'les Hobereaux' (1904), 'l'Ami de l'Ordre' (1905). The brothers wrote few novels, but Dingley l'illustre écrivain (published in its original draft in les Cahiers de la Quinzaine in 1902) was to win them the prix Goncourt in 1907 after major reworking. La Maîtresse servante (1911), les Bien-aimés (1932), la Randonnée de Samba Diouf (1922) (based on observations during a journey through Black Africa) count among the titles constituting their fictional output.

The bulk of the Tharaud production consists of works resulting from extensive travelling throughout Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. A significant number of these books are devoted to Judaism (l'Ombre de la Croix (1917); Un Royaume de Dieu (1920); Quand Israël est roi (1921); l'An prochain à Jérusalem (1924); la Rose de Saron (1927); le Chemin d'Israël (1948)). The Tharauds were the authors too of studies and memoirs based on friendship with such men as Charles Péguy (Notre cher Péguy (1926); Pour les fidèles de Péguy (1928), and Maurice Barrès, to whom Jean served as secretary for seven years (Mes Années chez Barrès (1928), Pour les fidèles de Barrès (1944)). Both brothers were elected to the Académie Française, Jérôme in 1938, Jean in 1946.

2. See 'la Commune dans le roman': included in Images of the Commune/Images de la Commune, edited by James A. Leith, Montreal/London, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978: p.71.
3. See la Ville et les Champs, op. cit. pp. 10, 14. 'Les Hobereaux' bears this dedication: 'A Monsieur Eugène Le Roy, romancier périgourdin, ce fait divers oublié qui parut un matin dans les journaux de septembre 1870, au milieu de nouvelles plus tragiques encore.'
4. Victoire-Marguerite Tinayre (1831-1898) obtained her brevet d'institutrice at Lyons at the age of seventeen. Present in Paris during February 1848, she was of course witness to the revolution. After her marriage in 1856 she ran a private school at Issoire, then returned with her husband to Paris, where she continued her

career as a teacher. In 1867, with her brother Antoine, her brother-in-law Jules Babick and a few friends, she founded the Société des Equitables de Paris, which was affiliated to the International. She was from 1868 an active participator in public meetings: and under the siege spoke frequently at clubs.

On her release from the Châtelet at the end of the semaine sanglante, Tinayre fled with her children to Switzerland: she was condemned in her absence on 9 January 1874 to deportation to a fortified place. Under the Empire she had written two novels using the pen name Jules Paty (la Marguerite (1864), Un Rêve de femme (1865)): and after her return from exile in 1880, she collaborated with Louise Michel in the writing of two fictional works, la Misère and les Méprisés, this time under the pseudonym of Jean Guétre. Two of her sons, Louis and Julien, provided illustrations for the first of these. Louis Tinayre was to produce a well-known portrait of Louise Michel in 1882.

For further information regarding Marguerite Tinayre and the tragedy of the semaine sanglante, see Edith Thomas, les Pétroleuses, Paris, Gallimard, 1963: pp. 23-27, 183, 235-237; Bernard Noël, Dictionnaire de la Commune, Paris, Flammarion, 1978, Vol. II: p. 253; Lucien Descaves, Philémon vieux de la vieille, Paris, Albin Michel, n.d. [but 1931], pp. 85-86; Pierre Durand, 'Des Proscrits de la Commune en Hongrie', La Commune, No. 4, September 1976, pp. 68-69; and (of special interest) André Lazar, 'Les Proscrits de la Commune en Hongrie - Un chapitre inconnu des relations franco-hongroises', Nouvelles Etudes hongroises, Vol. 10, 1975, pp. 214-221. It should be noted that the accounts can vary in matters of detail.

5. See André Lazar, op. cit., p. 217; Pierre Durand, op. cit., p. 69.
6. See André Lazar, op. cit., pp. 215-216.
7. See Appendix 3 of this study.
8. See André Lazar, op. cit., pp. 217-220.
9. Ibid., p. 221.
10. See Jean Bonnerot, Jérôme et Jean Tharaud, Paris, Editions de la Nouvelle Revue Critique, 1927, p. 10.
11. See Jacques Birnberg, 'A Propos des affiliations de Charles Péguy aux Fractions socialistes (1895-1900)', Australian Journal of French Studies, Vol. III, No. 1, January-April 1966, p. 156.
12. See Jérôme et Jean Tharaud, Notre cher Péguy, Paris, Plon, 1926, pp. 44-46; Daniel Halévy, Eloge de Jérôme Tharaud, Paris, Grasset, 1954, p. 16; René Johannet, Vie et mort de Péguy, Paris, Flammarion, 1950, p. 94. Cf. Jérôme et Jean Tharaud, Mes Années

chez Barrès, Paris, Plon, 1928, p. 28: 'La Revue blanche, des frères Nathanson, était une revue à tendance anarchiste et socialiste, très en faveur parmi nous...'

13. Daniel Halévy, op. cit, p. 16.
14. Jérôme et Jean Tharaud, Notre cher Péguy, pp. 75-76.
15. Ibid., p. 148: cf. Romain Rolland, Péguy, Paris, Albin Michel, 1944, Vol.II, p. 199. See also René Johannet, op. cit., p. 272.

The former Communard Maxime Vuillaume was Péguy's principal informant as to events of the Commune: his Cahiers rouges appeared in the Cahiers de la Quinzaine. Péguy would on occasion commend the cause of the Communards in his writings; notably in an article written in 1909 and addressed to subscribers to the Cahiers de la Quinzaine. Reference is made in lyrical prose to:

'...cette magnifique hécatombe cette semaine rouge (...) cette semaine admirable, (...) cette semaine sanglante, rouge comme une rose pourpre, ces trente mille morts, trente mille fusillés (...).

(...) ...votre semaine de mai, semaine tragique, la plus belle peut-être de toutes, de qui mai est taché pour son éternité temporelle, semaine tragique, grande comme l'antique, plus grande, si puissamment, si grandement tragique, si douce à moi cruelle...'
(*'A nos amis, à nos abonnés'*, 3^e cahier de la dixième série, 20 juin 1909).

In Charles Péguy, Oeuvres en prose 1909-1914, Paris, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, Gallimard, 1961, pp. 22-23.

Similarly, in l'Argent suite (1913): '*Je suis pour la politique de la Convention Nationale contre la politique de l'Assemblée de Bordeaux, je suis pour les Parisiens contre les ruraux, je suis pour la Commune de Paris, pour l'une et l'autre Commune, contre la paix, je suis pour la Commune contre la capitulation, je suis pour la politique de Proudhon pour la politique de Blanqui contre l'affreux petit Thiers...*' Oeuvres en prose, 1909-1914, p. 1239.

16. Jérôme et Jean Tharaud, Quand Israël est roi. Quoted by Jean Bonnerot, op. cit., p. 12.
17. Notre cher Péguy, p. 34.
18. René Johannet, 'La Vie et les progrès des frères Tharaud', Les Lettres fondées en 1913, cahier de Philosophie, d'Histoire, de Littérature et d'Art, (1 May) 1919, pp. 113-165: see pp. 138-139.
19. J. Ernest-Charles, 'Le Cas et les brochures de Jérôme et Jean Tharaud', Le Censeur (Politique et littéraire), 1907, 2^e année, No. 21, pp. 116-120: p. 118. Some of the more curious errors in

the article are as follows: Armande is referred to as Claire Cadras; she is saved from execution, it is said, because an officer finds her 'aimable'; and in the evening '*...(elle) commence à se consoler doucement de la vie et de la mort en compagnie d'un Américain anarchiste et poète qui l'aide à bercer les enfants de l'horloger.*'

20. See in particular Alphonse Daudet, Contes du lundi ('les Trois Sommations'); Ludovic Halévy, Madame et Monsieur Cardinal ('l'Insurgé').
21. We need only read 'les Hobereaux' (centred on the horrific murder by a group of peasants of one M. de Vivant, and the determination with which his mother sets to the task of tracking the murderers down, and bringing them to justice) to realise that any such idealisation would be improbable.
22. '*Urbaine avait raison*'; '*Tout se passa comme elle l'avait deviné*': sentences of this kind punctuate I.N.R.I. Similarly, in '*l'Ami de l'Ordre*': '*...les prévisions pessimistes de l'Auvergnat se réalisèrent*' (VC 46).
23. Emile Zola, Oeuvres complètes, Paris, Cercle du Livre Précieux, Vol. VI: p. 691.
24. Ibid., p. 1086.
25. Ibid., p. 1117.
It is of passing interest to note a similarity in phrasing between la Débâcle and '*l'Ami de l'Ordre*' when the capture of Montmartre is in question: '*Eh quoi! Montmartre enlevé en deux heures, Montmartre, la citadelle glorieuse et imprenable de l'insurrection!*' (Emile Zola, *ibid.*, p. 1094); '*...Montmartre, le rempart de la Commune, le réduit inexpugnable de la Révolution, fut pris en quelques heures, presque sans combat*' (VC 46).
26. The reference to '*...la justice (...) atroce du peuple*', while relevant to '*l'Ami de l'Ordre*', is certainly applicable also to 'les Hobereaux'.
27. For example Cimourdain (Quatrevingt-treize); Florent (le Ventre de Paris); Gamelin himself; Lucien Descaves' Rabouille (la Colonne).
28. See concerning the Tharaud brothers' fondness for the countryside, and its influence on their writing, Eugène Martin-Mamy, Les Nouveaux Païens, Paris, Sansod, 1914, pp. 195-196: '*Fidus*', '*Jérôme et Jean Tharaud*', Revue des Deux Mondes, Vol. 64, 15 July 1921 (pp. 305-323): pp. 307-309, pp. 321-322; Armand Praviel, '*Deux Grands Lettrés limousins: les frères Tharaud*', Le Correspondant (nouvelle série), Vol. 252, 10 September 1922 (pp. 845-860): pp. 846-848.

In la Maîtresse servante in particular, the Tharauds are seen to be deeply sensitive to the romance and charm of the landscapes of their native Limousin.

29. This provides a somewhat misleading impression of the Commune's approach to education during its final weeks. A Commission was appointed by Vaillant on 22 May to organise and monitor teaching in girls' schools.
30. For example Silvère (la Fortune des Rougon); Florent (le Ventre de Paris); Etienne (Germinal).

Overtones of le Ventre de Paris are arguably discernible in Maurice Montégut's le Mur in that Ludovic Charmes - the idealistic dreamer among the novel's Communards - presents more than one point in common with Zola's Florent. The latter, whose revolutionary activities are of course confined to the Second Empire period, is all too clearly a specimen of the gently impractical breed intent on bringing about transformation of a less than equitable state of things. Ludovic Charmes is said to have been an impecunious teacher ill-used by his pupils (see le Mur. Mars-avril-mai 1871, Paris, E. Dentu, 1892: pp. 47, 388); Florent has enjoyed a no greater success in this same calling. Florent is described as lanky, scrawny, shabby, ill-favoured physically: Ludovic Charmes is hardly less so (see le Mur, pp. 51, 61, 77, 390, 392, 395). Both men are naturally chaste (although Charmes will harbour an ill-starred passion for the disquieting Thérèse Dyonis): and each is presented by his respective creator as a dreamer, and as a social misfit. It cannot of course be conclusively proven that Montégut was influenced by Zola in his characterisation: the fact, however, that a copy of le Mur held at Yale University bears a dedication to Zola from the author ('*A Emile Zola, au maître, hommage de Maurice Montégut*') seems indication enough that Montégut was an admirer of the Rougon-Macquart series. It might also be noted that Madame Lablache of le Mur is reminiscent of Lisa Quenu in le Ventre de Paris (see le Mur, pp. 168-170).

31. The words attributed to Delescluze are based on a passage in Lissagaray's Histoire de la Commune de 1871, Paris, François Maspéro, 1976, p. 265.
32. See P.-O. Lissagaray, *ibid.*, pp. 374-375: '*On livrait tout chaud les classés aux exécuteurs, qui les emmenaient à la caserne Lobau. Là, les portes refermées, les gendarmes tiraient sans grouper leurs victimes. Quelques-unes, mal touchées, couraient le long des murs. Les gendarmes leur faisaient la chasse, les canardaient jusqu'à extinction de vie.*' Cf. le Mur, pp. 328-329.
33. Gustave Geffroy, l'Apprentie, Paris, Crès, 1919: p. 56.

34. Further examples not indicated in our consideration of 'l'Ami de l'Ordre' are to be found on p. 49, when the young officer is suddenly aware of Cadras and the children standing in the shadows; and on p. 57, when Armande arrives at the house in the rue des Lombards: '*Elle (...) monta l'escalier sans lumière où le triste jour qui tombait du toit éclaircissait d'étage en étage une ombre moisie. Sur le palier du cinquième elle s'arrêta, toute vêtue par la clarté de la lune, seule avec son ombre, dans cette maison surpeuplée, dont le silence était plus sinistre que le tumulte des rues.*' Having decided not to ask for shelter, Armande, it is said, '*...se renfonça dans la nuit de l'escalier, inquiétant du bruit de ses pas ces ténèbres inhospitalières.*'
35. The horrors of the square Saint-Jacques had been portrayed by Maurice Montégut in le Mur. This novel concludes with a scene by usual standards melodramatic and grotesque, in which Françoise Moireau, identifying a hand emerging from the soil as that of her lover Jacques Maillandru, attempts to remove from one of its fingers the ring she had formerly given to him. The hand - and the entire arm - are torn thus from a corpse in a state of partial decomposition...(See le Mur, pp. 418-419).
36. See le Temps, 28 May 1871 (quoted by Lissagaray, op. cit., p. 379):
'*Qui ne se rappelle, s'il ne l'a vu, ne fussent (sic) que quelques minutes, le square, non, le charnier de la tour Saint-Jacques. Du milieu de ces terres humides fraîchement remuées par la pioche, sortaient çà et là des têtes, des bras, des pieds et des mains. Des profils, des cadavres s'apercevaient à fleur de terre, c'était hideux. Une odeur fade, écoeurante, sortit de ce jardin. Par instants, à certaines places, elle devenait fétide.*' Cf. la Petite Presse, 29 May 1871 (quoted in la Commune de 1871, published under the direction of Jean Bruhat, Jean Dautry, Emile Tersen), Paris, Editions sociales, 1970, p. 285: '*On voyait hier sur la Seine une longue traînée de sang suivant le fil de l'eau et passant sous la deuxième arche du côté des Tuileries. Cette traînée de sang ne discontinuait pas.*' Lissagaray includes this item of information in his account (p. 379).
37. The shooting by Urbaine Hélioiz of General Clément Thomas, the '*vieil ennemi des faubourgs*' (see Léon Cladel, I.N.R.I., Paris, Librairie Valois, 1931, p. 168) may be seen within the context of the novel as a symbolic exaction of vengeance (performed in the name of the oppressed) for the slaughter of June 1848. The killing of Clément Thomas (if not, perhaps, that of Lecomte) is justified totally by Cladel, who will indeed refer to '*...(l)es légitimes représailles exercées contre ce vieux suppôt de l'arbitraire oligarchique de 1848...*' (ibid., p. 166).
38. In the story 'Revanche' (dated 18 March 1873, and included in the collection les Va-nu-pieds) the baby born to Çardoc and Léone only hours before his parents meet their end in the Père-Lachaise is

seen as the future avenger of an oppressed race (he is in fact given the name 'Revanche'). This situation is almost duplicated in I.N.R.I. As the improbable centenarian Noël Lazare explains, it is in the new-born progeny of Urbaine Hélioiz and Jacques Râtâs that hope for the future may be placed: '*Fils et petit-fils de martyrs, ayant leur sang dans ses veines, il ne respirera que par eux et pour le châtement de leurs bourreaux*' (I.N.R.I., p. 285); '*Tôt ou tard, c'est fatal, les faibles seront les forts et, leurs maîtres ayant été implacables, eux, les affranchis, s'en souviendront. Il en sera, ton petit, de la rouge fête, il en sera! Confie-le-moi, lègue-le-moi, je le vouerai à la revanche et même à la belle!...*' (Ibid., p. 286). In 'Chez ceux qui furent' (dated 2 November 1877) the message often conveyed by Cladel - namely, that the cause of revolution lies in the hands of those yet to grow to manhood - recurs in marginally less dramatic form. The widow of a former Communard leads her two small sons to the Père-Lachaise and points out to them the spot where their father, fighting with many others in defence of the Republic, had been shot down by Versailles bullets. The shout from a soldier as the little boys kneel on the mass grave of the slain insurgents ('*Hors d'ici! C'est le coin des fusillés, on ne s'arrête pas là; filez!*') (see Petits cahiers, Paris, Ed. Monnier & Cie., 1885; p. 83) receives this proud rejoinder from the older son as he gestures towards an ornate monument erected to the memory of one of Napoleon III's ministers ('*Oh! sachez-le, vous, mon père, qui ne servit jamais les tyrans, était plus digne que ça d'avoir ici son tombeau!*') (ibid., p. 83); and his younger brother, '*Quoique tout ému (...) se roidit, et blême, indigné, tout en haussant les épaules, ajouta: - Dame! oui, sergot.*' (ibid., p. 83). The witness to these scenes is thoughtful as he watches the children and their mother leave the cemetery: '*Très pensif, frappé, je suivis longtemps des yeux ces deux énergiques enfants de Paris, qui, comme tant d'autres déshérités, seront hommes dans quelques années, c'est-à-dire bientôt, c'est-à-dire demain...*' (ibid., pp. 83-84).

39. André Gide, Journal 1889-1939, Paris, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, Gallimard, 1951, p. 696.

40. It is of interest however to note the reference to Péguy's 'latter-day Communard' propensities in Notre cher Péguy, pp. 75-76:

'Si Péguy avait eu vingt ans au moment de la Commune, nul doute qu'il s'y fût jeté avec la même ardeur que dans l'affaire Dreyfus. Il en aurait tout aimé: la révolte populaire contre un gouvernement bourgeois qui se résignait si patement à la défaite, et l'espoir des temps nouveaux.'

41. See their 'Lettre à l'éditeur', la Ville et les Champs, p. 10.

CHAPTER THREE

GEORGES DARIEN

Georges-Hippolyte Adrien (1862-1921) - in his writing he used the anagram 'Darien' - was a self-declared adversary of the general order of things, an outlaw and a 'révolté' who reviled through his work the values and institutions of the France of his day (and by extension, those of 'civilised' societies everywhere). Biribi, written in 1888 and containing a horrific portrayal of existence in the disciplinary camps of North Africa, recounts - in ostensibly fictional guise - the author's own experiences during the three of his five years of military service (1) spent in this environment of sadism and misery. Le Voleur (1897) - regarded as Darien's masterpiece and admired by Alfred Jarry (2) and André Breton (3) - was written in London where its author had been obliged to seek refuge during persecution of the libertarian movement in France. The work constitutes a further major indictment of the current state of society, significantly through the exploits of its anarchistic central figure Georges Randal. La Belle France (1901) is a pamphlet distinctly francophobic in orientation despite the indication of its title. Darien's publisher, Paul-Victor Stock, encapsulated the generally antagonistic tenor of the work when he spoke thus to the writer of limited prospects for sales:

Jamais un pareil livre ne se vendra... ni les Nationalistes, ni les Socialistes n'ont intérêt à parler de votre volume dans lequel ils sont malmenés. Que restera-t-il? Les Gouvernementaux? Mais ceux-là ont encore plus d'intérêt à faire le silence. Alors?(4)

It is necessary from the outset to realise that the French middle class in particular - at all times vilified in Darien's work - was considered by the author to exercise an influence all the more nefarious because total on the contemporary social order. As he wrote in la Belle France - and as is suggested in preceding and subsequent productions:

La bourgeoisie (...) impose ses goûts et ses préférences au pays tout entier, qui les accepte; les farces abjectes qui plaisent au tiers-état doivent réjouir l'aristocratie et mettre le peuple en belle humeur. (BF 109)

The assessment André Breton provides of Darien's achievement ('...le plus vigoureux assaut que je sache contre l'hypocrisie, l'imposture, la sottise, la lâcheté')(5) seems of undoubted validity when considered in relation to the above-mentioned titles and to Bas les Coeurs, on which attention will primarily be focused in this chapter. It is an estimation that may also explain in some measure the minimal interest in his work that blighted the writer's career in his own time and that has largely prevented awareness to this day of an in many ways extraordinary inspiration.(6) The novels published by Darien form in fact a part of an Inhumaine comédie that was to have numbered several more volumes.(7) In view of his stated '*horreur de la situation générale*'(8) Darien cannot be placed squarely in a given political camp (he had himself rejected classification either as a socialist or as an anarchist). There is clearly no disputing, however, his stance as a rebel - and it is a fact that he collaborated in several journals of anarchistic bent, among them le Roquet and l'En Dehors (an organ for '*les déserteurs de la bourgeoisie*' in the words of its front man Zo d'Axa,(9) and counting among its contributors Paul Adam, Tristan Bernard, Sébastien Faure, Félix Fénéon, René Ghil, the terrorist Emile Henry, Louise Michel, Octave Mirbeau and Saint-Pol Roux). On the demise of this journal in 1893 Darien was himself to found l'Escarmouche - a somewhat ephemeral venture which collapsed after four months.(10) In 1903 the writer was contributing to l'Ennemi du Peuple, a publication that ceased to appear the following year.

Referred to periodically in la Belle France, the Paris Commune is mentioned in Biribi and receives brief if significant treatment in the novel l'Epaulette (1905). It is however in Bas les Coeurs (appearing on 28 December 1889, having been written in twenty-six days during hesitations on Savine's part as to whether to publish the potentially more controversial Biribi) that the theme of insurrection acquires

particular importance. The milieu portrayed in the novel - through the eyes of Jean Barbier, aged twelve at the time of upheaval - is that of the Versailles petite-bourgeoisie in the climate of the Franco-Prussian War and the German occupation; echoes of the insurrection in Paris, and the subsequent manifestations of middle-class satisfaction on defeat of the 'red menace', feature indeed only in the book's concluding pages. This apparently limited attention accorded the Commune does not however diminish its value as an integral part of the novel's historical portrayal; and the ignominy of conduct evidenced by the bourgeois characters throughout reaches its apex during and in the aftermath of the insurrectionary period. Darien - who in la Belle France was to revile the bourgeoisie of his country as '*...la plus féroce, la plus hypocrite, la plus ignorante du monde entier*', '*la plus infâme, la plus bête et la plus lâche du monde...*' (BF 108; 299) presents the middle-class Frenchman of Bas les Coeurs as an opprobrious animal indeed. The vindictiveness and abominable cruelty he will display towards vanquished compatriots after the Commune is matched only by the hypocrisy, cowardice and self-interest typifying his dealings with the Prussian victor. The Commune, furthermore, may be seen to signal on the part of an increasingly disenchanted Jean Barbier the final stage in his dissociation from the attitudes of his milieu.

A contributor to the Journal des Débats (signing himself elliptically as F.D.) wrote on the novel's appearance that '*...les traits de bassesse et de lâcheté que (l'auteur) accumule sur la plupart de ses personnages ôtent heureusement toute vraisemblance à son récit.*' (11) There seems certainly no limit to the stupidity, the cowardly brutality and the base egoism of monsieur Barbier and his circle; some critics, however, expressed no reservation at all as to the novel's satiric value. Replying to the reviewer for the Journal des Débats (who questioned the justification for such literature) the twenty-one-year-old Charles Maurras lauded in the Gazette de France the '*satire énergique, amère et dure, de la bourgeoisie française pendant la dernière guerre.*' (12) Séverine wrote in similar vein for le

Gaulois, (13) while the English novelist of French lineage Marie Louise de la Ramée (celebrated in her day under the pseudonym 'Ouida') was later to praise somewhat puzzlingly in the Fortnightly Review '*l'ironie délicate et voilée de Bas les Coeurs*'.(14) Darien himself - pre-occupied chiefly no doubt at the time with his inflammatory novel on the Tunisian disciplinary camps - had dismissed Bas les Coeurs as superficial, an '*élucubration*':(15) but his evident hatred of the class he was representing would almost certainly have precluded any acknowledgement or feeling on his part that he had overdrawn the portrayal. He may even have considered subsequently that he had not been savage enough: we find him writing ten years afterwards in la Belle France (though not with reference to his earlier novel) that the manifold failings of the middle classes called for ruthless exposure in the aftermath of hostilities:

Il eût été bon de mettre à nu l'égoïsme, la cupidité, la couardise et l'hypocrisie de la classe possédante et boutiquière, de démontrer que son unique souci fut de protéger ses propriétés et d'accroître ses bénéfices, même par les plus honteux des moyens; qu'elle ne se fît nul scrupule de troquer des vies françaises contre de l'or allemand; et que, pour avoir la paix nécessaire à ses vils trafics, elle fit mettre à l'encan, par la tourbe qu'elle envoya siéger à l'Assemblée Nationale, l'honneur et l'existence même de la France. (BF 46)

It is clear from other references in la Belle France that the Communards were seen by Darien almost to be upholders of the national honour, to be the one element within the French population to display at the time any sense of integrity or patriotism.

Satirisation of the bourgeoisie was hardly of course an original theme in letters, although few writers had treated the subject hitherto with the obtrusive ferocity evident in Bas les Coeurs. In traits evinced the Barbier set recalls - as Pascal Pia points out (16) - the detestable hypocrites of Maupassant's Boule de Suif; one may in addition be reminded of Flaubert's père Roque, or of certain creations by Zola.(17) A comparison that seems, however, even more apt than these might be drawn between Bas les Coeurs and a novel to appear

fourteen years after Darien's death. The farcical Babinot, the detestable Point couple and above all the deplorable Nabucet of le Sang noir by Louis Guilloux (1935) seem firmly in the tradition of the grotesques and monsters making up the Barbier circle. Taking place as it does, furthermore, in a small provincial town during a day in 1917, le Sang noir provides its author with an opportunity to deride the bellicosity and chauvinism of bien-pensants who, safely distant from the front, are unaware or unheeding of the horrific toll of warfare.

Bas les Coeurs can be considered a Bildungsroman in that formation of a child's outlook provides the basis for Darien's presentation of satire. As in other works by this author, autobiographical elements would seem to comprise a substantial portion of the novel: it is almost certain, for instance, that the child Adrien spent the months of war and insurrection at Versailles, and that the adult was drawing upon his recollections of this period. The process of enlightenment followed by the young narrator of Bas les Coeurs is a by no means unbroken one: if in time Jean does reach a level of true consciousness and discernment - to a substantial degree through guidance from the republican antimilitarist Merlin - he will of course be prey throughout the novel to the inconsistencies and failings that beset all human beings regardless of age. Any child is a prisoner of his condition; and for all that the boy feels at odds with his milieu even at the outset, he cannot at that stage be immune to environmental influences. While a germ of rebellion seems discernible in his forbidden conversations with the workers in his father's timber-yard, or in unedifying expeditions (in Merlin's company) to gather horse dung, it may be noted that Jean appears aware on occasion of certain social distinctions ('*Ce n'est pas une dame qui a sonné, c'est une femme*') (BC 140), and that on 4 September the idea of republican government engenders fear in his twelve-year-old mind. Substantially of course, young Barbier is seen to be at the mercy of those who are his elders if not his betters, and the inevitable barriers between child and adult do at times thwart sound intentions on his part. When on one occasion the boy clumsily attempts to convey to Merlin something of the

esteem and liking he feels for the old man, he is merely assumed by his future mentor to be seeking damaging information on his family's behalf.

Darien himself did not hold fond recollections of his childhood and youth. Monsieur Barbier was modelled in some degree on the writer's father: and in none of Darien's other works is the family circle presented in rosy hue.(18) Séverine, in her article for le Gaulois, was to suggest a parallel between Bas les Coeurs and Jacques Vingtras:(19) assumed evidence of Valles' influence has been mentioned indeed by Lucien Descaves, Léon Daudet, Alexandre Zévaès, Gaston Gille... and more recently by Jacques Dubois and Christopher Lloyd.(20) All assertions of this kind are rejected categorically by Darien's biographer Auriant,(21) who affirms at regular intervals throughout his Darien et l'inhumaine comédie the original, indeed unique quality of the writer. Account must be taken of bias on Auriant's part: while Darien's style and inspiration are essentially his own, the reader is nonetheless aware on occasion - in Bas les Coeurs as in Biribi and le Voleur - of a decidedly Vallesian ring.

The sympathy Jean will later feel for the insurgents of '*la grande ville*' (BC 238) is perhaps foreshadowed on outbreak of war by his stated appreciation of and preference for the more convivial atmosphere of the capital:

Je voudrais demeurer à Paris. J'ai envie de Paris. Chaque fois que j'y vais, je voudrais y rester, ne jamais retourner à Versailles. (BC 22)

The atmosphere in his town of residence seems to the boy stultifying, and the Versaillais are for the most part considered to be '*drôles comme des enterrements*' (BC 23). Jean is not mistreated by his father, but the latter's expression scarcely inspires confidence ('...il y a dans son regard quelque chose de méchant qu'il ne peut arriver à adoucir') (BC 22). Nineteen-year-old sister Louise ('*Poseuse, hypocrite, égoïste, rapporteuse, pincée. Orgueilleuse comme*

un paon' (BC 20) - and much else besides) is as disagreeable a young woman as one is likely to find; while the physiognomy of père Toussaint, Jean's maternal grandfather ('*(une) figure de vieux renard'*, '*(des) lèvres pincées'*, '*(un) éclat cruel (aux) yeux'*') (BC 78-79) suggests an iniquity of soul that will in time be all too strongly apparent. The loyalty and devotion that the maidservant Catherine has displayed during her ten years in the Barbier household is counterbalanced by an ignorance as lamentable as it is entire ('*A toutes mes questions sur les chiens écrasés, les aveugles et les boiteux, les chevaux qui se cassent une jambe et les morts qu'on mène au cimetière, elle faisait la même réponse: C'est le bon Dieu qui l'a puni'*') (BC 19).

Catherine's story, it may be noted, will further exemplify the at times fortunate inability of her bourgeois 'superiors' to practise what they preach. When the maidservant's brother Grégoire is killed in battle, a variety of outlandish tortures are proposed by the grotesques of the Barbier entourage as suitable retribution for the evils of '*Bismarck, Guillaume et Badinguet'* (BC 111):

...les attacher à un poteau et les faire mourir à coups d'épingle... Les faire souffrir des journées entières, quoi!...

(...)les faire griller (...). Le feu, il n'y a que ça.(...)

(...)On pourrait encore user de l'écartèlement, ou de l'écorchement, ou du crucifiement; mais ce sont des moyens bien rapides... Non, en vérité, je crois que le pal...

(...)attacher les trois bourreaux au milieu des cadavres de leurs victimes et les laisser mourir là! (BC 112)

The maidservant's loss will not go unavenged, it is declared ('*Les barbares nous rendront compte du sang qu'ils ont versé!*') (BC 112). When it seems probable, however, that Catherine has indeed intentions of attempting reprisal against the Prussians billeted in the Barbier household, a safe-conduct is quickly procured for her and she is dispatched to the suitably distant village whence she hails. In 1890 Darien was to collaborate with Lucien Descaves in the writing of a one-act play *les Chapons*, based on this portion of the novel. Its one performance (at Antoine's Théâtre Libre on 13 June of the same year) was turbulent in the extreme.(22)

On declaration of hostilities, Jean is strongly imbued - as a twelve-year-old could scarcely fail to be - with the prevailing martial fervour. When in the presence of collective manifestations of mindless bellicosity and xenophobia, he can indeed succumb to the general fever; although a natural sensitivity and degree of intuition seemingly prevent him from yielding totally to the delirium and hysteria about him. Early in the novel, a suitably adoring crowd watches the march past of the last regiment to leave Versailles. Jean, who has just filled the flask of a recruit, realises as the soldier muses on a possibly imminent death that war may not be the glorious amusement his entourage would have him believe:

(Ce soldat) ne considère peut-être pas la guerre comme une partie de plaisir, il s'en fait peut-être une idée plus exacte que nous, au bout du compte. Et des tas de choses auxquelles je n'ai pas encore pensé se présentent à mon esprit... (BC 37-38)

The military, exalted of course by the bourgeois stalwarts of warfare, is seen on this occasion to display a suitably arrogant brutality. An officer who has slipped without harm on the stray onion of a nearby vendor, treats the old man to a possibly fatal blow on the skull; and Jean - in contrast to his friend Léon Gâteclair - will feel momentary compassion for the victim of this outrage. While such an incident might be seen, rightly or wrongly, as in keeping with the excessive, even caricatural nature of much of Bas les Coeurs, its inclusion provides fleeting insight into a further significant aspect of Darien's social portrayal. The abominations of which Darien considered France's 'defenders' to be guilty will be considered later in this chapter with respect to la Belle France and l'Epaulette: and in Biribi, written so soon before Bas les Coeurs, the hero Jean Froissard is seen to be rancorously anti-militaristic after his experiences in the Tunisian disciplinary camps.

Changes in attitude on the part of young Barbier are at times disconcertingly and unconvincingly rapid. When the stone he has flung 'de toute (s)a force' (BC 51) fails to contribute further to the

breakage of a cafeteria window, he feels strong disappointment - but seconds later finds the insults hurled at the proprietor and his wife (both English, but imagined by the crowd to be German) excessive in nature ('...car enfin si ce n'étaient pas des Prussiens?') (BC 52). The disenchantment with which he initially regards his environment will turn to unmitigated horror only on awareness of the sordid machinations in which his father and grandfather have engaged. He feels at the outset a vague unease rather than indignation when his father and sister make light of Catherine's devotion to her brother, or when later (surrounded by approving friends) monsieur Legros the grocer reaffirms - farcically in view of the pusillanimity displayed by him and his kind - the necessity for sacrifice and selfless dedication to 'la patrie' ('Je voudrais bien l'applaudir comme les autres, mais quelque chose m'empêche') (BC 181). Jean's development might be felt to entail, among other things, apprenticeship in cynicism. Monsieur Barbier's praise at one point of the Luxembourggeois agent Zabulon Hoffner ('la complaisance et la loyauté mêmes') will induce promptly in his son's mind the deduction ('Alors, il trompe son monde. Il a l'air franc comme dix-neuf sous') (BC 143). Hoffner, indeed, will return to Paris during the Commune to serve there as an informer for Versailles. In a society where duplicity reigns supreme he will on defeat of the insurgents receive, Homais-like, his less than just deserts: the Legion of Honour!

Inevitably perhaps, Darien avails himself of the opportunity to express or intimate through his youthful narrator antipathies of his own. Some of these - while astonishing - are unlikely to arouse indignation on an Anglo-Saxon reader's part: others are more disquieting. It is as well that young Barbier should understand that his country does not in fact constitute the epitome of all that is great and good; but a view of the French tricolour as **agaçant, gueulard et crapuleux'* (BC 54) seems not merely excessive but totally improbable on the part of a boy of twelve. Disparaging reflections on the dimensions of the Jew Hoffner's nose ('...je croyais à un accident; je supposais que le monsieur avait fourré son appendice nasal dans un

nid de guêpes. Je me trompais. Ce nez est extraordinaire, mais il est naturel. Il y a de drôles de choses dans la nature' (BC 142) indicate furthermore a tendency to anti-semitism on the author's part. Darien, who held many aspects of the French character in contempt, seems all too often little more kindly disposed to the Jews, Corsicans and Alsatiens appearing in his writings. (23)

The occasional perturbing note aside, it is only with sympathy that one can regard Jean's progression towards awareness. By the end of January 1871, he will have understood fully the speciousness of his family's values and the duplicity governing its outlook. The effects of his environment (pernicious and stultifying at any time) seem even more harmful in the prevailing climate of defeat:

J'étouffe, je me sens empoisonné peu à peu par l'air vicié que je respire depuis de longs mois. Sous l'influence du milieu dans lequel je vis, je sens ma conscience s'endormir, mon esprit se paralyser; je veux en sortir, en sortir à tout prix, de ce milieu que je hais. Je ne veux pas grandir dans l'étouffante atmosphère familiale, comme les plantes qu'on fait pousser dans les serres chaudes où montent des vapeurs malsaines et qui s'étiolent lorsqu'on leur fait voir le soleil. Je veux grandir à l'air libre. Je ne veux pas vivoter. Je veux vivre. (BC 221)

Jean's aspiration foreshadows the desire (superficially reminiscent of Gide) that Darien would in time express on his own behalf, the need to be '*l'homme libre sur la terre libre*', unbound by prejudice or constraint of any stamp.

With the Paris Commune comes the final stage in the process of estrangement. Jean's reactions during and in the aftermath of the semaine sanglante indicate the intensity of his aversion now to the self-righteous bien-pensants of his circles. As bourgeois Versaillais jeer at Communard prisoners, inflicting on them whatever injury and indignity they are able, Jean - in contrast with earlier times - feels a total horror and disgust at the crowd belligerence:

Je me suis sauvé, écoeuré, et j'ai regardé longtemps, le soir, le ciel tout rouge, sanglant, du côté de Paris, où la bataille continue. (BC 243) (24)

Similarly on defeat of the Commune monsieur Barbier (who has been in a state of consternation at the possible threat to his timber yard in the rue Saint-Jacques) whoops with glee when he learns that his property is undamaged and that eight insurgents (would-be incendiaries it must be admitted) have been shot down on the premises:

- Huit! s'écrie mon père. Ah! tant mieux!

Ce tant mieux m'entre dans l'oreille comme un coup de pistolet. Je n'oublierai jamais ce cri-là. (BC 244)

Tangible evidence of Jean's renunciation of environmental values is provided when at the novel's conclusion he and his parent watch the passing carriage of Adolphe Thiers. The latter - viewed by Barbier the Bellicose at the outset of hostilities as '*une vieille canaille*' because opposed to war - is hailed now by this self-styled '*bon bourgeois*' as '*le vainqueur de la Commune! le grand patriote!*' (BC 253). Jean's eyes have been opened by the horrors of recent weeks, and by a determining conversation with monsieur Merlin; not for him this assessment of the Third Republic's first President:

Moi, je connais Thiers. Je sais ce qu'il a été. Je sais ce qu'il est. Je ne saluerai pas. (BC 253)

In the one-act play *l'Ami de l'Ordre* - treating specifically of the *semaine sanglante* and performed in November 1898 - Darien was again to vilify bourgeois attitudes in the person of one '*monsieur Bonhomme*'. Overjoyed at the bloody massacre of the Communards, this abject personage displays a total sadism, and lauds to the skies Thiers, instigator of the slaughter:

Plus on en tuera, mieux ça vaudra. Il faut que le couteau reste rivé aux mains du bourreau!...Ah! M. Thiers est un grand homme!

Ce sera une des plus belles figures de notre histoire. Et savez-vous (...) ce qui le fera grand à jamais? C'est qu'il a été l'Homme de l'Ordre. C'est qu'il a été impartial. Ce qu'il fait aujourd'hui contre les révolutionnaires, il l'a fait autrefois contre les royalistes. Il n'a pas plus hésité devant Paris révolté qu'il n'avait hésité devant la duchesse de Berry. L'ordre avant tout. Ah! c'est un grand homme!(25)

Thiers' arrest of the duchesse de Berry in 1832 for her attempted legitimist coup against Louis-Philippe seems moderate indeed when compared with his repression of the Commune or, for that matter, the 1834 uprisings in Paris and Lyons. Totally implacable in his treatment of any enemies of the Established Order, Thiers in his inhumanity, his egotism and attention to self-interest, his political opportunism and his defence of middle-class prosperity might be considered to embody many of the traits of the bourgeois as portrayed in Bas les Coeurs. His opposition in 1870 to hostilities with Prussia contrasted in fact with the bellicose foreign policy he had advocated when Chief Minister in 1836 under Louis-Philippe; and in his conclusion of an agreement with Bismarck whereby French prisoners-of-war were to be repatriated in order to quell the Red Menace in Paris, Thiers might well, to the mind of some, seem a traitor par excellence.

This leads us then to a more detailed consideration of the bourgeois character as portrayed in Bas les Coeurs. Money, of course - seen unquestionably in this novel to be the root of all evil - is paramount in the bourgeois spectrum of values. Jean, when the novel opens, has had occasion already to realise its abasing influence. He recalls the quarrels between his parents, the acrimony of reproaches Barbier had flung at his now dead wife for her failure to provide a satisfactory dowry and her imagined trickery in connivance with père Toussaint:

Je savais que mes parents se disputaient et s'insultaient, que mon père bousculait ma mère pour de l'argent. Et depuis ce temps-là j'ai le dégoût et la peur de l'argent. J'ai presque deviné, à douze ans, tout ce que peut faire commettre d'horrible et d'infâme une ignoble pièce de cent sous. (BC 21) (26)

At the age of twelve then, Jean repudiates the cornerstone of the middle-class credo. For financial reward, père Toussaint - ironically named, for he is the most blackguardly in a dramatis personae composed largely of blackguards - will be guilty under Prussian occupation of every imaginable baseness and chicanery. It is for money that he will denounce to the Prussian authorities an officer in a company of francs-tireurs: for money equally he will arrange for his arch-rival Dubois (the mayor of the village of Moussy-en-Josas - champion of 'les va-nu-pieds', 'un scélérat,' 'un gredin'... 'un rouge' (BC 74-75) who is assumed to have voted against the Empire in the plebiscite of 1852) to be sent to internment in Germany, thus paving the way for his own acquisition of the mayoralty held by the other. He is able as a result of such schemings to put into effect a Machiavellian plan. Prussian soldiers will in their turn be paid to engage in debauchery and carousal in the home of his ailing sister so that in terror and desperation the old lady may be better induced to disinherit her dead niece's children in favour of Toussaint himself. Promises on the arch-villain's part to put a stop to the persecution when a new will is made are of course no more than a ploy; the will is altered, and the Prussians return... for the sooner tante Moreau can succumb to illness and distress the sooner her brother will be in a position to reap the benefits of an ill-gotten gain.

The lure of remuneration will equally determine the treachery of monsieur Barbier - impassionedly nationalistic of course on declaration of hostilities. Disgruntled in the extreme at the stagnation in business caused by Parisian resistance (as Jean writes: '*...le siège de la capitale, qui semble disposée à se bien défendre, peut traîner en longueur. Ça ne fait pas marcher les affaires, tout ça au contraire!*') (BC 165) he will, following the counsel of Zabulon Hoffner, supply timber to the Prussians so that they may build their batteries for the shelling of Paris. Later, through his contact with the civil servant de Folbert - prominent in a branch of the Treasury, and who has fled to Versailles on outbreak of the Commune - he will be assigned the construction of a huge ambulance for wounded in the regular forces.

His governing fear at this time is of course that the Communards will be vanquished before he is able to complete the undertaking. Louise, Jean's atrocious older sister, is for her part guided solely by material considerations in choice of a spouse. She will therefore abandon her worthy suitor Jules Gâteclair (one of the few agreeable characters in the novel, but who has suffered loss of fortune as a result of the war) in favour of the insignificant, fatuous - but moneyed and well-connected - de Folbert.

Totally lacking in any positive attributes, the bourgeois in Bas les Coeurs is then a champion turncoat, brilliantly adept in his application of double standards. Declared supporters of Napoleon III at the outset of hostilities, messieurs Barbier, Beaudrain and Legros profess after 4 September abhorrence at the treachery of 'Badinguet' (*'Nous avons eu confiance en lui jusqu'à Sedan'*) (BC 89), a detestation of Bonapartist tyranny, and republican sympathies long held, they claim... but hitherto unexpressed. The extreme nationalism displayed at the beginning of the war, hysterical detraction of the German barbarian and periodic vows of continued resistance however great the cost, will of course in the reality of occupation lose much of their vehemence. This in itself, it may be considered, is all too human. What might be judged contemptible is the total reversal of former stance, the subservience evident in dealings with the erstwhile foe and a cowardice that in the case of messieurs Legros and Beaudrain - until now such ardent defenders of the cause of Duty and Resistance - becomes unmitigated terror. Facets of the Teutonic character, formerly denigrated with violence, are now glorified both within and without Prussian earshot. Any expression of loyalty to country is avoided in German hearing (Jean, for a cry of 'Vive la France' is slapped by his father) and co-operation with the Prussian will become, as seen, collaboration for both Toussaint and Barbier - despite the latter's scathing denunciation at one point of *'(les) gens qui pactisent avec l'ennemi'* (BC 149). Madame Arnal, whose husband is in Paris - and who has been loud in condemnation of a hussy known to be according her favours to the 'enemy' - will of course in time take as her lover the

wounded Prussian soldier billeted in her home.

In a burlesque scene that illustrates a further time the stupidity and sadism of the bourgeois monsters, monsieur Barbier, his children and various friends stand at Merlin's window to watch the chastisement of a German soldier for an unspecified misdemeanour. The punishment administered takes the form of repeated kicks in the posterior by a superior officer; a near-total lack of reaction on the part of the victim excites the wonderment and admiration of the Barbier clique ('...quelle obéissance! quelle soumission! cinquante coups de pied au derrière!' (BC 152); '...cette discipline, cette obéissance passive... c'est extraordinaire, vraiment' (BC 152); 'C'est le manque de discipline qui nous a perdus, nous autres' (BC 152)) and distasteful fascination on the part of Louise ('Oh! attendons la fin (...) ...c'est si amusant. Ce qui doit être bien drôle aussi, c'est la figure du soldat. Quel dommage qu'on ne puisse pas la voir!') (BC 152).

The brutality practised and condoned by the bourgeois is constantly in evidence in Bas les Coeurs. At the beginning of the novel, on declaration of hostilities against Germany, all in the Barbier entourage had of course been convinced of rapid, near-immediate victory over 'ces canailles de Prussiens' (BC 7). Jean, himself swayed by the naïve and absurd propaganda receiving total credence in his circles, recounts the demonstrations of bellicosity to which the assembled friends and acquaintances of his father give way during an evening at Barbier's home. The latter is projecting views of the Crimean and Italian campaigns: the reactions of his set, impelled to near hysteria by the sanguinary representations of suffering and slaughter, will be in evidence to marked extent in subsequent pages:

C'est à peine si, dans le va-et-vient rapide des personnages qui s'égorgeant sur le drap blanc, on arrive à distinguer les formes humaines, à voir autre chose qu'une effrayante mêlée, une masse informe et bariolée éclaboussée de boue rouge. Comme ça donne l'idée d'une bataille! j'en tremble. Et je n'ai même pas la force de hurler comme les autres spectateurs qui, dans l'ombre, poussent des cris de cannibales, des hurlements d'anthropophages.

Heureusement, pour me calmer, des tableaux moins chargés apparaissent. Trois ou quatre personnages tout au plus: des turcos hideusement noirs et des zouaves effrayants, aux longues moustaches en croc, embrochant des Russes qui joignent les mains et des Autrichiens tombés à terre.

- Pas de pitié pour les Autrichemards! crie M. Legros. Et il faudra en faire autant aux Prussiens.

- Tiens! sale Prussien, crie M. Pion, absolument emballé, et dont je perçois dans l'obscurité la longue silhouette tendant le poing vers l'orbe où un soldat blessé agonise, un coup de baïonnette au ventre.

Mon père glisse le dernier verre dans la lanterne et se croise les mains derrière le dos. Il sait que ce tableau-là n'a pas besoin d'être agité comme les autres que tous les artifices sont inutiles cette fois-ci. Il est sûr de son effet: on a peint sur le verre l'incendie d'un bateau où les malheureux se tordent dans les flammes.

C'est épouvantable.

- Magnifique! crie Mme. Arnal. Ah! ces brigands de Prussiens, si l'on pouvait les faire griller tous comme ça! (BC 15-16)
(My underlining)

The point made none too subtly here and elsewhere is of course that in company of this sort no fate can be too unspeakable for the adversary. Eight months later, another enemy has manifested itself, more fearsome than the Prussian because constituting a threat to the social order... and to the pocket. The Commune, forcing the issue of popular rule, will soon face defeat; and processions of insurgent prisoners are led through Versailles. A description of the viciousness displayed by the nantis finds parallel, of course, in many a memoir or novel, and is not unreminiscent of the sort of cruelty evident during the evening in July. These representatives of 'les rouges', 'les canailles' are (unlike the Prussians) in a position of total vulnerability; what better occasion could present itself to the bourgeois for invidious name-calling and manifestation of cowardly brutality? As Jean writes:

Je suis arrivé au bout de la rue Saint-Pierre comme une colonne de ces malheureux passait sur l'avenue de Paris, entre deux files de

cavaliers. Des hommes en uniformes de gardes nationaux, en habits civils, en haillons, blessés, éclopés, portant au front la colère de la défaite et le désespoir de la cause perdue, s'avançaient farouches, la tête haute, avec la vision de la mort. La foule les huait. Des bourgeois, la face éclairée par la satisfaction immonde de la vengeance basse, levaient sur eux leurs cannes, passaient entre les chevaux des soldats pour cracher au visage des vaincus. Derrière, venaient des femmes, toutes têtes nues; des femmes du peuple, portant la jupe d'indienne, le tablier bleu; d'autres habillées de riches costumes. On leur avait enlevé leurs ombrelles, à celles-là, leurs ombrelles qui auraient pu les garantir du soleil, et qu'un dragon avait accrochées à sa selle. Elles se hâtaient, les pauvres, faisant de grands pas pour suivre la colonne, pendant que les injures et les coups pleuvaient sur elles, pendant que des messieurs très bien leur jetaient des insultes sans nom, que des dames du monde leur lançaient des pierres. (BC 242-243)

While one might again say that Darien is hardly describing the episode in question from a twelve-year-old's perspective, he is capturing effectively, and without exaggeration, the ugliness of possédant behaviour in such circumstances. A passage bearing some resemblance to this one occurs in l'Ami de l'Ordre, when Bonhomme - the loathesome 'friend of the establishment' referred to in the play's title - exults over the butchering of Eugene Varlin (in which he has been fortunate enough to participate) and recounts the savagery of the crowd as its victim was dragged up the Butte Montmartre:

Alors, les soldats ont pris mon Varlin et on l'a emmené... savez-vous où? A Montmartre, rue des Rosiers, pour le fusiller à la même place où ont été assassinés les généraux Lecomte et Clément Thomas. Je l'ai suivi tout le long du chemin. Vous pensez si la foule grossissait, en route. Des gens passaient entre les soldats pour le frapper, le misérable. On lui jetait des pierres, les messieurs lui donnaient des coups de canne et des coups de poing, les dames des coups d'ombrelle. Je l'ai frappé, moi aussi, avec cette canne. Un grand coup, comme ça, pan! Le sang a coulé. Ça m'a fait un plaisir!... J'aurais voulu avoir une massue! ...Bref, messieurs, quand il est arrivé sur les Buttes-Montmartre, ses vêtements étaient en lambeaux et ruisselaient de sang; ce n'était plus une tête qu'il avait sur les épaules; c'était une loque sanglante. Et c'est un amas de chairs pantelantes qu'on a fusillé. (27)

The photographer Nadar (recalling crowd reaction at Versailles as prisoners were led through the town) has left a memorable account of the behaviour of onlookers, and of the cane-wielding bourgeois ever ready to inflict injury on the pariah having no possibility of retaliation.(28) Louis Guilloux (inspired possibly himself by accounts dating from or relating to the Commune) was to include in le Sang noir a grimly arresting episode recalled by the philosophy teacher Cripure, and taking place during the 1890's. One evening on the boulevard Saint-Michel, the bleeding, inanimate form of a Chinaman pursued by the police and beaten almost literally to a pulp when caught, had been dealt a savage blow with a cane by a respectable and contemptible 'friend of the establishment'.(29)

The ultimate condemnation of the Barbier clique's style of patriotism is of course conveyed through its view of the mass slaughter of Frenchmen by Frenchmen during the semaine sanglante. For Barbier senior, this provides proof of a concern for the national welfare common to all right-thinking compatriots: for what more heroic sacrifice could be exacted from a people than extermination of undesirable elements in a massive but necessary bloodbath? In a phraseology recalling that used by Zola both at the time of the Commune and twenty years later (albeit in rather different spirit from Darien's character),(30) Barbier proclaims profound satisfaction at the turn of events, and confidence as to future subjugation of the Teuton:

...nous avons raison de ne pas désespérer, pendant la guerre. Nous avons été battus, c'est vrai, mais nous nous relevons dans la guerre civile. Non, la patrie n'est pas morte! Elle est plus vivante que jamais; et les Prussiens, à Saint-Germain et à Saint-Denis, assistent avec rage à son réveil. Est-ce qu'on a le droit de douter d'un peuple qui, pour vivre, n'hésite pas à couper le mal à sa racine, à s'amputer héroïquement? Oui, nous avons raison. Il faut élever nos coeurs! Debout! Encore plus haut! Sursum corda! Il s'agit de prendre notre revanche aujourd'hui. La grande! La définitive! La patrie est forte, maintenant qu'elle vient de recevoir, dans sa victoire sur la Commune, le baptême de sang nécessaire. Ce sang lave toutes les hontes passées: nous n'avons plus de boue à essuyer, nous n'avons qu'une revanche à prendre. Haut les coeurs! ... (BC 252)

The concluding lines here (flagrantly 'à double sens') serve of course to underscore the obscenity and obtuseness of the Barbier appraisal. It might well be considered that a country able to tolerate a massacre of this scale has reached a nadir of humiliation; having, in fact, a surfeit of mud to wipe clean. So nauseating, furthermore, is the attitude evinced by Barbier that it more than justifies the resounding 'Haut les coeurs!' with which he concludes his tirade (the Latin equivalent had originally been intended as the title of the novel.) Elements in the Barbier 'oration' may conceivably have been prompted by awareness on Darien's part of an address given by the Bishop of Versailles at a thanksgiving service on 28 May 1871. Addressing the members of the National Assembly in Versailles Cathedral, the Bishop had concluded with the stirring if predictable words: 'Maintenant, messieurs, dans un même sentiment de foi, de repentir et de confiance, élevons nos coeurs vers Dieu. Sursum corda!'(31)

The reader might imagine a passage such as the above to have been included essentially for its satirical effect. Possédant opinion at the time had, after all, generally deplored civil war before Prussian eyes and had even held these internecine struggles to signal the death of the nation.(32) The earlier connivance and obsequiousness of which Barbier had been guilty in dealings with the Prussian heighten, moreover, the enormity of his radotage now. The reaction in 1871 of conservatives who rejoiced at the French army's relèvement through defeat of the Communards would seem indication enough, however, that the Barbier viewpoint is not so very far removed from one then prevailing.

It would be misleading to suggest that the transgressions of bourgeois characters in Bas les Coeurs are at no time apparent among those of lower social rank. Justine, tante Moreau's maidservant, will accept bribes from Toussaint and contribute further to her mistress's physical and mental breakdown. Benoît, the foreman of the timber-yard in Versailles, is as lacking in principle as his employer, for he sees

nothing amiss in providing the Germans with wood for construction of the batteries necessary in bombardment of Paris. Francs-tireurs from the capital engaging in continued acts of aggression against the Prussians arouse the ire of Jean's grandfather ('*ces sales voyous parisiens*') (BC 155) and of the peasant inhabitants of Moussy-en-Josas ('*...ces brigands de Parisiens... (...) Des canailles comme ça! Si les Prussiens avaient besoin de quelqu'un pour les aider, (on) leur donnerai(t) bien volontiers un coup de main*') (BC 159). The essential divergence between peasant hostility to the irregulars and that of père Toussaint is simply of course that the former have little use at any time for patriotic sentiment and make no attempt to camouflage the self-interest that is as strongly the governing factor in their existence as in that of their bourgeois compatriots. As Merlin (in his capacity as lucid commentator) remarks to Jean:

Le paysan, au moins, ne cache pas sa haine de la guerre. Il ne se met pas de masque sur la figure; il vous donnerait tous les drapeaux du monde pour un quarteron de pommes... (BC 213)

It is through the pacifist, republican Merlin, of course, that Darien provides his strongest censure in the novel of contemptible bourgeois attitudes. Merlin's behaviour is, to the mind of his neighbours, in keeping with the dubious political sympathies of which he makes no secret. He has participated in January 1870 in the demonstrations marking Victor Noir's funeral, and following declaration of hostilities with Prussia, in anti-war manifestations (evoked by Vallès in l'Insurgé). (33) Merlin is assumed to have lived in cohabitation with the now dead mother of his children, for what else (the worthies about him suppose) could be expected of a man of his ilk? His vocabulary before the fair sex is at times improper (coarse language may well pass the lips of males of approved circles, but only on grave provocation - when loss of fortune seems imminent, for example) and he will, as mentioned earlier, abase himself so far as to gather horse dung for fertiliser. Jean, who accompanies him on occasion, is soon of course obliged by parental authority to forego

this tasteless pursuit (*'Un Barbier ramasser du crottin! Est-ce que j'aurais l'intention de devenir républicain, par hasard?'*) (BC 28).

For all his improprieties Jean's family and acquaintances maintain not unamiable relations with Merlin; he has, after all, a particularly beautiful flower garden! A mild improbability in the novel is that the republican himself seems to frequent the Barbier set rather more than one might expect; although this presence does allow him to mock discreetly the innumerable absurdities and inconsistencies to which his bourgeois acquaintances are prone, and to summarise the likely reality of political and military developments. In his vitriolic appraisal of the middle-class Frenchman:

... le bourgeois! ce mouton affublé d'une peau de tigre! cet imbécile qu'un plumet rend enragé et qu'une épaulette fait rêver de batailles... et qui ne comprend même pas, l'abruti, pourquoi les meneurs de nations tiennent à faire, de temps en temps, un charnier de leurs peuples... (BC 213)

Merlin is expressing not merely his creator's convictions at the time of writing, but ideas that will recur more than once in other novels relating to the Commune: notably Cladel's I.N.R.I.

It is after a particularly ugly altercation - arising from the discovery by monsieur Barbier and Louise of tante Moreau's alteration to her will - that Jean (who had been appalled to learn earlier in the day of Barbier's provision of timber to the Prussians) will come to understand fully the extent of his neighbour's kindness and integrity. Shocked, tearful, confused and sick at heart, he realises on looking into Merlin's eyes that this at times plain-spoken man may well provide comfort and succour in an hour of sore need:

Ces yeux m'attirent; je vois dans ces prunelles calmes de la loyauté et de la douceur, de la bonté pour les faibles, de la sympathie pour les souffrants. (...) ...je me sens entraîné vers ce vieil homme à la face honnête et digne. (...) ...je comprends que je puis avoir confiance en ce vieillard, qu'il ne me trahira

pas, qu'il me donnera peut-être du courage et du coeur, à moi qui n'ai plus de force, qui ne sais ni ce qu'il faut faire, ni ce qu'il faut penser. (BC 207)

The kindness of Merlin's expression contrasts of course with the glint of cruelty normally discernible in the eyes of both monsieur Barbier and père Toussaint. The old man is at this point the embodiment of Honour; and his advice on learning of both the appalling trickery and cunning of Jean's grandfather, and the motives for the abject fury displayed by monsieur Barbier and Louise will, the reader may assume, provide the foundation for the twelve-year-old's later philosophy. Young Barbier's intention to reveal the baseness and iniquity of which he has knowledge can ultimately - Merlin tells him - serve little purpose. His essential duty to himself at the present time and in the months and years ahead is not to yield to anger and to a spirit of revenge, but to retain his indignation at the evil and injustice about him:

L'indignation est toujours une chose juste. C'est pour cela qu'elle vit. Plus tard, quand tu seras grand, les frémissements qui t'agitent aujourd'hui te secoueront encore et ce sera peut-être au souvenir des ignominies qui t'ont fait horreur que tu devras d'être un homme. (BC 209)

This message will find a frequent echo elsewhere in the Darien output. Jean's acute distress has been intensified by the realisation of his father's duplicity in professing patriotic sentiment while selling wood to the invader:

...quand j'ai appris ça, ce matin, ça m'a bouleversé. Il me semble que mon père est un brigand, un traître...

- Ton père est un bourgeois, mon ami... un bourgeois... voilà tout...

(...)

- Et dire qu'à la maison, on ne parlait que de patriotisme, de défense nationale, de guerre à outrance! On ne parlait que d'élever son coeur! ... (BC 210-211)

The reader is thus reminded a further time that for the bourgeois no principle - not even patriotism, or what passes as such - is too lofty to be disregarded when financial gain is at issue. As Merlin says to Barbier junior (with probably only minimal exaggeration):

Tiens, petit, tu serais à l'armée, toi, (...) tu serais soldat, que ton père, entends-tu, ton père? fournirait, pour de l'argent, aux Prussiens, de quoi établir les batteries qui devraient tirer sur toi!... (BC 213)

In the cause of patriotism, of course, the most heinous atrocities are pardonable. As Merlin says of Thiers - recently returned from his (unfruitful) *'tournée des capitales'* and regarded now as *'un grand homme, un citoyen illustre'* (BC 182), a possible saviour:

...il est au pinacle. Il montera encore, le chacal, et il pourra, si ça lui plaît, recommencer Transnonain. Qu'est-ce que ça fait? C'est un patriote... (BC 212)

Acquainted as he is with subsequent historical development, the reader can only be aware that *'le foutriquet'* (*'...le vieil assassin, l'homme qui a toujours fait litière de la justice et du droit'*) (BC 212) will indeed repeat the massacre of April 1834 with a vengeance. On the German occupation of Paris - not long after his conversation with Jean - Merlin predicts the emergence to gratify popular mood of another Napoleon (*'Il n'a pas besoin d'être en vrai. Il peut être en toc. Ça ne fait rien'*) (BC 229). Adolphe Thiers, with his healthy sense of self-worth, was hardly to view himself it seems as merely an *'imitation'* Bonaparte. (34)

It is appropriate that the republican pacifist should be accorded the final word in Bas les Coeurs. As monsieur Barbier - glorying a moment previously in his self-accorded designation of *'bon bourgeois'* - prepares to strike Jean for failure to doff his cap to Thiers the Patriot (alias *'Adolphe-le-Petit'*, *'César en raccourci'*), (35) Merlin, stepping between father and son, delivers with a smile this judgement

on Barbier and his kind:

- *Décidément, Barbier, - pour revenir à nos moutons - je dois avouer que vous aviez raison tout à l'heure: vous êtes un bon bourgeois.* (BC 254)

The reader may be certain that the allusion to sheep is not a chance one.

While in Auriant's opinion Bas les Coeurs was the one book '*...qui ait osé dire la vérité sur le comportement d'une ville française sous l'occupation prussienne en 1870-1871*', (36) the reader will almost certainly have doubts as to the essential justness of the portrayal. Could there really have been many members of the bourgeoisie so base, so blackhearted as père Toussaint or monsieur Barbier? Could the possessing classes have displayed such total perfidiousness in their rapports with the Prussian invader? Most disconcerting perhaps to the reader is the concentration of such iniquity within a relatively restricted circle of individuals: and while there might indeed have been men so conscienceless as to undertake profitable business ventures with the enemy of the previous week, one is inclined to feel that such incidence must have been rare. M. Adrien, to whom his twenty-seven-year-old progeny gave a copy of the novel, apparently recognised himself in the portrayal of monsieur Barbier: and the transparent irony of the handwritten inscription (in which the young man described himself as 'son fils dévoué') can have afforded him little comfort.(37) Any mortification or discomfort experienced by Adrien senior was presumably increased one hundredfold by the knowledge that he was in fact entirely innocent of the blackguardly shenanigans attributed to Barbier. Was it really thus, he may have wondered, that his son viewed him? And what might not a perspicacious reader known to the family imagine of his (Adrien senior's) possible conduct during the war?(38)

The assessment of Bas les Coeurs offered by Léo Trézenick seems, in sum, a not inaccurate one. Trézenick considered the book to be

'...le procès-verbal de toutes les niaiseries chauvines, de toutes les fanfaronnades des matamores en pantoufles qui épinglaient les victoires françaises sur la carte d'Allemagne et escomptaient les désastres des ennemis, entre bourgeois, autour de la théière bouillante.' The author, he wrote, '...y mettait impitoyablement en relief le cabotinisme agaçant de ces hâbleurs avant la bataille, devenus les trembleurs d'après la défaite.' (39) Account having been taken of the deficiencies which Darien, with such total generosity, ascribes to his characters, it is of interest to consider views expressed at the time of the Commune which would appear to indicate that the satire of the novel has at least some basis in fact.

For many a bourgeois during the period of civil war, the Prussian seemed distinctly the lesser of two evils. This was recognised by at least two of the leading figures of the time: looking agitatedly to a possible triumph of the Paris insurgents, Hippolyte Taine wrote at the end of March:

...si par malheur ils triomphent demain et chassent l'Assemblée, dans huit jours les Prussiens seront à Paris, et ce qui est pis, bien accueillis comme libérateurs après une Terreur. (40)
(My underlining)

In conversation with a gunner at Versailles some days later, he referred to the Communards as 'les Prussiens de l'intérieur', and received the reply 'C'est bien pis, monsieur.' (41) Observations such as these are corroborated by excerpts from Flaubert's correspondence. In her defeat by Prussia (the proprietor of Croisset held) France seemed to have attained the depths of humiliation: the reaction of the possessing classes to the Paris barbarians was however to his idea testimony that the nation could experience even greater shame. 'Ah! Dieu merci, les Prussiens sont là; c'est le cri universel des bourgeois...' he wrote to George Sand: (42) and in a missive of 17 June to Madame Roger des Genettes in which emotion and mistaken perception are at least equally represented:

Croiriez-vous que beaucoup de "gens raisonnables" excusent les Prussiens, admirent les Prussiens, veulent se faire Prussiens, sans voir que l'incendie de Paris est le cinquième acte de la tragédie et que toutes ces horreurs sont imitées de la Prusse et fort probablement suscitées par elle? (43)

Perhaps the ultimate illustration of the quasi Germanophilia manifested, it would seem, by bourgeois at this time is provided by a letter published on 20 May in the third number of Francisque Sarcey's newspaper le Drapeau Tricolore. Received (Sarcey claimed) from a friend who had had the good fortune to escape from the 'abominable ménagerie de singes et de tigres' in Paris, the letter relates the 'conversation' of its writer with a German soldier in a small town under occupation. The German's command of French is clearly limited, his near exclusive reply to pleasantries being the word 'Ia'. The pronunciation of this word, however, is comforting to Sarcey's correspondent:

Il semblait dire: oui, pauvre Français, nous sommes là, ne crains plus rien; on ne te mettra plus en prison; tu auras le droit d'aller et de venir; tu ne seras plus réduit à lire les boniments de Jules Vallès ou les sanglantes pasquinades du vaudevilliste Rochefort, tu es ici en pays libre, Ia, sur une terre amie, Ia, sous la protection de baïonnettes bavaroises, Ia. (...) Je t'assure que ce sont de braves gens et qu'on les a calomniés. Le bruit courut, il y a huit jours, de leur départ. C'était une désolation générale. (My underlining) (44)

Following representation of les Chapons in June 1890, Francisque Sarcey was one of a number of critics to denounce the subject of the play. 'La plaie', he whined, 'saigne encore à vif, elle est trop douloureuse... Antoine est inexcusable d'avoir jeté, en jouant cet ouvrage, un défi au public.' (45) The remonstrance, given past circumstances, might be considered not a little ironic, and Darien lost no time in pointing out the incongruity of this particular critic's righteous indignation.(46) Sarcey, indeed, seemed representative to Darien of the vilest and most dangerous bourgeois small-mindedness. L'Ami de l'Ordre (described by its author as 'l'évocation d'une époque

où les doigts lâches des satisfaits rivèrent le glaive aux mains du bourreau') (47) bore this dedication to a man who had at the time of the Commune been among the most vociferous in advocacy of an unsparing repression: '*Monsieur Francisque Sarcey, ami de l'Ordre et bon homme*'.

For all that it does not constitute the principal focus of Darien's attention in Bas les Coeurs, the Commune theme may be seen to serve an essential function in the novel. Without it, indeed, the writer's message would lose its ultimate significance. However the present-day reader may choose to view Darien's portrayal of the bourgeoisie, those episodes in the book relating to the insurrection provide total confirmation of the wickedness and stupidity in 1870-1871 of men and women considered by their creator to be representative. Portrayed in itself hardly at all, the Commune serves then to highlight the appalling deficiencies of a class detested by the author.

Evil appears to triumph in Bas les Coeurs. The unpleasant are rewarded, the good defeated or unheeded. For all this, the honesty of vision of Jean and Merlin might have seemed indication to a reader that Darien's message was not exclusively negative, that he placed a degree of faith in the receptivity of a 'happy few' to a sounder set of values. The youth of this narrator repelled by the double-dealing about him might suggest a parallel with a message implicit in the writings of Léon Cladel and Lucien Descaves, whereby a child educated according to values held by the author to be sound allowed the sympathetically inclined reader of the time to look with some optimism to the future. One is helped also, it must be said, by the fact that there seems in this novel to be some clarity of position on Darien's part. A reading of certain subsequent works, on the other hand, leaves one with a not infrequent impression of his increasing rage, confusion and deep-rooted, sometimes unbalanced antipathy to society as a whole. It is worthwhile, however, to consider Darien's attitude in his other writings to the French army, and to see how he refers to or depicts not merely repression of the Commune, but the brutal acquisition by French

troops of colonial territory, or the quelling of the 1891 strike at Fourmies.

The disquieting Biribi, published in 1890, recounts the three-year martyrdom endured by one Jean Froissard (none other than Darien himself) as a prisoner in the punishment camps of Tunisia. In a preface to the novel, Darien implied strongly that the revilement of the army expressed by Froissard did not reflect his own view, and disclaimed any suggestion that this was '*un roman militaire*'.⁽⁴⁸⁾ One must accept of course that the deplorable environment portrayed in the novel was hardly that of regular army existence at the time: for all this, the sombre reflections of Jean Froissard as his time for release approaches⁽⁴⁹⁾ are too close to views expressed by Darien elsewhere to have been included essentially for effect. The reader may even feel (as Darien almost certainly did) that an institution tolerating cruelty of this type at any level was intrinsically shameful.

The malevolence of soldiers in the regular army towards the 1871 insurgents receives indication in Biribi. The socialist Queslier (in real life Emmanuel Quesnel, Darien's companion in suffering at one camp) has recounted to Jean Froissard his arrival at Karmouan in Tunisia:

Aussitôt qu'il fut arrivé (...) le commandant le fit demander et lui dit à brûle-pourpoint: "Vous êtes une canaille. Vous avez fait partie d'une société secrète qui s'appelle: la Dynamite. (...) Le colonel n'a pas voulu vous traiter comme vous le méritiez, en France, à cause de ces sales journaux qui fourrent leur nez dans tout ce qui ne les regarde pas. C'est pour cela qu'il vous a envoyé ici. Et moi, je vous déclare ceci: c'est que, si vous ne filez pas droit, je vous montrerai comment je traite les communards. Vous voyez ces quatre galons-là? Eh bien! je n'en avais que trois avant la Commune: le quatrième, on me l'a donné pour en avoir étripé quelques douzaines, de ces salauds!... Allez, crapule!" (B 130-131)

Long after 1871 those of suspected socialist sympathies were described automatically by many as Communards. Born in June 1861,

Emmanuel Quesnel was of a working-class background that predisposed him to sympathy for and even participation in the Paris Commune:(50) and while there is no direct reference in *Biribi* to such involvement on the part of the worker Queslier, an assumption of his affinity with the 1871 insurgents seems valid. Queslier, whose formal education has been rudimentary, '*...mais qui a appris, à l'école de la misère, à penser bien et à voir juste*' (B 141) will exercise a formative influence on Froissard, explaining to him, as the latter writes,

...verset par verset, le texte de cet évangile que j'avais à peine feuilleté, dans mon dédain bourgeois, et dont les chapitres sont écrits avec le sang et les larmes des Dououreux - quelquefois avec leur fiel. (B 141-142)

Queslier - whose fundamental lesson to Froissard is that rancour must be directed not at individuals, but at the System (a similar lesson, in sum, to that Merlin had taught twelve-year-old Jean) - will fall victim towards the end of the novel to the obtuse insensitivity of the Powers that Be. Too exhausted and unwell to continue drill, he will be placed under arrest for failure to do so. Notwithstanding persecution and appalling hardship, Queslier has been sustained throughout his term in the disciplinary camps by a determination to survive and return a free man to France. Now, with a likely prison sentence staring him in the face, he asserts grimly that he will not go under... and harbours thoughts of his (and Froissard's) eventual revenge:

Nous retournerons à Paris malgré eux, les crapules! Et nous irons voir s'il y a encore de la place dans un jardin de la rue des Rosiers où l'on colle autre chose que des espaliers le long des murs. (B 341)

By this oblique reference to 18 March 1871, Queslier seems to imply that representatives of the Army Hierarchy might yet atone for the horrors upon which their code is founded. His court martial is marked by a doltish disregard for justice... and he will receive a prison term of two years.

Biribi is unquestionably (as Léon Deffoux observes) '(une) oeuvre agressive et traversée d'accents à la Vallès.' (51) In terms strongly reminiscent of many a passage in the Jacques Vingtras trilogy, Jean Froissard recalls the horrors of the camp environment, and his resolve never to be cowed by the brutes who have, in effect, his life in their hands:

Je n'aurais jamais imaginé qu'on pût traiter des hommes comme nous ont traités, au travail, revolver au poing, des chaouchs qui ne parlaient que de nous brûler la cervelle chaque fois que nous levions la tête. J'ai été terrifié, d'abord. Puis, j'ai compris qu'ils étaient dans leur rôle, ces gardes-chiourme, en nous torturant sans pitié; j'ai compris qu'il n'y avait ni grâce à attendre d'eux ni grâce à leur faire, et que c'était une lutte terrible, une lutte de sauvages qui s'engageait entre eux et nous. La colère m'est montée au cerveau et a chassé la fièvre. Je suis fort, à présent (...); et gare au premier qui m'insultera, qui me cherchera une querelle d'Allemand, qui tentera de me marcher sur les pieds! Je laisserai mûrir ma vengeance, moi aussi; et puisqu'on a le droit de m'injurier en plein soleil et de me menacer en plein jour, j'outragerai dans l'ombre et je menacerai la nuit - quitte à frapper, s'il le faut. Je n'oublierai rien. Et je ne faiblirai pas, car j'aurai toujours, pour me soutenir: la rage. (B 196-197) (My underlining)

The Vallesian attributes of indignation, fury, and vengefulness are ever present throughout Darien's novel. On return to Paris, Froissard is resolved to set down in writing the iniquities endured in Tunisia, less in a spirit of vengeance now than in the interests of justice.(52) His hatred, he can be sure, will always sustain him: never will time work its effect of assuagement:

La haine me gonfle le coeur, c'est vrai. Mais elle est trop forte, je le sens bien, pour pouvoir jamais s'assouvir - ou se calmer. Elle ne me quittera plus, maintenant; et c'est elle qui mettra un frein à mes emportements et brisera mes colères. Mais c'est elle aussi qui, calme et froide, me montre déjà le pilori auquel je dois clouer (...) l'ignominie de mes bourreaux.
(B 370-371)

Night falls on the boulevard, and the Paris fog thickens: it is from a darkness even more profound than this (Froissard writes) that

the oppressed must cry out,

...qu'ils doivent faire éclater la trompette aux oreilles de la Société - la Société, vieille gueuse imbécile, qui creuse elle-même, avec des boniments macabres, la fosse dans laquelle elle tombera, moribonde-sandwich qui se balade, inconsciente, portant, sur les écriteaux qui pendent à son cou et font sonner ses tibias, un grand point d'interrogation - tout rouge. (B 371)
(My underlining)

It is on this note - again not unworthy of Vallès - that the novel concludes. The yearning for and delight in personal freedom evident throughout the Jacques Vingtras trilogy and elsewhere in the réfractaire's production is of course another feature of Darien's work inviting parallel with his no less turbulent predecessor.

Ideas implicit in Bas les Coeurs and explicit in Biribi were to be developed with truculence and acridity in Darien's lengthy, sometimes confused and confusing la Belle France (1901). The army, venerated by the contemptible bourgeois breed represented in the earlier work (and, as Darien writes in la Belle France - clearly with the Boulanger episode in mind - by the nation as a whole) reflects by its very nature the abjectness and pusillanimity particularly characteristic of French society since 1870-1871. We have had occasion to note the extent of genuine patriotic sentiment evinced by the grotesques of the Barbier circle: the insurgents of the Paris Commune (referred to not infrequently in la Belle France) (53) were, by contrast, fervent in defence of an ideal concurring not at all with the self-interest determining the behaviour of compatriots elsewhere. The Communards, Darien cynically opines, inspired general horror and abomination precisely because they had had the temerity to fight for a principle. They were not professional killers, indulging a penchant for butchery, and therefore,

...avant d'être fusillés, par les héros qui revenaient de faire campagne outre-Rhin, étaient-ils lapidés par les belles dames en grand deuil qui encombraient Versailles et dont les cartes portaient, les unes des armoiries, les autres le cachet de la Préfecture. (BF 14-15)

If the officer's caste enjoys such prestige among Frenchmen in 1900 (Darien seems not to believe that the irregularities of the Dreyfus Affair had significantly modified public thinking) this may be imputed substantially, he writes, to the repression of the Communards nearly thirty years previously. The massacres of 21-28 May 1871 had been no more than a means of regaining prestige after the humiliation of defeat by Prussia (this recalls not merely monsieur Barbier's attitude to the bloodbath, but the tone of some conservative journalism and correspondence relating to the repression): and failure to vanquish the Teuton was indeed made good by the '*conquête du Père-Lachaise*' (BF 145).(54) The evident precepts of the military hierarchy - again representative of the bourgeois outlook - have remained constant ever since. Let lip service be accorded the need for revanche, but may a healthy fighting spirit be displayed only in combat of forces having no possibility of victory, or perhaps even resistance. Far from carrying in their sheaths the honour and the future of France, French officers

...ont dans leurs fourreaux (...) une lame mal trempée, qui fut présentée aux Prussiens la poignée en avant, qui donna le signal du feu contre les Français de Paris, de Fourmies et d'ailleurs, qui égorga des nègres sans défense et coupa leurs bourses après avoir coupé leurs gorges. (BF 143)

The Army, ever valiant in quelling the demonstrations of poverty-stricken workers (as at Fourmies) or in subjugation of tribes or races brutalised by the French in their quest for colonial glory, is then the faithful extension of a soulless, unprincipled, almost irremediably vile social order. But what else - Darien asks - might be expected in a Republic so tainted in its origins, and doomed by the slaughter of the Paris insurgents to turpitude and inertia:

...le massacre des ouvriers parisiens a saigné la France du meilleur de ses énergies. (...) cette tuerie immonde et imbécile (...) lui a enlevé toute virilité, toute confiance en soi, l'a condamné à l'impuissance honteuse, a fait de ses prétentions démocratiques quelque chose de sinistrement burlesque. (BF 228)

A republic founded in such heinous circumstances could not be a true republic, and any attempt to bestow dignity or decency upon it must fail. It is however Darien's firm conviction that the 35,000 corpses of the Commune will be avenged.

...et que c'est à ce prix seulement que la France pourra vivre. C'est ma conviction que les poteaux auxquels furent liés, pour mourir, les Rossel, les Bourgeois, et les Ferré d'il y a trente ans, n'ont jamais été abattus, qu'ils attendent les Rossel, les Bourgeois et les Ferré de demain: que tout le monde le sait en France; et que personne ne fait semblant de le savoir. (BF 229)

In view of Darien's sympathy for the Communards, one might feel him to be somewhat careless in stating that the execution stakes of those three victims of Versailles justice Rossel, Ferré, and Bourgeois now await the three men's like in the future. Be this as it may, the implicit reference here is to the Social Revolution anticipated by Darien at intervals in the course of his writing, and to be discussed further later.

The manifold imperfections of the Third Republic were to be considered anew in l'Épaulette, the principal focus of which is suggested by the title. This novel, beginning in 1868, has a time span of some thirty years, enabling reference to and coverage of the Paris Commune, colonial expansion, and social unrest of the 1890's (notably the strike at Fourmies). Some link with Bas les Coeurs is evident in that the narrator, Jean Maubart, is aged nine in 1871 (as was Darien himself) (55) and living at Versailles. Maubart however is of a military family, destined to obtain the 'épaulette' which will place him within a privileged caste enjoying ill-deserved adulation and able, in a situation of conflict, to give free rein to sadism and brutal, summary injustice. Those parallels suggested in la Belle France between 1871 insurgent, restive striker of 1891 and indigenous populations in far-flung territories will find illustration in l'Épaulette. All are underdogs, and all may be confronted with impunity by the bullying braggarts prepared only to talk of hostilities on the grand scale.

As in the case of Jean Barbier, a latent spirit of dissension is suggested on the part of the nine-year-old Maubart, who would prefer the company of working-class children to that of the '*... petits êtres froids à jeunesse momifiée...*' (E 57) of his own social standing. The little boy has nonetheless a healthy sense of his superiority to prospective lower-class playmates, and understands the adult view that contact with them would be unfitting:

Je n'ignore pas que ce sont mes inférieurs, que je suis naturellement destiné à les avoir plus tard sous mes ordres, avec droit de vie ou de mort sur leurs méprisables personnes. (E 57)

Maubart fils feels no unease on learning of the massacre of the Communards. In view, indeed, of his background and his predestined role as a member of the officer caste,

...il est évident que je trouve justifiée, et même naturelle, la conduite du parti de l'Ordre. Je considère comme des hauts faits les actes du général de Galliffet qui supprime sommairement les perturbateurs, du capitaine Garcin qui réussit à extraire Millière du sein de la société, du capitaine Desmarets qui remporte sur Flourens une victoire mémorable, et du lieutenant Sicre qui capture la montre de Varlin. Les massacres de Paris, l'arrivée à Versailles des communards prisonniers qu'on parque à Satory ou à l'Orangerie, les Conseils de guerre, les fusillades, ne m'émeuvent que médiocrement. Pourquoi se révoltaient-ils? Est-ce qu'on s'est révolté à Versailles? Alors?... (E 103) (My underlining)

Jean's reactions in short (tinged here with the irony afforded by hindsight) seem precisely of the sort one might expect from a nine-year-old.

Darien returns in l'Épaulette to the idea expressed in la Belle France and intimated in Bas les Coeurs, whereby the supporters of the Commune constituted the only element within France committed sincerely to continued resistance. Colonel Paul-Frédéric-Eugène Maubart (father of Jean) will be acclaimed as a hero for his reputedly valiant stand against the Prussians in the village of Nourhas, said to be near Vendôme. There is, however, a side to the story on which official

silence is maintained, and Jean will learn thirty years later that the Colonel had in fact been on the point of surrender. It was his subaltern Jean-Baptiste (later executed as a Communard) who had conducted the resistance in defiance of his chief.⁽⁵⁶⁾ Jean-Baptiste, who is sickened at the pusillanimity and treachery of his superiors, will appear unexpectedly at the Maubart home at Versailles on 19 March 1871 (*'Il parle de traîtres, de Bazaine, de cochons vendus, de capitulars, d'un tas de choses et de gens que je ne connais pas'*) (E 101). After a less than amicable exchange with the Colonel which is a source of even greater bewilderment to the listening boy, he will depart, shouting his intention to join the insurgents:

- *Je vais à Paris, vous savez; avec ceux qui vont prendre la peau des capitulars pour faire des tambours! On va vous donner de nos nouvelles! On va vous faire voir ce que c'est que des hommes à poil!* (E 102)

As befits the intrepid upholder of national honour he has proved himself to be, Jean's father is said to be furious at the Parisian wish to continue hostilities. Placed in command of one of the regiments of prisoners-of-war repatriated from Germany after negotiation between Bismarck and Favre, Maubart père will have the opportunity to vent his wrath on the insurgents by massacring widely and well during the semaine sanglante. The fervour he will display is hardly disinterested: his superior and friend of sorts General de Lahaye-Marmonteau has before Versailles entry advised him that zeal in decimation of the Communard might well hold as its reward the procuration of more stripes. Nor are the repression period and its aftermath expedient merely because they afford opportunities for advancement. Three days after the entry of Versailles troops, the wife of General de Lahaye-Marmonteau (with whom Maubart père has been having an increasingly wearisome affair) is found shot dead in front of the house in which she had been residing in the boulevard Malesherbes. Her husband's brigade - as fate would have it - is in occupation of that very district: and Jean will hear it said subsequently that his father

and the general '*...avaient été débarrassés, en même temps, l'un d'une femme compromettante, l'autre d'une maîtresse gênante*' (E 109). Among those defending the Commune to the very last is Jean-Baptiste: Maubart père will be a witness for the prosecution at his trial, and the young man meets a convenient end before the firing-squad at Satory.

Indictment in this novel of the bourgeois manipulation of principle is little more subtle than in Bas les Coeurs. What might be considered the most damning condemnation of the repression is made through the apparently artless naïveté of young Maubart, who reflects upon the motives determining action in his milieu, and the attributes he will himself need to develop if he is to acquit himself worthily in his future role:

Le Devoir. Voilà. C'est le sentiment du devoir qui a poussé mon père à déposer contre Jean-Baptiste, au Conseil de guerre; c'est par devoir qu'on traque les communards et qu'on les extermine comme des bêtes fauves. Le Devoir. Ça me fait l'effet d'une puissance mystérieuse qui vous pousse à faire ce que vous ne feriez jamais de vous-même, ni par instinct, ni par raison. C'est beau.

Seulement, c'est grave; très grave. Et depuis que j'ai découvert la signification, la toute-puissance du Devoir, je suis sombre, retiré, taciturne. L'idée me hante qu'il me faudra tuer, aussi, pour préserver l'Ordre, et massacrer n'importe qui, pour faire mon devoir. Il faut être sérieux, pour bien faire son devoir; et dur, surtout. Je me jure de ne plus jamais me laisser attendrir par quoi que ce soit. (E 104)

For all the apparent ingenuousness of his thinking, Jean will be at least partially awakened as a result of the Commune to some of the hypocrisies of his entourage. Vaguely conscious for the first time of social inequalities in wealth ('*Je ne raisonne point, certes; je pense à peine; je sens. Je sens, pour la première fois, qu'il y a des riches et des pauvres; des pauvres qui sont toujours trop pauvres, et des riches qui ne sont jamais assez riches*') (E 105), he is suddenly aware on piecing together various conversations overheard of a fundamental reason for the antagonism towards the Communards:

...par un enchaînement rapide et surprenant, - le mot "argent" tintait en mon cerveau comme un appel de tocsin - mes pensées (...) accourent et défilent de nouveau devant moi; non plus avec l'austère allure de Vérités inflexibles alignées derrière le Devoir, maître de cérémonies; mais avec la hideuse dégaîne de mensonges difformes se bousculant derrière l'Argent, tambour-major à postiches. L'Argent. C'est peut-être parce qu'ils n'avaient point d'argent que les communards se sont révoltés; et c'est peut-être pour être sûrs de garder leur argent que les Versaillais les ont fusillés. L'Argent! Et pas de devoir, alors? Non... J'ai de la colère, et beaucoup de dégoût, d'avoir été trompé, de m'être trompé... (E 105)

Duty then, the young boy discovers (in like manner to his counterpart in Bas les Coeurs) is a nebulous concept that for older and wiser people can justify almost any baseness or brutality.

Some years later at Saint-Cyr, a Jean Maubart now on the threshold of his army career feels that his time might be more profitably spent elsewhere: for is not the art of war (said by the military hierarchy to be so complex) little more than the art of destruction, and might not a man whose role it will be to kill forego any study of theory and set directly to the decimation of African tribes or the shooting of workers stirred to revolt? ('Ce serait là un excellent moyen, le seul, de nous permettre de nous faire la main') (E 122). The colony of Garamaka, brought under French domination by the now General Maubart in 1889, is said to lie in the Sudan, but might well be taken to represent those territories (Tunisia, Madagascar, Tonkin) annexed from the early 1880's and whose acquisition was to make of a France still smarting from defeat by Prussia 'not merely a free nation, but a great nation'.(57) The satire could hardly be more flagrant as Jean's father (proud, he tells his son, of having fought for 'civilisation') recalls the gentleness of the Africans subjugated with total barbarity:

- C'étaient des gens très doux, très calmes, presque sans mauvais instincts. La preuve, c'est que nous les avons massacrés par centaines et par milliers, et ils n'ont pas rouspété. (E 247)

The accounts of Garamakais savagery receiving general credence in France had been fabricated by missionaries: (58) to useful purpose, of course, in General Maubart's view, for these lies and misrepresentations had resulted in war... and in the greater glory of General Maubart. The credit for the pillage and plunder undertaken in Garamaka cannot, he admits, be assumed by him alone: had it not been for the 'bons pères' and their knowledge of the country,

...nous nous serions fait rouler; nous n'aurions pas exigé assez; mais avec eux... confiscations, rançons, razzias, ça n'arrêtait pas. (E 247)

As it is, the campaign has been immensely profitable for him in every sense of the word. The 'savages' of Garamaka had, he tells his son, a 'civilisation of sorts', '*...et leurs objets d'art ont du prix. J'en ai rapporté douze caisses, de cinq cents kilos chacune; tout le plus chouette*' (E 247). An antique dealer, in fact, is to give him twenty thousand francs the following day '*...pour quelques bibelots que je lui ai vendus*' (E 247).

With an ingenuousness or cynicism that is highly convenient, of course, from Darien's point of view, the worthy general recalls then his exploits in distant climes. It is established that Darien saw a link between the French army's repression of the Commune and its 'pacification' (59) of native populations: and this - given the viewpoint expressed by Maubart père - perhaps requires further elaboration. The military - ostensibly combating for civilisation - was widely felt in both cases to be confronting 'barbaric' adversaries: we remember the tone of much Conservative journalism at the time of the Commune, and the parallels made by Flaubert, for instance, between Paris and Dahomey. To many readers or students of the 1980's, however, it is the nineteenth century defenders of the Civilised Order who assume the role of barbarians: and the theses of politicians or writers of the time who were convinced of France's (or other European powers') 'civilising mission' in Africa or Asia may seem at best outmoded and arrogant, at worst obtuse or mischievous.

Related not unmovingly in l'Epaulette is an episode of May 1891 illustrating (albeit on a minor scale) the perpetuation of a certain aptitude on the part of Authority that had been cruelly manifest twenty years before. Jean will himself be of the troops dispatched to Fourmies (barely disguised in the text as Courmies) for the threatened strike of 1 May. A foe who is decidedly unformidable, but who threatens to ruffle the fabric of Social Order in the factory town, is likely to manifest himself:

L'Ennemi. Une face émaciée, blafarde, lasse, tellement fatiguée; une face aux joues creuses, à la bouche tordue par un douloureux rictus, aux yeux éteints, comme noyés; une face que la misère a serrée dans son étau, très fort, et sur laquelle la faim a frappé à petits coups, très longtemps. Et cette face sur des corps d'hommes que ronge l'alcool, que mine le travail bestial; sur des corps de femmes dont la misérable anatomie se dissimule sous des haillons; sur des corps d'enfants qu'alourdit et courbe vers la terre hostile le pressentiment de la vie. La chiourme productive. Voilà l'ennemi que doit tenir en échec la chiourme soldatesque.
(E 278)

The message seems almost an echo of Germinal. Seen by his employer as an instrument useful only for continuance of productivity, the factory serf at Courmies loses seemingly all entitlement to existence in the event of accident, or once overwork, poverty and malnutrition have taken their toll. Of course a strike can be averted on this occasion: for harmony to prevail once more between capital and labour, all that is needed, we are told, is a little good will ('*Que les salariés fassent toutes les concessions, et que les chefs d'établissement les acceptent*') (E 278). Earlier, the senator for the Nord had paid two visits to the 'ilotes', the 'esclaves' of the nearby industrial town of Navesnes, exhorting them never to forego certain sacrosanct virtues, and to be ever-moderate in all things:

Delanoix sait parler aux ouvriers; il leur parle (...) de l'honnêteté, sans laquelle on n'arrive à rien; de l'ordre et de l'économie, qui mènent à tout; du travail, qui est la liberté; du gouvernement, qui veille paternellement sur la classe ouvrière. Enfin, il sait leur parler. Il leur dit de se méfier des meneurs, et leur prêche la modération. Vous avez faim? Soyez modéré.

Votre femme grelotte sous des haillons? Soyez modéré. Vos enfants, rongés par la maladie, n'ont ni remèdes, ni nourriture? Soyez modéré. La misère vous étrangle et vous dépèce? Soyez modéré. Vous crevez? Modérez-vous. Ne crevez, mon ami, qu'avec la plus extrême modération. (E 275-276)

On 1 May, the troops are positioned in the town square of Courmies in readiness for the oncoming demonstrators. The latter are unarmed, of course, and have at their head a girl carrying a flowering may-tree and a young man bearing a tricolour flag. Commands are barked to the Defenders of Order... and shots ring out:

Point de fumée. Une détonation sèche, hypocrite, implacable.

Des cris désespérés s'élèvent. Des femmes et des enfants viennent de tomber, frappés par les balles; la jeune fille qui tenait le mai en fleurs est étendue à terre, la tête fracassée, la cervelle répandue; le jeune homme qui portait le drapeau a été tué d'une balle dans la bouche, et gît, couvert de sang... La foule s'enfuit, hurlant d'horreur. Des hommes (...) épaulent encore, tirent. Un enfant que sa mère tient par la main est tué; une jeune fille qui entre dans un café est tuée. Un jeune homme, au bout de la place, relève un blessé. Un soldat le couche en joue et il tombe. (E 280-281)

About forty dead and wounded - nearly all women and children, and horribly disfigured by bullets fired at point-blank range - lie now in the square:

Des filets de sang commencent à couler sur la terre noirâtre, forment des flaques rouges qui s'étendent, s'étendent... (E 281)

While the effect of a passage such as this ought not perhaps to be undermined by petty fault-finding, there does seem again to be an element of carelessness on Darien's part. We are told that two male corpses only lie before the soldiery, '... l'un, celui d'un vieillard' (E 281), the other, presumably, that of the young man attempting to help a wounded comrade. Forgotten all too quickly, it would appear, is the bearer of the flag, said to have received a bullet in the mouth. There are, on a count, fourteen dead and twenty-two wounded: and

Darien, no more enamoured of the Church than of the professional butchers he depicts, adds a further significant touch. On cessation of the firing,

La porte du presbytère s'est ouverte, trois prêtres en sont sortis et se sont approchés des victimes, comme des messagers de bienveillance et de consolation.

La porte du presbytère s'est ouverte, trois prêtres en sont sortis et se sont approchés des victimes, comme des chacals qui viennent flairer des cadavres. (E 281)

Although published in 1905, l'Épaulette had apparently been written some four years previously, at a time when Darien was convinced, rightly or wrongly, that the baneful, insidious influence of the Church had never been stronger in France. The horrid alliance of 'sabre et goupillon' is excoriated in la Belle France: and an argument developed in that publication - and that might be considered nothing if not original - was that the French Revolution had been a gigantic conspiracy engineered by Rome! The reason for this manoeuvre, so Darien claimed, had lain in terror that the physiocratic principles of François Quesnay - whereby a single land tax (entailing the eventual collapse of individual privilege) was advocated - would be generally implemented if some drastic preventive measure were not taken. (60)

For all his at times poignant representations of the System's pitilessness towards the disfavoured, it should not be assumed that Darien professed compassion for the lower classes. On the contrary, what he perceived as an habitual tolerance on their part of exploitation at the hands of the bourgeois engendered more than once expression of savage contempt. (61) The myth of the 'Great Revolution' accepted by the masses was (Darien argued in la Belle France) a monstrous ploy highly expedient for the privileged in Society: for so long as lip service continued to be paid under the Third Republic to the precepts of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, the worker (possessed of a few rights, but no privileges) would hopefully not trouble himself in significant degree with the thought that his material condition had

altered little in one hundred years. Increasing industrialisation, Darien writes, has condemned much of the working population even more intractably to soul-destroying thralldom, and the factory worker is most of the time an unthinking automaton who has lost any capacity for indignation. In a description in l'Épaulette of the town of Navesnes, Darien skilfully brings out the total subjugation of the individual to the factories and machines that regulate his existence: and more importantly, his acceptance of this state of things:

On dirait que les maisons sont rongées de la lèpre de l'esclavage; qu'elles rampent devant les hautes cheminées des usines qui les bafouent; qui érigent leur insolence de nouvelles tours féodales et crachent, sous la liberté du ciel bleu, le ciel noir des servitudes sans fin. La population ne respire que dans la respiration des machines; son pouls ne bat que dans le va-et-vient des pistons. Ça pue la misère; ça empeste la patience. Les faces n'ont point d'expression. C'est comme si l'éclat de la vie s'était échappé de toutes les prunelles, pour venir se figer sur l'acier des monstres qui mâchent la vapeur meurtrière, sur l'acier des baïonnettes qui prolongent les fusils Lebel, protecteurs de l'Ordre. (E 274-275) (My underlining)

In contrast to Geffroy referring to factory servitude in l'Apprentie, (62) Darien intimates strongly here that suffering should have instilled in the people a need to revolt.

Even more contemptible than mere acceptance of lot, on the people's part, is its veneration for the Military. The impact of a Soldier on the plebeian imagination (Darien is thinking of course of Georges Boulanger), the gaping adulation with which the chauvinistic masses will observe a display of military panache, can only heighten (one may assume Darien to feel) any latent misanthropic sentiment on the part of the onlooker. By their mindless endorsement of the Army, widely held to embody all that is noblest in the French tradition, the people ('ridicule victime (...) dupe imbécile, irrémédiablement prostitué aux sauteurs à épauettes, toujours prêt à couper dans la pommade patriotique - à la moelle de meurt-de-faim...') (B 241)

subscribe to all that is most brutal, uncaring and grandiloquently despicable in the prevailing order of things: the very order, in fact, that holds them firmly in subjection.

If then the lower orders are victims of the System, they have essentially themselves to blame. Jean Maubart of l'Epaulette (whose views may be considered to be substantially a reflection of Darien's own) proclaims himself so nauseated at times by the people's capacity for acceptance, so repelled by their apparent worship of much that is worthless, false or vile that '*...(il) souhaite une nouvelle Commune - pour la répression*' (E 365).

The brutality of the comment seems illustrative of the tormented rancour characteristic now of Darien's outlook. Advocacy of submission to suffering by one such as François Coppée called, Darien wrote in la Belle France, for violent, vehement repudiation.⁽⁶³⁾ The poor should have done with torpid resignedness and patience, and set single-mindedly to realisation of a new Social Order. 'Patrie' (again in Darien's view) signified in the first instance the soil of the territory occupied by the French nation: the land must not be the means for exploitation of the unprivileged at the hands of the 'favorisés du sort'.

His study of the theories of François Quesnay and of Henry George's book Progress and Poverty ⁽⁶⁴⁾ had led Darien to certainty as to the Way, the Truth and the Light. The objective must be 'liberation' of the soil, leading to emancipation of the individual, '*l'homme libre sur la terre libre*': the means enabling collective ownership of the 'patrie' would be in a fair way to accomplishment upon institution of a single tax on land values. The French Revolution - a giant confidence trick originated and perpetuated by the agents of exploitation - had resulted in an incoherence in France that must entail eventual collapse of the nation. It was up to the poor to reject the nefarious legacy of 1789 and its aftermath, cast off all political affiliation ('*La politique des pauvres ne doit avoir qu'un*

but: *le refus de se laisser exploiter'*) (BF 251) and embark on the course leading to appropriation of the land.(65)

The conflict that might well result would at least put paid to the abject peace in which France had been stagnating since 1871: and reconstitution of the national armies by an enlightened people could only be beneficial for the patrie as a now purified entity. The viewpoint of the pacifist Merlin hardly represented Darien's own a decade after appearance of Bas les Coeurs. It is clear from the opening pages of la Belle France that war between France and Germany in 1870 gave him per se no cause for regret: he seemed, to the contrary, to rankle at French defeat. At an anti-militarist conference held at Amsterdam in 1904, Darien declared that while he was 'anti-militariste' he was not 'anti-militaire': and the thoughts of Jean Maubart as he reflects upon the contemporary state of things are supposedly, once again, those of Darien himself:

Pauvres! n'ayez pas peur de la guerre! Elle vous libérera. Elle tuera la Misère qui vous étrangle, et l'Hypocrisie qui vous ligote. Elle vous donnera une patrie. Vous aurez la victoire - la victoire qui vous permettra de faire jaillir la fraternité internationale de votre Nationalisme réel. Vous aurez la victoire, la plus glorieuse de toutes, lorsque vous tendrez la main à vos frères, délivrés aussi, par-dessus les corps éventrés de vos ignobles tyrans... (E 366-367)

It is not perhaps surprising that the outbreak of international conflict in 1914 should have seemed to Darien a development necessary to the arousal of humankind from its turpitude and torpor. Such a cataclysm, he no doubt imagined, might perhaps pave the way for the Social Revolution he had forecast in his writing.

If Darien reviled the French army then, the reason was essentially that he held it to be a hideous projection of the bourgeois-dominated order. Representative of much that was ugliest in the contemporary French psyche, it was at its most nefarious as a repressive and suppressive force crushing with cowardly brutality those in positions

of weakness or subservience. Darien's portrayal of the French military in Bas les Coeurs, Biribi, and l'Epaulette is of interest when compared to the not dissimilar representation of Lucien Descaves... or if contrasted, on the other hand, with that of one such as Paul Bourget for whom the military was a Fount of Honour in a divided, unsettled France.(66) It is, in short, Darien's depiction of the army as a posturing, iniquitous instrument of oppression that merits attention in a study of this kind.

Darien would write in la Belle France of the explosions of unrest punctuating the French social scene during the nineteenth century (1830, February and June 1848, March-May 1871), and claim that in their ill-preparedness and incoherence they had been of disastrous effect. The insurgents had also (to their detriment, as he considered) found inspiration in '*...le spectre de la Grande Révolution, agitant devant leurs yeux son bonnet rouge taillé dans une robe d'enfant de choeur, (qui) les empêchait de distinguer leur route*' (BF 305). As has been indicated, however, there were facets of the Commune interlude that can only have seemed positive in his eyes.

The 'Déclaration au peuple français' of 19 April 1871 is generally held to be the testament of the Communards. Its statement of the need to '*universaliser la propriété*' its call for '*la fin du vieux monde gouvernemental et clérical, (...) de l'exploitation, de l'agiotage, des monopoles, des privilèges, auxquels le prolétariat doit son servage, la patrie ses malheurs et ses désastres*' may well have seemed evidence to the writer that the 1871 insurgents had been close to a perception of 'patrie' as he himself understood the term.(67) The recurrence throughout the 'Déclaration' of the words 'libre' and 'liberté' clearly underscored the ideal of freedom so dear to many Communards: Darien, enamoured of the principle of total liberty, and aspiring always to be '*un homme libre sur la terre libre*' can only have found merit in such an objective. The Commune was, specifically, a bid for proletarian emancipation; to a writer enraged by both the exploitation and the resignation of the humble, must it not have seemed that the Paris

working classes had achieved (albeit briefly and imperfectly) some alteration to the traditional state of things?

It seems valid, furthermore, to assume that the willingness of the Communards to give their lives for a cause aroused sympathy in this writer portraying with such ferocity the hypocrisy, cowardice and self-interest of the bourgeoisie during and in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War. In Conservative eyes, the Commune remained years afterwards an affront to the concept of patriotism, a profoundly humiliating and inexcusable interlude. To Darien however (considered by some critics to have performed a treasonable act in writing Bas les Coeurs, and for whom 'patriotism' in contemporary France meant simply '*la somme des privilèges dont jouissent les richards d'un pays*' (BF 85)), the Paris insurgents outraged in such numbers at capitulation to the Prussians must have seemed to exemplify a somewhat purer sentiment. For all that Darien disclaimed affiliation to any group in society ('*Je hais tous les drapeaux, y compris le drapeau rouge*') (68) his impulses - however erratic, eccentric or impracticable on occasion - inclined him towards the socially disfavoured: and in this, when all is said and done, lay the essence of the Commune.

If then the events of March-May 1871 are an essential ingredient in texts considered so far, it cannot be said that the importance of the 'seventy-two days' in l'Apprentie, l'Ami de l'Ordre, Bas les Coeurs or l'Epaulette is matched by substantial representation. With the two novels of Lucien Descaves (as with Jean Cassou's les Massacres de Paris) this ceases to be the case: portrayal of the Commune, and discussion of its nature, acquires appreciably greater depth. The antimilitaristic focus of Darien's writing finds, furthermore, a decided echo in la Colonne.

NOTES

References for Bas les Coeurs, Biribi and la Belle France have been taken in each case from the 10/18 edition published in 1978 by the Union Générale d'Éditions, Paris. The edition of l'Épaulette used is that published by Jérôme Martineau, Paris, 1971.

The abbreviations followed are: BC, B, BF, E.

1. Darien enlisted 16 March 1881. Repeated breaches of discipline on his part led to his transfer to Tunisia in June 1883. He was released from the disciplinary camp on 16 March 1886.
2. Jarry places le Voleur among the works making up the library of Doctor Faustroll (Gestes et opinions du Docteur Faustroll, pataphysicien - published posthumously in 1911). It seems though that Biribi was the title he had initially intended for the Doctor's bookshelf (See the edition of the Gestes et opinions published by Gallimard (Collection Poésie), 1980 - pp. 22, 181). Jarry had also written in 1903: *'Le héros du Voleur tenait ce raisonnement: "J'ai passé dix ans au collège, trois au régiment. J'ai donc le droit de commettre - honnêtement - des crimes jusqu'à concurrence de treize ans de prison."* Le Voleur was made into a film in 1966, Biribi in 1971.
3. See article entitled 'Darien le maudit'. This appeared as a preface to the edition of le Voleur published by Jean-Jacques Pauvert in 1955: it was reprinted in le Nouvel Observateur fifteen years later (No. 313, 9-15 November 1970, p. 44).
4. See the avant-propos to la Belle France, 10/18, 1978.
5. Breton, 'Darien le maudit', le Nouvel Observateur, No. 313, 9-15 November 1970 - p. 44.
6. A recent work devoted to Darien is however that by W. D. Redfern, Georges Darien. Robbery and Private Enterprise, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 1985.
7. See Auriant, Darien et l'inhumaine comédie, Brussels, Ambassade du Livre, n.d.[but 1966], pp. 21-22, 157; cf. Les Pharisiens, 10/18, 1978, Preface, pp. 39-40. See also Philippe Venault, 'Le Scandale permanent de Georges Darien', Magazine littéraire, Paris, Vol. 53, June 1971, pp. 32-34.
8. See Auriant, who as a foreword to his biography cited in the above note quotes these words by Darien:

'Inutile de vous dire que je ne me donne ni comme socialiste, ni comme anarchiste. Je suis simplement un homme révolté par l'horreur de la situation générale et, n'étant ni assez intelligent ni assez savant pour me conduire en citoyen du monde, je désire me révolter simplement comme Français.'

9. In fact Alphonse Gallaud (1864-1930). Emilien Carassus, in his work Le Snobisme et les lettres françaises, Paris, Armand Colin, 1966, gives Zo d'Axa's real name as Gallo de Lapérouse - p. 372.
 10. L'Escarmouche lasted from November 1893 until March 1894.
 11. Quoted by Auriant, op. cit., p. 38.
 12. Ibid., p. 38.
 13. Ibid., p. 40. 'Tous les clichés ingrats et mauvais avec lesquels on essayait de masquer le désastre, toutes les banalités courantes qui déplaçaient les responsabilités et faussaient l'opinion de la foule - je retrouve tout en cette oeuvre saine et forte. C'est comme une résurrection du passé, et à cette différence que mes parents étaient de braves gens - ce qui est bien terrible -, il me semble que les phrases que l'auteur fait revivre sont prononcées entre les murs de la vieille demeure où j'ai été élevée, au plein coeur de Paris. Je les ai entendues, je les reconnais.'
- Cf. Mireille Delfau, 'Severine journaliste', in Les Ecrivains français devant la guerre de 1870 et la Commune, (Colloque - 7 novembre 1970), Paris, Armand Colin, 1972 - pp. 164-172.
14. Auriant, p. 84.
 15. Ibid., p. 38.
 16. Pascal Pia, Romanciers, poètes, essayistes du XIXe siècle, Paris, Denoël, 1971 - pp. 471-473.
 17. Those of Pot-Bouille, for example.
 18. The bourgeois family circle is unattractively portrayed in Biribi (Chapter 1) and le Voleur. In both novels a Wicked Uncle features (Randal, the central character of le Voleur, will be robbed of a good part of his fortune by this relation).
 19. Auriant, pp. 39-40. 'Par de certains côtés, ce livre se rapproche un peu de David Copperfield, un peu de Jacques Vingtras...' - p. 39.
 20. Ibid., p. 39: 'Lucien Descaves disait à Jules Huret (Enquête sur l'évolution littéraire, p. 253): '...Vallès... a laissé, dans le roman, deux arrière-petits-cousins de talent: Henry Fèvre, avant qu'il fît du roman comique, et Darien, celui de Bas les Coeurs et

Biribi'. Ibid., p. 39: Léon Daudet wrote in his article entitled 'Jules Vallès' (Candide, 26 May 1932) that '(les) trois véritables disciples de Vallès, quant au langage et aussi quant à l'humeur dans son sens le plus général, sont Séverine, Jules Renard et Georges Darien'. See also Alexandre Zévaès, Jules Vallès. Son oeuvre, Paris, Editions de la Nouvelle Revue Critique, 1932, pp. 82-83: 'Comment ne pas reconnaître l'influence de l'Enfant (...) dans les livres, trop injustement oubliés, de Georges Darien, *Biribi* et *Bas les Coeurs*?' Ccf. Gaston Gille, Jules Vallès 1832-1885. Ses révoltes, sa maîtrise, son prestige, Paris, Flammarion, 1941, pp. 534-537; Jacques Dubois, Romanciers français de l'instantané au XIXe siècle, Brussels, Palais des académies, 1963, p. 196; Christopher Lloyd, 'Jules Vallès, Georges Darien et le Roman contestataire', Les Amis de Jules Vallès, No. 2, October 1985, pp. 239-250.

21. Auriant, p. 39.

22. M. and Mme. Barbier are a middle-aged couple (fifty-five and forty-five respectively) living at Versailles during the Prussian occupation. Three soldiers have been billeted in their home. Frightened that their maid Catherine (who has been with them for twenty-five years) will try to avenge the death of her brother killed at Forbach, they obtain a safe-conduct for her and dispense with her services. Catherine leaves their home during a heavy downpour: the parting recommendation to the old servant on Barbier's part is worthy of his namesake in Bas les Coeurs: 'Tu as assisté à l'enfouissement de notre argent, de nos bijoux, de nos couverts... de tout ce que nous possédons de précieux... Ta discrétion nous est trop connue pour que nous en doutions... oh! nous n'en doutons pas... Mais l'ennemi emploie quelquefois, pour arracher un secret, des moyens violents, atroces, je dirai même indignes des peuples civilisés!... Pouvons-nous espérer en ta vaillance, en ton silence malgré tout?' (Les Chapons, Paris, Tresse et Stock, 1890 - p. 52). Catherine having departed under driving rain, the Barbier couple and their neighbour Raquillet (who has been instrumental in inducing them to dismiss the maid) look out the window as the three Prussian soldiers billeted with them set out for drill ('Ils vont à l'exercice, d'un temps pareil? (...) Ah! les pauvres gens!') The play bore the dedication: *Aux Mânes des Bourgeois de Calais Nous sacrifions ce spécimen de leur pitoyable descendance.*

For an account of the performance of 13 June 1890, see Auriant, pp. 52-55; also Lucien Descaves, Souvenirs d'un ours, Editions de Paris, 1946 - pp. 115-117.

23. See for example the portrayal of the Jew Issacar in le Voleur and l'Épaulette. It is to be noted however that Darien wrote his novel les Pharisiens essentially as an attack against the anti-semitic views of Edouard Drumont. Darien speaks with harsh intolerance of the Alsatian and Corsican accents in Bas les Coeurs and Biribi respectively.

24. These lines recall the close of Jules Vallès' l'Insurgé, as Christopher Lloyd points out (op. cit., p. 242). Vingtras, fleeing into exile, casts a final look in the direction of the capital:

'Je regarde le ciel du côté où je sens Paris. Il est d'un bleu cru, avec des nuées rouges. On dirait une grande blouse inondée de sang.'

Cf. Jean Richepin, Césarine, Paris, Maurice Dreyfous, 1888: p. 237: *'...un vieux fédéré, aux yeux de gamin, qui souriait dans sa barbe grise, en regardant le ciel, où un nuage rouge semblait tendre l'écharpe de la Commune'.*

25. Auriant, p. 114. The copy/copies of l'Ami de l'Ordre held at the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris could not be reproduced ('état fragile'). A copy of the play apparently held at the New York Public Library was reported missing when ordered on microfilm.
26. One is put in mind of this passage from la Cousine Bette in which one of the characters describes the state of affairs in July Monarchy France:

'Vous vous abusez (...) si vous croyez que c'est le roi Louis-Philippe qui règne, et il ne s'abuse pas là-dessus. Il sait, comme nous tous, qu'au-dessus de la Charte il y a la sainte, la vénérée, la solide, l'aimable, la gracieuse, la belle, la noble, la jeune, la toute-puissante pièce de cent sous.'

27. Auriant, p. 116.

28. *'...le double cordon des cavaliers d'escorte fléchissait par instants sous la terrible pression des spectateurs, ayant peine à couvrir les captifs - hommes non condamnés, non jugés, pas même interrogés encore. Des messieurs bien vêtus, des "dames" se heurtaient, se poussaient pour injurier de plus près les prisonniers... et au paroxysme de la folie sanguinaire, unanimes, sans une protestation, sans récusation, criaient, hurlaient ces cris horribles que j'entends encore: "A mort! A mort! - Ne les emmenez pas plus loin! - Ici! Tout de suite."'*

...A ce moment, comme une trombe, un monsieur âgé et gras, décoré, de tenue respectable, venait de faire irruption, du café de la Paix, et, fendait la foule, était parvenu au centre de l'escorte d'où il frappait d'estoc et de taille les prisonniers à coups de canne... Et au-dessus des hurlements et rugissements des possédés... nous entendions une voix stridente entre toutes, une voix de femme, glapissant en fausset suraigu, vers les nuages: "Arrachez-leur les ongles!"'

Nadar, 1871, Enquête sur la Commune, Paris, 1897, pp. 152-153. Quoted in la Commune de 1871, (published under the direction of Jean Bruhat, Jean Dautry, Emile Tersen), Paris, Editions sociales, 1970, pp. 290-291.

Cf. Arthur de Gobineau's description of Communard prisoners at Versailles, and of the atmosphere in the town, in his Lettres à deux Athéniennes (1868-1881), Athens, Kauffmann, 1936, pp. 173-174 (letter of 28 May 1871):

'Les convois des prisonniers qu'on amène donnent un spectacle plus affreux peut-être que Paris. On les voit défiler au nombre de cinq à six cents, quelquefois jusqu'à quinze cents, déguenillés, sales, farouches, les femmes marchant en tête, tous têtes nues, sous le soleil, sous la pluie battante. Comme de Versailles à Paris il y a plus de quatre lieues, ces misérables venant quelquefois de l'autre bout de la ville n'ayant ni dormi, ni reposé depuis dix jours, ivres d'eau-de-vie, de fanatisme et de méchanceté, sont frappés en route par le soleil et tombent comme foudroyés sur les bas côtés du chemin. On a amené deux charrettes pleines de ces morts. Comme il n'y avait pas de place pour les loger, cinq à six mille sont restés quarante-huit heures de suite, à la pluie battante dans la boue. Il y a des femmes en quantité, j'ai vu des jeunes filles de quatorze à quinze ans. Les hussards qui les escortent frappaient dessus à coups de sabre. J'ai vu fendre la tête d'un homme qui n'avancait pas et il criait et pleurait tout couvert de sang. La foule des spectateurs applaudissait, riait, était charmée et parmi ces spectateurs une quantité de messieurs et de dames. (...) Sur les promenades de Versailles, on voit des soldats traînants revenant de Paris et entourés de promeneurs qui les interrogent: Moi, j'ai tué une femme, dit l'un. - Moi, j'ai expédié d'un coup de bayonnette un enfant incendiaire; - Vraiment? mon ami, dit une dame respectable, son livre de messe à la main; et elle lui donne de l'argent.'

29. The Chinaman - either dead or dying - is dragged away by the policemen:

'Alors... Mais alors seulement, un petit homme fluet se dégagait de la foule et s'approcha en sautillant du sinistre cortège. C'était un bon petit bourgeois de chez nous, quelque chose comme un employé de banque ou un rond-de-cuir quelconque. (...) ...il avait une canne et un chapeau de paille et la canne, il la brandissait déjà...

Je le vis enfin arriver tout près du cortège et la canne se levant toute droite en l'air s'abattit, oui, d'un coup, sur le visage en sang du moribond.'

Louis Guilloux, le Sang noir, Paris, Gallimard, 1978 edition, p. 272.

It is of passing interest to note that Cripure's name is in fact Merlin.

Vallès, whose influence seems discernible in the work of many writers, made a marked impact upon the youthful Louis Guilloux ('La découverte de Jules Vallès a été l'un des grands événements de mon adolescence'). See Guilloux' article 'A Propos de Jules Vallès', in la Nouvelle Revue française, 1 October 1930, pp. 437-443.

30. See Zola's letter of 30 May 1871 published in le Sémaphore de Marseille of 3 June: 'Le bain de sang qu(e Paris) vient de prendre était peut-être d'une horrible nécessité pour calmer certaines de ses fièvres. Vous le verrez grandir maintenant en sagesse et en splendeur.' Quoted by Roger Ripoll, 'Zola et les communards', Europe ('Zola'), No. 468-469, April-May 1968, pp. 16-26: see p. 17.
Cf. la Débâcle (Emile Zola, Oeuvres complètes, Paris, Cercle du Livre Précieux, Vol. VI, pp. 1117-1118): 'Mais le bain de sang était nécessaire, et de sang français, l'abominable holocauste, le sacrifice vivant, au milieu du feu purificateur. Désormais, le calvaire était monté jusqu'à la plus terrifiante des agonies, la nation crucifiée expiait ses fautes et allait renaître'.
Ccf. Paul Bourget, la Barricade, Paris, Plon, 1910: Préface, liv-lv: 'Ces dures opérations de salut national: la répression de Juin, celle de la Commune, ont certes leurs heures. Elles peuvent être nécessaires. Elles peuvent être bienfaisantes. Elles relèvent de la chirurgie, et l'intervention chirurgicale est un procédé de guérison dans des instants de crise...'
31. See [H. de Sarrepoint], Guerre des Communeux de Paris, 18 mars - 28 mai 1871. Par un officier supérieur de l'armée de Versailles. Paris, Firmin Didot, 1871: pp. 275-276.
32. Georges Bizet: 'Jamais Paris ne se relèvera de cette honte. Ce serait à crever de rire si ce n'était pas le signe certain de la mort d'une société' (to Hippolyte Rodrigues, 20 March 1871).
Arthur de Gobineau: 'Tout est fini, la pièce est jouée, l'agonie a commencé et nous voilà comme toutes les autres nations latines, allant à la dérive. (...) Ce pays est un pays perdu, cette race est une race avilie et le tout est inguérissable' (to his sister, 23 June 1871).
Leconte de Lisle: 'Le prolétariat triomphera inévitablement, et ce sera la fin de la France. Après tout, ni les civilisations, ni les nations ne sont immortelles. Quand un peuple doit disparaître, qu'importe qu'il soit englouti par une invasion barbare ou qu'il se mange lui-même?' (to Jean Marras, 3 November 1871).
33. See l'Insurgé, Chapter XVI. Vallès describes also the hostility of the crowds towards the demonstrators: certain passages in the chapter seem of interest in the light of ideas conveyed in Bas les Coeurs and other works by Darien:
'... voilà que c'est sur les talons des soldats qu'elle marche à présent, cette foule! Elle emboîte le pas aux régiments, elle acclame des colonels dont les épaulettes sont encore assez grasses du sang de Décembre - et elle crie "A mort!" contre nous qui voulons boucher avec de la charpie le pavillon des clairons! (...) Elle me fait horreur, votre Marseillaise de maintenant! Elle est devenue un cantique d'Etat. Elle n'entraîne point des volontaires, elle mène des troupeaux. Ce n'est pas le tocsin

sonné par le véritable enthousiasme, c'est le tintement de la cloche au cou des bestiaux.'

34. See Pierre Descaves, Monsieur Thiers, Paris, Editions de la Table ronde (Collection 'Meneurs d'hommes'), 1960, pp. 103-108: cf. Elémir Bourges, les Oiseaux s'envolent et les fleurs tombent, Paris, Mercure de France, 1964, p. 46: ' - Ce bon Olympe!... Toujours flatteur!... Et haussé en pied, tant qu'il put, l'homme d'Etat pinça l'oreille de son ami, avec des façons napoléoniennes.'
35. See Bernard Noël, Dictionnaire de la Commune, Paris, Flammarion, 1978, 2 vols.: Volume II, p. 252.
36. Bas les Coeurs, 10/18, 1978: See the Note by Auriant at the conclusion of the novel, p. 254.
37. The rapports between father and son had not been made more cordial by the latter's transfer to a disciplinary camp in Tunisia. See Auriant's preface to the 10/18 edition of Biribi published in 1978.
38. Bas les Coeurs, p. 255.
39. Quoted by Auriant, *ibid.*, p. 255. The underlining is my own.
40. Hippolyte Taine, Sa Vie et sa correspondance, Paris, Hachette, Vol. III, n.d. [but 1905], p. 84, letter of 31 March 1871 to his wife.
41. *Ibid.*: letter of 6 April 1871 to his wife.
42. Gustave Flaubert, Correspondance 1859-1871, Paris, Club de l'Honnête homme, 1975: p. 640 (letter of 30 April 1871). The title cited is the 14th volume of the Oeuvres complètes, the 3rd of the Correspondance.
43. Gustave Flaubert, Correspondance 1871-1877, Paris, Club de l'Honnête homme, 1975, p. 16. (Oeuvres complètes, tome 15.)
44. Quoted by A. Dupuy, la Guerre, la Commune et la presse, Paris, Armand Colin, 1959, pp. 119-121.
45. Quoted by Auriant, Darien et l'inhumaine comédie, p. 57.
46. *Ibid.*, pp. 57-60. For a vitriolic résumé of Sarcey's career, see la Belle France, pp. 109-110.
47. See the dedication of the play. Sarcey's attitude to the Commune is clear from his recommendation in the first number of le Drapeau Tricolore (6 May 1871): 'Il faut que Paris cède et soit vaincu.'

Dût-on noyer cette insurrection dans le sang, dût-on l'ensevelir sous les ruines de la ville en feu, il n'y a pas de compromis possible.'

48. Biribi, p. 40: 'Où voit-on l'armée dans ce livre, l'armée telle que nous la connaissons, l'armée telle que nous la rencontrons tous les jours, l'armée régulière, enfin? Est-ce l'armée, cette poignée d'indisciplinés revêtus de la capote grise et soumis à des règlements inconnus dans les régiments? Est-ce l'armée, ce bas-fond où croupissent les relégués militaires? C'est l'armée comme le bagne est la société.'
'Biribi' in argot refers to the disciplinary companies of North Africa.
49. Ibid., pp. 358-360: 'Je pense à cette armée que je vais quitter. Je l'envisage froidement, laissant de côté toutes mes haines. C'est une chose mauvaise. C'est une institution malsaine, néfaste. (...) Elle prêche la haine des peuples, le respect du soldat, la sanctification de la guerre, la gloire du carnage... (...) L'armée incarne la nation! Elle la diminue. Elle incarne la force brutale et aveugle... (...) L'armée, c'est le réceptacle de toutes les mauvaises passions, la sentine de tous les vices. (...) ...c'est le cancer social, c'est la pieuvre dont les tentacules pompent le sang des peuples et dont ils devront couper les cent bras, à coups de hache, s'ils veulent vivre.'
50. Auriant, Darien et l'inhumaine comédie, pp. 276, 278.
51. Léon Deffoux, le Naturalisme, Paris, Les Oeuvres représentatives, 1929, p. 121. Quoted by Gaston Gille, op. cit., p. 534.
52. While Biribi attracted little attention on publication, it is of some interest to note that a bill was passed without fanfare on 1 July 1890, abolishing (if only in name) the Compagnie des pionniers de discipline.
53. La Belle France, pp. 14, 15, 29, 35, 36, 52, 58, 71, 93, 148, 149, 169, 208.
54. Cf. la Belle France, p. 46.
55. Auriant, in Darien et l'inhumaine comédie, gives Darien's birth date as 6 April 1862 (pp. 17, 23): elsewhere (i.e. in the preface to the 10/18 edition of Biribi) the date supplied is 6 October. Darien, a perpetual 'mystery man', may well have preferred that his date of birth be hedged in doubt: it seems that he had also volunteered 6 February 1862 ('par inadvertance', according to Auriant).
56. The deception recounted in l'Epaulette was apparently based on a genuine case in which one Colonel Lambert had in similar circumstances received full credit for the bravery of his captain. See Auriant, Darien et l'inhumaine comédie, pp. 146-147.

57. The tenor of a pronouncement by Jules Ferry made in justification of French expansionist policies in Indo-China. On the question of colonial expansion, see Roger Magraw, France 1815-1914: The Bourgeois Century, London, Fontana, 1983 - pp. 234-245.
58. Ibid., p. 237: 'As early as 1873 the clergy had helped disseminate the idea that the Tonkinois masses desired liberation from their Annamite rulers by French troops - a myth fostered by the Gambettist press.'
59. This was in fact the term used in referring to the conquest of Madagascar, undertaken after the deposition of Queen Ranavalona in 1897.
60. See la Belle France, pp. 282-298.
61. Ibid., pp. 176, 212, 299; cf. Biribi, pp. 365-366.
62. See Gustave Geffroy, l'Apprentie, Paris, Crès, 1919, pp. 344-345.
63. La Belle France, p. 120: '*...le sieur Coppée, académicien à dos d'âne et crapaud de bénitier, s'est permis de développer cette opinion fangeuse que la souffrance est bonne, sans qu'aucun des douloureux eût l'idée de venir écraser à coups de botte les pustules du personnage.*' Coppée is reviled repeatedly in la Belle France. See also pp. 54, 55-58, 62, 63, 67, 70, 71, 73, 78-79, 92, 149.
64. Progress and Poverty, a 'best-seller' by the American economist Henry George (1839-1897), appeared in 1879.
65. See la Belle France, pp. 303-311. In intended furtherance of the ideas of Henry George, Darien founded a Ligue pour l'Impôt unique in 1911. A magazine (Revue de l'Impôt unique) was to be published monthly. The venture was shortlived. (See Auriant, Darien et l'inhumaine comédie, pp. 219-227).
66. See for instance l'Emigré (1907), passim; Némésis (1918), passim; also the short story 'le Déserteur', included in l'Envers du Décor, 1911. To be noted also is an enumeration by Anatole France of the virtues of the military (he was writing in 1885):
'Je les aime beaucoup, d'abord parce qu'ils sont la force et la sécurité de la France, ensuite parce qu'ils ont des vertus qui ne courent pas les rues aujourd'hui. Ils ont le sentiment de l'honneur, de la patrie; ils savent commander, parce qu'ils savent obéir; ils se font tuer avec une merveilleuse facilité; ils sont galants et de belle tenue. Je les aime aussi parce que je déteste leurs ennemis, tous ces barricadiers et révolutionnaires qui dévorent notre malheureux pays et qui nourrissent dans leur coeur une peur légitime du gendarme.'
 Quoted by Charles Braibant, Du Boulangisme au Panama: le secret d'Anatole France, Paris, Denoël et Steele, 1935: p. 66.

67. See la Belle France, p. 150: '*Le peuple, qui avait été près de découvrir la signification du mot Patrie - et qui fut impitoyablement décimé, en 71, pour ce crime, - renonça à en poursuivre le sens et la définition...*'
68. Auriant, p. 246 (extract from article written in 1919 entitled 'la Reconstruction. Les Deux Formules du but collectif'). If Darien continued: '*Je suis un bourgeois, et ne me mets pas un faux nez de prolétaire*', this should be taken as a statement of fact and not as an expression of affinity with or loyalty to the class into which he had happened to be born.

CHAPTER FOUR

LUCIEN DESCAVES: LA COLONNE

For half a century - from 1901 until his death in 1949 at the age of eighty-eight - the journalist, novelist and dramatist Lucien Descaves acquitted himself with distinction in a role as principal vindicator of the Paris Commune in the French literary world. His two novels la Colonne (1901) and Philémon vieux de la vieille (1913) present limited artistic affinity with the work of Jules Vallès; they are often considered however to rank with l'Insurgé among the finer achievements relating to the insurrectionary period within the genre.⁽¹⁾ While neither work is of the near hagiographic brand favoured, for example, by Léon Cladel, each constitutes a significant rebuttal of the negative representation of the Commune still generally accepted (within middle-class circles) at the beginning of the twentieth century. These two titles are unquestionably Descaves' most important contributions to pro-Communard literature: his short story 'Flingot' (whose central figure is a young boy ostracised by his Paris classmates because his father is allegedly a Versaillais) and the play la Saignée, written in collaboration with the critic Fernand Nozière and performed with some success in 1913, relate also to a subject which had been a source of ever-deepening fascination for Descaves since the mid-1890's.

For all that they may be wearied at times by the abundance of factual material incorporated in each text, readers of either la Colonne or Philémon vieux de la vieille can hardly fail to appreciate the range or the thoroughness of Descaves' documentation. Planning originally to write a formal history of the period of exile, Descaves was substantially to achieve this objective within the framework of his second major novel. Philémon vieux de la vieille is almost from beginning to end a 'remembrance of things past', treating essentially of the recalled experiences in exile of an old couple for whom the Commune

three decades previously remains a cherished episode, the high point in their life. La Colonne, as its title suggests, centres upon the demolition of the Vendôme Column... and the fruitless endeavours by a group of war veterans resident in the Hôtel des Invalides to prevent what is to them an act of sacrilege. Publication of the novel marked an important reversal of the by then hackneyed refrain whereby the Communards, in their demolition of the monument to past military feats, had been guilty of an atrocious act of lèse-patrie.

The son of a well-known engraver, Descaves was born at Petit-Montrouge on 18 March 1861:(2) it was in the 14th arrondissement that most of his long life was spent. He had not, as he informed his readers in Souvenirs d'un ours,(3) a substantial fund of personal recollection upon which to draw for his works relating to the Commune: the chapter of his memoirs devoted to the period suggests in fact a man with a somewhat limited power of recall. Nor could any eventual interest in or sympathy for the Communards be attributed to family enthusiasms inculcated in him in youth: during the siege, Descaves wrote, his parents had envisaged with no little uneasiness the possible assumption of power by '...ces communistes: Blanqui, Flourens, Delescluze et Félix Pyat.'(4) The ten-year-old boy had been taken on 16 May to watch the demolition of the Vendôme Column: there is apparent contradiction however in two later reports of the episode supplied by him as to whether he had in fact witnessed the monument's eventual toppling. His uncle, he was to write in Souvenirs d'un ours, had taken him from the place Vendôme following the snapping of one of the cables in mid-afternoon:(5) a newspaper article published in May 1926 contains however an account of the crucial moment, and reference to its decisive impact upon him:

Au signal invisible du machiniste, la Colonne s'inclina comme pour saluer et déposa, sur le sol qu'il mesurait, César décapité. L'exécution était ainsi complète. Des applaudissements et des cris s'élevèrent dans un nuage de poussière. Le drapeau rouge flotta sur le piédestal inébranlable. Des bavards se mirent à discourir. La fête était terminée; mais j'en avais l'image gravée dans la mémoire et je crois bien qu'elle ne fût pas étrangère, plus tard, à ma vocation.(6)

Fervent interest in the Commune on Descaves' part was to develop only some twenty-five years afterwards, upon contact with a number of former participants in the insurrection. It was largely through the intermediary of Ernest Vaughan, friend and confidant of Louise Michel and himself a former Communard, that such friendships came to be. Editor during his journalistic career of the socialist newspapers l'Intransigeant and l'Aurore, (7) Vaughan's door was open at all times to any former partners in revolution. As Descaves' acquaintance with various Communards deepened, it became increasingly clear to him that the legends still receiving general credence made for a less than equitable representation of the insurrectionary period. If he felt such interest in and respect for the Communards, the reason was, as he wrote in Souvenirs d'un ours:

...parce que tous ceux que j'ai connus dans leur âge mûr et leur vieillesse déshéritée, étaient d'honnêtes gens, sincères, désintéressés et sans remords. (8)

Descaves would meet in the course of 1896 such men as Victor Jaclard, Augustin Avrial, Charles Longuet and, most significantly, Gustave Lefrançais, who in the few years of life then remaining to him was to become one of Descaves' dearest friends. This bond of sympathy and affection, coupled with Lefrançais' apparently inexhaustible quota of information concerning the Commune, resulted in the younger man's conversion to a cause which, for its more devoted adherents, held all the mystique of a Faith. 'J'eus en (Lefrançais)...', Descaves wrote, '...un directeur de conscience qui m'expliqua les événements que j'avais sous les yeux, à dix ans, sans les comprendre.' (9) His fondness for and gratitude to Lefrançais were further evident in references to 'mon cher vieux Communard' (10) and to:

...ce vieux révolutionnaire impénitent, dur à cuire, que j'ai toujours regardé comme un second père qui m'ouvrait les yeux sur un monde inconnu. (11)

The acquaintance was made also, in 1898, of Louise Michel, whom Descaves met at the offices of the publisher Paul-Victor Stock and who encouraged him to think in terms of an eventual work on the Commune.⁽¹²⁾ Any ideas Descaves may have had along these lines doubtless received reinforcement in the final months of the same year during a visit to Geneva, for in that city Descaves was in communication with a surgeon Auguste Reverdin and a bacteriologist Léon Massol... both of whom had frequented the Communard exiles in Switzerland.⁽¹³⁾

While Descaves' enthusiasm for the Commune had developed specifically as opportunities for heightened awareness presented themselves, his particular cast of temperament can only have predisposed him towards eventual sympathy for a group of men and women reviled in professedly right-thinking circles. An unmistakeable pride in his reputation as a réfractaire emerges at intervals throughout the aptly titled Souvenirs d'un ours: there are allusions to 'mon tempérament de lutteur', 'mon goût batailleur', 'mon caractère indépendant et difficile', 'mon caractère combattif',⁽¹⁴⁾ bold affirmation of his instinctive abhorrence of injustice:

Je n'ai pas eu besoin de passer par le collège, le lycée ou la caserne, pour être incité à désobéir par un abus d'autorité, conscient ou maladroit. La résistance à l'injustice était innée en moi; l'expérience n'a fait que m'y affermir...⁽¹⁵⁾

and an almost defiant statement of allegiance to society's downtrodden, disadvantaged and misunderstood:

...je reste du côté des vaincus, des innocents et des persécutés, et je ne crierai jamais 'Tue!' derrière les rabatteurs qui vocifèrent 'Assomme!'⁽¹⁶⁾

As for the Communards themselves, 'A leur âge j'aurais peut-être fait cause commune et communaliste avec eux.'⁽¹⁷⁾

Contentiousness of spirit on Descaves' part - evident, perhaps, even in his signing of the manifesto against la Terre in August 1887(18) - was demonstrated more decisively two years afterwards in his publication of Sous-offs. Based upon impressions gathered during a four-year period of military service, this novel painted a distinctly unflattering picture of army life. The resulting trial for 'injures à l'Armée et outrages aux bonnes moeurs' concluded with Descaves' acquittal on 15 March 1890, the young man having acquired in the interim the kind of notoriety attracted by Jean Richepin fourteen years earlier following publication of la Chanson des gueux.(19) A petition published in le Figaro on 24 December 1889 included among its fifty-four signatures those of such disparate literary personalities as Zola, Alphonse and Ernest Daudet, Edmond de Goncourt, Richepin, J. H. Rosny, Gustave Geffroy, Paul Margueritte, Henri Bauer, Clovis Hugues, Paul Bourget, Léon Cladel, Maurice Barrès, Séverine, Paul Alexis and Sutter-Laumann: figures hardly at one in their political or social views, but united at least on this occasion in defence of freedom of expression. Notwithstanding his acquittal, Descaves was to pay the price for this defiance or provocation of the System: he found the doors of most of the newspapers on which he had collaborated closed to him for some time thereafter.(20) In other domains also, Descaves was no stranger to controversy. The performance on 13 June 1890 of les Chapons (written by him in collaboration with Georges Darien) proved a turbulent event; this had not however been the first (nor would it be the last) occasion a play written by Descaves, or in which he was involved, seemed to invite strong or hostile reaction.(21) It is hardly surprising either - given Descaves' repeated vindication of the underdog, and his championship of freedom and justice - that during a certain celebrated Affair he should have cast in his lot with the Dreyfusards.

Widely regarded in the course of his life as cantankerous, choleric, contrary, there was seemingly little about Descaves' appearance to dispel any such preconception on the part of somebody meeting him for the first time. Edmond de Goncourt (whom Descaves

greatly admired) referred sardonically at intervals in his Journal to the young man's irascible countenance:(22) and Léon Deffoux, writing when Descaves was seventy-eight, provided a vivid description of (in the words of Roland Dorgelès) '*cet ennemi-né des conventions et des contraintes*':(23)

De taille médiocre, mais plein de pétulance - ses ennemis disent de hargne, - il est à première vue, avec son masque tourmenté, son crâne bossué, sa moustache hérissée, ses yeux vifs, son aspect peu endurant, le type même du Parigot mal commode, celui qui "rouspète" pour un oui, pour un non, et, suivant son expression, ne veut rien goûter ou vomir à demi.(24)

In Descaves' acknowledgement that his was not the most pacific or conciliatory of dispositions ('*Je me suis (...) souvent reconnu un caractère difficile*')(25) it is almost possible then to see a wilful adoption on his part of the role of enfant terrible. Uprightness of character, linked to combativeness and fierceness; these were the features commonly associated with the Descaves temperament: and the writer himself, one might suspect, made it his business not to disappoint those who perceived him thus. '*Rien ne me grise autant que les huées...*', he proclaimed: '*...je ne suis sourd qu'à la complaisance.*'(26) While Descaves' defence of the Communards was unquestionably sincere, there is a temptation on the outsider's part to see his espousal of unpopular or controversial causes as attributable (if only in limited degree) to a desire to disturb or shock. It is of passing interest to note that belief in the Communards did not entail for Descaves repudiation or even criticism of those who had referred acrimoniously to the insurgents at the time: when the names of Ernest Daudet, François Coppée or Edmond de Goncourt appear in Souvenirs d'un ours, the references to them are invariably favourable.(27) This may well of course suggest an exemplary tolerance and broadmindedness whereby differing views on matters of controversy provide no barrier to a mutual esteem. It might also indicate that Descaves - not, one would have imagined, overly inclined towards moderation on an issue upon which he felt strongly - believed either less totally in the Commune and its more staunch defenders than, perhaps, even he himself realised:

or inversely, that this apparent contradiction in 'allegiances' afforded him a further, vaguely perverse, satisfaction.

Be all this as it may, a book devoted to the insurrection or to one of its participants was to seem almost incomplete (after publication of la Colonne) without a preface by Descaves. He would accordingly introduce to the reading public such texts as Souvenirs d'un révolutionnaire by Gustave Lefrançais (1903); Victorine Brocher's Souvenirs d'une morte vivante, published in 1909; Cladel's I.N.R.I. (1931) and Gaston Gille's monumental study of Jules Vallès (1941).(28) The actual publication of Lefrançais' Souvenirs had been arranged by Descaves himself, who was acting in this in conformity with Lefrançais' deathbed wish:(29) similarly, it was through Descaves' intervention that Maxime Vuillaume's Cahiers rouges were accepted for publication in Péguy's Cahiers de la Quinzaine.(30) In evident recognition of his literary services to the Commune, Séverine (the former protégée of Vallès) invited Descaves to speak in the Père-Lachaise when a bust was placed upon Vallès' tomb there on 15 February 1914.(31) There is little surprise in learning that Descaves had himself frequently expressed admiration for the réfractaire par excellence: in the Enquête sur la vie littéraire conducted by Jules Huret in 1891, he referred to the debt owed Vallès by writers of his (Descaves') generation.(32) It was long Descaves' ambition, furthermore, to write a biography of 'cette lutteuse admirable'(33) Louise Michel: the plan failed however to materialise, and Françoise Moser, to whom Descaves confided his enormous documentation concerning the Commune's most celebrated female figure, had evidently a no greater success in bringing the project to fruition.(34)

In his preparation for both la Colonne and Philémon vieux de la vieille, Descaves drew extensively upon the recollections of former participants in events. For him as for Michelet, whose example he acknowledged (PVV 22), reminiscences noted were intrinsic to the

creative process. 'L'amateur d'imprimés, d'estampes ou de bibelots, le rat d'archives et de bibliothèques, n'ont jamais...', he wrote, '...les joies qu'on éprouve à travailler sur le vif, sur la tradition orale' (PVV 22). The fabric of Philémon having been woven essentially from memories relived, it should be no surprise that conversation seems all-important in the novel: and while recollection is not a determinant in la Colonne, dialogue and monologue are a constant of the earlier book.(35) The various characters of la Colonne - most notably Rabouille, Mazoudier and Martin - explain, justify, cite flawlessly from memory if the occasion demands, thus providing (ostensibly for the enlightenment of their companion or companions, all too obviously for that of the reader) background information relating to the Commune and elucidation of key developments. Such an approach is reminiscent more particularly of that adopted by Cladel in I.N.R.I.(36) Perusal of almost four hundred pages consisting, for the greater part, of such conversations, may well provide a reader with a heightened understanding of the insurrectionary period and of the Communards: there is unlikely however to be any resultant appreciation of la Colonne as a work of literature. While many of the secondary or minor characters of the novel seem fully credible, the leading figures, through whom Descaves' didactic objectives are largely realised, display too pronounced a fondness for wordy debate to be particularly lifelike or individually memorable.

La Colonne is, as one might perhaps expect, one of the rare works treating of the Commune not to include portrayal of the semaine sanglante. The novel opens on 13 April 1871, when outraged residents of the Hôtel des Invalides learn of the proposed demolition of the Vendôme Column; and concludes, appropriately enough, with an account of the ceremony of 16 May, which a group of invalides had hoped to forestall. Descaves can hardly have expected to create suspense as to the actual fate of the monument, the reader being aware from the outset that any attempts to prevent demolition will prove ultimately unavailing. The uncertainties and postponements marking the period between the Commune's announcement of intention and its accomplishment

of objective are used however to generate something approximating to mystery: similarly, factors in the entire episode upon which speculation or conjecture remained possible allowed Descaves to base segments of his story upon the machinations not merely of the Invalides prevention squad, but of a fictional Versailles agent Géran, said to be responsible for bribery of the workers employed on the site. In keeping with his favoured method of seeking the testimony of men and women who had truly lived the events of the Commune, Descaves, as he set about documenting himself for la Colonne, sought information from the engineer Maurice Iribe, who had suggested a procedure whereby the Column might be demolished without risk to surrounding buildings or humanity. Iribe, however, seemed curiously reticent in communication of whatever memories he had retained of the insurrectionary period.(37)

Writing some forty years after publication of la Colonne, Descaves set down what seemed to him to have been his objective in undertaking the novel:

En écrivant ce livre, je me proposais d'appeler deux générations à se mesurer autour d'un monument célèbre qui n'inspirait ni admiration ni respect aux partisans de la Commune. Les vieux invalides représentaient l'attachement à l'Empire et à son prestige érigé en trophée, tandis que les ouvriers de Belleville manifesteront l'hostilité des nouvelles couches sociales émancipées contre les risques et périls de la gloire et de sa fragilité.

Ai-je accompli ce dessein sans idées préconçues et avec objectivité?(38)

La Colonne deals then with the opposition of two cults: one of which, undoubtedly, seemed reprehensible to the author in 1901. The fetish of militarism - incarnated of course in the residents of the Hôtel des Invalides - finds its principal embodiment in the perhaps ironically named Timothée Prophète, a veteran of the Crimean War and of the Italian Campaigns. Jacques Rabouille, said to have been a bosom companion of the quixotic Gustave Flourens (killed at Chatou during the disastrous sortie of 3-4 April) is for his part - together with the seasoned revolutionary Mazoudier, who has seen service in 1830, 1848,

and in December 1851 - representative of the finest element in the Commune's forces. The interaction - intrinsic to the novel - of Prophète and Rabouille is made possible through their mutual connection with the Lhomme family of Belleville: Ferdinand, who is a cafeteria proprietor '*...rougeaud de teint, de moustaches et d'opinions...*' (C 49), his wife Céline, niece of Prophète and former lover of Rabouille; and their two children Sophie, aged eleven, and Adrien, three years younger. As is indicated transparently at intervals in the novel, and confirmed at its conclusion, the eight-year-old is in fact the son of Rabouille himself. The maxim 'the child is father of the man' has a particular relevance to la Colonne: Adrien's future course might be regarded as Rabouille's raison d'être, and he judges the very considerable influence of Prophète over the youngster to be pernicious.

The moral consideration underscored in a number of essential passages throughout the book is of course that education in the humanitarian ethos - if to be successfully inculcated in a nation's youth - must receive from society an endorsement overdue, and that it has yet to obtain. Demolition of the Vendôme Column - symbolic, to many Communards, of aggressive warfare and specious glory(39) - seems to Rabouille the logical means by which the insurgents might signal rejection of the still prized militaristic tradition. If they are to be consistent with their ideals, in fact, the monument cannot be permitted to stand:

Il s'agit, avant tout, de mettre d'accord nos principes et nos actes, en faisant disparaître un odieux symbole incompatible avec nos idées de fraternité universelle et avec le dégoût que nous inspirent tous les malfaiteurs de l'humanité. (...) Nous nous refusons à immortaliser l'aveugle soumission d'un pays qui s'est laissé confisquer son énergie par un aventurier. (C 72)

It is clear, of course, in the latter days of the Commune, that the statue of Napoleon the Warmonger (referred to at one point in the novel as '*...un malfaiteur tel que jamais criminel ne mérita davantage le baigne à perpétuité...*') (C 43) will be restored to its pinnacle following the victory of the 'Forces of Order'. To the idea of

Rabouille however - who agrees to act as overseer during preparations for the demolition - a gesture will have been made by the Commune that, if seemingly futile now, will be perceived as having been in advance of its time in a hoped-for later era when human beings are awakened to the absurdity of the Militaristic Cult. It needs to be said, of course, that Descaves in his denunciation of militarism is targeting less '*la guerre (...) défense légitime des foyers*' (C 346) than the kind of imperialistic conquest and intervention which took place during the reigns of both Napoleons. Interventions of this type - which many would consider egotism, even megalomania, to have dictated - were of course made possible in the first instance, one might argue, by the acquiescence or jingoistic stupidity of those ruled. Such a viewpoint on Descaves' part recalls the similar theses of Léon Cladel and Georges Darien.

In phrasing which provides some indication of the prolixity to characterise the novel, Descaves dedicates la Colonne to descendants of the heroes of the Commune, '*dont la gloire est d'avoir jeté bas le mât de cocagne impérial, les hommes de bronze qui grimpent après et le César qui excite leur émulation*'. The book they are about to read is for such descendants, '*(un) encouragement à recommencer*'. It is interesting therefore to note that the essentially symbolic gesture of demolition is referred to in Souvenirs d'un ours (written towards the end of Descaves' life) as '*Cette destruction inutile et éphémère*', '*cette fanfaronnade*'.⁽⁴⁰⁾ In 1900-1901, Descaves' friendships with various Communards were strong, his recollections of military service and of the trial following publication of Sous-oufs not far distant. No less significantly, the intrigue engaged in by members of the army hierarchy during the Dreyfus Affair would hardly have attenuated any antimilitaristic sentiment on the part of one already so disposed. By the 1940's, of course, France had been ravaged once, and now a second time, during international conflict: to a Frenchman writing in the climate of occupation, the act of 16 May 1871 may well have seemed almost cruelly hollow and purposeless. Even when account is taken, however, of the effects wrought by time and circumstance, one might

feel there to be something disconcerting in so summary a dismissal on Descaves' part when the question at issue had once been of sufficient importance to him to justify a book. No less disconcerting, in a sense, is Descaves' semi-rhetorical question as to whether he had accomplished his aim with respect to la Colonne '*...sans idées préconçues et avec objectivité*'. He had been referring a few lines earlier to a relative named Guillaume-Martin Motet, who had died at the Invalides on 28 November 1861, having been admitted to the institution in 1840:(41) it is true also that there is no systematic idealisation or vilification of either of the opposing camps in the novel. For all this, how far, even forty years afterwards, could Descaves seriously have imagined his representation in la Colonne to have been impartial? How far indeed would such an objective have been feasible, even valid, on the part of a writer who, if hating nobody, clearly deplored the faith (based on pseudo-principle) according to which the novel's war veterans are seen to have lived?

The answer to any queries as to Descaves' apparent shift in perspective is contained conceivably in a further reference to la Colonne in Souvenirs d'un ours. '*Ce livre...*', Descaves wrote, '*...comme tous les miens, lorsque j'ai épuisé l'intérêt de la documentation et de la composition, m'était devenu indifférent.*'(42) The novel may indeed have been tantamount to an exorcism, a vehicle whereby resentments or indignations could be channelled into, and substantially expunged through, the creative process. Any such supposition would be belied in some degree however by the impression of objectivity Descaves was seeking to convey: the book's tone, moreover, is hardly one of rancour. One might then conjecture, on the strength of the quotation supplied, that once Descaves had dealt at length with a subject of importance to him at the time, the ideas or principles central to the undertaking - not merely the means by which these had been reflected - ceased to hold the same significance.

On the morning of 13 April 1871, many of the residents of the Invalides gather for their breakfast in the Hôtel's dismal refectory, *'...vaste galerie que font paraître plus haute et plus froide les sévères allégories qui la décorent'* (C 9). In the portrayal of the invalidos, Descaves seeks to create from the outset an impression of force long spent, of querulous ineffectuality and near mindlessness through which, indirectly, the principles that have always governed the thinking of these men may be further negated. Mumbling, grumbling through toothless gums, expressing senile crossness at a diminution (real or imagined) in the portions of potato stew, many in the assemblage hardly convey an impression of venerable sagacity in these their declining years, nor of lives passed in the service of some ennobling ideal. While not fundamentally ill-natured, the mockery indulged in by Descaves as he introduces these veterans in varying stages of mental and physical decrepitude might seem unsubtle to the point of heavy-handedness. References are made to *'...ces grands enfants, ces vieillards avariés, (qui) présentaient des échantillons de toutes les mutilations et de toutes les puérilités'* (C 9); to *'...les rabâchages des grincheux mâchant à la fois la nourriture et les récriminations'* (C 10); and (when writing of the truly aged members of the company) to *'...ces démolitions du premier Empire, ces gravats ramassés sur les champs de bataille d'Espagne, de Russie, d'Allemagne et de France, ces charpentes vermoulues, prêtes à tomber en poussière'* (C 12). All, of course, have suffered loss of sight or limb in the cause of glorious warfare: of the number who will conspire more or less seriously to prevent the dastardly vandalism planned by the Communards, Timothée Prophète sports a hook in place of his right hand, Cassavoix and Clavquin are dispossessed respectively of both arms and the use of legs, and Lapuchet has one eye only, equally expressive however, as the occasion demands, of rage, joy or enthusiasm.

Resident in an institution conceived by Louis the Great for the casualties of his constant warfare, venerating the memory of the War God whose ashes lie enshrined close by, these men whose lives have been misspent in the service of Death and Destruction represent beliefs that

should by rights (the reader might infer) be relegated to the scrapheap of history. In contrast, furthermore, to Communards of the purer sort portrayed in the novel, they are preoccupied now for the most part less with intangible principle or with ideal than with self-esteem and self-interest. Certainly indignation is aroused at this intended desecration of the Monument: Prophète however can be sure of striking a particularly sensitive chord when he states that any violation of the Column (constructed ostensibly in honour of Napoleon's soldiery) must be interpreted as a direct affront to the invalides themselves. Some of those present fail to understand him when he declares that the Emperor's very tomb is potentially at risk ('...les bouches ouvertes, çà et là, exprimaient la lenteur à concevoir ou à s'indigner de quelques intelligences affaiblies') (C 13): senile torpor yields rapidly to comprehension however at his further suggestion that this series of outrages will culminate in all likelihood in the residents' eviction from the Hôtel. Chaos reigns as these relics of battles past set forth to inform their fellow veterans of the Column's impending fate; and of the magnitude both of the insult and the risk:

Partout l'emportement succédait à la confusion. Un vent de folie entraînait en eux, propageait l'ivresse, soulageait les rhumatisants, rendait la respiration aux asthmatiques et guérissait le plus grand nombre de la torpeur sénile. Des vieillards cuirassés d'égoïsme, de pacifiques escargots que le siège, le bombardement et la capitulation n'avaient pas tirés des petites voitures qu'ils manoeuvraient eux-mêmes, se soulevaient, montraient les cornes et bavaient de colère en se glissant dehors, le long des murs, pour ébruiter la nouvelle. (C 15)

The state of geriatric turbulence now prevailing contrasts sharply with the habitual monotony of life within the Hôtel. More significantly, however, it is at variance with the passivity and submissiveness which the ethos of obedience to superiors has always demanded. By the following day, when Prophète and Philibert Lacouture gather together for a secret meeting one hundred or so of the residents not entirely unsound of body and mind, the flame of indignation has dwindled to little more than a sputtering flicker. Men schooled in the belief that theirs is not to reason why could hardly remain impervious

for long to calls for calm from above: and the uproar of the previous evening had been quieted by such calls, and by the firm advice from superiors to offer no hotheaded resistance to the Commune's decree (unlikely, they believe, to be applied). Suggestions by Prophète and Lacouture at their secret meeting that reconnoitres be carried out around the place Vendôme are received less than enthusiastically. General de Martimprey, (43) it is argued, would not like it: and Lacouture's rejoinder that the general can hardly object if he does not know seems to awaken little spirit of daring in the majority of his listeners. Ideas for an alternative plan of action are not forthcoming, for '*un fond de discipline invétéré...*' (C 29) has largely destroyed any sense of initiative in the residents. A paradox of the military life is of course illustrated by the fact that men who had lived with discomfort and danger during their years of active service feel at ease only in an environment characterised by constraint and regimentation. Under the regime of the Hôtel the directives of superiors must still be obeyed without question, punishments are imposed for infringements of discipline; and, schoolboy-like, the invalides are required to report for roll-call in the evenings. The disorder and exuberant vitality of the insurgent city outside will provide a lively contrast in the third chapter to the sanctuary of these aged but hardly venerable worthies. For the present, however, Commune-dominated Paris seems another world, divined merely through the outraged or contemptuous references to the brigands and bandits intent upon desecration of the Monument.

With its dreary refectory and its dormitories redolent of age, poverty and monotony of routine (C 21), the Hôtel is, one might consider, a fitting abode for men who have lived to serve Death. Small wonder that the Invalides should strike a chill in the veteran revolutionary Mazoudier when he brings Adrien and Sophie Lhomme here on 30 April to visit their uncle Prophète. The old Communard, it is written,

...s'imagina qu'il pénétrait dans une nécropole. Tout concourait à lui en donner l'illusion. (C 125)

A walk along the covered galleries with old Lapuchet will hardly diminish any negative impressions. Rain has brought back under cover those among the invalides who were outside tending their garden plots, and like irascible old children,

... (ils) s'en allaient bégayant et trébuchant, comme toujours tenus en lisières par les noms de batailles et de vertus militaires donnés aux cours et aux corridors. De ceux-ci émanait une insupportable odeur de graillon, d'humidité et de goguenaux. (C 137)

The residents of the Hôtel as they appear now seem suggestive to Mazoudier of:

...(un) village frappé tout entier de cécité, une humanité de rebut, errant, désœuvrée et méfiante, miteuse et rance, à travers le monument ironique de sa grandeur et de sa force passées. (C 137)

The Invalides' moribund cheerlessness stands in stark contrast then to the seemingly general animation and good humour of the city without. Prophète himself will often feel out of place and uncomfortable on those occasions he ventures from the Hôtel, most notably on Sunday 16 April when he sets out for the Lhomme cafeteria in Belleville. Convivial, undisciplined, apparently indifferent now to the veteran's military decoration and to his very person, Paris seems to him an alien, hostile territory:

...il s'y aventurait comme en pays ennemi et dévorait tristement l'affront de n'être plus salué. (...) Il avait l'air d'un explorateur revenant parmi les sauvages et s'étonnant d'en être pour ses frais. (C 37)

On this particular day the Belleville streets are thronged with a carefree crowd apparently intent after the rigours of a winter siege on enjoyment of the spring weather. The entire population of the district, it seems, is out in the open air:

Réchappé d'une grave maladie, le peuple ressemblait à ces convalescents que les imprudences exposent à une rechute. Il ne tenait pas en place, cherchait le soleil et se retrempait dans les effusions d'un printemps propice. On avait envie de lui crier: gare l'insolation! (C 37)

With its street vendors, sideshows and itinerant singers, with its family groups, its urchins, and its detachments returning from guard duty, Belleville of such sinister reputation ('...le croquemitaine de la bourgeoisie')(C 41) hardly exudes an atmosphere of crime or menace. Madcap undoubtedly, even burlesque, with its range - among officers, fédérés and civilians alike - of motley, near-theatrical attire: such springtime madness, however, is said by Descaves to be '*...douce, cordiale et gaie*' (C 38). The evocations of ambiance in these pages and others in la Colonne are reminiscent, one might note in passing, of certain passages in Jean Richepin's Césarine: passages undoubtedly based in the case of the older author (Richepin was born in 1849) on personal recollection.(44) While his discussions with men who had truly lived the events of the Commune may well have assisted Descaves in his descriptions of street life and general atmosphere, it seems valid - notwithstanding claims on the writer's part that he recalled little of the insurrectionary period - to suppose at least some lasting impressions of a type indicated above. On 30 April, the mood of Paris seems no less cheerful, and scarcely more orderly than a fortnight earlier ('*Une fête locale mal organisée, c'était exactement l'idée que suggérait la physionomie de Paris...*') (C 120). When, five days later, the group of veterans make their annual pilgrimage to the Column, Prophète - the only member of the contingent actually to receive permission to lay the wreath they have brought - is almost discomfited that there is no hostility displayed towards him by the fédérés and the cantinières at the place Vendôme: '*Il se sentait rapetissé par la tolérance de ses adversaires, et il ne croyait pas que la distance fût si grande de la rue de la Paix au pied de la Colonne*' (C 186). The reader is aware that light-heartedness will not be a constant of the seventy-two day period: passages such as those quoted would suggest however an intentional contrasting by Descaves of the negativism

incarnated by the Invalides... and a Life Force which, for all its lack of direction, seems allied with a spirit of optimism and humanity.

A less convivial side to the Commune is certainly intimated in the early pages of la Colonne. References are made (usually in the course of discussions among the invalidos) to the shooting of 'Friends of Order' on 22 March (C 80); to a search of the Invalides by fédérés in quest both of the reliquary of Napoleon I, and some rifles they believe to be hidden in the cellars (C 36); to the removal from the Invalides, and transportation to the Mint, of the officers' silverware (C 86); to the arrest of Commanding Officer Martimprey as a hostage (C 95); and to the dismissal or the petty persecution of nuns serving in a nursing capacity during the Commune (C 132). For all this, the discrepancy between the invalide view of the Commune and the reality of the insurrectionary interlude seems implicit in the impression normally conveyed by such terms as 'sauvages', 'barbares', 'canaille' (liberally applied to the Communards in the veterans' conversation), and the representations provided of street atmosphere in Paris and of those serving the Commune. There is, similarly, some irony in the fact that Rabouille (Prophète's 'bête rouge') (C 40) will be called by his enemy, and described by the Versailles agent Géran as, 'un enragé' (C 209).

What action do Prophète, Lacouture and their cohorts actually propose to take to prevent the rogues and brigands of the Commune from effecting their vandalistic objective of demolition? Initially, armed resistance is envisaged: after all, whatever the defections among their own number, one hundred and fifty determined invalidos would, Lacouture suggests, be more than a match for a bunch of lily-livered degenerates such as the insurgents might be assumed to be. Gradually, this bellicose stance abates as various difficulties present themselves. When General de Martimprey is arrested by the Commune as a hostage on 26 April, his welfare, it is believed, might well depend on the good conduct of the invalidos: the hierarchy at the Invalides would therefore, if it came to hear of them, view with a particularly jaundiced eye any overt or covert discussions and schemes of the sort

envisaged by the clique. The vast majority of residents subsist in a near-comatose state of apathy and servility: there is, as indicated earlier, little commitment on their part to plans for interference in the Commune's designs. It is extremely difficult, furthermore, to know what is going on at the place Vendôme: reconnaissance missions are of no avail, as the site is closed to the public. Various possibilities other than open combat are entertained by Prophète and his cronies. Would not a small company of old soldiers positioned around the Column suffice, if the worst came to the worst, to win over onlookers and paralyse the efforts of a demolition crew? Also, the customary placing of a wreath at the foot of the Column on 5 May might, if reported in the newspapers, revive some fighting spirit in other vieux de la vieille not resident at the Invalides. The reality, in short, is that the small group of veterans intent upon protection of the Column is powerless to achieve much unaided.

It was believed, during the Commune, that workers employed at the place Vendôme were receiving payment to absent themselves and thus delay or prevent demolition. Both Maxime Du Camp and Lissagaray refer to this, Du Camp implying, with more than a hint of sarcasm, that such rumours had no basis, as workers involved were genuinely unwilling to have any part in the act of vandalism:(45) Lissagaray stating matter-of-factly that bribery was taking place.(46) Whether or not the stories of bribery were founded - and it seems probable that they were - such an idea is of course intrinsic to Descaves' own designs. It is in this respect that Philibert Lacouture's nephew Gérán - a stockbroker by profession, and a Versailles agent in these unsettled times - proves useful.

Said to have been a lieutenant in the National Guard during the siege, Gérán has retained his rank in a federalist battalion: a cause can, after all, be undermined far more effectively from within than from without. Having access to the place Vendôme every day, he is in a position to inform his uncle as to what progress is being made... and to intervene discreetly should he judge such a move opportune. When he

writes to Lacouture guaranteeing the Column will not fall on either the 5th (the date originally scheduled) or the 8th, the reader can accurately guess as to the reasons for such certainty.

Through approaches to tradesmen in the vicinity of the place Vendôme - nearly all of whom feel concern at the damage to premises likely to result from execution of the Commune's decree - Géran has obtained sufficient financial backing to be assured of a fair power of persuasion in any negotiations he might undertake. Workers on the site have been enticed individually to a hotel in the rue de la Paix, where, in exchange for a promise not to work, they have received a sum in excess of the hundred sous a day constituting their normal rate. It is with the just pride of an uncle that Lacouture explains his nephew's ploy to Prophète and Feuillette on the 8th: there will however be little time allowed him to savour Géran's cleverness. Minutes later, the wizard of ingenuity himself has arrived with the news that Rabouille is aware of his little game, and has warned him off!

In danger of arrest in Paris, Géran, it now transpires, is regarded with misgivings in certain circles at Versailles. One of a number of agents acting under directions from a mysterious 'Colonel' who has been entrusted - as Lacouture understands it - with organisation of the counter-revolution within Paris (C 83-84), Géran's apparent anxiety to safeguard the Vendôme Column has aroused suspicions that he might be a Bonapartist conspirator in league with Chislehurst! There are also doubts at Versailles as to the Colonel's reliability. Certain that Versailles troops will be in Paris within a week, and that he himself still has useful work to do on the Colonel's behalf, Géran decides to hide out in various places in Paris until Versailles entry. His precise fate after his leave-taking of the invalidos remains, not inappropriately, something of a mystery: it seems probable, however, to his uncle and to Prophète, that he has been arrested and imprisoned by the Commune.

The pages of la Colonne devoted to conspiracies of this type have been influenced, almost certainly, by Lissagaray's Histoire de la Commune and by A.-J. Dalsème's Histoire des conspirations sous la Commune (published in 1872 and consulted, in all likelihood, by Lissagaray himself). A number of colonels were involved in various attempts to undermine or destroy the Commune:(47) Lissagaray makes reference also to a plot whereby tricolour armbands - to be worn by National Guards supporting the regular troops - were being made secretly in Paris in anticipation of Versaillais entry. A woman by the name of Legros apparently entrusted with the making of the armbands was, according to Lissagaray, unable or unwilling to pay her helpers... with the result that one girl, under the impression that this work was for the Commune, approached the Hôtel de Ville to enquire about her wages.(48) Dalsème, for his part, devoted a chapter of his book to the 'armband conspiracies' (there had been, he claimed, no less than five).(49)

Descaves incorporates the armband affair into his novel, attributing the hatching of the scheme to the Colonel without, of course, actually naming him. Reference is made by Géran at one point to the making of twenty thousand tricolour armbands '*...pour permettre à l'armée de discerner ses amis*' (C 214): the reader will next hear of the venture when the tie-maker Ninie Bagarre - who has sought and obtained employment with madame Legros - asks Rabouille to verify the woman's story that she is working for the Hôtel de Ville in Paris.(50) Rabouille does so... with apparently bothersome results for madame Legros, if not for the Colonel, safe as he is in the Conservative stronghold!

With Géran in no position to provide further help after 8 May, Prophète will discover that he himself has some talent for clandestine bargaining. It is on the maddest of impulses that he will make an approach to a seemingly incorruptible party two days before the Column is scheduled to fall. Forty pages later, confirmation is supplied by Prophète himself that a worker known to him is prepared, for three hundred francs, to at least delay demolition by one means or another on

the 16th. The Forces of Order are expected at almost any time: one further obstacle on the fateful day might well prove sufficient. Whatever the ingenious ploy decided upon, the reader knows of course that it will not ultimately succeed: to be borne in mind, however, is the fact that the first attempt at demolition on the 16th proved abortive...

In les Massacres de Paris, published over thirty years after la Colonne, Jean Cassou was to draw upon some of the more nebulous episodes of the Commune to generate (with a degree of success) an atmosphere of intrigue and drama. While la Colonne is based on a conspiracy - for how else might one describe the undercover operations of the invalidos? - scheming of this type is hardly the stuff of which great mysteries are made: no more so the intrigues of Géran, or the machinations of the Colonel and madame Legros, neither of whom actually appears in the book.

Already useful in la Colonne for introduction of the bribery question, Géran serves an added purpose that might be considered more important still. In one among several juxtapositions in the novel of contrasting individuals or groups, it is through Géran, whose life is based on double-dealing, that the fundamental honourableness of Prophète himself, and the possibility of an eventual understanding between the former soldier and Rabouille, can be further indicated.⁽⁵¹⁾ Géran having arrived at the Invalides on 8 May with news that Rabouille is aware of his stratagem, Prophète will resist pressure to seek information at Belleville as to possible plans on his adversary's part for the eventual apprehension of the agent. When Géran describes Rabouille as a scoundrel, Prophète feels instinctive resentment, and finds himself defending the character of his arch-enemy:

Dans la bouche de Géran, le mot misérable, appliqué à Rabouille, lui avait déplu, sans qu'il démêlât d'ailleurs, les raisons de son mécontentement. (C 210)

Il avait pris le parti du communard contre Gérán, poussé, en quelque sorte, par un instinct de vérité et de justice plus fort que sa volonté. Il évitait de réfléchir à ce mouvement spontané, de peur que l'analyse n'en tournât davantage encore au profit de son ennemi et au détriment de son allié. (C 217)

If Rabouille himself has not actually denounced Gérán to the relevant authorities in Paris, the reason, it is intimated (C 208-209), is that he wishes to spare Prophète undue discomfiture. It had been, furthermore, as a result of his intervention on 5 May that Prophète received authorisation to lay a wreath. These illustrations - less than convincing, one might feel - of a reluctant esteem on the part of each man for the character if not the credo of the other, prepare the way for a climactic discussion towards the end of the novel; and for the conversion of Prophète to a sounder faith than that according to which he had previously lived. This spiritual regeneration, as presented in la Colonne's two concluding chapters, already offers some strain to credibility: it would appear however even more in the light of a blatant literary contrivance without the kind of prefigurement indicated above.

Whatever the possibilities for eventual esteem, Rabouille and Prophète regard each other at the beginning of the novel with cordial antipathy. Hatred in Rabouille's case has been exacerbated by Adrien's affection and admiration for the war veteran (the attachment, it is said, has developed essentially as a result of the months of war and siege). Rabouille - who wears no uniform during the Commune, and who has refused on principle a rank in his company - is painfully aware that the corollary of Prophète's increasing prestige has been an erosion in his own status. Any periodic illusion on his part of influence regained remains merely '*une victoire sans lendemain*' (C 45), to be cherished only so long as Prophète remains safely at the Invalides. The moment he reappears at the Lhomme cafeteria: '*...la recrue passait à l'ennemi!*' (C 45).

Little more than an instrument in la Colonne whereby the rivalry and hostility between Rabouille and Prophète might be brought into focus, Adrien remains then, for all but the concluding pages of the novel, a captive and insatiable audience to the martial anecdotes and recollections of past campaigns with which Prophète is only too pleased to regale him. Obsessed by ideas of battle and mayhem, he will, when anticipating bellicose reminiscences, give voice to noisy, onomatopoeic enthusiasm ('*C'est lui qui sait des belles histoires, m'n oncle Prophète! Pif, paf, boum!*' (C 111); '*Viens de bonne heure pour avoir le temps de me raconter beaucoup d'histoires. Pif, paf, boum, padaboum!*' (C 139)). The influence upon him of the tales told by Prophète is, as one might expect, perceptibly harmful. The quarrels and disagreements of others are a source of delight ('...*le petit Adrien (...) empourpré de plaisir à l'idée d'un conflit*') (C 158):(52) and as the little boy's mother tells Prophète (though without undue concern) the bloodthirsty fare he thrives upon results in troubled sleep, and in acts of senseless cruelty:

- *Quand tu lui racontes des histoires de batailles, il en rêve toute la nuit ou bien il martyrise les chiens, les chats, les mouches qu'il peut attraper. C'est un diable incarné.* (C 142)

It is hardly surprising then if the state of contention between Rabouille and Prophète has come to be viewed by the former as a battle for Adrien's heart and mind. There is a certain irony in such a perception on the part of the antimilitaristic Communard: yet for what better cause than formation of a youthful conscience might one figuratively take up arms? As the Communard sees it (and as the evidence supplied suggests) a victory by Prophète will entail, for the adult born of the child, a mindless acceptance of the militancy and chauvinism from which humanity at large has yet to be liberated. Should Rabouille's credo triumph, however, Adrien will be in a position to attain a wisdom, tolerance and humaneness that is the prerogative of few in 1871... or, arguably, a century later.

If all this seems suggestive of smugness or fanaticism on Rabouille's part, the reader has little option but to accept such attitudes at face value. There is no indication that Descaves considers them blameworthy; and they are of course inherent to the novel's thesis. One might conclude without undue cynicism that Adrien is for his natural father less an identity in his own right than the means whereby Rabouille's own beliefs can receive some kind of safeguard for the future. As Descaves himself writes:

Les révolutionnaires aiment dans l'enfant leur rêve qui marche et qui balbutie: c'était l'avenir que Rabouille défendait contre les retours offensifs du passé. (C 45)

In this particular contest between obscurantism and enlightenment, the former would seem however, for the present, to have the advantage: and Prophète - whose capital source of anecdotal material is drawn from experiences in the Crimea - is seldom wanting for evidence of the hero status he enjoys in the eyes of his eight-year-old great-nephew. One story recounted (relating to General Aimable Jean-Jacques Pélissier's assumption of supreme command in May 1855) might not be considered particularly spellbinding from a young boy's point of view: it does, on the other hand, serve the more important purpose, within the context of la Colonne, of emphasising the nature of the tenets upon which the veteran has based his life:

Le jour qu(e Pélissier) prit possession de son commandement, les vieux soldats d'Afrique l'accueillirent par des hou! hou! en mémoire des grillades d'Arabes qui avaient fait sa réputation. Il se retourna vers nous et cria: "Tas de viande à canon, je vous en foutrai, moi, des hou! hou! Vous allez voir ça!" Comme il avait notre confiance, il pouvait nous parler sur ce ton-là...; ça nous faisait même plaisir. (C 142)

The unwitting pungency of such reminiscence almost speaks for itself. A man who during his years in Algeria practised atrocities of the kind indicated is said to greet his adoring acolytes with a term of abuse that, in fact, sums up exactly their role in warfare. General and subordinates, all equally victims of the blinkered perceptions

resulting from acquiescence to or unthinking acceptance of a system, are linked momentarily by a bond of tastelessness which Mazoudier (present as Prophète relates the episode) not surprisingly finds objectionable. His only comment as Prophète tells Adrien of the satisfaction engendered by Pélissier's brutish rejoinder is: '*Vous n'étiez pas difficiles*' (C 142).

As might be expected, Mazoudier will quiz Prophète as to the reasons for French involvement in the Crimea. Is the veteran even able to explain (the revolutionary asks) why he and thousands like him were dispatched there? Prophète does appear to understand that factors such as protection of the Holy Places at Jerusalem and Bethlehem, and impediment of Russian expansionism in the Balkans, were equalled if not outweighed in the Emperor's heart of hearts by ambitions of a more personal sort (specifically - though this is not in fact stated in la Colonne - the desire to prove himself a worthy perpetuator of the Napoleonic tradition). The French combatants were not so naïve, Prophète says, as to imagine their ruler to have been preoccupied solely at the time by the greater good of France and Europe: the eyes of the world, however, were upon developments in the Crimea, and national honour demanded that France's troops acquit themselves in a manner befitting. '*On ne se battait plus...*', Prophète again declares, '*...pour la grandeur d'un homme, mais pour le prestige d'un pays, le nôtre!*' (C 144). The obvious point to be made (and Mazoudier will not fail to make it) is that from time immemorial rulers have been adept at viewing personal prestige or advantage, and national interest, as one.

It might be considered a damning reflection on Prophète's career that the Crimean War - embarked upon on the flimsiest of pretexts, entailing major suffering and loss of life (32,000 in the French camp) and ultimately benefiting France and Britain hardly at all - should seem to him the high point in his life. A further absurdity inherent to the years of conflict (both in the Crimea and elsewhere) is that while Prophète has as a result of his Crimean experience an ingrained hatred of the English, the Russian adversary seemed at the time decidedly sympathique (C 160-162).

Whatever the limitations of Prophète's outlook, Descaves does endow him with a number of positive attributes. Reference is made on initial description of the veteran to '*...la bonté foncière qu'un regard paisible décelait*' (C 24):(53) he is capable of generosity, has a strong code of personal honour (however arguably dubious its base), and notwithstanding his apparent hatred of Rabouille, and generalised hostility towards the Communards, does not necessarily condemn out of hand those whose ideas are at variance with his own. The sincere convictions of Mazoudier, for instance, seem to him estimable in their way ('*Généreuse et désintéressée, une erreur est toujours respectable*') (C 143): and while this judgement is expressed in the course of the discussion relating to the Crimean campaigns, it is clear that Prophète has Mazoudier himself in mind. Prophète's fundamental kindness and openness of heart is of course a prerequisite for the eventual change in him, and for the undertaking he will give, towards the end of the novel, to educate Adrien according to the credo of Rabouille himself.

As they set forth in discovery of the Way, the Truth and the Life, the child Adrien and the adult Prophète are in an almost equal state of ignorance; Prophète having only his essential soundness of instinct to guide him in the attempted rectification of a wrong unknowingly done. The most apt symbol of the veteran's life-long self-deception is perhaps supplied by an Epinal representation (said to be Prophète's '*...image de sainteté (...), son cachet de première communion*') (C 202) which has pride of place on his wall at the Invalides. Napoleon (depicted throwing his coat to a mortally wounded grenadier) is saying to the latter: '*Tâche de me le rapporter et je te donnerai en échange la croix que tu viens de gagner.*' The reply, again revealing the all-importance of Death as the paradoxical basis for the invalides' life, is: '*Sire, ce linceul vaut bien la croix!*' (C 202). By the concluding pages of la Colonne, any humanitarian seeds instilled by the now dead Rabouille in the mind of his former arch-enemy seem in a fair way to germination. It is indeed with Prophète's implicit rejection of the beliefs represented in the Epinal illustration that Descaves chooses to end his novel.

Descaves' rejection of the militaristic credo per se is not then open to doubt. In conformity however with his aim of providing a balanced portrayal of the respective Belleville/Invalide camps, he makes no attempt to idealise the rank and file of those constituting the insurgent battalions.

The former non-commissioned officer Quélier, for instance, is a womanising braggart, a preening popinjay for whom the Commune has provided the means for an advancement hitherto denied him:

...il réalisait, à la 20^e légion, une espérance que l'armée régulière avait trompée et, capitaine de fédérés, paradait dans le costume le plus propre à la double ambition de commander et de plaire. (C 56)

Said to be of the number who had accused Flourens of betrayal following the offensive of 3 April, his character seems epitomised by the worthless rings he wears (C 61), and he will be a constant source of mischief for Rabouille, of whom he is secretly jealous. Jéricho, a packer turned barricade inspector, is a blustering booby of gigantic proportions, an oafish cretin remarkable only for his capacity to sleep forty-eight hours at a stretch. Fundamentally pusillanimous despite the resonance of voice which explains the nickname given him, (54) his limited military aptitude had been evident from the day when, '*...aux avant-postes, (...) mal réveillé, éperdu, (il) s'était mis à tirer à tort et à travers, si bien qu'on avait dû lui enlever son fusil, pour éviter un accident*' (C 147). The barber Lépouzé (who though a fédéré lieutenant is anything but committed to the Commune) seems above all to display a weak-kneed timorousness, seeking (in anticipation of a Versaillais victory) to ingratiate himself with Prophète and asserting repeatedly to the invalide that, despite appearances to the contrary, there are few less revolutionary than himself:

...je déplore tous les excès, vous ne l'ignorez pas; j'aime l'ordre, la sécurité, la force qui fait respecter le pouvoir... Mais quoi!... Je dois me plier aux circonstances...

- *Mon grade..., mon grade..., si vous croyez que j'y tiens, monsieur Prophète. Je dois plutôt songer aux ennuis qu'il me rapportera... si la Commune est vaincue.* (C 234)

Au début, parbleu! j'étais pour la Commune, à peu près comme tout le monde à Paris... On croyait gagner au change. (C 235)

On est bien obligé de penser avec le quartier qu'on habite et avec les gens qui vous font vivre. (C 275-276)

Learning on 15 May that his battalion is to set forth against Versailles, the intrepid barber takes to his bed feigning an attack of rheumatism. To have done otherwise (he intimates to Prophète in what can only be the ultimate in obsequiousness) would have been for him nothing less than a violation of personal conscience ('*Non, mais me voyez-vous tirant sur de braves soldats... ran!... qui nous ramènent l'ordre, la paix, le travail...*') (C 334).

The actor Adolphe is a grotesque figure weary of the perpetual comic roles falling to him, and who hopes that the Commune will provide an escape from an existence he considers unworthy of his talents:

La Commune, résultat imprévu! attisait en lui un feu d'ambition dévorant et il comptait sur elle pour sortir d'un emploi qu'il jugeait au-dessous de ses moyens. Il avait transporté dans l'art dramatique la folie du galon et d'avancement rapide qui sévissait alors, et, honteux de faire rire, il prétendait, à la faveur des circonstances, révéler ses aptitudes à faire pleurer. Il muait du canard à l'aigle. (C 52)

Demolition of the Column will (Adolphe hopes) enable him to impress a wider audience with his dramatic flair. An attempted declamation atop the pedestal of Barbier's 'l'Idole' ('*Je n'ai jamais chargé qu'un être de ma haine, / Sois maudit, ô Napoléon!*') is however, on 16 May, brought unceremoniously to a halt.

The fifteen-year-old gouape Nénesse (son of la Canapé, who is in turn the mistress of Bibroque, resident at the Invalides) seems hardly motivated, when he enlists among the Enfants du Père Duchêne, by any sense of social iniquity or by outraged patriotism:

...(sa) haine pour les cognards et les roussins (...) l'avait jeté dans la Commune. Il brûlait de marcher sur Versailles, c'est-à-dire contre les gendarmes et les sergents de ville avec lesquels il croyait tout uniment qu'il se mesurerait. (C 195)

Of the various auxiliary Communards in la Colonne, two only might be considered entirely sincere in their commitment to the Cause. The thirty-year-old former accountant Charles Husson - outraged at the capitulation of Paris, and the National Assembly's voting of peace (*'C'était, à cet égard, une sorte de Rossel civil'*) (C 260) - has eventually resigned an administrative position at Belleville to take up arms at the outposts. Although referred to at some length, he makes no actual appearance in the novel. The essential integrity of the deformed shoemaker Schramm (nicknamed le Bombé because his shoulders are of unequal height) is counterbalanced by his verbosity, belligerence and vindictiveness. It had long been a source of contention in Ferdinand Lhomme's cafeteria as to whether Schramm was actually hunchbacked:

On tombait d'accord que c'était un bossu mal opéré, abandonné par les chirurgiens qui n'avaient pas tout enlevé. Il penchait la tête, en parlant, vers ce qui restait et semblait en recevoir des mauvais conseils et des confidences empoisonnées. (C 50)

Of the genuineness of Schramm's republican enthusiasm there can however be no doubt. No more in question is his courage, apparent when (Rabouille having been shot down on 16 May before the barricade at Bourg-la-Reine) the shoemaker ventures forth under continuing rifle fire to retrieve the corpse.

One might well wonder how far a reading of Descaves' text would show the Communards themselves to require education as to the perniciousness of warfare. There is no underplaying of the fact - evident, as we have seen, in portrayal of Quélier - that the trappings of soldiery were anything but repugnant to many defenders of the Commune. If Rabouille and Mazoudier consider that insurgents should

wear their usual working clothes at the outposts or on guard duty, Lépouzé, Adolphe and Jéricho, it is said, are never more naïvely proud than when in uniform. The flaunting by officers during the insurrectionary period of often ludicrously embellished apparel was referred to adversely in proclamations by two of the Commune's War Delegates: Cluseret on 7 April, Delescluze at the beginning of the semaine sanglante.⁽⁵⁵⁾ Quéliier, as might be expected, feels some vexation on issue of a decree whereby the right to gold stripes is limited to the staff of generals of the Commune, or those officers in service at the War Ministry (C 229-230).

When Cassavoix, Lapuchet, Prophète and Lacouture pay their annual pilgrimage to the place Vendôme on 5 May, it is with amazement that they observe the garish, motley assortment of uniforms worn by the Commune's defenders (C 182-183). Elsewhere in the novel, invalo reaction allows Descaves to further indicate the ineptness of fédéré attempts to be what they are not. Their awkward handling of rifles, for instance, invites the disdain of the war veterans who observe them when the Hôtel des Invalides is under occupation towards the end of April (C 100).

It would seem then that the ideals cherished by Rabouille are no more than dimly perceived, if perceived at all, by many in the Commune's ranks. Of many movements, however, it might be said that the principles upon which they are ostensibly based receive the committed endorsement of only a minority among their adherents. Rabouille himself has doubts at one point as to the appropriateness of demolition of the Column ('- *Les idoles ont leurs niches en nous; ce n'est pas la pioche qui les renversera!*') (C 302). By the time of his death, such doubts have been - in his own mind at least - substantially resolved.

One can argue with some plausibility that Commune championship of brotherhood and peace was founded on paradox: did not an essential reason for the March-May insurrection lie, after all, in outraged patriotism, and in frustration at the desire at government level and in

the provinces for a cessation of hostilities? It might be ventured nonetheless that a principle does not in itself become invalid if the series of events leading to its affirmation seem superficially to belie that self-same principle. Nor should it be forgotten that Internationalists - who were hardly an insignificant force during the Commune - had not favoured war with Prussia.(56) What better moment, many would say, to signal rejection of militarism than in the sequel to a disagreement between rulers for which thousands had died?

Aged forty-three, and said to be tall and sturdy with a long dark beard and short grey hair, Rabouille is a somewhat solitary figure, superficially reminiscent of the revolutionary type met on occasion in literature for whom belief in Ideal stands seemingly in lieu of any affectional bond. While his past involvement with Céline is intimated clearly at intervals in the novel, it will be only in his parley with Prophète towards the end that the readily deducible is actually confirmed. Particulars as to Rabouille's character and background are supplied early in the book by means of a discussion in which maman Mazoudier (who has known the machinist ten years: *'Un si beau gars, et si doux, si incapable de faire de la peine à quelqu'un!'* (C 67-68) provides by far the greater part of the information in response to questions from Prophète (*'- Vous le connaissez depuis longtemps, ce Rabouille?'*) (C 66) and artless interjections from young Sophie Lhomme. The reader learns that Rabouille had been cared for by Ferdinand and Céline during a bout of pneumonia some nine years before, and that *'Madame Lhomme ne regardait pas à monter plusieurs fois par jour dans sa chambre (...) pour lui porter ses potions'* (C 67). Soon after his recovery, Rabouille had gone off to work in the provinces, returning to Paris only in 1867, at the time of the Universal Exposition. He had again taken a room with the Lhomme family: the two children, Sophie chirps, love him because he is kind and good; but why has he always been so sad? This is a question maman Mazoudier is apparently unable or unwilling to answer: she will say however that while Rabouille seems to have little interest in women now (one in particular, the tie-maker Ninie, would require no persuasion to move in with or marry him), he

had been less indifferent to overtures in the past. The year after his return to Paris he had thrown himself into politics, accompanying Mazoudier to the various clubs operating in the closing years of the Empire: thus had both men come to know '*...tout le personnel à peu près de la Commune*' (C 68). Initially, Mazoudier had considered his friend's sudden interest in politics to be '*...comme un moyen de s'étourdir...*' (C 68): he had revised his opinion however on realising that while others confined their involvement to talk, Rabouille was prepared to act. Maman Mazoudier concludes her résumé with further kind words which hardly meeting with smiling acquiescence from Prophète:

Je vous le répète, monsieur Prophète, il n'y a pas d'homme plus estimable que lui, cachant davantage le bien qu'il fait. Il déprécie l'argent en montrant qu'on n'en a pas besoin pour être charitable. Ah! si tout le monde était partageux à sa façon, il y aurait moins de malheureux, pour sûr! (C 68).

Something of Rabouille's own uprightness and revolutionary integrity may be inferred from his devotion to Gustave Flourens, with whom he is said to have been on terms of the closest friendship, and whose revolutionary career he had shared from January 1870. On 16 April 1871 (the date complementary elections to the Communal Council are taking place) a substantial number of Descaves' personae are gathered inside Ferdinand Lhomme's cafeteria in the rue Lassus. The comments and expostulations exchanged allow Descaves to introduce many of the personalities who will play a part in the novel (Rabouille himself, the Lhomme family, M. Martin, various members of the fédéré contingent) and to provide, in rather arid factual form, background information relating among other things to the ill-starred sortie of 3 April. The circumstances of Flourens' end (his evident weariness and depression when, following the firing from Mont-Valérien fort, he had been angrily accused of betrayal; the manner in which he had wandered away, dispirited and unaccompanied) are recalled regretfully by Rabouille ('- *Je ne me pardonnerai jamais de l'avoir laissé s'en aller tout seul. Dame! on ne s'était guère quitté depuis l'enterrement de*

Victor Noir') (C 57). The fraternal closeness of the rapports between Rabouille and Flourens is evident inasmuch as Rabouille alone is said to have been present with Flourens' mother and brothers at the revolutionary's funeral (at which a priest had officiated). Descaves is drawing in this upon reports of the funeral service as supplied at the time by such newspapers as le Vengeur and l'Affranchi, in which it was stated that an unidentified man had joined members of Flourens' immediate family at the funeral ceremony.(57)

It is not unlikely that Descaves, in his résumé of Flourens' life and career, was making use both of written accounts available to him and (in accordance with the policy he claimed to favour) the oral reports of former Communards of his acquaintance. The conversation over some seven pages consists essentially of anecdotes and reminiscences relating to Flourens' revolutionary activities, and which (when considered en bloc) suggest a man of courage, generosity and quixotic idealism(58) capable also, on occasion, of hot-headed impulsiveness. Attempts by Flourens to instigate revolt on the occasion of Victor Noir's funeral ('*Vous le rappelez-vous, ce jour-là, quand il voulait avec Ranvier nous entraîner vers Paris? Et la veille, son appel aux armes, à la réunion de Belleville?*') (C 57); his temerarious proclamation of the Republic the evening before, following news of Rochefort's arrest; the construction, in readiness for insurrection, of barricades at the rue de Puebla, the rue Saint-Maur and elsewhere; all of this is nostalgically recalled by Rabouille and by the Piedmontese whom Prophète, in order to delay the toppling of the Column, will later bribe. Rabouille gives a brief account of his association with Flourens during the siege:

Depuis le jour où je me suis fait inscrire au 63^e, qui élit Flourens commandant, je peux dire que je l'ai suivi partout. C'est ensemble qu'on descendit à l'Hôtel de Ville le 29 septembre, puis le 5 octobre, pour réclamer les élections municipales, la levée en masse, la sortie...

(...)

-...le rationnement et l'échange de nos vieux fusils à piston contre des chassepots. Lorsqu'il constitua son bataillon de tirailleurs, j'y entrai, et c'est encore au milieu de nous qu'il passa la soirée du 31 octobre... (C 58)

One of the leaders of the insurrection of 31 October, Flourens had, as a result of his activities, been arrested on 7 December and imprisoned at Mazas. Rabouille, it is revealed, had been of the number to effect his rescue during the night of 20-21 January and to have taken him to the municipal headquarters of the 20th arrondissement.

To the former teacher M. Martin (known locally as l'Emigrant because of his distinctive travelling cap and raglan) Rabouille will provide specific instances of Flourens' generosity, and testify to this bourgeois intellectual's absolute dedication to the people:

- C'est aux frais de Flourens que beaucoup d'entre nous furent armés de chassepots. Pendant le Siègè, lorsqu'on a formé le 63^e, grâce à qui avons-nous été rapidement habillés, équipés, prêts à entrer en ligne? Grâce à lui, aux ateliers de couture improvisés où les femmes gagnaient leur vie en travaillant pour nous. Quant à son désintéressement, a-t-il jamais touché un sou des traitements auxquels il avait droit comme chef de bataillon de marche ou major des remparts, maire-adjoint du vingtième ou membre de la Commission des barricades? Il payait de sa poche, au contraire, la seule ambition qu'il eût: celle de servir le peuple et de l'affranchir. (C 60)

While an indirect tribute on the part of Descaves himself to one of the noblest and most colourful personalities of the Commune period, the outline of Flourens' revolutionary experience thus imparted in the course of conversation fulfils the purpose (obviously important to Descaves) of educating the reader. These pages reveal also something of Rabouille's own outlook; in particular those references by him to the apparently voluntary courting of death on Flourens' part:

Enfin, le coup a été porté... Comment ne l'ai-je pas compris quand il a renvoyé son cheval et s'est éloigné de nous? Assez souvent, il répétait: "Bien mourir, comme Baudin, est le suprême honneur pour un républicain!" Pour moi, il a été au-devant de ses meurtriers, et s'il a vendu cher quelque chose, c'est sa vie. (C 57)

Thus in fact is Rabouille's own end foreshadowed, for exactly a month later (on the date the Vendôme Column is itself demolished) he

too will seek (and obtain) a rendezvous with Death. Flourens' commitment to the working man of Paris, his wish to give his life in the cause of freedom, is recalled by Rabouille with what seems an implicit desire for emulation:

Il appelait Belleville le coeur de Paris. Il était, lui, le coeur de Belleville. Sa protestation, que nous affichâmes le 10 mars dans Paris, relisez-la. "J'ai appris, par une longue expérience des choses humaines, que la liberté se fortifiait par le sang des martyrs. Si le mien peut servir à laver la France de ses souillures, je l'offre volontiers aux assassins de mon pays et aux massacreurs de janvier!" C'était sa fin qu'il annonçait... La fin qu'il a sans doute hâtée. Les plus purs s'en vont les premiers!
(C 60)

Christ-like in tone, these words assume added significance within the context of Rabouille's own destiny. On 16 May, he will give his blood that others may be absolved; either from their trespasses committed in ignorance, or from the effects of trespasses committed. The sins in question, moreover, are those not merely of individuals, but of a society and a nation. Rabouille's comprehension even now of the apparent death wish of his friend is explicitly stated when Schramm (overhearing the above words spoken to Martin and Lépouzé) expresses condemnation of Flourens' probable suicide:

- Si Flourens s'est fait tuer exprès, il a eu tort.

- Pourquoi? dit Rabouille. Quand on perd la croyance qui vous aidait à vivre, quel prix l'existence a-t-elle? Est-ce bien à nous de lui reprocher sa lassitude et son découragement? Si sa mort atteste une infidélité, c'est la nôtre. (C 61)

The theme of suicide, it may be noted, features prominently in Descaves' works relating to the Commune. M. Martin of la Colonne tells Rabouille and Mazoudier of his firm intention, once his money supply is exhausted, of putting an end to his life (C 165). Old Colomès ('Philémon' of Philémon vieux de la vieille) who has never accepted favours of any sort, will terminate his existence when poverty, loneliness and infirmity seem to be all that continued self-reliance holds for him. Young 'Flingot' - tormented then shunned

by other children because his father is believed to be a sergent de ville at Versailles - will shoot a Versaillais officer from the barricades during the semaine sanglante, then himself plead to be executed (*'Dépêchez-vous de me fusiller... J'en ai assez de la vie!'*).⁽⁵⁹⁾ For all Descaves' implicit advocacy of the life force, it is clear then that death is hardly underrepresented in his writing.

The bookbinder and lifelong republican Mazoudier (*'...barbe blanche et regard loyal...'*) (C 102), said to be nearly sixty-five at the time of the Commune, has seen revolutionary service during 'les Trois Glorieuses' of 27-29 July 1830, the February and June days of 1848, and in December 1851. He has known furthermore the bitterness of exile, having been obliged to flee to England following the coup d'état. For him the fourth of September 1870 seems a tardy recompense for the acts and aspirations of the preceding forty years. *'Il était d'autant plus âpre à ce gain...'*, Descaves writes, *'...qu'il avait trop vécu pour en jouir longtemps'* (C 102): and if he has taken up arms again under the Commune, this is above all in resistance to *'...une restauration mijotée (...)'* à Versailles... (C 102).

Parallels suggest themselves in much of this with Pierre Simon of the Margueritte brothers' la Commune or with the various insurgents to appear in Léon Cladel's writings.⁽⁶⁰⁾ As the old man's wife explains to Prophète following acerbic comment by the latter that Mazoudier seems rather more assiduous in guard duty at the ramparts than many younger co-revolutionaries:

Les vieux doivent donner l'exemple..., les vieux de 48 comme lui, surtout. (...) Même que ça me rajeunit de le voir partir comme dans le temps et de l'entendre répéter ce qu'il disait il y a vingt-trois ans: "Moi vivant, ils ne toucheront pas à la République! Les rois et les empereurs nous ont fait assez de mal, pour que nous nous opposions par la force à ce qu'on en ramène un sur le trône." (C 48)

A valiant and faithful companion to her more politically conscious husband, maman Mazoudier recalls in this respect Thérèse of la Commune,

and Phonsine of Philémon vieux de la vieille. Seldom venturing anywhere without a large basket on her arm, it had been her habit during the siege to take Mazoudier food and clean clothing when he was on guard duty at the ramparts: and (motivated largely by her friendship with Nathalie Lemel),(61) she has become a member under the Commune itself of the Union des femmes pour la défense de Paris et les soins aux blessés (C 248-249). Her creed may be simple ('*Je suis du parti des bons coeurs, comme M. Rabouille et ce pauvre M. Flourens, qui était si sympathique!...*') (C 66), but she is hardly bereft of arguments (expressed in homely, unpretentious phrasing and containing more than the occasional flash of sagacity) when in conversation with such supporters of order and the status quo as Prophète himself and his niece Céline. The talk at Ferdinand's cafeteria seems foolish and excitable, declares Prophète: and for every sincere revolutionary such as Mazoudier, how many scoundrels and lightweights have joined the insurgent ranks? Not many, maman Mazoudier answers predictably enough: as for the patrons, they may be noisy and argumentative, but if this is the case, the fault lies in the first instance with members of the Government of National Defence, whose insincere speechifying during the siege served simply to arouse emotions. Prophète taxes the clientele with idleness: many places of work are closed, the old woman points out, and those that are open can hardly take on everybody. The unoccupied, Prophète retorts, seem still to have plenty to spend on drink. This will not of course pass unchallenged ('*Oh! réfléchissez, monsieur Prophète; c'est pas avec trente sous par jour qu'ils peuvent faire des balthazars*') (C 65). Nor will maman Mazoudier accept the invalide's further grousing affirmation that those without ready cash are buying on credit, will get into debt, then blame the legal government for their misfortune:

- *C'est d'abord la guerre et le Siège qui nous ont mis dans l'embarras. Nous avons moins à souffrir des gens qui ont proclamé la Commune pour sauver la République, allez, que des gens qui voulaient la rendre impossible en déclarant la guerre. Faut être juste.* (C 66)

Maman Mazoudier's view of the Commune itself seems essentially that of Pierre Simon: that society's poor should by rights have an opportunity now to enjoy some of the good that life has to offer.⁽⁶²⁾ Prophète of course will have none of this: the majority of insurgents want simply to carouse and take it easy. Anyway, he asks impatiently, what does this term 'Commune' signify? *'Tout en commun?'* (C 66).

'Tout', maman Mazoudier answers, *'...c'est peut-être beaucoup dire... mais quelque chose de plus que la peine, le besoin et l'espérance éternelle'* (C 66). *'Croyez-moi'*, Prophète assures her, *'...ces insensés n'en ont pas pour un mois'* (C 66): (he is speaking on 16 April). It will be sad if that proves the case, the old woman replies apparently unruffled: *'...car ils ont jeûné beaucoup plus longtemps que ça et un petit dédommagement leur était bien dû'* (C 66).

Mazoudier (and Husson) will be killed at Vanves during the night of 12-13 May. It can seldom be said in la Colonne that Descaves succeeds in creating an atmosphere of tension or drama: nor was this, in all likelihood, a primary objective on his part. His tendency to wordiness, the inclusion in a potentially moving episode either of factual information or of some topical pleasantry or anecdote volunteered by an observer, both detract and distract from his representation of the human situation in question. This is illustrated to some extent when news of Mazoudier's death reaches the rue Lassus on the 13th. Absorbed in her usual tasks in the Lhomme kitchen, maman Mazoudier (who is soon the only person not to have been informed) moves to and fro, back and forth, apparently oblivious as outside the door an ever-increasing number of people glance in, talk amongst themselves and try to determine who should break the news to her. When told by Céline of her bereavement, the old woman, while obviously shaken, displays the courage of one who has lived with this possibility more than once in the course of her married life. Referring regretfully to the loss of Husson, who is survived by a wife and two small children (*'Celui-là était jeune encore; il aurait pu voir des temps meilleurs...'*) (C 267), she is conscious that her own husband's death will at least spare him heartbreak as the Cause is once again defeated. For in contrast to Husson, time would not have been on the side of the bookbinder:

A son âge, les vaincus n'espèrent plus de revanche; ils n'ont qu'à disparaître. J'aime mieux le savoir mort que prisonnier... Il n'aurait pas supporté les pontons, l'exil encore une fois... Son heure était venue... (C 266)

Maman Mazoudier's own faith in the validity of the revolutionary cause has been in no way diminished by personal loss, as Céline, arguing the pointlessness of attempted political or social change, discovers:

- Il y aura toujours des pauvres et des riches, des maîtres et des serviteurs...
 - Ce sont les riches et les maîtres qui le disent...
 - Et les révolutions qui le prouvent... Est-ce que la République, depuis qu'elle est proclamée, a supprimé la misère?
 - Oh! la proclamer ne signifie rien; autre chose est de la maintenir... Et puis, voyez-vous, madame Lhomme, on peut dire d'elle ce qu'on voudra... C'est comme un enfant longtemps désiré: il naîtrait disgracié qu'on l'aimerait et qu'on souhaiterait tout de même sa conservation.

Et l'on sentait chez la vieille une conviction si profonde, un attachement si sincère, que Céline n'osait plus reprocher à cet enfant d'avoir, en venant au monde, coûté la vie à son père. (C 267)

The likening of the Republic to an infant or a child is to be found more than once in Descaves' novels and theatre: as is the ascription to the Communards of a parental role in creation of the regime. Mulard of the play la Saignée returns from New Caledonia in 1880: to the acclamations of enthusiastic listeners, he proclaims his delight at finding himself once more in Paris, and in a France where the Republic has apparently survived the dangers and difficulties of her early youth:

Cette République-là, nous l'aimons comme notre petite fille. Elle est pétrie de notre chair et de notre sang. On s'attache d'autant plus aux enfants qu'on les a disputés à la mort. Ils peuvent nous causer des déceptions... mal tourner même... il y a toujours pour eux, au fond de notre coeur, la tendresse infinie du père et de la mère qui ont tremblé un jour de les perdre! (63)

The returning exiles are again likened in Philémon vieux de la vieille to parents reunited with their progeny after a separation of years:

Ils se faisaient reconnaître de la République, l'enfant dont ils s'étaient séparés (...), après l'avoir embrassée dans ses langes. Aux mains des nourriciers qui avaient pris soin d'elle, son éducation laissait à désirer; mais il n'était pas trop tard pour la mieux élever... En réchappant des maladies graves de l'enfance, elle avait montré sa vitalité, elle allait vers l'adolescence en force et en beauté. (PVV 293)

As one whose life has been dedicated to the fostering of a Republic sometimes stillborn or slain in infancy, Mazoudier seems then deserving of the attribute applied to him inwardly - and with no thought of reverence - by Céline. It is perhaps however to go too far to describe the elderly Republican (as Mateo Pardo Jr. has done) as '...the revolutionary patriarch of (la Colonne)(...) the living memory and conscience of the working-class movement (...) the father of the Commune.'(64)

The ordinariness of perception ascribed to Céline Lhomme (principally through dialogue with Rabouille) is perhaps the most obvious ploy used by Descaves in his illustration of the unreflecting resistance progressive thinking will usually encounter. The Mazoudier viewpoint ("*Si l'on ne pensait qu'à sauver sa peau, ils auraient vite fait d'escamoter la République*") (C 48) is incomprehensible and reprehensible to madame Lhomme, for whom - as in the case of mère Pommier in l'Apprentie - the possible sacrifice of one's life for an intangible cause such as revolution cannot be justified when one has family responsibilities. While Geffroy however feels compassion for mère Pommier, faced with caring for her two daughters almost unaided should her remaining son lose his life, Descaves has manifestly little sympathy for the attitudes of Céline. Said by her creator to be thrifty, hard-working and (when the occasion truly warrants it) accommodating, Céline is no more than Prophète a target for exaggeration or caricature: her face, the reader is told, '*...laissait voir à la fois des restes de beauté et des restes de bonté végétant dans les conditions les moins propres à leur conservation respective*' (C 47). Hard-headedly pragmatic now most of the time, her concern for her husband's safety should he be obliged actively to defend the

Commune is linked closely to fear for the prosperity of their business. If, indeed, she disapproves so strongly of the Commune, a determining reason appears to be that disruptions of this type affect the normal pattern of trade:

Elle quittait la pente de son coeur pour suivre celle de ses intérêts alarmés. D'une intelligence moyenne ouverte aux vérités pratiques, elle ne pesait pas les raisons qu'avaient de se heurter la Commune et Versailles: elle était foncièrement du parti de l'ordre et de l'épargne. (C 47)

The funeral of Mazoudier and young Husson on 14 May will afford the opportunity for a significant conversation between Rabouille and Céline as they wait to follow the cortège. Aware that Versailles entry may be only days away, Céline is anxious that her former lover procure an exemption from service for Ferdinand: a favour to which Rabouille ('...il ne faut contraindre personne') (C 279) immediately agrees. Despite this ready acquiescence, it is clear that nine years after their affair the two are as much at variance in their perceptions of duty and moral responsibility as it is possible for them to be. Referring to the Husson children:

Céline s'apitoya: - Que vont devenir ces malheureux, sans leur père? Certes, je plains cette pauvre femme, mais elle est aussi bien coupable. Est-ce qu'elle n'aurait pas dû détourner son mari d'aller se faire tuer, lorsque rien ne l'y obligeait?

- Il a écouté sa conscience, dit Rabouille. C'est elle qui lui a indiqué son devoir.

Madame Lhomme s'emporta: - Son devoir, ayant des charges pareilles, c'était de ne pas les oublier. Que ceux qui n'en ont aucune, paient de leur personne, libre à eux; mais qu'un père de famille les imite, je n'admets pas ça.

- Il y a des charges qui sont les mêmes pour tous, dit encore Rabouille. Le célibataire n'a pas d'enfants dont l'avenir l'inquiète, mais le sort des enfants des autres le préoccupe autant que son propre sort et c'est pour l'améliorer qu'il se dévoue. Il a droit à la réciprocité, sinon l'égoïste ce n'est pas lui, mais le père qui s'absorbe dans sa famille. (C 279)

Here as elsewhere, Rabouille serves as a mouthpiece for his creator. A certain ironic ambivalence in Descaves' attitude to Céline seems suggested by the juxtaposition of two references: apparent sympathy as Céline the mother expresses compassion for madame Husson and her two small children ('*Céline s'apitoya*') and the sudden extinction of such sympathy when Madame dogmatically and aggressively intimates in answer to Rabouille that duty lies not in obedience to some principle or in attempted furtherment of a Cause beneficial to humanity at large, but in the exclusive (and egoistic) preoccupation with immediate family. While such a viewpoint might be considered at least defensible, it clearly meets with Descaves' less than wholehearted approval here.

In her fundamental conservatism and her distaste for social disturbance, Céline invites comparison with Lisa Quenu of le Ventre de Paris. Adrien's clerical education, she informs Rabouille at one point in the novel, will resume once order is re-established: not, it is clear, because she is herself devout, but because (as one may assume her to be thinking) therein lies the right and proper preparation for life. It is hardly surprising in the light of this that she should deplore the absence of Christian rites at the funeral of Mazoudier and Husson:

- L'église..., des prières..., les consolations de la religion, toutes les choses auxquelles on est habitué, quoi... Ah! je ne voudrais pas pour moi ni pour les miens, d'un enterrement pareil, bien sûr! (C 284)

For the service Céline is wearing a hat of grotesque and disagreeable ornamentation ('...un chapeau de cérémonie, sur lequel bougeait un oiseau du goût le plus détestable..') (C 276): and this decoration, needless to say, seems to Rabouille symptomatic of the changes for the worse he has noted in her outlook and character (C 285).

The most disturbing evidence of Céline's insensitivity and lack of imagination is provided on this and other occasions by her denial to Rabouille of any right to an interest in his son's future. The reader may be tempted to query this: to what consideration, it might be asked, should Rabouille feel himself entitled as of right? Céline had, moreover - as we learn towards the end of the novel - made it clear to her former lover on his return from the provinces that the past was, in every sense, the past. There is however one factor to be borne in mind. A mother jealous of her role in forming and guiding her son would perhaps not have been prepared to allow business concerns to take precedence over maternal responsibility: and this Céline had done. To Rabouille has fallen what is in fact the highly welcome task of looking after, and being a father to, both Adrien and Sophie.

An earlier dismissal by Céline then of Rabouille's request for some say in the matter of Adrien's education, might be regarded as not merely high-handed in its expression (*'Il y a d'autres enfants que lui pour servir à vos expériences et d'autres mères que moi pour s'y prêter'*) (C 160) but, in the circumstances, ironically inappropriate... and indeed callous. It is to be noted that Ferdinand Lhomme remains apparently unaware of Adrien's true paternity, and totally tractable in the matter of his supposed son's instruction. On the earlier occasion in question, Céline obtusely remarks to Rabouille that her uncle Prophète, at least, does not attempt to interfere with or query the teaching imparted to Adrien by the priests in the rue Pelleport (C 159) and that she will continue to favour the influence of the invalide over her son until such time as there is evidence it is doing him harm. The boy's fixation with warfare, his nights of fitful dreaming and his teasing or torture of animals have been for her a source of amusement and (for form's sake) mild reproach, when Prophète comes to visit.

Rabouille's argument that abolition of conscription under the Commune should invite commendation from mothers everywhere will fall, predictably, on deaf ears when expressed to Céline on 14 May. There is

considerable irony, of course, in this woman's self-congratulatory smugness at her family feeling and her soundness of perception ('*Je suis une femme de bon sens; je ne comprendrai jamais qu'on soit plus utile à ses enfants en se faisant tuer qu'en vivant pour les élever*') (C 285); as there is in her total inability or unwillingness to understand her former lover's point of view. Clinging tenaciously to the idea that her husband, as a family man, has no place in the insurgent ranks, Céline is closed to any suggestion that some fathers defending the Revolution do so in the hope that one day, women such as herself will not weep for their sons grown to manhood and lost to them in the carnage of a distant battlefield. It seems valid to assume that death for Adrien in some ultimately senseless war would be lamented by his pedestrian, unreflecting mother... but perceived automatically nonetheless as a glorious end in the service of country. As he takes his leave of Céline at the gate of the cemetery, Rabouille is again despondently aware that in the woman he once loved and for whom he still has some feeling, petty bourgeois instinct and narrowness of vision are now amply represented:

Elle n'avait plus de la femme d'autrefois qu'un air de famille. Les traits étaient à peu près les mêmes dans la maturité que dans la jeunesse, mais l'expression en prenait un caractère de sécheresse inattendu. (...) Otée du cadre de l'atmosphère où le meilleur d'elle s'était lentement consumé, elle affirmait le goût du petit commerce et de la petite épargne, pour la Loi, la Propriété, le Mariage, la Religion, les digestions paisibles. Elle haïssait, dans la Commune, la morte-saison et ne voyait pas plus loin que le plat et la recette du jour. (C 286)

A consideration of la Colonne makes it clear then that the adult characters of the novel represent a significant range of type and outlook. If there are in the book two essential categories (the war veterans of the Invalides, and the Belleville insurgents) these hardly encompass all who have a role to play. Nor is it entirely satisfactory to talk of an alignment of personae either on the side of Conservatism and Order, or in the Revolutionary camp. Many in the novel (both among invalos and Communards) are in fact without true conviction, motivated by selfishness or (as is so striking in the case of Lépouzé) by

cowardice. Appearances sometimes belie true allegiance: Géran, who is ostensibly an insurgent, has of course other irons in the fire. Céline, for her part, may be a Bellevilloise: she is also, by temperament and inclination, of the conservative number. The loyalties of Martin the Emigrant (who is originally a provincial, having come to Belleville from Northern France in May 1870) lie entirely with the Commune. After a constricted and solitary existence, he has now, among its supporters and defenders, a sense of belonging, of being a part of a family (C 165). There is of course, in one major character, a sudden radical change in attitude. Prophète's eventual 'surrender' to Rabouille on the Buttes-Chaumont might be said to constitute the ultimate victory in la Colonne of the nobler precepts embodied by Rabouille, and represented in certain Communard aspirations.

We can consider further now Descaves' inclusion of documentary material in his novel; and his representation of the Commune as a political and social movement. The 'confrontation scene' between Rabouille and Prophète will then be examined; to be followed by discussion of that portion of la Colonne's final chapter dealing directly with the toppling of the Column.

The use of quotation (consisting of extracts from newspapers of the time, decrees by the Commune, letters or pronouncements of various sorts) is an important facet of Descaves' portrayal of the insurrectionary period. The presentation of such material is usually straightforward, the characters for the most part either reading from a newspaper they happen to have with them, or quoting a given speech or extract from memory. Further items of information with respect to the Commune are introduced through apparently casual conversation (as between maman Mazoudier and Prophète, or when Schramm supplies père Bagarre with information as to the decree concerning the mont-de-piété) (C 244).

As one might expect in view of the subject of the novel, many of the quotations provided relate to the Vendôme Column itself: the

decree announcing demolition of the monument (C 11); proposals - recorded in le Vengeur - to sell the stone and the bronze of the Column (C 88); various recommendations as to the fate of the Column put forward during the meeting of the Communal Council on 27 April (C 129); an extract from le Vengeur published after 5 May, supplying reasons for delays in demolition (C 205-206). Incidental information (gathered, no doubt, from a variety of sources) is included. If the reader feels curiosity as to how precisely the Column is to be demolished, such curiosity will be gratified (C 156-157); the explanation being based, conceivably, on that supplied by Maxime Du Camp.⁽⁶⁵⁾ There is reference to the means envisaged by Georges Cavalier (Pipe-en-Bois) to reduce the impact of the Column's fall (C 211): and when Descaves has Ferdinand Lhomme refer to the Column as '*un monobronze*' (C 211) he is almost certainly including a snippet gleaned from Du Camp.⁽⁶⁶⁾ Mazoudier, in the course of conversation, will negate the belief widely held at the time that Gustave Courbet was the driving force behind demolition (C 129-130):⁽⁶⁷⁾ and (a less significant inclusion) the phrasing of a pass entitling its holder to entry to the place Vendôme is supplied (C 185), Prophète's laying of a wreath on 5 May affording the pretext. The news that the Column's bronze exterior is no more than a cover for the freestone of the shaft comes as something of a shock to invalides and fédérés alike (C 71); and might be considered, within the context of la Colonne, as a further symptom of the duplicity inherent to Bonapartist despotism. Erected ostensibly in honour of the combatants of the Grande Armée, the Column, so legend had it, consisted entirely of the bronze of enemy cannons taken in war. Well, any surviving grognards, not to mention participants in later battles, have proof now, in the weeks leading up to demolition, of the esteem in which the War God (that unprincipled cynic!) actually held the common soldier. As a worker on the site calls to a mortified Prophète on 5 May:

Cinq millimètres de bronze et la pierre tout de suite par dessous! Avions-nous raison de dire qu'il s'était toujours foutu du peuple? Douze cents canons là-dedans? Allons donc! (...) Tout le bronze, le bonhomme qui est là-haut l'a gardé pour lui. (C 187)

In the ninth chapter, taking place during the afternoon and evening of 9 May and treating largely of the confusion surrounding the fall of Issy, it is not astonishing that there should be inclusion of pronouncements by or relating to Louis Rossel. The latter's proclamation to a shocked city that the tricolour flag was flying over the fort (said by him to have been abandoned by the defending troops) (C 218); recollection of the phrasing of his answer - in late April - to the Versailles colonel in charge of the trenches surrounding Issy (*'Mon cher camarade. La prochaine fois que vous vous permettrez de nous envoyer une sommation aussi insolente, je ferai fusiller votre parlementaire, conformément aux usages de la guerre'*) (C 240); an extract from his letter of resignation as War Delegate (C 247). Rossel is not the only figure to be quoted in the chapter. With what would be regarded in usual circumstances as a rather puerile flaunting of his powers of memory, M. Martin recites a substantial portion of a speech by Thiers in 1848 concerning the bombardment by the Sicilian king Bomba of his capital Palermo: a city he had fled and was seeking to recapture (C 219-220). The situation, needless to say, reflects exactly that in which Thiers finds himself with respect to Paris.

Through the medium of conversation and discussion, the various characters of la Colonne present a composite picture of the Commune's strengths, deficiencies and particularities. When talking together, or with others, Rabouille, Mazoudier and Martin (for it is they above all who discuss the nature of the revolution, its aims and its shortcomings) express themselves fluently, elegantly, eloquently, with a ready recourse to image, an uncanny ability to recite or quote from memory, an accuracy of reference that recalls a similar aptitude on the part of Cladel's Urbaine Hélioiz. There is at times a tendency to repetitiveness on Descaves' part, a given issue being raised on a particular occasion only to be considered again, at some length or in passing, at a later stage. Descaves seems often to be presenting what are in effect a series of expositions; to be expected perhaps, in view of the novel's pedagogical objectives, but wearisome, in the form they assume, to all but the most impassioned student of the Commune. On

occasion, segments of a particular conversation are simply supplied in theatrical form.(68) It would seem impracticable to provide an exhaustive, and sequent, consideration of such material: only the salient elements of these discussions are therefore indicated here.

In conformity with Descaves' objective of providing a balanced consideration of the Commune's policies, Rabouille and Mazoudier present, from time to time, opposing arguments as to how far the Commune might legitimately go in those avenues available to it. Imbued still with all the idealism of an 1848 combatant, Mazoudier will hold no brief for any course of action that might be considered ethically questionable. Appropriation of the Banque de France would be in his view an undesirable measure: the red flag, he says high-mindedly, '*...flotte sur les conquêtes du peuple; il n'a jamais flotté sur ses déprédations*'(C 226). The suggestion that prisoners held by the Commune might at some stage be executed brings forth either confident assertion that such a thing would never happen (C 122); or (when Archbishop Darboy is mentioned) anxiety lest the insurgents actually make this cardinal mistake through which, of course, misrepresentations of the Commune by Versailles would be apparently sustained. One might well feel fate to be kind in its decree that Mazoudier the optimist should be killed before the semaine sanglante. In the imaginative phrasing Descaves so often attributes to his characters, Rabouille - who is certainly not advocating execution of the hostages - will defend the need for bold, decisive action on the Commune's part. Seizure of the Bank, for instance, would guarantee food and lodgings for the Revolution's defenders and for two hundred thousand families in want. The time is hardly right, he claims, for nicety of sentiment or scruple, through which

*...les révolutions s'anémient et meurent de consommation! (...)
Le peuple est un malade indigent: il a besoin, lui aussi, pour se refaire, de vin de Bordeaux et de viandes saignantes. Quand il en aura sa suffisance, vous pourrez lui demander sans ironie, de se montrer généreux et désintéressé. (C 123)*

Martin holds similar views to Rabouille. Based significantly on the principle of help for the needy, the Commune seems preoccupied in fact with political rather than social concerns; as the former teacher has had particular opportunity to realise since taking up a clerkship, in early May, at the Hôtel de Ville. Before coming to Paris, Martin had no awareness, he says, of the hardships of life in this or any large city (*'Je ne connaissais pas la misère des villes, la misère de l'employé, de l'ouvrier, du déclassé, des familles enfermées au sixième sur la cour, en des taudis obscurs sans air'*) (C 231). Faced now fifty times a day with evidence of poverty's harrying effect on the working-class women of Paris, he is conscious of the discrepancy between the professed aims of the Commune, and its reluctance to take the radical measures which might ensure their realisation. There is, Martin says, a flagrant absurdity in the Commune's failure to occupy the Bank (*'...cet archevêché du Capital...'*) (C 226) when such a step could go no small way towards alleviation of the hardships facing the families of those killed in defence of the Revolution. He cannot grow used to the idea that men on their way to die are marching every day in front of *'ce Moulin de la Galette'*,

...et n'y entrent pas pour assurer, pendant quelque temps au moins, le sort des familles qu'ils laissent dans la misère. C'est comme si les défenseurs de la Commune se résignaient à être fusillés par derrière. C'est bien assez qu'ils le soient par devant. (C 310)

The influence of previous revolutionary example on the majority of the Commune's executive is discussed more than once in the various conversations throughout the novel. How can the Commune fail to understand, Rabouille asks his two friends on 9 May, when rumours of a dictatorship are afloat,

...qu'on la conduit à sa perte en adoptant pour article de foi le principe autoritaire mortel aux gouvernements antérieurs? Comment ne comprend-on pas qu'à une situation sans précédent dans l'histoire, il faut des mesures nouvelles appropriées aux circonstances et au milieu, et que le Comité de Salut public ne nous fait pas prendre des vessies pour des lanternes, des conventions pour la Convention? (C 255)

The readiness to look to the past for inspiration, or for solutions to immediate problems, is a failing imputed to the Commune in a significant chapter of Philémon vieux de la vieille. Albert Malavaux fils, the son of a former Communard, advocates, with apparent good sense, that revolutionaries must be prepared to break with tradition and act in accordance with the requirements engendered by their particular circumstances. It is possible of course to argue that the Commune (beset by internal divisions and in desperate military straits) would have benefited from the leadership of a competent committee or individual. Be this as it may, the very use, at the time, of a term such as 'Committee of Public Safety' seemed too blatant a plagiarism of 1793 - and too symptomatic of dependence on the past - to be acceptable to a minority on the Communal Council.(69) One would not expect Descaves, furthermore - a champion of individual freedom, and the friend and admirer of the anarchist Gustave Lefrançais - to be arguing, in his own name or through his characters, the merits of dictatorship or authoritarian direction. Through its delegation of power to a body such as the Comité de salut public, the Commune was not merely displaying an emotional affiliation with its predecessors of the 1790's; but also betraying (as one might imagine Descaves to be thinking) the principles of communal autonomy and personal liberty extolled, for instance, in its manifesto of 19 April. None of this is to say that either Rabouille or Descaves is rejecting in toto the example of eighty years previously. Seizure by the Commune of the Banque de France (wherein lies the guarantee of payment of the war indemnity) might, Mazoudier considers, serve as a pretext for Prussian intervention. If this is indeed a factor influencing non-appropriation, Rabouille replies, the Commune's executive is guilty less of circumspection than of downright cowardice. After all,

La perspective d'un retour offensif des Prussiens devrait (...) sourire à quiconque protestait, il y a deux mois, contre une capitulation honteuse et prétendait garder les canons pour prolonger la résistance. Le Gouvernement n'a jamais réussi qu'une sortie: celle qui l'a conduit à Versailles. La Commune pourrait montrer à ces braves de quelle défense est capable une ville libre décidée à vendre chèrement sa liberté. Malheureusement, nous aimons mieux singer la Convention dans les petites choses que dans les grandes. (C 124)

Prepared then in various superficial respects to ape the Jacobins of bygone days, the Commune's leaders hardly display the same strength or sense of resolve in matters more vital. One has, all too often, indeed, an impression of silly parody. In the characteristically acerbic terms of M. Martin (who is thinking of a measure such as the delegation by the Comité de salut public of Civil Commissioners to the three commanders in the field):

Nos singes ramassent les vieux miroirs fêlés des hommes de 93 et s'étudient devant la glace à les imiter. (C 306)

Other shortcomings of the Commune - linking in some cases to the authoritarian perceptions of the Blanquist contingent on the Commune's executive - are mentioned regretfully by Martin. He refers to the suppression of newspapers hostile to the Commune; to the infractions of personal liberty on the part of the Sûreté générale, and to the introduction of controls exemplified by the obligatory carrying of an identity card; to the foolish, indeed inept measures sometimes enacted. The decree ordering demolition of Thiers' home is simply one of these '*...décrets d'intimidation puérile...*' (C 302), the National Assembly having promptly voted to provide the little man with another, costing this time however three - and not two - million francs. Both Rabouille and Martin are thinking all too obviously also of the interminable, futile debates and disagreements within the Communal Council, and of the feuding and rivalry marking rapports between the latter body, the Comité de salut public and the Comité central. Such dissension, which is calamitous in itself, should, Rabouille says, be concealed insofar as possible from the adversary at Versailles. He is at this point thinking primarily no doubt of Louis Rossel's letter of resignation as War Delegate; sent on 9 May to newspapers within Paris for publication, and charging the Communal Council and the Comité central with incompetence, incoherence and indecisiveness. On 15 May of course (the day after this particular conversation) the manifesto announcing the socialist minority's withdrawal from the Commune's deliberations was to cause dismay within Paris... and delight at Versailles.

Rabouille would wish then to see evidence of a team spirit gravely lacking, in fact, among the Commune's leaders. The abolition of conscription; separation of Church and State, and nationalisation of the clergy's possessions; the possible recovery of goods from the mont-de-piété, and the measure cancelling rent owing from 1 October 1870 to 1 April 1871: attribution of credit for such decrees, which might be considered positive achievements on the part of the Commune, is of no importance ('Ils sont, à nos yeux, l'oeuvre de tous indistinctement. Ils affirment leur solidarité devant l'histoire') (C 307). Nor should blame be apportioned for the movement's inadequacies: all those involved are, as it were, in the venture together. The good and the bad, the embittered and the pure of heart,

...(tous) sont pétris ensemble, comme le levain et la pâte. On ne peut plus les séparer. C'est de leur mélange intime que sont faits les décrets de la Commune les plus substantiels...
(C 306-307)

The contribution (anonymous but all-important) of myriad humble identities to the processes of history, is an underlying theme of la Colonne; and, even more notably, Philémon vieux de la vieille. 'Ils sont Légion...' Martin says,

...dans toute l'acception du mot, les hommes qui, restés fidèles à leur origine, accomplissent chacun dans la mesure de son intelligence et de ses moyens, la prédiction de l'Internationale: "L'émancipation des travailleurs sera l'oeuvre des travailleurs eux-mêmes." C'est surtout le dévouement anonyme et unanime de ceux-là que j'admire. (C 309)

The Commune itself of course testifies to the fact that an ability to change things is not automatically the prerogative of the eminent. What does it matter (M. Martin asks when the question is raised on 16 April) if the members of the insurrectionary government are often unknown outside their particular district? Obscurity is not synonymous with incapacity: and for an historical moment that has had its like at no time before, men who embody the new movement are called for. The Commune is, after all, a government for the people: 'Pour représenter

le prolétariat...' (Martin continues) '...vivent ses enfants légitimes!' (C 53). The notion that a working man might acquit himself at all competently of some administrative function from which origins and education should normally debar him is, to a possédant, nothing short of ridiculous. Derision is misplaced, however: the bourgeoisie, in the words of Martin,

...a tort de se moquer des mains noires qui signent les décrets sur un établi, sur une borne ou sur une table de crèmerie, entre des repas à trente-cinq sous. Aveugle, comme toujours, elle ne lit pas sa perte inscrite, à une date rapprochée, dans la rude empreinte laissée par la classe ouvrière sur le pouvoir acquis pour la première fois. (C 309)(70)

If, of the eighty-one members of the Communal Council, thirty-three only were workers and artisans, this was, as we know, an appreciable increase on the one worker in the Provisional Government of February 1848. For a reader of the 1980's (who possesses of course a certain advantage over Martin in terms of historical cognisance) the prediction itself might be relegated, with regret or satisfaction as the case may be, to the category of wishful pronouncement. Reciting a list of names with no apparent hesitation or effort of recall, Rabouille draws attention to the success of members of the Commune in reorganising the abandoned municipal departments within minimal time:

Jourde et Varlin aux Finances; Theisz, aux Postes; Camélinat, à la Monnaie; Faillet et Combault, aux Contributions; Treilhard, à l'Assistance publique; Debok et Alavoine, à l'Imprimerie Nationale; Delescluze, Vermorel, Lefrançais, Gambon, Longuet, Vallès, Tridon, Arnould, Franckel, Malon, Vaillant, Dereure, Pottier, Avrial, Clémence, Pindy dans les Commissions et ailleurs. Ceux-là et beaucoup d'autres, démentent les accusations d'incapacité et de concussion que l'on porte contre le personnel de la Commune en général. (C 307-308)

The ascent to influence on the part of the humble need not of course entail a betrayal of background. The men now in authority within Paris are content, Rabouille says, with the fifteen francs they earn daily, and though in a position now to enjoy an affluence which circumstances previously denied them, have brought no changes to bear

on their modest lifestyle.(71) 'Allez, monsieur Martin', he continues:

...de quelque façon que finisse la Commune, ceux qui l'ont servie en sortiront du moins les mains nettes. Ni lâches, ni voleurs. De quel gouvernement la France a-t-elle jamais pu en dire autant?
(C 308)

The integrity of participants in the Commune is stressed by Descaves in his subsequent works. The austere, rigorously moral Mulard of la Saignée, who is elected to the Communal Council, declares that he will emerge from the insurrectionary episode as he entered it, '*...les mains nettes!... Si j'en sors vivant!*'(72) Commenting in Philémon vieux de la vieille upon the precarious material situation in which the Communards facing exile found themselves, Descaves makes clear that for these men and women who had had access to riches untold, probity had come before all else in circumstances where temptation might have been immense:

...il fallait vivre. Ces bandits, ces administrateurs infidèles qu'on représentait gonflés de pillage et de malversations, étaient tous arrivés à Genève sans le sou et ne déguisant (mal) que leur identité. Ils avaient eu des sommes importantes à leur disposition et ne s'en étaient servis que pour emplumer leur idole. Ils avaient tenu entre leurs mains les pis volumineux de la Banque de France et s'étaient fait scrupule de la traire. Ils avaient continué d'habiter leurs taudis, à côté des hôtels et des appartements désertés par leurs locataires éperdus! Et d'avoir trouvé, puis rendus intacts à leurs propriétaires, tant de portefeuilles rebondis, ces pauvres semblaient, en vérité, plus coupables que de les avoir gardés!(PVV 25)(73)

The belief fostered in the provinces that Paris is in the grip of anarchy, pillage and debauchery is then, as Mazoudier and Martin remark (C 224), of the stuff of myth. Since the regular police left the city, the streets have never been safer, and notwithstanding shops filled with goods, and apartments abandoned by the well-to-do, the incidence of looting is minimal.(74) The Paris working classes remain in the outer areas of the city, in the unhealthy, cramped lodgings they have always occupied. Is there not (the barber Lépouzé enquires) a decree in existence whereby the apartments left vacant might be placed at the

disposal of inhabitants of districts bombarded by Versailles? Yes, answers Martin, '*...mais ce décret reste lettre morte comme tant d'autres et n'a pas même reçu un commencement d'exécution...*' (C 225). Presented then in Thierist propaganda as a movement of lawlessness and excess, the restraint of the Commune's policies, the very moderation of insurgent behaviour, seem (to the idea of Rabouille and Martin) to guarantee defeat. From the conservative perspective, of course, it would make no odds how the Communards conducted themselves, as all three men realise:

...la lutte est fratricide seulement quand le peuple irrité a le dessus. Elle est fratricide aujourd'hui; elle ne l'était pas au 2 décembre; elle ne le sera pas demain, si nous sommes les moins forts. (C 227)

Nous nous battons et l'on nous assassinera; nous sommes généreux, on sera implacable; nous épousons par inclination une belle cause, et l'on soutiendra que nous l'avons déshonorée.
(C 308-309)

In a prediction such as the above, Martin hardly displays clairvoyance.

As the process of educating is central to the preoccupations of Rabouille (as of Descaves himself), it is hardly to be wondered at if the moulding of attitudes, both present and future, provides the basis for several significant discussions. Young Adrien's predilection for military faits divers has been reinforced, as we know, by the war and the siege, and by the tales of his uncle Prophète. It could however - Descaves strongly intimates - have been expected in any case, in view of the systematic glorification of warfare underlying so much of the instruction traditionally imparted to France's youth. An account of Francois Ier's reign recited by Sophie Lhomme on the evening of 14 May as a part of her history preparation, is said to typify the kind of regimen foisted by teachers upon their innocent charges... who are, as a result, warped for life. Intended specifically for schoolchildren, and described by Descaves as

...fallacieuse et stupide, pleine de défaites encensées comme des victoires, de sottises changées en grâces chevaleresques, de roueries tournées en habileté et de crimes déguisés en raison d'Etat... (C 299)

this particular history, Descaves would have his readers understand, possesses all the characteristics of the mind-addling twaddle upon which generations of French children have been nurtured. It is Rabouille's hope - as he explains to Martin - that the teachers formed under the Republic will inculcate in their pupils the true story of the nation, as distinct from that of the nation's rulers: and M. Martin, for years a teacher himself in one of the northern departments of France, acknowledges regretfully that the lessons he imparted were in conformity with those of innumerable colleagues throughout the country ('*C'est grâce à des milliers de coupables comme moi que le mal s'étend, que le chancre rongé, que l'erreur se perpétue*') (C 300). Previously a party then to the deceptions practised upon the young, Martin - who has no intention of remaining alive once his savings have run out - looks now to some supposedly distant day, which he himself will never see, when the wrong may be put to rights:

Quand donc racontera-t-on aux Français la vie de leurs pères et non plus exclusivement celle de leurs maîtres? Quand donc, renversant les rôles, considérera-t-on simplement un François I^{er}, un Charles IX, d'autres Charles encore, tous les Henri et tant de Louis, qui jalonnent l'histoire, comme des bornes chronologiques contre lesquelles il n'y a lieu de s'arrêter que pour vomir? Ah! l'histoire de France, quels instituteurs l'apprendront enfin aux enfants du peuple? (C 300)

In the manner to which Descaves has accustomed his reader, Sophie's history recital provides the starting-point for a discussion (between Rabouille and the Emigrant) as to Republican concepts of education... and the inroads the Commune has been able to make even in the limited time at its disposal. A direct question is asked by Martin as to what the Education Commission(75) has achieved for both pupils and teachers; his own impression being that nothing of significance has been accomplished. Not so, answers Rabouille: given the

constraints under which it has had to operate, the Commission can feel a just pride in its work. The clerical stranglehold on teaching has ended... and male and female teachers alike have received an increase in salary. If, to a twentieth century reader grown cynical in such matters, this second measure seems suggestive of priorities misplaced, it is to be borne in mind that the minimum salary for a male primary teacher had been fixed only in April 1870 at the near-starvation wage of seven hundred francs a year; a woman in the profession receiving around five hundred francs.(76)

Implementation of a programme geared to republican objectives could hardly (Rabouille continues) take place all at once. The days following 18 March had seen an exodus of teachers from Paris:(77) and the extent to which rationalistic, free and compulsory instruction can prevail must in any case depend, all too obviously, upon the able and willing human resources available. These vary in fact from municipality to municipality.(78) There should be no compulsion for teachers to educate in accordance with precepts distasteful to them: therefore, in the 17th arrondissement, those wishing to cease their classes have been requested to advise the authorities. This is a sensible move on the Commune's part on grounds other than those of mere efficiency and practicality, for *'Mieux vaut, pour la Révolution, dix ennemis au dehors qu'un seul dans l'école'* (C 301). Commendably, some municipalities do not consider their responsibility to be limited merely to impartment of instruction. There is an added objective, within the 20th arrondissement, of providing clothes and food to pupils in want: *'...car il est juste d'inscrire, en tête d'un nouveau programme, (le) droit (des élèves) à la subsistance et au vêtement. Un enfant qui a faim et qui a froid est mal préparé pour recevoir des notions de morale'* (C 301-302).

Reference is made also by Rabouille to what is, in effect, an educational innovation: the opening in the rue Lhomond of a vocationally orientated school at which, in addition to more general instruction, boys will receive preparation for the trade they wish to

follow. Another such establishment for girls has already opened in the rue Dupuytren.(79) All in all then, it might be said that endeavours under the Commune to provide an education attuned to popular needs have been not inconsiderable:

Et tout cela, songez-y, monsieur Martin, s'accomplit sous les obus, au milieu d'une population en armes, ardente à défendre de chétives conquêtes, soit! mais qui constituent pour elle, néanmoins, un salaire supérieur aux trente sous de la solde journalière. (C 302)

M. Martin has heard enough, evidently, to acknowledge his earlier assumption to have been hasty ('*Le malheur, voyez-vous, c'est que la Commune cache ses bienfaits et répand ses erreurs*') (C 302). We remember that this conversation is taking place on the evening of 14 May; a few days before two significant measures which, because immediately preceding or taken concurrently with the Versaillais entry, had no time to yield results. A specific directive to close down church schools was issued to all municipalities by Edouard Vaillant on 19 May (some arrondissements - notably the 3rd, the 17th and the 18th - had been more zealous than others in attempted enforcement of secularisation).(80) Of arguably greater importance, however, an all-female commission to deal with girls' education was constituted on the 22nd. Had it been in no other way remarkable, the Commune's approach to this last question would suffice, no doubt, to place it as a movement in advance of its time: although Descaves of course does not insist upon this. Nor, in fact, is there specific acknowledgement in la Colonne of the far-sightedness and energy of Edouard Vaillant appointed Delegate to the Education Commission on 20 April, and very much its driving force from that date onwards.

Those steps taken by the Commune on behalf of the disadvantaged are then indicated at intervals in the text. The pension granted both wives and companions of fédérés killed in battle is referred to ('*La Commune...*', as maman Mazoudier expresses it, '*...ne reconnaît pas qu'aux femmes légitimes le droit d'avoir faim*') (C 69): similarly, the

cancellation of rent, and the importance for the city's indigent of the decree whereby goods could be retrieved from the mont-de-piété (C 64). As is made clear however in the discussions of Rabouille, Martin and Mazoudier, so much more might be done for those the Commune claims to represent. Instead of merely visiting churches and religious establishments with a view to harassment of clerics and nuns, why - Mazoudier wonders at one point - could not those now in authority in Paris lodge some of the needy in such places? With respect to the Invalides itself (built to accommodate six thousand men and now providing a home for only seven or eight hundred) the vacant rooms, Rabouille says, might be used

..pour les ouvriers, les victimes des métiers meurtriers, tant d'invalides du travail dont l'incessant labeur, la longue fatigue, l'indigence, la vieillesse et l'infirmité, méritent bien, après tout, les honneurs que l'on rend à des hommes dont l'héroïsme est uniquement d'avoir été blessés, par hasard. (C 104)

In the history of the stablehand père Bagarre, specific illustration is provided of the social injustices and illogicalities from which, by every means at its disposal, the Commune should attempt to distance itself. The old man had once saved the lives of three people by stopping a runaway horse: he had however, in the process, been incapacitated by a kick from the animal. Loss of job had resulted, poverty had set in, his wife had died of sorrow, and he had taken to drink. The stuff of melodrama or tragicomedy, a reader may feel: only, however, from a twentieth century perspective. When the misfortunes of père Bagarre are under discussion, Rabouille, naturally enough, will not allow the opportunity to pass for what can only seem, in the context of la Colonne, an appropriate indictment of mistaken social priorities:

Si, au lieu de sauver trois personnes, il les avait tuées à la guerre, une pension serait, avec la croix, sa récompense. (...) Il n'y a pas d'Invalides pour les vieux ouvriers estropiés et les héros civils. (C 117)

Possédant arrogance and hypocrisy are of course implicit in la Colonne. We can have no direct manifestation of such attitudes, for the simple reason that the characters of the novel (including the veterans) are nearly all, if only by origin, of the working class or the petite-bourgeoisie. The relative blamefulness of inactivity as determined by one's social position and advantages, is conveyed at one point by maman Mazoudier in what is, perhaps, a deceptively light-hearted fashion. Of Jéricho, whose greatest capacity is for sleep, one might say (as the old woman does) that such idleness is harmful only to Jéricho himself;

...tandis qu'elle serait nuisible aux autres, si les parents de Jéricho lui avaient laissé des rentes et s'il dormait dessus. Dans ce cas-là, personne ne lui adresserait de reproches, et il jouirait de l'estime générale. (C 69-70)

Periodic reminders throughout the novel of one of the army's essential functions might be considered, however, to constitute Descaves' principal condemnation of this less than equitable social order. For all that they have been drawn themselves from the ranks of society's less fortunate, the residents at the Invalides have in their majority served at one time or another as instruments in protection of the status quo within France. Things are not what they used to be, grumble some of the invalidos as they reflect, during the Commune, upon the time being taken by the regular army to gain entry into Paris: in our day, there would have been none of this shilly-shallying. One veteran savours reminiscence of the expeditious seizure of barricades set up in resistance to the coup d'état twenty years before:

Le soir du 4 décembre, on partit de la pointe Sainte-Eustache pour enlever au pas de course cinq barricades dans la rue Montorgueil et la rue Montmartre. Fallait voir ça!... C'était un plaisir de travailler à la baïonnette... On ramassait les fusils par brassées. (C 91)

Thus is conveyed, by indirect means, the professional soldier's sanguinary function in 'peacetime' as in war. The record of General de

Martimprey - established through Mazoudier's conversation with residents at the Invalides - could leave few in doubt as to his fitness to command now at such an institution. Is this not the same Martimprey, Mazoudier asks,

...qui marcha en 48 contre les Parisiens et, colonel du 27^e de ligne, en 51, présida la commission mixte chargée de condamner à mort ou à la déportation les républicains de la Nièvre? (C 136)

It is indeed - though the invalide to whom the question is addressed fails even to comprehend it - the same Martimprey.

Notwithstanding then suggestions that the 'reds' are demonic barbarians intent upon massacre and destruction, the truth would seem to be, as Mazoudier says on a later occasion,

..qu'il y a moins de sang dans le drapeau rouge tout entier, que dans la bande rouge du drapeau tricolore, traîné, lui, dans le sang de tous les peuples, y compris le peuple français. (C 227)

Descaves will of course make the point that defeat by a foreign power could, for the army, be quite satisfactorily expunged through repression of subversive elements at home. It matters little (Mazoudier comments, with a degree of foresight):

...que l'armée de la défense nationale ait été vaincue, pourvu que l'armée de la répression soit victorieuse. (...) Paris saigné à blanc, c'est pour la province quinze à vingt ans de tranquillité... (C 221)

As the agent Gérán intimates when talking to Lacouture and Prophète, it would in fact be almost as well if the Commune were to engage in every conceivable crime and folly. Supposing, Lacouture asks Gérán, the Commune proceeded to acts of vandalism, or to execution of hostages held? The nephew - who is in touch with opinion in governing circles at Versailles - voices what may be taken to be an unofficial viewpoint ('-Tout ce qui peut déconsidérer la Commune, devant l'opinion

publique, rend service au gouvernement...') (C 135). Tempting it might be for monsieur Thiers - Géran seems to infer - to exchange Blanqui for the Archbishop and others ('...(il y a) dans le rôle de sauveur, de quoi séduire le chef d'un pouvoir ébranlé') (C 135): in the long-term interests of society, however, those in power must be prepared to resist temptation, make necessary sacrifices (the Archbishop, in this case) and hope that the Commune will take advantage of the opportunities for massacre and mayhem available to it. In how much nobler a light, then, will appear those measures supposedly necessary to suppression of Barbarism and Evil. As the government sees it, Géran suggests, '*les circonstances sont assez graves pour que l'on accueille tous les moyens de restaurer le principe d'autorité si affaibli en France!*' (C 135).

If the irony of a passage such as this one seems more muted than might be the case in a Darien novel, Géran shows himself nonetheless to be a worthy counterpart to Monsieur Barbier of Bas les coeurs.

The climactic explication between Rabouille and Prophète on the evening of 15 May in the garden of the Buttes-Chaumont serves, among much else, to clarify any possible areas of uncertainty still remaining for the reader. Quéliier having told Prophète that Rabouille is the father of Adrien, the invalide is seeking confirmation of the appalling intelligence from Rabouille himself: the latter has a service to ask of his principal adversary. This paramount conversation in the novel is in fact a near monologue on Rabouille's part. As the Communard talks on and on, stating that he is indeed Adrien's father, recounting the circumstances and the nature of his liaison with Céline, explaining somewhat sanctimoniously his reasons for so detesting Prophète's influence over Adrien, outlining his views on warfare and the significance demolition of the Vendôme Column has for him, Prophète remains astonishingly if conveniently silent, allowing to pass without challenge views and judgements that could only be anathema to him, and

seized merely with the periodic urge to inflict harm with his iron hook, or put a bullet in his loquacious foe. Plausibility is stretched further however by the undertaking finally sought from the invalide... and by the latter's disconcertingly rapid awakening, as some might feel, to realisation of the error of his ways.

Having attended many of the republican meetings held during the final year of the Empire, Rabouille had, as he tells Prophète, extracted from the frequently confused and jumbled rhetoric a number of elevated and elevating truths that have since provided the foundation for his personal philosophy. He made it his mission to disseminate these ideas (*'Je me consacrai à leur diffusion, à leur application autour de moi, et je m'habituai à considérer le petit Adrien comme un terrain d'adoption à ensemençer'*) (C 345). In the past, Rabouille admits, his aversion to Prophète lay not merely in the erosion of his own influence over Adrien, but in jealousy at the evident adoration felt by the little boy for the invalide. Gradually, however, he has succeeded in overcoming such unworthy grounds for antagonism:

...je n'en veux qu'au mirage par lequel vous avez séduit cet enfant; je n'en veux qu'à votre influence d'avoir tué en lui, chaque jour, les germes de sagesse, de justice et de bonté, qu'il recevait de mes leçons. Je m'adressais à son intelligence et vous parliez à ses instincts; je m'efforçais d'élever son esprit à des notions de beauté et d'harmonie et vous le rejetiez dans l'horreur et la barbarie; j'ouvrais ses yeux sur la vie, sur des images riantes, paisibles et fécondes, et vous tourniez ses regards vers la mort la plus absurde, vers des images désolées, violentes et stériles. Je lui montrais des hommes et vous lui faisiez voir des spectres. Vous étiez le sorcier moderne, qui a remplacé le bonnet pointu par une coiffure militaire et le bâton magique par le bâton de maréchal. Ah! n'en doutez pas, c'est de toutes mes forces que je vous ai détesté! Je vous ai détesté comme un cultivateur déteste la sécheresse, la grêle et la gelée. (C 345)

Rabouille the upholder of humanity, intelligence and spiritual richness has then according to his own grandiloquent representation waged a losing battle with Prophète the sorcerer; under whose influence a youthful neophyte receptive to what was good and true had been lured to the path of sterility and nothingness. While Rabouille

does not describe it thus, the contest as represented by him is of course manichean in nature: Light versus Darkness, Good versus Evil. There is a mild irony, perhaps, in the likening of the invalide to a destroyer who has, in effect, nipped in the bud any burgeoning seeds of wisdom and tolerance in young Adrien's soul: for in another of those inclusions early in the novel which suggest that Prophète is not some inconvertible replica of a military stereotype, he is said to be a keen gardener, one of whose greatest pleasures is to tend the shrubs and flowers in his tiny plot at the Invalides (C 126). Indications of this kind are essentially confirmed by the information that Prophète feels at peace with himself also when walking in the park on the Buttes-Chaumont. The caretakers' lodges he sees there arouse his envy:

Il eût voulu vivre et finir dans un de ces petits chalets. Il avait choisi les Invalides faute de mieux. Entre un emploi de gardien de square et une existence de soldat laboureur, il n'eût pas hésité. (C 338)

It will be clear now, Rabouille continues, why the fate of a monument symbolising '*...la force et la gloire dans ce qu'elles ont de plus malfaisant*' (C 346) should have assumed such importance for him. His motives for working actively to bring about demolition have never derived (as some acquaintances imagine) simply from a wish to further antagonise Prophète himself. Accomplishment of the objective would be, far more importantly:

..l'affirmation d'un principe de concorde et de fraternité, (...) l'affirmation d'une morale fondée sur le travail et le développement des facultés créatrices et productives de l'individu. (C 346)

The Communard will proceed, logically enough, to an outline of his (and Descaves') views on warfare and soldiery. The professional soldier should have no place in the scheme of things: once invading armies threatening the home territory have been repulsed (as in 1792), '*le soldat qui (...) ne retourne pas volontairement à la charrue, aux outils de sa profession, (...) est un parasite que son pays a le devoir de congédier*' (C 346). Fittingly, no doubt, in this novel excoriating

the memory of Napoleon, Rabouille will deplore that consequence of the Great Revolution whereby a low-born ambitieux previously 'condemned' to subaltern obscurity found himself able, if talented enough, to attain the highest ranks. A career cannot justifiably be made of war, which is no more than

...un accident qui ne comporte d'indemnités aux mutilés, aux veuves et aux parents sans soutiens, que s'il s'agit de la défense légitime des foyers. (C 346)

Having meditated long and hard over the past week upon the import of this planned act of demolition, Rabouille himself, he admits, has at times doubted whether it is all worthwhile. On defeat of the Commune the monument scheduled to topple the following day will be re-erected to the acclamations of the multitude, for social conditioning cannot be reversed overnight; and the people, '*...bestialisé par des siècles d'ignorance, de pâtées et de fouet, retournera à son vomissement*' (C 347). The example of the Communards themselves has been wanting in that they have for the most part been unwilling to break free from the glorious ancestral pattern. It will be for the teachers of the future, when the gropings and hesitations of some timorous, transitory pseudo-republic have been outgrown, to inculcate in their young charges the merits of brotherhood and peace. At this later time, moreover, the significance of the gesture of demolition will be understood: it is therefore the duty of the Commune, Rabouille concludes,

...de donner le signal auquel nos successeurs répondront, en achevant de ruiner, dans les esprits, la religion de la gloire militaire et de la conquête brutale, religion ébranlée par nous dans ses rites et ses représentations. Cet article de foi est notre patente de libérateurs. On aura beau relever la Colonne abattue, le geste de la Commune restera sur elle, comme un éteignoir sur un cierge. (C 347-348)

It would be carrying improbability too far, of course, to have Prophète yield as of now. He will point out mockingly that the Column has yet to be demolished: and when this attempted provocation fails,

indulges in aggressive taunts ('...j' imagine que ce n'est pas uniquement pour me débiter ces balivernes que vous avez désiré me rencontrer') (C 348). Rabouille's disclosure that he plans now to 'disappear' engenders outright venom. Nothing surprising in that, Prophète sneeringly rejoins, now that the game is up for the Commune: and of course, once the crisis is past, back you will come to step into Ferdinand's shoes. These however are merely words on Prophète's part, a desperate attempt to convince himself - in defiance of his own instinct and knowledge - that Rabouille is indeed the rogue and the reprobate Prophète would like him to be. When Rabouille points out the nonsensicality of the charge (Prophète is only too aware of the steps he (Rabouille) has taken on Ferdinand's behalf, particularly as the invalide has himself found a place of hiding for his nephew) the reply is brief and brutal ('- La belle avance... si vous le connaissez!') (C 348).

While Rabouille clearly does not merit the tag of unprincipled, blackguardly seducer, his confession of the former affair with Céline might of course superficially justify such an impression in the mind of one anxious to view him in this light. Perhaps seeing himself confusedly as an avenger of violated family honour, Prophète reaches for his revolver ('Vous dites que vous allez disparaître. Vous ne pouvez être un bon débarras pour nous que si votre départ est définitif. C'est mon affaire qu'il le devienne')(C 349). The gesture, in its melodramatic theatricality, does not elicit, however, even fleeting alarm on the part of Rabouille, who looks on indifferently as Prophète struggles to free the weapon which has become entangled in the lining of his pocket. In a further touch which serves to underscore the absurdity of the situation, poetic declamation is suddenly to be heard: Rabouille lifts his eyes to see the actor Adolphe posturing and gesticulating from a vantage point some distance away, in rehearsal for his intended public recitation the following day of Barbier's 'l'Idole'. By the time Rabouille's attention has returned to the invalide, the revolver is levelled at him; but a somewhat discomfited Prophète has no thought now of pulling the trigger:

Le contretemps, l'appel d'Adolphe, avaient suffi pour dissiper son vertige, et il demeurait là, stupide, dans le ridicule de sa vaine menace et guetté par un ridicule plus grand encore s'il la mettait à exécution, car, superstitieux, il était à présent convaincu que son arme raterait s'il en faisait usage. (C 349)

It might be noted that a reference some pages earlier to the revolver in Prophète's pocket has provided the opportunity for a somewhat contrived foreshadowing of the events of the semaine sanglante. Following a conversation with Lépozé in which the barber has shown himself at his most pusillanimous, Prophète, as he continues on his way through Belleville, reflects in disgruntlement upon the bad faith and cowardice of so many about him. The bumping of the pistol against his leg gives rise to suitably bellicose impulses: it would not matter much, he says to himself, if one of these puppets were dispatched today, for:

On ne discute pas avec des chiens enragés, on les abat..., puisqu'il n'y a pas moyen de les guérir. Les mettre hors d'état de nuire est un droit légitime. (C 335)

While this seems a rather ferocious indictment of the weak-willed vacillators and turncoats Prophète has in mind, thoughts of this type are in clear conformity with those expressed or intimated in army and possédant circles during the repression period. The man finally threatened with the weapon is of course one in whom Prophète is obliged to recognise qualities of courage and integrity during times which seem to him distinctly unheroic.

Confronted by this former soldier and one of the tools of his trade, Rabouille, as seen, displays no fear whatever. Dismissing with indulgent irony the invalides's less than dexterous gunmanship ('*Il faut laisser ces procédés-là aux chefs de l'armée régulière qui opère contre nous. La bourgeoisie, qui paie les généraux, en veut pour son argent*') (C 350) he proceeds to a far more serious matter: his reason for seeking this meeting with Prophète.

The invalide had wanted to be rid of Rabouille for good: he will now have tangible proof that the Communard is indeed planning such a departure. Producing a small packet, Rabouille tells Prophète that this contains the totality of his riches: eighteen hundred francs in bank notes, and a silver watch and chain. The money is to be spent in educating Adrien according to instructions Rabouille will now provide: the watch, also intended for the little boy, is to be handed to him once it is clear his father will never again reappear in the Lhomme family circle. Rabouille has sufficient faith in Prophète, he says, to be confident that any wishes he might express as to Adrien's future direction will be respected if he himself is no more ('...vous endurez de ma mémoire ce que vous n'avez jamais toléré de ma personne') (C 350). Should there be a resemblance between Adrien and himself (and it has been remarked upon) Prophète will have constantly before him the image of his former adversary; and this will hopefully suffice to curb any temptation he might feel to slip back into his bad old ways. Let there be no more tales of massacre and mayhem, the Communard sermonises:

Enseignez-lui [à Adrien] plutôt les vertus de la paix, la bonté, l'aide et le dévouement mutuels, et que les hommes peuvent employer à s'améliorer les uns les autres, l'ardeur qu'ils apportent à s'entre-nuire et à s'entre-dévorer. Apprenez-lui l'héroïsme obscur et bienfaisant de tous les sauveteurs et de tous les gardiens d'existences humaines; apprenez-lui l'utilité de vivre, d'être juste et d'aimer. (C 351)

There is of course one major obstacle to contend with. For Prophète to successfully inculcate these ideas, it will be necessary for him to acquire them himself. Should he succeed in this however (Rabouille further pontificates), he will have achieved the most resounding and honourable of victories,

...celle dont nul au-dessus de vous, ni Dieu, ni général, ni maître, ne vous frustrera en s'en attribuant l'honneur. Et votre conscience sera pleine d'une telle joie et d'un tel orgueil, que vous sentirez l'inanité de toute autre récompense. (C 351)

It is hardly excessive to see in Rabouille's discourse a latter-day Sermon on the Mount: he is, we remember, speaking on the Buttes-Chaumont. The Rabouille of 1871 is indeed a being of superior moral fibre, a Communard saint who is prepared to give his life that others (Adrien, and even Prophète himself) may be saved. His very instructions to the invalide might appropriately be terminated by the words: 'Do this in remembrance of me'. Rabouille has experienced all of the saint's soul-searching inner struggle; and has, saint-like, achieved apparent victory over the evil within. Perhaps, however, the self-congratulatory candour of his allusions to such battles indicates a lack of the humility associated with the true paragon. If Ferdinand inspired in me the detestable sentiments you say he does, Prophète is told:

...je trouverais en moi la force de les surmonter. J'en ai réprimé de plus pressants, j'ai soutenu des luttes intérieures plus périlleuses. Je ne me gonfle pas d'héroïsme... et pourtant, je crois qu'il m'a fallu souvent plus de courage pour me vaincre moi-même, sans effusion de sang, que vous n'avez déployé de vaillance en répandant celui des autres. (C 349)

Should Prophète the unreflecting transgressor succeed in vanquishment of his former self, the satisfaction engendered by knowledge that this victory is his alone will (Rabouille tells him) far outweigh whatever pleasure might have been obtained by conferment of some specious honour or decoration. In a novel in which an ethos generally accepted is presented as wrong, misguided, dangerous, Rabouille's lesson, while not particularly original, underscores the defensible tenet according to which Descaves himself seems always to have lived. The individual's ultimate responsibility is to himself and to his conscience: the approval of others can, per se, provide no valid basis for one's own life and thinking.

The foundations for Adrien's humanitarianism having hopefully been laid by Prophète, the boy when he is older (Rabouille says) is to use the money left him to travel. Equipped practically for life - it is a logical enough assumption on Rabouille's part that his son will adopt a

trade - Adrien will come to understand the principle of international brotherhood through direct experience of the lands to which, in other circumstances, he might have been dispatched as a soldier. He will realise, Rabouille says,

...qu'on peut faire plus de chemin dans le monde avec une trousse de tailleur, d'ébéniste ou de serrurier, qu'avec un fusil à l'épaule, et que les seules conquêtes morales et durables sont celles de la science et du travail. L'homme qu'on envoie à l'étranger comme apprenti n'a pas envie d'y retourner comme soldat. C'est une assurance contre la haine qu'il contracte. Promettez-moi qu'Adrien en aura le bénéfice et souhaitons ensemble qu'il en accroisse l'héritage. (C 351)

The instructions imparted as to his son's future course, Rabouille's homily is nearly done. He concludes with a tribute to the Revolutionary legacy and to France's role in shaping world attitudes; with a further indictment of the Napoleonic influence; and with a positive observation to the effect that, notwithstanding the Warmonger's obstruction of the move towards enlightenment, humankind might legitimately feel that progress has been made. As the invalide listens to these final words (expressed with timely parallel) there are indeed signs of a transformation in him:

La Révolution de 89 a marqué midi au cadran de la pensée française, qui donne l'heure au monde. C'est à peine, en ce siècle, si l'aiguille, arrêtée par Napoléon, aura fait un tour. Mais une heure par siècle vers la liberté intégrale, universelle, l'humanité peut se contenter de ce progrès.

Tandis que coulaient, rafraîchissant l'atmosphère, ces paroles de source, Prophète remettait furtivement le pistolet dans sa poche, si bien qu'il eut la main libre, à la fin, pour recevoir le dépôt de Rabouille.

- Ai-je votre promesse? répéta celui-ci.

- Vous l'avez, dit l'invalide, initié, par une illumination soudaine, à l'oeuvre de Rédemption sociale que l'ouvrier incarnait. (C 351)

Prophète has then seen the light.(81) The revolver is slipped furtively out of sight as though in repudiation of the values that have

governed Prophète's thinking hitherto: acceptance of the money for Adrien's future is almost a symbolic commitment to a new beginning. Rabouille, for his part, is to die that his example may better live on: *'S'il est nécessaire que je meure pour vivre devant vous...'* (he declares selflessly) *'...qu'à cela ne tienne...'* C 350).

However apparently Christ-like Rabouille's giving of his life for the redemption of others, it has to be said that his intended suicide seems to find its root, quite as much as any other, in a very human sense of discouragement and despair. Conversations with Céline have made it clear to him that he can expect to play no significant role in Adrien's life. He is likely, in fact, to remain for his son little more than a poor second to Prophète: and time would no doubt see a further diminution of influence. If his attachment to Céline herself has none of the intensity of days gone by, the realisation of the gulf between them making even understanding and friendship impossible had been the previous day a source of distress. The loss of such companions as Flourens and Mazoudier has presumably taken its toll: and of the imminent defeat of the Commune there can be no question. In the mood then that one might suppose to be his on this evening in mid-May, would there be grounds for surprise if Rabouille saw his death as providing the solution to an impasse; as an outcome which, if ostensibly negative, could only yield lastingly beneficial result? Having secured from Prophète a promise as to Adrien's future, Rabouille can 'disappear' in the knowledge that his child may yet live in the noblest sense of the word. This voluntary 'departure' is highly expedient of course from Descaves' point of view: no less so the considerably rapid conversion of Prophète himself. In its psychological improbability, this second development is in fact exceeded only by its usefulness in providing the novel with a dénouement.

On the morning of 16 May then, Rabouille will take his leave of life in circumstances recounted that evening by Quéliier at the Lhomme cafeteria. The troop had been in combat near Créteil: Versailles

forces occupying Fresnes, Rungis and la Belle-Epine presented in fact little threat, a few bullets sufficing to repel any scouts who might periodically appear. Safe behind their barricades, the Communards were preparing to deal in this way with a further reconnaissance patrol, when suddenly,

...sans raison, Rabouille, qui faisait le coup de feu à côté de nous, sortit de la barricade et s'avança, tout seul, sur la route, en tirillant... C'était de la folie. Rien ne l'obligeait à se découvrir, à risquer ainsi inutilement sa vie... Il n'obéissait pas à un ordre; au contraire; tout le monde lui criait de rentrer, d'autant plus qu'il gênait notre tir et que nous n'osions plus riposter, de peur de l'atteindre. Mais il avait l'air de ne pas nous entendre... ou bien c'était comme un parti pris de sa part. Il fit une vingtaine de pas et s'arrêta pour recharger son fusil. Mais au moment même où il l'épaulait, nous vîmes le fusil lui échapper et Rabouille tomber, la face en avant, foudroyé par une balle au front. (C 373)

Foreshadowed as we have seen by Gustave Flourens' courting of death on 3 April, this end is, in its nature, superficially reminiscent of the 'suicide' of Charles Delescluze nine days afterwards at the barricade du Château d'Eau. Prophète, who has arrived from the place Vendôme in time to hear Quéliier's account, will have the opportunity that evening to begin the task entrusted him. Adrien, of course, is playing with a toy pistol when his great-uncle enters the Lhomme kitchen: as a child in whom kindness and sensitivity have been essentially destroyed, it is further appropriate that his only remark on being told of Rabouille's death should be: ' - Ah!... C'est de quoi être content pour toi... Il ne te fera plus enrager' (C 375). As Prophète gives his first lesson in brotherly love (one should never be nasty, he tells his young pupil; nor wish harm on anyone); as he tells of the tragic losses inflicted on Scottish troops at the battle of Inkerman - troops who are, as one might expect, described initially as English - it is hardly surprising if his habitual audience (Adrien, Sophie, Céline) feels a degree of bewilderment. The tunes played by a Highland piper until he too is killed provide the basis for Prophète's anecdotal fare this evening:

Avec quelques notes, le musicien exprimait tout, rappelait tout, résumait tout: l'enfance heureuse et bercée, les simples travaux, les veillées de famille, les joies du foyer, dans l'abondance et le calme, et l'éternel décor de la montagne natale, où tous ils comptaient mourir, après une existence bien remplie. Comme (les soldats) en étaient loin à présent, de leur Ecosse, et pourquoi l'avaient-ils quittée? Pourquoi? Le joueur de cornemuse mourut sans le savoir... Une balle l'acheva... Et ses frères d'armes redoublaient de pleurs sur lui, car il n'emportait pas le secret du bonheur: il le leur avait révélé.

Céline, Sophie, Adrien, écoutaient l'oncle... Et, tandis qu'il parlait, jamais Rabouille évanoui, invisible, n'avait empli davantage la maison de sa présence et de son prestige. (C 376)

To the Lhomme family, and to Prophète himself, Rabouille's death has been then - as he himself hoped - nothing short of a boon. Later that evening, as Prophète returns to the Invalides, he has in his mind's eye an image of his former enemy's corpse:

Sa pensée ne pouvait se détacher de Rabouille. Il se le représentait étendu, le front troué, la barbe souillée, les yeux grands ouverts... et la vision obsédante lui donnait, pour la première fois, cette perception nette de la mort, du vide irréparable, de l'absence indéfinie, qu'il n'avait jamais eue sur les champs de bataille les plus encombrées de victimes, ni devant les corps ensanglantés de ses meilleurs amis. Jamais, en les voyant disparaître, fauchés, il n'avait pris souci des forces immenses perdues, en un jour, une heure, une minute; des intelligences pareilles à celles de Rabouille, éteintes brusquement, s'échappant par une déchirure... Il faisait petit jour dans son esprit, comme dans celui d'un enfant recevant ces premières et fortes impressions qui ne s'effaceront plus. Ainsi, du cadavre de Rabouille, émanait encore une introduction à la Vie. (C 379)

If this reference to Prophète's as yet rudimentary degree of awareness rings slightly false in view of the lesson imparted to Adrien only hours before, it does serve of course to underscore the idea of a spiritual regeneration on the invalide's part. Never more alive for the Lhomme family than when dead, Rabouille, as somewhat morbidly imagined now by Prophète, enables the veteran to appreciate at last the waste and futility accompanying warfare. Having been brought thus to the threshold of enlightenment, it is seemly that there should be an

implicit repudiation by Prophète of the cult to which he has dedicated his life. As he enters his room at the Invalides, his eye is caught as usual by the old grenadier in the Epinal picture,

..exhalant, avec son dernier soupir, une suprême flatterie à l'adresse de l'Empereur debout devant lui: "Sire, ce linceul vaut bien la croix!"

Mais l'invalidé n'était pas d'humeur à écouter cette radoterie; et l'index menaçant l'image, il dit:

- Allons, allons..., ce soir, pas de grimaces! (C 380)

It is on this encouraging note that the novel concludes. There is some irony however in the fact that Prophete's 'awakening' comes only days before entry of the Forces of Order; and the onset of a blood bath carried out with the endorsement of so much of 'civilised' France and Europe. In what light, we may wonder, will the soldier reformed view this further manifestation of military valour; perceived by many, at the conclusion of the semaine sanglante, as a restorative to confidence in the nation's defenders. By his triumph over the Socialist Demon, the Noble Fighting Man of France had made good, for the present, the calamity of defeat at Prussian hands.

It is with an image-charged appreciation of the significance of 16 May that Descaves opens the concluding chapter of la Colonne. Entering its sixtieth day on the morning of that portentous date, the Commune is said to be already in its delirious death-throes. In the afternoon however,

...dans un effort pour se lever, elle flanquait par terre la colonne Vendôme, comme fait d'un bougeoir à portée de sa main, sur la table de nuit, un malade agité. Et, par un phénomène singulier, à peine avait-elle renversé ce lumignon qu'une autre main invisible écartait les rideaux et que le soleil entrant dans la chambre, mettait au front de l'agonisante un rayon d'immortalité. (C 356)

In the confusion and uncertainty of these its final days, hardly aware even of what it is doing, the Commune proceeds to accomplishment

of the edict of 12 April. In view of the antimilitaristic thrust of la Colonne and the very event upon which the novel is based, it is to be expected that Descaves should suggest demolition of the Vendôme Column to be the most significant act carried out during the Commune's brief lifespan. The title given the chapter ('Nunc dimittis') is manifestly relevant in terms both of history and individual, fictional destiny. The Communards, for whom defeat is now only days away, have by implication earned themselves a niche in history through this act alone: Rabouille, as we have seen, has provided through his death the means by which Adrien and Prophète might be initiated to life. Descaves may however have been prompted to selection of this particular title after a reading of Maxime Du Camp's les Convulsions de Paris: (82) a work he has clearly consulted and drawn upon, for all that it is, in spirit, totally at variance with his own book.

The inclusion of a substantial volume of information in the opening pages of the chapter places the act of demolition within the framework of the overall situation in Paris and Versailles on or within a day or two of 16 May. We are told, among much else, that the Commune's Journal Officiel has adopted the revolutionary calendar for the first time on that date; that the Louvre is now closed; that André Gill has been made provisional administrator of the Luxembourg museum; that six further newspapers have been closed down, some promptly to reappear under a new name. Descaves tells us the titles of plays being performed in Paris, and in what theatres; of the activity or inactivity of various delegates; of measures adopted or contemplated by the Commune. All of this recalls the method followed by Hugo in such pieces of writing as 'l'Année 1817' (les Misérables) and 'les Rues de Paris dans ce temps-là' (Quatrevingt-treize). The very phrasing indeed ('*Blanqui était en prison. Darboy aussi. Et le père Beslay également - à la Banque de France*') (C 358) has often a Hugolian ring. Recurrently, in these opening pages of the chapter, Descaves emphasises that Paris is a city under sentence of death. Having outlined a number of ineffectual or unavailing measures adopted by the new Committee of Public Safety, and the frenetic, sometimes

ill-conceived projects of this delegate or that, Descaves adds ominously:

Et la petite montre qu'avaient offerte, en 1864, les ouvriers relieurs à Varlin, comptait, sur la poitrine de ce juste, les heures qui le séparaient du martyr. (C 357)

Reference is made also to the calls by the Scientific Delegation for those holding supplies of sulphur, phosphate and petrol to declare their possessions to the authorities; and quotation supplied of the famous warning to Thiers published in le Cri du Peuple ('*Si M. Thiers est chimiste, il nous comprendra. Que l'armée de Versailles sache bien que Paris est décidé à tout plutôt que de se rendre*') (C 357).(83) And yet, we are told, good humour and light-heartedness prevail even now in the streets:

..on chantait, tandis que l'armée de Versailles poursuivait ses travaux d'approche dans le bois de Boulogne et que les canons continuaient d'aboyer, la nuit, comme des chiens de ferme surexcités. (C 359)

Allied to suggestions of wilful destruction by the Commune itself, and of impending danger from another quarter, is the fact of dissension within the Commune's ranks, the split between the Jacobin majority and the socialist minority. The latter's manifesto of 15 May is likened to '*...le mouchoir de Delescluze: la Commune y crachait, dans une quinte, son sang et sa vie*' (C 359).(84) The Commune is doomed as Delescluze himself is, both '*...frappés à mort, minés par le même mal sourd et déchirant*' (C 359). Meanwhile, a few miles away, the hyenas, jackals and foxes (in Descaves' phrasing) savour the prospect of certain victory: '*Les journaux imprimés à Versailles ou à Saint-Germain sonnaient l'hallali et préludaient (...) à la curée chaude qu'ils jugeaient imminente*' (C 360). Mazoudier, were he still alive and aware of developments, would have now every reason for despair: for at the very time the Column was falling, Descaves writes:

...l'Assemblée nationale refusait de reconnaître la République pour gouvernement de la France, (...) et, docile à la motion du général Du Temple, décrétait, "afin de ne pas faire attendre Dieu davantage", des prières publiques pour attirer la protection divine sur le pays. (C 360)

In the pages describing the ambiance at the place Vendôme on 16 May, Descaves has taken considerable pains to create an impression of atmosphere and authenticity: his dual role of novelist and historian is perhaps more strongly evident here than in any other part of la Colonne. While in his reconstruction of events he may well have been aided by memories of his own as by the recollections of friends and acquaintances made in later life,⁽⁸⁵⁾ it is clear, as indicated already, that use has been made of written sources as well. The result is a not unsuccessful fusion of various accounts, and of imagination and fiction, in a well documented and skilfully integrated whole. A number of references are based on the relevant section of les Convulsions de Paris: Descaves writes as Du Camp does of the brass bands at various points on the place Vendôme; of Félix Pyat, clothed in black and carrying two revolvers in his belt; of the presence of M. Glais-Bizoin, a former deputy and a member of the Government constituted on 4 September; of Henri de Rochefort in an open carriage on the boulevard in front of the rue de la Paix.⁽⁸⁶⁾ There is of course inclusion on Descaves' part of the unusual or memorable item of information. He refers, therefore, to the anxiety of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood who have stuck strips of paper over their home and shop windows in anticipation of breakage as the monument crashes down:⁽⁸⁷⁾ and of the placing by Simon Mayer of a tricolour at the Column's summit, this in lieu of the red flag of the Commune which will thus be spared the ignominy of falling with the Emperor (C 365).⁽⁸⁸⁾ Some of those holding authority under the Commune, and gathered to witness the spectacle, are described with a certain imaginative flair: Miot, '*...enveloppé dans ses principes de 89 et dans sa barbe de 48*' (C 361): Gustave Tridon, '*...pâle, débile et impatient, comme un convive que la mort guette au sortir du repas*' (C 361): '*...le vaste Courbet, en chapeau de paille, portant encore avec assurance, le poids*

trop lourd pour lui, d'une légende agréable à sa vanité' (C 365-366).

The bare facts relating to demolition of the Column on 16 May are widely known: the snapping of a cable at the first attempt to overturn the monument; the wait until the capstan could be replaced; and then, late in the afternoon, the moment originally scheduled to take place eleven days before. The initial failed attempt at demolition is of course convenient for Descaves' purposes, linking as it does with his representation of foul play from the inside. Georges Cavalier (alias Pipe-en-Bois) who is overseeing operations together with the engineers Iribe and Abadie, testily upbraids the Piedmontese when the latter is unable to tell him the whereabouts of Rabouille; and demands that the machinist (said to have been responsible for installing the capstan) be found forthwith. Cavalier's principal concern in fact is that the manhole cover to which the capstan is fastened should be secure: he is therefore paying less attention to the capstan itself than he might otherwise have done...

The mood of the crowds gathered in surrounding streets is an all-important element in these pages: their light-hearted gaiety and good-humoured irony, their increasing turbulence as the preparations for demolition drag on.⁽⁸⁹⁾ Irreverent popular refrains and zestful dialogue punctuate the narration: as elsewhere in the novel, conversation is often a means whereby further background information - conveyed this time with a typically Parisian bagou - might be included:

- Paraît qu'un English a offert deux mille francs pour monter le dernier sur la Colonne.
- Pourquoi qui s'est pas adressé à moi? J'y aurais pris moins cher qu'au bureau.
- Des blagues! La vérité, la v'là. Une compagnie belge a proposé à la Commune d'acheter les débris de la Colonne pour en faire des réductions et les vendre. (C 362) ⁽⁹⁰⁾

When newspapers relating the demolition of a Column that is still very much upright go on sale about four o'clock, crowd amusement and brio are, understandably enough, unbounded:

"C'est peut-être nous qui avons la berlue... Hé! Jules, tu la vois? - Oui. - Eh ben! mon vieux, c'est une erreur de tes sens abusés... Ce que tu prends pour la Colonne, c'est le câble d'un ballon captif. La Colonne... y en a plus... rasée! Non? Alors c'est une poutre que t'as dans l'oeil... On va t'enlever ça en soufflant dessus." (C 367-368)

Factual elements are of course used throughout the chapter as a starting-point for fictionalised inclusions. When Adolphe, who climbs on to the pedestal once the monument has fallen, has time to do little more than strike an attitude before being ordered down, Descaves may be drawing on a fleeting episode mentioned by Du Camp.⁽⁹¹⁾ Far more important, however, is the presence of a contingent from the Invalides - an entirely fitting, indeed essential inclusion in view of all that has preceded. It would appear that a number of war veterans were actually present at the demolition on 16 May:⁽⁹²⁾ although Du Camp - in whose view the invalides were '*...(ceux) qui ont porté au plus haut degré l'honneur et l'influence militaires de la France...*'⁽⁹³⁾ and who deplores the act of wicked sacrilege certain to cause them such distress - writes that despite the hopes of the crowd living almost in anticipation of the arrival of veterans from the Invalides, none came.⁽⁹⁴⁾ The invalides, in la Colonne, arrive at the scene: the crowd's initial half-expectation that there will be some attempt on their part to prevent the demolition, yields rapidly however to disappointed awareness that no such venture is likely given that the five - Lacouture, Prophète, Cassavoix, Lapuchet, Clavquin - are not an advance guard to an army of outraged and resolute fellow residents intent upon protection of their idol. Particularly appropriate, one might feel (as Descaves himself obviously does), is the presence on this occasion of the armless Cassavoix, '*emblème de l'héroïsme militaire*':

Amputé, par surcroît, des deux jambes, on l'eût peut-être porté en triomphe jusqu'à la Colonne, comme une offrande humaine sur l'autel des sacrifices. Il incarnait l'idéal barbare dans son principe. A quoi bon les réductions en bronze de la Colonne? Celui-là en était une en chair et en os, vivante et inutile, la plus propre entre toutes à inspirer l'horreur des massacres, des conquêtes et de la gloire obtenue à prix de Shylock. Ces deux troncs creux et superbes, le grand et le petit, la cause et l'effet, pouvaient se regarder une dernière fois, avant que l'un précédât l'autre dans le néant. (C 364)

The presence of the invalides has a symbolism suggested already by the discrepancy between initial crowd anticipation and the reality of the contingent's powerlessness to hinder or prevent demolition. Having taken up a position near the barricade in the rue de la Paix, they are said to be quickly forgotten by the other onlookers. Merely spectators themselves, '*...n'ayant plus que leur place au parterre, comme tout le monde...*' (C 365) these men seem now divested of all prestige and significance, to have come down (as Descaves puts it) from their pedestal, '*...eux aussi, - avant l'autre!*' (C 365). Behind the scenes, however, at least one of them has displayed a certain resourcefulness in attempted deflection of the course of events. The great moment is at hand, the attention of thousands is focused in expectation... when crack! As the capstan veers sideways, knocking over one of the men turning it; as, amidst exclamation, exasperation, recrimination, Cavalier, Iribe and Abadie rush forward; as it is realised that the instrument has been sawn through by two-thirds, Prophète's eyes meet the gleamingly triumphant gaze of the Piedmontese. In this instance, communication has no need of words. There is seemingly little chance that the venture will proceed that afternoon; and by the morrow, who knows but that the Versaillais might not be in Paris? The one factor that is disturbing to Prophète is that Rabouille's continued absence (it has yet to be confirmed that he is dead) results in a somewhat hasty assumption on the part of some that the machinist is behind the contretemps:

Cavalier, fébrile, répétait:

- Voyons, il n'y a pas moyen de mettre la main sur ce Rabouille... C'est singulier. Il y a quelque chose là-dessous.

Il se tourna vers un petit homme en paletot gris à col de velours noir:

- Ferré, vous devriez ouvrir une enquête.

Mais Théophile Ferré, les doigts dans sa barbe noire et fine, l'oeil dur derrière les verres du binocle qui chevauchait son nez bossu, répondit sans bouger:

- Croyez-vous qu'il n'y ait rien à faire de plus pressé?

A quelques pas de là, Prophète les observait et, sachant à quoi s'en tenir, était tout ensemble reconnaissant à Rabouille de son absence et contrarié qu'elle laissât peser un soupçon sur lui.
(C 367)

Contrary to expectation, however, the reprieve of the Warmonger cum War God will be all too short. There is, in fact, a mild oversight on Descaves' part, interesting if only because representative of many such in both his major novels, particularly Philémon vieux de la vieille. Following the abortive first attempt at demolition, the time is said to be four o'clock. An hour afterwards, a windlass has been brought; for the installation of which, and arrangement of the cables, a further hour is needed. We are told, however, that it is about a quarter past five when the monument is actually toppled.⁽⁹⁵⁾ Be this as it may, a part of the place Vendôme is eventually cleared for the second time that afternoon:

Au loin, la foule se taisait, béante. Et il n'y avait plus que l'Empereur de bronze qui pût, ébloui, voir du haut de la Colonne le soleil se coucher par-dessus les maisons de la place. Il le vit effectivement pour la dernière fois, lorsque la Colonne secouée, après une légère oscillation, comme pour conserver son équilibre, le perdit tout à coup, s'inclina et, brisée en trois morceaux, vint s'abattre avec un bruit sourd et en soulevant des nuages de poussière, sur sa litière dispersée. (C 369-370)

This description is clearly drawn from that found in les Convulsions de Paris.⁽⁹⁶⁾ Headless, and with a broken arm, the despot Caesar lies now abject in the bed of boughs and manure prepared for him. It seems almost a symbolic commentary on his fate (and a touch, furthermore, that is convenient for the novel's message) that the winged victory atop the orb in his left hand should also have snapped adrift. The head has rolled a little way from the trunk:

Un ouvrier s'en approcha et la poussa du pied, comme on aligne un point sous une exclamation. Car c'était renversée, couchée à son tour, comme les millions de cadavres que sa chute consolait dans leur tombe; c'était alors vraiment que la Colonne méritait qu'on la comparât, avec Théophile Gautier, à un gigantesque point d'exclamation posé au bout de la phrase sonore du premier Empire! (C 370)

It is in petrified shock, Descaves writes, that the five invalides (Prophète included) have witnessed the collapse of the Monument. Clavquin, who had been hoping with an almost touching egoism that the

sight would suffice to jolt him to his feet, sits now in near tearful silence at this ultimate confirmation he will never walk again. Prophète and Lacouture

...regardaient fixement devant eux un point ou plutôt une ligne, dans l'espace, et réédifiaient imaginativement la Colonne... Et l'Empereur, manchot aussi, gisait non loin de Cassavoix, comme un frère à l'image de sa destinée.

Mais le vieux Lapuchet était le plus atteint. Au moment où la Colonne tombait, il avait ouvert la bouche toute grande et jeté un cri de: Vive l'Empereur! qui s'était perdu dans le tumulte. Et dans cet hommage suprême et véhément, sa dernière dent avait sauté; il restait immobile, la mâchoire disloquée, la face effrayante, avec les deux trous noirs qu'y creusaient l'orbite et la bouche vides. (C 371)

In the destiny of Prophète himself, the destruction assumes a particular significance - whether he is at the moment aware of the fact or not. Initiated as he has been to another Faith, it corresponds almost to a definitive break with the past, to a symbolic leave-taking of his errant former ways. It has again to be mentioned, however, that for Napoleon this humiliation of 16 May 1871 was hardly of a definitive nature. Six days afterwards, on the 22nd, the National Assembly voted unanimously in favour of the Column's re-erection.

It seems appropriate at this point for attention to be deflected from la Colonne itself, and for some consideration to be given the tenor of conservative reaction and commentary in the wake of the demolition. Such commentary, of course, holds few surprises.

Already deplored by bien-pensants as an outrage in the face of the victorious Prussian, the Commune seemed, in this act of 16 May, to have committed the ultimate in traitorous folly. It was incomprehensible to Ernest Feydeau

...comment même les pires bandits soigneusement choisis dans la lie des égouts avaient pu avoir l'idée de commettre une action si plate et si lâche, devant les Allemands qui bivouaquaient sous les murs de Paris. (97)

François Coppée, later a member of the anti-Dreyfusard Ligue de la Patrie française (and for whose person and work Descaves always retained a degree of affection) referred in Une Idylle pendant le siège to *...cet épouvantable crime de lèse-patrie commis en face des Prussiens pleins de joie...*'(98) Writing with less emotivity than many of his contemporaries, Ludovic Hans considered the gesture to have been *'...une chose fort sotté à faire sous les yeux de l'étranger.'*(99) To some, demolition of the Column seemed almost confirmation of an idea that leading insurgents were in the employ of Bismarck: with this in mind, Edmond de Pressensé referred to *'...ces brigands cosmopolites qui, en face de l'étranger vainqueur, peut-être même à sa solde, viennent insulter notre gloire nationale.'*(100)

Perhaps the most agitated (and prolix) denunciation came however from the pen of Jules Barbey d'Aurevilly. Deploring the incendiarism (attempted or realised) of various public buildings and national treasures, Barbey d'Aurevilly felt their loss to be of little consequence beside destruction of the Column. *'La Colonne...'*, he wrote:

...n'est pas un monument comme les autres. La Colonne fait partie de l'honneur de la France, et mise à bas, notre honneur semble à bas comme elle. La Colonne!... mais ce n'est plus uniquement un signe de Victoire, c'est bien plus! Son bronze est bien plus que du simple bronze. Le sang de ceux qui le prirent à l'ennemi sur les champs de bataille l'a imbibée, l'a pénétrée et en a fait une chose humaine et vivante, mais ne vous trompez pas: c'est le sang de la France qui est là-dedans. Le sang incorporé avec l'âme et l'honneur de la France!(101)

As was not uncommon at the time, Barbey d'Aurevilly embarked upon a verbal flagellation of Gustave Courbet, assumed to have both instigated and engineered the enormity:

...Courbet, l'Erostrate de la Colonne, plus coupable et plus imbécile que les stupides Erostrates qui ont si bestialement brûlé Paris! Courbet le faux artiste qui trouvait laide cette fière Colonne s'élançant droit vers Dieu, comme un Te Deum de Victoire pour les yeux ravés, comme la flamme d'un encensoir, inextinguible Courbet qui restera à jamais le titulaire de la Colonne dans une exécration immortalité.(102)

To Barbey d'Aurevilly then, the Vendôme Column was so absolute a reflection of national glory as to be representative of values ethereal. With a similar intimation, Gautier referred to '*...cette spirale de batailles qui montait jusqu'aux cieux (...) toute cette gloire dont pouvait s'enorgueillir la France vaincue, car elle lui appartenait autant qu'à César.*'(103) A distinction might be made - as by Catulle Mendès - between the Emperor himself and the valour of '*...nos pères victorieux, superbes...*':(104) the fact remained that without Napoleon, the early years of the nineteenth century would not have provided for Frenchmen the stuff for such retrospective pride, nor for legend on so grandiose a scale. The respective merits, for the mass of opinion, of the Napoleonic era and the Commune interlude were suggested somewhat cynically by the critic Rachilde on publication of la Colonne. What she most admired in Napoleon, she wrote, was in fact his unmitigated sanguinariness:

Je comprends, au nom du pittoresque, la célébrité du monsieur qui fait de grandes choses et principalement des hécatombes. Ses assassinats à lui étaient beaux, bien exécutés, selon des plans merveilleusement conçus. Il fut le héros du genre. Je trouve tout naturel qu'on lui dresse un autel, puisqu'il a, dans le sadisme militaire, de nombreux partisans. Aussi les malpropres petites fourmis de la Commune me paraissent laides et vaines en s'agitant sur ce bronze. (...) Non, vraiment, au nom de l'humanité qui a toujours besoin de saignées et de purgations, je ne vois pas ce que la Commune a fait de si grand en renversant la verge de bronze de monsieur Bonaparte!(105)

It is not uninteresting (perhaps even diverting) from a late twentieth century point of view, to note the extremity of the contrast between what might be considered a traditional representation of the Napoleonic legacy(106) and that expressed by certain Communards, and taken up in a text such as la Colonne. If Jules Vallès/Jacques Vingtras so detests Béranger, one of the principal reasons (we read in le Bachelier) is that the poet had sung the praises of Napoleon:

Il a léché le bronze de la colonne, il a porté des fleurs sur le tombeau du César, il s'est agenouillé devant le chapeau de ce bandit, qui menait le peuple à coups de pied, et tirait l'oreille

aux grenadiers que Hoche avait conduits sur le Rhin et dans la Vendée (...).

*Ce poète en redingote longue baise les pans de la redingote grise!
Deux redingotes sur lesquelles je crache!(107)*

When visiting Waterloo in the early 1860's, Vallès and two friends had made the following entry in the tourist album at the inn where they stayed:

18 juin 1815: 32 000 hommes tués bêtement pour la patrie,
 qu'a glorifiés l'histoire.

23, 24, 25 et
26 juin 1848: 40 000 prolétaires qui demandent du pain,
 que l'on décime, que l'on fusille, que
 l'on jette sur les pontons, dans les prisons,
 au bagne.

*Sur le champ de Waterloo, nous n'avons
pensé qu'aux vaincus des faubourgs de
Paris.(108)*

The Warmonger/War God - whose fall in 1814 was greeted with relief in a France bled white from constant warfare, but who, in the drabness of subsequent regimes, seemed the very incarnation of Grandeur and Glory - is for a Mazoudier in full rhetorical flight '*...le mort qu'il faut qu'on tue, la légende à détruire, le culte à déraciner*' (C 107): his tomb '*...ce puits pestilentiel au fond duquel pourrait la charogne d'une bête enragée. (...) ...le puits dont les émanations ont corrompu l'air d'un siècle et l'âme d'un peuple*' (C 107). These vitriolic pronouncements are made as the old man stands beside the sarcophagus: it is perhaps fortunate, one might reflect in passing, that Mazoudier will not be on hand thirteen years later at the time the young déracinés make their pilgrimage to the tomb to seek inspiration and spiritual elevation for whatever life may hold for them.(109)

Arguments relating to demolition of the Column are probably no more readily resolvable today than any number of other questions of greater immediacy to a twentieth century readership. Few in the 1980's will view the action as a horrifying iniquity: some, on the other

hand, might regard it as pointless, ill-judged, inopportune. Others again will indeed consider the demolition to have been a commendable (if purely symbolic) repudiation of imperialistic warfare; or perceive it as a worthwhile reinforcement of the principle of universal brotherhood. By the 1940's, as we have seen, there had been an apparent shift in attitude on the part of Descaves himself. For many reasons, however, it seems possible to suggest that the sentiments behind the decree of 12 April 1871 will be better understood today, by people everywhere, than could ever have been the case at the time: and this, all too obviously, even when the particular climate of defeat for Frenchmen of the day is borne in mind. The explanation of the gesture provided by Arthur Arnould (probably Vallès' closest friend) has a vigour and a sincerity that will leave few unimpressed be they sympathetic to the Commune or not:

C'était la condamnation de la guerre et de la conquête, c'était le jugement du peuple et de l'avenir sur ce despote qui avait fait de la Révolution du droit humain l'asservissement de la France et de l'Europe.

C'était, en face des Prussiens vainqueurs et conquérants, rejeter à leur place véritable et marquer du sceau du mépris les victoires et les conquêtes de la force brutale...

C'était l'idée se substituant au fait, le peuple souffletant le despotisme dans la boue, marquant à l'épaule, du fer rouge de la révolution, tous les grands capitaines, tous les Bonaparte d'hier, tous les Guillaume d'aujourd'hui, tous les Bismarck de demain. (110)

Set in 1871, and written with the dawn of the new century, la Colonne might be viewed as an historical novel reflective of attitudes at the time of its publication. (111) Few readers in 1901 would have been unaware that the defeat of thirty years before had seen no diminution in the prestige of the army within France: the mood of revanchisme had resulted, to the contrary, in a near cult for the military. The emergence in the late 1880's of Georges Boulanger - seen by many (ironically) almost as a latter-day Bonaparte - testified, among other things, to the continued hold of the dashing military

figure on the popular imagination. By the closing years of the century, France was embroiled in an Affair which underscored how imperative the image of a strong, inviolable army remained for major sections of opinion. To those defending at the time the principle of justice for the individual (and Descaves, of course, was of this number) the gradual exposition of the cover-ups and subterfuges engaged in by the military hierarchy in attempted preservation of its near-sacrosanct status must have seemed evidence not merely of a cynical betrayal of morality, but of the dangers inherent to unquestioning belief in or sanctification of an institution.

Essentially the fruit of contact with, and sympathy for, participants in an insurrection of three decades earlier, la Colonne, as Descaves may have hoped, would perhaps strike a responsive chord with readers for more immediate reasons. The very toppling of the Vendôme Column - reviled at the time, and during intervening decades - might well, in 1900-1901, seem rather less deserving of vilification. Rabouille in his final address to Prophète is fully conscious that any change in public perceptions will not be immediate: thirty years afterwards, the climate might have appeared to favour at least some shift in attitude. It is to be remembered, of course, that by the time of Philémon vieux de la vieille's publication in 1913, a movement spearheaded by such conservative republicans as Raymond Poincaré was afoot in France to engender a revival of pride in nation, and in the military. Seventeen-year-old Armand Barbentane (of Aragon's les Beaux Quartiers) is prompted, in May 1913, to attend the ceremony normally held at the Père-Lachaise after reading an article by Descaves in the Bataille syndicaliste. The people of Paris are being called upon in this article to demonstrate in remembrance of the Commune against the law extending military service from two to three years. (112)

Even when not a focus for direct consideration, the military ethos, one might argue, is a question fundamental to any text relating to repression of the Commune. As logic would perhaps dictate, the action of la Colonne ceases on 16 May: it is however as though

Descaves is resting his case just short of what many would regard as the crowning demonstration of army brutality and hypocrisy. Within the framework of material considered in this study, the basis for comment or comparison of most interest with respect to la Colonne is provided, perhaps, by Georges Darien's l'Epaulette. The iniquities to which Descaves' characters refer, and which Prophète and other invalos unwittingly expose, are brought graphically to the consciousness of the reader in certain scenes or passages of Darien's text. It is a perhaps unhappy truth that from a reader's point of view, direct, brutal example of cruelty, repression or exploitation will prove generally more effective in conveying a message than ten pages of conversation in the Descaves style are likely to do.

Those assessing Descaves' literary career seem usually to hold la Colonne in some esteem. Léon Deffoux, Gérard Bauer and Roland Dorgelès refer, with a certain conformity of phrasing, to '...la Colonne, ce magnifique roman...';(113) '...ce beau roman: la Colonne...';(114) '...ce roman magistral, la Colonne...' (115) Aspects of the novel - its generosity of sentiment, the conscientiousness of its documentation, even Descaves' powers of expression - may invite respect: an attribute such as the last, however, is substantially impaired by a surfeit of vocabulary and imagery which in its sheer excess deprives much of the book of incisiveness or impact. Sections of la Colonne - chiefly those centred on the personalities or exploits of various invalos - are not without humour, but fall outside the scope of a study such as this.(116) While the less important characters of the novel are often life-like and individual, it is questionable whether the same can be said of the rather too verbose Rabouille, Mazoudier and Martin... or even of Céline and Prophète. It is from a work such as Philémon that the reader emerges with a deeper awareness of Descaves' success in humane, affectionate portrayal of the so-called ordinary folk from whom he derives the essence of his inspiration.

NOTES

The editions cited in discussion of the two principal texts by Descaves considered in this study are: la Colonne, Paris, Albin Michel, 1931; Philémon vieux de la vieille, Albin Michel, n.d. [but 1931].

1. See Jean Fréville, 'La Commune et la littérature', in Europe ('La Commune'), April-May 1951, pp. 73-111, see p. 109; Anne Roche, 'Le Roman et la Commune', in 1871. Jalons pour une histoire de la Commune, Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 1973, pp. 552-583, see pp. 559-561; Bernard Noël, Dictionnaire de la Commune, Paris, Flammarion, 1978, 2 vols.: Vol II, p. 61. Cf. Léon Deffoux 'Avant l'"Autre Guerre". Le cinquantenaire d'un livre qui fit du bruit (avec des textes inédits)', Mercure de France, 1 January 1940, pp. 45-72, see p. 61: '*...les seuls livres vivants qui aient été écrits sur la Commune...*'.
2. This date - supplied by Descaves himself on the first page of Souvenirs d'un ours - is said to be incorrect by André Bourin, who states that the writer was in fact born on 19 March, but chose (for obvious reasons) to move his date of birth forward. See the entry for Lucien Descaves in the Larousse mensuel illustré, Revue encyclopédique universelle, No. 423, November 1949, p. 357. The comment of Léon Deffoux (op. cit., p. 46) is perhaps worthy of note: '*Il vint au monde (...) le 18 mars 1861 (...); de sorte qu'on peut célébrer son anniversaire le jour où l'on commémore la dernière des grandes révolutions de Paris, le dernier mouvement insurrectionnel de caractère romantique et qui lui est cher. Faut-il voir là mieux qu'une coïncidence: une sorte de prédestination, le signe qui orienta une carrière littéraire entre toutes sympathique et puissamment originale?*'
3. Souvenirs d'un ours, Editions de Paris, 1946. For Descaves' recollections of the war period, the siege and the Commune, see Chapters III, IV & V.
4. Ibid., pp. 30-31. Descaves' father is said (p. 4) to have been .. *légitimiste à ses moments perdus, sans qu'il se crût tenu à dire pourquoi.*'
5. Ibid., p. 33.
6. In l'Oeuvre, 16 May 1926. Quoted by Deffoux, op. cit., pp. 60-61.
7. Ernest Boutin (known as Vaughan) was a member of the International, and the leader of the section for Rouen in March 1871. Condemned in absentia to two years' imprisonment, he arrived in Belgium on 30 September 1871, where he edited during his time of exile a weekly newspaper, la Bombe. It was Vaughan

who (on Clemenceau's suggestion) ran the headline 'J'Accuse', and placed it on the front page of l'Aurore on 13 January 1898.

Vaughan was held in considerable esteem by Eugène Pottier (see Pottier's Oeuvres complètes, Paris, François Maspéro, 1966, p. 217) and seems to have been highly regarded by many Communards. See, in Souvenirs d'un ours, pp. 118, 177-178, 191, 214. Cf. Edith Thomas, Louise Michel, Paris, Gallimard, 1971, passim. For Vaughan's friendship with Louise Michel, see also Charles Chincholle, les Survivants de la Commune, Paris, L. Boulanger, 1885: pp. 201-206, 222, 240.

8. Souvenirs d'un ours, p. 178.
9. Ibid., p. 176. It is of passing interest to note that Eugène Pottier had dedicated 'l'Internationale' to Gustave Lefrançais.
10. Ibid., p. 240.
11. Ibid., pp. 175-176.
12. Ibid., p. 192. Paul-Victor Stock had published Sous-offs in 1889, and was to print Louise Michel's la Commune in 1898.
13. Ibid., pp. 191-192; cf. Philémon vieux de la vieille, pp. 23, 28.
14. Souvenirs d'un ours, pp. 102, 220, 268.
15. Ibid., p. 15.
16. Ibid., p. 214.
17. Ibid., p. 178.
18. On Descaves' signing of the manifesto against la Terre, see Souvenirs d'un ours, chapter XIV; Léon Deffoux, op. cit., pp. 53-55.

Descaves' early writings (le Calvaire d'Héloïse Pajadou (1882); Une vieille Rate (1883); la Teigne (dedicated to Zola) (1886)) bear a strong naturalistic imprint which remains evident, indeed, in later works. Having read le Calvaire d'Héloïse Pajadou, Paul Alexis wrote of it to Zola in these terms:

'...Héloïse Pajadou, que je viens de lire, m'a étonné, stupéfié. C'est de l'Huysmans, sans chic de peintre, sans mots extraordinaires, mais plus sobre, plus profond et plus fort. Et ce Lucien Descaves qui est venu m'apporter son livre, n'a que vingt ans; il part soldat le mois prochain. C'est épatant! Cette maturité précoce ne s'explique que par le milieu où il a grandi: Paris, c'est-à-dire Montrouge. Fils d'un aqua-fortiste, qui a dû l'élever au biberon de l'Art.' (See B. H. Bakker, Naturalisme pas mort. Lettres inédites de Paul

Alexis à Emile Zola, 1871-1900, University of Toronto Press, 1971; p. 239 (letter of 25 October)); Cf. p. 475. Huysmans himself commented favourably upon le Calvaire d'Héloïse Pajadou, describing its author as a '*...styliste consciencieux, observateur sagace, réaliste véhément et sûr*' (See entry for Descaves in the Larousse mensuel illustré, op. cit., p. 357). To Zola he said about mid-November 1882: '*C'est une dilution de vos livres, mais l'auteur a 20 ans, c'est étonnant d'écrire ainsi, à cet âge; et surtout c'est étonnant de n'être pas hugolâtre Mussettiste, en sortant à peine du collège. S'il pouvait y en avoir beaucoup comme cela!*' (see B. H. Bakker, op. cit., p. 240, n. 8). A friendship between Descaves and Huysmans developed after publication of the novel, and lasted until Huysmans' death in 1907. For the impact of l'Assommoir upon Descaves, see Souvenirs d'un ours, p. 268; and for the influence of naturalism upon him, *ibid.*, p. 103.

19. Publication of Sous-offs had been preceded by that of a collection of short stories, La Caserne. Misères du sabre (1887). For an account of the Sous-offs affair, see Souvenirs d'un ours, chapter XVI, pp. 106-115; Alexandre Zévaès, Les Procès littéraires au XIX^e siècle, Paris, Librairie Académique Perrin, 1924, pp. 251-258. Cf. Léon Deffoux, op. cit., pp. 55-59. Of some interest is the article by Léon Bloy, 'Un Démolisseur de plus' (Oeuvres de Léon Bloy, Vol. XV, Paris, Mercure de France, 1975, pp. 203-208). The date supplied (incorrectly) is June 1877. See also Harold L. Simpson, 'Antimilitarism in the French Naturalist Novel', L'Esprit créateur, Vol. IV, no. 2, Summer 1964, pp. 102-108.
20. See Souvenirs d'un ours, p. 115. Cf. Léon Deffoux, op. cit., p. 59.
21. La Pelote (written in collaboration with Paul Bonnetain) had received a stormy reception when performed in 1888 at Antoine's Théâtre libre. La Cage (solely Descaves' work) seemed so outrageous as to be closed down after the second performance, in January 1898. On Descaves' theatrical career, see Charles Méré and Henri Clouard, 'Centième anniversaire de la naissance de Lucien Descaves', 2^e November 1961, Chronique de la Société des Gens de lettres, 4^e trimestre, 1961, pp. 30-39, see pp. 30-35; also Gérard de Lacaze-Duthiers, 'Souvenirs sur Lucien Descaves', Quo Vadis, 3^e année, nos. 18-19, January-February 1950, pp. 3-13, see pp. 8-9.
22. See the Journal, Paris, Fasquelle/Flammarion, 1956, Vol. III; entry for 29 March 1888 (p. 770): '*Ce pauvre petit Descaves, il a toujours dans sa personne l'aspect d'un enfant rageur, qui s'en va faire la pénitence qui lui a été imposée!*'; *Ibid.*, entry for 29 December 1889 (p. 1092): '*Il a toujours son air de tapin rognonnant et bougonnant...*' Cf. Vol. IV, entry for 31 March 1891 (p. 70); *ibid.*, entry for 11 January 1896 (p. 902). See also Jules Renard, Journal, entry for 15 March 1897:

- Descaves (...) a l'air joyeux pour la première fois de sa vie.*
 Descaves was elected to the Académie Goncourt in 1900, and became its president in 1945.
23. Roland Dorgelès, Images, Paris, Albin Michel, 1975, p. 221.
 24. Léon Deffoux, op. cit., p. 72.
 Descaves felt strong admiration for Louis-Ferdinand Céline's Voyage au bout de la nuit, and considered (with perfect validity) that its author would be a deserving recipient of the Prix Goncourt. When on 7 December 1932 the majority of the Académie's members voted for les Loups by Guy Mazeline, Descaves walked out of the meeting (see Souvenirs d'un ours, pp. 267-269). Céline's second novel, Mort à crédit, was dedicated to Descaves.
 25. Souvenirs d'un ours, p. 274.
 26. Ibid., p. 117.
 27. Ibid., pp. 101-102, 107, 156-159. In his preface to Gaston Gille's Jules Vallès 1832-1885. Ses Révoltes, sa maîtrise, son prestige (Paris, Jouve & Cie., 1941) Descaves refers at some length to Goncourt, '*...qui n'avait rien de commun avec les Dumas fils, Pontmartin, Paul de Saint-Victor, Caro et consorts, diligents à sonner l'hallali, quand ils virent aux abois les défenseurs de la Commune exécrée*' (iv).
 28. Descaves, in 1935, wrote the foreword for a catalogue prepared for an exposition relating to the Paris Commune (see Gérard de Lacaze-Duthiers, op. cit., p. 7).
 29. Souvenirs d'un ours, pp. 219-221.
 30. Ibid., p. 33. Vuillaume's Mes Cahiers rouges au temps de la Commune (1909) is dedicated to Descaves.
 31. See preface to Gaston Gille's Jules Vallès, op. cit., i; cf. Souvenirs d'un ours, p. 73.
 32. See Gaston Gille, op. cit., p. 549.
 33. Souvenirs d'un ours, p. 283.
 34. Ibid., p. 283.
 35. An interesting, if not perhaps always entirely convincing, study of la Colonne has been made by Mateo Pardo Jr. in his unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 'Norm and Structure in Lucien Descaves' la Colonne', Northwestern University, 1974.

36. The technique is not unreminiscent either of that followed by Hugo in Quatrevingt-treize (for example in the conversation between Boisberthelot and La Vieuville in chapter 3 of Book II).
37. Souvenirs d'un ours, pp. 145-146.
38. The decree concerning the fate of the Column was phrased as follows:
'La Commune de Paris, Considérant que la colonne impériale de la place Vendôme est un monument de barbarie, un symbole de force brute et de fausse gloire, une affirmation du militarisme, une négation du droit international, une insulte permanente des vainqueurs aux vaincus, un attentat perpétuel à l'un des grands principes de la République française, la fraternité. Décrète: Article unique. La colonne de la place Vendôme sera démolie. Paris, le 12 avril 1871. See Emile Andreoli, 1870-1871. Le Gouvernement du 4 septembre et la Commune de Paris, Paris, A. Bocquet, 1871: p. 261.
 A facsimile of the decree in handwritten form may be found in C. A. Dauban, Le Fond de la société sous la Commune, Paris, Plon, 1873, opposite p. 87.
39. Souvenirs d'un ours, pp. 146-147.
40. Ibid., p. 33.
41. Ibid., pp. 146, 216; Philémon vieux de la vieille, pp. 48-51. Descaves' precise relationship to Guillaume-Martin Motet is not clear. Described by the writer as his great-uncle in Souvenirs d'un ours, Motet is said to be Descaves' great-grandfather (bisaïeul) in Philémon. Descaves writes on p. 146 of Souvenirs d'un ours that Motet had died soon before his (Descaves') birth: on p. 216, however, we are told that Motet's date of death was 28 November 1861.
42. Souvenirs d'un ours, p. 221.
43. The commanding officer at the Invalides. Martimprey's arrest as a hostage is referred to by Maxime Du Camp in les Convulsions de Paris (Paris, Hachette, 1878-1880, 4 vols.): Vol. I, p. 95.
44. Jean Richepin, Césarine, Paris, Maurice Dreyfous, 1888: Chapter VII, pp. 104-108. Cf. Villiers de L'Isle-Adam, 'Tableau de Paris', published in Mercure de France, 1 August 1953, pp. 580-598: see pp. 580-581.
 Mateo Pardo Jr. (op. cit., p. 94) makes the point that the invalides are '...placed at the feet of the allegory of the Sun King while the people are basking in the real sun.'
45. Maxime Du Camp, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 271: *'L'ingénieur chargé du travail ne put être prêt à la date indiquée. Ses ouvriers*

trouvaient plus d'un motif afin de ralentir une besogne qui leur répugnait singulièrement. On inventait mille prétextes pour quitter le chantier; les échafaudages tombaient tout seuls; les outils disparaissaient subitement; le service militaire avait des exigences auxquelles il fallait obéir; tout allait à la diable, et les impatients accusaient, comme toujours, "l'or corrupteur de la réaction".'

46. P.-O. Lissagaray, Histoire de la Commune de 1871, Paris, François Maspero, 1976, p. 290.
47. Ibid., chapter XXII, pp. 270-272; and A.-J. Dalsème, Histoire des conspirations sous la Commune, Paris, E. Dentu, 1872, passim.
48. Lissagaray, op. cit., p. 274.
49. Dalsème, op. cit., chapter XX ('Trop de brassards'); also pp. 252, 266-269.
50. Prophète happens also to be within earshot when Ninie is talking to Rabouille. Portions of the relevant conversation might usefully be compared with extracts from Dalsème's book:

la Colonne, pp. 250-251: ' - Des brassards... ce sont des brassards pour les ambulances que vous confectionnez? interrogea Rabouille.

- Je ne sais pas si on les destine aux ambulances... C'est des brassards tricolores. Il y en a des tas. Nous sommes après depuis huit jours. Paraît que la commande doit être livrée le 12. Mais tailler, rassembler et coudre ensemble des bandes de calicot et de percale, c'est pas la mer à boire. On arrivera. (...)

L'oncle Prophète et Rabouille s'intéressaient extraordinairement à cette histoire (...). (Prophète) se rappelait la confiance de Gérard relative aux vingt mille brassards tricolores qui devaient servir de ralliement aux gardes nationaux de l'ordre, lorsque les troupes entreraient dans Paris... (...)

Rabouille (...) poursuivait:

- Legros... c'est le nom de l'entrepreneuse?

- Oui. C'est une dame qui a des amis dans la haute. On prétend qu'elle connaît intimement un ancien écuyer de l'empereur, M. Pager... Pagerie...

- Tascher de la Pagerie.

- Oui, un nom dans ce genre-là.' (My underlining)

Cf. Dalsème, pp. 227-228: 'L'idée d'emprunter un brassard tricolore, comme signe de ralliement, était dans l'air depuis la tentative de l'amiral Saisset.

...lorsque l'état-major de l'amiral s'était dispersé, la grande

préoccupation de ceux qui effectuaient leur retraite sur Versailles et de ceux qui continuaient leur séjour à Paris, avait été de savoir comment le parti de l'ordre reconnaît les siens.

A Versailles aussitôt, le département de la guerre s'était mis à faire confectionner des brassards. Ces bandelettes à trois couleurs (...) devaient être distribuées aux gardes nationaux fidèles, le jour où l'armée pénétrerait dans Paris.

(...)

(...) M. Lasnier devait surveiller et payer la fabrication de 20,000 brassards, et cette fabrication, le colonel [de Beaufond] l'avait confiée à une personne qu'il connaissait depuis longtemps, intimement liée qu'elle était avec l'un de ses amis, M. Tascher de la Pagerie. On la nommait Mme Legros.'

P. 231: '(La) femme (de L...) aussitôt s'était mise à la besogne, achetant (...) du calicot dans un magasin, de la percale bleue dans un autre, ailleurs, enfin, de la percale rouge; en moins de quarante-huit heures, tout cela était taillé, rassemblé, cousu.'

P. 252: 'La fabrication des brassards était poussée avec une activité nouvelle. Chaque jour des monceaux en arrivaient dans les bureaux du colonel Corbin, pour y recevoir l'estampille officielle.'

P. 267: '...la livraison des brassards que Mme Legros avait entrepris de confectionner, et dont une récente convention avait fixé la remise à la date même du 12.' (My underlining)

51. For further indications of the fundamental esteem Rabouille and Prophète feel for each other, see pp. 139, 155.
52. Cf. la Colonne, p. 75. Prophète and Rabouille seem on the point of coming to blows: '...la petite Sophie, tout émue, courait chercher sa mère, tandis qu'Adrien jubilait...' Ccf. p. 140. Amidst rumours that Issy has been taken: '-Il faut rentrer vivement, dit Mazoudier. Peut-être allons-nous marcher aussi. -Oh! oui, dépêchons-nous de rentrer, s'écria le petit Adrien. On vous verra défiler... Et il sautait de joie autour de Rabouille, comme tout à l'heure sur les genoux de son oncle, à l'idée de bataille qu'ils incarnaient successivement à ses yeux.'
53. '(Le) crâne (...) rasé (de Prophète) faisait paraître plus broussailleux encore de forts sourcils qui mettaient des moustaches où l'on n'est point accoutumé d'en voir, sans parvenir à donner le change sur la bonté foncière qu'un regard paisible décelait' (p. 24). In 'Flingot', the central figure père Thiébault is described in similar terms, insofar as reference is made to '...des sourcils en fagots d'épines, qui ne parvenaient point à donner le change sur la bonté foncière que les yeux décelaient' (Lucien Descaves, Flingot, Paris, A. Romagnol, n.d. [but 1907], p. 5).

54. The nickname has derived presumably from thoughts of Joshua's trumpet on the Wall of Jericho.
55. The relevant portions of Cluseret's proclamation reads as follows:
'Citoyens. Je remarque avec peine qu'oubliant notre origine modeste, la manie ridicule du galon, des broderies, des aiguilletes commence à se faire jour parmi nous. Travailleurs, vous avez pour la première fois accompli la révolution du travail par et pour le travail. Ne renions pas notre origine, et surtout n'en rougissons pas. Travailleurs nous étions, travailleurs nous sommes, travailleurs nous resterons. (...) Avant de sévir, je rappelle mes concitoyens à eux-mêmes: plus d'aiguilletes, plus de clinquant, plus de ces galons qui coûtent si peu à étager et si cher à notre responsabilité' (See E. Andreoli, op. cit., p. 255). Cf. la Colonne, p. 103. For Delescluze's proclamation (beginning *'Assez de militarisme, plus d'états-majors galonnés et dorés sur toutes les coutures!'*) see Andreoli, pp. 355-356. With respect to the ostentatious costumes and the lack of military expertise of the majority of the Commune's officers, see Louis Barron, Sous le Drapeau rouge, Paris, Savine, 1889, chapter V (pp. 29-32); Sutter-Laumann, Histoire d'un Trente sous, Paris, Savine, 1891, pp. 252-253.
56. See Eugène Varlin, Pratique militante et écrits d'un ouvrier communard (Présenté par Paule Lejeune), Paris, François Maspéro, 1977, pp. 125-127. Cf. Jules Vallès, l'Insurgé, chapter XVI.
57. See Jean-Pierre Chabrol, le Canon Fraternité, Paris, Gallimard, 1970, p. 570: *'Les journaux, "Le Vengeur" et "L'Affranchi" notamment, du (11 avril) annoncèrent: "Avant-hier matin, à quatre heures, le corps de notre noble ami Flourens a été exhumé du cimetière Saint-Louis, à Versailles, et déposé dans une voiture des pompes funèbres qui l'a ramené à Paris. A sept heures, il arrivait au cimetière du Père-Lachaise, et il était déposé dans le caveau de famille. Le plus profond mystère avait été gardé sur cette lugubre cérémonie. Le cortège se composait: de la mère de Flourens, de son frère, d'un inconnu et, de plus, de ce que ce cher et grand citoyen n'eût jamais admis, de ce qu'on peut appeler une impiété devant son cercueil... d'un PRETRE! Pas un ami, pas un frère en révolution.'*
 (My underlining)
58. See Lissagaray, op. cit., p. 184: *'...ce bon chevalier errant que la Révolution aime'*; Henry Bauer, Mémoires d'un jeune homme, Paris, Charpentier & Fasquelle, 1895, p. 172: *'...un tempérament de don Quichotte...'*; E. Lepelletier, Histoire de la Commune de 1871, Paris, Mercure de France, 1911-1913, 3 vols.: Vol. III, p. 245: *'...cet exalté, vaillant et loyal. Il perpétue (...) le type légendaire du parfait chevalier français, avec ses défauts et ses admirables dons.'* The parallel with Don Quixote is made specifically by Lepelletier on pp.

245-246: Flourens is likened also to Enjolras of les Misérables. Hugo, learning of Flourens' death, wrote on 4 April: '*Flourens a été tué. Très brave et un peu fou. Je le regrette. C'était le chevalier rouge*' (Victor Hugo, Oeuvres politiques complètes - Oeuvres diverses, Paris, Jean-Jacques Pauvert, 1964, p. 1448). Cf. Jules Vallès, l'Insurgé, chapter XV: '*(Flourens) a la foi et la force d'un saint.*'

Further parallel between Flourens and Don Quixote is found in Paul Delion's les Membres de la Commune et du Comité central (Paris, Alphonse Lemerre, 1871 - pp. 325-329): '*Nous avons eu notre Don Quichotte tout aussi courageux, tout aussi fou, tout aussi ridicule que celui de Cervantès, tout aussi sympathique. Flourens avait sa Dulcinée: la liberté. C'était une nature généreuse, mais à vue courte: comme Don Quichotte, il eût délivré des forçats parce que ces forçats étaient enchaînés; comme Don Quichotte il comptait sur son bras invincible, et nous l'avons vu proclamer, tout seul, la république sur le boulevard de Ménilmontant. C'était un fier redresseur de torts qui voulait purger la terre non des monstres ni des enchanteurs, mais des oppresseurs et des injustes. Il allait droit à l'adversaire, droit au but, sans songer aux lois, aux usages, aux conventions sociales, et se faisait prendre aux ailes de moulin et sottement rouer. (...)*

(...) Il se croyait assez fort pour aller seul comme un chevalier errant, et brisait immédiatement avec quiconque lui semblait suspect de félonie. (...)

Flourens mourut comme il avait vécu, en Don Quichotte, toujours brave, toujours fou.'

Delion's book is, in general, strongly hostile to the Commune.

The paths of Flourens and Joseph-Arthur de Gobineau were to cross, it might be noted in passing, while the latter was serving as French consul in Athens. On 19 June 1867 Gobineau (for reasons never disclosed) met with Flourens, who was actively engaged in the Cretan struggle against Turkish rule and seeking to obtain the support of the Greek and French authorities. On 28 May 1868 however (following an attempt on Flourens' part to appear uninvited and unheralded in the Greek sovereign's presence) Gobineau made arrangements for the forced embarkation of the republican upon a vessel bound for Marseilles. See the article by Jean-Hervé Donnard, 'Pour le Centenaire de l'insurrection crétoise: Arthur de Gobineau et Gustave Flourens, frères ennemis' (Etudes Gobiniennes 1967, Paris, Klincksieck, pp. 185-220).

A description of Flourens provided in Sutter-Laumann's Histoire d'un Trente sous (op. cit., pp. 241-242) presents some interest: '*A (la) tête (des bataillons) caracolait, sur un cheval noir, un officier dont la physionomie attira de suite mon attention. C'était un grand garçon, aux yeux gris-bleu, au nez fortement recourbé sur une barbe blonde frisottante. Il avait l'air très doux et aussi très énergique. Figure toute de sympathie, un peu inquiétante cependant, tant les regards de ces yeux gris-bleu*

étaient noyés comme dans un rêve, mobiles et pour ainsi dire concentrés sur une intérieure vision. Ce ne devait pas être un militaire de métier. De temps à autre, comme secoué par une impatience, il se retournait vers ses hommes pour leur dire je ne sais quoi qu'ils paraissaient écouter avec une grande déférence. A un moment, ce cavalier estimant que nous défilions avec trop de lenteur (...) s'avança vers nous et cria:

- Mais allez donc! on n'en finira jamais. Le timbre de la voix était plein de douceur, si nettement que l'ordre eût été donné. (...) - Qui est-ce donc? demandai-je. - C'est Flourens, parbleu! me répondit un camarade. J'allais le regarder plus attentivement encore, quand une poussée en avant se produisit... Je ne revis plus Flourens qui fut tué quelques jours après.'

59. Flingot, p. 31.

60. Yxglu of Léon Cladel's story 'Yxglu le Canonnier d'Issy' has fought during 'les Trois Glorieuses' of July 1830, in February and June 1848, and in December 1851. During the week of 21-28 May 1871 '*...il se disait à part soi que la République ne tarderait pas à retomber entre les griffes des fainéants et que le peuple, ainsi que jadis, crèverait de faim et de soif, en ramant pour eux de l'aube à la brume comme un galérien... et, ma foi, vrai, cela le chiffonnait plus que tout; oui! ça l'em...bêtait'* (Urbains et ruraux, Paris, Paul Ollendorff, 1884; p. 194). In 'Chez ceux qui furent', the insurgent killed in the Père-Lachaise is said to have been devoted to his family but even more enamoured of the Republic. As his widow tells their two sons: '*On ne nous la ravira pas, affirmait-il souvent, elle est à nous, c'est notre récompense et nous ne l'avons pas volée!* (...) "*Au revoir et peut-être adieu! me dit-il une ou deux heures avant le suprême combat; elle vivra ou je mourrai.*"' (Petits Cahiers, Paris, Ed. Monnier & Cie, 1885; pp. 79-80).

61. Nathalie Lemel (née Duval) (1827-1921) joined the International in 1866, and with Eugène Varlin founded the Marmite - intended to provide workers with good quality food at cheap prices - the same year. A speaker in various clubs during the siege, she and Elisabeth Dmitrieff organised under the Commune the Union des femmes pour la Défense de Paris et les soins aux blessés; Nathalie Lemel taking particular responsibility for social (as opposed to political) questions. At the beginning of the semaine sanglante, she led a group of some fifty women who built and defended the barricade at the place Pigalle. Condemned to be deported to a fortified place on 10 September 1872, she was a prisoner in New Caledonia until 1879, when the partial amnesty enabled her to return to Paris. Rochefort employed her on the staff of l'Intransigeant. She died, blind and in poverty, at the Hospice d'Ivry.

62. See Appendix 3 of this study.

63. Lucien Descaves and Nozière, la Saignée (1870-1871), Paris, L'illustration, 1913, p. 35.
 Cf. la Colonne, p. 166: '...M. Martin secoua sa barbe grise:
 - Je me souviens d'une remarque de Proudhon... Je n'en garantis pas les termes, j'en indique le sens: "L'Europe est grosse d'une révolution sociale. Mais ne mourra-t-elle pas avant d'accoucher?" On peut en dire autant de la Commune. - Non, fit Mazoudier. A la Commune s'applique plutôt un autre mot de Proudhon: "Il faut tuer l'enfant pour sauver la mère." Ils tueront la Commune, mais la République en réchappera.' Ibid., p. 281.
64. Mateo Pardo Jr., op. cit., p. 186.
65. La Colonne, pp. 156-157: ' - Alors, vous avez trouvé le moyen de l'ébranler? - C'est un moyen qu'aurait indiqué le premier bûcheron venu. Si vous avez jamais vu abattre un arbre, c'est la même chose. Une entaille en biseau d'un côté, une seconde horizontale, rejoignant le bec du sifflet, et il n'y a plus qu'à tirer sur la corde. (...)
 - Il suffira de desceller quatre ou cinq plaques de bronze pour pouvoir entamer la pierre, expliqua Rabouille. Imaginez maintenant un système de câbles attachés, à l'aide de poulies, au-dessous du lanternon et reliés à des cabestans, et je vous garantis qu'il sera assez difficile à la Colonne, quand les câbles se tendront, de garder son équilibre.
 Le Piémontais (...) déclara: - Faut pas être sorcier, en effet, pour avoir trouvé ça.'
- Cf. Du Camp, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 272-273: 'Au-dessus du soubassement, on scia le fût de la colonne en bec de sifflet sur la face qui regarde vers la rue de la Paix; sur la façade dirigée vers la rue Castiglione, on se contenta de faire une entaille profonde. On obtint, de chaque côté, un trou d'un mètre environ qui "entamait" l'escalier de bronze. Des câbles attachés au couronnement, au-dessous même de la statue, reliés à des cabestans placés à l'entrée de la rue de la Paix, permettraient d'incliner très-légèrement ce fût énorme qui se briserait forcément à la base et s'abattrait d'un seul jet. C'était fort simple, comme l'on voit; le dernier des maçons aurait trouvé cela sans peine. Ce n'en fut pas moins déclaré une invention de génie, destinée à remplir d'étonnement la science réactionnaire et rétrograde.'
- Ccf. Lissagaray, op. cit., p. 291: 'L'ingénieur (...) avait scié la colonne horizontalement un peu au-dessus du piédestal. Une entaille en biseau devait faciliter la chute en arrière (...). Un câble attaché au sommet de la colonne s'enroule autour du cabestan fixé à l'entrée de la rue (de la Paix).'
66. Maxime Du Camp, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 268. A quotation from a letter by one M. Gesray calling for the dome of the Invalides to

be divested of its gilding (C 130-131) might well also have been taken from les Convulsions de Paris (see Vol. II, pp. 268-269).

67. The fate of the Vendôme Column had been under discussion following the collapse of the Second Empire on 4 September. Courbet, who was president of the newly formed Commission artistique, had called upon the Government of National Defence to demolish the Column: he considered it to be without artistic merit, and an outdated glorification of warfare. No action on the matter was taken by the Government: and Courbet was not elected to the Commune until the by-elections of 16 April (four days after publication of the decree cited in note 38). At that stage he was too occupied with other responsibilities (as a member of the Education Commission and the Fédération des artistes) to be involved with the déboulonnement (as he termed it) of the Column; his opinions on the question were however widely known; and a legend had formed. When on 30 May 1873 the newly elected President Mac-Mahon called for restoration of the Column, an idea began to develop that the artist should bear the financial cost of the operation. Everything he owned in Paris and at Ornans was seized: and Courbet fled to Switzerland. The sum fixed upon for reconstruction of the Column was 323,091 francs 68 centimes: Courbet was to pay in yearly instalments (10,000 francs a year for 33 years - until he was ninety-one). He died on 31 December 1877, the day before he was due to pay the first instalment.

On the subject of Courbet and the Vendôme Column, see Souvenirs d'un ours, p. 34; also Maxime Vuillaume, Mes Cahiers rouges au temps de la Commune, Albin Michel, 1971 (facsimile publication of the 1909 edition), pp. 251-252 (notes 1 and 2).

It may be noted that Courbet - whose painting had earned for him the tag of 'artiste socialiste', and to whom total blame for demolition of the Vendôme Column had been somewhat unjustly imputed - was seemingly a favoured target for abuse among conservative writers and journalists. It was thus that Alexandre Dumas fils pondered the likely origins of the Courbet phenomenon: '*De quel accouplement fabuleux d'une limace et d'un paon, de quelle antithèse génésiaque, de quel suintement sébacé peut avoir été généré (...) cette chose qu'on appelle M. Gustave Courbet? Sous quelle cloche, à l'aide de quel fumier, par suite de quelle mixture de vin, de bière, de mucus corrosif et d'oedème flatulent a pu pousser cette courge sonore, cette incarnation du Moi imbécile et impuissant!*' (see A. Dumas fils, Une lettre sur les choses du jour, Paris, Michel Lévy, 1871, p. 16; cited by Paul Lidsky, Les Ecrivains contre la Commune, Paris, François Maspéro, 1970, pp. 58-59). Th. Sylvestre of l'Eclair made thundering reference to '*ce monstre célèbre né de la pourriture d'Erostrate et mort, quoique vivant, pour la France et pour le monde*': while an anonymous critic using the pen name Chrysale set pen to paper with this result: '*C'est encore lui! Cette grosse caisse, ce bugle crevé, ce fantoche plus sinistre*

- qu'on ne croit...' (see Maurice Choury, Bonjour, Monsieur Courbet!, Paris, Editions sociales, 1969, p. 129). Emile Bergerat, for his part, chose to ridicule the painter in verse: 'Qu'il vive! extasié devant son ombilic!// Les pouces sur le ventre, à la façon des Carmes!// Qu'on l'engraisse! et qu'ouvert nuit et jour au public,/ Il crève de vieillesse entre quatre gendarmes!' (See Maxime Vuillaume, op. cit., p. 251).
68. See la Colonne, pp. 220-221. Cf. p. 175 (used, with humorous effect, to report the invalides' conversation).
69. The views of Courbet (expressed before the decision was officially taken to set up a Committee of Public Safety) are worthy of note: 'Je désire que tous titres ou mots appartenant à la Révolution de 89 et 93 ne soient appliqués qu'à cette époque. Aujourd'hui, ils n'ont plus la même signification et ne peuvent plus être employés avec la même justesse et dans les mêmes acceptions. Les titres: Salut public, Montagnards, Girondins, Jacobins, etc., etc., ne peuvent être employés dans ce mouvement socialiste républicain. Ce que nous représentons, c'est le temps qui s'est passé de 93 à 71, avec le génie qui doit nous caractériser et qui doit relever de notre propre tempérament. Cela me paraît d'autant plus évident que nous ressemblons à des plagiaires, et nous rétablissons à notre détriment une terreur qui n'est pas de notre temps. Employons les termes que nous suggère notre révolution.' (See Bernard Noël, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 145-146).
70. The comments of Arthur Arnould are of some interest in this respect: 'A l'Hôtel de Ville, il y avait des hommes dont personne ne connaissait les noms, parce que ces hommes n'avaient qu'un nom: LE PEUPLE. La tradition était rompue. Quelque chose d'inattendu venait de se produire dans le monde. Pas un membre des classes gouvernantes n'était là. Une révolution éclatait qui n'était représentée ni par un avocat, ni par un député, ni par un journaliste, ni par un général. A leur place, un mineur du Creusot, un ouvrier relieur, un cuisinier, etc., etc. Un pareil fait se produisant dans Paris révélait, je le répète, une situation sans précédent. Dans le livre de l'histoire, on avait tourné une page, on entamait un nouveau chapitre.' (See Eugène Varlin, op. cit., pp. 157-158). Cf. l'Insurgé, chapter XXVII ('Les nouveaux ministres').
71. The wife of Francis Jourde, for instance, continued to wash her husband's shirts at the laundries along the Seine. Jourde was Chief Delegate for Finance.
72. La Saignée, p. 23.
73. Cf. Souvenirs d'un ours, p. 36.

74. Arthur de Gobineau, who was no admirer of the Commune, wrote to his wife from Paris on 14 April explaining that reports of lawlessness in the city were greatly exaggerated:

'Nous allons tous très bien et sommes parfaitement tranquilles et en sûreté, sauf l'impossibilité de sortir de Paris. Tu ne dois ajouter foi à ce que tous les journaux publient. Il s'en faut de tout qu'il y ait les désordres que l'on imagine. (...) La Commune est beaucoup moins violente qu'elle ne s'en donne l'air...' (Quoted by Maurice Choury, Le Paris Communard, Paris, Librairie Académique Perrin, 1970: pp. 149-150). Cf. Gobineau's letter to Zoé Dragoumis, dated Versailles, 27 April 1871: *'(...) il m'a fallu rester trois semaines à Paris au milieu de toute l'insurrection et c'était vraiment curieux: je suis fort aise d'avoir vu cela, d'autant plus que beaucoup de gens prétendent qu'on y court des dangers horribles et rien n'est moins exact'* (Lettres à deux Athéniennes (1868-1881), Athens, Kaufmann, 1936, p. 165).

A wealthy American, Mrs Multon, referred in her diary entry for 7 May to the calm of the streets at night, the absence of drunkards, and the fact (surprising to her) that there was never any mention of thievery or pillage. (See Maurice Choury, *op. cit.*, p. 150). Another American, the journalist John Russell Young, wrote in the New York Standard of 15 June 1871 that he had never known a more peaceful city than Paris under the Commune; and that whatever might be said in press reports, he had seen no evidence of drunkenness or banditry. (See Samuel Bernstein, Vie de Blanqui, Paris, François Maspéro, 1970, p. 328). *'Jamais ville ne fut plus rangée, plus paisible à l'intérieur'* (Elie Reclus). Quoted by J.-P. Azéma/M. Winock, les Communards, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1964, p. 112.

Extracts from the correspondence of Georges Bizet (who detested the Commune) seem worthy of note: *'Quant au pillage, le Journal officiel en a mille fois menti! On n'a pas pris une épingle. Ils sont disciplinés, là-haut, et le premier qui volerait serait fusillé. Montmartre est parfaitement accessible. Les conservateurs vont s'y promener et y sont du reste reçus très courtoisement. Hier dimanche (il faisait beau), la ville avait vraiment un air de fête!... Je vous donne ma parole d'honneur que je n'exagère rien!'* (letter of 20 March 1871 to Hippolyte Rodrigues). Cf. letter of 12 May 1871 to Léonie Halévy: *'Je puis vous assurer que, jusqu'au 11, nos effets et votre mobilier étaient intacts. On a beaucoup exagéré, heureusement, les méfaits de la Commune au point de vue des propriétés des particuliers.'* See Michel Cardoze, Georges Bizet, Paris, Mazarine, 1982: *'Quatorze lettres sur la Commune de Paris'*, pp. 135-157. Cf. Hippolyte Taine's letter to his mother, 5 May 1871: *'...il y a encore de l'ordre dans Paris, il ne s'y fait pas de pillage, ni d'extorsions privées'* (See Hippolyte Taine, Sa Vie et sa correspondance, Paris, Hachette, Vol. III, n.d. [but 1905], p. 106). In le Sémaphore de Marseille of 25 April 1871, Emile Zola wrote: *'Certes, nul plus que moi ne condamne*

les misérables fous et les intrigants éhontés qui oppriment la grande ville. Mais il ne faut pourtant pas, emporté par une légitime colère, qu'on noircisse outre mesure la situation et qu'on épouvante les parents et les amis que nous avons en province. La terreur règne, la liberté individuelle et le respect dû aux propriétés sont violés, le clergé est odieusement poursuivi, les perquisitions et les réquisitions sont employées comme mode de gouvernement. Mais il est faux que le sang coule dans les rues, comme je le lis dans certaines feuilles; il est faux qu'un seul meurtre ait été commis depuis l'épouvantable assassinat des généraux Clément Thomas et Lecomte: il est faux même que le vol se pratique sans un certain appareil légal: je veux parler par exemple des formalités remplies pour envoyer à la Monnaie l'argenterie du Ministère des Affaires étrangères' (Quoted by Henri Chemel, 'Zola Collaborateur du Sémaphore de Marseille (1871-1877)', Les Cahiers naturalistes, no. 14, 1960, pp. 555-567: see p. 560).

75. Members of the Education Commission included Vallès and (after the complementary elections of 16 April) Jean-Baptiste Clément (author of 'le Temps des cerises') and Gustave Courbet.
76. See Bernard Noël, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 243.
77. Many of those leaving were, as one might expect, nuns and priests.
78. On 28 April, Edouard Vaillant appointed a Commission d'organisation de l'enseignement, the members of which were not drawn from the Commune's executive. The function of the Commission was to promote secular teaching; and to coordinate the activities of the various municipalities.
79. The school in the rue Lhomond was to open on 23 May. Its counterpart in the rue Dupuytren had been in operation since the 12th.
80. With a view to more rapid secularisation, Vaillant had, on 13 May, entrusted inspection of schools to members of the Commune and to delegates for education.
81. Cf. the enlightenment process evident in Léon Cladel's I.N.R.I. as Urbaine Hélioiz educates Jacques Râtâs:
*'...le peuple est sauvé s'il ouvre les yeux à temps.
 - En ce cas, appuya Râtâs plein d'audace, ouvrons-les-lui.
 (...) Elle le regarda dans les prunelles et s'aper(çut)
 qu'elles rayonnaient d'intelligence et de hardiesse...'*
'- Enfin! nous y voilà. Que je t'embrasse! A présent, tu n'es plus aveugle, ni sourd, ni muet, et nous irons ensemble à la délivrance ou bien au tombeau!'
I.N.R.I., Paris, Librairie Valois, 1931, pp. 47, 50.

82. Maxime Du Camp, Vol. II, p. 292. A quotation is supplied from Félix Pyat's Le Vengeur, relating the Column's fall: *'Elle est tombée le nez sur le fumier, sans autre accident que le cou cassé du bonhomme providentiellement décapité. Je l'ai vu choir; je puis fermer les yeux, notre oeuvre est faite; nunc dimittis!'*
83. This warning - widely attributed to Vallès - came in fact from the pen of Casimir Bouis. See l'Insurgé, Paris, Editeurs français réunis, 1973, pp. 308-309, n. 1.
84. Cf. Gustave Lefrançais, Souvenirs d'un révolutionnaire (Texte établi et présenté par Jean Cerny), Paris, Société encyclopédique française; Editions de la Tête de feuilles, 1972, p. 410: *'Les adversaires de la Commune mènent grand tapage autour de cette déclaration dans laquelle ils croient voir déjà la mort de la Révolution.'*
85. The account of the demolition left by Maxime Vuillaume has several points in common with that in Descaves' novel, as the following comparisons indicate:
- La Colonne, p. 361: *'...sur les échafaudages établis autour du soubassement (...) des ouvriers donnaient à la pierre entaillée jusqu'à l'escalier, les derniers coups de scie et enfonçaient des coins de fer dans la plaie agrandie'; p. 366: 'Au-dessus de la Colonne, un léger nuage blanc flotta...'*
- Cf. Maxime Vuillaume, op. cit., pp. 248-249: *'Sur le piédestal de la colonne, une demi-douzaine d'hommes, causant avec animation, interrogeant du regard l'écorchure du fût. - Encore quelques coups de scie, commande l'un d'eux. Et la scie commence à entamer la pierre. Un léger nuage blanc s'échappe. (...). Sur le piédestal, des hommes enfoncent des coins dans la blessure, au pied du fût.'*
- La Colonne, p. 367: *'...Théophile Ferré, les doigts dans sa barbe noire et fine, l'oeil dur derrière les verres du binocle qui chevauchait son nez bossu...'*
- Cf. Maxime Vuillaume, p. 248: *'Ferré, tout petit, le masque envahi par la barbe noire, le nez busqué, deux yeux noirs, très doux, qui brillent cependant, derrière le lorgnon, d'une flamme étrange.'*
- La Colonne, p. 371: *'...et Courbet, dans les salons du ministère de la Justice, montrant à ses amis quelques lettres anonymes menaçantes, envisageait l'avenir avec inquiétude...'*
- Cf. Maxime Vuillaume, pp. 245-246.
- The Cahiers rouges were published in the Cahiers de la Quinzaine between 1908 and 1914 (the volume which appeared in 1909 contained much of the material of the first seven Cahiers). Early versions of these recollections had however been published well before, in l'Aurore, la Justice and le Radical (see Bernard

Noël, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 285). Vuillaume, furthermore, had already given Descaves an oral account of many of the episodes he was later to record (See Souvenirs d'un ours, p. 33).

86. La Colonne, pp. 360-361: 'La chute de la colonne Vendôme était annoncée pour deux heures. (...) On (...) avait pratiqué (dans la barricade de la rue de la Paix) une large brèche (...) afin que la Colonne mesurât le sol facilement, si elle s'étendait jusque-là. C'était l'inquiétude du quartier. Rue de la Paix, rue de Castiglione et dans les rues avoisinantes, les habitants, en prévision de l'ébranlement des vitres par la commotion de la chute, avaient collé de nouvelles bandes de papier sur leurs croisées et sur les glaces des devantures (...).
Sur la place Vendôme, qu'un cordon de gardes nationaux, l'arme au pied, encadrait, trois musiques de bataillons étaient réunies devant le ministère de la Justice, l'Etat-Major et le numéro 10 de la place; et des groupes, ailleurs, se formaient. Il y avait là plusieurs membres de la Commune: Bergeret, habillé par Dusautoy et fumant des cigarettes; (...) Félix Pyat, déguisé en dompteur noir, avec deux revolvers à la ceinture; (...) Ferré, qui causait avec un petit vieux politique, Glais-Bizoin...'

Cf. Maxime Du Camp, op. cit., pp. 274-275: '...on avait imaginé de coller des bandes de papier sur les carreaux des fenêtres, sur les glaces des devantures de boutique. (...) De la rue de la Paix, de la rue Castiglione, de la place Vendôme, la panique avait gagné les rues adjacentes...

(...) la "cérémonie" était annoncée pour deux heures. Place Vendôme, où l'on avait détruit une partie de la grande barricade commandant la rue de la Paix, afin de laisser passer la chute du colosse, on avait réuni des musiques militaires (...). Les bataillons fédérés, l'arme au pied, étaient rangés le long des maisons. Des membres de la Commune honoraient de leur présence cette fête populaire (...). Bergeret, tout vêtu de clinquant (...); Félix Pyat, portant un costume noir prétentieux rappelant celui des hussards de la mort, armé de deux revolvers (...); Ferré (...) (qui) fut salué par M. Glais-Bizoin...'

Ccf. Catulle Mendès, Les 73 Journées de la Commune, Paris, Lachaud, 1871, p. 283: 'Bergeret, à une fenêtre, secouait négligemment du petit doigt les cendres de sa cigarette...'

La Colonne, p. 361: '...Rochefort (...) à la veille de quitter Paris, parcourait le boulevard, devant la rue de la Paix, en voiture découverte, suspect à Versailles, non moins suspect à la Commune et semblant chercher une inspiration dans la rue qu'il avait soulevée naguère et qui le regardait maintenant sans passion, comme une image.'

Cf. Maxime Du Camp, op. cit., pp. 277-278: 'Trois fois M. Rochefort, en voiture de place découverte, (...) traversa (la foule) sur le boulevard devant la rue de la Paix. Voulait-il se rendre compte des impressions qui l'animaient, cherchait-il une ovation? Je l'ignore, mais j'étais là, et je sais qu'il fut reconnu; on le

nomma, on se le montra, et l'on se contenta de sourire. (...) La Commune (...) tenait (Rochefort) en suspicion, et le traitait volontiers d'aristocrate. (...) Il n'était pas plus aimé à Versailles, dont il avait eu le don d'exciter toutes les colères.'

Ibid., p. 282: 'Rochefort ne produira pas plus d'impression dans l'histoire, qu'il n'en produisait, le 16 Mai, sur la foule indifférente qui s'ouvrait pour laisser passer sa voiture.'

La Colonne, pp. 357-358: 'Ferré (...) averti que des mouvements hostiles devaient se produire dans la foule au moment de la chute de la Colonne, ordonnait à Dombrowski de prendre des mesures énergiques...' Cf. Maxime Du Camp, op. cit., pp. 276-277.

La Colonne, p. 366: 'Une autre musique joua Le Chant du Départ, et Glais-Bizoin se découvrit.' Cf. Maxime Du Camp, op. cit., p. 290: '...M. Glais-Bizoin, respectueusement découvert...'

Emile Zola had served as Glais-Bizoin's private secretary at Bordeaux from late December 1870 until the elections of February 1871. Glais-Bizoin attempted unsuccessfully to have Zola nominated to the sub-prefecture of Castel-Sarrasin (Tarn-et-Garonne).

87. See Souvenirs d'un ours, p. 32: 'J'allais voir avec mon oncle, où en étaient les travaux qui traînaient en longueur. Je me rappelle surtout la précaution des commerçants du quartier de coller sur leurs vitres des bandes de papier destinées à amortir la secousse provoquée par la chute du monument.'

88. La Colonne, p. 365: '...l'on vit un homme faire le tour de la plate-forme, au haut de la Colonne, en proférant des paroles indistinctes et en agitant un drapeau tricolore qu'il finit par substituer au drapeau rouge, celui-ci ne devant pas, dans la pensée de l'orateur, tomber avec le monument.
- C'est Simon Mayer..., qui commande la Place, dit la sentinelle à quelqu'un qui la questionnait.'

Cf. Maxime Vuillaume, p. 249: 'Un officier paraît là-haut, sur la plate-forme. Il enlève le drapeau rouge, qu'il remplace par un tricolore.' Ccf. Lissagaray, p. 291.

See also Maxime Du Camp, op. cit., p. 287: 'Tout à coup un homme parut sur le couronnement, agita un drapeau tricolore et le lança dans l'espace, afin de bien indiquer que tout ce qui avait été la Révolution française, le premier Empire, la royauté de Louis-Philippe, la seconde République, le second Empire, disparaissait de l'histoire et allait faire place à l'ère nouvelle symbolisée par la loque couleur de sang que l'on appelle le drapeau rouge. L'homme qui eut l'honneur de jeter au vent les couleurs de la France était digne de cette mission: il s'appelait Simon Mayer.' Du Camp is referring to the fact that Mayer had been condemned to death in November 1871 for having (allegedly) participated in the executions of the two generals

Lecomte and Clément Thomas on 18 March. The sentence was commuted to hard labour in New Caledonia.

89. La Colonne, p. 369: 'La foule devenait houleuse, réclamait la chute de la Colonne sur l'air des Lampions. Des gamins imitaient le bruit de la scie et le chant du coq ou bien jetaient des avertissements auxquels se laissaient toujours prendre les gens assis au bord des trottoirs. "Pardon! disaient les farceurs, c'était pas le clairon, c'est m'sieu Courbet qui s'mouche." Des spectateurs lâchaient pied, persuadés que, la journée s'avançant, on renverrait la suite au lendemain. "Qu'on rende l'argent, alors! - Faut-il garder sa place à monsieur? - Tombera!... - Tombera pas!..."'
- Cf. Catulle Mendès, op. cit., p. 283: 'Dans la foule, il y avait des malheureux qui frappaient du pied en mesure et en criant: "Des lampions!"'
- Ccf. Maxime Du Camp, op. cit., p. 287: 'L'esprit ironique et gamin du badaud de Paris ne perdit point une si belle occasion de s'amuser un peu; de tous côtés, on se mit à crier: "Elle tombera, elle ne tombera pas!"'
90. Catulle Mendès, p. 283: 'Les uns parlaient de cet Anglais qui avait payé trois mille francs le plaisir de monter le dernier au sommet de la Colonne. Presque tous le blâmaient; on aurait dû donner cette somme au peuple.'
91. Maxime Du Camp, op. cit., p. 290.
92. '...comme à tout enterrement il faut des pleureurs, les pleureurs se trouvent au rendez-vous. Parmi eux, il y a beaucoup d'invalides. Cela devait être. Ces vaillants défenseurs du drapeau qui portait pour devise "chair à pâte" s'exhalent en imprécations contre les vandales qui ont décrété la culbute de leur empereur. Un surtout, porteur d'une jambe de bois, au paroxysme de la fureur, s'écrie: "Insulter celui qui a été le bras de la France!" - Ce bras-là vous a pris une jambe, répond froidement un citoyen qui n'est pas manchot.'
- C. A. Dauban, op. cit., p. 311. Cf. Paul Ginisty, Paris intime en révolution, Paris, Eugène Fasquelle, 1904, p. 144. For the reaction of an invalide on realisation that the Column consisted essentially of stone, see Maurice Choury, Bonjour, Monsieur Courbet!, Paris, Editions sociales, 1969, pp. 106-107.
93. Maxime Du Camp, op. cit., pp. 270-271.
94. Ibid., pp. 282-283: '...au milieu des groupes (qui composaient la foule) un bruit courait, qui (...) me fit battre le coeur: on disait: "Les invalides vont venir; ils se rangeront autour de la colonne et ne permettront pas qu'on la renverse." Dès qu'un mouvement se produisait vers la place Vendôme, on

répétait: "Ce sont les invalides qui viennent, ils ont des piques à la main." Chacun alors se levait sur la pointe des pieds pour mieux voir. Cela se renouvela plusieurs fois pendant la longue attente, et chaque fois la foule, en reconnaissant son erreur, eut un sentiment de déception et comme l'amertume d'une espérance trompée. Les invalides ne vinrent pas; mais s'ils étaient venus? - Je ne sais, en vérité, ce qui se serait passé, et il est possible que, d'une irrésistible poussée, la foule eût brisé le cordon des sentinelles, envahi la place, renversé les cabestans et empêché toute manoeuvre de destruction.'

95. For times given, see Catulle Mendès, p. 283; Lissagaray, p. 291; Maxime Vuillaume, p. 249.
96. Maxime Du Camp, op. cit., p. 288: 'Il y eut une sorte d'oscillation très-rapide, comme si la statue, brusquement secouée, avait repris sa place. Puis la colonne parut se pencher en avant, elle s'inclina, se brisa en trois morceaux, laissa échapper ses entrailles de pierre et s'abattit sur le lit de fascines qui lui avait été préparé dans l'axe de la rue de la Paix. Un nuage de poussière s'éleva; on entendit un bruissement sourd et nous sentîmes à peine une légère trépidation agiter le sol sous nos pieds.'
97. See 1871: la Commune de Paris, Textes réunis par Nicole Priollaud (Collection 'les Reporters de l'histoire') Paris, Liana Levi/Sylvie Messinger, 1983, p. 197.
98. François Coppée, Une Idylle pendant le siège, Paris, Alphonse Lemerre, n.d., p. 153. Cf. Coppée, Mon Franc parler, I, Lemerre, 1894, p. 135: 'L'acte monstrueux de la Commune, renversant, en présence des Allemands vainqueurs, la colonne Vendôme sur un lit de fumier, eut un caractère symbolique. Par une folie que l'imbécillité des passions politiques peut seule expliquer, la France, au lendemain de sa défaite, semblait vouloir déchirer les plus glorieuses pages de son histoire, avilir et souiller une épopée militaire comme aucun peuple n'en a dans les annales.'
- On 18 May 1871, an order of the day issued by Marshal Patrice Mac-Mahon read as follows:
- 'Soldats! La colonne Vendôme vient de tomber. L'étranger l'avait respectée. La Commune de Paris l'a renversée. Des hommes qui se disent Français ont osé détruire, sous les yeux des Allemands, qui nous observent, ce témoin des victoires de vos pères contre l'Europe coalisée. Espéraient-ils, les auteurs indignes de cet attentat à la gloire nationale, effacer la mémoire des vertus militaires dont ce monument était le glorieux symbole? Soldats! si les souvenirs que la colonne nous rappelait ne sont plus gravés sur l'airain, ils resteront du moins vivants dans nos coeurs, et, nous inspirant d'eux, nous saurons donner à la France un nouveau gage de bravoure, de dévouement et de patriotisme.'

- See [H. de Sarrepoint], Guerre des communex de Paris, 18 mars-28 mai 1871, par un officier supérieur de l'armée de Versailles, Paris, Firmin Didot, 1871, p. 201.
99. Ludovic Hans, Second Siège de Paris, Alphonse Lemerre, 1871, p. 199.
100. E. de Pressensé, 'Le 18 mars', Revue des Deux Mondes, 15 June 1871, pp. 561-588: p. 580. Cf. Maxime Du Camp, op. cit., p. 295: '*Bien des personnes fort sensées et de raison droite n'ont pu comprendre qu'il se soit rencontré en France des hommes assez obtus pour accomplir froidement un tel acte de vandalisme, après les défaites dont nous avons souffert et sous la main même du vainqueur. Leur patriotisme s'est révolté; ils ont supposé une ingérence étrangère à cette monstruosité qui fut essentiellement et exclusivement communarde, et ils ont cru que l'impulsion de la Prusse avait aidé au renversement de la colonne.*'
101. See 1871: La Commune de Paris (Collection 'les Reporters de l'histoire') p. 128.
102. Ibid., p. 129. Cf. note 67 of this chapter.
103. Théophile Gautier, Tableaux de siège. Paris 1870-1871, Paris, Bibliothèque Charpentier, 1895 (nouvelle édition): p. 317.
104. Catulle Mendès, op. cit., p. 149.
105. Rachilde, 'Revue du Mois', Mercure de France, November 1901, pp. 495-496.
Mme Alfred Valette (1860-1953), who used the pen name 'Rachilde', co-founded the Mercure de France with her husband.
106. There was, of course, a bitterly hostile representation of 'Buonaparte', 'l'Ogre corse', favoured by royalists in the early decades of the nineteenth century. It should not be forgotten that in April 1814 a royalist demonstration had taken place before the Column, during which one of the gathering had twice slapped the bronze face of the fallen Emperor. The statue was actually pulled down on the 8th of that month.
The following are four of the many texts relating to the Napoleonic Legend(s): Pieter Geyl, Napoleon: For and Against, London, Jonathan Cape, 1949 (published in Peregrine Books 1965); J. Lucas-Dubreton, le Culte de Napoléon, Paris, Albin Michel, 1960; Maurice Descotes, La Légende de Napoléon et les écrivains français du XIX^e siècle, Paris, Minard, 1967; Europe ('Napoléon et la littérature'), April-May 1969.
107. See le Bachelier, chapter X ('Mes Colères').
108. See Alexandre Zévaès, Jules Vallès, son oeuvre, Paris, Editions de la Nouvelle Revue Critique, 1932, pp. 27-28.

109. See Maurice Barrès, les Déracinés, 1897 (chapter VIII: 'Au Tombeau de Napoléon').
110. Quoted by Maurice Choury, La Commune au coeur de Paris, p. 338. For other views of the Column, see Choury, Bonjour, Monsieur Courbet!, pp. 169-177.
111. The point has been made by Mateo Pardo Jr. (op. cit., pp. 23-24).
112. Les Beaux Quartiers, Part Two, chapters XXVIII, XXIX. Descaves would appear not to have been a regular contributor to the Bataille syndicaliste. He wrote for innumerable papers in the course of his journalistic career: among them the nihilistic En dehors which lasted from May 1891 to February 1893; l'Aurore; le Mercure de France; les Temps nouveaux; les Nouvelles littéraires and l'Intransigeant, for which he was drama critic. Perhaps most worthy of note however is his role as literary director for le Journal, from 1919 to 1940.
113. Léon Deffoux, op. cit., p. 61.
114. Gérard Bauer, 'La Mort de Lucien Descaves', Le Figaro littéraire, 10 September 1949.
115. Roland Dorgelès, op. cit., p. 221. Cf. Rachilde, op. cit., p. 496: '...tout, dans cette oeuvre, est d'un art extraordinaire...'.
116. Residents at the Invalides whose portrayals are not without comic value are: the two Alsatians, Klauss and Muller; Feuillette and Bibroque; Lapuchet.

CHAPTER FIVE

LUCIEN DESCAVES: PHILÉMON VIEUX DE LA VIEILLE

Inasmuch as imagination and invention play a relatively limited role in Philémon vieux de la vieille, it is almost misleading to describe the work as a novel in the usual sense. Descaves was substantially realising through Philémon his early plan to write a history of the period of exile:(1) some two-fifths of the text consists of factual (and informative) anecdotal material relating to the years in Switzerland of Etienne Colomès, a former defender of the Commune, and his wife Phonsine. Representative of those anonymous and totally committed participants in events in whom, it might be argued, the spirit of the revolution found its soundest embodiment, Colomès would seem to have been based on a number of real-life Communards known to Descaves. For the Colomès couple - brought together as a result of the semaine sanglante - March-May 1871 remains thirty years later the mainspring of their experience: Colomès, it is said, has retained so powerful a recollection of the 'bloody week',

..qu'il parle toujours de la Semaine sanglante comme il ferait de la dernière semaine écoulée. Sa mémoire a engrangé en huit jours de quoi nourrir toute une vie.(PVV 40)

Many particulars in Colomès life have been drawn, seemingly, from the experiences of one Henri Mathey. A former ouvrier-bijoutier (Colomès himself is of this trade) Mathey had held command at Vanves for a fortnight in May 1871, and spent the years of exile in Switzerland. Colomès, we are told, had been placed by Rossel in command of the fort from 3 to 7 May 1871. Mathey was Descaves' neighbour when the writer lived in the rue de la Santé: Colomès and Phonsine are said also to reside in this street, in a block of flats immediately in front of Descaves' villa. It seems, furthermore, that before learning Mathey's name Descaves ascribed to him privately that of 'Philémon'.(2)

Significant departure from Mathey's experience is made however in the concluding chapters of the novel. Unwilling to face the infirmity and hardship of a penniless old age, and resolved never to accept charity in any form, Colomès will take his own life six months after the death of his beloved Phonsine. Mathey, on the other hand (in his final years a patient at the hospice de Brévannes) passed away peacefully at that institution in 1913, at the age of eighty-nine. Descaves indeed will recount in Philémon a visit by Colomès to Brévannes in his (Descaves') company, writing of their meeting there with Mathey and his spouse.(3) If the similarities between Mathey and Colomès are numerous (both, it may be noted, have known the joys of perfect companionship in marriage) there is certainly no identity of taste or preference. Mathey had been a devoted admirer of the not entirely estimable Félix Pyat, even turning his hand, in apparent emulation of the latter, to the writing of a drama. Colomès, as will be seen, worships the memory of Eugène Varlin, the young socialist bookbinder who by the selflessness of his life in the service of his fellow workers, his unremitting efforts towards eventual emancipation of the proletariat, and the tragedy of his end, is certainly one of the Communards most deserving of posterity's recognition.

Descaves would seem to have drawn his inspiration for the novel's final chapters from the experiences of other Communards known to him. A former insurgent by the name of Bouit(4) acted as cashier at the offices of l'Aurore. When he was advised in 1900 by Ernest Vaughan that the paper was soon to close down, he chose to end his life rather than face ill-health, unemployment and inevitable poverty. As Colomès is seen to do in his final letter to Descaves, Bouit had written to Vaughan informing him of his intention, and requesting that the journalist come to his lodgings on receipt of the letter. It is of interest to note in addition Descaves' comment concerning Bouit's death in Souvenirs d'un ours ('L'insurrection a ses vieux de la vieille, qui meurent et ne se rendent pas'):(5) for in addition to the obvious analogy with the title of the novel, the final chapter of Philémon (recounting Colomès' suicide) is entitled: '*Ils meurent, eux aussi,*

plutôt que de se rendre.' Gustave Lefrançais, also Descaves' neighbour at one time,(6) and a former exile in Switzerland, died in straitened circumstances on 16 May 1901 at the age of seventy-five (Colomès at the time of his death is said to be seventy-six). As is seen to be the case with 'Philémon', he was cremated at the Père-Lachaise. The parallels between Philémon and Lefrançais may however have more substance than this. Descaves, who was one of Lefrançais' testamentary executors,(7), writes in Philémon vieux de la vieille that he and Colomès had held each other in the highest esteem, *'...si bien qu'il finit par me préférer, pour exécuteur testamentaire, à des amis de plus ancienne date'* (PVV 48). It is clear that Lefrançais too had been a limitless source of information on the subject of the Commune (*'...j'ai 'feuilleter' mon père Lefrançais jusqu'à son dernier jour, apprenant ainsi de lui, sans livres, tout ce que lui et ses camarades de lutte avaient observé et subi'*):(8) and Descaves' almost filial devotion to the old revolutionary is said also, in Philémon, to mark his rapports with Colomès. Of the latter he will write in Philémon vieux de la vieille:

...je l'aimai filialement, lorsqu'il n'eut plus de mystères pour moi. Il dépend de nous de n'être jamais orphelins. Nous avons tous quelque part des parents spirituels qui nous cherchent aussi passionnément que nous les cherchons, et nulle adoption réciproque n'est plus noble et plus féconde que celle-là... (PVV 33)

and after the old man's suicide: *'Il me semblait perdre mon père pour la seconde fois'* (PVV 348).

While the likely influence of various Communards in creation of Etienne Colomès is of particular interest here, it is to be noted that other sources may have counted for something in the portrayal. The mutual devotion of Colomès and his wife reflects conceivably that of Descaves' maternal grandparents, described in Souvenirs d'un ours as *'(un) ménage de Philémon et de Baucis'* (PVV 3). Colomès' excellent memory, his fondness for song are attributes Descaves ascribes to his grandfather and father respectively;(9) while the former Communist's

fierceness and forthrightness seem to tally with the writer's own personality as described both by him and by friends and acquaintances.

The décor within which the friendship of Descaves and Colomès will develop is indicated in the opening pages of the first chapter. The territory bounded at its extremity by the rue de la Santé, having on one side the boulevard Raspail and the boulevard Saint-Jacques and on the other the boulevard Montparnasse and the boulevard de Port-Royal, lies within the 14th arrondissement and borders on the 13th. It is a kind of intermediary point, in fact, between the home environments of Descaves and Colomès respectively. Embracing at one end the Hospice des Enfants assistés, at the other the Hôpital Cochin and the Prison de la Santé, the area (said to be '*...un archipel de douleurs...*') (PVV 1), seems a microcosmic expression of human suffering in which each misfortune has its own islet. Religious establishments of one sort or another are amply represented both within the enclave, and close by; and while these have little obvious bearing upon the lives of either Colomès or Descaves, they are suggestive of a peacefulness already under invasion from what is, by implication, a menacing, alien force. From his window in the rue de la Santé, Descaves can see a number of towering factory chimneys, '*...(qui) déroulent (...) comme un deuil, le gros crêpe de leurs fumées flottantes*' (PVV 3-4). Whereas in the past a sleeper might have been awakened by the bells of a convent or chapel, Descaves is aroused in the morning by the sinister howl of a factory siren summoning the workers to their toil '*...comme le maître siffle ses chiens*' (PVV 4).(10)

The predominance of walls and confining spaces within the locality is all too clearly indicative of the sort of imprisonment imposed by poverty, cheerlessness and ill luck. Of the buildings and establishments (each representative of some aspect of suffering or failure), it might be said, Descaves writes, that they take hold of the individual at his birth '*...et ne l'abandonnent qu'à sa mort, saturé de l'illusion d'avoir vécu*' (PVV 1-2). This suggested constraint and imprisonment might be considered also a coincidental reflection of the

material circumstances - though not of the spirit - of Colomès and Phonsine themselves. Philémon and Baucis, as Descaves will style the old couple until actually learning their names, live according to a firm code of decency and integrity, their whole outlook and approach to life best indicated perhaps by a love of singing for which almost any occasion seemingly provides a pretext. They are fiercely independent, valiant in the face of adversity: a total contrast, needless to say, to the contemptible plebeian specimens of anti-Communard literature. The 'vieux de la vieille' (men and women who have, to use Colomès' apt parallel, crossed the Red Sea together)(11) are quite literally, by the 1900's, a dying breed, survivors of a brief and tumultuous episode which, if all-important to them and to a limited number of enthusiasts, is presented in the novel as misunderstood by, or far removed from the preoccupations of, most others. Even to the younger proletarian generation - represented in Albert Malavaux fils, the son of a deportee to New Caledonia - the Commune seems not incomprehensibly an embryonic (and gravely flawed) advertisement for proletarian rights, important in that it has foreshadowed the more determined, decisive movements of later decades, but representative nonetheless of an impractical, quixotic, foolishly heroic former stage in development of working-class self-assertion. In the dedication of the novel ('A tes vieux de la vieille, République des travailleurs, ces bulletins de leur Grande Armée') the parallel is made by Descaves with veterans of an earlier time, and of another sort: again (though less directly) at a time when he has no clear idea as to Colomès' and Phonsine's past:

Des Vieux de la Vieille rabâchant leurs exploits; des Vieux de la Vieille sans uniforme, sans galons sur la manche, ni croix sur la poitrine, il y en a, Dieu merci! en dehors de la grande armée impériale. On revient toujours d'un pèlerinage à la Colonne, quand on a le culte d'un drapeau, quel qu'il soit. (PVV 18)

On realisation soon afterwards that they are indeed former sympathisers with the 1871 insurrection who yearly make a pilgrimage to their own shrine, Descaves writes anew: 'Mur ou Colonne, c'est tout un...' (PVV 21). The term 'vieux de la vieille', which had currency as

a locution to describe Napoleon's grognards, was indeed used by some under the Third Republic to refer to surviving participants in the Commune: we need hardly ponder as to which group, in Descaves' view, had defended the nobler cause.

The reference to the invasion by industrialisation of a formerly tranquil district assumes its full significance as the novel progresses. Representative in this of most Paris workers at the time of the Commune, Colomès and Phonsine are artisans; menaced in the early 1900's by an overwhelming, impersonal force which threatens their livelihood... and, no less seriously, their individuality, soul and freedom. The struggle (nothing if not unequal) put up by the old couple against industrialisation and the machine is likened by Descaves, as we shall see, to another battle, rather different in type, of over thirty years before. The 'vieux de la vieille' who have survived into the twentieth century are indeed the victims of time, reluctant witnesses to changes they dislike or misunderstand; and some of which, as in the case of Colomès and Phonsine, threaten to engulf them. With each passing year, the ranks of the Communards grow fewer, the sense of anonymity of those who remain more pronounced. They are relics now, in a world that seems indifferent or hostile to their 'glorious interlude' of days gone by, and the values and perceptions of which are largely foreign to them. All of this, it might be argued, is no more than a reflection of universal human experience: its expression, however, in Philémon vieux de la vieille, is by no means banal.

Significantly, Colomès will first impinge upon Descaves' consciousness as, one April morning in 1900, he heartily serenades the approaching spring. Descaves has been resident in the rue de la Santé only a few weeks: at work as usual on this particular morning, he finds his concentration broken as he recognises in this song ('l'Ami soleil') one of the preferred items in his father's repertory. Looking in curiosity out of his study window, he realises that the baritone who has unknowingly revived in him memories long dormant is himself

standing at a window only a few feet away, in the flat opposite Descaves' villa. In his shirtsleeves, and with the cuffs tucked back, this 'Friend of the Sun' is busily polishing a pair of shoes:

Agé de soixante-cinq ans environ, court, replet et sanguin, il avait tant de poils sur la figure, en barbe, moustaches et sourcils, que des houppes grises, dans ses oreilles, pouvaient n'être pas indispensables. La chevelure, toute blanche, devait à son désordre de paraître non moins abondante. (...) il s'accouda un instant sur l'appui de la croisée, pour humer le matin d'avril. Et comme sa chemise était ouverte sur la poitrine, sa longue barbe semblait descendre plus bas, augmentée de la brousse qui végétait au creux de l'estomac. Tout cela prenait l'air voluptueusement, pour n'en rien perdre, le nez, assez large déjà, enflait davantage ses ailes, et les paupières elles-mêmes battaient de joie sur des yeux rafraîchis. (PVV 7-8)

This congenial description sets the tone for the portrayal gradually developed in the course of the novel; although it will be some weeks yet before Descaves is aware either of the singer's identity, or of his link with the Commune. It is appropriate that this initial encounter - limited in fact to the stare of one, and the glare of the other - should be taking place at the onset of spring: for Colomès, as has been indicated already, looks upon the memorable springtide of three decades earlier as the high point of his existence. Descaves' sudden and vivid recollection of childhood days as he listens to the song (*'...elle rouvrirait en moi, d'un coup d'aile, une de ces cellules secrètes où tant de souvenirs sont en léthargie'*)(PVV 6) cannot fail to recall the narrator Marcel's experience in Combray (Du Côté de chez Swann, of course, appeared also in 1913). The fact that Descaves' father had frequently opted for 'l'Ami Soleil' as he worked at his engravings is suggestive already of the near paternal role Colomès will come eventually to occupy for the younger man. Colomès has unwittingly disengaged recesses in Descaves' memory that enable him to relive segments of his childhood experience largely relegated to the subconscious: and an intrinsic aspect of the portrayal of Colomès is precisely that his values and enjoyments are those of days gone by. It is clear to Descaves on this April morning that such unselfconscious

delight in singing marks the old man as temperamentally of a time when - in many working or lower middle-class circles - a song was the natural accompaniment to every situation:

Ce vieillard appartient à une génération qui chantait en travaillant, qui chantait à table, qui chantait en s'insurgeant, qui avait un gosier sonore pour saluer toutes les circonstances de la vie. Non seulement, mon voisin est capable de conduire une chanson jusqu'au bout (je gagerais qu'il sait par coeur, ô miracle! la 'Marseillaise' et le 'Chant du Départ'), mais il a le courage de son innocente passion. (PVV 8)

In the early 1900's, this type of response to daily impressions or situations may invite - from some - amusement or ridicule. Not only, however, do old habits die hard, but certain wonts and rituals are so much a part of oneself as to be retained in defiance of evolving (and often unsympathetic or uncomprehending) opinion. Descaves will have occasion, in ensuing days and weeks, to note the extensiveness of the singer's repertoire: it is clear however that the old man has a particular fondness for the songs of Eugène Pottier and Jean-Baptiste Clément. The extreme closeness of the flat allows the writer not so much to indulge what might be considered a misplaced curiosity as to partially satisfy legitimate interest through the processes of deduction... An outing by 'Philémon and Baucis' at the end of May; their return with three friends, and the snatches of conversation overheard by Descaves as the company sits at table; a reference in the following day's paper to observance before the Mur des Fédérés of the twenty-ninth anniversary of the semaine sanglante; a bunch of immortelles discernible on one of the portraits in the couple's living-room: from all of this, Descaves can conclude with little likelihood of error that an insurrection of absorbing interest to him has two former participants close by. A conversation with the concierge in the apartment block will yield Colomès' name: and in the course of a visit to Geneva made in quest of material for his planned history of the exile period, Descaves happens upon further information relating to his neighbours. A direct approach to Colomès is made on return to Paris: and if the old man is initially reserved, even

unfriendly, he will display a greater readiness to converse when Descaves begins to talk of some of his and Phonsine's former comrades-in-exile. The way is now clear for development of an enriching friendship which, if certain indications in the novel are taken into account, spans a period of some ten years.

Born in the Gobelins district (the year, from information supplied throughout the book, may be fixed at about 1834) Colomès is of course of soundly plebeian stock. His mother had been a washerwoman and his father a tanner who, in the words of his progeny, '*...faisait peu de différence entre ma peau et celles qu'il corroyait*' (PVV 35). The limited education Colomès received was gained at the école mutuelle: his apprenticeship to a jeweller had begun at thirteen. Through innumerable humanising touches which might have assumed a near-caricatural effect in the work of another writer, Descaves builds up an impression of a distinctly engaging central character. Several of Colomès' physical characteristics mark him from the outset as something of a personality, notably his stocky, beetle-browed truculence, and the fiery, impassioned sparkle of his eye.⁽¹²⁾ Attention will be drawn to certain peculiarities or tics of language: recurrence in his conversation of the phrase '*Et allez donc!*' (PVV 37); the distinctive pronunciation of 'lorsque' (lorseque), 'poète' (pouate), 'recoin' (racoin). Proper names of a more unusual sort occasionally elude the old man: Colonel Boisdemachin for example (who presided at Rossel's court martial) becomes, predictably enough, '*un général Boisdemachin*' (PVV 38). Insecurely fastened at the waist, Colomès' trousers seem in perpetual danger of slipping; and one of his harmless eccentricities is to wear only square-toed shoes because Napoléon Gaillard (a cobbler by trade, and one of Colomès' companions-in-exile) had advocated their use.⁽¹³⁾ In his attitudes not merely to those of the bourgeois camp but to certain fellow insurgents, Colomès can display an unshakeable antipathy or prejudice. As he sorts through pamphlets accumulated during the years of exile and relating to or written by former participants in the Commune, the old man's face ('*...à sa façon d'être rouge, écarlate ou cramoisi...*') will seem to

the observer indicative of three respective attitudes or states: '*...une conviction profonde, la colère ou l'apoplexie*' (PVV 182). Not surprisingly, any reference by Descaves to vilifiers of the Commune seems almost to invite the last-mentioned affliction ('*Sa barbe a l'air de n'être blanche que parce qu'il écume*') (PVV 84). Inconsistencies in outlook on Colomès' part do reveal themselves from time to time: while George Sand, Théophile Gautier, Flaubert and Goncourt are reviled, and Hugo's stand on behalf of Communard refugees dismissed as mere posturing, Colomès will excuse Pierre Dupont's toadying behaviour during Empire days(14) because '*...il vécut toujours près du peuple, lui! Vos pouates sont courtisans et menteurs de nature*' (PVV 102). Taking the air with the old man is, Descaves discovers, a stimulating experience; any expression of disagreement on his part with a given view or parti pris will invariably provoke an animated reaction:

La contradiction (...) s'accompagne, chez mon voisin, d'une gesticulation bien curieuse, pour laquelle il retrouve la souplesse et la pétulance du jeune âge. L'ai-je provoqué? Il s'arrête, tombe en garde, engage un fer imaginaire, prend des contres, pare, coupe, dégage, allonge le bras, riposte et me touche enfin en pleine poitrine, de son index tendu.

Il n'y a qu'un moyen de l'apaiser: accuser le coup. Je n'y manque pas, lorsque je vois les passants intrigués nous servir de témoins. (PVV 54)

Good-natured mockery by Descaves of the old man's various foibles does not of course mean that the reader will ultimately form an impression of some kind of eccentric buffoon. Colomès' powers of recollection are said to be formidable (what, after all, is his function in the novel, if not to remember and recount?) and he displays in the role of raconteur an articulacy and eloquence that might seem astonishing in a man whose education has been little more than rudimentary. The reader of la Colonne has already felt similar scepticism in that the workers Rabouille and Mazoudier express themselves exceptionally well also... by any standards. More importantly, of course, the portrayal of Colomès does serve to offset the representation of the brutal, alcoholic, slothful, wife-beating,

basely envious plebeian found in anti-Communard literature.⁽¹⁵⁾ For the old man the cult of work is sacred: he had, when in exile, little time for the Swiss and the Russians of his acquaintance because, Descaves writes:

Il avait trop regardé leurs mains sans métier, leurs mains improductives; vice impardonnable pour le vieil ouvrier dont la religion du travail avait ceci de commun avec toutes les religions, qu'elle excommunait quelqu'un. (PVV 112)

The sort of constancy and depth of affection characterising the rapports of Colomès and Phonsine are (in Descaves' own view) far less evident in contemporary relationships than might be wished. As befits a reader of Proudhon, Colomès believes firmly in marriage, and is described as '*...vertueux et chaste par inclination...*' (PVV 122). It must be added, however, that he has no more doubts than had Proudhon himself as to the woman's position of inferiority vis-à-vis her husband; and has even on one occasion, in Descaves' hearing, termed his better half a '*foutue bête*' (PVV 122). In a touch contrasting with frequent anti-Communard portrayal whereby a working-class habitat was considered synonymous with squalor, Phonsine is said to be a fanatical housekeeper: '*...elle hennissait à la poussière, comme une jument de bataille à la poudre*' (PVV 32).

Whatever their qualities of industry, independence and integrity - and there will be occasion to examine these further - it cannot of course be suggested that the attitudes and beliefs of Colomès and Phonsine would have won them much favour with the average bourgeois reader in 1913. There are, first and foremost, constant references throughout the novel to Colomès' lasting preoccupation with the events and personalities of March-May 1871: Descaves refers in fact to the '*...impérieux besoin qu'éprouvait Philémon de tout rapporter à la Commune, axe et astre de sa vie*' (PVV 123). Beside the fireplace in his living room, there hangs a long strip of paper (referred to as '*le pilori*') on which the names of authors who have written unkindly of the Commune are listed.⁽¹⁶⁾ Similarly, the supreme, incontrovertible proof

of valour in Colomès' eyes is to have fought at the last point of organised resistance during the semaine sanglante:

Avoir été rue Fontaine-au-Roi, c'est-à-dire au dernier carré de la Commune, constituait le plus indubitable des titres à l'indulgence de Colomès. (PVV 145)(17)

Even in 1900, ragpickers are ill-regarded by the old man because, as he informs Descaves, *'De toutes les professions, c'est celle de chiffonnier qui a fourni le moins de partisans à la Commune'* (PVV 62). The Parc de Montsouris, one of the favourite recreational spots for the capital's poor, is of course preferred to the Luxembourg, *'...jardin de la bourgeoisie, de ses enfants et de leurs écoles'*:

'Et puis, ajoutait-il, on a trop fusillé là, en 48 et en 71!'
(PVV 113)

Colomès' reminiscences concerning the insurrectionary period itself and the semaine sanglante are accorded some nine pages only of the novel. A fédéré in the 86th battalion with no particular military competence, he had on 2 May, when visiting the Hôtel de Ville, been almost entreated by Henri Brissac (general secretary of the Commune's executive commission) to accept interim command at Vanves. Initial reluctance was substantially dispelled by a conversation with Eugène Varlin, Colomès' closest friend, regarded by him as an oracle and to whom, after the Commune, he will dedicate nothing short of a cult: *'Il avait parlé, je partis immédiatement...'* (PVV 39). Henri Mathey, on whom, as we have seen, Colomès is at least partially based, held command at Vanves for a fortnight: Colomès however, as he tells Descaves, was replaced to his no great sorrow on the 7th, after five days during which, despite the limited manpower available, the fort had held out under constant enemy fire. On his return from the outposts Colomès had engaged in no further active combat until the entry of Versailles troops. The semaine sanglante, searingly memorable in its drama and tragedy, had proved a turning-point in the lives of Colomès and Phonsine for other reasons which are not far to seek. The spring, of course, had been a glorious one that year:

Et pourtant, à la vérité, mai, le joli mai, n'avait duré pour eux qu'une semaine. Quelle semaine, par exemple! Errant, traqué, recru, roulé vivant et sans cérémonie vers le Père-Lachaise, comme un condamné à mort auquel il n'est donné que de choisir son cimetière..., Colomès avait rencontré le salut en Phonsine. Et c'était tout de même le joli mai, puisqu'ils avaient fait connaissance dans ce mois et ces circonstances-là! (PVV 34)

Colomès, who had been fighting without intermission since the evening of Sunday 21st, begins his oral account of developments at the Wednesday of the 'bloody week'. Brevity and concision can hardly be said to characterise Descaves' writing: he does however on this occasion choose to limit his (or Colomès') evocation to the salient sights and impressions attributed to the Communard as he sets forth in search of Varlin, last seen by him the previous evening at the Croix-Rouge. Combating in infernal temperatures resulting not merely from raging fires but from a merciless sun, the insurgents can have no illusions as to the outcome of the struggle: as Colomès says, however,

C'était la défaite, ce n'était pas la panique. On acceptait le sort. Les incendies ne furent pas inutiles; ils firent comprendre aux insurgés qu'ils n'avaient plus à demander ni à espérer grâce. Bon avertissement. La clémence du vainqueur n'a jamais grandi que lui. (PVV 41)

At one o'clock or thereabouts on the Wednesday afternoon, Colomès - still looking for Varlin, whom he has in fact seen for the last time - finds himself at the place de la Bastille. Here, women and children are handing food, drink or ammunition to insurgents, many of whom, as they lie on their stomachs behind the barricades, might be taken to be in a state of intoxication. '*Ils avaient l'air ivres...*', Colomès says: '*...ils n'étaient, comme moi, qu'exténués*' (PVV 41). Other combatants are tranquilly partaking of a snack, or quaffing wine that is being circulated in a flowerpot. As Colomès moves down towards the boulevards, there seems more direct evidence of the toll taken by the fighting. From the back of an ambulance, a lifeless arm may be seen hanging: and a little further on, a fédéré whose posterior has been shattered by shellfire is being carried, shrieking in agony, in a tub

of water. While we are told that Colomès has a near total power of recall with respect to events of the semaine sanglante, this may be accepted with some reservations as he is unable - given his state of fatigue - to remember just where his last shots were fired. The one impression that remains with him at this point is that at either the Porte Saint-Denis or the Porte Saint-Martin - he was at one or the other - a hurdy-gurdy was playing tunes from 'Orpheus in the Underworld'.(18)

When that night a near somnambulistic Colomès wanders to the flat of a workmate, Prosper Lagneau, he will find only the latter's sister at home. Of Prosper, in fact, nothing more will be heard, all attempts to ascertain his fate proving unavailing:

On n'a jamais su ce qu'il était devenu. Passé, dans le tas, au moulin à café, il alla, sans doute, comme tant d'autres, aux fosses communes creusées pour la circonstance. (PVV 45)

On this particular evening, a bed is offered Colomès; and while he lies in a state of apparent delirium Phonsine (for it is she) disposes of his rifle, and all items of clothing that would compromise him in the event of a search by Versailles soldiers. When in due course a sergeant appears, the combatant of recent days is said by his protectress to be stricken with typhoid; this statement being apparently confirmed, of course, by reason of Phonsine's judicious prior placement on the bedside table of various bottles of physic not normally there. To the sergeant, indeed, Colomès owes a debt of thanks; for once the crisis is past, the emotion generated by such a visit assumes a more tenderly intimate quality for both 'patient' and nurse!

Phonsine's role as guardian angel does not end here. She will arrange for Colomès to go into hiding at the home of an aunt of hers living in another part of the city: and will, during his month of concealment, somehow procure the identity papers of a Swiss worker whose description matches that of her lover. At the end of June 1871,

Colomès takes the train to Geneva, where Phonsine will join him not long after. Stewardship at Vanves has of course its price in the eyes of Versailles authority: the one-time commander is sentenced in his absence to deportation to a fortified place (this meaning, of course, after the Commune, deportation to New Caledonia).

Colomès and Phonsine have a daughter, born in 1872. By the time Descaves has made the acquaintance of the couple, Louise (for this is her name) is married, living in Poitiers, and no longer on speaking terms with her father. Her clockmaker husband (whom Descaves will meet after Colomès' death) had come to judge none too favourably Colomès' involvement in the Commune; and since a comment one day by this pratiquant that the mass incineration of corpses seemed a wise measure in 1871 (*'Ces enragés avaient fait assez de mal de leur vivant, pour être dispensés de nuire, une fois morts'*) (PVV 127) Colomès - who had at the time to be restrained from physical violence - has not surprisingly ceased all relations with him. The clockmaker, if referred to by his father-in-law in conversations with Descaves, is *'un ostrogoth'*, *'un joli coco'*, *'ce triste individu'*: and Louise, whose loyalties might have been divided, has had apparently no qualms about siding totally with her husband. She does, however, see Phonsine from time to time, either in Paris or in Poitiers.

Strongly implicit condemnation of the Versailles repression is of course to be found in Philémon; notably in references to the Wall of the Père-Lachaise:

Un mur, ce n'est qu'un mur... mais par quoi cimenté! Si le canon y ouvrait une brèche, il saignerait encore! Colomès le croit, et, de cette croyance il a vécu... (PVV 294)

Le Père La Chaise... (...) Là, l'insurrection traquée, aux abois, avait expiré, massacrée... Les murs de la rue des Rosiers, de la Roquette et de la rue Haxo, où deux généraux et une poignée d'otages s'étaient adossés pour mourir, ces Murs pâlissent, oui, pâlissent auprès de celui du Père La Chaise, abondamment taché de rouge par la suprême hécatombe! Il en a mérité d'être appelé Le Mur tout court. Il n'y a plus que lui. Il dépasse les autres de dix épaisseurs de cadavres. (PVV 354)

Referring at one point to Henri Rochefort's support for Boulanger, Descaves censures (in what might be considered his usual elaborate fashion) the belief of former Communards in a man who, seventeen years before, had taken part in the repression of 21-28 May:

Ah! pourquoi le pamphlétaire avait-il compromis son prestige dans l'aventure boulangiste! Le fouet, dans sa main, n'était plus qu'une chambrière: autour de lui, d'anciens compagnons d'armes sablaient la piste au cheval ennemi qui les avait heurtés du poitrail, pendant les Vêpres versaillaises! Comme si c'était à ceux dont le sang fut répandu, d'en faire disparaître la trace aux yeux des meurtriers! (PVV 294-295) (My underlining) (20)

As he turns the pages of the Colomès photograph album on one occasion, looking not merely at the faces of the more celebrated insurgents, but at the countless unknown sympathisers or combatants who have such importance for his two friends ('C'était la foule des anonymes, des dévouements obscurs, des combattants dispersés par la rafale versaillaise et tournoyant dans l'espace...; toute la famille de Colomès et de Phonsine') (PVV 98) Descaves reflects upon the nobility, and (to his idea) the ultimate futility of the Communard combatant's willingness to give his life. However valiant, the insurgent resistance seems to him also to have been misguided:

Ces ouvriers, la semaine finie, pouvaient se reposer, attendre, en rabâchant éternellement, des jours meilleurs. Ils avaient célébré le dimanche en prenant le fusil. Ils avaient cru, eux aussi, eux les derniers, que leur sang répandu crierait: Succès! Succès de leurs revendications, réalisation de leurs espérances, accomplissement de leurs vœux... Comme si une saignée avait jamais fortifié le malade sur qui on la pratique! Les fils, heureusement, sont revenus de l'erreur des pères... mais cela empêche-t-il de vénérer les pères, dont le sang généreux abreuva les sillons? (PVV 98)

The reader's initial reaction to a passage such as this might conceivably be one of puzzlement. Are the implications of Descaves' phrasing not clear to him? one may wonder: is he writing in momentary forgetfulness of the Communards' circumstances? The eighteenth of

March was hardly an orchestrated seizure of power: the insurgents' moment of revolt (as is made clear elsewhere by Descaves) had been, if anything, forced upon them. Once they found themselves however in a situation of open opposition to the hated Thiers and his Assembly, how psychologically probable would their immediate surrender have been? Resistance to Versailles - so scathingly denunciatory of the Paris 'assassins', and the initiator of hostilities after 18 March - was on balance deserving of reproof, Descaves might be taken to be saying, because certain to lead to bloodshed. The significance of the passage becomes clearer, of course, when read with certain conversations from la Colonne in mind; or when considered in relation to the fourth chapter of Philémon, in which twenty-seven-year-old Albert Malavaux describes the Communards - appropriately, if not originally - as 'revolutionary romantics' akin to their predecessors of the 1830's or of 1848. Had the insurgents been more ready to seize opportunities available to them - had they taken possession, for instance, of the Banque de France - the entire question of self-sacrifice and of horrendous repression would not (Descaves presumably means) in all likelihood have arisen at all.

The repression of the Paris Commune seems today one of the sorriest episodes in nineteenth century European history. And yet, as we know (if only from Colomès' earlier remark) the truly committed insurgent of 1871 often did not expect, and was not asking for, quarter. Subdual by bloody means of what might with greater or lesser accuracy be perceived as social disorder, was and is, after all, a well-trying response by government: so well-trying indeed, in the nineteenth century, as to be regarded as almost inescapable by challengers to established authority in the event of conflict or defeat. Insurgents portrayed by Descaves are seen sometimes to be aware of the potential significance of the repression in shaping posterity's view of their cause. Is it not of this that Colomès is thinking when he comments that '*La clémence du vainqueur n'a jamais grandi que lui*' (PVV 41)? In the play la Saignée, the point is made outright. A fédéré, hearing that the Versaillais are now in Paris,

says that all is lost ('...autant dire que la Commune est morte!')(21) to which Charles Bécherel - who has deserted the regular army on 18 March - gives the following reply:

- Tu crois ça... Ecoute bien... Elle est morte si peu qu'ils vont la tuer... Et plus ils la tueront, plus elle aura de chances de vivre dans la mémoire des hommes! (22)

Descaves' views with respect to certain Communard activities during the semaine sanglante coincide essentially with those expressed by Jules Vallès/Jacques Vingtras in l'Insurgé. The acquaintance had been made in 1906 of Jean-Louis Pindy, placed in charge of the Hôtel de Ville during the Commune, and responsible for ordering the firing of the building on 24 May. Descaves felt only esteem for the former Communard ('Coeur dévoué, bras ferme, aimable tournure et belle humeur, il avait tout pour faire aimer la cause qu'il servait') (PVV 282) and the respect and liking Pindy evidently inspired may have contributed, in some degree, to the tolerant view Descaves himself took of the incendiarism marking the Commune's death-throes:

Etrange contradiction! Rostopchine

Laissant derrière lui brûler Moscou fumant

passé pour un héros. Pourquoi Pindy conformant sa conduite à cet illustre modèle, est-il couvert d'opprobre?

Traité en "ennemi de l'intérieur", l'insurgé se défend en conséquence. La guerre n'a pas de lois, elle n'a que des nécessités. Quand le droit des gens n'est plus respecté, quel droit à la préservation des archives et des monuments pourraient-ils invoquer? Mais c'est le propre des gens que le sang répandu laisse indifférents, de gémir sur les décombres. Coeurs de pierre et cerveaux de papier, ils ont l'air de se regretter eux-mêmes. (PVV 283)

The view - not untenable, one might feel - recalls that found in l'Insurgé.(23) Like Vingtras the réfractaire - and as he had himself done in la Colonne - Descaves censures the killing of hostages; guiltless of any crime, and whose execution could only prove detrimental to the Commune. As he observes eloquently (or extravagantly) to Colomès:

Vous donniez des verges pour vous battre. Vous répandiez inutilement le sang le plus propre à retomber sur vous en pluie!
(PVV 131)(24)

Colomès himself - while of course making the point that the number of hostages executed during the semaine sanglante was paltry indeed when compared to the slaughter perpetrated by Versailles - is in agreement with Descaves; citing the opinion of his idol, and adding that the martyrdom of a few priests had provided, for their fellows, an invaluable pretext for subsequent distortion and exploitation:

C'était bien ce que pensait Varlin, d'ailleurs, lorsque, rue Haxo, il s'opposait à l'exécution des otages, en criant à la foule ameutée qu'elle allait déshonorer la Commune. Il avait raison. Les prêtres ont bien vengé leurs vingt-quatre martyrs en les faisant passer et repasser dans leurs récits, comme une poignée de figurants destinés à donner l'illusion du nombre! La légende qui a dénaturé le mouvement insurrectionnel, est en grande partie l'oeuvre des curés. Tel qui réchappa, ne fut détenu que quelques jours, quelques heures, voire simplement menacé d'arrestation, a raconté sa Passion, porté sa croix, gémi sur ses compagnons de captivité, coloré enfin de piété, de regrets éternels, un volume ou une brochure d'excitation à la haine et aux représailles! Ces trompettes de jugement dernier ont fait croire que nous avions massacré tout le clergé parisien, et la Commune a dégénéré en Saint-Barthélemy. (PVV 131)

Eugène Varlin ('...le héros qui prépara de son cerveau plein et de ses mains pures, l'émancipation de la classe ouvrière') (PVV 97) is, as already indicated, of sacrosanct status in Colomès' eyes. Colomès had loved Varlin as a brother: they were, he tells Descaves, of almost the same age; although this - as will be demonstrated in a later consideration of certain errors and inconsistencies in the novel - need not be taken too literally. Portraits and photographs of participants in the Commune cover the walls of the Colomès home: above them all however may be seen:

...comme à la place d'honneur, un front pâle et magnifique, sous un bourrelet de cheveux mordorés, (qui) avait l'air d'un miroir penché pour refléchir la collection tout entière. (PVV 30)

Descaves - whose veneration for Eugène Varlin seems hardly less than that of his Communard neighbour - finds himself in the spell of the cult on his first visit to his neighbours, '*...pénétré de respect comme on l'est involontairement, dans une chapelle, devant un saint dont le bedeau vous murmure le nom*' (PVV 31). When referring to insurgent destruction during the semaine sanglante, Descaves will express the view that the loss of a man of Varlin's unique calibre was an infinitely greater tragedy than the incendiarism of buildings which could, after all, be reconstructed:

La mort de Varlin... la mort de la pensée et peut-être du génie qui habitaient tant de cervelles fracassées... voilà d'autres catastrophes que la destruction d'un hôtel de ville. Et la preuve, c'est qu'on l'a reconstruit, tandis que la perte d'un Varlin est irréparable.

Belle flamme éteinte, à quelle conjonction d'un homme et d'une femme te rallumeras-tu?

J'ai dit cela sincèrement, le regard tourné vers l'image du crucifié, aux mains dont les clous furent rivés par des balles... (PVV 286)

The parallel with him who is in Christian belief the Supreme Martyr - and is there not in the above an almost wistful anticipation of a Second Coming? - recurs often in Philémon vieux de la vieille.⁽²⁵⁾ The reader, who has already noted the implicit association of Rabouille with Christ in la Colonne, will find constant evidence in this later novel of Descaves' fondness for the religious analogy or reference. Shortly before a celebration entre intimes of the anniversary of 18 March, it is with obvious intent that Colomès carries the portrait of his idol into the dining-room:

Allégorie transparente! Il avait l'air, avec sa belle figure pensive, d'être au milieu de ses apôtres et de leur dire, lorsqu'ils rompaient le pain: Ceci est mon corps, et lorsqu'ils versaient à boire: ceci est mon sang. (PVV 133-134)

As the evening advances, and sometimes heated discussion gives way to song not always tunefully rendered:

Derrière moi, au mur, (...) Varlin lui-même, ne trouvait pas cela si ridicule et, toujours pensif, semblait dire: "Ils font ceci en mémoire de moi..." (PVV 173)

It seems fitting that Colomès should bequeath this portrait holding such sentimental value for him to his neighbour: for through Descaves, tribute might finally be paid those working-class insurgents whose honesty, courage and devotion to a cause were no less for having been disregarded by posterity. 'A vous, mon ami...' (Colomès writes in his suicide letter):

...qui peut-être un jour ferez rendre justice aux hommes dont j'ai partagé la vie, les doctrines et le malheur, je lègue, en souvenir d'eux et de moi, le portrait d'Eugène Varlin, ce juste et ce martyr. Tenez-vous quelquefois debout devant lui, car on ne s'agenouille pas, chez nous, devant les icônes. (PVV 343)

That a rendering of justice is overdue seems intimated both by the conversation of various busybodies gathered in Colomès' dining-room after the old man's death ('*Un quidam y pérorait sur Colomès et disait: "Le voici quand il était jeune", en montrant le portrait de Varlin!*') (PVV 348) and, later the same day, by the inability of Colomès' son-in-law to retain the bookbinder's name ('*"Vous pourrez prendre dès ce soir le portrait de ce M. Colin..."*') (PVV 357). One of the Communards most deserving of remembrance is in 1910 unknown to, or forgotten by, all but a few. Varlin, after all, was but a worker, one of a breed whose life (as Colomès remarks with some bitterness) is held generally to be of little account, '*...bien qu'elle vaille pourtant la peine qu'on la raconte, quand elle est remplie et mémorable comme celle de Varlin!*' (PVV 31). Descaves himself, at the time he was working on Philémon vieux de la vieille, had apparently the intention of one day writing Varlin's biography:(26) fate, or other commitments, would decide however that his tribute to the bookbinder should remain limited to the pages of this novel.

Despised by those who see themselves as his social superiors, the manual worker (of whom Varlin is, in Colomès' eyes, the supreme

representative) is the only member of society considered by the old man to perform a genuinely worthwhile function. Men who, as Descaves writes, '*...ne créent pas ou ne perfectionnent pas, de leurs mains, un objet quelconque, utile, autant que possible*') (PVV 69) are to the idea of Colomès little more than social parasites! Such lofty denigration by no means excludes former supporters of the Commune: Jules Babick, whom Colomès clearly detests, is summarily dismissed as '*Un inutile, qui n'a jamais fait oeuvre de ses dix doigts; un improductif...*' (PVV 29): and if Benoît Malon (said by Colomès to be '*...douceux, cauteleux, double...*') (PVV 262) is so cordially disliked, the reason lies, Descaves supposes, in his abandonment of working tools for the pen (PVV 263). Before making a direct approach to Colomès, Descaves himself is warned in Geneva to expect a cool reception, for the old man loathes both barristers and journalists: referring to the former, during the exile period, as '*gargouilles*', to the latter as '*des chieurs d'encre*' (PVV 27).⁽²⁷⁾ In the old album treasured by the Colomès couple and containing, together with photographs of the leading Communard figures, those of innumerable anonymous participants:

Delescluze, Vermorel, Flourens, Ferré, Rossel, Millière, Tony Moilin, Gaston Crémieux, qui ne manièrent jamais l'outil, eux, ne méritaient, aux yeux de Colomès, une place à côté de Varlin, que parce qu'ils étaient morts en beauté, en lumière, comme lui.
(PVV 97-98)

Colomès' generalised dislike of those ostensibly his social superiors is further apparent in any references he may make to the bourgeois exiles who had frequented the café du Nord in Geneva. As you can imagine, he tells Descaves sarcastically, '*la fine fleur de la proscription*'

...se donnait rendez-vous ailleurs que dans les caboulots. Elle frayait le moins possible avec les ouvriers comme nous, obscurs combattants qui n'avions fait, en prenant le fusil, un jour, que changer d'outil. (PVV 69)

Eugène Razoua (soldier, sailor, journalist, Communard) had been held by Colomès in considerable esteem. To be deplored, however, in

the old man's view, was the fact that in exile Razoua's friends and acquaintances were for the most part '(des) fils de famille égarés dans la Révolution' (PVV 74), representative more particularly of '...cette bohème de la presse et du Quartier Latin, qui avait voltigé à la Préfecture de police autour de Raoul Rigault' (PVV 74). Implicit in Colomès' denunciation of this group is a distinction (to which Descaves himself might not subscribe unreservedly) between the genuine, proletarian spirit of revolution as represented in Colomès and his like, and the dilettantism this manual worker will attribute to the youthful bourgeois he feels to have been masquerading in insurrectionary guise. When, on the anniversary of 18 March, recounted in Chapter Four, jovial reference is made by members of the company to the zest for life marking the Commune period, Colomès is quick to rectify any possible misapprehension on the part of Descaves himself, or Albert Malavaux fils. The Commune may indeed, he says, have provided the opportunity for a few light moments: after the hardships of the siege, what harm was there in that? But who proved the most guilty of licentiousness and irresponsibility? Members of the working classes? No!

Ce fut la bohème de l'opposition à l'Empire, glorieuse de petits procès, la jeunesse bourgeoise, soi-disant révolutionnaire, qui frétille à la préfecture de police, dans les délégations, les états-majors, la presse, les brasseries et les petits théâtres. Voilà la honte de la Commune! Ces fils de Marius, mari de Cosette et gendre de Jean Valjean..., le sympathique trio des Misérables... ne moururent pas, eux non plus, sur les barricades. Nous avons retrouvé leur ivraie, mêlée au bon grain de la proscription, à Genève, à Londres, à Bruxelles... partout! C'était elle qui, à Genève, tandis que nous serrions le ventre, godaillait aux Charmettes, où elle formait l'escadron volant de Nina de Villars, après avoir été celui de Raoul Rigault!
(PVV 167-168)(28)

The Communard ideal might then have embraced promotion of universal brotherhood: harmonious co-existence hardly marked the insurrectionary interlude, or the exile period. Having commented himself at some length on the hostility frequently marking the exiles' dealings with one another, and on the class antagonism seemingly

perpetuated by men who should have been united, if not by a spirit of brotherhood and justice, at least by the sense of an experience shared, Descaves will conclude that fraternity is not of this world ('*Quelle chimère que la fraternité!*') (PVV 186) only to add:

Mais à cette exclamation impie, quand parfois elle m'échappe, répondent les voix sincères de Colomès, de Le Mel, de tant d'autres qui ont espéré le Messie, comme eux, avant eux, et qui attendront sa venue jusqu'à la consommation des siècles!...

Il a pris ta figure, Fraternité difficile et douloureuse: et plus l'on te couronne d'épines, plus lourde est ta croix, plus trempée de vinaigre est l'éponge offerte à ta soif, plus ils demeurent convaincus, ces croyants, que tu sauveras le monde!

Ne les détrompons pas. Et puis..., s'ils disaient vrai, tout de même!... (PVV 186-187)

Noteworthy, of course, for its sustained religious parallel, this passage jars somewhat when considered in relation to attitudes already expressed by Colomès. In view of the old man's hostile (even jaundiced) perception of the bourgeoisie, is there not an element of inconsistency or implausibility now in Descaves' attribution to him of a sincere, unwavering faith in the principle of universal brotherhood?

As is almost to be expected in a man of his background and generation, Colomès' views have been substantially fashioned by - or are perhaps, on certain questions, merely coincidental with - the doctrines and attitudes of Pierre Joseph Proudhon. The son of an artisan, and, in the words of Theodore Zeldin, 'the most genuinely plebeian of the early socialist thinkers',⁽²⁹⁾ Proudhon - who died six years before the Commune - had a major impact on the thinking of many insurgents: Courbet, indeed, went so far as to describe him as the Christ of the 1871 revolution.⁽³⁰⁾ The younger generations, Colomès laments, do not read Proudhon: how much they miss!

Quel grenier d'abondance que ses journaux eux-mêmes! Le fait d'en intituler un: Le peuple, ne le dispensait ni de respect ni de lumières. Il ne descendait pas à ses lecteurs, il les élevait à lui. Il ne pratiquait pas la mal façon, ni la fraude, et le repas quotidien qu'il préparait à la classe ouvrière, il le partageait.

Aujourd'hui, c'est tout le contraire. La fonction du lecteur mal nourri semble être de bien nourrir le cuisinier. (PVV 297)

Proudhon himself wrote on one occasion that while he was largely unread by the masses, they were familiar with his ideas.⁽³¹⁾ The cobbler Edouard Rouillier, a participant in the Commune who had fought also during the June Days of 1848, described himself as a '*Proudhonien, foutre!*'⁽³²⁾ and was in the habit of carrying about with him a volume of the socialist's writings, usually les Confessions d'un révolutionnaire. To his discomfiture one evening, an acquaintance drew attention to the fact that its pages were uncut.⁽³³⁾ Be this as it may, the time Colomès feels perhaps most at peace with himself is that moment when, after the midday meal, he is able to settle in a chair by the window with a volume of Proudhon's correspondence; whole pages of which he knows by heart (PVV 297). A comprehensive analysis of Proudhonist thinking is not our objective here: certain elements of it reflected in the Colomès ethos might however be considered incidentally, and intermittently, insofar as they relate to Descaves' central character himself.

For all that he rejected the idea of a centralised state, Proudhon - whose federalist beliefs link directly to an all-important aspect of the Commune - retained the deepest attachment throughout his life not only to his native Franche-Comté, but to France itself. He felt at home only within French borders, and tended to the view that foreigners were an inferior breed. In each of these respects, Colomès' sentiments seem essentially akin to those of his guide. An internationalist, as Proudhon himself was, Colomès the former member of the International is also '*(un) patriote de clocher*' (PVV 91) whose strongest loyalty is probably to the Gobelins district in which he had grown up:

La patrie est une habitude... une longue habitude. Aimer une petite patrie n'est pas une raison pour mépriser les autres pays; mais puisqu'il faut vivre quelque part, on a le droit d'avoir une préférence, hein? Citoyen du monde n'empêche pas d'être natif des Gobelins. (PVV 91)

Colomès' thinking on this is in tune with Descaves' own. If the writer feels such attachment to Montrouge, the reason is, quite simply, that his roots are there; that each street of the 14th arrondissement contributes for him to an overall sense of belonging, and to a sense of the continuity of his own and his family's experience. In an alley that was formerly where the rue Méchain is now located, his grandfather (Descaves tells Colomès) had been employed when a boy: not far away, in the avenue d'Orléans, stands the house in which he himself had squawled on coming into the world. In the avenue d'Orléans, furthermore, the little school at which both Descaves and his elder son had received their earliest instruction (at the hands of the same master) is still in existence. The experience of both Colomès and Descaves points of course to an essential feature of Paris life in the nineteenth century which has been aptly summed up by Jean-Pierre Chabrol:

(Les habitants de la capitale) naissaient dans un coin de la vieille ville, ils grandissaient et mouraient là, pour la plupart. L'immeuble était un village et la rue le pays natal où tout le monde se saluait. (34)

It may be mentioned in passing that the defence by Parisians of their particular district during the semaine sanglante probably facilitated Versaillais occupation. A concerted insurgent resistance would have been perhaps less easily overcome.

During their years of exile Colomès and Phonsine had of course felt acute nostalgia for Paris. 'Le mal du pays...' (Colomès will tell Descaves) '...est moral et physique: on en souffre dans la tête et dans la poitrine' (PVV 91). Men and women able to recreate the atmosphere of home had been assured of a warm welcome in the Colomès residence. Certain landmarks in Geneva are said to have reminded the couple of corresponding sights in Paris (PVV 89): and from mont Salève two miles away, the Swiss town could on a sunlit day seem not unlike their native city when seen from the heights of Belleville. For Colomès, however, patriotic feeling was not limited to mere nostalgia.

Specific reference is made by him, during celebration of the anniversary of 18 March, to Proudhonist influence in shaping his generation's view of their country. We grew up, he says,

...à l'école de Proudhon qui enseignait: "Nous nous sentons tous Français... Nous croyons à une mission de notre pays... Le patriotisme peut être plus ou moins ardent en chacun de nous, sa nature est la même et son absence une monstruosité!" (PVV 156)

While his bourgeois compatriot remains, to Colomès' idea, the Enemy, there is a genuine need on the old man's part to believe both in the superior craftsmanship of the French worker, and in the worth and uniqueness of the contribution made by his proletarian fellows to the societies in which exile obliged them to live. For Descaves' edification one day, a passage from a Belgian newspaper published during the 1870's will be produced. According to the writer, who was replying to a statement in a Paris journal that Belgium was anxious to be rid of the revolutionary infestation constituted by the Communard presence,

"Les Bruxellois n'ont eu (...) qu'à se louer du séjour, parmi eux, des réfugiés de la Commune. Ce sont généralement d'excellents ouvriers gagnant bien leur vie et qui ont installé à Bruxelles une foule de petites industries pour les produits desquelles nous étions tributaires de Paris." (PVV 218)(35)

It is clear to Descaves that Colomès' insistence upon the quality of French workmanship is not purely a defence of the Commune and of the old man's former brothers-in-arms:

..c'est la suprématie de la France dans le monde du travail, qu'il affirme. Il croit fermement, ingénument, que l'ouvrier français d'avant la guerre était partout sans rivaux, comme les soldats d'alors jugeaient nos armes invincibles. Il s'offenserait sans doute du rapprochement, et c'est pourtant vrai: chez les hommes de sa génération, le sentiment patriotique prenait ce double aspect. (PVV 218)

Befittingly, in a disciple of Proudhon, Colomès is said to believe in the principle of mutualist aid: *'...(il) réduisait le jeu de*

l'activité humaine à la production par les travailleurs et à l'échange entre eux de ce qui est nécessaire à l'existence' (PVV 119-120).(36)

His ideas on personal ownership (*'Il était même très rigoureux sur le chapitre du tien et du mien'*) (PVV 119) become clearer, furthermore, when placed within the context of Proudhonist thought. The question posed by the title of Proudhon's celebrated pamphlet of 1840 (Qu'est-ce que la propriété?) had been answered - with intended shock value - in the opening paragraph (*'Qu'est-ce que la propriété? (...) C'est le vol'*). Proudhon was not in fact attacking the principle of property ownership, but denouncing the exploitation frequently inherent to possession at the time, whereby an idle property-owner might profit from the labours of those who worked on his behalf. The right of the individual to own his means of production was very much a part of the Proudhonist ethos. Such ownership (in keeping, all too obviously, with the theorist's passion for justice; for who is more entitled to possession of the tools used by a worker than the worker himself?) allowed furthermore for the sense of equality, of independence and of the worth of one's individual contribution necessary, as Proudhon believed, to successful mutualistic association. In view of Colomès' belief that the worker is the only worthwhile member of society, it might seem natural that he should advocate (as he is said to do) the transfer of all property to the proletariat. Such a measure was never advanced - in so many words - by Proudhon himself: the thinker envisaged however a society composed of multiple autonomous groups functioning according to the principle of mutuellisme; and in which (logically enough) the employer and the bourgeois would be, as such, obsolete.

It is Colomès' attitude to the evolving industrial scene that perhaps best illustrates his Proudhonist belief in personal liberty and in the dignity of the worker. While the Second Empire period was, as we know, a time of expanding industrialisation, 70 to 75 per cent of the French labour force was still artisan in 1865, the year of Proudhon's death.(37) Even forty years later, in 1906, over half the labour force was employed in establishments numbering from one to five

workers;(38) although - and this factor counts for much in the novel - industrial production was developing significantly in France between 1896 and the First World War. Of no small importance, to Proudhon's idea, was the sense of self-worth and personal satisfaction afforded the worker by his employment; any such view on the socialist's part being based essentially of course upon his knowledge of the artisan's circumstances as distinct from those of the factory worker. The life of the craftsman might not always have been easy: whatever the hardships with which he had to contend, he was subjected on the whole to less regimentation than his counterpart on the factory floor. If the worker of the early 1900's displays no particular fondness for singing, this may be attributed (Colomès will declare) to the soulless, impersonal routine brought about by progress and mechanisation. During the years of exile, when he and Phonsine had worked light-hearted and unsupervised in the freedom of their own home, production had been a source of joy: what more natural, this being the case, than that their activity should have been accompanied by song? Nor was this a mere expression of mood: the couple's shared repertoire was for them an added means whereby emotional links with the homeland might be retained:

...s'il est vrai qu'on n'emporte pas la patrie à la semelle de ses souliers, on l'emporte sur l'aile d'une chanson. C'est un souvenir vivant et qui embaume..., le bouquet de l'ouvrier! Nous avons toujours eu ainsi des fleurs sur notre table, parce que nous avons toujours travaillé chez nous..., et que le travail est joie, sans surveillance, sans contremaître, sans cloche ni sirène, à l'arrivée et au départ.

(...)

...la division du travail et le développement du machinisme n'avaient pas, comme à présent, réduit l'ouvrier à un nouvel esclavage. Il pouvait encore saluer d'une chanson l'oeuvre de ses dix doigts. Le bruit d'une machine ne couvrait pas sa voix. Est-ce que j'ai envie de chanter devant un monstre d'acier qui découpe ou perce des trous sans relâche? Allez donc mettre des paroles sur cette musique-là! Le mouvement des volants et des bielles vous les renforce dans la gorge. (PWV 87)

Mechanisation then is the enemy of song: the song that, in days gone by, expressed the aspirations, the joys, the culture of the

working man.(39) Colomès, who as a man of the past detests all the discoveries and inventions that have transformed day-to-day life over the preceding two or three decades, feels particular aversion for the gramophone: what chance, after all, has the human voice against that device's raucous, stentorian sound?

Encore un résultat du machinisme à outrance! Après avoir supprimé les bras, il devait soumettre jusqu'à la voix... la voix humaine!
(PVV 119)

Songs reflecting genuine hope or emotion had yielded (Colomès informs Descaves) to syrupy, inconsequential inanity by the time the couple returned from exile: not that Colomès' attitude was one of acquiescence when he found himself confronted by evidence of the decay. The trivia in vogue in 1880 among younger working-class folk had, as the old man tells the story, been dealt a not inconsiderable blow one Sunday afternoon on the plateau de Châtillon; where having listened with increasing irritation to a contemporary rengaine sung close by, he had, finally, been unable to contain himself any longer. Initial surprise on the part of the young people who had offended his ear and his sensibilities had given way apparently to clapping, cheering delight as Colomès - in an attempted deathblow to the ridiculous 'Joséphine elle est malade' - launched into a hearty rendition of Pierre Dupont's 'les Cerises':

...j'étais comme le porte-drapeau de la chanson populaire, la vraie, la bonne, la meilleure! Je me serais fait tuer pour elle! Leur Joséphine n'était plus malade... elle était morte! (PVV 118)

Colomès, one might suspect, is not merely defending a type of song that has lost ground. He is reaffirming also - unconsciously perhaps - the values of a time disquietingly distant to him even in 1880. Whatever the truth of his comment to Descaves that '*La patrie est une habitude, une longue habitude*', nine years (the time spent in exile) is a period which would allow for ample modification of the tastes and enthusiasms still so dear to the absentee. The homecoming of Colomès

and Phonsine - to a cheerless, impersonal gare de Lyon where no familiar face was to be seen(40) - seemed the shattering of an illusion, the exchange of one exile for another ('*Que revenions-nous faire dans cette ville détachée de nous, dans cette patrie si belle... en rêve?*') (PVV 317); a forewarning or a foretaste (when considered with hindsight) of the impression to be increasingly theirs of having been outdistanced by time. It is true of course that such an impression need not be intolerable so long as links remain to a cherished past. What greater pleasure indeed, in this instance, than a reliving with kindred souls of the increasingly remote seventy-two days, or the years of exile? What more soothing balm than a retrospective recrossing of the Red Sea? Nor should mere awareness that one's own values are not (or are no longer) those generally prevailing necessarily engender a feeling of inadequacy or inferiority: Colomès' own attitudes and reactions, indeed, are testimony to that. The gradual fading from the scene of former supporters or brothers-in-arms is, on the other hand, a definite invitation to discouragement; and the discovery, on the part of one fiercely independent, that he has been so far supplanted by change as to be faced with a situation in which his continued self-sufficiency will no longer be possible.

Following an incidental reference by Colomès one day to the vilifying effects of mechanisation, Descaves, perversely, embarks upon a eulogy of progress. On this occasion, however, the propensity to tease he often feels in Colomès' company would have been better unindulged. Arguments as to the inevitability and the desirability of change, enumeration of the beneficial results of transformations to the industrial scene, can be of small comfort to Colomès, who - though Descaves is as yet unaware of this - is confronted with unemployment now that the objects he and Phonsine have crafted by hand can be made more efficiently by machine. The principal effect of mechanisation - Colomès tells Descaves, who is initially amused at his vehemence - is infliction upon the worker of an automaton-like existence which denies him the right to think and to dream, and, no less importantly, all

sense of satisfaction resulting from a task well done. Descaves need be in no doubt, Colomès continues fiercely: mechanisation

...est facteur de démoralisation. L'ouvrier, ne s'intéressant plus à ce qu'il fait, prend son travail en horreur. Vous croyez qu'une tâche monotone, ingrate, lui permet de penser plus haut, d'avoir un idéal enfin. C'est tout le contraire. (PVV 223)

La dépravation des mœurs et du goût de l'ouvrier; son empressement à mettre en pratique la théorie malfaisante du moindre effort; voilà l'oeuvre du machinisme! (PVV 223-224)

In his references to the soulless monotony of factory conditions, and the threat to the artisan posed by industrialisation, Descaves seems almost to be echoing views expressed three-quarters of a century earlier by one of the nineteenth century's most celebrated literary figures. In his Journal, and in le Peuple (1846), Jules Michelet had occasion to reflect upon the actual and potential power of the machine, and the slave-like role of the workers so ensnared.⁽⁴¹⁾ Substantial advances had of course been made in factory conditions between 1840 and the early 1900's; it is clear in any case that Descaves' objective is not to show progress to be, per se, harmful. A further time, however, he underscores Colomès' attachment to a seemingly halcyon past when the French craftsman, as the old man himself believes, had not his rival anywhere. His livelihood threatened, aware of his near anachronistic status in the modern world, Colomès the survivor of over thirty years previously stands a no greater chance against this further manifestation of the demon Capitalism. We have read how Colomès admires those who had fought against Versaillais forces at the rue Fontaine-au-Roi on Sunday 28 May: it is not for nothing now, of course, that Descaves should use the image of a 'last stand' as the old man (with that glint in his eye the writer has come to know so well) launches a vigorous verbal attack upon the new-fangled ways against which all resistance is hopeless:

C'est pour l'honneur (...) qu(e le vieux combattant) se rue, le poil hérissé, la bouche ouverte, le bras haut..., tel enfin que nous apparaît le maréchal Ney sur la place de l'Observatoire. Pareil à celui-là, Colomès évoque le dernier carré, sans qu'il

soit nécessaire de le montrer..., le dernier carré formé par une poignée d'ouvriers prêts à mourir plutôt que de poser les armes devant les forces écrasantes.

Mais je ne sais pas encore à quel point cette image est exacte.

La plainte qui s'élève d'un monceau de cadavres, Colomès me la fait entendre seulement lorsqu'il ajoute:

"Que le prolétariat soit préservé des épreuves que nous avons traversées; il ne les supporterait plus. Je le disais hier à Phonsine: de quoi subsisteraient aujourd'hui les proscrits comme nous? Ils risqueraient fort de mourir, n'importe où, d'inquiétude et de faim, à côté de la machine à fabriquer les cottes de mailles..., les cottes de mailles!" (PVV 224)

In the context of the novel, the fate of Colomès and Phonsine assumes a certain tragic appropriateness. Representative as they are of that vast, anonymous human contingent for whom life is usually a struggle, they have hitherto retained their resilience and their fighting spirit in the face of almost every adversity. This time, however, they are threatened by the crushing defeat of the spirit. Descaves - who has finally understood why Colomès is denouncing mechanisation so vehemently - sums up in these terms the situation in which his neighbours find themselves:

Voilà la blessure d'où leur sang coule..., voilà l'explication de leur pâleur à tous les deux. Ils ont trop vécu. Même en leurs cauchemars, jamais ils n'ont vu l'adresse de leurs doigts minutieux transférée à des rouages tissant le métal aussi facilement que la soie. Ils ne croyaient pas la chose possible; ils avaient pris en toute confiance leurs quartiers d'hiver..., et ils sont là, maintenant, en retraite, défendant pied à pied le prestige d'une infanterie ouvrière qui fit la France grande aux yeux des nations.

Pauvres Vieux de la Vieille! Comme je me reproche à présent d'avoir prononcé l'éloge, au moins inopportun, de ce qui les tue!
(PVV 224-225)

The very day this conversation between Colomès and Descaves takes place, Phonsine suffers a stroke. There is no doubt in Colomès' mind that his wife's condition can be attributed to shock, to the 'révolution' she had felt on learning that she and her husband were now expendable... that they had been, in effect, superseded by a machine. In the months of life remaining to her, Phonsine (whose speech is

limited now to the periodic hoarse, unintelligible utterance) sits at times in apparent unreceptiveness to any stimulation; barely registering, on such occasions, when Colomès or his friend Fournery recount high points of the years in exile... or when the cult of Eugène Varlin is invoked. There is, as Anne Roche writes,⁽⁴²⁾ a definite poignancy in the seeming fruitlessness of endeavours on Colomès' part to recapture the spirit of his and Phonsine's common experience: what more acute reinforcement could be provided after all to an impression of having been defeated by time, than the reluctant awareness that the companion of years is now shut off from the memories and emotions both had cherished, and so often relived together?

When, in time, Phonsine is carried off by bronchopneumonia, Colomès' own interest in life becomes understandably less. His resources, Descaves is aware, must be rapidly depleting: discreetly, the writer will try to interest him in retirement to Brévannes, where at least three former Communards - Henri Mathey, Jeallot, Gouhier - now live. A visit to Brévannes in Descaves' company, and renewed acquaintance with former brothers-in-arms, brings no solace to the old man, who seems true to form however in the vigour of his reaction as he and Descaves make their way back along the road. While of some length when quoted, the conversation between the two men could hardly afford a more conclusive demonstration of Colomès' total intransigence when the principles of a lifetime are in question:

Dès que nous eûmes pris congé de ses amis, (...) il s'écria:

"Non, mais, vous voyez-vous terminant votre existence dans cette boîte, où l'on tient tout de la charité!

- Mon Dieu! dis-je, sans conviction, s'il n'y avait pas moyen pour moi de faire autrement, j'en prendrais peut-être mon parti.

- Il y a toujours moyen de faire autrement, répliqua-t-il avec vivacité.

- Je ne vois aucune humiliation à s'avouer vaincu, lorsqu'on a rempli son devoir de combattant.

Colomès se redressa:

- Nous avons été écrasés, déportés, proscrits...; nous n'avons pas été vaincus!

- Si... par la vie, et c'est tout à votre honneur.

- Non; même à ce point de vue-là, ce que vous appelez défaite est victoire. Les vaincus de la vie sont ceux d'entre nous qui se cachent aujourd'hui dans un emploi, des fonctions, des honneurs..., acquis au préjudice de leur foi, de leur dignité, de leur idéal. L'hospice lui-même n'est pas une excuse. Il importe peu de tomber plus ou moins bas: ne pas tomber, voilà l'affaire! Je me refuse à voir dans la République, une maison de commerce, une maison de rapport ou une maison de retraite!

- Ce qu'elle vous donne, vous l'avez gagné. Vous êtes quittes.

- Merci. Cette assistance alimentaire me dégoûte! Vous avez pu constater l'influence de ce régime débilisant sur des hommes que je ne reconnais plus. Ils furent de l'Internationale, cette conspiration des bras; ils furent de la Commune, cet holocauste; ils affrontèrent vingt fois la mort, aux jours où la vie est si belle!... tout ça pour s'y cramponner désespérément, à présent qu'ils en sont réduits à la chercher dans les épiluchures! (...)

(...)
Arrêté sur le bord de la route, le Vieux de la Vieille se retourna, et pointant sa barbe héroïque du côté de Brévannes, qu'on n'apercevait plus:

"En tout cas, ajouta-t-il, voilà un endroit où j'espère bien ne ref... jamais les pieds!" (PVV 330-332)

Residence at the hospice would be then for Colomès an admission of defeat, an acceptance of charity from the Republic which he and his companions had (as they themselves believe) helped to save, but from which he will accept no favours whatever others might be prepared to do. It is almost superfluous to point out that this again constitutes a reversal of a certain anti-Communard representation according to which the plebeian insurgent was, for the most part, lacking in principle, faith or ideal. Thinking principally, perhaps, of Camille Barrère (France's Ambassador to Rome from 1897 to 1925, and upon whom the diplomat Norpois in A la Recherche du temps perdu is at least partially modelled)(43) Descaves invokes the example of various bourgeois adherents to the Commune whose bids for prominence or acceptance of honours in subsequent decades might seem a far more blatant contravention of youthful belief. Are not these men, he asks ('...(ceux) qui ont mendié l'aisance et la considération, officiellement garanties!') (PVV 332) more deserving of your contempt than those whom material circumstances have forced into a situation of dependence? Colomès however acknowledges no distinction:

- Par cela même qu'il mendie quoi que ce soit, l'ancien insurgé fait amende honorable de sa vie passée! (...) Qu'il tende la main ou la boutonnière, peu importe! C'est l'image déchirée de ce qu'il a été!" (PVV 332)

Though this is not confirmed until the final chapter, Colomès is resolved - like M. Martin of la Colonne - to live only so long as he is able to be financially self-sufficient.

It is of interest to note that a number of parallels present themselves between the residents of the Invalides described in la Colonne and the Communard veterans whom Descaves and Colomès will visit at Brévannes. The ninth chapter of Philémon, relating this visit, is entitled 'Leurs Invalides': elsewhere, the analogy is established even more conclusively. The various institutions, of which Brévannes is one, where some of the 1871 insurgents are said to be living in retirement, are described as the '*... Invalides sans gloire des enfants de la Révolution, tombeaux que rien ne change en sanctuaires*' (PVV 149). Just as Timothée Prophète has, by way of an icon, an Epinal print of Napoleon on the wall of his room, Mathey has as his '*images de piété*'

...comme un signe de ralliement, les lithographies emphatiques de Picchio, 'le Triomphe de l'ordre' et 'la Veuve du fusillé', auxquelles les Vieux de la Vieille se reconnaissent entre eux.
(PVV 329)

The invalides gathered for their breakfast in the opening chapter of la Colonne are presented as carpingly querulous and generally dissatisfied:(44) for Jeallot and Gouhier, everything about Brévannes - the food, the regulations, the care they receive - is a subject for complaint. Descaves was recording in all likelihood an impression carried away after an actual visit to the hospice: it may however have seemed (to him whose objective was always to appear equitable) that the ill humour of the two former Communards was a not unsatisfactory complement to the behaviour attributed to the war veterans of his earlier novel.

It will become of greater urgency to Colomès, as his thoughts turn presumably towards his own end, to see marked down for the possible attention both of contemporaries and of posterity the names of the 'obscurs' he has known, or of whom he is aware. Referring in the course of conversation one day to the funeral of Jules Vallès and to the throngs who had lined the route or followed the coffin, he is clearly mindful of the fact that the Commune was still, in the mid-1880's, of sufficient immediacy for some public tribute to be accorded the passing not merely of a celebrated figure, but of an insurgent such as himself:

En 1885, quatorze ans après, aucun combattant n'était encore obscur; il y avait de la gloire pour tous. A quoi sert de vieillir, si chaque jour qui s'écoule est un pas de plus vers l'oubli? (PVV 294)

In the days when Vallès himself, Séverine and Ernest Vaughan were the predominant influences behind such journals as le Cri du Peuple, l'Aurore and l'Intransigeant, it remained possible even for those Communards who enjoyed no measure of fame to receive something of the recognition that was their due. Using anew the parallel with soldiers of an earlier time - coupled also, on this occasion, with the no less favoured religious analogy - Descaves described the last-mentioned newspaper as having been,

...pour ces Vieux d'une autre Vieille que la Vieille à soldats, ce qu'avait été le café Lemblin après le premier Empire, pour les demi-solde. Ils ressuscitaient chaque jour, d'entre les morts qu'ils enterraient. Ils entretenaient par leur agitation l'illusion d'être encore redoutables. Ils soulevaient, comme Lazare, la pierre de leur tombeau, pour reprendre la conversation à l'endroit où Thiers l'avait interrompue. (PVV 293)

Staffed entirely by Communards on publication of its first number in July 1880, l'Intransigeant had continued to report any matter presenting even slight interest to the insurgent number. With Vaughan's departure however first from this newspaper then from l'Aurore, the men described by Descaves as the '*derniers débris de la*

Commune' (PVV 296) had lost an irreplaceable ally:

Ils s'éteignaient sans qu'un journal mentionnât leur disparition, j'entends la disparition des petits, des modestes gardiens du feu, dont la destinée est de vivre et de mourir, enfermés dans leur phare, pour le salut des gens de mer et des voyageurs surpris par un gros temps. (PVV 296)

Neither Colomès nor Descaves has any illusions that heed will necessarily be paid the contribution of the former's plebeian partners in revolution once it is recorded. The mere fact, however, of the names having been grouped and committed to print would go some way at least towards making good an omission long overdue. In a society unaware of, indifferent to or reluctant to recognise the role played by such men, it is as though Colomès, in supplying the names for his friend, is fulfilling his final mission before the end:

...ces noms obscurs, poussiéreux, retrouvés dans les fouilles, je les écrivais sous la dictée de mon voisin, et je remplis aujourd'hui la promesse que je lui ai faite de les imprimer... comme si cela suffisait pour qu'on les retînt! Il les enflammait derrière moi, ainsi que des allumettes prêtes à s'éteindre; puis, il lisait par-dessus mon épaule, et rectifiait l'orthographe que je mettais mal. Il entendait que pas un seul grain du rosaire ne fût défiguré. Il semblait n'avoir survécu que pour me confier ce vénérable dépôt. Grâce à moi, les derniers seraient donc, une fois, les premiers!

Peut-être au fond - cette idée me vient à présent - n'ai-je été pour lui que l'instrument d'une revanche. Je rachetais les erreurs et le parti pris d'une race détestée. (PVV 302-303)

In this his overriding concern - that justice at last be rendered those so deserving of it - Colomès shows himself perhaps to be quite as strongly Proudhonist in spirit as when citing the example of the socialist, or when obviously influenced by his doctrines. 'Les Epaves' was the title originally planned by Descaves for his intended history of the proscription period: the term is used recurrently in Philémon in designation of these men and women who had found themselves penniless, and cut off from home and country, in Switzerland or elsewhere.⁽⁴⁵⁾ If, as the names are assembled, Colomès continues to

find misplaced any interest Descaves might periodically express in those épaves not of the working class, such an attitude should not be held against him. His exclusivity has its own merit in fact, Descaves writes, for:

Le vieillard était sincère. Sincère et sans fiel. Quelque chose allait mourir avec lui, dont il voulait que le souvenir subsistât. Car c'était moins sa classe et sa condition, qu'une manière d'être, un caractère professionnel, un état d'esprit qu'il donnait en exemple à ses successeurs déchus. Que l'ancien commandant du Fort de Vanves ne fût pas, à ce titre, exempt de vanité, soit! Mais l'ouvrier bijoutier ne montrait, somme toute, qu'un légitime orgueil. Il avait aimé le travail manuel en soi et non pour son salaire; il était du temps où l'ouvrier rougissait plus d'une malfaçon involontaire que d'un délit puni par les lois, et il me demandait seulement de noter cela - qu'on ne reverrait plus!
(PVV 306)(46)

If a reading of these pages leaves one with an impression of a host of names presenting no interest today and thrown down almost at random,(47) this might be considered to reinforce a message intrinsic to the novel. Through Colomès and his countless anonymous associates of the Commune and exile period, Philémon vieux de la vieille extols those innumerable participants in historical development who might not initiate change or provide direction, but without whom no battle could be undertaken, cause gained or ideal realised. Men of courage, integrity and constancy have lived and died in loyalty to beliefs which might be a target for revilement in many circles: throughout, however, they have remained true to themselves. Attention in both la Colonne and Philémon is concentrated principally upon the unknown and the uncelebrated: in the former novel, the uncelebrated who have given their lives to warfare are seen though to be the dupes of political cynicism and social stupidity or misconception. It is interesting, indeed, to note in Descaves' novels a reversal of the anti-Communard perception whereby the 1871 insurgents were the gullible prey of demagoguery: for might one not regard the war veterans of la Colonne as victims of one gigantic hoax; practised, in the first instance, by that historical superfigure Napoleon?

In what manner, one may wonder, do the vieux de la vieille evoke the Commune when gathered en bande intime on an anniversary of 18 March over thirty years after events? The fourth chapter of Philémon, recounting an evening at the Colomès home held to commemorate the occasion, provides some idea of this, and serves to illustrate further the extent to which, in the twentieth century's opening decade, the veterans find themselves out of sympathy with prevailing attitudes and beliefs. This particular evening, it may be assumed, is taking place perhaps in 1907 or 1908, during the first premiership of Georges Clemenceau. There are seven guests in all: four former Communards, one accompanied by his wife; Descaves himself, and twenty-seven-year-old Albert Malavaux, the second son of one of the vieux present on this occasion. Through Malavaux fils, Descaves will illustrate how far the ideas of a younger worker sympathetic to syndicalist objectives are in conflict with those of his elders.

As one might deduce, Malavaux fils has been born since the general amnesty declared in 1880. His father, it is said, was among the fédérés involved in the shooting of the Dominican friars on 25 May 1871. Because evidence as to his guilt remained inconclusive, however, the former Communard had been sentenced merely to transportation by the Versailles court-martial before which he appeared. The story is provided of endeavours by one of Malavaux senior's aunts to inculcate a strong religious sense in the deportee's older son during the father's exile in New Caledonia. The attempts have failed: the boy, by the time he has reached adulthood, is a committed socialist. This anecdote points to one of the slight anomalies in the novel, for Malavaux senior is said to have been a widower at the time of his deportation. Given the existence, and the age, of the son present on the anniversary evening, it is to be assumed that the old man had remarried - with minimal delay - on his return to France.

While feeling no pride at his involvement in the killing, Malavaux senior - who is discussing the episode with Descaves before the arrival of the other guests - feels no particular remorse either. This crime,

he points out, was hardly premeditated: it was the result of a spontaneous, unreflecting burst of violence. Far more reprehensible in his view is the 'murder' of one such as Marshal Ney, condemned cold-bloodedly to death by twelve former companions-in-arms who were able of course to reach their cowardly decision under the full protection of the military code. As for the Dominicans themselves,

...dont les ancêtres composaient les tribunaux de l'Inquisition qui envoyèrent au bûcher tant d'innocents, après les avoir torturés, laquelle est la plus criminelle de cette procédure ou de la mort sans phrases et sans raffinements que nous avons donnée?
(PVV 140)

Descaves, in all likelihood, was recording the recollections of an acquaintance who may or may not be faithfully represented in Malavaux senior. As it is his custom in the book to attribute to himself, or to others, wordy refutation of viewpoints with which he disagrees, one might suppose Malavaux senior's opinion to be essentially his own; or held by him to be sufficiently valid not to merit the outpouring of sagacious counterargument punctuating other accounts or conversations in the novel.

Present also, on this anniversary of 18 March, is the joiner Fournery, of notorious grubbiness but seen to be possessed of a compensating inner richness and beauty of soul. The blue-eyed candour of his gaze disarms those who might otherwise condemn or prejudge him: in contrast, moreover, to the others of his age group gathered on this occasion, he is seen to display considerable open-mindedness when listening to the ideas expressed by Malavaux fils. Said to have been a member of the Comité central, and later a hospital director during the Commune, Fournery has the added, perhaps dubious distinction, in the eyes of some, of having saved the life of a wealthy industrialist in the course of the insurrectionary period. The industrialist has, understandably, never forgotten it: and Fournery can usually count upon funding when friends or deserving acquaintances seem in need of material aid. Others invited for the anniversary are an old reprobate

named Gerberoy, and an irascible brushmaker by the name of Charpin, who is accompanied by his rather commonplace wife. Charpin is a staunch Blanquist, who had hoped for Boulanger's emergence as a dictator and who will, significantly, advocate on this occasion that a street should be named in honour of Rossel.

Of the guests assembled on this evening, only the painter and decorator Gerberoy will allow the reader or researcher to indulge any penchant for the matching up of ostensibly fictional characters with real-life Communards. We cannot know how far, or even whether, Gerberoy as a personality is based upon somebody - or several people - known to Descaves: said to be boastful and loud, cutting still at sixty a dashing if somewhat vulgar figure, he had fought with courage at the rue Fontaine-au-Roi. For this reason his licentious lifestyle is tolerated, though not condoned, by the strait-laced Colomès. He has also, Descaves notes with some disfavour, a curious, unexplained habit of referring to the Commune as 'la Commode' ('*Au temps de la Commode... Quand nous faisons la Commode... Sous la Commode...*') (PVV 146). Some of Gerberoy's experiences or traits reflect to a limited degree those of the insurgents Alfred-Edouard Billioray and Jules Martelet, both of whom had been elected to the Communal Council by the 14th arrondissement, in which Gerberoy is said to have been a candidate. Gerberoy, we are told, likes to boast that he had received 6000 votes out of a possible 6500: Billioray for his part received 6100, Martelet 5927.⁽⁴⁸⁾ Martelet was himself a painter and decorator by trade, Billioray a painter. The description supplied of Gerberoy - said to be tall, sturdy, ruddy-complexioned - corresponds in two particulars only to a photograph of Billioray:⁽⁴⁹⁾ for Descaves' vieux beau also has a moustache, and wears his long hair swept back in artistic fashion. This, however, is where any obvious, or arguable, points of resemblance end. Billioray suffered from tuberculosis, and died in New Caledonia in 1877: Martelet's year of death is unknown, although he was still alive in 1913, the year of Philémon's publication. Martelet spent the years of exile in Belgium, Switzerland and the United States: Gerberoy, it is said, remained in London until declaration of the amnesty.

The conversation attributed to the characters this evening serves essentially to situate the outlook and aspirations of these former Communards in relation to preceding and succeeding stages in the working-class move towards self-emancipation. The question of what the Commune might be considered essentially to be (the final manifestation of the romantic revolutionary spirit illustrated by 1830 and 1848; or an historical dawning annunciatory of a new proletarian era) was one of which Descaves, writing as he was in the early twentieth century, could have had only limited awareness. It is clearly his intention however to underscore the contrast between the spirit of the Commune and former insurrectionary interludes (supposedly characterised by generosity, idealism, drama and romantic folly) and what he perceives as the current practical appreciation by those of Malavaux fils' generation of the goals to be attained, and the steps necessary to this end. On the question of working-class liberation, Malavaux fils - whose formative years have coincided with the development of the bourses du travail (numbering 157 by 1907) and the rise of the syndicalist movement - is indeed seen to have a far more developed sense of proletarian direction and purpose than his elders present this particular evening. The youth of today may lack imagination, Fournery comments:

...mais, moins spéculative que ses devanciers, elle leur est, dans la pratique, infiniment supérieure. Elle sait ce qu'elle veut, et la Révolution économique entrevue par nous dans les nuages, elle la fera descendre sur la terre. Une idée fixe vaut mieux pour ça que des idées générales. (PVV 154-155)

A listener inclined to the view that the Communards had been motivated more by frustrated patriotism than anything else would hear little on this occasion, Descaves writes, to dispel such an opinion. Any other reason for the insurrection seems to have been forgotten by the members of the gathering; with the possible exceptions, it is suggested, of Colomès and Fournery. The direct causes - decrees concerning back rent and overdue bills, cancellation of the thirty-sou allowance, planned disarmament of the National Guard;

...par un singulier phénomène de décantation (...) ces motifs s'étaient, avec le temps, déposés au fond de leur mémoire. De sorte que le mouvement communaliste n'avait plus pour eux de cause limpide, que l'exaspération produite par la défaite et la capitulation. (PVV 153)

Malavaux fils (who has sat silently while the company gives, to use Descaves' expression, '*la couleur tricolore*' to its revolt of nearly forty years earlier) will not even be understood initially by the Blanquist Charpin when he remarks that he had himself believed there to have been other motives for revolt ('- *Je croyais que vous aviez fait la Commune pour autre chose*') (PVV 154). Elaboration on his part - merely superficial at this point - will be necessary:

- *Enfin, que vos revendications avaient eu, si peu que ce soit, un caractère économique et social, en dehors et au-dessus de la politique.* (PVV 154)

Some emphasis is placed by Descaves in other texts on the immediate causes of the Commune. The declaration of peace, and the humiliating capitulation, are cited in la Saignée as the factors triggering 18 March; and are said, significantly, to justify the fact of civil war before enemy eyes.⁽⁵⁰⁾ The hardships endured during the siege, the humiliation of defeat and surrender, and the provocations by Thiers and the National Assembly resulted, Descaves writes in Souvenirs d'un ours, in an insurrection which the government, in its ineptness and insensitivity, had not foreseen.⁽⁵¹⁾ The point is made by Malavaux père, following his son's observation, that the mentality of the Parisians during the months of siege can hardly be understood by those of the younger man's generation. What twenty-seven-year-old Albert is intimating, of course, is that once thrust into power as a result of extraordinary circumstances, the Communards were prevented - through a lack of clear direction and coherent philosophy for which they cannot necessarily be criticised - from drawing the maximum advantage from the situation.

While comments made by Malavaux files in the course of the discussion might be considered an accurate enough reflection of the Commune's limitations, a degree of resentment is understandable on the part of the more irascible members of the company as - with an insight and an objectivity made possible by time - this young member of a post-1871 generation proceeds to enumerate hesitations and arguable errors which they themselves feel to be, if anything, to their credit. Certain elements of this conversation will have a distinctly familiar ring: '*Timidement socialiste*', in young Malavaux' words, the Commune had allowed to slip through its fingers opportunities to attack the bourgeoisie where it was most vulnerable: through appropriation of the wealth stored in the Banque de France; and, furthermore, in occupation of the bourgeois apartments abandoned when revolution seemed imminent, or after 18 March. High-minded ethic is all very well, the young man seems to be saying (much as Rabouille had done in la Colonne): preoccupation with what, in normal circumstances, might be considered blameworthy is no substitute for resolve and firmness of purpose when the occasion demands. The Communards can however be excused their lack of boldness. One of the prerequisites for success in any domain is, after all, a clear awareness of the goal to be attained, and the means of obtaining it: and as Malavaux files says of the 1871 insurrectionary period, '*Les aspirations du socialisme étaient (...) trop vagues, en ce temps-là, pour se traduire en actes*' (PVV 160). However fundamental the Communist dream of a better and more equitable state of things, the majority of the Commune's elected representatives, and indeed the average fédéré, took their inspiration quite as much (indeed more) from the revolutionary example of eighty years before as from any firm view of the means by which this unjust society might be fundamentally modified. In his love of uniform and partiality for militarism, in his patriotic and republican fervour as in his constant references to the Terror, the typical insurgent might have been considered - though Descaves does not himself make the parallel - a sans-culotte of the year 79.(52) The would-be emulation by the Communal Council's Jacobin majority of their forebears of the 1790's is of course, as we have seen, a not infrequent subject for discussion in la Colonne. Inability

or unwillingness to break with precedent on the part of those who would change things is to be deplored, young Malavaux says: for adherence to ideas formulated in past circumstances is likely of course to impede achievement of objectives that might be envisaged in the light of prevailing conditions and possibilities. So then, exclaims Gerberoy indignantly: '*...nos traditions, les principes de 89, rengaines!*' (PVV 158). No, answers the young man: they are '*...préjugés, chaînes...* *Vous perdez votre temps à renouer ce que l'usure a rompu*' (PVV 158). In one further, all-important respect, the Communard's readiness to borrow from the legacy of his forerunners might stand as a lesson to succeeding proletarian generations of an example to avoid at all costs.

Through the intermediary of Malavaux films, Descaves returns to the idea that insurgent resistance during the semaine sanglante had been a magnificently futile display of defiance in the face of inevitable defeat. The principle which led the silkworkers of Lyons ('*Mourir en combattant*') and the insurgents of the June Days ('*Du pain ou la mort*') to spill their blood in 1834 and 1848, had made of the combatants of 1871 (as young Malavaux expresses it) '*...les avant-derniers romantiques (de la révolution), les anarchistes étant sans doute les derniers*' (PVV 158). The martyrdom of the Communards during the semaine sanglante might indeed, as Colomès says, have enormously heightened proletarian class consciousness in France and elsewhere, and have given to the insurrection (in the words of the present-day historian Roger Magraw) '*...a final heroic, tragic grandeur*':(53) what, however, in practical terms, had been the consequence of this mass self-immolation? Through the shooting, or the departure into exile, of leaders of the workers' movement, economic and social emancipation of the proletariat had been set back by a decade. Fournery, whose role it is this evening to qualify, expand upon or tactfully refute affirmations by young and old alike, will remark aptly, if grandiloquently, that revolution in March 1871 had been in any case premature:

Le 18 mars fut un printemps précoce. Tout de suite après vinrent les bourrasques et les gelées mortelles aux jeunes pousses. Il avait fait beau trop tôt... le 18 et le 26, jour de la proclamation de la Commune. Le peuple se découvrit imprudemment et attrapa une fluxion de poitrine. Il a été trente ans à s'en remettre. Il a fallu, pour qu'on reparlât de l'affranchissement du prolétariat, que les fils des vaincus fussent devenus des hommes. (PVV 161)

It is to be remembered that Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels... and Eugène Varlin had all judged the insurrection to be untimely. (54)

The shedding of its lifeblood in war or in insurrection is not then a sacrifice that can be contemplated by Malavaux fils' generation. In so many respects intrinsic to contemporary experience, and always useful if the lessons it has to offer are heeded, the legacy of the past can be little short of pernicious when adopted unthinkingly or permitted a misplaced influence in subsequent historical circumstances. The humiliations of the 1870 defeat (most significantly the loss of Alsace-Lorraine) might well, to the idea of those who were of an age to serve at the time, seem sufficient justification for the departure of their own sons for the battlefield: why, Malavaux fils asks with some logic, should our generation pay the price for a territorial loss occurring before we were born? A principle inherent to each individual destiny (what is done cannot be undone) must, as the young man suggests, apply no less necessarily in the lives of nations: as regards the loss of the two provinces; '*C'est le fait accompli, un accident historique sur lequel il n'y a plus à revenir*') (PVV 155). It is to miss the point to reflect (as a reader will now inevitably do) that this particular accident of history was to be rectified before many more years had passed. With respect to the Commune itself, Malavaux fils says:

Nous rendons hommage à votre abnégation, à vos gestes héroïques sur les barricades, à vos illusions généreuses...; mais c'est assez que vous ayez été échaudés, pour que nous craignons l'eau froide. Ainsi les leçons de votre expérience ne sont pas perdues. Etant le nombre, nous devons être la force, sans avoir besoin de prendre un fusil ou de jeter des bombes. Vous étiez prodiges de votre sang, nous sommes économes du nôtre, car nous ne ferions que nous appauvrir davantage en le versant. (PVV 158-159)

The question of self-sacrifice for a cause is seen to be linked to another crucial issue under discussion this evening: the nature of the republic in whose defence the Communards gave their lives. From the 1870's down to the present day, champions of the Commune have maintained that insurgent resistance to Versailles was instrumental in ensuring maintenance of the republican form of government.⁽⁵⁵⁾ Colomès is of this view (PVV 161): and Descaves, as we have had occasion to note in the previous chapter, evidently concurs. He refers directly at one point, furthermore, to '*ces fondateurs de la République*' (PVV 150). Thiers' awareness of the continued strength of republican feeling not merely in Paris but in the large provincial centres may well have counted for much in his advocacy in November 1872 of the republic's continuation:⁽⁵⁶⁾ it cannot be forgotten, however, that restoration of the monarchy would almost certainly have proceeded in July 1871 had it not been for the comte de Chambord's obstinacy over the question of the Bourbon flag. A consideration that serves, somewhat ironically, as partial corroboration of Colomès' belief is the fact that to traditionalists both inside and outside the National Assembly, the blood bath of the semaine sanglante seemed at least to exemplify Thiers' commitment to defence of the status quo and suppression of the socialist menace. If such was the stamp of his 'conservative republic', it was felt, perhaps (for the meantime) the regime could be tolerated. Following Mac-Mahon's election to the Presidency on the evening of 24 May 1873, plans were again under way for the return of Henri, comte de Chambord, as sovereign: and once more, the obstacle of the Bourbon emblem arose...

It is to be noted that Frenchmen in their majority had not been so terrified by events in Paris during the insurrectionary interlude as to reject republicanism en bloc in the partial elections held between January 1872 and February 1875; nearly all of which strengthened the republican position at the expense of the monarchists.⁽⁵⁷⁾ As a result of the Wallon Amendment of 29 January 1875, the Republic ceased (by one vote) to be a merely provisional form of government.

It is almost superfluous to point out that the various republican governments in existence until 1940 were, with the exception of the Front Populaire, a far cry from the socialist republic wished for (if somewhat nebulously) by the Communards. With the decline in influence, however, of Mac-Mahon and the monarchists (Mac-Mahon, whose position was seriously weakened after the elections of October 1877, resigned the Presidency in January 1879) the way was clear for institution of a secular, democratic and parliamentary regime: the 'République des Républicains'. Certain initial measures (the return of the National Assembly to Paris; introduction of the Marseillaise as the national anthem; the declaration, on 6 July 1880, that the Fourteenth of July would henceforward be France's national day) were, if not perhaps far-reaching, supposedly a source of encouragement for former participants in the 1871 insurrection: although less so, of course, than the declaration in 1879 and 1880 of a partial then a total amnesty for the Communard exiles. In March 1882, primary education in France became free, non-clerical and compulsory. The veritable war on clericalism during the opening years of the new century - culminating of course in the separation of Church and State in December 1905 - must have seemed to surviving insurgents a belated validation of one of the principal aspects of the Communard ethos. To the idea of Malavaux fils, however, there remains - understandably - much that is rotten in the state of the republic: for what important, durable social reform has been accomplished, he asks, by the bourgeois-dominated social order? It is irritating, the young man tells his indignant listeners - for whom, whatever its imperfections, the Republic's very existence is cause for satisfaction - to receive the answer

"A bas la calotte!" chaque fois qu'on demande à la République quelle réforme sociale sérieuse, durable, elle a accomplie. Tandis qu'on jette au pays cet os à ronger, le capital beurre tranquillement ses tartines et la représentation nationale croupit dans son jus. (PVV 162)

As suggested earlier, this anniversary dinner would be taking place in all likelihood during the first premiership of Georges Clemenceau (lasting from October 1906 until July 1909). Despite a

proclaimed belief in progress, and a concern for social problems expressed often in the course of his political career, Clemenceau the self-styled radical accomplished during his two years and nine months as Premier only one of the seventeen reforms on his programme when he assumed power (nationalisation of the Western railway, in 1908). 'Le Tigre' proved himself, furthermore, totally deserving of his self-description of 'premier flic de France', smashing the recurring strikes marking his premiership, and dealing rigorously with any further social unrest. As Minister of the Interior (March-October 1906) he had informed a delegation from the Confédération Générale du Travail (the C.G.T.) that his own place was on the opposite side of the barricade from themselves, that if their method of action was disorder, his responsibility was to make order supreme.(58) Whether the limited legislative achievement and the repressive tactics of Clemenceau are what young Malavaux has in mind or not, the proletarian of today (he indicates strongly) would be no more justified in shedding his blood for the Republic as it stands than his forerunners were in serving the egocentric ends of tyrants and autocrats. For the middle classes jealous of their own privileges and hostile to any idea of social justice, the working man's function in time of peace as of war remains what it has always been; to be exploited to the limit:

Jamais le sang répandu n'a fait augmenter le prix de la main-d'oeuvre civile ou militaire. Chair à canon et chair à fabrique sont les engrais au meilleur marché. Il n'y a qu'à se baisser pour en prendre. Eh bien! non, assez de gaspillage!
(PVV 157)

There is, one might feel, a certain gloomy irony in Malavaux films' championship of life during this conversation when it is remembered that the year after publication of Philémon, Europe would be plunged into a cataclysmic conflict in the course of which a generation of young manhood was all but wiped out, and at whose conclusion France had lost one-and-a-half million men. To be recalled also is the fact that antimilitarist sentiment among factions on the Left in France was essentially discarded, in 1914, in the face of the threat to the

national territory and glorification of the 'Union sacrée'. On this particular evening, however, the horrors of international warfare lie several years in the future. Far from ever again laying down their lives in thousands (the young man continues) the workers owe it to themselves to acquire the means of production, and once in possession of them, to take full advantage of what they have gained:

...il s'agit (...) de vaincre pour vivre et de vivre pour profiter de la victoire. Il ne nous convient plus de tirer les marrons du feu pour que d'autres les mangent. (PVV 158)

...la peine est de vivre et la gloire d'améliorer notre existence. (PVV 164)

While sentiments of this sort might have been expected to strike a responsive chord with the former Communards, they react as negatively to them as to any other view expressed by Malavaux fils. Charpin's grumbling '*Travailler moins et gagner davantage n'est pas un idéal révolutionnaire*' (PVV 166) reflects of course Colomès' own belief in the work ethic: and the idea that no cause merits the supreme sacrifice of one's life meets with a mixture of outrage and incredulity from all but the ever-comprehensive Fournery. What Albert means, Fournery explains,

...(c'est) que le peuple n'a plus maintenant que des intérêts de classe à défendre et qu'il ne se soucie pas d'offrir à la bourgeoisie régnante une nouvelle occasion de décapiter ce qu'elle appelle l'hydre de l'anarchie. Elle oublie que la particularité de l'hydre est d'avoir des têtes qui repoussent. Elle devrait pourtant s'en rendre compte en voyant nos sections dissoutes de l'Internationale se reformer en syndicats et réaliser l'union nationale des Associationslibres préparant l'union universelle, où finiront par s'absorber, comme le voulait Bakounine, les Etats politiques autoritaires. Notre évangéliste à nous, Proudhon, se demandait si le peuple était capable de constituer un centre d'action, expression de ses idées, de ses vues, de ses espérances... Le syndicat me paraît répondre à la question. (PVV 164-165)

Recognising that the bourgeoisie who hold the reins of power will never of their own accord grant more than the minimum to the worker,

Fournery himself is convinced that '*...la poussée révolutionnaire finira par faire éclater les cadres du vieux monde, ses formes politiques vermoulues*' (PVV 163). The way to proletarian ascendancy may be long: the worker, Malavaux fils declares, will nonetheless move slowly, inexorably, towards realisation of his objective. From step to step, from goal to goal, he says, '*...nous parviendrons à être les maîtres du travail, de ses instruments, de ses fruits accumulés, de la richesse sociale, enfin!*' (PVV 166). It is of interest, as we read the prognoses of Malavaux fils and Fournery, to recall the sombre warnings issued in the early 1900's by Paul Bourget, who wrote in 1910 in his preface to la Barricade of the class warfare now intrinsic to the French social order, and of the imperative need for the possessing classes to toughen their moral and intellectual fibre so as to counter the increasingly ominous challenge from below.(59)

Descaves was writing of course for a public that would have been familiar with developments in proletarianism during the two decades prior to Philémon's publication. It is clear from various references, and from the tenor of portions of the conversation, that Malavaux fils is in sympathy with the objectives of revolutionary syndicalism, promoted by the Fédération des Bourses du Travail after this body's merger in 1902 with the C.G.T. In his biography of Clemenceau, Edgar Holt has described the union as 'the first sign of a concerted challenge by workers to established authority'.(60) Not content of course merely with accomplishment of reform measures that might be effected within the system in place, revolutionary syndicalists sought the worker's total liberation from the existing order.(61) They wanted no part of current political and parliamentary activity: looking to destruction of capitalism and of the State through their all-important weapon of the general strike, the syndicalist leaders aimed for replacement of the centralised parliamentary system by federations of trade unions which would enable the worker to assume ownership and control of the factories and workplaces where, hitherto, he had been merely an employee. In this new order, the basic social unit would have been, not astonishingly, the syndicate rather than the commune.

It can hardly be said that syndicalist objectives received the generalised support of the French working masses. The Confédération Générale du Travail may have been dominated by the revolutionary syndicalists from 1902 until the First World War: Georges Gurvitch writes that a mere 5 per cent of French workers were affiliated to the C.G.T. in the opening decade of the century;(62) and Roger Magraw that of the one million workers unionised by 1914, only half actually belonged to the body.(63) What might be said, on the other hand, is that in the working-class psyche, the mystique of the strike grew to the extent that it came to seem a reflection, almost an expression, of worker values.(64) The numbers participating in strike action were by no means negligible: nine-and-a-half million in 1906, close to five million in 1910.

Some sympathy for facets of the revolutionary syndicalist movement might, as Descaves himself notes,(65) have been expected on the part of Colomès and his friends. The workers' associations of the 1860's were, after all, syndicates in embryo. Similarly, the idea promoted by syndicalist leaders of a society made up of producers and parasites seems in line with Colomès' thinking; as also, of course, the commitment to a fostering of a strong spirit of solidarity among workers. Both young and old, on this anniversary of 18 March, believe as one in the need for working-class self-determination, in the right of the proletariat to conduct its affairs without advice or interference from the bourgeoisie.(66) Though Malavaux files states at one point that his own generation is less steeped in Proudhonist doctrine than that of his father, revolutionary syndicalism was of course influenced substantially by aspects of Proudhon's thinking.(67) It is of passing interest to note also that the ideas of the Allemanists - followers of the former Communard Jean Allemane, who had founded the Parti ouvrier socialiste révolutionnaire in 1890 - were strongly akin to, in many ways annunciatory of, syndicalism. Objectives pursued by the syndicalists would seem then in not a few respects (Descaves intimates) a logical culmination of proletarian goals evident, in more rudimentary form, some forty years earlier.

The weapon, however, through which the new social order was to come into being was not advocated in Proudhonist teaching, and is apparently at variance with the beliefs of these particular veterans of the Commune. Charpin, for his part, makes aggressive reference to use of the general strike and sabotage as a means for effecting change: to which Malavaux files answers accurately, if provocatively, that circumstances have altered; and that his generation does not have at its disposal the rifles of the National Guard. At its Brussels conference in September 1868, the International had declared the strike to be a legitimate weapon: Eugène Varlin - so venerated by Colomès - had been a key supporter of such action during the closing years of the Empire. When it is remembered however that there were on average over one thousand strikes a year in France during the early 1900's as compared to around one hundred annually (an already considerable figure) in the 1880's, (68) one might feel perhaps less surprise if these artisans condemn a development seemingly compromising the value, indeed the sacrosanct nature of, the work ethic. There is mild irony in the fact that in their attitude of disapproval the former Communards enter into fleeting affinity with middle-class possédants; for whom strike action, in the early years of this century, was - as it had been two decades earlier - a social horror. When, in 1906, the C.G.T. called a general strike for 1 May, there was - unnecessarily as it transpired - anticipation within Paris of a day of massacre, pillage and incendiarism; to be followed, perhaps, by another Reign of Terror. (69) Shades, in brief, of a further March-May 1871 as represented in conservative mythology!

The account of the dinner en famille is complemented, towards the end of the novel, by a segment relating the last commemorative function Colomès will attend. There are forty gathered on this particular evening: of these, at least half are either the children or the grandchildren of Communards, or people such as Descaves himself who are present as 'friends of the Commune'. While the allusions in la Colonne to the geriatric senility of certain war veterans find no direct equivalent in Philémon vieux de la vieille, references are to be noted

in the latter book to '*...(des) ruines qui fumaient encore...*' (PVV 154), and to '*...de (...) vieilles souches d'insurrection (...) (qui) ne tenaient plus pourtant que bien peu à la terre...*' (PVV 335). If the ideas of these survivors seem in many respects outmoded, and if they have themselves 'had their day', Descaves (in contrast to his portrayal of the veterans of la Colonne) does place some emphasis in Philémon on the future of the revolutionary cause. In a continuation of the image of the '*vieilles souches d'insurrection*' who seem now to have a tenuous grip on the soil, reference is made to the presence this evening among the 'old stumps' of '*...de jeunes arbustes vivaces qui pouvaient refaire la forêt détruite*' (PVV 335). It might be assumed that this dinner would be, for the veterans of the Commune, in the nature of a family gathering: Descaves is astonished, therefore, when Colomès, Fournery, Gerberoy and Charpin appear to have no more idea than he himself does as to the identity of some of the 'old soldiers' present:

Comment s'appelait celui-là? Quel rôle tel autre avait-il joué? Nulle souvenance. "Le sais-tu, toi?... - Non, et toi?..." Ces racines, que je me représentais enchevêtrées, ne se touchaient même pas du bout de leurs fibres!

Mais j'avais tort de m'en étonner. Est-ce que les vieux soldats se connaissent davantage? Ils ont cependant quelquefois chargé ensemble l'ennemi, soutenu le même siège, fait le coup de feu à une lieue de distance... Un morceau d'étoffe, une date dessus... et c'est assez, somme toute, pour rapprocher des hommes qui ne se sont jamais regardés que dans un emblème! (PVV 335)

Representing the future, as he so obviously does, Malavaux fils - whom Descaves holds in considerable regard - fulfils an essential function in the novel; an embodiment, seemingly, of the sensible practicality needed by the proletarian in countering any exploitive propensity on the part of his self-styled betters. The young man's attitudes, as we have seen, are not founded on unthinking reverence for the legacy of his revolutionary forebears. Not for him or for those of his generation a disposition to the heroics from which legends are born; and which can be, as Descaves writes, so hideously costly in terms of human life:

Tout à l'heure, des rescapés chenus diraient l'héroïsme du désespoir sur les dernières barricades... Tant de sang répandu pour l'honneur seulement... quelle leçon! Dieu merci, elle n'était pas perdue, contenue dans l'admirable parole de Lacordaire sur l'ouvrier qui ramasse ses bras et s'en va! A bout de patience, le travailleur les ramasse, en effet; mais ce n'est plus pour leur faire porter des armes bien inutiles, du moment que par son simple refus de produire à des conditions inadmissibles, l'ouvrier conjuré peut obtenir de ses exploiters ce que la force ne leur a pas arraché. Le prolétariat a eu, lui aussi, des temps chevaleresques. Ils sont révolus. J'assistais au banquet des derniers preux de la Révolution. (PVV 336-337)

Quasi-quixotic romantics of revolution and likened here to valiant knights, the Communards of Colomès' and Charpin's stamp have been supplanted in the progression towards total proletarian self-realisation. And again, the question arises on this evening: just how clear was the Communist perception of the objectives possible or desirable of attainment in the spring of 1871? How lucid, in fact, might one have expected it to be, given the negative circumstances that produced the insurrection, the disorder in which the Communards were operating, and the forces weighed against them:

"Savaient-ils exactement ce qu'ils voulaient, en (...) faisant (la Commune)"? me disait, à l'écart, Albert Malavaux.

Et je lui répondais: "Non. Ils savaient seulement ce qu'ils ne voulaient pas. C'est le fin mot de toutes les révolutions. Ils ne voulaient plus de l'Empire, avec sa fin désastreuse, et ils ne voulaient pas davantage d'un gouvernement d'incapables, qui avaient achevé notre défaite et parafé notre amoindrissement. On leur a reproché l'insurrection devant l'ennemi encore chez nous...; mais ils n'ont pas choisi leur moment; il leur a été imposé par les circonstances, et il en sera toujours ainsi."
(PVV 337)

An assessment then in which any possible aspiration on the Communards' part to change society features hardly at all.

The dinner entre intimes recounted in Chapter Four had been likened to a communion by the faithful (PVV 134; 149). Seldom in better voice than for the after-dinner singing that evening, Colomès, as he stood his glass aloft,

..semblait célébrer l'Office de la République Universelle, la Messe des Peuples. Et j'en porte témoignage: pas plus que le prêtre à l'autel, il n'était excité par le vin des burettes!
(PVV 171)

It is not surprising that a parallel should again be drawn in this later chapter between the company assembled, and devotees of a cult observing the rites of their faith.⁽⁷⁰⁾ The song 'la Belle' ('Ah! quand viendra la Belle? Voilà des mille et des cent ans Que Jean Guêtré l'appelle') is said to be 'le cantique des Communards' (PVV 340); those who join in the refrain comprise 'le chœur des fidèles' (PVV 340). Still grieving for Phonsine and initially reluctant to participate in the after-dinner singing, Colomès will finally treat the company to Pierre Dupont's 'le Chant du pain', one of the anthems of the worker in 1848. So truly does this convey the temper of a former proletarian generation (Colomès, it is said '*...jeta le cri de son temps, de ses revendications, d'une classe tellement habituée aux privations, que le strict nécessaire comble ses vœux*') (PVV 338) and so vigorous is the old man's rendition, that a renewed fervour will be momentarily evident among the veteran assembly whose revolutionary force, though nearly spent, can still on occasion be sparked to revival. Colomès communicates anew to men who had grown up to the cry for bread *...l'émotion sacrée que ce chant religieux avait autrefois propagée'* (PVV 338-339): he is, for the moment, fulfilling a role of officiant, interpreter of the mood of a multitude, merging his own identity, as he sings, with the collective bygone spirit of famished throngs. It is as though the old man, who stands now '*le regard étincelant, le sourcil haut, la barbe altière...*' (PVV 338) is setting the social order at defiance one final time in this his swansong: he will end his life the following day.

Again then, this time in choice of song, Colomès seems to demonstrate that he is, as it were, a 'temporal overstayer'; almost out of place in the early twentieth century. A call for bread hardly reflects the workers' primary concern in 1910: but if adequate sustenance is less of a preoccupation now, improved conditions have

led, not surprisingly, to greater expectations. As a young worker sings 'le Droit du travailleur' ('Ouvrier, prends la machine/Prends la terre, paysan!') the glance thrown Descaves by Malavaux fils serves as silent testimony that such is indeed the objective of the more militant among the rising proletarian generation. The young singer has selected a song he might well have learned at his grandfather's knee: its words (as Descaves remarks to Malavaux fils) indicate that the Communards, notwithstanding their somewhat nebulous appreciation of how the economic furtherance of the worker's cause might best be realised, had indeed seen,

.. tout au moins en rêve, la Terre Promise, dans laquelle vous, ou vos enfants, vous entrerez un jour. (PVV 339-340)

It was, as we know, only with the Front Populaire that a government for whom working-class interests were a priority held power in France. Constricted by economic difficulties, by an increasingly uncertain international situation and, of course, by opposition at home, the Front under Blum nonetheless achieved gains for the working man that were, by any standards, considerable. Recognition (as a result of the Matignon agreements) of the right of the trade unions to represent the workers; an average wage increase of 12 per cent; paid holidays; introduction of the forty-hour week... hardly entry into the Promised Land perhaps: but a significant narrowing of the gap between the respective worlds of the bourgeois (principal exerciser of political power since 1789) and members of the Quatrième Etat.

A seemingly logical progression towards the type of objective for which the Communards might have been supposed to be fighting, the Front populaire would in all probability have invited Colomès' displeasure on more than one count. Paid holidays? A forty-hour week? It is not difficult to imagine the old man scoffing or muttering cholericly at self-indulgent legislation of this stamp. In one of those anomalous situations of which history, and life, contain not a few examples, a subsequent regime profoundly alien to Colomès' values and philosophy

might nonetheless in some of its features have awakened an echoing sentiment in him. Founded on the motto 'Travail, Famille, Patrie', denouncing the legacy of capitalism and industry, glorifying the peasant and the artisan, the Vichy Government drew sufficiently from Proudhonist teaching for us to wonder just how Colomès, had he been alive in 1940, would have regarded it. (71)

Two days after Colomès' suicide, Descaves, Fournery, Gerberoy and Charpin accompany their old friend for the last time to the Père-Lachaise. It is appropriate that he should be cremated here; in the place where, during the night of 27-28 May 1871, some of his partners in revolution had waged a desperate battle; and against whose wall, in the morning, those combatants not yet dead had faced the rifle fire of the 'Forces of Order'. In a further use of the military parallel recurrent in Philémon, the Communards dying over thirty years later and carried to the cemetery for cremation, are said to be:

..des traînards qui rejoignent... Mais la phalange au bivouac est déjà serrée dans un champ si étroit, qu'il n'y a plus de place pour les nouveaux venus. D'où la nécessité pour eux de monter au bûcher, afin de ne laisser qu'une pincée de cendres! (PVV 354)

For a conservative judging in 1910, Colomès' entire life would have seemed, no doubt, little short of a scandal. A participant in and sympathiser with an insurrection that remained decades later, in bien-pensant eyes, a criminal interlude, an episode of shame, this miscreant had never the decency or the taste to repent of his aberration: quite the reverse. Each year since that horrific springtide had seen, in fact, an intensification of his cult for the Commune, and for the leading plebeian figures to have espoused it. Others, reduced to a condition of dependency, would have had both the moral and the practical sense to live out their final years as beneficiaries of the Republic (that accursed republic; in the view of not a few traditionalists): Colomès, however, has so far exercised his

freedom of decision as to take his own life. There can be no doubt about it: Colomès' existence, and his end, have been a near affront to right-thinking society, and to conservative Christian belief: and from this, the old man would in all probability have derived considerable satisfaction. When on the day of the funeral the few mourners walk, with no priest in attendance, behind the humble coffin, it is with contentment that Descaves imagines the chagrin almost certainly felt by Colomès' pratiquant son-in-law; present at the ceremony, and for whom position and appearance - as Descaves has already had occasion to realise - are all-important:

...je jouissais de l'ennui que celui-ci (...) devait éprouver en suivant ce convoi civil et de dernière classe! Nul, heureusement, ne le connaissait. A Poitiers, on l'eût montré du doigt.

Aussi bien, le corbillard était promu à une classe supérieure par les fleurs qui recouvraient le drap. Mais l'immortelle y dominait... autre cause de souffrance pour le régleur de pendules. (PVV 353)

The religious parallels encountered so often in the novel underscore of course the importance of their creed for Colomès and his fellows. Might they not be considered also, however, to suggest the purity of their belief; quite as valid as more traditional faith, and untainted (in the case of these men) by egotism or self-interest? The phrasing of the novel's concluding lines is not of course fortuitous, as Colomès the free spirit finds himself at one with the immensity of Earth and Sky:

Nous n'avions plus qu'à nous retirer; mais dehors, au grand air, avant de redescendre dans Paris, nous tournâmes nos regards, une dernière fois, vers la sombre usine où le bon ouvrier qu'avait été Colomès, s'était fait porter pour prendre congé de nous.

Par la cheminée du Crématoire, il finissait de s'en aller en fumée, dans l'espace et dans la lumière, ressusciter à la vie universelle. (PVV 357-358) (My underlining)

The factory chimneys described in the opening paragraphs of the novel might be considered by extension to symbolise the forces against

which Colomès had found himself powerless in the closing years of his life. It is, perhaps, no more than coincidental irony that the Crematorium should itself be likened to a factory... by means of which the spirit of Colomès the Valiant now attains total freedom.

On receipt of a letter from the novelist Antonin Lavergne requesting a copy of la Colonne, Descaves enquired amiably "*Vous ne me demandez pas 'Philémon vieux de la vieille' pour lequel j'ai, moi, le plus de tendresse?*" (72) The reader's view, as Anne Roche comments, (73) is likely to be that of Descaves himself; for the human element in Philémon lends the book - in places at least - a charm, pathos or humour less apparent in the earlier novel. Colomès, Phonsine and their friends (based as they almost certainly are on men and women known to Descaves) seem to us to be genuine personalities, having the normal human foibles and prejudices, but essentially likeable, honest and decent: of a kind, in sum, to incline the fair-minded reader in 1913 to at least an equitable appreciation of the cause they hold dear. In a novel whose heroes are the anonymous defenders of the Commune, the individuality of such defenders is brought out through the Colomès couple, through Fournery, Charpin, Gerberoy... representatives of history's nameless.

With a further instance of his fondness for the religious parallel, Descaves summed up in Souvenirs d'un ours the experience of the majority of former Communards known to him. Poverty is an example, he wrote,

...si elle couronne d'épines, plus que de fleurs, une longue existence de travail, d'abnégation et d'espérances trompées. (74)

Principled, courageous, faithful to his own code to the last, is it excessive to see in old Colomès an irascible, bushy-browed martyr and saint? Whatever the validity of such a parallel - and many would contest it - the nature, and the quality, of Colomès' life helps in no small way to counterbalance the portrayal of the worker (and of the

Commune) found in the often unrestrained outpourings of anti-Communard mythology.

The portion of Philémon vieux de la vieille devoted to an essentially factual chronicling of the period of exile does not call for detailed consideration in this study. It is important, nonetheless, to remember that Descaves' purpose in writing the book was twofold; and that the history of the years of exile - provided through anecdotes, reminiscences, near-recitations or lectures by Colomès, Descaves, Fournery - has hardly less significance within the text as a whole than the portrayal of Colomès himself. In much of the material it contains relating to the Commune and the exile period, Philémon has now been equalled or eclipsed by more recent publications. When it appeared in 1913, however, the book - which remains for many reasons a unique contribution to the literature inspired by the Commune - could lay definite claim to originality.

Information is provided then by Colomès, to a limited extent Fournery, and, not infrequently, by Descaves himself, concerning the better known (if not truly celebrated) men and women of the years of exile, and the conditions of life in Geneva and elsewhere.⁽⁷⁵⁾ The reader learns of the surveillance under which the Communards were kept in Geneva, and of various attempts to discredit the exiles in the eyes of their Swiss hosts: he is told also of the frequent hostility marking the exiles' relations with one another. Under discussion also, at various points in the book, are the gatherings at the villa known as 'les Charmettes', where diverse and eccentric personalities - among them the former bohemian hostess Nina de Callias - were regular visitors; the tragedy involving Marguerite Tinayre; the history and experiences of Eugène Razoua, one of the insurgents under observation in Geneva by spies from France, and whose attempted extradition, had it succeeded, would have set an unfortunate precedent for his fellow exiles. References to or assessments of such people as Charles Beslay, André Léo, Ferdinand Gambon, Benoît Malon, Elisée Reclus, Georges Renard and Jean-Louis Pindy punctuate the book. In presentation of

some material, the information conveyed ostensibly by Colomès is supplemented (for the reader's benefit) by Descaves himself. Thus, Colomès having referred to André Léo, to her liaison with Benoît Malon who was nine years her junior, to her literary propensities and to the esteem in which she was held by Louis Rossel, Descaves adds further particulars which (in a conversation such as the one he purports to be recounting) might seem sententious, or even superfluous in view of the fact that Colomès would himself, in all likelihood, be aware of what he is now being told:

J'interromps Colomès pour compléter ces renseignements.

- Elle s'appelait en réalité Léodile Champseix, ayant épousé, précédemment, à Lausanne, Grégoire Champseix, collaborateur de Pierre Leroux à la Revue Sociale, puis, rédacteur en chef du Peuple, de Limoges, et banni de France après le coup d'Etat. Il la laissa veuve à trente ans. C'était une femme remarquable. Je raconterai un jour son histoire, qui n'est point à l'avantage de Malon. Continuez, monsieur Colomès. (PVV 178-179)

Disappointingly, the reader is never told the story said to be to Malon's disadvantage.

An important further feature of these sections of the novel is the outlined development of various movements or organisations with which the former Communards were associated during exile. The reader is told of such support groups for needy refugees in Geneva as the Egalité, founded in 1871, and the Marmite sociale, supplying good quality food at cheap prices.⁽⁷⁶⁾ Of greater historical significance, perhaps, is the split within the Fédération Romande de l'Internationale between the working men of Geneva (led by the Russian Marxist Nicolas Utin) and the watchmakers of the Jura villages faithful to Bakunin, and inspired by the Swiss anarchist, and friend of the latter, James Guillaume.⁽⁷⁷⁾ The appraisal of Guillaume's character provides further example of one of the more wearisome features of the Descaves style: namely, an inability to express an idea, and then simply leave it alone. James Guillaume is (Descaves grandiosely declares in his supposedly informal conversation with Colomès):

...la plus belle conscience d'homme et d'historien que l'on puisse aujourd'hui révéler. S'il y a une Légion d'honneur idéale, ses grands dignitaires m'apparaissent sous les traits d'Elisée Reclus et de James Guillaume. Quand on a l'estime et l'amitié de ces hommes libres, vrais et sans tache, on fait partie de la légion: on a la croix. Elle est invisible; elle ne se porte pas sur la poitrine; elle n'y fait la retape ni en ruban, ni en bijou...; c'est une distinction d'intérieur. (PVV 201)

As Colomès will explain, the French refugees with few exceptions cast in their lot with the Jura watchmakers, who formed the Jura Federation in November 1871:

..la fédération jurassienne, dont (James Guillaume) fut le ressort et dont Bakounine était l'âme, releva notre courage et donna un but à notre activité. Nous lisions le Bulletin, comme on prend un cordial. Nous étions chez les autres en Suisse, mais nous étions chez nous à la Fédération. (PVV 201)

In his support for a body that would be, in the words of George Woodcock, 'a centre of libertarian thought, and the real heart of the anarchist movement during its early years' (78) Colomès the Proudhonist is again in evidence.

Just as Colomès' powers of expression, the frequent richness and eloquence of his phrasing might seem improbable in a man who is largely self-taught, so also certain experiences or acquaintances attributed to him would appear, on the face of it, unlikely. How does it happen, one is tempted to wonder, that Colomès (a relatively obscure participant in the Commune for all that he has briefly held command at Vanves, a professed despiser of the bourgeoisie and no admirer of Benoît Malon) should be accompanying Gustave Lefrançais, Jules Guesde, the said Malon and the Russian Joukovsky, to the conference held at Sonvillier in November 1871 from which the Jura Federation came into being? His usual rather disarming explanation, when he is with more celebrated figures somewhere, is that he has simply attached himself to them, and gone along 'en curieux' (PVV 178) 'en amateur' (PVV 204). Similarly, what bond of friendship would make likely a visit by Colomès and Phonsine to Courbet's villa at the Tour de Peilz? The account of the

visit to Courbet is presented as an attempt by Colomès to stimulate in the now invalid Phonsine some renewed interest in the experiences shared years before. Overheard by Descaves (who has entered the couple's apartment and, intrigued by what is being told, sat down quietly without making his presence known) the story is punctuated by slightly contrived inclusions whereby particulars are sought from an aphasic Phonsine and supplied, after unsuccessful prompting, by Colomès himself. Thus is provided a description of Courbet's abode ('*Tu te rappelles?... C'était une petite villa à un étage, dont les fenêtres regardaient le lac*') (PVV 241), the interior of the house, the garden, Courbet himself:

Comment vint-il au-devant de nous? Il vint... en manches... en manches de chemise, mais oui! le col ouvert sur son cou de taureau, la bedaine débordante... et allez donc! (PVV 242)

Colomès talks reminiscently of how the afternoon had been spent (in a fencing lesson given Colomès by Morel, another former Communard; in a game of skittles at the local cafeteria with Cluseret, whom Colomès detests because of his part in the repression of the insurgents in June 1848; and, later, in a singing spell at the same cafeteria, followed by the rumbustious merrymaking of a cheerfully intoxicated Courbet). Descaves had himself visited the Tour de Peilz in the summer of 1903; later describing Courbet's life there, in Souvenirs d'un ours, in terms recalling those used in Philémon.(79) It is clear however that he has also drawn for his novel upon an account of a visit to Courbet included by Maxime Vuillaume in the Cahiers rouges.(80) Anything said relating to the conference at Sonvillier may well have been obtained from Lefrançais himself.

Certain inadvertences and inconsistencies, particularly over dating, suggest that Philémon was written over a considerable period, with frequent interruptions and, on completion, little attention to revision.(81) It is in late April 1900 that Descaves sees Colomès singing at his (Colomès') open window: he will actually make the old man's acquaintance in September of that year, on returning from Geneva.

It becomes less easy after this to establish just when a given event or conversation might be taking place. The dinner commemorating 18 March recounted in the fourth chapter could hardly be occurring before 1907 or 1908 in view of Malavaux fils' age (twenty-seven) and because his father - said in any case to be a widower at the time he is transported to the Southern Hemisphere - would not presumably have set foot on French soil again until 1879 or 1880. Young Malavaux, however, refers to the separation of Church and State (which became law in December 1905) as though this is a recent development. It is possible then that Descaves - having forgotten, perhaps, certain particulars of the sort indicated - was placing the dinner at March 1906.

On Phonsine's death (said to take place in October) Colomès tells Descaves that they had been thirty-eight years together (PVV 290). As the couple met, and married, in 1871, it may be deduced that she has died in October 1909. Colomès' own end, we are told, comes six months after (PVV 353): in fact on 19 March, the day after the commemorative dinner of the second-to-last chapter. The old Communard is seventy-six at the time of his death, so born presumably in 1833 or 1834. This means that the statement of his concerning Varlin and himself ('*Nous avions à peu près le même âge...*') (PVV 31) need not be taken too literally, Varlin's year of birth being 1839.

At the time of the commemorative dinner of which we read in Chapter Nine, mention is made of Charles Ostyn, born in 1823 and said to be eighty-five at the time of this anniversary (PVV 337). One might then suppose the year of this particular dinner to be 1908 or 1909. Earlier in the chapter, however, the visit to Brévannes (taking place in late February, some three weeks before the commemorative dinner) has been recounted, and the meeting there with Mathey, said to be eighty (PVV 325). Mathey, as mentioned earlier, died at Brévannes in 1913 aged eighty-nine: if chronology were being observed, the visit would therefore be taking place in 1904 or 1905. It may be noted in passing that Colomès and Phonsine have, when Descaves makes their acquaintance in 1900, a sparrow named Vif-argent. Still alive ten years later at

the time of Colomès' death, this bird's longevity is, if not necessarily remarkable, at least deserving of commendation.

Descaves shows himself to be inconsistent in further, insignificant, particulars. The portrait of Eugène Varlin is said in Chapter One to have pride of place on the wall of the dining-room (PVV 21, 30-31). At the beginning of Chapter Four, however, we are told that Colomès brings the portrait from the bedroom to the dining room in honour of 18 March (*'Il l'accrochait de façon qu'il dominât la table et fût en quelque sorte du festin'*) (PVV 133). When Descaves calls on Colomès not long after Phonsine's death, the old man is said to be reading one of the volumes of Proudhon's Correspondance (PVV 322) (fourteen had in fact been published by the Librairie Internationale Lacroix in 1874 and 1875). Some months later, following Colomès' suicide, Descaves realises as he looks at the row of works by Proudhon in the Colomès home that a volume (the Correspondance) is no longer there (PVV 347): his friend had been obliged to part with the book in order to cover the cost of his meal at the banquet of 18 March. While Descaves refers at one point to 'le Droit du travailleur' by this its correct title (PVV 200), informing Colomès - who presumably knows as much - that it had been written by Charles Keller and set to music by James Guillaume, he refers mistakenly to the song as 'le Chant du travailleur' in the penultimate chapter of the novel.

Reference is made by Descaves in Souvenirs d'un ours to the limited interest he felt in his books once they were written.⁽⁸²⁾ A rechecking of the manuscript with a view to correction of petty oversight might almost have seemed to him then to be time misspent.

It was Descaves' obvious intention, in la Colonne and Philémon vieux de la vieille, to attempt to set the record to rights with respect to the Commune. In neither text is there any minimisation of the Commune's deficiencies: admiration for the seventy-two-day period

was, after all, hardly unqualified on the writer's part. Fallacies and misapprehensions inherent at the time to a middle-class perception of the insurrectionary interlude are, however, set in perspective; or dispelled altogether. Published as they were in the early years of the twentieth century, the novels might be viewed as a twofold antidote to what had been a predominantly hostile fictional representation.

In his clear affinity with the less fortunate of society, Descaves is reminiscent of Léon Cladel - for whom he seems to have had limited sympathy, notwithstanding his prefacing of I.N.R.I. in 1931(83) - and Gustave Geffroy. The bond between Descaves and Geffroy was strong, as suggested in Chapter One of this study; Descaves describing Geffroy in 1941 as having been his closest friend, '*...dont l'esprit s'apparentait au mien par une pente naturelle.*'(84) If both men were essentially successful in their depiction of working-class subjects, Geffroy's emphasis on feverish irrationality in his portrayal of the Commune suffices to distance l'Apprentie somewhat from la Colonne and Philémon vieux de la vieille. A further analogy inviting comment is that between the Margueritte brothers' Pierre Simon (intended of course to be representative of the sincere, committed working-class defender of the Commune(85) and Etienne Colomès. One can hardly suggest however of the latter - as one might well do of Simon - that he is the result of some paternalistic preconception of what, for the purposes of a given thesis, a worthy plebeian Communard was required to be. Based supposedly on several real-life models, Colomès seems at times in fact to assume a life independent of his 'creator'. It might almost be said then that this, if nothing else, is the hallmark from Descaves' point of view of a literary task successfully accomplished: with respect, at least, to Philémon vieux de la vieille.

The similarities between Lucien Descaves and Jules Vallès have been discussed by Gaston Gille in his biography of the latter.(86) Both men might indeed be reckoned kindred spirits in their combativeness, their defence of the underdog, their angry rejection of injustice. Descaves' obvious pride in his reputation as an enfant

terrible (and this seems to have been almost literally the way many friends and acquaintances regarded him) is reminiscent also of what one suspects to have been a near-perverse satisfaction on Vallès' part at feeling himself sometimes - even with others of supposedly like temperament - at odds, misunderstood, a source of irritation or disquiet. However genuine, however commendable Descaves' championship of the Communards, one might still wonder how far the innate contrariness of which he was so proud had counted (initially anyway) in his espousal of their cause.

While there is no difficulty then in accepting the idea of a temperamental affinity between Descaves and Vallès, it is less easy to agree with Gille when he sees a fundamental likeness in their respective literary styles.⁽⁸⁷⁾ If Descaves is capable of writing with richness, eloquence and humour, the tone of some passages in his novels comes dangerously close to sententiousness or pontification. His apparent compulsion to present much by means of image-laden, sometimes pompous parallel does not seem truly reminiscent either of Vallès' colourful, more vigorously incisive prose. Such features of the Descaves style might be considered however an at least partial reflection of one of his principal objectives in his novels on the Commune: for his monologues, expositions and rather pedantic conversations (blending awkwardly at times with the more directly novelistic elements in his writing) are in fact those of a conscientious researcher, a man who is seeking to educate and inform quite as much as to entertain. An enriched, more accurate perception of the Commune, its combatants and the years of exile would be, Descaves undoubtedly hoped, the fruit yielded by a reading of la Colonne and Philémon vieux de la vieille. If one might regret today a certain heaviness in technique, and a sometimes turgid style, much in the novels (particularly the second) still repays a reading.

The emphasis in Chapter Five has been placed upon the obscure participants in the Paris Commune. In the final chapter of the thesis,

dealing with les Massacres de Paris by Jean Cassou, attention is concentrated more particularly on various leading actors in the insurrectionary drama. It will be seen that source material has been no less invaluable to Cassou than to Lucien Descaves. The freedom of the spirit often associated with the Commune (and exemplified in Etienne Colomès) provides, moreover, an essential motif for Cassou's novel.

NOTES

1. In 1871: Jalons pour une histoire de la Commune (Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 1973, p. 538) a facsimile is provided of the first page of a letter to Descaves from the old Internationalist Gustave Drouchon. The latter (dated 24 May 1903) begins with a reference to '*Le livre que vous projetez de faire sur la proscription communaliste...*'

Georges Renard's semi-autobiographical novel Un Exilé (Paris, Ollendorff, 1893) deals also with the exile period in Switzerland. A former normalien, Renard (1847-1930) had been secretary to Rossel at the War Ministry, ceasing all active association with the Commune after Rossel's resignation as War Delegate. Escaping to Switzerland during the repression, he was condemned in absentia in January 1873 to deportation to a fortified place. Renard obtained a teaching position at Vevey after his arrival in Switzerland, and was later appointed to a professorship of literature at Lausanne, where he remained twenty-five years.

René Messant (the hero of Un Exilé) is a young bourgeois as Renard himself was. He presents, therefore, no real parallel with Etienne Colomès. The novel (as Renard writes in his preface) '*...ne se borne pas à conter les étonnements, les mélancolies et les consolations d'un Parisien jeté par l'exil dans cette petite Suisse, si heureuse et si calme (...). (Il) dit aussi les espoirs et les désillusions, les douleurs et les révoltes d'une bonne partie de ceux qui, en 1870, se trouvaient aux environs de la vingtième année.*'

2. See Charles Méré and Henri Clouard, 'Centième anniversaire de la naissance de Lucien Descaves', 2 November 1961, Chronique de la Société des Gens de lettres, 4^e trimestre 1961, pp. 30-39, see p. 38; also Léon Deffoux, 'Avant l'"Autre Guerre". Le cinquantenaire d'un livre qui fit du bruit (avec des textes inédits)', Mercure de France, 1 January 1940, pp. 45-72, see pp. 63-65.
3. See Maxime Vuillaume, Mes Cahiers rouges au temps de la Commune, Paris, Albin Michel, 1971 (facsimile publication of the 1909 edition), pp. 428-429. Vuillaume tells of a visit to Brévannes made in Descaves' company in September 1909: '*...Descaves a (là-bas) un vieil ami, Mathey, qui commanda pendant une quinzaine de jours, en mai, le fort de Vanves.*'
4. See Lucien Descaves, Souvenirs d'un ours, Editions de Paris, 1946, p. 214. Adolphe-Henri Bouit was born in Paris on 15 October 1836. A brushmaker, he belonged to the International, and was a member of the Comité central under the Commune. On 19 May, he was appointed to the Commission des Subsistances. Sentenced to death in absentia on 30 July 1873, Bouit (said by Descaves to have been in England, then in Switzerland, during

the exile period) may also have spent time in Brussels (see P.-O. Lissagaray, Histoire de la Commune de 1871, Paris, François Maspéro, 1976, p. 440.

5. See Souvenirs d'un ours, p. 214.
6. Ibid., p. 177.
7. Ibid., p. 219.
8. Ibid., p. 176.
9. Ibid., pp. 4, 13.
10. Goncourt, who had attended the funeral of Descaves' first wife on 11 January 1896, referred lugubriously in his journal entry for that date to '*ce quartier de Montrouge, ce quartier miséreux et sans caractère, avec ses usines mélancoliquement muettes, et ce mur de ceinture plus morne qu'ailleurs!*' A cadre of this sort may however have seemed fitting enough (to Goncourt's way of thinking) for the likes of Descaves. Referring to a portrait of the latter included in an edition of Sous-offs, the Patrician had written condescendingly on 14 July 1891 of '*...ce portrait où le peintre a trouvé le moyen d'exagérer le commun du pauvre garçon.*'
11. Philémon vieux de la vieille, p. 132. This is associated of course with the idea of exile. Given however that Paris was almost literally awash with blood during the week of 21-28 May, Colomès' evocation of the Red Sea in reference to the Commune seems appropriate on other grounds still.
12. '*...il me jeta un regard étincelant...*' (p. 8); '*...en me lançant un regard courroucé...*' (p. 17); '*...grandi d'un demi-pouce et les yeux brillants...*' (p. 46); '*Colomès m'a jeté (...) un coup d'oeil sévère*' (p. 70); '*Le regard de Colomès étincelle...*' (p. 222); '*Colomès, piqué, sursaute*' (p. 65); '*Colomès, atteint dans sa prédilection, bondit*' (p. 102).
13. For Descaves' impressions of Napoléon Gaillard, and an account of his meeting with him, see Souvenirs d'un ours, pp. 32-33.
14. Sentenced to seven years' transportation to Lambessa after writing the anti-Bonapartist '*Chant des paysans*', Dupont had pleaded for clemency. There was also a somewhat embarrassing episode outside the café de Madrid one summer's day, when Dupont hastened up to the Emperor (out driving in his tilbury) exclaiming '*Sire, vous êtes le plus grand des citoyens de France!*' (See La Chanson française: Le Pamphlet du pauvre (1834-1851), Introduction et notes par Pierre Brochon, Paris, Editions sociales, 1957, p. 71). The poet was also a protégé of princesse Mathilde (see Philémon vieux de la vieille, p. 102).

15. See Paul Lidsky, les Ecrivains contre la Commune, Paris, François Maspero, 1970, pp. 103-111 and *passim*; Henri Mitterand, 'Littérature et société en 1875', Europe ('1875'), November/December 1975, pp. 14-30, see pp. 21-24.
A committed exponent of traditionalist beliefs from 1900 onwards, Paul Bourget (1852-1935) habitually portrayed the revolutionary worker in negative light. See his stories 'le Père Theuriot' (la Dame qui a perdu son peintre, 1910) and 'le Déserteur' (l'Envers du Décor, 1911), both relating to the Commune; also l'Etape (1901), Auguste Riouffol; l'Emigré (1907), Baudouin; Nénésis (1918), Marius Bellagamba.
16. The names on the 'pilori' are: Maxime Du Camp / Louis Blanc / Théophile Gautier / Leconte de Lisle / Jules Simon / Ernest Daudet / Louis Veuillot / F. Sarcey / De Pressensé / Le fils Dumas / Henri Martin / Paul de Saint-Victor / Mendès / Renan / Goncourt / Champfleury / Caro / About / La Sand / J. Claretie / Barbey d'Aurevilly / Bergerat / Taine / Littré / Bourget / De Vogüé. (p. 100).
17. A barricade at the rue Ramponneau was actually the last to be defended during the semaine sanglante; by a solitary fédéré. (See Lissagaray, *op. cit.*, p. 370.) All fighting was over by about one o'clock on the afternoon of Sunday 28 May.
18. The hurdy-gurdy was of course an established feature of nineteenth century street life. In Souvenirs d'un ours (p. 8), Descaves recalls the weekly visit of an organ-grinder to his street when he was a child. There is, as Anne Roche comments (see 'Le Roman et la Commune', in 1871. Jalons pour une histoire de la Commune, pp. 552-553; see p. 560) a touch of incongruity in this brief resurgence of '...l'"enfer" guilleret du Second Empire au milieu de l'apocalypse communaliste...'
19. Cf. Zola's reference in la Débâcle, Part III, chapter VIII: 'Au Père-Lachaise, bombardé depuis quatre jours, emporté enfin tombe par terre, on (...) jeta cent quarante-huit (misérables) contre un mur, dont le plâtre ruissela de grandes larmes rouges...'
20. In 'Flingot', the savagery of the massacres is conveyed through the execution of a young boy; and the reaction to this tragedy of his guardian, père Thiébault. Seized with apoplectic fury, storming and ranting at the laughing soldiers responsible, 'Ce vieillard qui n'avait, au fond, aucune inclination pour la Commune, semblait devenu tout à coup et devant l'horreur des représailles, le plus furieux des insurgés. Il faisait acte de succession' (see Lucien Descaves, Flingot, Paris, A. Romagnol, n.d. [but 1907], pp. 35-36). A further implicit denunciation of Versailles mercilessness is evident in the closing lines of the story: 'Deux hommes, alors, empoignèrent le père Thiébault qui se débattait, et finirent par l'entraîner. On ne l'a jamais revu.'

The title of the play la Saignée (which does not refer exclusively to the blood bath of the semaine sanglante) nonetheless speaks for itself; as does the remark at one point by one of the Versailles characters as a champagne cork pops:

' - *Et souhaitons, mes enfants, que cette détonation-là soit suivie de beaucoup d'autres!*' (see Lucien Descaves et Nozière, la Saignée (1870-1871), Paris, l'Illustration, 1913, p. 27). On his return from New Caledonia in 1880, the former Communard Mulard speaks to a crowd gathered to wish him well: '*Je ne demande plus maintenant qu'à vivre assez longtemps pour voir réhabiliter ceux qu'on a massacrés, déportés, et liés et jetés en prison il y a neuf ans!*' (ibid, p. 35).

Cf. references to Adolphe Thiers in the preface to Gaston Gille's Jules Vallès 1832-1885. Ses Révoltes, sa maîtrise, son prestige (Paris, Jouve & Cie., 1941), i: '*...l'hôtel particulier dit mausolée, érigé à la mémoire sanglante d'Adolphe Thiers*'; and in Souvenirs d'un ours, p. 73: '*...le petit homme rouge de la Semaine sanglante...*' Descaves' own recollections of the semaine sanglante were few, as is clear from Souvenirs d'un ours, pp. 37-38.

21. La Saignée, p. 25.

22. Ibid., p. 25. It is to be noted that la Saignée (performed in 1913, the year of Philémon's publication) presents a number of parallels with the latter novel. Old Mulard too is an artisan; a cabinet-maker '*...qui répare les meubles de style dans la perfection*' p. 27). He is, like Colomès, scrupulously honest, devoted to Paris, and has the same strait-laced views on questions of morality (even turning his daughter Antonine out of doors when she becomes pregnant by Charles Bécherel). For Mulard's return from New Caledonia in 1880, a wall in Antonine's home is covered with photographs and portraits of former Communards taken from albums and newspapers. As one character murmurs, looking at the display: '*Et puis tous ceux qui en étaient... Delescluze... Varlin... Vermorel... Duval... Flourens... Tony Moilin... Y en a-t-il! Y en a-t-il! Toute la famille à Mulard, quoi!*' (p. 33). This idea of a 'Communard family' is of course brought out in Philémon: on p. 98, as indicated, and in an early description (p. 11) of the interior and the furnishings of the Colomès home: '*...tout cela avait cet air de famille que les objets contractent à la longue dans notre intimité. Et cette impression était encore fortifiée par les nombreuses photographies tout uniment épinglées au mur, de chaque côté d'un corps de bibliothèque...*'

La Saignée concludes with a song by old père Gachette. The account is not unreminiscent of certain passages in Philémon: '*Electrisé, le vieillard déclame, plutôt qu'il ne chante, le chant de sa jeunesse et de son idéal révolutionnaire, 'le Chant du Départ'. Il en attaque le premier couplet d'une voix chevrotante, qui se raffermiit à chaque vers, si bien qu'il scande avec une chaleur communicative les deux derniers:*

Le peuple souverain s'avance...

Tyrans, descendez au cercueil!

La foule fait chorus au refrain, tandis que le rideau tombe.'
(p. 35)

23. See l'Insurgé, chapter XXXII.
24. Ibid., chapter XXXIII: '*Un classique se lamente et se désole. - Vous avez joué le jeu de l'adversaire; Thiers ne demandait que ça et va s'en lécher les babines, la petite hyène!... Flotte ne vous a donc point conté la scène de Versailles? L'autre n'a pas rendu Blanqui parce qu'il pressentait ce dénouement, parce qu'il l'espérait, parce qu'il avait miaulé à la mort... il lui fallait ce stock de dirigeants, ces cadavres de pieux, ces corps de martyrs pour en caler son fauteuil de Président...*' Vallès does not condemn entirely, however, the shooting of the Archbishop ('*L'idée le voulait, ils pensaient qu'il fallait l'Exemple*'). For further reference on Descaves' part to the hostage question, see Souvenirs d'un ours, pp. 178-179.
25. Cf. Edmond Lepelletier, Histoire de la Commune de 1871, Paris, Mercure de France, 1911-1913 (3 vols.): Vol. II, p. 86; Vol. III, p. 331. Varlin's torments on the Butte Montmartre are likened to Christ's ascent of Calvary.

Cluseret is said to have described Varlin as the 'Christ of the working class' (see Boris Nicolaievsky & Otto Maenchen-Helfen, Karl Marx: Man and Fighter, edition published by Pelican Books, 1976, p. 343). Cf. Cluseret/Rossel, 1871. La Commune et la question militaire, Paris, 10/18, 1971, p. 287: '*...le vrai prolétaire, sans épithète ni phrases, celui que représentait si noblement Varlin...*'; p. 291: '*...le prolétaire honnête et dévoué, dont Varlin fut la personnification la plus pure, irréprochable, honnête et dévoué jusqu'à la mort...*'

Ccf. Lissagaray, op. cit., p. 377: '*Le Mont des Martyrs n'en a pas de plus glorieux. Qu'il soit, lui aussi, enseveli dans le grand cœur de la classe ouvrière. (...) Ce mort-là est tout aux ouvriers.*' In his article 'Poésies et chansons populaires de la Commune' (published in Images of the Commune/Images de la Commune, edited by James A. Leith, Montreal/London, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978, pp. 47-67) Pierre Aubéry refers to '*...Varlin dont le supplice et l'agonie ont fait un des plus purs martyrs de la classe ouvrière*' (p. 61).

The representation of Varlin in anti-Communard literature was, as one might expect, rather less positive. Paul Delion in les Membres de la Commune et du Comité central (Paris, Lemerre, 1871) describes him as '*(un) intrigant infatigable*' (p. 229), '*...un mauvais ouvrier relieur, aussi intelligent que paresseux, aussi ambitieux que remuant*' (p. 224). Cf. Jules Clère, les Hommes de la Commune, Paris, E. Dentu, 1871, p. 177: '*Sous des dehors modestes et presque timides, Varlin cache une excessive ambition...*'

A degree of similarity might be noted between Etienne Lantier (who sees himself, as he addresses the miners at the

Plan-des-Dames, as ...l'apôtre apportant la vérité') (Germinal, Part 4, chapter VII) and Eugène Varlin as represented by Maxime Du Camp in les Convulsions de Paris. Just as Etienne's lapidation by the miners is for him an 'awakening' to the fickleness and ingratitude of the mob whose hero he had been (Part 7, chapter 1), Varlin is said by Du Camp to be suddenly aware, as he is manhandled by the crowd on the butte Montmartre on Sunday 28 May, of his own woefully deficient understanding of the popular soul: '...il comprenait trop tard, par une sorte d'illumination suprême, en voyant comme (la foule) le malmenait, lui son bienfaiteur et son apôtre, qu'en la conviant, sans éducation préalable, à l'exercice de droits nouveaux, il n'avait fait qu'ouvrir un champ plus vaste aux convoitises brutales qu'aucun scrupule n'atténue. (...) Il comprit la lâcheté des foules qui haïssent naturellement les vaincus (...); il se sentit humilié jusque dans les derniers replis de son âme par les traitements que ses amis, - ses frères, - lui infligeaient. (...) Le parti qui réclame aujourd'hui Varlin comme l'un de ses martyrs, comme l'un de ses héros, peut être certain que ce malheureux l'a maudit avant de périr' (les Convulsions de Paris, Vol. III, Paris, Hachette, 1879, pp. 402-403: My underlining). Varlin's beliefs are said by Du Camp to have been 'chimères', 'rêves' (op. cit., pp. 400, 402).

Parallels with Christ's martyrdom are to be found of course in writing by Léon Cladel relating to the Commune (the title of his novel I.N.R.I. is almost self-explanatory). In total ignorance of political matters at the outset ('...je n'ai jamais eu, je n'ai pas d'opinion politique') (I.N.R.I., Paris, Librairie Valois, 1931, p. 23), Jacques Râtâs will by the end of the novel have attained the status of Christ-like martyr for the revolutionary cause, tortured, humiliated, crucified by representatives of the forces of tradition. Of the Commune itself Charles Delescluze will say in I.N.R.I.: '- Elle mourra, mais pour ressusciter un jour et ne plus périr dès lors...' (p. 242). In 'Revanche' (les Va-nu-pieds) Léone, who has crossed a battle-torn, defeated city to join her lover Çardoc in the Père-Lachaise, anticipates Paris's eventual 'résurrection': 'On a fait à Paris de belles funérailles. Il dort, Majesté, sur un lit de pourpre. Un jour, il se ranimera, ce mort, il ressuscitera. Les pierres alors se lèveront toutes seules et parleront' (les-Va-nu-pieds, Paris, Alphonse Lemerre, 1884, p. 377).

A copy of les Va-nu-pieds in my possession bears the handwritten inscription: 'A mon vieux camarade A. Daudet et à la sienne. L. A. Cladel, 2 Novembre 83'. It is amusing to speculate how Alphonse Daudet (author of 'la Bataille du Père-Lachaise') would have viewed Cladel's evocation of the insurgents' 'last stand' in 'Revanche'.

Zola (who does not of course view the Commune in the same light as Cladel) likens France to a nation crucified in la Débâcle (see Chapter 3 of this study, note 30). The image of the People

- crucified recurs in Victor Hugo's production (in Paris (1867); in an address to the National Assembly on 1 March 1871 ('*Paris, à l'heure qu'il est, est cloué sur sa croix et saigne aux quatre membres*'); in 'Viro major' (dedicated to Louise Michel)).
26. See Philémon vieux de la vieille, p. 286, n. 1.
 27. While Descaves is told in Geneva that Colomès cannot abide journalists, this cannot always have been the case. Henri Brissac, who was a writer and a journalist, is described by the old man at one point (p. 38) as a friend.
 28. Although not actually in Paris during the 'seventy-two days' Marius Cazaban (of François Coppée's Une Idylle pendant le siège) might be considered a caricature of the bourgeois 'pseudo-Communard' reviled by Colomès.
 29. Theodore Zeldin, France 1848-1945: Politics and Anger, Oxford University Press, 1979, p. 94.
 30. J.-P. Azéma/M. Winock, les Communards, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1964, p. 85. Cf. Philémon vieux de la vieille, p. 165: '*Notre évangéliste à nous, Proudhon...*'
 31. Theodore Zeldin, op. cit., p. 101.
 32. See Maxime Vuillaume, op. cit., p. 313.
 33. Ibid., p. 313; cf. Zeldin, p. 101.
 34. See Chabrol's preface to les Poètes de la Commune (présentés par Maurice Choury), Paris, Seghers, 1970, pp. 10-11.
 35. The extract has been taken from la Chronique (30 March 1876). See La Commune de 1871 (published under the direction of Jean Bruhat, Jean Dautry, Emile Tersen), Paris, Editions sociales, 1970, p. 348.
 36. See F. F. Ridley, Revolutionary Syndicalism in France. The Direct Action of its Time, Cambridge University Press, 1970: pp. 25-32 ('Proudhon and mutual aid').
 37. See Theodore Zeldin, op. cit., p. 191.
 38. See John and Muriel Lough, An Introduction to Nineteenth Century France, London, Longman, 1978, p. 161.
 39. Cf. Charles Péguy, L'Argent (in Oeuvres en prose, 1909-1914, Paris, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, Gallimard, 1961: pp. 1103-1104): '*Le croira-t-on, nous avons été nourris dans un peuple gai. Dans ce temps-là un chantier était un lieu de la terre où des hommes étaient heureux. (...) De mon temps tout*

le monde chantait. (Excepté moi, mais j'étais déjà indigne d'être de ce temps-là.) Dans la plupart des corps de métier on chantait. (...) (Les ouvriers) se levaient le matin, et à quelle heure, et ils chantaient à l'idée qu'ils partaient travailler. A onze heures ils chantaient en allant à la soupe...'

Cf. Pierre Aubéry, op. cit., pp. 50-53; also Georges Coulonges, La Commune en chantant..., Paris, Editeurs français réunis, 1970: pp. 12-13.

40. In their impression, upon arriving home, of having been abandoned, forgotten, the Colomès couple are reminiscent of another exile, Jacques Damour.
41. Jules Michelet, Journal, Tome 1 (1828-1848), Paris, Gallimard, 1959: entry for 26 August 1834 (p. 152). Cf. Jules Michelet, Le Peuple, Paris, Flammarion, 1974, p. 99. For a more recent appreciation of the role of the machine (but one echoing points made by Michelet and Descaves) see Robert Garric, Belleville, Paris, Bernard Grasset, 1929, pp. 184-188.
42. Anne Roche, 'Le Roman et la Commune', op. cit., p. 560.
43. See George D. Painter, Marcel Proust: a Biography, 2 vols., London, Chatto & Windus, 1959-1965: Vol. I, pp. 63, 329.
44. To be noted also, with respect to this, is the grumbling radotage to which Lapuchet subjects Mazoudier when the latter visits the Invalides. See la Colonne, pp. 136-137.
45. See Philémon vieux de la vieille, pp. 23, 202, 307, 349. As regards the original plan for the title of the book, see Léon Deffoux, op. cit., p. 64, n. 13; Gaston Gille, op. cit., p. 553, n. 6.
46. On the artisan's love of his work, see Péguy, l'Argent, op. cit., p. 1104: 'Travailler était (la) joie même (des ouvriers), et la racine profonde de leur être. Et la raison de leur être. Il y avait un honneur incroyable du travail, le plus beau de tous les honneurs, (...) le seul peut-être qui se tienne debout. (...) Nous avons connu un honneur du travail exactement le même que celui qui au moyen-âge régissait la main et le coeur. (...) Nous avons connu ce soin poussé jusqu'à la perfection, égal dans l'ensemble, égal dans le plus infime détail. Nous avons connu cette piété de l'ouvrage bien faite poussée, maintenue jusqu'à ses plus extrêmes exigences...'
- Cf. Robert Garric, op. cit., pp. 182-184. In particular, on p. 183: 'Le métier a sa dignité, son honneur; on a l'orgueil de sa maison, parce qu'on a l'orgueil de ce qu'on y façonne, le sentiment vif qu'on y met un peu de sa vie: quelque chose, mystérieux reflet de la personnalité humaine, passe de la main dans l'objet...'

47. See pp. 301-302: 'A Genève, tous ceux d'entre nous qui avaient un métier en vivaient: tailleurs, comme d'Agincourt père, Andignoux, Ots, Martineau; cordonniers comme Ledroit, Portalier, Charles Rouchy, Raymons, Gaillard, Guillemain, Michon, Dupoizat, Couturier, Leprêtre, Lafont, Chamarié, Copréaux, Guétat, Longueville, Etienne Faure, Hetzel, Vola; serruriers, comme Légalité, Tacussel, Porroche, Chataing; ébénistes ou menuisiers comme Redourtier et Lanthoine, de Marseille, Dissart, de Saint-Etienne, Tony Graillat, de Lyon, Coméras, Chaffault, Flamion, Warcher; peintres en bâtiment, comme Martelet, Alphonse Bazile, un vieillard, et le père Saignes, flanqué de ses concitoyens lyonnais Pochon, Tissot, Aréthus, Verdier, Benoît Velay, canuts ou tisseurs devenus manoeuvres ou commis, faute de mieux.
Nigault, Lauprêtre et Leblanc, du Creusot; Perrare, Schettel et Léonard Fournier, de Lyon, Dodille, étaient mécaniciens. Horlogers ou bijoutiers: Petite, Mathey, Joseph Amiel, Barbou, Guéry, Rebeyrolles, de Limoges, et Supplicity, du Creusot; chaudronniers-ferblantiers: Guittat, Gentil, Bonneviel, Lelièvre; potier, le brave père Lion, proscrit de 51 et de la Nièvre, comme son ami Gambon; typographes, Léopold Douce, Piéron, Joseph Roche; monteurs en bronze, Kuffner et Chalain; imprimeur Adolphe Delattre, blessé le 22 mai, sur les barricades; tapissiers Baudrand, Jules Favreaux et l'un des frères Thomachot (l'autre était menuisier); opticien, Poirier; graveur, Pitois; maçon, Pillard, de Marseille; armurier, Chomat; tourneurs, Destouches et Colonna; gazier, Dumartheray; charpentiers, Létang et Joseph Bérourd; tailleurs de pierre, Lafuit, Minot, Parisis, Jean Bosson; cuisiniers, Lacord et Helmer; voyageurs de commerce, Emmanuel Jeannin, Courgeon... Dangers fabriquait des porte-monnaie, Suet des parapluies, Tracol des articles de pêche, Bruyat, des balances et le père Massé des sommiers compensateurs, pour les conjoints d'un poids inégal! Enfin, le père Ostyn, Gouhier, Mortier, Chastel, et d'autres, de passage, travaillaient dans la fabrique de caractères en bois que les frères Charles et Victor Bonnet, avaient fondée rue Gutenberg.'
48. See Bernard Noël, Dictionnaire de la Commune, Paris, Flammarion, 1978 (2 vols.): Vol. I, p. 233.
49. See La Commune de 1871 (Jean Bruhat, Jean Dautry, Emile Tersen), p. 144. Billioray has in fact a distinctly receding hairline.
50. See la Saignée, p. 29. A Versaillais lieutenant is speaking to Mulard: ' - La guerre civile, c'est vous qui l'avez voulue, et devant l'ennemi. Mulard. - Oui, mais nous ne l'aurions jamais déclarée, si vous n'aviez pas déclaré la paix.' Ibid., p. 30, when Charles Bécherel is asked by the marquis d'Anthenay why he deserted from the regular army: ' - Pour voir si l'on capitule sous le drapeau rouge, comme sous le vôtre.' At the conclusion of the play, when Mulard is addressing his crowd of

well-wishers: 'Aux insurgés!... dont j'étais... on a reproché, comme un crime de lèse-patrie, leur transport au cerveau. L'avenir les jugera... sans oublier que ces mauvais patriotes ont tout de même fait entendre la première protestation contre une paix humiliante!' (p. 35).

51. See Souvenirs d'un ours, pp. 27, 36.
52. See Jacques Rougerie, Paris libre 1871, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1971, pp. 215-247. Cf. Rougerie, Procès des Communards, Paris, Julliard (Collection 'Archives') 1964, pp. 229-241.
53. Roger Magraw, France 1815-1914. The Bourgeois Century, London, Fontana, 1983, p. 204.
54. See Eugène Varlin, Pratique militante et écrits d'un ouvrier communard, (Présenté par Paule Lejeune), Paris, François Maspéro, 1977, p. 155.
55. See Alexandre Zévaès, Histoire de la Troisième République, Paris, Editions de la Nouvelle Revue Critique, 1938, p. 55; Jean Bruhat, 'La Commune et les origines de la III^e République', in Europe ('1875'), November/December 1975, pp. 6-14, see pp. 12-14.
56. See in Jules Vallès, Le Cri du Peuple (Paris, Editeurs français réunis, 1970), an article written for la Révolution française of Thursday 21 January 1879: pp. 185-190. Vallès is writing of a conversation between himself and Varlin on 27 May 1871: with them was an old man grief-stricken at the shooting by the Versaillais of his son and eight-year-old granddaughter:

' - Et c'est encore le peuple qui sera traité de scélérat. C'est nous qu'on appellera des bandits!
 - Oui, dit Varlin; oui, nous serons dépecés vivants. Morts, nous serons traînés dans la boue. On a tué les combattants, on tuera les prisonniers, on achèvera les blessés. Ceux qu'on épargnera, s'il en reste, iront pourrir au bagne. Oui, mais l'histoire finira par voir clair, et dira que nous avons sauvé la République.

(...)

C'est vrai pourtant! ce que Varlin me dit le 27 mai 1871. Si la France a gardé la République, si M. Thiers ne la laissa pas assassiner, c'est qu'il fallait promettre sa vie à nos grandes cités qu'effrayait, dégoûtait le massacre. Nul n'osera dire que je mens, pas même M. Gambetta, député de Belleville, de ce Belleville qui fut le dernier retranchement des vaincus, où il a continué à donner le mot d'ordre, après nous. Je voudrais que la barque qui porte ce César bourgeois passât dans les eaux de la déportation et du bagne en Calédonie. Les galériens, les déportés, sans pousser un cri, viendraient se ranger sur la rive, debout, tête nue, non pas pour saluer le maître, mais pour montrer les cicatrices; il y aurait tous les courages et toutes

les douleurs, les supplices sourds et les grandes blessures; il y aurait Brissac, il y aurait Roques, on pourrait amener ceux qui sont devenus fous. Ils ne diraient rien, mais, devant eux comme devant une rangée de squelettes sur une rive où il y eut un naufrage, on planterait un écriteau:

ICI SONT ENTERRES CEUX QUI SAUVERENT LA REPUBLIQUE!

57. See Jean-Marie Mayeur, La Vie politique sous la Troisième République, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1984, pp. 37-39.
58. Edgar Holt, The Tiger, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1976, p. 135. Cf. Theodore Zeldin, op. cit., p. 341.
59. See la Barricade, Paris, Plon-Nourrit, 1910; Préface, xxiv-xliv. Cf. Bourget's story 'le Père Theuriot' (la Dame qui a perdu son peintre, Paris, Plon-Nourrit, 1910). Having listened one evening during the early 1900's to the conversation of a group of socialites light-heartedly discussing syndicalist objectives, a sombre Amédée Morand recounts an experience during the semaine sanglante '(qui) m'a donné, à moi, pour la vie, l'horreur et la terreur des révolutions...'
60. Edgar Holt, op. cit., p. 133.
61. The aims of revolutionary syndicalism were outlined at the conference of the Confédération Générale du Travail held at Amiens in 1906:
- '...dans l'oeuvre revendicatrice quotidienne, le syndicalisme poursuit la coordination des efforts ouvriers, l'accroissement du mieux-être des travailleurs, par la réalisation d'améliorations immédiates, telles que la diminution des heures de travail, l'augmentation des salaires, etc. Mais cette besogne n'est qu'un côté de l'oeuvre du syndicalisme; il prépare l'émancipation intégrale qui ne peut se réaliser que par l'expropriation capitaliste; il préconise comme moyen d'action la grève générale, et il considère que le syndicat, aujourd'hui groupement de résistance, sera dans l'avenir le groupe de production et de répartition, base de réorganisation sociale.'*
- See Georges Lefranc, Le Syndicalisme en France (Collection 'Que sais-je?'), Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 1964, p. 34.
62. Georges Gurvitch, Proudhon, sa vie, son oeuvre, Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 1965, p. 68.
63. Roger Magraw, op. cit., p. 302.
64. Ibid., p. 303.
65. See Philémon vieux de la vieille, pp. 165-166: 'Chose singulière, ces vieux démocrates, internationalistes, pour la

plupart, se refusaient à reconnaître leur petit-fils dans ce nouvel organe du prolétariat; la Fédération des Bourses du travail, qui substituait le Syndicat au Comité électoral et l'antagonisme de classe à la lutte des partis. Ils affectaient de croire que le syndicalisme réduit la question sociale à un débat d'intérêts corporatifs, à une tempête dans une marmite.' Cf. p. 211.

66. Fernand Pelloutier (1868-1901) - described by Roger Magraw as 'syndicalism's visionary and martyr' (op. cit., p. 305) - was in fact a bourgeois.
67. See Georges Gurvitch, op. cit., pp. 66-68.
68. See Roger Magraw, op. cit., p. 303.
69. See Edgar Holt, op. cit., p. 134.
70. In Cladel's story 'Revanche', the combatants said to be preparing for their last stand in the Père-Lachaise on the morning of Sunday 28 May, are described as '*...religionnaires, sentant que l'heure était venue de périr pour la foi qu'ils avaient confessée les armes à la main...*' (op. cit., p. 366).
71. '*La création d'une oeuvre artisanale demande un effort physique, de l'intelligence et du coeur; elle exige de l'homme l'esprit de décision et le sens de la responsabilité. Elle aboutit à la naissance du chef-d'oeuvre par où l'artisan se hausse à la dignité d'artiste...*' From the Dictionnaire du Maréchal, Paris, S.P.E.S., 1942: quoted by Jean Plumyène, Pétain (Collection 'Le Temps qui court'), Paris; Editions du Seuil, 1964, p. 132. One of the figures in the Vichy Government, Henri Moysset, had been involved in editorship of Proudhon's collected works (see Robert O. Paxton, Vichy France. Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1972, p. 271).
72. See Anne Roche, 'Le Roman et la Commune', op. cit., p. 559, n. 3.
73. Ibid., p. 559.
74. Souvenirs d'un ours, p. 33.
75. For further information on personalities or developments during the exile period, see 1871. Jalons pour une histoire de la Commune, essays by Daisy E. Devreese, Marc Vuilleumier, Miklos Molnar, Jacques Rougerie; also Charles Rihs, La Commune de Paris 1871: sa structure et ses doctrines, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1973, passim.

76. For an account of Varlin's role in setting up the Marmite during the closing years of the Second Empire, see Eugène Varlin, op. cit., pp. 33-37.
77. James Guillaume (1844-1916) was the author of an important four-volume history of the International (L'Internationale, 1905-1910). His rapports with Bakunin are discussed in Arthur P. Mendel's biography of the latter (Michael Bakunin, Roots of Apocalypse, New York, Praeger Publishers, 1981, passim). He was known also to Varlin; who wrote to him on 20 February 1871 concerning various members of the French International (see Eugène Varlin, op. cit., pp. 148-149). This is in fact one of the last letters Varlin is known to have written.
78. George Woodcock, Anarchism. A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements, New York, Meridian Books, 1962, pp. 168-169.
79. See Souvenirs d'un ours, pp. 34-35.
80. See Maxime Vuillaume, op. cit., pp. 250-252. Vuillaume's references to Courbet ('*Il (jette) dans le silence de la belle après-midi son large rire. Nous voyons émerger, à travers les feuilles, un vaste dos, autour duquel bouffe une chemise découverte sur un cou de taureau*') present some parallel with the terms used by Colomès. The old man - speaking, as we remember, to Phonsine - mentions that Courbet had from a distance imagined her to be an Englishwoman, '*...et riait comme un coffre de son erreur*' (PVV 242). Vuillaume had made the visit he is recounting in the company of the artist (and former secretary to Raoul Rigault) André Slom. The latter's presence is mentioned by Colomès (PVV 242-243): cf. Souvenirs d'un ours, p. 206.
81. The letter of 24 May 1903 from Gustave Drouchon refers (as mentioned in note 113) to Descaves' planned work on the exile period. It might be assumed then that preparations for the novel had begun in the opening years of the century. Having referred in Philémon vieux de la vieille to the giving of soup to the needy by various religious orders in the 14th arrondissement, Descaves adds in a footnote (p. 59 of the edition cited): '*Écrit en 1902, lorsque les Congrégations du quartier distribuaient encore des soupes.*'
82. Souvenirs d'un ours, p. 221 (see Chapter 4, of this study, note 42).
83. See Souvenirs d'un ours, p. 189.
84. Gaston Gille, op. cit., i.
85. See Appendix 3 of this study.

86. Ibid., pp. 549-556. Cf. H. Talvart/J. Place, Bibliographie des auteurs modernes de langue française, 1801-1927, Paris, Chronique des Lettres françaises, 1928-1933: Vol. IV, p. 190.
87. Gaston Gille, pp. 555-556.

CHAPTER SIX

JEAN CASSOU

The interest in the Paris Commune reflected in Jean Cassou's les Massacres de Paris (1935) was seemingly a logical adjunct of the author's increasing commitment to leftism during the 1930's. Following the major rightist demonstration of 6 February 1934, Cassou had presided over the first meeting of intellectuals protesting against the upsurge in fascism.(1) His strong endorsement of the Popular Front led in 1936 to his appointment by Jean Zay, Minister of Education, as principal delegate for Fine Arts.(2) Born near Bilbao, in the Spanish Basque country, in July 1897, Cassou (of Franco-Mexican and Spanish parentage) felt the deepest affinity with the nation he had left at the age of four months.(3) He was a keen observer of developments in Spain from 1931, his fervent sympathies during the period of civil war lying, not unexpectedly, with the Republican camp. Writing in Barcelona in early August 1936, he noted:

Les prédictions s'accomplissent: c'est en Espagne que, après la Russie, se déroulent les événements qui doivent changer la condition de l'homme...

La culture, le prolétariat, l'humanisme, c'est sur le sol espagnol qu'ils jouent en ce moment leur partie.(4)

The writing and publication of les Massacres de Paris was coincidental then with significant left-wing development in both France and Spain. It is hardly to be imagined that this evocation of Revolution Past would not have seemed to Cassou of a particular timeliness;(5) and a reading of the novel confirms that the Paris Commune had indeed been to the writer's idea an embryonic foreshadowing of momentous twentieth century events. Leading fictional characters in the book are aware that while the moment they are living will be reviled and misunderstood by both contemporary and future opinion,(6) it remains, for all its weaknesses, confusion and

incoherence, a crucial chapter in the story of humanity's déshérités. The selection of title for the novel in itself merits comment insofar as it seems to counterbalance that momentous contribution to anti-Communard mythology les Convulsions de Paris, by Maxime Du Camp.

Cassou's experiences during the Second World War were in accordance with the sympathies manifested by him during the previous decade. Displaced as assistant curator of the musée du Luxembourg once the Vichy Government was installed, he was active in the earliest Resistance groups, receiving a twelve-month prison sentence from the champions of 'Travail, Famille, Patrie' in 1942. Two years later, with the approach of Liberation, the Algiers Government appointed Cassou to the position of Commissioner for the Republic for the Toulouse region: his fulfilment of responsibilities in this post nearly cost him his life.(7) During Pétain's tenure as Chef de l'Etat français, les Massacres de Paris had been prohibited reading in France. The subject of the novel, and the fact that its author was persona non grata with Authority, seems sufficient explanation for this declared illegality: the constant recurrence however in the text of the words 'libre', 'liberté', might alone, to the minds of some, have made its place on French bookshelves of the time less than appropriate. A limited edition of les Massacres was in fact published in Rio de Janeiro in 1942, solely for distribution in the Americas.(8)

In his acquisition of documentation Cassou was seemingly no less conscientious than Lucien Descaves.(9) It is clear on a reading of the novel that good use has been made by its author of Lissagaray's Histoire de la Commune de 1871: of greater interest however is Cassou's evident consultation of various works appearing from the late 1890's, and constituting an undoubted boon to any would-be portrayer of the insurrectionary period. The use to which Cassou has put such material in his representations of leading figures of the Commune will be an important focus of concentration in this chapter. While attention will be given primarily to the portrayal of the ill-fated Louis Rossel, the characterisation in les Massacres of Louise Michel,

Jaroslaw Dombrowski, Raoul Rigault and Théophile Ferré requires some examination, as do the more fleeting depictions of such men as Eugène Vermersch, Félix Pyat, Delescluze and Eugène Varlin.

Some outline of the principal ideas and elements in les Massacres de Paris seems a prerequisite to detailed consideration of the figures of the Commune portrayed. The novel (written from the viewpoint of the enthusiastic, impractical, naturally gentle dreamer Théodore Quiche) is divided into three parts. In the first, Théodore narrates his experiences during the closing years of the Second Empire, first as a clerk in the employ of his uncle Joséphin, a wealthy, pragmatic varnish merchant; later as secretary to one monsieur Havelotte, deputy for the Nièvre. The opening thirty pages of the second part consist of a journal kept by the young man over the three-month period from 1 January to 28 March 1871. After this, he is relating from memory adventures and events up to the climactic moment in the Père-Lachaise when his beloved, Marie-Rose Siffrelin, is among those to be shot down before his eyes against the wall of the cemetery. In the eight pages of the third section, Quiche, now a prisoner on the île Nou, recounts his escape from the cemetery, his eventual capture, and the horrors endured by the Communard prisoners at the hands of the Versaillais.

Involvement in the Commune is seen to be for Théodore the culmination of his needs and aspirations as reflected in the first part of the novel. Certain attitudes mark him early as an eventual sympathiser with the insurrection, not least a decided inclination towards a state of things other than that represented by his staunchly conservative uncle, aunt and cousins. He feels liking and respect for old Siffrelin (a cabinet-maker in the faubourg Saint-Antoine who has fought at the barricades in 1834, 1848 and 1851), for the Alsatian student Becker and, to a lesser degree, for Flageot, a worker in his uncle's warehouse whose drunken, sacrilegious example is considered to have a pernicious influence on his workmates. Most importantly no doubt, there is his burgeoning love for Marie-Rose, '*filie de l'autre race*' (MP 247). The opposition of the conservative and revolutionary

worlds in the first part of the novel is further evidenced by conflicting perceptions of Auguste Blanqui, Hero for Siffrelin ('-Tant que celui-ci restera enfermé (...) nous ne pourrions pas nous sentir entièrement vivants!')(MP 37) as for Quiche, Bandit and Renegade for Joséphin and his family.⁽¹⁰⁾ Even in the early stages of his employment by Joséphin, Quiche looks forward vaguely to a time when he and kindred souls he has yet to meet will accomplish some as yet ill-conceived design, one that may prove imperfect and even abortive, but that will be remarkable nonetheless:

Ah! si nous sommes (...) plusieurs compagnons d'infortune, nous pouvons nous chercher à tâtons et nous entendre entre nous, mais je crois bien que nous n'entrerons jamais dans la Terre Promise. Et cependant, de notre infortune même et de notre incapacité ne pourrions-nous faire jaillir je ne sais quoi de très confus, d'agité et d'extraordinaire qui remplacerait tant bien que mal nos facultés absentes et, tout de même, nous obtiendrait une sorte de salut et de très réel bonheur? (MP 31)

This passage foreshadows the events to which the second part of les Massacres will be devoted in near entirety. The insurrectionary period as portrayed by Cassou is indeed a time of confusion, noise and frenetic agitation during which Théodore - in a manner not unreminiscent of Fabrice del Dongo at Waterloo - will be frequently bemused, bewildered, uncertain as to the nature of developments. It is a time characterised also by drama, pathos, intensity of experience and feeling; doomed early to defeat but assuming, in the principles upon which it is based, a universal significance. Not himself a leading participant in the Commune adventure - he is for a time a member of the Comité central, and is attached to the War Delegation for much of the insurrectionary period⁽¹¹⁾ - Quiche will have dealings during the seventy-two days with men and women not perhaps widely known today (Louis Rossel, Louise Michel, Jaroslaw Dombrowski, Eugène Varlin) but each of whom might be considered to have had a remarkable destiny. He will find himself involved in potentially crucial episodes of which, much of the time, he seems to understand little: he is the first to see Versaillais soldiers within the walls of Paris; and he will be

present during the semaine sanglante at a number of the poignant or lamentable happenings of the Commune's final days, not least the execution of hostages at the rue Haxo.

Seen from early in the novel to be a lonely, poetic soul possessed nonetheless of a marked zest for life, Théodore seems to aspire first and foremost to the maximal development of the vital forces within him. Any ability he may possess to inspire esteem, liking or love is essentially, as he reflects at one point before the Commune:

Afin de me sentir, ne serait-ce qu'un instant, considéré comme un être. Un être qui existe ou qui s'essaie à l'existence. Car ce que je crains toujours, c'est que l'on me chasse, que je disparaisse et que je ne sois plus là. (MP 115)

In the period preceding Franco-Prussian hostilities, the young man's relations with his cousins Clémence and Adélaïde, and an affair with the wife of the deputy Havelotte, seem inconclusive, half-hearted expressions of a need for self-fulfilment. An intense but undoubtedly platonic friendship with the young officer Maxime de Rieuse appears to offer Théodore the chance for enrichment through frequentation of a kindred spirit: Maxime, however, is killed at Froeschwiller three weeks after declaration of war. It will be then through his love for Marie-Rose Siffrelin (a love blossoming in the intensity and fervour of the Commune period, and in fact inseparable from it) that Théodore attains the liberation of the soul and of the senses for which he has wished throughout. Participation in revolution and adoration for Marie-Rose are seen to be complementary: the two experiences constitute for Théodore an expression of the vital forces of liberty and love, which stand, paradoxically, both in alliance with and in contrast to an ever-imminent death.

The spirit of the Commune as Cassou perceived it is reflected in his selection of a line from Rimbaud's 'Fêtes de la patience' ('*Et libre soit cette infortune*')(12) which stands as a prelude to the novel. Adhesion to the insurrection entails of course in the first instance

for Théodore a break with (and freedom from) the bien-pensant constraints of his milieu. The young man who when in the employ of his uncle Joséphin had yearned for liberation of some kind ('Ah! quand les hommes se donneront-ils congé? (...) N'y aura-t-il pas, un jour, je ne sais quand, des vacances, de libres vacances?') (MP 61) displays on advent of the Commune an ingenuous, almost schoolboy-like glee that is reflective, perhaps, of his personality:

...Paris va être libre, et moi, rien ne m'attache, rien ne me retient. (...) Ma vraie jeunesse commence, ma libre jeunesse, et j'ai le droit de crier tout ce que je pense à la face du monde entier! (MP 187-188)

For Cassou (as for Rimbaud) the insurrection is a blow struck for both collective and individual emancipation. The Communards, furthermore, are living one of those rare moments in history when a minority, acting in defiance of more powerful forces, might be felt to be waging a struggle for principle. Courage in the face of what are soon enormous odds is arguably one of the higher manifestations of liberty: the outcome of such a combat, however, is in this case hardly to be doubted. As Marie-Rose comments when Théodore waxes eloquent on the New Order soon to prevail:

Il ne suffira pas de laisser Paris vivre librement: il faudra que, partout ailleurs, aussi, la vie soit libre. (MP 192)

In the first part of the book, the German Jew Linden (a member of the Siffrelin-Becker coterie) had drawn attention to the anomaly of the nineteenth century French social scene whereby barbaric measures could be justified in the name of Order and Morality ('Quand vous faites massacrer cent mille hommes, vous trouvez moyen de prouver que c'est là une question de civilisation') (MP 103). The hopes and aspirations of the Communard struggle acquire a heightened grandeur and pathos when the concluding pages of the novel are read. The indiscriminate slaughter by the 'regular' army, the savagery of the crowds at Versailles, the brutal cynicism of General de Galliffet sneering at his weeping female

prisoners,(13) the horrendous conditions endured by the prisoners at Satory, and en route to the pontoons: in all of these ways the Defenders of Civilisation reduce themselves, rather than their victims, to animal level. Suffering of this type can only be seen though as a shattering emergence from the dreams Théodore and others have allowed themselves to entertain: self-discovery and self-awareness, however valuable and real, have resulted in a total denial to young Quiche and his fellow Communards of any identity or worth as human creatures.(14) On the sun-parched île Nou where he endures all the privation of a convict, the natural beauties of his environment allow him not to totally discount the possibility of a new beginning. In France, on the other hand, all ground for optimism or hope seems now irrevocably destroyed:

Je ne veux plus jamais retourner au pays d'où je viens. Car celui-ci est si étrange et si lointain que je peux en attendre une surprise merveilleuse, et c'est cela seulement qui me permet de vivre un tout petit peu et comme s'il y avait une raison de vivre. Car dans le pays d'où je viens, tout le monde est mort. Mais celui-ci, il est si étrange et si lointain: je peux espérer encore y retrouver Marie-Rose. (MP 318)

However profoundly negative in one sense, the concluding pages of the novel are implicitly an affirmation of the humanist credo dear to Cassou. We are aware, moreover, as Cassou was, that the flame of justice, freedom and love was not extinguished by the massacres within Paris.

Cassou can of course portray directly in les Massacres de Paris only those events in which Quiche himself will be involved. The opening chapter of the second half of the novel consists, as mentioned earlier, of a journal kept by the young man from 1 January 1871 until the formal proclamation of the Commune on 28 March. Accounts are provided of the beginning of the bombardment of Paris on 5 January; the defeat of French troops at Buzenval on the 19th; the demonstration outside the Hôtel de Ville on 22 January, following which Siffrelin and Becker will be arrested; the entry into Paris of Prussian troops on 1

March, and a meeting at the Tivoli-Vauxhall two days later to approve statutes for the National Guard Federation. Théodore will attend this meeting as a delegate for his battalion and is elected there to a temporary executive commission having among its members (in addition to himself and Becker) Eugène Varlin and Jacques Durand.⁽¹⁵⁾ In his evocation of the meeting (MP 164-166) Cassou not unskilfully conveys requisite background information through the speeches made, and through the remarks either of those presiding over the gathering, or shouted from the floor. The measures taken against Paris by the National Assembly are referred to, and the insults to which Garibaldi and Victor Hugo (both elected deputies for Paris) had been subjected at Bordeaux. A fortnight later, Quiche writes of his experience on 18 March, and then of the events of the 19th and 22nd (the conferment of the Paris mayors and deputies with the Comité central, and the demonstration by the 'Friends of Order').

Belonging as he does to the Comité central, Théodore will spend a part of the morning of 18 March at the office in the rue Basfroi, and will be in due course of the number to occupy the Hôtel de Ville. Confused and inconclusive reports as to developments are received at the rue Basfroi; and Becker, arriving at one point from the 18th arrondissement, is able to supply members of the committee with a succinct account both of the failure of Vinoy's attempt to gain possession of the cannons on the butte Montmartre, and of the rallying of the lignards on the boulevard Ornano (MP 168).

Insubstantial appearances are made in these pages by Paul Brunel, Charles Lullier, Edouard Moreau... and Amédée-Joseph Langlois, whose appointment by Thiers to command the National Guard in place of Louis d'Aurelle de Paladines would be rejected by the Comité central. Following Becker's report that the butte has been evacuated by the regular troops and that the cannons are firmly in the possession of the people, '*un homme tout ébouriffé*' (Lullier, in fact) is carried in shoulder-high and declared a general then and there. Quiche will be of the group helping Brunel in construction of a barricade outside the

Hôtel de Ville; and when the Comité central has assumed possession of the building, he is among those to hear the view of Edouard Moreau '*...un commissionnaire en marchandises (...) dont j'avais souvent admiré la facilité de parole...*' (MP 170) that the body should organise the municipal elections long desired by the Parisians, and then withdraw from power.

This reference to Moreau (unremarkable enough in itself) provides nonetheless indication of a major source of information in these pages. Lissagaray, recounting the events of 18 March in his Histoire de la Commune, had described Moreau as '*...un inconnu tout à fait, ce petit commissionnaire en marchandises qui fut si souvent la pensée et le verbe éloquent du Comité.*' (16) Cassou does not make the mistake of adhering rigidly to Lissagaray's day-by-day account of developments. He will, when the occasion seems to present itself, make free with incidents or snatches of dialogue still culled from the Histoire, but belonging to episodes other than the one with which he is immediately concerned. Thus the exchange between members of the Comité central and Langlois (who will refuse to recognise the body, let alone any possible entitlement it might have to organise the municipal elections) is based upon the paragraph supplied by Lissagaray relating to the discussion; and also upon elements included in the account of the Comité central's deliberations during the afternoon of 19 March. The sketching of character, elements of dramatic tension, the touches that impart life to a scene, can for the most part be credited to Cassou himself. Langlois makes a solemn entrance, runs a nervous hand through his long hair (in this trivial particular the novelist is not of course citing Lissagaray) and states his mission ('*Vous me connaissez. Mon nom signifie concorde. Je suis prêt à travailler avec vous pour donner à Paris ses légitimes libertés et consolider la République*') (MP 171). He is greeted (Cassou tells us) by derisive laughter. The lines just quoted occur in substance in Lissagaray's account, as does the answer - attributed by Cassou to Moreau, who is said to give it in apparent unease - that the National Guard intended to appoint its own leaders. (17) The conditions imposed by Becker in les Massacres ('*Nous*

voulons bien de vous à notre tête, mais alors vous nous laissez faire les élections et vous reconnaissez le Comité central') (MP 172) are ascribed by Lissagaray to the Committee as a whole: they provoke in Cassou's text a burst of apoplectic fury on the newly appointed general's part ('- C'est de la folie! hurla Langlois, tout rouge') (MP 172).

The subsequent altercation between Langlois and members of the Committee is based upon excerpts from the fourth chapter of Lissagaray's history. This chapter centres on the body's preparations for the municipal elections and its meeting with the deputies and mayors of Paris. Langlois' accusations and sneering innuendoes:

- Oh! fit-il, pour ce qui est des crimes, vous en avez d'autres sur la conscience... Mes collègues Clément Thomas et Lecomte, qui ont été assassinés ce matin...

(...)

- Vous êtes des insurgés! Pour le compte de qui travaillez-vous? Des Bonapartistes? Des Prussiens? (MP 172)

have been manifestly inspired by the report appearing in the Journal officiel on 19 March and supplied by Lissagaray.(18) It may however be noted that in the reference to the shootings that morning of Clément Thomas and Lecomte, Cassou is repeating an error made (somewhat surprisingly) by Valles in l'Insurgé.(19) Langlois is in fact speaking in the small hours of the morning of 19 March, although he can be referring only to the events of the 18th. The denials and retorts of members of the Committee have been based by Cassou upon Lissagaray's account (again in his fourth chapter) of the body's deliberations concerning the two generals' executions. Two passages (taken in the first instance from les Massacres de Paris, in the second from the Histoire de la Commune) are supplied below by way of illustration:

- Nous désavouons cet assassinat!

- Assassinat! Qui parle d'assassinat?

- Nous ne désavouons rien! cria Brunel. Nous ne désavouons pas la colère du peuple. Mais le Comité dégage sa responsabilité.

- Nous étions rue Basfroi, derrière la Bastille...

- Laissez parler Rousseau!

- Il est faux, cria l'interpellé, il est ignoble de dire que les exécutions se sont commises sous nos yeux. Mais nous acceptons de partager la responsabilité des exécuteurs. Il ne faut pas essayer de nous séparer du peuple. Nous sommes et restons avec lui!
(MP 172)

La séance a recommencé. Babick demande que le Comité proteste contre les exécutions de Clément Thomas et de Lecomte auxquelles il est complètement étranger. "Il importe, dit-il, que le Comité dégage sa responsabilité." On lui répond: "Prenez garde de désavouer le peuple ou craignez qu'il ne vous désavoue à son tour." - Rousseau: Le Journal officiel déclare que les exécutions se sont faites sous nos yeux. Nous devons arrêter ces calomnies. Le peuple et la bourgeoisie se sont donné la main dans cette Révolution. Il faut que cette union persiste. Vous avez besoin que tout le monde prenne part au scrutin." - "Eh bien, abandonnez le peuple pour conserver la bourgeoisie; le peuple se retirera et vous verrez si c'est avec des bourgeois qu'on fait les révolutions."(20) (My underlining)

The rage displayed by Langlois in his discussion with the Comité central is not simply an attempt on Cassou's part to convey the mood of the situation as he imagines it to have been. Lissagaray refers to the ire of the Assembly's appointee subsequent to his humiliation at the Hôtel de Ville ('...furieux de son généralat manqué, (il) aboyait aux "assassins"').(21)

In Quiche's diary account of the Comité central's meeting with the mayors and deputies on 19 March, a description is included of Jean-Baptiste Millière. The latter - soon to lend his support to the Commune - is at this point in a role of conciliator:

...je me rappelle surtout la face de Millière, ses yeux de chien triste, sa moustache tombante, et sa redingote bleue, serrée jusqu'au menton. Il était près de moi et parlait avec un air de douceur et d'amertume. A tout ce que nous disions il répondait:

- Prenez garde...

Il hochait la tête:

(...) un coup d'état, juin 48, c'est à cela que vous marchez... Je suis un vieux révolutionnaire, vous le savez bien. Mais je

vous avertis: ce n'est pas encore l'heure de la révolution sociale. (MP 179)

Again, a passage from Lissagaray has provided the embryo of this description, and the words of warning are almost exactly those recorded in the Histoire de la Commune.(22) Addition of certain details ('*ses yeux de chien triste, sa moustache tombante*') may have been facilitated by a photograph of Millière for which Cassou's description seems particularly apt. Becker's assertion that the Comité central has been entrusted by the National Guard with the task of preserving the Republic and Liberty ('*Nous connaissons ces gens de l'Assemblée: tout cela, c'est du Louis-Philippe, c'est du Bonaparte. Nous n'en voulons plus*')(MP 179) reproduces, albeit with markedly different phrasing, the essence of the message attributed by Lissagaray to an unnamed member of the Committee.(23) In the outlining by Becker and fellow members of some of the Committee's objectives, Cassou's consultation of the historian is further evident.(24)

Three days later, Théodore and Becker will watch the demonstration of the 'Friends of Order' from a balcony at the Ministry of Justice (MP 180-184); and on 28 March the young man is present for the proclamation of the Commune at the Hôtel de Ville. The '*nouveaux maîtres de Paris*' (MP 188), many of whom will soon be known personally to Théodore, survey from the dais the gala-like spectacle of jubilant crowds, red flags, waving banners, and bayonets glinting in the sunlight:

(Il y avait) Félix Pyat, la chevelure majestueuse, l'oeil superbe; Jourde et son honnête barbe noire partagée en deux; Vallès les sourcils froncés, le nez court et farouche; Flourens, blond et martial; Delescluze, blanc, la poitrine creuse, ses larges narines aspirant l'air avec avidité et sa bouche étirée et contenue (...). Il y avait aussi le papa Beslay, cravaté jusqu'au menton et portant haut son beau visage de grand bourgeois racé; Raoul Rigault, solennel et implacable, et, dans le soleil, l'étrange miroitement du lorgnon de Ferré, et ce regard insistant, bien fixé au-dessus du nez busqué, dans une face tout en barbe et en cheveux. On avait laissé un fauteuil vide: c'était la place de Blanqui. (MP 188-189)

To the blare of bugles and the crash of drums, the Commune's troops, led by Brunel, march before Paris's newly elected leaders. Thus is formally ushered in (amidst the echoes of cannon thunder, frenetic cheering and the strains of the Marseillaise) a period of paradox, contradiction and high drama, during which, much of the time, the participants in the adventure seem to understand less than perfectly the realities of their situation. While Théodore (who after 28 March has ceased to keep a diary) will sometimes be confused or uncertain in his subsequent account as to dates or the sequence of events, he recalls months later the acuity of sensation resulting from day-to-day experience during the Commune:

On ne se demandait plus rien, on ne s'interrogeait sur aucun principe, on était tout entier livré à la tragédie et aux remous du jour actuel. Seulement, au bout de chacun de ces jours il semblait qu'une aurore prodigieuse allait se lever sans cause et rien que parce que ce jour-là avait été sanglant et formidable: une aurore qui, soudain, embraserait l'univers. (...) Nous étions séparés du reste du monde, et cependant tout le sort du monde se jouait avec nous. Et plus nous nous sentions abandonnés, plus nous nous enfoncions dans notre ardeur à combattre et à espérer. Nous sentions la victoire d'autant plus proche qu'elle devenait plus impossible.

Ah! comme nous vivions! Quel sérieux dans nos actes! Quelle folie de vitesse, quel déploiement d'énergie dans toute notre machine administrative et guerrière! Quelle cordialité brutale et dramatique dans les rapports des hommes entre eux, les ordres, les reproches, les invectives, les propos! Et quelle large ivresse dans nos détentees... (MP 193)

The paradox of the Commune finds some illustration within the limits of Quiche's personal experience. Notwithstanding the fact that his life during the seventy-two days is marked often by a keenness of emotion he has experienced seldom hitherto, he will have much of the time also an impression of dream-like detachment, of not really living the events in which he is enmeshed, (25) of being a spectator at a play. The technique followed by Quiche/Cassou in the second part of les Massacres is not unreminiscent of that Flaubert had used (on a more limited scale) in the pages relating to February/June 1848 in l'Education sentimentale. Inclusion of the salient detail, the

fleeting appearance of anonymous men and women reacting to circumstances or actively engaged in the struggle at hand, creates an impression of collective human involvement, of beings now lost in the immensity of time but who, for a brief, dramatic interlude, were caught up in an adventure holding more than the usual potential for tragedy and heroic finality.(26) To Quiche, moments of real tension or horror can at times seem almost theatrical:(27) Frédéric Moreau, (not, it is true, a direct participant in the events of 1848) has a not dissimilar reaction when he ventures forth in Paris on 23 February.(28)

Quiche will be present in early May(29) at a clandestine meeting during which overthrow of the Commune and installation of a dictatorship under Louis Rossel is under discussion. Such an eventuality was indeed considered in the course of the insurrectionary period. Although details of the scheme or schemes remain even today hedged in uncertainty. Cassou - whose portrayal of Rossel is set within the context of this rather nebulous conspiracy - was able therefore to allow himself some degree of imaginative licence without serious risk, on this count at least, of incurring subsequent charges of distortion or misrepresentation. It is even suggested in les Massacres that the fictional Becker - who will remind Quiche of the advice Garibaldi had offered the Commune after 18 March ('...un seul honnête homme doit être chargé du poste suprême, avec de pleins pouvoirs')(30) - has engineered the plot, or is at the very least one of those to have done so.(31) Accorded a major role also in the conspiracy is another fictional character by the name of Péchin, chief of one of the Commune's battalions and revealed in due course to be an agent for Versailles. It is never clear to the reader (nor can Cassou have wished it to be) how far eventual failure of the coup should be attributed to the intrigues of Péchin: the entire episode provides supreme illustration of the kind of uncertainty and disorder shown by Cassou to be typical of the seventy-two day period. Cassou's use, for the purposes of his novel, of the inconclusive or mysterious element has of course more than a little in common with the method followed by Lucien Descaves in composition of la Colonne.

As mentioned already, Cassou was able to draw upon a considerable fund of literature published thirty to forty years earlier by actual participants in the Commune. La Commune, by Louise Michel, had appeared in 1898; Gaston Da Costa's la Commune vécue was published in 1903-1905; the Cahiers rouges of Maxime Vuillaume appeared in the Cahiers de la Quinzaine between 1908 and 1914. Of unquestionable value to Cassou for his portrayal of Louis Rossel were the Mémoires et Correspondance of the former War Delegate, compiled by the sister of the young man and published in 1908. In the three last-mentioned texts and elsewhere, reference is made to various plans for establishment of a dictatorship.(32) It seems almost certain that Cassou also drew some of his information for les Massacres from la Commune by Pierre Dominique, published in 1930 and written, as Cassou's own text would be, with the benefit of a not insubstantial amount of authoritative literature relating to the insurrectionary period.

The conspirators of les Massacres will gather initially on this evening in early May at the flat of Eugène Vermersch, editor of le Père Duchêne. This meeting place in the rue de Seine was perhaps suggested to Cassou by his reading of Vuillaume, who made the point (taken up by the later writer) that Vermersch's flat had been the former abode of Charles Baudelaire.(33) Vuillaume (one of Vermersch's collaborators for le Père Duchêne) had written furthermore of a sudden outburst on the part of his colleague on one occasion in early May following a conversation with Rossel, and of the plans hatched by the War Delegate and Vermersch for overthrow of the Commune and establishment of another Comité de salut public:

*Tout à coup (...) Vermersch frappe sur la table:
- Tout cela n'est rien... J'ai vu Rossel tout à l'heure. Nous
allons marcher... Il faut foutre la Commune par les fenêtres...
Ces gens-là ne sont bons à rien... Nous nous partagerons la
dictature, Rossel, Rigault, Eudes, Dombrowski, nous... Le Père
Duchêne est dans l'affaire... Et nous nous installerons aux
Tuileries. Oui, aux Tuileries... Au Pavillon de Flore... Comme
le Comité de Salut public... l'ancien...(34)*

It is useful, perhaps, to provide a rapid synopsis of the movements apparently afoot during the Commune period to install a firm, authoritarian leadership (judged imperative by some in view of Paris's desperate plight) in place of the ceaseless, inconclusive discussion and argument characterising meetings of the Communal Council. The catastrophic military situation of the Commune after the sortie of 2-3 April led to ideas for establishment of a Comité de salut public on the model of that of 1793. This was set up on 1 May; but (in the view of some) it remained insufficient. If the revolution were to survive, it was felt, a capable army officer with definite leadership qualities must impose his will, marshal the Commune's disparate forces and through one means or another set to vanquishment of Versailles. The idea of entrusting supreme command to Rossel had apparently been entertained from the time of his entry into the War Ministry in early April: sometimes cryptic references by the young man himself in an account of his role during the Commune testify to various approaches made to him in the course of the month.(35) It seems highly probable that Rossel, on assuming leadership of the War Delegation, was planning with the aid of his friend Charles Gérardin,(36) the two Poles Dombrowski and Wroblewski, and the writers for le Père Duchêne to set up a dictatorship with a view to saving the revolution. The Blanquist Raoul Rigault (leader of the Comité de sûreté générale until 24 April, and the Public Prosecutor for the Commune) is said by Gaston Da Costa to have been informed of the scheme, and - while clearly not opposed to the idea of a dictatorship per se - to have advocated awaiting Blanqui's release by Thiers.(37) A plan by Rossel to assemble the battalions of the National Guard on the place de la Concorde might well have been made with the idea of then marching on the Hôtel de Ville. Le Père Duchêne - considered by Rossel to be a formidable ally because of its readership figure of sixty thousand - was to serve to allay public apprehension following the seizure of power.(38)

The evocative physical descriptions of Rossel provided in les Massacres are of a sort found in the writings of Vuillaume and Isabella Rossel herself.(39) They might, indeed, have been based on photographs

of the young man taken about 1871, one of which appears in the Mémoires et Correspondance. Making his first appearance in les Massacres on 1 or 2 May (just after he has been appointed War Delegate) Rossel is described as

Mince, serré dans un dolman bordé d'astrakan, le regard profond derrière le lorgnon, la moustache tombante, les lèvres sèches...
(MP 203)

When on the night of conspiracy he arrives to join his supposed supporters, his physical appearance (still conveyed with an effective concision) is nonetheless amplified slightly. Reference is made to '*La haute silhouette de Rossel (...) en civil, la redingote pincée à la taille*', to his '*...face juvénile, les yeux enfoncés, la petite moustache roussâtre, toute fraîche et sur le front studieux, ce toupet de cheveux souple, bien lissé, bien sage...*' (MP 220). A final, fleeting impression of Rossel is supplied following failure of the coup, when ('*...livide, la bouche terrible sous sa moustache tombante, le menton couvert de poils roussâtres...*') (MP 248) he is a man aware that crucial plans have come to nought and who is forced now into bitter confrontation with his destiny.

On Rossel's initial appearance on 1-2 May, temperamental traits often ascribed to the young man are merely suggested for possible subsequent development. The taciturnity and coldness frequently said to have been characteristic of him are indicated by his demeanour when Quiche enters his office ('*...il me regarda sans rien dire, puis se remit à lire un journal qu'il tenait à la main*') (MP 203); and, hours later, by a brief appearance at the door when his two sisters (and some members of the Comité de Salut public) arrive to see him ('*Qu'est-ce que c'est? fit-il de sa voix froide*') (MP 205). The thwarted patriotism that of course explains Rossel's presence among the Communards is indirectly conveyed through his reaction to Francisque Sarcey's notorious letter in praise of the German invader ('*J(e) (...) passai la brochure à Rossel. Il lut et serra les mâchoires*') (MP 204).

It may be noted in passing that the first number of Sarcey's newspaper le Drapeau tricolore appeared only on 6 May; and that the article in question was not published until the 20th. The extract of the article supplied by Cassou had been reproduced in Lissagaray's Histoire de la Commune: Lissagaray, who fails to supply the date of the letter, does imply that it had appeared in the first fortnight of May.(40)

On the evening of 6 May, then, the fictional Quiche and Becker confer with Rossel himself, his sister Isabelle, Vermersch and the double agent Péchin. Others too, at the very outset, are present at the flat in the rue de Seine: Maxime Vuillaume, co-editor of le Père Duchêne; a painter who is unnamed but who is known by Quiche to belong to the Fédération des artistes; and '*...un grand gamin jaune, au regard louche, qui fumait péniblement une pipe de terre, le fourneau renversé*' (MP 215). The question of Arthur Rimbaud's possible presence in Paris at some point during the Commune has never been conclusively resolved; the evidence seeming however to point to the improbability of such a visit.(41) Whatever doubts Cassou himself may have entertained on the matter (Rimbaud is not actually named in les Massacres, and is introduced but fleetingly on this one occasion) were obviously outweighed by a feeling that the young poet's suggested presence in the city - and in Vermersch's flat - was entirely fitting, even requisite in the context of his novel. Rimbaud is known to have admired '*...les fantaisies, admirables, de Vallès et de Vermersch au Cri du peuple*' (as he wrote to Paul Demeny on 17 April 1871): he mentions furthermore in the same letter that when in Paris (between 25 February and 10 March of that year) he had looked for Vermersch's address at the Librairie Artistique in the rue Bonaparte. Even more important of course is Rimbaud's identification with the Commune; his near-embodiment, in fact, of facets of the insurrectionary spirit. It is, as we have seen, a quotation from 'Fêtes de la Patience' that serves as a prelude to les Massacres: Rimbaud's cult of freedom ('*...je m'entête affreusement à adorer la liberté libre...*')(42) and his need for revolt, reflect a certain mood during the seventy-two days, and the aspirations of Quiche himself. Were mention of the pipe smoked

with its funnel downwards to seem insufficient for identification of this 'shifty-eyed youth', a further clue is perhaps provided a paragraph later by reference to the '*main rougeaude et humide*' (MP 216) that he extends to Becker and Quiche on taking leave of them.(43)

Isabella Rossel (or Isabelle, as Cassou prefers to call her) is in les Massacres de Paris strongly a character in her own right. Cassou indulges in further imaginative licence when he represents her as involved in the conspiracy, for the 'Essai biographique' written by Isabella herself, and serving as an introduction to the Mémoires et Correspondance, informs its reader that Rossel's affiliation to the Commune caused his family - indeed in Paris at the time - considerable distress.(44) Cassou, who in all probability had no guide as to her physical appearance, chooses not astonishingly perhaps to portray her as a being of particular loveliness. Quiche - by the evening's conclusion more than a little enamoured of her - makes reference to the beauty of her gaze ('...*deux yeux clairs très grands, assez éloignés l'un de l'autre, un regard magnifique*' (MP 205); '*Le magnifique regard nous dévisagea tour à tour, interrogateur et brûlant*' (MP 216)) and to her general quality of allurements ('*La belle jeune fille! Droite, élégante, et qui pouvait passer n'importe où sans rien perdre de sa droiture et de son élégance*') (MP 216). While Cassou was in all likelihood unaware of or unable to consult the at that stage unpublished memoirs of Paul Martine, the latter - invited on one occasion by Rossel to his parents' home in the boulevard de Latour-Maubourg - had described Isabella as '*peu jolie, mais intelligente et animée d'un ardent dévouement pour son frère.*'(45) Had Cassou known this, however, it is improbable that it would have influenced his portrayal. His young central figure - for whom sensual attractions and revolutionary fervour are almost one - is seen to feel a fascination for Isabelle during these few days that in no way precludes love for Marie-Rose.

The sister's absorption in her brother (which cannot fail to impress itself on any reader of her 'Essai biographique') provides the

basis for Cassou's characterisation of her. Isabelle is in fact an essential agent in the substantial portrayal of Rossel provided by the writer; for by her closeness to the young man, her intimate knowledge of his character and background, she is able to provide information and insight that Cassou - as a reader of the 'Essai' and the Mémoires - could convey convincingly in no other fashion. Her presence justifies totally the inclusion of human touches necessary to a rounded portrayal: the use by brother and sister of the diminutives Lisé and Bella; indications as to Rossel's almost paternal affection for his younger sister Sarah (a child at the time of the Commune);(46) and, indeed, his devotion to all the members of his family circle. The presence of Isabelle explains furthermore Rossel's departure from the reserve normally his, and the mellowing of authoritarian stiffness to which Théodore has hitherto been accustomed:

..Rossel se tourna vers nous. Ce que j'avais toujours vu en lui de glacé avait fondu, et il m'apparaissait à présent plein de jeunesse et de charme. (MP 221)

Detained himself at the War Ministry, Rossel will join the other conspirators after their repast; and this delayed arrival provides Isabelle with the opportunity to extol her brother before he can himself make his entrance. From the moment of her arrival at the flat in the rue de Seine, the young woman would have the company in no doubt as to Rossel's extraordinary qualities:

Il est si merveilleux! Lorsqu'on le voit pour la première fois je suis sûre qu'on sent qu'il n'est pas comme tout le monde. Est-ce que son air réfléchi ne vous frappe pas, vous aussi? C'est cela, surtout, que je trouve extraordinaire, son regard calme, sa bouche touched with pensiveness, comme dit un auteur anglais... (MP 218)

Use of the expression by Thomas De Quincey is explained when we read a judgement in the 'Essai biographique' to the same effect.(47) The ingenuousness of Isabelle's adoration might, to the mind of some, justify mockery: not so to Quiche, however, who finds the spontaneous, unaffected naïveté of such adulation appealing:

Ses grands yeux clairs exprimaient l'innocence la plus absolue. (...) Elle ne pouvait perdre ce grand regard étonné et confiant. Je ne sais ce que Becker et Vermersch pouvaient penser d'elle et des propos qu'elle tenait. Sans doute en étaient-ils touchés, peut-être même un peu gênés. Elle n'y prenait pas garde. Elle leur parlait de son frère comme il lui semblait naturel qu'on en parlât. Moi, de temps à autre, je l'encourageais comme pour lui faire comprendre que je la comprenais. Mais comprise ou non comprise, devant nous, ou devant n'importe qui, des juges, des ennemis, elle eût parlé de même. (MP 217-218)

Isabelle seeks understandably to dispel any doubts harboured by the conspirators as to her brother's integrity, selflessness and nobility of purpose. They may be sure, she tells them, that ambition - imputed constantly to Rossel, both before and after the Commune, by partisans and adversaries of the insurrection alike(48) - has no place in his considerations. His one desire since arrival in Paris has been to serve in whatever capacity, high or low, his new associates judge him most useful:

- Lisé n'a pas d'ambition (...). Je m'en porte garante. (...)

- Ce n'est pas pour lui, le pauvre... Il ne veut rien, il ne demande rien. (...)

- Quand il est venu à Paris, parmi vous, il a accepté ce qu'on lui a offert, il ne s'est jamais mis en avant. S'il est délégué à la Guerre, c'est qu'on l'a bien voulu... Alors?... Et si demain on lui demande plus encore, il acceptera. (MP 217-218)

A comparison of the Mémoires et Correspondance and Quiche's account of this particular evening makes clear just how heavily Cassou is indebted to the earlier publication. Touchily sensitive later in the evening to an implication by Becker that all revolutionaries are motivated essentially by vanity, Isabelle recalls a comment her brother had made which suggests to her that Rossel, if no other, is acting at the present time in total disinterestedness:

- Je pense (...) à ce que tu m'as dit un jour à Londres. "Sais-tu? Mon moi m'est devenu indifférent." Et en effet, tu allais et venais comme une ombre. Non, Lisé, on ne peut pas t'accuser d'agir pour toi. (MP 222)

In this as in much else, the 'Essai biographique' has provided the source of Cassou's inspiration, for Rossel had indeed spoken thus (Isabella Rossel writes) soon after the capitulation at Metz.(49)

Inspired then by a disinterested wish to serve, Rossel, his sister seems to suggest to the conspirators, is also staunchly Communard in spirit. The fictional characters of the novel see their venture as 'une folie', a valiant (almost madcap) struggle against overwhelming odds. Rossel's vain attempt to organise a sortie at Metz following Bazaine's capitulation is described by Isabelle as '*Une folie manquée... Celle-ci...*' (she is referring to the planned coup) '*...il faut la réussir*' (MP 217). Isabelle's recollection - again drawn by Cassou from the Mémoires et Correspondance - of Rossel's self-imposed duty to instruct her when at the Ecole Polytechnique ('*Il m'a enseigné la philosophie, Leibnitz, Descartes. Je me rappelle une lettre où il m'expliquait: "Depuis Descartes, nous sommes libres"*') (MP 218) (50) indicates not merely her brother's passionate interest in the seventeenth and eighteenth century rationalists but - of greater immediate importance in this study - his conviction as to his own liberty of conscience. If circumstances so decree, Isabelle appears to be saying, Rossel can prove himself to be no less a free spirit than his brothers of the Commune:

Il a toujours pensé qu'il était libre. C'est pourquoi il a mieux aimé désobéir que renoncer, bien qu'il fût un vrai soldat. A Metz, il a mis l'esprit au-dessus de la lettre. Quand on a appris que Bazaine s'était rendu avec toute l'armée, maman s'est écriée: "Mon fils n'a pas rendu les armes!" Et c'était vrai: il s'était sauvé... (MP 218)

The mother's reaction to news of the capitulation is again recorded in the 'Essai biographique'.(51)

The essence of much of the conversation attributed to Rossel himself in the course of the evening may again be traced to the Mémoires et Correspondance.(52) A portion of what is said is at least

moderately well known: when the young man declares to Théodore and Becker:

...je me suis rangé, sans hésiter, du côté du parti qui n'a pas signé la paix et qui ne compte pas dans ses rangs des généraux coupables de capitulation... (MP 221)

he is quoting with minimal variation an extract of his letter to the War Minister at Versailles written on 19 March 1871.⁽⁵³⁾ Similarly, his letter of resignation as War Delegate under the Commune (written on 9 May) has provided the basis of complaints he now voices as to the difficulties with which he must contend in his new position:

...voilà plusieurs jours que j'ai pris la délégation de la Guerre et je n'ai pu encore rien faire. Rien. J'ai voulu, avant toute chose, réorganiser l'artillerie. Le Comité Central d'artillerie délibère et ne prescrit rien. La réquisition des chevaux, la concentration des armes, la poursuite des réfractaires, autant de mesures qu'il me semblait indispensable de prendre dès mon arrivée au ministère. Dans ce sens encore rien n'a pu être fait, rien; rien; rien. (MP 220-221) ⁽⁵⁴⁾

Letters from Rossel to members of his family at the time of the capitulation and during his imprisonment before execution have also served Cassou not a little in his portrayal. The young man's comment to the company on this evening in May:

Voyez-vous, dans les premiers jours qui ont suivi l'armistice, je cherchais à me guérir du traité de paix. Tu te rappelles, Bella? Je t'ai écrit cela. Me guérir du traité de paix... (MP 221)

is indeed taken from a letter to Isabella written at Nevers on 18 March, mentioned by the sister in her 'Essai biographique' and quoted in entirety later in the volume.⁽⁵⁵⁾ Cassou's use of a portion of one of Rossel's last missives to his parents (dated 26 November 1871, two days before his execution) is clear also when the following passages - the first from les Massacres, the second from the Mémoires et Correspondance - are compared:

Lorsque le monde se coupe en deux, il faut bien être quelque part, n'est-ce pas? Il faut rejoindre son parti. J'ai connu des républicains, ou qui se disaient tels: le jour venu, on ne les trouve nulle part. Ah! c'est commode! Et puis, l'orage passé, si nous avons vaincu, ils seront avec nous. Si nous avons succombé, ils relèveront mon cadavre pour s'en faire un drapeau. Je ne suis pas des leurs. Je suis de ceux qui se battent. (MP 221)

...lorsqu'une guerre civile est engagée, il faut que tout citoyen soutienne son parti. Républicain, mon parti était à Paris. Il y en a qui se disent républicains et qui n'étaient nulle part à cette époque; ils me laissent mourir aujourd'hui et demain relèveront mon cadavre pour s'en faire un drapeau ou une arme. Qu'ils sachent que je ne suis pas des leurs: je suis de ceux qui se battent... (56)

Rossel himself is shown in the course of the evening to be no less concerned than his sister with rebuttal of any charges of egotism levelled at him. In an at times almost Hamlet-like semi-soliloquy, the young man recalls the interrogation to which he had been subjected by the Commune before appointment to the War Delegation:

Pourquoi êtes-vous républicain? Depuis quand? Vous sentez-vous sincère? Si l'on savait! C'est vrai que je ne m'intéresse plus à mon moi. Mais comment faire comprendre cela aux autres? Il faudrait être en moi pour voir à quel point ce moi est désert.

(...)

Il faudrait avoir suivi ma route. Vous savez, pour un jeune officier, c'est la grande question. Il ne pense qu'à cela, il ne médite que là-dessus: être tout ou ne pas être. Avoir un moi ou n'en pas avoir. Bonaparte ou rien. Moi, j'ai choisi rien. Cela vous étonne? Soyez-en assurés pourtant: vous avez fondé votre complot sur quelqu'un qui n'est rien. Etes-vous tranquilles? Allez, Dieu connaît son serviteur. MP 223)

Whatever Rossel's current state of mind, soul-searching of the sort described here - and which seems to make of the young man something of a romantique attardé - can only have called in the past for a not inconsiderable degree of self-absorption. The evident preoccupation with Napoleon - shared with countless young men throughout the nineteenth century - is all the more interesting in that Rossel was himself regarded by admirers as a potential Bonaparte, by detractors as a would-be emulator of the General cum Emperor. (57) The

conclusion the young War Delegate has reached as to Napoleon's state of mind - and which he outlines now to Quiche and Becker as final (and for him irrefutable) proof of his own good faith - is based upon a short essay by Rossel ('La Morale de l'Homme de guerre. Wallenstein et Napoléon') dated 24 April 1870 and included of course in the Mémoires et Correspondance:

- Je vais vous dire quelque chose qui vous prouvera mon absolue sincérité. Quelque chose que je pense; et si je pense cela, (...) c'est que j'ai été au bout de ce que l'on peut penser. Oui, savez-vous le grand secret que j'ai trouvé et que je puis proclamer? C'est que Bonaparte était fou.

(...)

- Il était complètement fou, poursuivit Rossel. Et alors il a pris le nom de Napoléon Premier, il s'est habillé d'une façon insensée, avec un chapeau de guignol et il a voulu se faire adorer de tout l'univers. Wallenstein aussi était fou. Mais un fou qui tressaillait de peur et qui croyait deviner son destin dans le cours des astres. (...) Il faut être fou pour intervenir ainsi dans les affaires des hommes, s'imposer à eux, jouer à des jeux aussi terribles et dégoûtants. Dégoûtants! Il faut être fou, et lâche. Car tous ces fameux capitaines, tous ces héros sont des lâches. Des fiévreux. Des trembleurs. De pâles histrions. Savez-vous ce qui se passe en ce moment? Savez-vous ce que cela veut dire, cette Commune, cette guerre suprême? C'est la fin de tous ces coquins-là. C'est le règne de l'égalité: tous les hommes débarrassés de leur moi, et devenus enfin des hommes! De libres individus! Oui, cela semble contradictoire, n'est-ce pas? Mais ce que je vous dis là, c'est un fait d'expérience, un fait incommunicable. Depuis que j'ai renoncé à mon moi, depuis que je me suis dit, là-bas, à Polytechnique, que je ne serais jamais Napoléon avec son chapeau gigantesque et sa macrocéphalie, depuis ce temps-là, je me sens plus homme! (MP 223-224) (58)

The question of insanity introduced fleetingly here is one that had preoccupied Cassou considerably in other writings.(59) In the frightening magnitude of his egoism Napoleon was a madman: men, furthermore, who are trapped by a public role and condemned to enactment of a given persona (as Napoleon may arguably have been)(60) can find themselves so divorced from - and perhaps even frightened to face - the consequences of their actions that they are at total odds with the reality they have themselves created. Self-examination, self-truth - and genuine freedom of choice - are denied them. The

direction or manipulation of one's fellows for the base pleasure of self-aggrandisement is even more misplaced - Rossel suggests - in this time of revolution: and the Commune (hopefully representative of a mood in which Justice and Liberty for all are the ultimate objectives) can have little use for those who are not genuinely preoccupied with the public good. Attitudes Rossel has expressed or intimated so far seem laudable enough: what follows, however, might be considered more disquieting:

Ecoutez-moi: ce matin, j'ai visité des avant-postes. Je regardais ces misérables troupes que vous m'avez données ou auxquelles vous m'avez donné, ces faces d'ivrognes, ces képis juchés sur des tignasses pouilleuses, ces pantalons en tire-bouchons, ces blouses crasseuses, et ces énormes capotes qui tombent sur les godillots, avec ces ceinturons au-dessous de la ceinture et ces sabres d'opéra-comique qui bringuebalent sur le pavé... Que voulez-vous? Je ne peux pas oublier que je suis officier, que j'ai étudié la science militaire, qu'on m'a enseigné la discipline. Peut-être vaut-il mieux s'occuper d'autre chose, c'est possible. Faire de la musique par exemple. Tu te rappelles, Bella, quand nous jouions à quatre mains les Grottes de Fingall? C'est une belle ouverture. C'est autre chose que la science militaire. N'empêche que ces misérables ont des uniformes grotesques. Mais ils ont raison de se battre. Je les regardais et je pensais: "Oui, ils ont raison de se battre. Ils se battent pour que leurs enfants soient moins chétifs, moins scrofuleux, moins vicieux qu'ils ne sont eux-mêmes." Puisqu'ils ont raison, me voici avec eux. Je suis l'instrument, ajouta-t-il, en se levant, les bras tendus. (MP 224)

Rossel's less than flattering assessment of the rabble of whom he finds himself in command can only reinforce a view that the War Delegate had indeed a bourgeois contempt for the people. His thoughts as to the reasons for fighting of these men at the outposts are recorded in the Mémoires et Correspondance, (61) and the description of the troops at the beginning of the extract would seem to be based upon a similar passage in la Commune by Pierre Dominique. (62) It is clear in any event that the overall tone given to this portion of the monologue is intended to create a certain impression in the reader's mind.

One has no difficulty imagining that the indiscipline and disorder generally prevailing among the Commune's troops would have shocked the young product of Prytanée de la Flèche and Polytechnique. The condescension, however, that is so glaringly evident in his appraisal of the lice-ridden, scrofulous, ridiculous individuals in whose midst he finds himself, seems indication enough that the young man has far to go before attainment of the state of humility he believes to be his. Whatever their manifold defects, many of these men have taken up arms in hope of a better future for their children: it is for this reason (Rossel seems to be saying) that they merit the support and guidance of one such as himself, who will be the means whereby their victory can be accomplished. It is difficult to contest the essential accuracy of the appraisal ascribed to Rossel: for those having small sympathy however with this fundamentally unrevolutionary soldier who could hardly have been less at home in the Communard camp, such near-mockery of the fédérés and the smug allusions by the young man to his own military expertise and to his general culture(63) are likely to jar somewhat.

Isabelle's certainty as to the quasi sacred mission of her brother ('J'ai toujours pensé qu'il était appelé') (MP 218) is intimated further in the course of the evening. When Becker warns of the probable fate in store for Rossel should he find himself unequal to the task of saving the Revolution:

Ils parlent de te tuer! Dear boy! Il faut leur pardonner: ils ne savent pas ce qu'ils disent. (MP 225)

The slight variation on Christ's pronouncement on the cross had been foreshadowed by this devout Protestant's earlier likening of her brother to an Old Testament hero when Rossel had seemed to envisage failure of the coup:

- *Il faut tout prévoir, Isabelle, et se tenir prêt à tout.*

- *Tu n'as que vingt-huit ans, reprit-elle. A vingt-huit ans on ne succombe pas. Ce n'est pas possible.*

Et elle ajouta, tout bas, comme pour lui seul:

- David avait trente ans quand il fut oint à Hebron. (MP 221)

It is curious that Cassou, who had clearly read the Mémoires et Correspondance with considerable care, should have been in error as to Rossel's age. Born on 9 September 1844, the young man was in fact twenty-six at the time of the Commune. Lissagaray - a further major source of information for les Massacres, as we have seen - in fact makes the same mistake in his unfavourable portrayal of the Commune's second War Delegate. (64)

Rossel's own religious faith - of which Isabella Rossel writes in her 'Essai biographique' (65) - is evident of course in the passing remark quoted earlier ('*Allez, Dieu connaît son serviteur*') (MP 223). More interesting perhaps is Isabelle's reaction to this, her implication that however intimate the Almighty's knowledge of His servant, she herself can know Rossel hardly less well ('*- Moi aussi, je te connais, Lisé, fit Isabelle en lui prenant la main*') (MP 223). Apparent belief in her brother's quasi divine role does not preclude moments of anxiety or fear as to the future: and when - in this entourage less ardently convinced of Rossel's exceptional status - Isabelle is again tormented at the possibility of danger to the Adored One, Cassou draws a further time upon the 'Essai biographique':

- J'ai quelquefois, balbutia-t-elle, d'affreux pressentiments. C'est comme quand le 2^e Génie est parti pour Montpellier. A partir de ce moment, Lisé, le cercle familial ne s'est plus reformé que par éclaircies. Ah! comme maman doit souffrir en ce moment! Et Marraine, donc! Tu voulais te marier très jeune. Tu en parlais toujours. (MP 225) (66)

Any premonitions of doom will of course be well founded. In what seems to be one of those snatches of intuition writers having the benefit of hindsight sometimes attribute to characters, Isabelle will reject Becker's warning as to what awaits Rossel in the event of failure ('*- Vous n'aurez pas à le tuer. Peut-être même est-ce les autres qui nous le tueront*') (MP 224).

It is of possible interest at this point (in view of certain questions arising from the portrayal of Rossel) to consider representation of another historical figure included in the first part of the novel. While the destinies of the Commune's second War Delegate and Napoleon III seem analogous in few respects, both offer parallels of sorts with an illustrious if controversial career.

Whatever Rossel's stated view of Napoleon, he was compared not infrequently, as suggested (both during and after the Commune) with the young General Bonaparte. For all that he might not have sought deliberately to repeat Bonaparte's example, the parallel between his abortive coup and that of 18 Brumaire has been made:(67) and Félix Pyat, who detested Rossel, was wont to apply to him the jeering sobriquet of 'Césarion'.(68) This last fact acquires greater significance in les Massacres de Paris when it is realised that Théodore and Maxime de Rieuse can refer to either of the Napoleons as 'César'.

Aided in his rise by the Legend, Louis-Napoléon was dogged thereafter, one might argue, by a need to prove himself a worthy nephew. The point is made by Maxime and Théodore in a conversation that seems a foreshadowing of Rossel's monologue in Part Two. For Théodore, Louis-Napoléon was '*...le Bonaparte en disponibilité (...)* (qui) recommence, comme un spectre, quelque chose qui s'est déjà produit' (MP 118). Maxime will develop the idea further:

...les événements se produisent toujours à deux exemplaires, eux et leur ombre. Le premier César était un dieu. C'était celui-là pour qui l'histoire s'était disposée de façon si fabuleuse qu'il y avait de quoi perdre la tête. Et un dieu, c'est un homme qui a perdu la tête. Imagine un peu: ne jamais se tromper, ne pas pouvoir se tromper, n'avoir même pas besoin de réfléchir avant de prendre une décision! Car la décision que l'on prend est toujours la seule possible, puisque c'est une décision divine. On n'est plus soi-même, on est le père, l'image de chacun de ceux qui composent le peuple qui se mire en vous. (...) ...on est l'histoire, l'histoire elle-même, infaillible. Ensuite, arrive le second César, hélas! et celui-là n'est plus qu'un comédien. Et un comédien qui ne sait pas très bien où mène la comédie.
(MP 118-119)

Rossel, in his monologue on Napoleon I, has been seen to suggest that the latter had himself become a prisoner of his role. Théodore's account in the first part of les Massacres of a conversation between Napoleon III and Eugénie at which, unbeknown to them, he had been present, underscores a view that the Nephew had in time found himself caught in an increasingly tiresome masquerade from which he was powerless to escape. Maxime, who is an orderly at the Tuileries, makes the point somewhat transparently when Théodore questions him as to the probable thoughts and attitudes of the Emperor:

...à présent, il est si fatigué! Quand on lui souffle son rôle, il a un air si las, si désolé, de dire, "Laissez-moi tranquille..." (MP 118)

In the pages devoted to the Imperial couple's supposedly private conversation, this apparent performing of a role on the Sovereign's part is plainly suggested. It will seem to Théodore (concealed with Maxime in an alcove adjoining the Empress's study in the Tuileries) that he is watching a play: as Maxime himself says, having led Théodore to this secret recess; *'Assieds-toi: tu es à la comédie'* (MP 137). When, their tête-à-tête concluded, the Emperor and Empress withdraw, the two young men remain, *'...assis côte à côte devant la scène vide'* (MP 143).

In keeping with his role as Actor, Napoleon's moustache is seen to be dyed, and his cheeks rouged (by April 1870 - when, probably, this conversation is taking place - he was of course seriously ill with a stone in the bladder). His attire (a dolman, and the ribbon of the Legion of Honour) seems theatrical to Théodore; and the impression of unreality is heightened by the names the couple give each other (prince Noir; princesse de Trébizonde; reine de Saba; Chimène). The Emperor, in a remark that may be taken figuratively, will refer wryly to the Empress's inability as an actress, receiving as his answer *'Je ne sais jouer que les rôles que je sens...'* (MP 143).

Napoleon (who is not portrayed unsympathetically by Cassou) is clearly reluctant to engage in war with Prussia. He speaks of his illness ('-*Pourquoi ne veux-tu pas admettre que je sois malade, Eugénie? (...) Il me faut du repos, et à la France aussi*') (MP 142), and defends the liberal Empire:

Qu'importe qu'on nous insulte? Qu'importe qu'on soit ingrat envers nous, si, tout de même, c'est de nous que ce pauvre peuple tient la liberté dont il a besoin. Gouverner, c'est souvent prévoir, accepter et laisser faire. (MP 142)

Eugénie - whose opinion, as we know, would eventually prevail - advocates the need to consolidate the dynasty by victory over France's Eastern neighbour, and talks of her ambitions for the young Prince Imperial. She deplores, as one might expect, the freedom of the press ('*Tu t'es laissé aller à une aventure dont tu ne peux plus sortir, avec tes républicains: plus tu leur donnes de libertés, plus ils nous insultent*') (MP 141): conquest of Prussia, however, would enable retraction of such ill-judged concessions ('*La victoire nous permettra de retourner en arrière*') (MP 141). The Emperor, seen before the entrance of his wife to cast a glance of bitter despair towards the mirror, is cruelly conscious, it seems, of his powerlessness to control or restrain impending development. While account must of course be taken of the two men's differing roles and responsibilities, one might still observe that Napoleon III is no more in command of men or events now than the young Rossel will be when, the following year, he finds himself struggling to make of the Commune's military apparatus an effective force against Versailles.

The discouragement Rossel feels at his inability to realise objectives is reflected in a minor incident the morning after the meeting. When Quiche enters his office, the War Delegate is seated before a gigantic accumulation of letters consisting for the most part of requests for favours, absurd propositions concerning defence of the Commune, and doggerel extolling Rossel himself or the revolutionary movement. The young man - as Quiche will learn soon - has been

informed in addition of imminent rebellion by the leaders of the Commune's legions, who are irate at the measures proposed for reform of the National Guard. Small wonder that his sorely tried nerves should momentarily give way when confronted by this futile yet time-consuming correspondence:

- Toute cette énorme sollicitation! soupira Rossel en balançant les papiers criards qui se dispersèrent sur le sol. Il n'y a pas huit jours que je suis au pouvoir et demain je serai peut-être fusillé, mais il faut qu'ils viennent tous me raconter leur petite histoire, comme ils la racontaient au député, au curé, au sénateur, comme ils la raconteront à celui qui viendra, n'importe lequel pourvu qu'il ait des galons. (...) Voilà à quoi on passe son temps: à lire toutes ces ordures! Et vous avez pu croire un instant que ça m'amuserait! s'écria-t-il en devenant brusquement tout rouge et en me mettant la main au collet. Grand nigaud, va! Toi aussi, peut-être, tu veux quelque chose? (MP 228) (69)

Such an outburst - attributable of course to frustration at important time lost in trivialities - seems nonetheless to give the lie to the claims of humility and selflessness made by Rossel himself (or by his sister on his behalf) the previous evening. It seems that Rossel, when Cluseret's underling at the War Delegation, had indeed been inundated with letters of the above kind.(70) The young man, in his own account of his role during the Commune written while he was in prison, claimed that the greater part of his time had been taken by:

...les importuns et les inutiles, les délégués de toute provenance, les hommes à inventions, les quémandeurs de renseignements...(71)

In the remaining pages devoted to Rossel and his abortive coup, Cassou is again using much of the time recorded remarks or conversations as a partial basis for his evocation. The chiefs of the legions are expected at any moment on this particular morning (the 7th, if we follow the chronology supplied in the novel); and Rossel, as he explains to Quiche, is ready for them, regretting only that the planned seizure of power cannot take place that day:

Un peloton de soldats se tenait dans la cour, l'arme au pied. Rossel les considéra avec un sourire amer.

- Eh! bien? dis-je.

- Quand les chefs de légions arriveront... Malheureusement, nous ne sommes pas prêts. Je n'ai pu prévenir Péchin. Quelle occasion, pourtant! Nous n'aurions pas eu besoin d'attendre à demain. (MP 228-229)

Maxime Vuillaume in his Cahiers rouges had recorded a wish expressed by Rossel on an unspecified occasion that he might have some officers of the Comité central de la Garde nationale executed in the courtyard of the War Ministry.(72) Lissagaray and Pierre Dominique also relate the incident in question, the latter placing it specifically at 8 May.(73) The account in les Massacres of the exchange between Rossel and the chiefs of the legions is clearly based on one or more sources; Cassou including however some not insignificant touches of his own:

Une vingtaine d'hommes à aiguilletes et à galons pénétrèrent (...) dans la cour. Les sabres résonnèrent sur le pavé.

- Bonjour, messieurs! cria Rossel. Vous avez bien de l'audace!

Ils levèrent les yeux et s'arrêtèrent. Rossel désigna le peloton du doigt.

- Voulez-vous que je vous fasse fusiller?

- Mais, citoyen délégué, fit l'un des chefs, les mains dans les poches de sa capote, il n'y a aucune raison... Nous venons vous parler de l'organisation de la garde nationale... Je ne vois pas d'audace à cela.

- Elle est jolie, votre organisation!

- Nous sommes prêts à étudier un nouveau projet... D'accord avec vous, citoyen délégué... Nous avons bien le droit de discuter...

Rossel haussa les épaules.

- Faites rentrer le peloton, cria-t-il. Montez, vous autres! Rien à faire aujourd'hui, me dit-il. Mais demain, ce sera le grand jour. Vous serez à l'Hôtel de Ville, ainsi que nous l'avons convenu?

Les pas des officiers résonnaient dans le couloir. La porte s'ouvrit.

- Laissez-moi avec ces messieurs, Quiche. Allez à vos affaires. A demain, n'est-ce pas? (MP 229) (74)

The episode as presented by Cassou does serve to indicate further something of the impossibility - even the incongruity - of Rossel's situation under the Commune. The indiscipline prevailing among those defending the Revolution is suggested as one of the leaders, hands in the pockets of his greatcoat, defends his right of discussion; and Rossel, who exasperatedly shrugs his shoulders, recognises tacitly thus an essential cause of the constant stalemate under which he works. The difficulty of understanding or communication between this bourgeois officer until recently of the regular army and men of the people with little or no formal military training is thereby intimated; as indeed it has been already by the greeting (sarcastic, or merely unreflecting) shouted by Rossel to the chiefs as they enter the yard. The exchange as recounted by Cassou may remind us of the extent to which Rossel is a prisoner of his situation, for there is a certain irony in the fact that the right to question the decisions of superiors was one that the Commune's War Delegate had himself exemplified - at Metz, and in his resignation from the regular army on 19 March. The defensibility of such a stand in the circumstances is not solely at issue: in adoption of it, Rossel has renounced his class and background only to find himself a man at odds with his adopted cause and milieu.

Developments or non-developments of ensuing days are distinctly enigmatic in nature. Rossel's dismissal of Quiche on arrival of the chiefs of the legions is significant: usually excluded, bewildered, unaware, the young man will spend the next three days in a state of confusion that is likely to be shared by the reader. It is only when he is with Marie-Rose that his life seems to assume during this period any semblance of stability. The disorder and the temporal imprecision evident in these pages has, as suggested, been introduced already, for Cassou has moved the discussion between Rossel and the leaders of the legions as recounted thus far forward a day. The leaders are, in les Massacres, threatened with execution on the 7th: Quiche, who after one or two mystifying episodes which, when told to Becker and Vuillaume, are greeted with laughter, spends the day '*...dans un état de somnambulisme complet, doutant de tout et scrutant les visages*' (MP 230). In accordance

with instructions given him, the young man will on the 8th appear at eleven o'clock outside the Hôtel de Ville, shouting for Pyat and carrying a letter from Dombrowski requesting all available troops to set out forthwith for Neuilly. This marks the onset of what will be for Quiche '*...une suite d'événements incohérents, absolument inexplicables...*' (MP 231): for Pyat, Rossel's implacable adversary, is in contrast to all expectations present at the Council's deliberations that morning... The bugle is sounded, Pyat and his companions disappear '*en brailant*' (MP 232) into one of the rooms nearby: and Quiche watches from a gallery window as, amidst the tumult and disorganisation seen in his account to be characteristic of the Commune, troops assemble on the square below:

...dans le parc aux canons, régnait un tumulte fantastique. Des bataillons s'assemblaient, les officiers s'égosillaient à donner des ordres que personne ne suivait. Et sur tout cela, une épouvantable cacophonie de clairons. (MP 232)

Suddenly the square is deserted. Alone in the gallery, aware only of a hum of voices behind a door, Quiche awaits developments:

Je pensais que, tout à l'heure, je verrais surgir le bataillon de Péchin, ceux des autres commandants complices. Je leur adresserais un signe de mon mouchoir. Ils fermeraient les issues de la place. Puis Rossel apparaîtrait, avec ses hommes. Ils entreraient dans l'Hôtel de Ville, monteraient l'escalier. J'irais à leur rencontre. Les soldats entreraient dans les salles. On en ferait sortir les membres de la Commune, les membres du Comité de Salut Public, la crosse dans les reins. Du haut des balcons on proclamerait le nouveau gouvernement, les noms de ses membres, celui du général Rossel en tête. (MP 232)

Thus, to the idea of Quiche, should events unfold: smoothly, without obstacle, according to some ingenuous preconception on his part of the pattern of revolutionary takeover. The reader, who is likely to be as much in the dark as Quiche as to what, if anything, is going on, may feel also that the jumble of non-happenings of 8-9 May should serve to teach young Théodore (if he is prepared to learn the lesson) that even the best-laid plans in revolution are likely to prove abortive.

The minutes pass, expected developments fail to materialise: and when Quiche's agony of anticipation is finally broken, the fragmentary, inconclusive nature of his impressions is again in evidence:

...derrière moi, la galerie s'emplit de rumeur. La porte s'était ouverte. Félix Pyat apparut, suivi d'autres membres de la Commune et de tout un état-major tonitruant. Il y avait aussi Delescluze, qui toussait à se rompre la poitrine. On criait:

- Le contrôle du Comité de Salut Public... Sous le contrôle du Comité...

- Rossel n'acceptera jamais.

- Qu'il démissionne!

- La gare de Clamart, le voilà, le point stratégique!

- La dictature, jamais!

Tout ce monde passa à côté de moi sans me voir. Sans imaginer que moi aussi, j'avais mon plan, que moi aussi je représentais une issue dans cette masse de propos, d'intérêts et d'ambitions. Mais je me sentis noyé. Des soldats suivaient, sac au dos, harnachés, baïonnette au canon et faisant, dans cette galerie étroite, un tintamarre de tous les diables. Leur tourbe m'emporta dans une odeur de pipe et d'oignon. Je ne sais comment je me retrouvai, comme midi sonnait, penché sur un parapet, au bord de la Seine.
(MP 234)

Noise, noise and more noise.(75) While it is hardly clear from these snatches of conversation what is being planned or proposed, the references are presumably to the critical position of the fort at Issy, in danger of occupation by the Versaillais. The plan would appear to be that the Comité de Salut public will direct operations for the attempted saving of the fort; and in the likely event of this proving unacceptable to Rossel, he will have only to step aside. Mention of the gare de Clamart is explicable insofar as the War Delegate had himself wanted to launch an attack from there.(76) It is to be noted, however, that a plan was entertained by the Central Committee on 9 May (after Rossel had submitted his resignation to the Commune) whereby the young man might for the time being exercise total military authority under the control of the Central Committee. Some lines from Pierre Dominique's la Commune have conceivably provided the inspiration for the shouted comments given here.(77) For the moment anyway it will

seem to the bemused Théodore - whose very presence goes unnoticed by the bawling, cacophonous individuals surging past - that the entire 'plot' has been engineered purely to make a fool of him. After inconclusive confrontation with Becker at the War Ministry:

- *En somme, on s'est foutu de moi?*

- *De toi? Pourquoi de toi?*

- *Enfin, moi, j'ai fait tout ce qu'on m'avait dit de faire. J'ai exécuté la consigne. Pourquoi les autres n'en ont-ils pas fait autant? Où étais-tu, toi, pendant ce temps-là (...)? Et Rossel, avec tous ses discours sur Bonaparte et Schiller? Mais qu'est-ce que c'est tout ça, oui, qu'est-ce que c'est? (MP 235)*

the young man will on return to his own office remember suddenly (as though emerging from a dream) (MP 237) that the central player in this bewildering fiasco should still be close at hand. Is there yet a chance that some coherence and pattern will emerge from the imbroglia?

Je me précipitai vers (le) bureau (de Rossel). Il était là, en effet, marchant de long en large, tandis que, assis autour de la pièce, le sabre entre les jambes, des chefs de légions discutaient à grands cris. (...)

- *Je le sais, disait Rossel, je n'ai pas la force. Je le sais plus que jamais, répéta-t-il en me regardant. Mais vous non plus. Quoi? Que dites-vous? Vos troupes... Eh! bien, montrez-les-moi, vos troupes. Depuis que je suis là, je ne les ai pas encore vues.*

- *Pourquoi n'avez-vous pas cherché à les voir? cria un des chefs.*

- *Pourquoi n'avez-vous pas fait vos conditions quand vous avez pris la Guerre? cria un autre.*

- *Je vous les fais maintenant. Allons, je veux essayer une dernière fois de tout sauver, une dernière fois... Je veux porter tous mes efforts sur Issy. Après, nous reparlerons. Amenez-moi demain matin à onze heures, place de la Concorde, douze mille hommes...*

- *Soit! fit un des chefs d'une voix de tonnerre et en fixant Rossel avec une expression de haine. Vous les aurez. Je pars rassembler mes hommes, nom de Dieu!*

- *Allons, dit Rossel en s'asseyant avec lassitude derrière son bureau. Il faut encore espérer...*

Et plus bas:

- Encore un jour... Un jour de plus. Cette fois, c'est le dernier délai... Allez-vous en, Quiche, je n'ai pas besoin de vous. Demain, messieurs, à onze heures, place de la Concorde.

Je sortis, désespéré. (MP 237)

It is almost as though time has been suspended since Quiche's exit from the War Delegate's office the previous day, for this discussion with the chiefs of the legions was in fact a continuation of the conversation begun by Rossel with the threat to use the firing squad. At this particular point, we may then note in passing, Cassou's chronology seems consistent with that of history in that the exchange just read is taking place on the 8th. In the young man's weary admission that he is ill-equipped for the task of defence, and in his proposal for the following day that twelve thousand men assemble, Cassou is again borrowing in all likelihood from Lissagaray, or from Dominique.(78) An impression of atmosphere is nonetheless created by various touches, a perception of an increasingly beleaguered Rossel surrounded by shouting, bitterly hostile leaders, and certain now of the near impasse in which he finds himself. Clearly then, the plans of the morning have gone awry: and the reader is likely to wonder precisely how the young War Delegate has spent the twenty-four hours or more since Quiche saw him last? There remains, despite the confusion and sense of hopelessness, a shred of hope that the Revolution can be salvaged; and a further rendezvous with destiny is fixed for the morrow, at the obviously fateful hour (during these few days) of eleven o'clock. An attempt will then be made to save Issy: or might Rossel even now be thinking of marching on the Hôtel de Ville?

Once more unheeded and unneeded, Quiche has then been a second time sent away. There lies in store for him (before the further bewilderment of the following day) an interrogation by Raoul Rigault and Théophile Ferré: for one of the manifold mysteries of 7-8 May has been the sporadic appearance in Quiche's office or in the corridor of a strange little man seemingly employed by Rigault as a spy, and who will finally, on Quiche's insistence, lead the young man to Police

Headquarters. Appointed Delegate at the Prefecture of Police on 20 March, Rigault had resigned from that position on 24 April only to be made Public Prosecutor for the Commune two days later. He and Ferré (his right-hand man) are seated on a couch as Quiche is ushered in: it is Ferré who makes the stronger impression initially because of his air of coldness and menace:

Ferré me fixa de son regard froid, que le lorgnon faisait miroiter. Le lorgnon de Rigault avait plus de chaleur, une sorte de flamme professorale. Ferré tenait la tête droite, et avec son nez busqué et son énorme chevelure, il évoquait un immobile rapace nocturne. Rigault, lui, portait beau, la barbe soulevée en vague, le cordon du lorgnon battant l'air, le regard judiciaire et satisfait. (MP 238) (79)

While there is small evidence on Rigault's part of the sense of humour described by Vallès in *l'Insurgé*, (80) his gestures and manner do not seem intrinsically sinister at the beginning ('*Il (...) posa ses mains sur ses genoux écartés et m'examina avec son air de curiosité triomphante*') (MP 238). The tenor of his questioning, however, and his apparent mistrust of Quiche (known by him to have been secretary for the prominent Bonapartist Havelotte) quickly unnerve the young man, who in a state of ever-increasing bewilderment and panic tries desperately to convince a silent, grimly smiling Ferré and an immovable Rigault of his merely superficial acquaintance with the Versailles agent Péchin. The latter, Quiche is told, is a friend of Gustave Chaudey (believed by Rigault - mistakenly, in fact - to have given the order to fire on the crowd gathered outside the Hôtel de Ville on 22 January). Cassou introduces here a forewarning of what lies ahead for Chaudey and others as Rigault expresses his own admiration for the methods of Revolutions Past:

Moi, je vous apprends quelque chose, c'est que dès que la Commune se fâchera, Chaudey sera le premier fusillé. Jusqu'à présent nous avons montré de la mansuétude et de la circonspection. Sous la Convention, cela se passait autrement et on n'y allait pas par quatre chemins. (...) vous êtes infecté d'idées réactionnaires. Que savez-vous de Péchin? Où est-il? (MP 239)

For a reader conversant with the history of the Commune, this entire scene might seem to reinforce an idea that the tyrannous methods favoured by the Blanquist duo during their collaboration at Police Headquarters yielded little tangible result.⁽⁸¹⁾ The majority of those suspected by them were of no more danger to the Commune than is Quiche himself: the double agents everywhere in Paris, were, on the other hand, able for the most part to continue their activities without detection. Bullied and threatened by Rigault ('Si je vous envoyais rejoindre Chaudey à Pélagie, que diriez-vous?') (MP 239) Quiche as he tries desperately to clear himself of any suspicion can derive minimal comfort from the flagrant absurdity of his predicament:

Tandis que je parlais, je sentais la sueur couler sur mon front. Rigault marchait toujours de long en large, et Ferré me considérait, immobile, un pâle sourire lunaire sur ses lèvres, qui apparaissaient, décharnées, entre le fourré des moustaches et de la barbe. A son tour il se leva: je vis qu'il était minuscule, une tête démesurée sur un corps de nabot...

- Tout cela, prononça-t-il en se rasant, ne nous apprend pas où est Péchin. (MP 240)

A seeming inability to gauge the veracity of the inoffensive Quiche may however be misleading. The reader might draw the conclusion that both Rigault and Ferré were sinister, power-hungry galopins indulging to the maximum under the Commune - even if only by alarming and discomfiting the manifestly innocent - a sadistic perverseness. Rigault's obsession during the Second Empire with the mechanism of police detection is indicated when Quiche's terror finally gives way to rage:

- Mais c'est insensé, tout ceci! m'écriai-je avec fureur. C'est insensé. Pendant que vous perdez votre temps à m'interroger sur des niaiseries, Paris est plein de traîtres et d'espions!

- Je les connais tous, dit Rigault dans un mouvement de fierté professionnelle. Tous, vous entendez? Ce n'est pas vous qui allez m'apprendre mon métier! Je le pratiquais déjà avant d'être ici. Déjà sous l'Empire, toutes mes fiches étaient prêtes. On le relâche? fit-il en s'adressant à Ferré et en me désignant de l'épaule, avec dédain. (MP 241)

However real his lack of professionalism, Rigault is too infantile or too enamoured of a role to accept without haughty rejoinder implication that his methods are less than foolproof. Théodore's morale after this disquieting interview will, fortunately, be boosted somewhat by a meeting with Marie-Rose and further reciprocal protestations of love.

Despite its length, Quiche's account of the events of 9-10 May is quoted below in entirety. The various considerations arising from it will then be examined:

Le lendemain matin, je m'éveillai très tard. Je courus à la Guerre. La rue Saint-Dominique était noire de troupes en désordre. J'eus à peine le temps de voir Rossel passer au galop, suivi de son état-major. Autour de moi on criait que le fort d'Issy était évacué. Dans la cour du ministère, j'aperçus Isabelle gantée de noir, fine, éperdue, et qui allait de groupe en groupe. Elle s'accrocha à mon bras.

- Que se passe-t-il? lui dis-je. Votre frère a-t-il eu ses douze mille hommes, ce matin, à la Concorde?

Elle éclata d'un rire nerveux.

- Sept mille! me cria-t-elle. A peine sept mille! Et il fallait voir comment ils étaient équipés! Je vous en prie, venez avec moi à l'Hôtel-de-Ville. Lisé est fou, il veut se constituer prisonnier, il demande une cellule à Mazas. Il faut l'empêcher. Le Comité Central veut le soutenir, demander pour lui les pleins pouvoirs. Où sont vos amis? Siffrelin, Moreau? Et Vermersch, que fait-il?

Elle m'entraîna dehors. Nous gagnâmes le boulevard Saint-Germain avec de grandes difficultés, tant la foule était dense. Au coin d'une rue, une blanche affiche toute fraîche s'étalait:

Le drapeau tricolore flotte sur le fort d'Issy, abandonné hier soir par sa garnison. Le délégué à la Guerre: ROSSEL.

- C'est terrible, murmurai-je.

- Rossel au poteau! cria une voix rauque dans la foule.

Isabelle devint d'une pâleur de craie. Je la soutins dans mes bras et nous continuâmes notre route. Les heures qui suivirent restent, dans ma mémoire, parmi les plus tumultueuses et les plus confuses que j'aie vécues. Je revois Isabelle Rossel, ses yeux plus étonnés que jamais, plus innocents dans son visage convulsé.

J'assiste à des discussions éperdues. J'entends la voix de Delescluze, coupée par la toux comme par des grondements de tonnerre, ses appels, ses supplications. Les nouvelles s'entre-croisent: le fort n'est pas pris, Mégy et Eudes sont arrêtés, Malon a crié à Pyat qu'il était le mauvais génie de la Commune! Delescluze est élu délégué à la Guerre, Courbet demande que la Commune se transporte aux Tuileries. Où est Rossel? On va le juger. Isabelle s'est accrochée à mon bras. Depuis le matin nous n'avons mangé, elle et moi, qu'un peu de jambon et de fromage. Mais j'ai beaucoup bu. Les heures de la nuit s'écoulaient. Le complot, dit-on, commence à s'éclaircir. Quel complot? Oui, cette trame ténébreuse... Issy était infesté de chouans. Péchin y avait pénétré, Péchin, l'homme de Thiers. La trahison est partout. On la flaire, on la voit dans ces couloirs où toute une foule bigarrée et braillarde se presse. Tout à coup, Isabelle pousse un cri:

- Gérardin!

Un homme se retourne, nous fait signe de la main, nous entraîne dans un escalier brusquement désert. Une porte s'ouvre devant nous. Rossel est là, livide, la bouche terrible sous sa moustache tombante, le menton couvert de poils roussâtres. Isabelle tremble de tout son corps, il me semble qu'elle va tomber. Tout devient miraculeusement facile.

- Je ne veux pas partir, dit Rossel.

Mais il marche à nos côtés. Nous pressons le pas. Nous nous retrouvons dans la cour de l'Hôtel-de-Ville. Un factionnaire, sous la voûte, présente les armes. Gérardin a disparu. Un fiacre passe rue de Rivoli, où nous montons, Rossel, sa soeur et moi. Rossel est assis, comme un paquet, le regard vide. Isabelle lui enlève son képi, en arrache la grenade d'argent, et le contemple passionnément. Je demande:

- Où allons-nous?

Isabelle me regarde et murmure:

- Merci... merci... Dieu vous... O Lisé! ajoute-t-elle. Tu vas revoir Sarah!... La petite...

Nous descendons de voiture boulevard Saint-Michel, devant une maison où Rossel et sa soeur se sont engouffrés. Je demeure seul sur le trottoir, dans la foule, sans savoir quel jour nous sommes, si c'est le matin ou l'après-midi. (MP 247-249)

Once more, the fragmentariness of Quiche's impressions is in evidence. The short, almost staccato sentences used by the young man at the beginning of his account do convey an effect of perceptions that are succeeding one another so rapidly as to prevent at the time any real grasp of developments. Cassou is engaging here in a telescoping

of the two-day period covered, making no attempt to indicate even approximately the length of time separating one occurrence from another, and creating an impression that events followed one another in rather more rapid succession than was the case. Thus is captured perhaps an effect more suggestive of the disorder and incomprehension marking the Commune and Quiche's experience of it. The young man's reference at one point to his small consumption of food and not inconsiderable alcoholic intake is intended no doubt as an implicit further explanation for his at times defective power of recall.

Quiche, who glimpses Rossel as the latter - returning presumably from the place de la Concorde - gallops past with his staff, is aware apparently simultaneously of shouting that Issy has been evacuated. The evacuation had in fact taken place some seventeen hours before (about 7 p.m. on the 8th); and it was only when Rossel returned to the War Ministry from the place de la Concorde that he learned the news. The proclamation he wrote immediately (with no warning either to the Communal Council or the Comité de Salut public) and ten thousand copies of which were printed on his order instead of the usual six thousand, not surprisingly gave rise to consternation within Paris, and was in any event a grave injustice to the men entrusted with defence of the fort.⁽⁸²⁾ In another deliberate avoidance of temporal precision, Cassou does not add the time of composition Rossel appended to the message (9 mai 1871 midi et demi).

Indications as to time are again lacking in Quiche's nebulous allusions to matters under discussion at the Hôtel de Ville. The charge hurled at Pyat by Benoît Malon was voiced during the evening of the 9th; Delescluze was nominated to the position of War Delegate on the morning of the following day, and it was on the 10th also that Courbet's suggestions as to an alternative venue for the Commune were under consideration. In the suggestion that Issy had not in fact fallen, and that Mégy and Eudes were under arrest, Cassou is merely indicating the kinds of rumours which, for reasons good and bad, were in circulation. Félix Pyat took the decision on the evening of the 9th

to print a notice denying the collapse of the fort: and Delescluze, who (as is indicated by reference to his appeals and entreaties) had voiced his distress during the afternoon at the time spent by the Commune in futile discussion, merely expressed a view that Mégy and Eudes should be brought before the Commune to answer charges of negligence.⁽⁸³⁾ As the hours wear on (in les Massacres) Versaillais occupation of Issy seems to be confirmed, and the ever-ready explanation of treachery pervades the garishly attired, bawling throng jostling in the corridors of the Hôtel de Ville. References to 'elucidation of the plot' are based upon a paragraph of Lissagaray's history, which, in view of the idea it has seemingly given Cassou, merits quotation here:

Le (...) Comité fit une proclamation désespérée; on venait justement de lui révéler deux nouvelles conspirations: "La trahison s'était glissée dans nos rangs. L'abandon du fort d'Issy, annoncé dans une affiche impie par le misérable qui l'a livré, n'était que le premier acte du drame. Une insurrection monarchique à l'intérieur, coïncidant avec la livraison d'une de nos portes, devait le suivre... Tous les fils de la trame ténébreuse... sont à l'heure présente entre nos mains. La plupart des coupables sont arrêtés... Que tous les yeux soient ouverts, que tous les bras soient prêts à frapper les traîtres!"
(84)

While Lissagaray will dismiss attention to such stories as '*...du mélodrame quand il fallait tout son sang-froid*'⁽⁸⁵⁾ Cassou has evidently seen this particular element as allowing possibilities for mystery or speculation within the context of his own novel. Just what part, the reader may wonder, has Péchin played in the disintegration of hopes and plans? The rubicund, vaguely theatrical supposed friend of the Commune is reported dead (MP 235), then sought by Rigault and Ferré, and will finally be seen by Théodore on Sunday 21 May in the vicinity (so the young man thinks) of the porte de Saint-Cloud, immediately before Versaillais entry.⁽⁸⁶⁾ Be all this as it may, the brief allusions to crowds (the troops swarming in the rue Saint-Dominique, the numbers within the Hôtel de Ville), and to the rumours, sometimes correct, often unsubstantiated, rife amongst them,

indicate a further time the milling disorder, and uncertainty, of the Commune period as portrayed in les Massacres de Paris.

The mood of these hours created, Rossel - principal cause of the confusion - is introduced again briefly, and for the final time, into the novel. Comprehensibly, Cassou makes no attempt to detail the young man's activities from the time of his return from the place de la Concorde on 9 May until his presence at the Hôtel de Ville the following day: the reference by Isabelle to her brother's wish for a cell at Mazas is based upon the final sentence of Rossel's letter of resignation (sent to the Commune and to all leading newspapers in Paris).⁽⁸⁷⁾ In the knowledge she expresses of plans by the Comité de Salut public to request full powers for the young War Delegate, Isabelle seems to display a gift for premonition, as it was not in fact until the evening of the 9th that Rossel was himself acquainted with the proposal. Similarly, the reader of the passage receives the impression that Rossel probably escaped from the Hôtel de Ville during the morning (or the early afternoon) of 10 May, when it was in fact after five o'clock that he (and Gérardin) disappeared. Charles Gérardin - instrumental in Rossel's flight - is in Cassou's evocation merely glimpsed, a figure whose importance in the plan may be implied but who will simply vanish (as characters both historical and fictional are wont to do throughout the novel) when the escape is actually effected.

The bond between Isabelle and Louis-Nathaniel is no less evident in these pages than during the evening of conspiracy. It is in her devotion to Rossel that Isabelle proves herself on both occasions to be most vulnerable: eyes wide in ingenuous pain as she moves with Théodore amidst the tumult and confusion, deathly white as a hoarse shout recalls to her the fate likely to befall her brother, Isabelle might well in her silent distress seem deserving of compassion. Originality of depth of imagination on Cassou's part may not be markedly in evidence in the passage; the very simplicity of the evocation does endow Isabelle and Rossel with a living quality. It is

unimportant that the account of the escape supplied is at variance with the one left by the War Delegate himself:(88) the dramatic effect is considerable in this image of a man ashen-faced, confronted with the collapse of all hope and of his very destiny; and in whom, furthermore, all power of will seems destroyed. Mention of the sentry presenting arms as Quiche, Isabelle and Rossel emerge into the yard of the Hôtel de Ville is a somewhat ironic touch based however upon fact.(89) Further irony will be implicit when, only minutes afterwards, Isabelle flings Rossel's cap through the carriage door having torn from it the silver insignia. While the young woman's intention is manifestly to mark the break with the Commune and those who have failed her adored Lisé, the gesture may seem also an unwitting testimony to her brother's failure as War Delegate. At Issy on 7 May, Rossel had himself ordered that three officers be degraded. The ceremony included the removal of ornamentation from képis:(90) and Cassou, conceivably, had this fact in mind.

Quiche - for whom Isabelle holds such fascination - has by reason of Rossel's disgrace and the general hostility towards the young officer, enjoyed for some hours at least the apparent dependence on him of a young woman overwhelmed by the turn of events. Once in the cab, however, he is clearly far from Isabelle's thoughts. When the three alight on the boulevard Saint-Michel (and it was indeed here, Rossel writes, that he and Gérardin separated) Quiche finds himself within seconds alone among the crowd. Isabelle and Rossel have disappeared into a nearby house, and their companion, unconscious of time or day, stands in his near-habitual state of confusion and bewilderment.

There is no further word in the novel as to Rossel's fate, for the simple reason, no doubt, that he at this point vanished into temporary obscurity. Using the assumed name of Gustave Tirebois, he remained in hiding within Paris until arrested (following revelation of his whereabouts) on 7 June 1871. Nearly six months later, on 28 November, Rossel, Ferré and sergeant Bourgeois were executed by firing squad at Satory. Persona non grata for both Left and Right, seen by many

conservatives almost as a class traitor, the Commune's former War Delegate had indeed, finally, fallen victim to 'the others'.⁽⁹¹⁾

Attention may now be turned to other real-life figures appearing in les Massacres. If Cassou was strongly conscious of Louise Michel's generosity and humaneness, this is hardly the overriding impression conveyed by his portrayal of her. '*Cette créature dont le coeur était aussi monstrueux que l'aspect*' (MP 191) is presented through Théodore's eyes as an alarming, fanatical woman, unattractive in appearance and unnerving of character. Louise is described going the rounds of the various hospital outposts soon before the end of March, '*...apportant aux blessés le réconfort de son visage osseux et de son large sourire inaltérablement saoul d'avenir*' (MP 191). Unbecomingly attired ('*Ses cheveux étaient coupés courts sous son feutre de franc-tireur et découvraient son grand front. Elle portait une cloche de mauvaise fourrure et des godillots*') (MP 191) there is something vaguely ghoulish about 'la Vierge rouge' as '*...dans un tourbillon de délire et de pitié...*' (MP 191) she hastens with gruesome zeal from the bedside of one wounded fédéré to another:

Louise courut aux lits avec passion, se pencha sur les blessés, posa des questions. (...) ...en partant, (elle) nous jeta:

- J'ai des nouvelles de Versailles. Ils sont découragés. Tous les bulletins ne contiennent que des mensonges. La Commune a été proclamée à Narbonne et à Toulouse. Vous le saviez? Oui, à Narbonne aussi! Vous dites? A Lyon, c'est fini? Qu'en savez-vous? Fini? Qu'est-ce que ça veut dire, fini? (MP 192)

Quiche will see her again some weeks later at Dombrowski's headquarters at Neuilly, '*...habillée en homme, tunique et pantalon, le fusil en bandoulière, des pistolets à la ceinture*' (MP 206). Something of her gruff quasi masculinity is suggested perhaps by a familiar grabbing of Dombrowski's neck as she addresses him (MP 208) (a gesture of this sort would hardly be performed by the alluringly feminine Isabelle Rossel, or by Marie-Rose). The essential feature of her

personality as Cassou represents it here is a fascination with the morbid and the macabre, for she talks of the skeletons recently discovered at Picpus and at Saint-Laurent, of instruments of torture and of women who sink into madness when shut away in confinement:

...toi, Dombrowski, dit-elle (...), toi, n'est-ce pas, tu y crois, à tout ça? Tu crois, n'est-ce pas, qu'il y a des recluses, oui, des femmes qu'on enferme et qui deviennent folles?... C'est possible, n'est-ce pas? (MP 208)

Such evocation of the more extreme features of conventual life terrifies Louise (*'Il y avait de l'épouvante dans (ses) yeux (...), dans sa grande bouche amère'*) (MP 208). The future however - with which, as suggested in her earlier appearance, this woman is obsessed - provides a fount of hope, the true religion. Spiritual enhancement and personal salvation may be attainable in a new order brought about through revolutionary change:

Quand je pense à ce qui était derrière moi, quand je me retourne, c'est la nuit. Et dans la nuit on imagine le pire. (...) Moi, je ne peux pas reculer: je sais tout ce dont l'homme est capable. C'est atroce. Mais aussi je sais imaginer tout ce dont il est capable quand... Quand Dieu ne s'en mêle plus... (MP 208)

Just as he had used Isabella Rossel's publication in his portrayal of the Commune's second War Delegate, so in his characterisation of Louise Michel Cassou is drawing upon her account of the Commune published in 1898. The description of her with short hair and boots is based in all likelihood upon a section of the fourteenth chapter.⁽⁹²⁾ For the conversation at Neuilly, information is taken from the chapter entitled 'Les Franc-maçons', in which the discoveries at Saint-Laurent and at Picpus are discussed over several pages.⁽⁹³⁾

On this visit to Neuilly, Quiche walks briefly in the open air with Dombrowski:

Devant (une) tranchée, à côté d'un drapeau rouge on avait planté des bannières maçonniques, ornées du temple d'or, du niveau, du

compas. Certains combattants, sur leur vareuse, portaient le cordon bleu, brodé d'insignes.

- J'ai ici deux loges, m'expliqua Dombrowski: l'Etoile Polaire et la Rose du Parfait Silence.

Sur l'une des bannières, une grande bannière blanche, je lus à haute voix: "Aimez-vous les uns les autres."

- Oui, murmura Louise qui nous avait rejoints. (MP 207)

Again the names of the two lodges, and the reference to the banner, are to be found in Louise Michel's la Commune.(94) When soon afterwards the female revolutionary speaks of an attempt by the freemasons to effect a conciliation between the warring camps:

Tu étais là, Dombrowski, le jour où tes amis francs-maçons se sont réunis au Carrousel et qu'ils sont allés à Versailles? C'était bien beau. Moi, je voyais cela comme une image des temps futurs, lorsque les sens seront plus puissants, lorsqu'il y en aura d'autres! Car il y en aura d'autres, n'est-ce pas, Dombrowski?
(MP 208)

Cassou is clearly making further use of the book: the reference to the more developed senses of the future is in fact taken almost textually from it.(95)

For both the real and the 'fictional' Louise Michel - as of course for innumerable Communards - the revolution should entail ideally a rupture with the pernicious attitudes of the past. We may note however - without necessarily seeing this as further disparagement of the female revolutionary - that she will twice at Neuilly serve unconsciously (and even indirectly, on the second occasion) to remind Quiche the poet and dreamer of the fanaticism, brutality and ugliness of which humanity is capable. As his thoughts linger on the charms of Marie-Rose Siffrelin, Théodore is lost in the beauties of his springtime idyll; only to be put in mind by Louise of certain macabre atrocities:

...je regardai (...) le ciel virginal, et, portant mes yeux aussi loin que possible, j'imaginai des promenades idylliques, aussi extraordinaires que l'amour de Marie-Rose que je portais au tréfonds de mon coeur. C'est alors que Louise me regarda de ses larges yeux fixes et se mit à parler des squelettes découverts à Picpus et à Saint-Laurent, des instruments de torture... (MP 207)

This seems to constitute an implicit linking of the twin themes of love and death - met in a number of texts relating to the Commune. Again, after the freshness of the open air, Quiche enters the hospital where Louise is tending patients:

...je fus saisi à la gorge par des relents affreux, des senteurs d'iode, de linge sale, de capotes lourdes de boue et de sang. (MP 209)

While it seems unjust to regard this as an implicit condemnation of Louise Michel - who is, after all, performing a useful and necessary function - one may feel Cassou to be indicating a further time that she had, in his view at least, little capacity to elevate or inspire. Even the favourable judgement expressed by a wounded fédéré:

- C'est une crâne et gaillarde fille, me dit d'une voix pâteuse un blessé, couché sur le dos, les yeux perdus dans une face embroussaillée d'ivrogne... (MP 206)

seems - despite the truth of the words - somehow diminished by the drunken slur and alcoholic visage of the man giving voice to it. It is true that Théodore, with his love of feminine charm, might well have found Louise's physical appearance - and superficial aspects of her behaviour - little short of repellent. An assumption that his hardly favourable portrayal reflects the impression of Cassou himself is not however unpardonable. Given this woman's evident lack of attraction, there might even - in the context of the book - be a degree of irony in her preoccupation with the more powerful senses of the future.

The suspicion and calumny with which Jaroslaw Dombrowski had to contend when serving the Commune constitutes the basis for Cassou's

representation of him in les Massacres. Required early in May to deliver a message to Dombrowski at Neuilly, Théodore is in turn given one to carry back with him that seems - in its mildly enigmatic quality - almost in keeping with the Pole's own character:

- Cinq mille hommes avant trois jours... Tu le leur diras, n'est-ce pas? Seulement, il ne faut pas me prendre pour un espion. Moi, je leur ai proposé de suivre ces négociations jusqu'au bout, pour voir où cela aboutirait. Mais s'ils n'ont pas confiance en moi, s'ils pensent que je joue la comédie, c'est bon, je me ferai sauter. On verra bien alors.

Il parlait tranquillement, d'une voix douce et ingénue. Je savais qu'on ne l'aimait pas beaucoup, parce qu'il était étranger. A la Guerre j'avais souvent entendu celui-ci ou celui-là prendre sa défense. Mais lui, il ne songeait guère à se défendre. Etranger? Bon, étranger partout. Et il était là, à Neuilly, comme il aurait pu être ailleurs, aussi libre, assurément, qu'il l'avait été dans toutes ses aventures militaires, au Caucase ou pendant l'insurrection polonaise. Aussi libre qu'il avait pu l'être pendant sa captivité en Sibérie! J'éprouvai à son égard un sentiment d'envie. Je pensai que si je restais près de lui, sans doute n'aurais-je plus jamais aucune difficulté médiocre à résoudre. J'irais, je viendrais à travers la terre, et toujours au milieu du danger, d'un vrai et pur danger. Il se promenait dans la chambre saccagée, les mains dans les poches, les yeux innocents, puis il s'approcha de la fenêtre. Il avait oublié ma présence. (MP 208-209)

A background knowledge of the Commune is no less a prerequisite for the reader here than in many another page of the novel. The Pole's somewhat cryptic remarks are made in reference to an attempt by the Versaillais spy Veysset to secure Dombrowski's services in betrayal of Paris. Dombrowski had lost no time in reporting the approaches made him to the Comité de Salut public, which had instructed him to follow the negotiation through, reporting all developments. In a clandestine move of its own, however, the Committee charged an agent in its employ to keep Dombrowski under surveillance and to shoot him if he seemed at all tempted by the bribes offered.(96) Cassou presents Dombrowski in les Massacres as a man alone. His foreign birth and background are said to endear him to few during the Commune:(97) it might be added however that while xenophobic rumours indeed gained ground when news of the approaches made him became known, the initial mistrust, on the part

of the National Guard, of Dombrowski the alien, had in fact been dissipated in significant degree by his extraordinary courage at Neuilly.

To Quiche, Dombrowski seems almost to personify individual liberty. His is not of course a freedom from restrictions imposed by forces without, but rather a freedom of the soul, an ability on the part of the individual to surmount by aspiration, by belief in self or in ideal - or even in this case by a certain Slavic fatalism - the tyrannies of various kinds endured by most human beings. Fleeting allusions to Dombrowski's past - his experiences in the Caucasus where he served not, as was subsequently assumed by many, in combat against the Russians but as a soldier in the tsarist armies; his involvement in preparation for the Polish insurrection of 1863 (arrested in 1862, he had been sent to captivity in Siberia two years afterwards, but had escaped during the journey) - indicate that his is a life liberally marked in fact by regimentation and restraint. The sum of his experiences however, as it may seem to Quiche, entitles him to recognition as a man of integrity and courage who has been prepared to cast aside purely selfish preoccupation and to struggle for justice and freedom. Cassou would in all likelihood have been aware that one of Dombrowski's preferred maxims was that of the Internationalist movement ('Pour Votre et Notre Liberté'): (98) and for Quiche - enamoured of revolution and what it purports to achieve, but whose own existence, spent exclusively within the Paris area, has been nothing if not restricted - a life such as Dombrowski's, passed in distant places, often in selfless devotion to a cause and in an attendant atmosphere of risk, would seem no doubt of distinctly ennobling quality. A further trait in the Pole's character of probable appeal to the young man is a latent theatricality, suggested in the pride Dombrowski appears to take in the colourful apparel worn by some of his men (MP 207). It may be noted in fact that the general's little yellow beard can at times seem to Théodore to have an artificial look. Here at Neuilly, as later during the semaine sanglante, Quiche imagines a personal affinity with Dombrowski and feels a need for his comradeship. The solitude of the

Pole - to be tragically evident before many weeks have passed - is suggested now however as, wrapped in thought, he is soon unmindful even of Quiche's presence.

On Dombrowski's next appearance in the novel (during the semaine sanglante) he is in a state of visible distress at the accusations of betrayal levelled against him. When during the evening of the 21st Quiche frenziedly arrives at the War Ministry with news of Versaillais entry, confused and manifestly unreasoning attempts to make a scapegoat of the general are apparent in the vociferations of men caught unawares:

- *Enfin, sont-ils entrés, oui ou non?*
- *Que dit l'Hôtel-de-Ville?*
- *On y a reçu une dépêche de Dombrowski.*
- *Mais c'est inconcevable! Comment Dombrowski les a-t-il laissé entrer? Encore un traître, comme Rossel.*
- *Pourquoi n'a-t-il pas averti?*
- *Mais puisqu'il a averti!*
- *Surtout ne pas affoler la population.*
- *Ne pas recommencer le coup de la proclamation d'Issy. (MP 267)*

Dombrowski had indeed sent a telegram, referred to by Vallès in his account of the Commune's final session.(99) Quiche describes the arrival of the Pole at the Hôtel de Ville about two in the morning, overcome, barely capable of speech, and with a chest severely bruised by flying stones.(100) Immediately he appears he is subjected to insult and accusation by those just apprised of the entry:

- On me laissa pour l'accabler de reproches et d'invectives.*
- *C'est bon, disait-il, on me prend pour un traître... Vous allez voir... Vous allez voir... Où est le Comité de Salut public?*
- On l'entraîna. Le tumulte des voix était assourdissant. MP 269)*

It is then amidst the apparently inescapable uproar Cassou associates with the Commune period that Dombrowski tries in vain to

vindicate himself. He will reappear at the Hôtel de Ville soon after dawn on the Monday morning, surrounded by a platoon of shouting fédérés and again in the grip of a tension and distress that is disregarded (or perversely derided) by most of those present. Siffrelin and Quiche himself try in vain to lessen the general's anguish; the young man feeling more than ever drawn to Dombrowski at a time when the latter could hardly be more alone:

Il crie:

- Je veux voir le Comité de Salut Public!

On lui dit:

- Encore?

La tête en avant, le visage crispé, il se défend, cette fois, d'avoir voulu fuir. Siffrelin fend la foule, pose sa lourde main sur l'épaule de Dombrowski, l'entraîne.

- Calme-toi, mon commandant, lui dit-il. Mais non, tu n'as pas voulu fuir, on le sait bien...

Moi aussi, je voudrais m'approcher de Dombrowski, le calmer, lui serrer la main, l'embrasser. J'ai besoin d'un compagnon. Becker a disparu. Je ne vois plus que la face douloureuse de Dombrowski, ses yeux obsédés, sa barbiche jaune qui tremble comme une barbe postiche et qui devrait tomber, car elle ne va pas avec cette physionomie tout occupée d'une pensée sombre et définitive. Où l'a-t-on emmené? Je sais qu'il a besoin de moi. Il m'a regardé, il m'appelle!

Enfin, voici Becker.

- Becker! Où est Dombrowski?

- Il est parti.

- Où? Je voudrais partir avec lui.

- Viens, me répond Becker, simplement. Je lui crie:

- Il faut retrouver Dombrowski! Vite, vite!

Nous descendons. On nous apprend que Dombrowski est parti dans la direction des Halles, seul, désarmé. (...) Qui est-ce qui a vu Dombrowski? Il était là, tout à l'heure, à une barricade du faubourg Saint-Denis: c'est lui-même qui a planté le drapeau rouge au milieu des pavés, puis il est reparti vers le faubourg Montmartre. C'était bien lui, on l'a reconnu. Il avait son uniforme de commandant. Mais pas de képi, ni d'épée. Il parlait tout seul. (MP 270-271)

With a skill apparent in his evocation of other figures of the Commune Cassou creates then for his reader a mental image of Dombrowski, face contorted in suffering, eyes haunted, distanced irreversibly even from those wanting to comfort or placate him. The very fact of his talking to himself seems in this context to underscore the general's inability now to communicate with, or be reached by, another human being. Here as elsewhere in the novel, attainment of dramatic effect precludes background explanation. The precise nature of events during the night of 22-23 May remains even today in doubt, although Lissagaray states that Dombrowski (tortured at the suspicions of treachery harboured against him by the Comité de Salut public) had indeed attempted escape from Paris, only to be captured and brought back by outraged fédérés.⁽¹⁰¹⁾ It would seem that Cassou is using this information as a basis for the scene.⁽¹⁰²⁾ Quiche (mindful probably of what Dombrowski had said to him at Neuilly and carrying etched in his consciousness the image of '*...cette physionomie (...) occupée d'une pensée sombre et définitive*') clearly feels his search for the Pole to be a race against time. The testimony of such men as Lissagaray⁽¹⁰³⁾ and Gustave Lefrançais⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ suggests that Dombrowski indeed intended to clear his name by exposing himself to death from Versaillais bullets.

The man commonly considered to be the Commune's ablest general is next seen by Théodore over twenty-four hours later at the rue Myrrha in Montmartre. While there can be no question as to the risk at which he is now placing himself, Dombrowski's attitude is seemingly that of a man seeking to obviate despair through aggression against the Versaillais, or the world at large, rather than in a deliberate courting of death:

Au coin de la barricade (...) je venais d'apercevoir, courbé en deux derrière la plaque d'une mitrailleuse, Dombrowski. Il tournait la manivelle grinçante, d'un geste régulier, et ses mâchoires serrées, ses yeux assombris exprimaient une pensée absente et désespérée. Moi, je me sentis saisi d'une folle exaltation. Je regardais Dombrowski, je n'osais ni l'appeler ni lui mettre la main sur l'épaule. Je comprenais qu'il ne fallait pas le déranger. Il fallait le laisser cracher toute sa mitraille. Je m'approchai de lui, je regardai son profil tendu, et la petite barbiche jaune, fixée au menton et qui tressaillait

de temps à autre. Becker s'étendit de tout son long sur les pavés, à côté de lui, épaula son fusil, tira. Je pris une cartouche, armai mon fusil. Là-dessus, une détonation éclata. Je me baissai instinctivement, me sentis noyé dans un nuage de poudre. Quand je levai les yeux, je vis Becker près de moi, non plus étendu sur le ventre, (...) mais retourné sur le dos parmi les pavés, les bras ouverts, le front sanglant. Dombrowski, lui, se tenait effondré sur sa mitrailleuse, la tête et les bras pendants. Comme s'il avait compris qu'il venait de réussir un beau coup, le canon des Versaillais se tut, et il y eut un silence qui me parut durer une éternité.

- Cochons! fit une voix rauque. Ils ont tué Dombrowski.
(MP 281-282)

Cassou provides here an evocation that, in its capture of lonely desperation and dramatic finality, may not be readily forgotten by the reader. It seems once again unimportant that this account of Dombrowski's end is at variance with what in fact took place. On horseback at the rue Myrrha (accounts differ as to whether he had in fact dismounted before receiving a fatal bullet wound) Dombrowski died in agony two hours later at the hôpital Lariboisière, murmuring - according to some sources - as he was carried there: '*Ils ont pu dire que je les ai trahis!*'(105) The poignancy of Dombrowski's solitude (which Cassou was clearly at pains to capture) is underscored in a passage such as the above: in death, however, he will not, in this fictional account, be alone. The corpse of Becker (killed by the same cannon shot) accompanies that of the Pole to the Hôtel de Ville, and later to burial. For the first journey, both bodies are borne on the same stretcher: and it seems ironic (though reflective of an implanted human tendency) that Dombrowski will now receive the homage denied him when alive.

Quiche recalls the hushed, almost reverent attitude of the fédérés when the identity of one of the victims is realised:

...on construisait hâtivement des barricades, qui s'ouvriraient sur notre cortège. Jonfosse [one of the stretcher bearers], solennellement, criait:

- Place aux héros! Laissez passer le général Dombrowski, mort en brave pour le peuple!

Les combattants se découvraient ou présentaient les armes.

- Dombrowski! disaient-ils. Voilà qu'ils ont tué Dombrowski.

- On le vengera!

(...)

...nous arrivâmes à l'Hôtel-de-Ville. Les couloirs, les salles, tout était plein de blessés et de mourants. Quel tapage! Mais notre cortège fit sensation. On murmurait: "Dombrowski..." Et les fronts se découvraient. (MP 284-285) (105)

Becker, as Dombrowski's companion in death, will also lie in state with him at the Hôtel de Ville:

On installa les deux morts dans une petite pièce, sur une table, avec une bougie devant. Et je restai là un moment à les veiller. Un officier arriva, qui savait dessiner et qui s'installa à leur chevet avec son crayon et son album de poche. De temps en temps, pour mieux saisir un détail, il se penchait sur ses modèles. (MP 285)

Dombrowski was indeed thus sketched, so Lissagaray tells us, as his body lay in the Hôtel de Ville. Cassou's description of the face of the dead general ('(Il) avait un petit visage tout blanc, couleur de lait. Le sang s'était coagulé sur son front. Il semblait sourire entre sa moustache et sa barbiche jaunes') (MP 285) is not unreminiscent of that supplied by the historian, (107) who had mentioned also the detail of the candle. Allusion by Quiche to the apparent smile on the general's face seems - in view of the latter's earlier intimations that his loyalty would be recognised after his death - a posthumous acknowledgement that this prediction had been accurate.

During the night of 23-24 May, both victims of the cannon-fire are borne together in ceremony to the Père-Lachaise. Quiche, Marie-Rose and Siffrelin accompany the procession at least as far as the Bastille:

Des groupes se formèrent. On discutait. Puis survint la civière de Becker et de Dombrowski, son drap rouge qui traînait à terre. Tout le monde se découvrit. Des fédérés suivaient, portant des torches. Le cortège se dirigea vers la rue Saint-Antoine. Nous partîmes derrière. Quelqu'un nous rejoignit en courant: je

reconnus Vermorel. Plus loin d'autres nous emboîtèrent le pas. Le bruit de la canonnade nous poursuivait.

(...)

(...) Il me semblait que nous courions à toute vitesse, poursuivant le cortège funèbre qui courait aussi devant nous, le long de la rue Saint-Antoine. La Bastille apparut, grouillante de baïonnettes et de clameurs. Des torches accoururent de tous côtés se joindre aux torches qui encadraient les cadavres de Dombrowski et de Becker. On criait: "Place!" Un grand cortège se forma, et au pied de la Colonne, qui surgissait, tendue de rouge, d'une masse de couronnes d'immortelles et de drapeaux, nous plaçâmes la grande civière. Un homme, dressé près de moi, sur le piédestal, les bras en croix et une torche allumée à chaque poing, hurla:

- Vive la République universelle!

Le cri monta dans le ciel embrasé. Il me parut que, là-haut, l'ange de la Liberté le répétait aux quatre vents. (MP 291-293)

The description is such as to enable ready imagination or visualisation of the crowd movement, the noise, the leaping flames of the torches under a sky already aflame; and of the amassed tributes, at the foot of the July Column, to the Revolution's dead. Lissagaray writes that the fédérés present on this occasion had each placed a kiss on the brow of the dead general: in lieu of this ceremonial Cassou introduces elements of his own. There could be no more appropriate call, in view of the nationality and the history of one of the slain, than for the Universal Republic: given also Théodore's idea of Dombrowski, the reference to the angel of Liberty may be supposed not to be a chance one. While Cassou makes no specific mention of this, it was Vermorel who would pronounce the eulogy at Dombrowski's burial on Wednesday 24th.

A number of brief appearances in the novel by other prominent Communards call for consideration also. When Quiche meets Eugène Vermersch in early May, he is struck primarily by the latter's almost disconcerting facility with language, and his entire demeanour as he expounds on subjects many and varied. Quiche has never known anybody, he claims, able to talk as Vermersch could:

Ses paroles avaient l'air de le dépasser. Son visage demeurait impassible, le regard froid, mais les paroles éclataient, sarcastiques, étincelantes, plus vives que la pensée. Il divisait les questions, disant: "Premier problème... Deuxième problème..." Et toute chose paraissait claire et réduite à ses éléments. Puis, avec un brusque éclat de rire il proposait une conclusion inattendue et qui n'avait rien à voir avec les considérations précédentes. Et il haussait les épaules comme pour faire entendre que, au bout du compte, il ne restait plus qu'à accomplir quelque action inconséquente et grandiose... (MP 216)

A propensity for irony was clearly a distinguishing feature of Vermersch's character. His close friend Vuillaume wrote in the Cahiers rouges of '...cette pointe d'ironie gouailleuse qui était pour lui une pose constante':(108) and Lissagaray referred in his Histoire de la Commune to Vermersch's scepticism and vanity.(109) This perhaps explains the touch in les Massacres whereby the word 'vanité' having been pronounced in the conversation,

Vermersch s'accrocha à ce mot (...). "Vanité, vanité..." répéta-t-il en bâillant. Il nous regarda tous, de son oeil perspicace, et nous quitta (...) pour aller faire son journal.
(MP 222)

The idiosyncratic delivery Vermersch evidences on this occasion (and, it may be supposed, on every other) holds appeal for the impressionable Quiche, who is somewhat cryptically warned against it by Becker after the meeting. Vermersch, Becker states,

...ne réfléchit pas: il pense... Ou il parle. Et ces deux opérations, il ne les fait jamais à la fois. Tu ne le connais pas: c'est un poète, il écrit, il est désespéré. C'est le type d'homme le plus dangereux au monde. (MP 226)

A condemnation, perhaps, of those inclined to talk for the sake of talking. Elements of this judgement may be related somewhat tenuously to Vermersch's life as we know it to have evolved. Poverty-stricken and seemingly afflicted with persecution mania during the period of exile in London, the poet's verbal attacks on fellow Communards also living in the British capital alienated him inevitably from his former comrades, and resulted in scenes of public humiliation (he was slapped

by Constant Martin on one occasion for referring to Edouard Vaillant as '(un) docteur allemand'). Struggling in vain through his writing to keep his wife and child from starvation, his sorely strained nerves collapsed finally through poverty, distress and overwork: he died insane in 1878. It is to Vermersch, however, that we owe what is widely considered the greatest poem by a Communard: 'les Incendiaires', written in London in September 1871. There is, of course, no word on Vermersch's fate after the Commune included in les Massacres de Paris.

The journalist, playwright and long-time revolutionary Félix Pyat is described at the Hôtel de Ville on 8 May:

...grand, raide, la rosette frangée d'or à la boutonnière (...) avec un puissant accent méridional, (il) tonnait contre le pouvoir militaire et exigeait des commissaires aux armées. (MP 231)

It is not clear why Cassou attributes characteristics of a Southerner to Pyat. Although elected deputy for the Bouches-du-Rhône in 1888, the man whom Becker will consider to typify '*le méridional d'aventure et de brasserie*' (MP 212) was born at Vierzon and educated at Bourges and in Paris. Be this as it may, the bombastic, declamatory nature of Pyat's personal style⁽¹¹⁰⁾ is suggested by the use in relation to him and his followers of the verbs '*tonner*, '*brailler*' (MP 232), '*tonitruer*' (MP 234). His malignant hatred of Rossel, implicit in the quotation supplied, is conveyed further through mention by Isabelle of the name he has given her brother ('*Je sais bien que Pyat le traite de Césarion...*') (MP 217), and through Becker's reference during the clandestine discussions to a not unsuccessful part played by Pyat in the undermining of the young man's authority as War Delegate:

- *Vous savez la dernière de Félix Pyat?*
- *Le déplacement de Wrobleski? dit Péchin en ricanant.*
- *Oui, ça a fait un beau tapage. Il a nié s'être jamais mêlé de cela. Alors on lui a montré l'ordre signé de sa main. Il est devenu livide, il a voulu monter sur ses grands chevaux, et puis il est sorti en claquant la porte. (MP 220)*

The incident in question lends weight to Rossel's undoubtedly well-founded belief as to the impossibility of his task as War Delegate. A member of the Comité de Salut public, Pyat had on 3 May been one of three men to sign a telegram from the body to General Walery Wroblewski, ordering him to proceed to Issy from the Moulin-Saquet redoubt. Also present at the fort on Wroblewski's arrival there were Rossel (quite unaware of any orders of this type given by the Committee) and Dombrowski, who had himself received a direction from the body to lend his support at Issy. During Wroblewski's absence from Moulin-Saquet, the redoubt fell to the Versaillais. When the question of the telegram was raised at meetings of the Commune, Pyat initially denied all knowledge of it, claimed when actually confronted with the evidence that he had no recollection of having put his signature to such an order... and finally, when further equivocation seemed pointless, treated the Communal Council to a display of histrionics. (111)

On each occasion Charles Delescluze makes an appearance in les Massacres, attention is drawn to his gravely impaired health. During the interminable discussions and tumult at the Hôtel de Ville following news of the collapse of Issy, Quiche observes the sixty-one-year-old Jacobin racked with coughing, eyes feverish, pleading for quiet (MP 248, 250). Amidst the turmoil and incoherence of the days prior to Versaillais entry, Delescluze (Quiche recalls) would appear amidst his colleagues at the War Ministry,

...son chapeau haut de forme sur la tête, sa grande redingote serrée à la taille, sa canne à la main. Il lançait des paroles véhémentes, coupées d'une crise de toux. (MP 261)

As in portrayal of Rossel (though on a far more limited scale) words actually spoken by Delescluze serve as a basis for comments of his in the novel. When on Sunday 21st Quiche sees Versailles troops inside the city walls, he hastens in frenzy to the War Ministry demanding to see Delescluze, who appears at last,

- ...blanc, aphone, un cigare éteint au coin de la bouche.
 - L'observateur de l'Arc de Triomphe dément la nouvelle.
 - Mais j'ai vu les Versaillais, citoyen délégué, je les ai vus!
 - Eh! bien, fit Delescluze en se redressant, on se battra dans les rues! Ça nous connaît! J'en ai assez de faire de la stratégie et du militarisme. Place au peuple! (MP 267) (My underlining)

This recalls strongly the opening paragraphs of the proclamation issued by the War Delegate on 22 May, and which - calling as it did on the fédérés to defend their own districts rather than make a concerted attempt to confront the Versaillais - is often considered to have been disastrous in its result.(112)

Delescluze will be introduced briefly on two further occasions. Ill and exhausted, he is seen by Quiche signing papers at the Hôtel de Ville on Wednesday 24 May ('Les sillons qui tiraient son visage de chaque côté de la longue bouche amère s'enfonçaient dans une chair jaune, creusée, épouvantable à voir') (MP 289). On Thursday 25th (only hours before his death) he is again glimpsed at the mairie of the 11th arrondissement, still frenetically dealing with paperwork '...jaune, démolí (...) Autour de lui, c'étaient des braillements' (MP 299). His suicide itself is referred to the following day by one of the group in the cafeteria in the rue du Borrégo:

- Delescluze (...) j'y étais quand il est mort. Il a pris sa canne, son chapeau haut de forme, il a boutonné sa redingote, noué son écharpe, et il est parti vers la barricade du Château-d'Eau. Il répétait tout le temps: "Je ne veux plus vivre." (MP 306)

In Delescluze then, we have fleeting portrayal of a desperately sick man, frenetically signing papers that can serve little purpose now, and surrounded by braying, shouting confusion. There can be little doubt, however, that despite its brevity this thumbnail sketch is considerably more evocative than the lengthy representation of the Commune's last War Delegate found in Cladel's I.N.R.I.(113) It seems again probable that Cassou has used references to Delescluze in Pierre

Dominique's la Commune as a starting-point for his own representation. (114)

While Eugène Varlin will feature no more prominently in les Massacres than Delescluze, Pyat and Vermersch, the reader is permitted in a significant episode to gauge his level-headedness when many about him have lost all sense of judgement, and his moral worth. The slaughter of Friday 26 May at the rue Haxo (which Varlin tried in vain to prevent) stands out in Quiche's mind from the tumult and chaos of which it is, of course, a sombre reflection. At the time, however, Théodore was anything but a horrified onlooker or frantic intervenor.

Frequently confused and bewildered during the Commune period, Quiche seems something of a lost soul as the semaine sanglante draws to its close. His friend Becker (who had served much of the time as elucidator or commentator in Théodore's frequent moments of stupefaction) is now dead, and the young man is often separated from Marie-Rose and Siffrelin. Small wonder, perhaps, that the fevered exaltation of these days should take its toll upon one who seems frequently to be vulnerable and malleable: and that Théodore's need to feel free of convention's bonds should assume, in the general ambience of madness, a somewhat ugly guise.

Caught up in the surging mob forcing the hostages to the rue Haxo, Quiche (who is writing from the rational perspective brought about by time) recognises implicitly in his references to the accompanying music ('*les clairons sinistres*', '*(les) tambours qui faisaient leur musique de sauvages*' (MP 301)) and to the crowd itself ('*Nous nous engouffrâmes comme une bande de bêtes, dans une longue venelle obscure*' (MP 301); '*...les faces hurlantes se tournaient et montraient les dents*' (MP 302) that justice and logic count for little at this moment. However understandable the fury within Paris at the wholesale massacre waged by Versailles, the men to be shot down at the rue Haxo are guilty of no crime other than that of being priests and gendarmes whose misfortune it is now to find themselves at the mercy of a vengeful crowd. This

essential consideration is evident to Quiche as he writes months afterwards: unmistakable however in these pages is the young man's continuing scorn for bien-pensant righteousness. The bitter contempt on the faces of the fifty victims as they stand before their howling assassins is matched, seemingly, by Quiche's own (*'Ils allaient mourir au champ d'honneur, comme des héros, comme des martyrs, assassinés par des voyous, et leurs âmes monteraient tout droit au paradis des honnêtes gens'*) (MP 302). Yet something of the cruelty and the irrationality which for the moment grips Quiche himself is evident as he decides that through execution of a priest he can himself settle a score with the past:

Les gendarmes, les policiers, les banquiers s'il y en avait eu, Adolphe Thiers lui-même s'il avait été là, décidément c'était trop facile de les choisir pour la vengeance. C'était trop juste. Ils défendaient la caisse, et moi, j'étais de ceux qui avaient voulu mettre la main à la caisse. Ils étaient les chefs, les tyrans, les bourreaux. Ils ne se battaient même pas pour l'honneur, ni pour une idée, mais pour l'autorité, leur autorité, leur ordre, leur force. (...) Bah! Ces canailles pouvaient faire les malins et prendre leurs grands airs: ils allaient retourner à la pourriture, c'était simple comme bonjour. Si simple que je dédaignais moi-même de prendre part à une telle besogne. Mais les prêtres m'étaient réservés. Ne fût-ce qu'un seul des prêtres... Cela était assez pour moi. (MP 302-303)

A young curé of gentle, inoffensive mien, gazing at his slayers with eyes of compassion and murmuring prayers to his Maker for their forgiveness, seems to Théodore a perfect target for his bullet. Thus will he himself be liberated from the vague feeling of constraint inculcated by boyhood religion: for has he not chosen to break with everything, to give himself over to the bold, the untried and the new? Sounding insistently within the young man however is the voice of his thwarted destiny, that of Théodore Quiche Conservative. What arrogance, this inner voice cries, can justify the rejection by the sinner Quiche of the Almighty's designs? By what right does he question a scheme of things divinely ordained? For Quiche the emancipated, however, rebuke of this type carries little weight:

Je me prends pour quelqu'un qui se dépouille de tous ses liens, (...) et de tous ses délires, et de toutes ses folies, et qui ne veut pas croire, et qui veut ignorer ce que cela peut être que de croire, et qui veut voir ce que deviendra le monde quand le monde ne croira plus, et à quelle vie nouvelle, véritablement sainte, pure et divine il accédera alors! (MP 304)

For all that we have seen Quiche to be anything but enchanted by the Commune's leading female revolutionary, thoughts such as those noted seem almost an echo of her words spoken at Neuilly. To the young man gripped either by poetic vision or hallucination, his prospective victim seems to have above him now a smiling, beautiful angel, '*...sûr de lui et dont le front était pur comme la conscience de l'homme de bien*' (MP 305). There is however a foil to this celestial presence, for at Quiche's side stands '*le démon des larmes*', urging him in a husky whisper to take aim and to fire. This fallen angel is no less beautiful than his serenely assured counterpart: his is a beauty however

...sans résignation, la beauté sauvage du printemps quand il éclate et qu'il refuse de retourner sous la terre. Ou encore la beauté que revêt la plus grande douleur humaine lorsqu'elle refuse de désespérer. Je visai le front du prêtre, entre les deux yeux, cependant que le démon triste m'aida à soutenir mon fusil. Le visage du prêtre se renversa un peu en arrière, dans les plis de la robe de son ange. (MP 305)

The contest seems then to Quiche in his present state of semi-delirium one between bien-pensant conscience defending its bastions of conservatism and constraint, and the dark, tragic, often unheeded beauties of a suffering humanity determined not to yield now to the dictates of Repression. Let the blood of these victims be spilt: may the soul of the priest be expedited heavenwards, for therein lies for Quiche his passport to total liberation...

Une main dure abaissait le canon de mon fusil. Varlin, la face convulsée, me criait:

- Qu'est-ce que tu fais, Quiche? Pas toi, voyons! Tu as été du Comité Central. Tu ne peux pas, tu ne dois pas... Ils sont fous. (MP 305)

Standing at the brink of the Irreparable, Quiche is then summoned back just in time. The priest, we may be sure, lies dead with the other victims: his blood however will not be on Théodore's conscience in the event of the young man's surviving these horrendous days. Quiche has been vaguely conscious already of Varlin's frantic pleas to the mob above shouts and invective: amidst threats and abuse now ('- *Et là-bas, est-ce qu'ils font tant de façons pour fusiller les nôtres? (...) Décampe si tu ne veux pas en recevoir autant'*) (MP 305) the socialist will gently but firmly lead an apparently dazed Théodore from the scene. The latter's acquaintance with Varlin has been limited, but '*...il me semblait voir ressusciter en lui l'autorité douce et fraternelle des amis que j'avais perdus'* (MP 306). In a cafeteria on a corner of the rue du Borrégo (where Quiche has a marked nervous reaction to the events of soon before) various Communards gathered⁽¹¹⁵⁾ comment on the likely consequences of Varlin's presence at the scene of the crime:

- *Tu as eu tort, Varlin, fit un des Communards, tu as eu tort d'aller là-dedans.*
- *Je ne le regrette pas, dit Varlin en me désignant. J'ai empêché celui-là de faire une bêtise.*
- *Oui, mais on dira que les membres de la Commune y étaient.*
- *On dira tant de choses! soupira Varlin. (MP 306)*

As we know, the young man who risked his life trying to prevent the rue Haxo executions met a grisly end on the butte Montmartre two days afterwards.

Reactions to les Massacres de Paris have been varied. Jean Guérin, writing in la Nouvelle Revue Française of 1 April 1936, considered that the disparate elements constituting the novel (historical portrayal, traditional love theme, the initiation of the central character to what is arguably noblest in life) failed to make for a cohesive whole. As for the Commune period itself, '*...dix pages*

de Vallès nous en apprennent davantage.'(116) Lucien Descaves, on the other hand, is said to have felt on reading les Massacres that his own endeavours to achieve recognition for the Commune's 'vieux de la vieille' had not been in vain.(117) To the idea of Jean Bazin (author of the preface to the 1942 edition of the novel published in Rio de Janeiro) the book was 'une oeuvre impérissable',(118) ranking with Germinal, la Débâcle, Quatrevingt-treize and les Misérables. There can be no doubt that it is an advantage for the reader of les Massacres to have some awareness of the Commune period: and even assuming a knowledge on his part of developments during the seventy-two days, the significance of many references may still escape him.

Attention in this chapter has been concentrated less however on Cassou's portrayal of the Commune per se than on his representation of a number of its leading figures. Perhaps the deepest impression to emerge from the personae of Louis Rossel, Dombrowski and, to a lesser degree, Louise Michel, is the solitude in which each seems imprisoned during the insurrectionary period. For all that the two men appear in different ways near embodiments of personal liberation (Rossel through his advocacy of, and compliance with freedom of conscience, Dombrowski in his history as an insurgent and his glorification of liberty) the fate of both seems at odds with the spirit of the Commune. Facing an already daunting task, at loggerheads with his new associates and arguably hampered, in his rapports with the mass of the fédéré army, by bourgeois prejudice and preconception, Rossel is finally a prisoner of the choice he had made on 19 March. Dombrowski, for his part, is destroyed by the accusations and the calumny imputable largely to his alien background. On the final appearance each makes in the novel, the reader seems in presence of a man looking into hopelessness and for whom the Commune has entailed a destruction of the spirit. While the insurrectionary period might be for many (not least Théodore Quiche) a time of personal emancipation, the collapse of the adventure could hardly, it is true, constitute a more total apparent triumph of the Forces of Repression.

Representation by Cassou of actual participants in the insurrectionary interlude was not, of course, an innovation in fictional literature relating to the Commune. Charles Delescluze had been portrayed by Léon Cladel in I.N.R.I.; Jules Vallès by Bourget in Nos Actes nous suivent (1927). It might be ventured, however, that Cassou's considerable talent and greater open-mindedness, together with his reading of varied source material, enabled him to impart to his historical figures a vigour, an authenticity and an interest value lacking in earlier novels.

NOTES

The original edition of les Massacres de Paris was published by Gallimard in 1935. References for this chapter have been taken from the twentieth edition, printed in 1949.

1. See Paul Guth, 'Jean Cassou', Revue de Paris, December 1954, p. 149.
An anecdote testifying to the young Cassou's incipient rebelliousness is recounted by Maurice Martin du Gard in les Mémorables, Vol. I (1918-1923), Paris, Flammarion, 1957, p. 89. Bored apparently with the docility of his young charges when a pion at the lycée de Bayonne during the the First World War, Cassou wrote in chalk on the walls: 'A bas Cassou! Sale pion!'
2. Cassou, who died in 1986, established in the course of his career a leading reputation as an art critic. His publications in this field include Marcel Gromaire (1925), Le Greco (1931), Picasso (1937), Ingres (1947), Situation de l'art moderne (1950), Les Impressionnistes et leur époque (1954), Panorama des arts plastiques contemporains (1960), Chagall (1966). Cassou was curator of the Musée national d'Art moderne from 1946 to 1965.
3. See Paul Guth, op. cit., p. 145.
The paternal branch of Cassou's family had its origins at Billères, near Pau. His father, Léopold Cassou, had been born in Mexico of a Mexican mother. Cassou's own mother was Spanish.
4. See 'la Révolution à Barcelone', Vendredi, 7 August 1936. Quoted by Maryse Bertrand de Munoz, la Guerre civile espagnole et la littérature française, Paris, Didier, 1972, p. 44.
5. See Maurice Rieuneau, Guerre et Révolution dans le roman français de 1919 à 1939, Paris, Klincksieck, 1974, pp. 506-509.
6. See in particular the comments by Becker, pp. 213-214.
7. See Paul Guth, op. cit., p. 150. During the night of Toulouse's liberation, Cassou and three colleagues chanced upon a group of German soldiers. The four were savagely beaten with rifle butts, and two were shot, Cassou himself escaping this fate only because he was taken for dead.
8. This edition has a preface by Jean Bazin. A 'Note importante' opposite the title page reads:
'La réédition panaméricaine des Massacres de Paris, faite par le Département Chantecler de la Librairie Victor Ltda., à Rio de Janeiro, a été incluse, sous le numéro 2, dans la collection, dite de la Marseillaise, réservée à la littérature de guerre et de la victoire, ainsi qu'à tout ouvrage, documentaire, idéologique ou romanesque, relevant de l'idéal démocratique.'

9. We will have occasion to consider Cassou's use of source material. Jean Bazin, in his preface to the limited edition, writes of his friendship with Cassou at the time the latter was planning les Massacres:

'Il connaissait dans les coins la vieille capitale, la suivant du bout du doigt sur des cartes du temps jadis confrontées avec le plan de la métropole contemporaine. (...) ...je l'accompagnai parfois au cours de ses recherches déambulatoires au long des rues historiques du quartier du Marais, de Belleville, de Charonne, du Père Lachaise. Nous parcourûmes ainsi (...) l'itinéraire stratégique qu'avait suivi la résistance désespérée de la Commune, en partant de l'Hôtel-de-Ville pour aboutir au Mur-des-Fédérés.

Cette connaissance érudite et topographique du Paris de 71, (...) permit à l'auteur de faire revivre sous nos yeux l'un des plus grands drames historiques du Peuple de Paris, dans sa lutte séculaire pour la Liberté, l'Égalité et la Fraternité.'

10. See les Massacres, pp. 55-56, 61.
11. During the early stages of the insurrectionary period, Théodore is in the service of the Journal Officiel and the Imprimerie Nationale (see pp. 189-190).
12. See the concluding line of 'Bannières de mai'.
13. The cruelty displayed by the marquis de Galliffet (1830-1909) during repression of the Commune finds illustration in the answer he gave a woman begging for her life ('*Madame, j'ai fréquenté tous les théâtres de Paris; ce n'est pas la peine de jouer la comédie...*'). On one occasion 111 prisoners were executed because their white hair suggested to the marquis that they might have taken part in the 'June Days' twenty-three years before. Years later, Galliffet could still boast of the massacres he had ordered; declaring at a dinner party in 1892 (at which both Alphonse and Léon Daudet were present): '*Si c'était à refaire, je recommencerais...*' (see Léon Daudet, Panorama de la Troisième République, Paris, Gallimard, 1936 (23rd edition), p. 16). On 26 June 1899 (following his appointment as Minister of War in Waldeck-Rousseau's cabinet of republican defence) the marquis found himself greeted at the Palais-Bourbon by roars and clenched fists from representatives of the Left; and by shouts of '*Vive la Commune! A bas le fusilleur! Assassin!*' (see Louis Capéran, l'Anticléricalisme et l'Affaire Dreyfus 1897-1899, Toulouse, Imprimerie régionale, 1948, p. 291; cf. Alexandre Zévaès, Histoire de la Troisième République, Paris, Editions de la Nouvelle Revue Critique, 1938, p. 241).
14. See les Massacres, p. 316: '*...je me demandais ce qui valait le mieux: penser à Marie-Rose afin de fondre mes maux dans une douleur plus vive encore, ou ne plus penser à rien et me*

contraindre à n'être qu'une chose afin de pouvoir supporter l'intolérable fatalité d'être immobilisé, ployé, brisé pour des heures et des heures, dans une boîte sans air, et de subir, contre moi, la présence d'(une) femme changée en louve et qui essaie de trouver un peu de place pour ne pas étouffer son bébé et le faire téter à une mamelle vide. Ce bébé (...) n'était pas une chose comme moi, c'était un être vivant, une petite conscience obscure qui souffre, qui crie, incapable de se contracter dans le silence et le néant, incapable de ne pas faire connaître son existence.'

15. See the Journal des Goncourt, entry for 7 May 1871. Happening to be present at a club during an address by Jacques Durand, Goncourt found himself almost impressed by the speaker.
Born at Pézenas in August 1817, Durand was a cobbler. He resigned from the membership of the Central Committee of the National Guard on 15 March 1871, and was elected to the Commune by the 2nd arrondissement on 16 April. It is considered likely that he was shot by the Versaillais on 25 May, behind Notre-Dame-des-Victoires.
16. P.-O. Lissagaray, Histoire de la Commune de 1871, Paris, Francois Maspéro, 1976, p. 118.
17. Ibid., p. 117.
18. Ibid., p. 120: "'Un Comité prenant le nom de Comité Central a assassiné de sang-froid les généraux Clément Thomas et Lecomte. Quels sont les membres de ce Comité? Sont-ils communistes, bonapartistes ou Prussiens? Voulez-vous prendre la responsabilité de leurs assassinats?'"
19. See l'Insurgé, Chapter XXIV.
20. Lissagaray, p. 121. For Nestor Rousseau's account of developments on 17-18 March, see Jacques Rougerie, Procès des Communards, Paris, Julliard, 1964 - pp. 47-50.
21. Lissagaray, p. 122.
22. Ibid., p. 124: '...Millière intervient. Il a des campagnes socialistes, ce persécuté de l'Empire et de la Défense, froid, compassé, exclusif, face triste, où s'allume parfois une lueur d'enthousiasme. "Prenez garde, dit-il, si vous déployez ce drapeau le Gouvernement jettera toute la France sur Paris et j'entrevois dans l'avenir quelques fatales journées de Juin. L'Heure de la Révolution sociale n'a pas sonné.'
23. Ibid., pp. 123-124.

24. Comparison of the following passages, the first from les Massacres, the second from Lissagaray, illustrates the point. Following Millièrre's warning to the Committee:

'Alors un de ses collègues, hautain:

- C'est donc la révolution sociale qu'ils veulent faire? Eh! bien, je leur promets un joli succès.

- Non, non, la fédération...

- Paris ville libre.

- Mais si! dit Becker avec tranquillité, et je l'appuyai. Nous voulons la révolution sociale, c'est exact.

(...)

- Voyons, précisez, quel est votre programme? Un conseil municipal élu? et puis?

- La remise pure et simple des loyers en souffrance.

- Oh! Oh!

- La prorogation des échéances.

- Et puis quoi encore?' (Les Massacres, p. 179)

Again following Millièrre's warning:

'Boursier: "Puisqu'on vient pour la première fois de parler de révolution sociale, je déclare que notre mandat ne va pas jusque-là. (Du Comité: Si! Si! Non! Non!) On a parlé de fédération, de Paris ville libre. Notre mission est plus simple, elle se borne à procéder aux élections. (...)

(...) La discussion devient batailleuse. "Mais enfin, dit Clemenceau, quelles sont exactement vos prétentions? Bornez-vous notre mandat à demander à l'Assemblée un conseil municipal?"

Beaucoup du Comité: Non! Non! - "Nous voulons, dit Varlin, non seulement le Conseil municipal élu, mais des libertés municipales sérieuses, la suppression de la préfecture de police, le droit pour la garde nationale de nommer ses chefs et de se réorganiser, la proclamation de la République comme gouvernement légal, la remise pure et simple des loyers en souffrance, une loi équitable sur les échéances, le territoire parisien interdit à l'armée." (Lissagaray, pp. 124-125)

25. For evidence of Quiche's frequent state of mind, see p. 190: 'Je flottais dans un état mêlé de sommeil et de vagabondage (...). J'avais totalement perdu conscience des distances qui séparaient le jour et la nuit'; p. 210: 'Pendant plusieurs jours je fis la navette, à cheval ou à pied, entre Neuilly, la Guerre et l'Hôtel-de-Ville, portant des nouvelles, transmettant des ordres, tâchant vainement de démêler cet écheveau de fils

contradictaires'; p. 230: 'Je demeurai éberlué...'; p. 271: 'Notre nuit? Quelle nuit? Depuis combien de soirs et de nuits les Versaillais étaient-ils entrés? Je n'en retrouvais plus le compte'; p. 296: 'Quand je m'éveillai, il faisait sombre. Était-ce encore la même nuit ou le soir suivant?'; p. 297: 'Je ne me rappelle plus très bien comment passa la nuit. A partir de ce moment je n'ai plus dans la mémoire que des images incohérentes'; p. 299: 'Et brusquement le brouillard se déchire et comme au sortir d'une crise de fièvre, je vois ce qui m'entoure, je vois!'; p. 309: 'Ai-je vraiment vu cela? Est-ce moi qui ai vu cela? Était-ce en rêve? Ou en enfer?'; p. 311: 'Je me laissais faire comme un somnambule'; p. 314: 'Je regardais tout cela sans comprendre...'; p. 317 (on the île Nou); 'Ces lianes, leur puissance est étrange à considérer lorsqu'on n'est plus qu'une ombre, comme moi, une ombre frêle, à peine vêtue d'une chemise et d'un pantalon, et qui glisse, pieds nus, et passe en somnolant.'

26. Examples in les Massacres of the effective detail or striking inclusion are: pp. 232-233 (the description of the urchin Polyte): 'Je voyais (...) son visage de papier mâché, son rire idiot, ses cheveux sur le front, débordant d'un bonnet rouge à gland jaune' etc.; p. 266 (an officer struggling amidst a group of fédérés): 'Le tourbillon passa sur nous, l'officier resta seul, fit un geste mélodramatique avec son épée (...) puis resta penaud devant nous, l'oeil atone, la lèvre pendante'; p. 279: '...une vieille béquillarde, le bonnet de travers sur ses mèches grises, s'était assise devant un petit orgue de Barbarie et, avec des rires édentés et des invectives, s'était mise à jouer une petite valse'; p. 280: the description of the female battalion, and of the man and the woman inside the house; p. 281: 'Un jeune homme en haillons, le mégot collé aux lèvres, l'oeil fiévreux...'; p. 283: description of a woman '...(qui) avait un chapeau avec des voiles de deuil, une robe de bourgeoise, noire, à fanfreluches et à rubans. Tout cela barré d'une écharpe de laine rouge'; p. 283 (description of Jonfosse, one of the stretcher-bearers): '...court sur pattes, gros, la vareuse déboutonnée sur un ventre bedonnant. Et il portait des lunettes, qui glissaient sur son petit nez de dogue.'

In l'Education sentimentale (Part III, chapter 1) a number of inclusions may be noted: the description of '...un grand jeune homme pâle, dont les cheveux noirs flottaient sur les épaules, prises dans une espèce de maillot à pois de couleur. Il tenait un long fusil de soldat, et courait sur la pointe de ses pantoufles, avec l'air d'un somnambule et lesté comme un tigre'; the reference to the barricade across the rue de Valois: 'La fumée qui se balançait à sa crête s'entr'ouvrit, des hommes couraient dessus en faisant de grands gestes, ils disparurent...'; the quarrelling couple ('...un homme en bonnet grec et portant une giberne par-dessus sa veste de tricot se

disputait avec une femme coiffée d'un madras'); the dead horse lying near the Arc de Triomphe; the mob invasion of the Tuileries. Other examples are to be found in the pages relating to the 'June Days'. Flaubert of course actually witnessed the revolution of February 1848.

27. Quiche will have the impression of being at the theatre on 28 March (p. 188). Six days before, during the demonstrations by the 'Friends of Order', he had looked down from the balcony at the protesters, among whom were to be seen *...quelques dames, qui s'époumonaient, tenant leurs jupes d'une main et levant l'autre d'un petit air martial comme des vivandières d'opérette'* (p. 181); at the rue Haxo on 26 May, *'...des détonations éclataient. On hurlait, on riait. Quelques otages tombaient comme des personnages de guignol'* (p. 305); in the Père-Lachaise, on the morning of Sunday 28 May, *'Moi, je venais de surgir d'une tranchée, comme pour atteindre le niveau de la scène où va se passer un spectacle extraordinaire'* (p. 310).
28. L'Education sentimentale, Part 3, chapter 1: *'Un remous continu fait osciller la multitude. Frédéric, pris entre deux masses profondes, ne bougeait pas, fasciné d'ailleurs et s'amusant extrêmement. Les blessés qui tombaient, les morts étendus n'avaient pas l'air de vrais blessés, de vrais morts. Il lui semblait assister à un spectacle.'*
29. The evening may in fact be placed at 6 May. Cassou's chronology for the events of the next few days does not always, as we shall see, coincide with history.
30. This opinion was expressed in a letter of refusal to the Central Committee, which had offered Garibaldi the rank of commander-in-chief of the National Guard.
31. See les Massacres, p. 204: *' - Théo, me dit (Becker), peut-être va-t-on voir du nouveau.*
- Bah?
- Je nourris en ce moment certaines idées... Nous en parlerons.'
 Cf. pp. 206, 215.
32. See Gaston Da Costa, la Commune vécue, 18 mars - 28 mai 1871, Paris, Librairies-imprimeries réunies, 1903-1905 (3 vols.): Vol. II, pp. 190-198; Maxime Vuillaume, Mes Cahiers rouges, Cahiers de la Quinzaine, Vol. 10, 1914 - pp. 86-87; Mémoires et Correspondance de Louis Rossel, Paris, Stock, 1908, pp. 311-312; Louis Barron, Sous le Drapeau rouge, Paris, Savine, 1889, p. 133; les Mémoires de Maxime Lisbonne (Texte présenté et annoté par Marcel Cerf), Chapter 9. Published in la Commune (Revue d'Histoire de l'Association des Amis de la Commune de Paris 1871), No. 11, 1978, pp. 10-11.

- See also Pierre Dominique, la Commune, Paris, Grasset, 1930, p. 181; la Commune de 1871 (published under the direction of Jean Bruhat, Jean Dautry, Emile Tersen), Paris, Editions sociales, 1970, pp. 249-250; Maurice Choury, la Commune au coeur de Paris, Editions sociales, 1972, pp. 325-329; C. Talès, la Commune de 1871, Paris, Spartacus, Cahiers mensuels, January-February 1971: Série B, no. 38, pp. 97-98; Edith Thomas, Rossel, Paris, Gallimard, 1967, p. 361.
33. See Maxime Vuillaume, Mes Cahiers rouges au temps de la Commune, Paris, Albin Michel, 1971 (a facsimile of the 1909 edition), p. 148; les Massacres de Paris, p. 215.
34. See Maxime Vuillaume, Mes Cahiers rouges au temps de la Commune, p. 212.
35. See Mémoires et Correspondance, pp. 311-312.
36. Charles Gérardin (1843-1921) was elected to the first Comité de Salut public on 1 May. Vuillaume devotes a number of pages to him in his Cahiers rouges (Cahiers de la Quinzaine, Vol. 10, 1914, pp. 81-88).
37. Gaston Da Costa, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 194-195.
38. Rossel had himself referred to the influence of the press in a democratic society in his Mémoires (See Mémoires et Correspondance, p. 379). The detail of le Père Duchêne's readership figure is taken up by Cassou when he attributes to Péchin satisfaction at the support offered the conspiracy by the newspaper's editors ('Eh! bien, (dit-)il en tapant sur l'épaule de Vermersch, c'est une bonne chose que d'avoir le Père Duchêne avec nous. Un tirage de soixante mille, peste!') (MP 220)
39. Maxime Vuillaume, Mes Cahiers rouges au temps de la Commune, pp. 185-186: *De taille moyenne, veston et chapeau mou, la barbe châtain entière, longue (...) les yeux brillants, enfoncés dans l'orbite, derrière le lorgnon, le front haut, la lèvre mince...'*; Mémoires et Correspondance, xxix-xxx: 'Il est grand, svelte; sa démarche et sa parole ont une grâce un peu lente. Il tient du Midi des traits de jeune Romain, mais sans doute le Nord a fourni le teint délicat, la fine moustache presque rousse, tombante, en opposition avec les cheveux bruns, et le langage sans gestes et l'air très correct, que les étrangers peuvent trouver froid.' Cf. Louis Barron, op. cit., p. 134. While the two descriptions provided are contradictory with regard to Rossel's height, and Vuillaume is basing his reference to a beard upon a photograph taken at Nevers soon before the young man's departure for Paris, it is not difficult to see how Cassou might in both cases have been influenced for his own evocation. Pierre Dominique in la Commune (pp. 170-171) provides a description of Rossel based closely on that supplied by Vuillaume.

40. See Lissagaray, p. 303. *'Versailles trouve ce Sarcey dans le ton, tout à fait. Versailles en applaudira bien d'autres. Le 16 mai, jour des prières, le Figaro publie un programme de massacre...'*
41. In les Hommes d'aujourd'hui (7th volume, 1888, no. 318) Paul Verlaine stated that Rimbaud had visited Paris at this time (*'Retour à Paris pendant la Commune et quelque séjour à la caserne du Château-d'Eau, parmi de vagues vengeurs de Flourens'*) (*'Arthur Rimbaud'*, 1884; included by Jules Mouquet in Rimbaud raconté par Paul Verlaine, Paris, Mercure de France, 1934 (4th edition), pp. 67-74; see p. 68). Ernest Delahaye, Rimbaud's close friend during schooldays, wrote in Rimbaud l'artiste et l'être moral (Messein, 1923) that the poet journeyed to Paris during April, escaping from the city towards the end of May. Rimbaud's presence during the Commune is again affirmed by Delahaye in Souvenirs familiaux (Messein, 1925). Colonel Godchot - basing his argument both on the last-mentioned work and on his personal correspondence with Delahaye - maintained that Rimbaud left Charleville on 19 April, reaching Paris on the 23rd; and that he set out for home on 3 May, arriving back in Charleville on the 8th (Colonel Godchot, Arthur Rimbaud ne varietur. I (1854-1871), II (1871-1873); published in one volume by Slatkine Reprints, Geneva/Paris, 1983. See, with respect to Rimbaud and the Commune, Vol. I, chapter VIII (pp. 163-194). Godchot's assertions as to dates are not totally discounted by Antoine Adam in the edition of Rimbaud's Oeuvres complètes published for the Bibliothèque de la Pléiade in 1972 (see the 'Chronologie', xli). Others affirming that Rimbaud visited Paris during the Commune are Paterne Berrichon (Jean-Arthur Rimbaud le poète (1854-1873), Geneva/Paris, Slatkine Reprints, 1983, pp. 99-102); Marcel Coulon and Henri Strentz (both of whom claim that the visit took place in May). See, for particulars concerning the last two, les Poètes de la Commune, (présentés par Maurice Choury, préface de Jean-Pierre Chabrol), Paris, Seghers, 1970, p. 58.
- For further consideration as to Rimbaud's presence in or absence from Paris during the Commune, see the edition of the Oeuvres complètes prepared for the Bibliothèque de la Pléiade by Rolland de Renéville and Jules Mouquet (Paris, Gallimard, 1963: 'Notes et variantes', pp. 709-712); M.-A. Ruff, Rimbaud, Paris, Hatier, 1968, pp. 61-65; Pierre Gascar, Rimbaud et la Commune, Paris, Gallimard, 1971. M.-A. Ruff suggests that Rimbaud may have left Charleville on 16 or 17 May, reaching Paris on the 22nd or 23rd; and that (if such a journey took place) the boy probably set out for Charleville again about 26 or 27 May. Maurice Choury (op. cit., pp. 58-62) discusses the three letters from Rimbaud (17 April and 15 May 1871 to Paul Demeny; 13 May 1871 to Georges Izambard) which seem to nullify any idea that the young poet actually visited Paris during the Commune period.

42. See Rimbaud's letter to Georges Izambard of 2 November 1870. The sixteen-year-old was again a prisoner at Charleville having been repatriated after his fugue to Belgium.
- 'Le Coeur du pitre', written in May 1871, has of course been interpreted as a 'revelation' of Rimbaud's sordid experiences at the hands of a group of fédérés (see, for instance, Colonel Godchot, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 176-181). Were Godchot's theory - dismissed by Antoine Adam as '*une invention ridicule*' (Rimbaud, Oeuvres complètes, la Pléiade, 1972, p. 890) and reviled by Maurice Choury (les Poètes de la Commune, pp. 56-58) - to be other than grotesque fabrication, it has to be said that any humiliations or brutality endured by the sixteen-year-old seem to have in no way modified his belief in the Commune.
43. It was on Rimbaud's return to Charleville following the fugue of 25 February - 10 March, that (as one of the many signals of his contempt for convention) he adopted the practice of smoking a pipe with its funnel pointing downwards. In the light of Cassou's second reference to Rimbaud in les Massacres ('*Bientôt le peintre et Vuillaume nous dirent bonsoir. Le gamin à la pipe à l'envers nous tendit une main rougeaude et humide et sortit à son tour*'), and the brief description of him some sentences earlier, it is of interest to note the phrasing used by Edmond Lepelletier when writing in Verlaine (1907) of Rimbaud's first evening at the Mauté residence. The young poet is described as: '*...un gamin pâle, imberbe, maigrichon (...) La dernière bouchée avalée, Rimbaud prétexta la fatigue, alluma une pipe, et après un "bonsoir", alla se coucher.*' Cf. François Ruchon, Jean-Arthur Rimbaud, sa vie, son oeuvre, son influence (Paris, Honoré Champion, 1929): '*...un grand gamin aux cheveux ébouriffés (...) aux mains rouges et mal soignées.*' See, for both quotations, Colonel Godchot, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 145-146.
44. Mémoires et Correspondance, xxxvii: '*On peut comprendre notre violent chagrin; nous étions atterrés, mais je tiens à dire que jamais l'estime exceptionnelle en laquelle nous le tenions ne fut, de ce fait, en rien diminuée.*'
45. Edith Thomas, op. cit., p. 266.
46. Sarah Rossel was born in 1861. Isabella herself, born on 6 December 1845, was a year Rossel's junior. See Edith Thomas, p. 15.
47. Mémoires et Correspondance, xxx: '*La bouche au dessin pur rit souvent d'un rire bien jeune; les yeux bruns, nuancés ont un regard pensif qui paraît venir de loin. L'expression "touched with pensiveness" est bien la caractéristique de sa personne.*'

48. Gustave Cluseret, whom Rossel replaced as War Delegate, described his underling of some weeks as '*...calme jusqu'à la froideur, résolu, sévère jusqu'à la dureté, cassant, ambitieux au-delà de toute expression...*' (Cluseret/Rossel, 1871. La Commune et la question militaire, textes choisis et présentés par Patrick Kessel, Paris, 10/18, 1971, p. 226); cf. Lissagaray, op. cit., pp. 230, 269. Louis Barron in Sous le Drapeau rouge, clearly considers ambition to have been a determinant in decisions taken by Rossel (see pp. 133-139). Maxime Du Camp in les Convulsions de Paris described the young man as '*...un homme à la fois violent et indécis, sans opinions bien assises et dévoré par une ambition dont l'intensité s'ignorait peut-être elle-même.*' (Vol. I, Paris, Hachette, 1878, p. 111). In Le Fond de la Société sous la Commune (Paris, Plon, 1873, p. 247) C.A. Dauban writes: '*Rossel était un jeune homme dévoré d'ambition, travailleur ardent, esprit sans mesure, froidement exalté, comme Saint-Just, qui était son héros, rigide jusqu'à la cruauté, et qui devait peut-être à des habitudes de chasteté, bien rares à son âge, une énergie de volonté qui en eût fait un homme supérieur, s'il l'eût mise au service d'une bonne cause.*'

During Rossel's second court-martial (before the 4e Conseil de guerre) on 7 October 1871, the attitude of the presiding officer, colonel de Boisdénemetz, was clear from the outset ('*Boisdénemetz: Vous prétendez expliquer votre conduite par des motifs patriotiques. Nous verrons tout à l'heure des pièces qui prouvent que vous obéissiez à d'autres motifs, quand vous avez passé à l'ennemi. Rossel: J'ai passé à l'insurrection. Boisdénemetz: N'épiloguons pas... Vous avez agi par un sentiment malsain d'ambition*'). (See Edith Thomas, op. cit., p. 447). The damning evidence referred to by the colonel lay not in anything Rossel had written, but in the thoughtless if well-intentioned message sent to Thiers by one of Rossel's former comrades-in-arms: ('*Mes convictions politiques sont bien différentes de celles de l'infortuné Rossel. Je ne saurais cependant m'empêcher de faire des vœux pour que votre clémence ne confonde point un criminel égaré par la jeunesse et l'ambition, avec les infâmes bandits...*' etc.) (Edith Thomas, op. cit., p. 447). In her 'Essai biographique' Isabella Rossel quotes from letters written in defence of Rossel by officers at Nevers. These letters testify to the young man's deep patriotism, and refer furthermore to a desire apparently expressed by Rossel to take up a civilian career after the war. '*Si ces lettres avaient été connues, si l'on avait su ce désir déjà ancien de prendre une carrière civile, les démarches en ce sens interrompues par la guerre, reprises tout récemment, on n'aurait pas accusé la pauvre victime d'un vulgaire désir de galon, d'une ambition militaire déçue amenant sa décision du 19 mars 1871.*' (Mémoires et Correspondance, xxxv).

49. 'Un jour, il me dit tout à coup, pendant que nous courions en voiture dans Londres pour l'équiper de nouveau: "Sais-tu? Mon moi m'est devenu indifférent!" Et une expression de surprise, comme s'il n'avait pas cru cela possible.' (Mémoires et Correspondance, xxxiv).
50. Ibid., pp. 35-39.
51. Ibid., xxxiii.
52. Anne Roche is mistaken therefore when she writes that Cassou avoids the use of pronouncements actually made by the young War Delegate (see Anne Roche, 'Le Roman et la Commune. Jalons pour une description' in 1871. Jalons pour une histoire de la Commune, Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 1973, p. 568).
53. See Mémoires et Correspondance, p. 291. Cf. Edith Thomas, op. cit., pp. 258-259.

Rossel's writings had been used by Paul Bourget for his characterisation of the young chemistry student Georges Fresnelay (Nos Actes nous suivent, 1927). Fresnelay, who has of course seen active military service, feels anger at the capitulation of 2 September 1870. His views as to the manpower available to the French, and the part of the country from which defence could be continued, are based on Rossel's arguments for continued warfare written at Nevers in February 1871 (Nos Actes nous suivent, Paris, Plon, 1927, 2 vols.: see Vol. I, pp. 23-24; cf. Mémoires et Correspondance de Louis Rossel, p. 286). Learning on 20 March of the revolution in Paris, Fresnelay will elect to join those wishing to prolong the struggle against German forces: '*...je résolu, vis-à-vis de moi-même, de choisir, entre les deux partis désormais en conflit dans le pays, celui qui n'avait pas signé la paix*' (Nos Actes, Vol. I, p. 23). Fresnelay's creator has him write, moreover: '*J'ai retrouvé plus tard, dans les papiers du malheureux Louis Rossel, la preuve que des officiers de carrière, plus compétents que moi, pouvaient penser et sentir comme je pensais et sentais.*' (Ibid., p. 24).

The misguided young bourgeois who enlists in the Commune is a recurrent type in Bourget's production (Courlet, 'le Père Theuriot' (la Dame qui a perdu son peintre, 1910); Voreux, 'le Déserteur' (l'Envers du Décor, 1911); René Guéneville, 'l'Exemple' (Conflits intimes, 1925)).

54. Mémoires et Correspondance, p. 331: 'Lorsqu'il a fallu organiser l'artillerie, le Comité central d'artillerie a délibéré et n'a rien prescrit. (...) A mon arrivée au ministère, lorsque j'ai voulu favoriser la concentration des armes, la réquisition des chevaux, la poursuite des réfractaires, j'ai demandé à la Commune de développer les municipalités d'arrondissement. La Commune a délibéré et n'a rien résolu.'

55. Ibid., xxxviii; letter quoted in entirety pp. 290-291. The conclusion of the letter reads: *'Adieu, ma chérie, je n'ai pas le courage d'écrire de longues lettres; je tâche de me guérir un peu du traité de paix et de tout cela, mais je n'y réussis guère.'*
56. Ibid., p. 429.
57. In his letter to Emile Zola of 29 February 1892, Paul Martine wrote of *'(s)on ami Rossel, qui avait l'âge, l'aspect et le talent de Bonaparte à Lodi, avec des convictions plus fortes et une instruction plus solide'* (See les Rougon-Macquart, Paris, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, Gallimard, Vol. V, p. 1419). Cf. Edith Thomas, op. cit., p. 254, where a quotation is supplied from Martine's Mémoires: *'Rossel avait l'âge, l'allure et jusqu'au profil de Bonaparte au 13 vendémiaire. Il en avait aussi, sous une apparence chétive, la volonté de fer, la décision, le froid héroïsme.'* In his preface to the Mémoires et Correspondance de Louis Rossel, Victor Margueritte makes the parallel between the two destinies: *'Qui sait si Bonaparte, né vingt ans plus tôt, n'eût point fini petit capitaine? C'est ainsi que Rossel, en qui ressuscitait un Napoléon, vécut et mourut, sans donner sa mesure. Non point prêtre, mais victime d'un grand destin.'* (vi); cf. in same volume, xlv, n.2. See also Paul and Victor Margueritte, Une Epoque. La Commune, Paris, Plon, n.d. [but 1904], p. 330. Léon Daudet (op. cit., p. 15) refers to *'...Rossel, ancien Fléchois, patriote exaspéré, protestant, auquel ses condisciples, dont Auguste Brachet, accordaient du génie. Brachet le définissait: 'Un Bonaparte avec toutes les cartes retournées.'* Among those less kindly disposed towards Rossel, we may note the view of Cluseret: *'...méprisant le peuple en véritable bourgeois et, par-dessus tout, mû par une pensée dominante: jouer les Bonapartes; je ne dis pas les Napoléons'* (Cluseret/Rossel, op. cit., p. 226). Cf. Paul Delion, les Membres de la Commune et du Comité central, Paris, Alphonse Lemerre, 1871, p. 363.
- Having referred to Rossel's ambitiousness in le Pilori des Communeux (Paris, E. Lachaud, 1871, p. 143) Henry Morel continues: *'Il aspirait à jouer le rôle d'un Bonaparte communiste et n'aurait pas reculé devant un 18 brumaire. Les grenadiers ont manqué peut-être.'* Cf. Maxime Du Camp, op. cit., I, p. 112; IV, p. 128 (an implicit parallel with 18 Brumaire).
58. See Mémoires et Correspondance, 'La Morale de l'Homme de guerre. Wallenstein et Napoléon', pp. 469-471. See also in same volume 'Sur le Système politique et le système militaire de Napoléon', pp. 453-454; 'Sur les Causes de la Chute de Napoléon', p. 454; 'Sur Bonaparte', 455; 'La Force armée et la démocratie', pp. 459-460; 'De la Santé chez les généraux', pp. 491-493; 'Préface de l'Art de la Guerre', pp. 501-507.

59. See in particular l'Eloge de la folie, 1925.
60. The portrayal of Napoleon found in Alfred de Vigny's Servitude et grandeur militaires (1836) is of course a hostile one. It is of interest however (in the light of Rossel's ideas as conveyed in les Massacres) to consider the admission Vigny has Napoleon make in his none too amicable conversation with Pius VII: 'Tout est rôle, tout est costume pour moi depuis longtemps et pour toujours. Quelle fatigue! Quelle petitesse! Poser! toujours poser! de face pour ce parti, de profil pour celui-là, selon leur idée. (...) Les éblouir par des dates et des bulletins, par des prestiges de distance et des prestiges de nom' (see Servitude et grandeur militaires, Paris, Garbier Frères, 1965, p. 164).
61. Mémoires et Correspondance, p. 338: 'Parmi les bataillons que j'avais l'honneur de commander, certains étaient affligeants à voir. Des hommes débiles, laids, petits, difformes, dont l'uniforme faisait ressortir la mauvaise mine. En passant devant ces malheureux, je me disais: "ces gens ont raison de se battre; ils se battent pour que leurs enfants soient moins chétifs, moins scrofuleux, moins vicieux qu'ils ne sont eux-mêmes."'
62. See Pierre Dominique, op. cit., p. 185: 'Ah! les soldats qu'il a vus hier! ces hommes petits, laids, difformes, dont l'équipement accentue la mauvaise mine! Et ces officiers communards, le pantalon en vrille, le ceinturon pendant sur une capote trop large, le képi crasseux, ferrailant du sabre sur les pavés, avec l'oeil mort du buveur d'absinthe.'
63. In a letter to his parents written on 31 October 1858 from the Prytanée de la Flèche, the fourteen-year-old Rossel was requesting permission to take violin lessons. On 10 January 1859, he was writing to them of his intention to buy '*...une traduction des poésies d'Ossian.*' See Mémoires et Correspondance, pp. 8-9, 13.
64. See Lissagaray, op. cit., p. 230. Cf. Pierre Dominique, op. cit., p. 169.
65. Mémoires et Correspondance, xxvii, xlii-xliii.
66. Mémoires et Correspondance, xxx-xxxii: 'Ce qu'on appelait tout simplement autrefois pressentiment est devenu aujourd'hui la voix mystérieuse du moi inconscient, latent, que l'on cherche à dévoiler.
La petite soeur ressentait par instants, comme ma mère et moi, ces craintes que rien ne pouvait justifier.
Une tristesse bien motivée fut en 1868, en automne, le départ du 2^e du génie pour Montpellier; nous ne pouvions plus suivre notre officier qui voulait se marier très jeune et qui devait changer de nouveau de résidence en passant capitaine. Le cercle

familial ne se reformera plus jamais que par éclaircies. A Metz, il avait été complété à plusieurs reprises et pendant de longs mois par la présence de ma grand'mère maternelle, madame Campbell, qui tenait une grande place dans les affections de mon frère, c'est Marraine.
 Rossel's mother, Sarah Campbell, was Scottish-born.

67. See, in note 57, the comment of Henry Morel.
68. See Lissagaray, p. 262. It is of interest to note with regard to this the introduction to Henry Morel's entry on Rossel (op. cit., p. 142):
'Encore un homme pâle, dont l'apparition aurait rendu soucieux le front de César.
Et César n'aurait pas eu tort de se défier de ce grand jeune homme maigre, au front plissé, au masque bilieux, coupé, dans sa partie inférieure, par une bouche froide, aux lèvres minces, faite pour jeter le sarcasme et le mépris et scander les durs commandements de cette voix impérieuse.'
69. A further aspect of Napoleon's character as represented by Vigny in Servitude et grandeur militaires seems of passing interest in view of the parallel made on occasion between Rossel and the General/Emperor. On the First Consul's desk each day is placed a pile of petitions from those needing aid and protection. These letters are treated in summary fashion: *'Il ne les prenait ni par ordre, ni au hasard; mais quand leur nombre l'irritait, il passait sa main sur la table de gauche à droite et de droite à gauche, comme un faucheur, et les dispersait jusqu'à ce qu'il en eût réduit le nombre à cinq ou six qu'il ouvrait'* (op. cit., p. 155).
70. See Edith Thomas, op. cit., pp. 279-280.
71. Mémoires et Correspondance, p. 302.
72. See Maxime Vuillaume, Mes Cahiers rouges au temps de la Commune, p. 187.
73. See Pierre Dominique, op. cit., pp. 183-184.
74. See Lissagaray, op. cit., pp. 262-263.
75. The passage is in places reminiscent of descriptions found in l'Ami de l'Ordre by Jérôme and Jean Tharaud (*'Un bataillon quittait la place, en marche vers un poste inconnu, tambour en tête, en désordre, l'arme à volonté, des miches, des saucissons enfilés aux baïonnettes'*). See la Ville et les Champs 1870-1871, Paris, Edouard Pelletan, 1906, p. 44.
76. Lissagaray, p. 263; cf. Pierre Dominique, p. 184.
77. Pierre Dominique, p. 187: *'A ce moment [i.e. 9 May] par vingt-deux voix sur vingt-huit, le Comité central décide de demander*

pour lui à la Commune pleins pouvoirs afin que Rossel exerce, sous le contrôle du Comité de Salut public, - voilà un mot bien mal placé, car il nie la dictature, - la dictature militaire provisoire.'

78. See Lissagaray, op. cit., p. 263; Pierre Dominique, p. 184.
79. Cassou's physical representation of Ferré (both in this scene and on p. 189) would seem to have been influenced by a description provided by Vuillaume in Mes Cahiers rouges au temps de la Commune. See Chapter 4 of this study, note 85.
80. L'Insurgé, Chapter XV ('Sous l'Odéon').
81. See Pierre Dominique, pp. 144-145.
82. Lissagaray, pp. 259-260, 263.
83. Ibid., p. 265.
84. Ibid., p. 269.
85. Ibid., p. 269.
86. Péchin is said to be commander of a battalion. In this he presents some analogy with an actual Versailles agent Barral de Montaud, who managed under the Commune to obtain command of the 7th legion. See Lissagaray, p. 271; Pierre Dominique, p. 201 (Barral de Montaud is here said to be leader of the 17th legion); Edith Thomas, les Pétroleuses, Paris, Gallimard, 1963, pp. 192-193. It is known that M. Ducatel, a civil servant for the Ponts et Chaussées who held a position of responsibility under the Commune, was in fact on the side of Versailles, signalling that the gate was unguarded on Sunday 21 May at the Porte de Saint-Cloud. He was subsequently awarded the Legion of Honour and a public subscription was initiated on his behalf by le Figaro.
87. Mémoires et Correspondance, p. 333 ('*Je me retire, et j'ai l'honneur de vous demander une cellule à Mazas*').
88. Ibid., p. 328. See also, in note 35, Gérardin's account as supplied by Maxime Vuillaume.
89. Ibid., p. 88; cf. Pierre Dominique, p. 190.
90. Mémoires et Correspondance, p. 325; Edith Thomas, p. 346.
91. See les Massacres de Paris, p. 244.
92. Louise Michel, la Commune, Paris, Stock, 1898 (facsimile published 1971) - pp. 283-284.

93. Ibid., chapter XII, pp. 261-272.
94. Ibid., pp. 267-272.
95. Ibid., p. 272: *...tout ce qui peut prendre un être, harmonie, mise en scène, parfums, est une impression du temps futur de l'humanité où les sens seront plus puissants, où il y en aura d'autres.'*
96. See Lissagaray, pp. 273, 483-484. Pierre Vésinier, in his Comment a péri la Commune (Paris, Savine, 1892) devotes five chapters to Dombrowski's supposedly traitorous activities. Vésinier, however, is an anything but reliable informant.
97. On reactions to Dombrowski the foreigner, see Sutter-Laumann, Histoire d'un Trente sous (1870-1871), Paris, Savine, 1891, p. 279; also Pierre Dominique, p. 126. For Dominique's representation of Dombrowski, see pp. 209-211, 234.
98. See 'Un Grand Film: "Yaroslav Dombrowski"': in la Commune, No. 1, Premier semestre 1975, p. 83.
99. See l'Insurgé, chapter XXXIV; also Lissagaray, p. 309.
100. See Lissagaray, p. 313.
101. Ibid., p. 321. See also 'Arrestation de Dombrowski. Un texte inédit d'Henry Bauer, présenté par Marcel Cerf'. In la Commune, No.3, Premier semestre 1976, pp. 67-71.
102. It may be noted that Lissagaray (p. 321) gives the time of Dombrowski's reappearance at the Hôtel de Ville as 10 p.m. on Monday 22.
103. Lissagaray, p. 321.
104. Gustave Lefrançais, Souvenirs d'un révolutionnaire (Texte établi et présenté par Jean Cerny), Paris, Société encyclopédique française; Editions de la Tête de feuilles, 1972, p. 425.
105. See Lissagaray, les Huit Journées de mai derrière les barricades, Brussels, Bureau du Petit Journal, 1871, p. 67; Edmond Lepelletier, Histoire de la Commune de 1871, Paris, Mercure de France, 1911-1913, 3 vols.: Vol. III, p. 392; Pierre Dominique, p. 234; Léon Deffoux, Pipe-en-Bois, témoin de de la Commune, Paris, Editions de France, 1932. The copy of Pipe-en-Bois in my possession has the following handwritten dedication: 'A l'historien de La Commune, A Pierre Dominique, avec les plus affectueux sentiments du complice de [Pipe-en-bois, témoin de la Commune] Léon Deffoux'.
106. Maurice Rieuneau (op. cit., p. 508, n. 360) makes the point that the description in les Massacres of Dombrowski's corpse being

carried to the Hôtel de Ville amidst crowd consternation recalls the scene in l'Espoir where the dead or wounded aviators are carried down on stretchers from the crash in the Montes Universales.

107. See Lissagaray, Histoire de la Commune, p. 333: 'Une bougie laisse tomber sa demi-lueur sur l'héroïque soldat. Le visage d'une blancheur de neige est calme, le nez fin, la bouche délicate; la petite barbe blonde se relève en pointe. Deux aides de camp, assis dans les coins obscurs, veillent silencieux. Un autre esquisse à la hâte les derniers traits de son général.' Cf. Huit Journées de mai, pp. 76-77.
108. Maxime Vuillaume, Mes Cahiers rouges au temps de la Commune, p. 267.
109. Lissagaray, Histoire de la Commune, p. 253. It is of interest, with respect to Vermersch's command of language, to note Rossel's own impression: '...Vermersch saisissait immédiatement une idée et sa verve endiablée la traduisait avec un éclat, un brio surprenants; par une opération rapide de son esprit, il vous rendait votre propre pensée transformée en un feu d'artifice, étincelante de bouquets et de girandoles, émaillée de ces fioritures que proscrivent l'académie et la bonne société, et qui fournissaient tant de lignes au Père-Duchêne' (Mémoires et Correspondance, p. 379).
110. While Jules Clère (Les Hommes de la Commune, Paris, Dentu, 1871) is hardly the most objective of commentators, his assessment of Pyat ('Ce matamore cassant et farouche n'est en réalité qu'un fantoche gonflé de vent') (p. 135) seems in keeping with the portrayal found in les Massacres.
111. Lissagaray, Histoire de la Commune, pp. 250-252; cf. Edith Thomas, op. cit., p. 335.
112. The opening paragraphs of the proclamation were phrased as follows: 'Assez de militarisme, plus d'états-majors galonnés et dorés sur toutes les coutures! Place au Peuple, aux combattants aux bras nus! L'heure de la guerre révolutionnaire a sonné.
Le peuple ne connaît rien aux manoeuvres savantes; mais quand il a un fusil à la main, du pavé sous les pieds, il ne craint pas tous les stratégestes de l'école monarchiste.'
Cf. Chapter 4 of this study, note 54.
113. Cladel describes Delescluze at one point as '...livide et ridé, n'ayant plus qu'un souffle de vie...' (I.N.R.I., Paris, Librairie Valois, 1931, p. 215); and refers elsewhere to '...l'ancien compagnon de chaîne des forçats de Toulon et de Brest, l'inflexible proscrit que l'insalubre et vorace Cayenne avait appauvri, mais non pas dévoré...' (p. 219); to '...le délégué à la Guerre (...) pâle et froid, déjà sépulcral et

spectral...' (p. 239); to '...la voix presque éteinte du frêle et débile orateur...' (p. 242). In the 'confrontation scene' with Urbaine Hélioze, Delescluze is thus described as he looks out at a battalion crossing the square in front of the Hôtel de Ville: 'Immobile et debout en la baie d'une large fenêtre ouverte vers laquelle il s'était traîné, le vieil agitateur considéra longtemps ce groupe de maudits, (...) et les muscles de son ovale et blême figure où, fort rares, les poils de sa barbe rousse et blanche luisaient comme des filigranes d'or et d'argent, se crispèrent, tandis que ses yeux froids et durs, aux reflets métalliques, s'attendrissaient tout à coup et qu'au fond de sa malade poitrine creuse avortait un sanglot refoulé. - Fatal, c'était fatal, murmura-t-il en serrant de ses mains décharnées son crâne chauve un peu cône...' (pp. 218-219).

114. See Pierre Dominique, p. 190: 'Homme de conscience, d'apparence et d'âme austère, on ne le voit jamais qu'en jaquette noire, en haut de forme et la canne à la main'; p. 227: '...Delescluze à peu près aphone, respirant à peine, n'est plus qu'un cadavre ambulante'; p. 262: 'Appuyé sur sa canne, il s'en retourne désespéré [de la porte de Vincennes]. - Je ne veux plus vivre, dit-il. Tout juste s'il reste quelques minutes à la mairie. Puis, sa canne à la main, dans sa jaquette noire et sous son haut de forme, ceinturé de rouge, le ruban rouge frangé d'or à la boutonnière, seul, à pas lents, il marche par le boulevard Voltaire vers la barricade du Château-d'Eau que ses défenseurs abandonnent.'
115. Vallès has left a graphic account of the rue Haxo executions in Chapter XXXIII of l'Insurgé. He too tried in vain to prevent the killing: Quiche thinks he was one of the number in the cafeteria immediately afterwards (see les Massacres, p. 306).
116. Jean Guérin, 'Revue des Livres': la Nouvelle Revue Française, No. 271, 1 April 1936, p. 617.
117. See René Lalou, le Roman français depuis 1900 (Collection 'Que sais-je?'), Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 1963, p. 62.
118. See les Massacres de Paris, Edition 'Chantecler', Rio de Janeiro, 1942: Préface, p. 7.

CONCLUSION

For mainstream French opinion, in the early twentieth century, the Paris Commune remained a period of acute national shame. At least until the War of 1914-1918, the episode was habitually perceived as an indefensible aberration: in the phrasing of a textbook widely used in classrooms at the time: *'De toutes les insurrections dont l'histoire ait gardé le souvenir, la plus criminelle fut certainement celle du mois de mars 1871 faite sous les yeux de l'ennemi vainqueur.'*(1) Those remembered as having been associated with the movement could at times excite strongly adverse reaction. In what was almost certainly a repudiation of Jules Vallès and everything he was known to represent, a bust of the réfractaire was knocked over in 1913 at his birthplace, le Puy. Similarly, some years later, the proprietor of the building in which Vallès had died (77, boulevard Saint-Michel) refused to allow the placement of a plaque proclaiming the fact.(2) The anti-revolutionary (and anti-Communard) cause had a staunch advocate in fictional and polemical literature until the mid-1930's. From 1900, when he formally embraced Catholicism having rallied to the monarchist cause five years previously, Paul Bourget's energies were zealously employed in the attempted undermining of forces which, for over a century, had been bringing such changes to bear on European political and social structures. Writing of this kind might have reflected in some degree - until the watershed of World War One - the outlook of a moneyed, conservative class: its irrelevance, even futility, could hardly have been more decisively underscored than by a cataclysm which saw, in addition to much else, the collapse of three of Europe's ruling dynasties and the advent of a 'New Socialist Order' in what had been Imperial Russia. For all this, Bourget's recurrent attacks upon the Paris Commune throughout his production would not have seemed notably inappropriate or undiscerning to many readers of less traditionalist persuasion.

Long regarded as a criminal interlude, the Commune is not of course viewed so intransigently today. By many, indeed, it is seen as one of the principal episodes - sometimes even as the fount - of contemporary

history; as '*le creuset de notre temps*'.(3) If the centenary of the Commune saw an outpouring of material - both historical and fictional - relating to the insurrectionary period,(4) it is of course true, as Roger Magraw has pointed out,(5) that there was no official commemoration arranged by President Georges Pompidou's regime. Notwithstanding a significant modification of attitudes in the course of a century, recognition of the Commune remained, and remains, the prerogative of the Left.(6) The events of May-June 1968 - during which the example of almost one hundred years before had been invoked more than once - were furthermore, at the time of the centenary, of recent and disturbing memory.

In the contemporary mind, the Paris Commune conjures up varied, sometimes conflicting, images. The febrile horror of the semaine sanglante, with its Dantesque infernos and wholesale massacres, might be considered in this the age of the audio-visual medium to yield not a few of the elements making for the potential success of a box-office attraction or a television docudrama. Among the authors considered in the thesis, Jean Cassou, with his vivid descriptions and evocation of atmosphere, comes closest, perhaps, to capturing for his reader some impression of visual immediacy. His portrayals of leading Communards (notably Louis Rossel, Louise Michel and Jaroslaw Dombrowski) can genuinely be said, at times, to bring such people to life. The light-hearted ambience frequently characteristic of Paris prior to the semaine sanglante is evoked with success by Lucien Descaves in certain passages of la Colonne. It is entirely possible, in fact, to regard much of the seventy-two day period as a '*fête populaire*'(7) during which the Paris populace rejoiced in its unscheduled (and ill-starred) taste of freedom. A reader of Philémon vieux de la vieille, les Massacres de Paris (and la Commune, considered briefly in Appendix Three) will note the intermittent likening of the Commune period, or of long-term proletarian wellbeing, to entry into the Promised Land. To many in that social class whose interest was, ostensibly, most served by the Commune, advent of this government for the less favoured must indeed have seemed initially to signal attainment of that objective, or at least, a step

significantly closer to the goal. With collapse of the dream, and the destruction in blood and fire of this particular aspiration by the working classes, places associated with the massacres acquired (as we are reminded in l'Apprentie and in Philémon vieux de la vieille) a shrine-like status. Just as the Wall of the Père-Lachaise assumed major significance in the legend generated by the insurrectionary period and its repression, certain working-class heroes - notably Eugène Varlin - assumed seemingly, in the minds of some surviving Communards, a near-divine quality.

As has been seen, neither l'Apprentie nor l'Ami de l'Ordre can be classified as a text specifically favourable to the Commune. The insurrectionary period was, according to Geffroy's portrayal, an ill-timed aberration: the Tharaud brothers, for their part, present the Commune's leaders as argumentative, impractical, ineffectual dreamers; and the rank and file comprising the revolution's defence forces as a noisy, undisciplined rabble. While many readers might feel the slant of such representations to be unjust, the two texts - focusing as they do upon the cost, at individual and family level, of the Commune's repression - reflect one undeniable aspect of the revolutionary legacy. Mère Pommier's story, in particular, seems to offer more than an element of universal application. This working-class wife and mother whose like undoubtedly existed in 1871, and whose tragedy is essentially that of women everywhere who find themselves bereaved as a result of warfare or repression, might be perceived as one of the countless millions who have suffered down through time, on every continent, as a result of circumstances they are themselves powerless to influence or modify. It seems not inappropriate in fact to draw a parallel between mère Pommier and, for example, a Kampuchean woman whose sons and husband had counted among the innumerable victims of Pol Pot's scourge of terror; or an Argentinian mother still mourning the loss of two adolescent sons dead, almost certainly, at the hands of the military during the unrest of the late 1970's and early 1980's.(8)

In a very different way, Lucien Descaves' Philémon vieux de la vieille reflects the reality of the Commune as an advertisement for the experience of history's nameless. The procedure followed by historians today of consigning the oral reminiscences of 'ordinary' people to tape for posterity, seems to an extent foreshadowed in the approach Descaves adopted in his preparations for both major novels relating to the insurrectionary period. If the phrasing Descaves attributes to his characters in Philémon (and in la Colonne) is at times of an improbably literary quality, it is still possible to imagine - and almost to hear - a 'flesh-and-blood' Colomès orally reliving the semaine sanglante and the years of exile. In another respect - hardly, again, within the bounds of the strictly ordinary - Philémon vieux de la vieille illustrates an age-old and inescapable facet of human experience. Through the person of Albert Malavaux fils, the 'generation gap' between two schools of revolutionaries is brought into focus.

Important in any study relating to fictional treatment of the insurrectionary period is, of course, some examination of the manner in which Versailles is presented. A reader of Darien's work might well feel him to be providing, in both Bas les Coeurs and l'Epaulette, an exaggerated, even caricatural portrayal of the Versailles bourgeois: the two novels indicate nonetheless - with often limited subtlety - certain undeniable ways of thinking among many well-to-do of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries where those regarded as 'inferior' were concerned. The consideration in the introduction to this thesis of attitudes to the army on the part of the possessing classes after the semaine sanglante, assumes added significance when coupled with the representation of bourgeois and soldier found in Bas les Coeurs, l'Epaulette... and la Colonne. Darien's linking of the Commune's repression to policies adopted with respect to French colonial expansion or routine subjugation of unrest, finds chance endorsement, indeed, in an article by Octave Mirbeau published in l'Endehors on 1 May 1892. Mirbeau deplored the hypocrisy of a society that expressed outrage at anarchist bomb attacks, but condoned, or approved outright, such atrocities as the slaughter of the semaine sanglante, the shootings at Fourmies on 1 May

1891, and the massacres carried out in the interests of colonial expansion (*'En face de ces tueries continuelles et de ces continuelles tortures, qu'est donc ce mur qui se lézarde, cet escalier qui s'effondre?'*)(9) If discussion of a certain conservative viewpoint merits inclusion, in a study such as this one, entirely for its own sake, it can still be said that thus, indirectly, do the lives of such fictional (though representative) individuals as mère Pommier and her two sons, or Etienne and Phonsine Colomès, acquire a heightened interest and poignancy.

The outraged patriotism that was a determining factor in engenderment of the Commune is of course acknowledged, in sometimes markedly differing fashion, by writers considered in this study. Such sentiment, which is made in l'Apprentie to seem almost an attendant of volatile irrationality, contrasts starkly, in Georges Darien's work, with the brutal egoism of the possessing classes. In the chapter of Philémon vieux de la vieille recounting the commemorative dinner at the home of Colomès and Phonsine, it is the feeling of patriotic outrage on the part of the Paris populace in 1871 that has seemingly been retained above all else by the group of convives reliving the 'seventy-two days'. The Commune's rejection of warmongering - expressed essentially, of course, through destruction of a treasured national symbol - provides the nucleus however of Lucien Descaves' la Colonne.

Whatever the weight they chose to accord the social and political factor, or the slant for which they opted, Geffroy, the Tharaud brothers, Descaves, Darien and Cassou were all aware of the Commune as being at least a potential force for change. If the issues acted upon or calling for action during the insurrectionary period related essentially to a particular social class in a given nation during the second half of the nineteenth century, the Commune was nonetheless an endeavour - at times confused, perhaps, or half-hearted, given the circumstances of its birth, and the problems besetting it - to address the questions of poverty and misfortune that have always been the lot of countless human beings the world over. March-May 1871 forms part, therefore, of a broader, indeed

universal canvas. In principle if not always in practice, the Commune was in many important ways (as Jean Cassou in particular indicates) an expression of liberation. The main writers considered in Chapters One to Six of this study may not be equally concerned with presentation of the positive in the Commune adventure; they all convey however, in their various ways, at least something of the Commune's 'humanness'.

NOTES

1. E. Lavissee, Histoire de France, Nouvelle 2^e année, 1895. Quoted by Jacques Rougerie, Procès des Communards, Paris, Julliard, 1964, p. 11.
2. See Gaston Gille, Jules Vallès (1832-1885). Ses Révoltes, sa maîtrise, son prestige, Paris, Jouve, 1941: xiii.
3. See Max Gallo, Tombeau pour la Commune, Paris, Robert Laffont, 1971, p. 17. Gallo himself is not of this view.
4. Perhaps the most significant novel to have been published about this time was Jean-Pierre Chabrol's le Canon Fraternité (Paris, Gallimard, 1970).
5. Roger Magraw, France 1815-1914: The Bourgeois Century, London, Fontana, 1983, p. 204.
6. To a question included by l'Express in an opinion poll conducted in 1983 ('Avec le recul du temps, diriez-vous que [la Commune (1871)] eu des conséquences plutôt heureuses ou plutôt malheureuses?') 41 per cent of respondents answered 'Heureuses', 25 per cent 'Malheureuses', with 34 per cent giving no reply. It was still found, however, that respondents claiming leftist sympathies viewed the Commune far more positively than their counterparts of stated conservative persuasion. See 'les Français jugent leur Histoire', l'Express, Edition internationale, no. 1676, 26 August 1983, pp. 13-23; in particular pp. 15, 18.
7. The expression is used by Henri Lefebvre in his article 'la Commune: dernière fête populaire' (Images of the Commune/Images de la Commune (editor J. A. Leith), Montreal-London, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978, pp. 33-45).

8. The parallels are prompted by two documentaries screened on New Zealand television in the course of 1988.
9. See Reg Carr, Anarchism in France: the case of Octave Mirbeau, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1977, p. 62.

APPENDIX 1

LÉON DEFFOUX: UN COMMUNARD

The nouvelle Un Communard - published in 1913(1) and dedicated to Ernest Vaughan - relates, as does Philémon Vieux de la Vieille, to a veteran of the Commune; living this time at Ménilmontant in the early 1890's. While hardly of the same depth or interest as Lucien Descaves' novel, Un Communard is nonetheless, in the words of the critic Rachilde, 'un petit tableau saisissant de réalisme'.(2) A friend and admirer of Descaves (as his article 'le Cinquantenaire d'un livre qui fit du bruit' indicates),(3) Léon Deffoux was to publish an account of the Commune itself in Pipe-en-Bois, témoin de la Commune (1932). His death from drowning in December 1944 - in somewhat puzzling circumstances - is discussed by Descaves in the brief concluding chapter of Souvenirs d'un ours.(4)

The portrayal of Joseph Burtau in Un Communard may have been based on a personality known either to Deffoux or to an acquaintance of his: Rachilde, in her brief assessment of the story, clearly assumes this to be the case.(5) It is to be borne in mind, however, that Deffoux (born in 1881) would have been no more than ten or eleven at the time the events of the story are taking place, and that the comments and reactions the narrator attributes to himself in his reported dealings with Burtau are hardly those of a boy that age. Nor, for that matter, would a man over eighty (as Burtau is said to be) normally address a child in the terms of gruff, barely amiable equality characterising the old Communard's conversation with the narrator.

Burtau, who seems in his own way as much of a personality as Colomès, possesses few of the latter's more engaging or estimable traits. He too is of distinctive appearance: totally bald (so never without a felt hat), round-faced, bespectacled, and with a large, Viking-like moustache. Taciturn, as Colomès himself is, Burtau has an

ill-tempered, tyrannical side, obtaining, furthermore, a degree of surly satisfaction from any uneasiness or annoyance he might cause others.(6) He has - not necessarily to his detriment - little of Colomès' fierce independence in monetary concerns. A former deportee to New Caledonia, where he had spent seven years, he is known to Henri Rochefort and receives from the journalist a pension of thirty francs a month; this constituting a tidy supplement to the eight hundred francs accorded him annually as a victim of the 1851 coup d'état.(7) It is to be said on Burtau's behalf that he is a widower who has known fifty years of marital happiness, interrupted only by the seven years in New Caledonia. Following his condemnation to exile at Lambessa in 1851, his wife had obtained permission to accompany him.

A veteran of the Commune, and a combatant in 1851, Burtau had also fought during the June Days of 1848. Even in 1890, when his days pass in a tranquil monotony of routine, he lives in perpetual hope of another revolution, another Commune:

...ce fanatique de l'insurrection à main armée n'aspirait encore à quatre-vingts ans passés, qu'à redescendre dans la rue, faire le coup de feu, se battre... Contre qui? Pour qui? N'importe! (...) Qui sait si l'occasion ne se présenterait pas une fois de plus de grouper les révoltes, d'organiser l'émeute, de risquer sa peau enfin!

C'était, dans un corps usé, la même volonté nihiliste, le même besoin de s'évader de soi contre la banalité de la vie qui l'animait faubourg Saint-Marcel en 1848, boulevard Montmartre en 1851, au Père-Lachaise en 1871. (Com 68-70)

Not, perhaps, the most reflective of attitudes; and reminiscent in some degree of the revolutionary mentality as represented by Alphonse Daudet in his story 'les Trois Sommations' (Contes du lundi). By the time the narrator has made the old man's acquaintance, such recklessness of spirit seems belied by Burtau's obvious enslavement to habit. Each day of the week but one is spent by the old Communeard first in reading and rereading Rochefort's article in l'Intransigeant; then in eating, dozing, gazing from his window at any passers-by, and in lingering enjoyment of his apéritif. On Sunday, he receives the

visit of one Louis-Antoine Hachard, another former Communard who had also been transported to the Southern Hemisphere, and whose material circumstances now oblige him to reside at the Hospice Debrousse. As is to be expected, the past provides the focus for the two men's conversation,

...quelque date mémorable, une conversation avec Blanqui, dans tel café de la rue Saint-Denis, une réplique de Louise Michel, une boutade de Vaughan. (Com 56-57)

Initially animated and argumentative, their talk gives way gradually to disjointed monologue in which neither is paying the slightest attention to the other; and then to long, torpid silences...

A lifestyle such as this, and the very fact of drawing a pension as a victim of the Prince-President, does then lend a degree of incongruity to Burtau's continued revolutionary aspiration. The old Communard displays inconsistency in other respects also. Harboring many illusions in matters political, and said to believe totally in '*...les destinées supérieures de l'humanité...*' (Com 76), his view of human nature is in fact less than charitable:

Le mot "mufle", au singulier et au pluriel, revenait souvent dans ses propos. Il était de ceux qui croient trop à la Vertu pour ne pas mépriser à la fois et la probité courante et la banale canaillerie. Dans un parti pris de simplifier, il considérait donc la majorité de ses contemporains comme également "mufles" et indignes d'intérêt. Il était plus à l'aise ensuite pour méditer sur une société future et sur le communisme intégral. (Com 77)

An admirer of Blanqui, as meditations of this type would suggest, Burtau is not averse to the idea of dictatorship. The fact that he has a portrait of Boulanger ("*le brave général, le seul!*") (Com 20) on his wall seems a further testimony to such leanings. This does not prevent him, however, from detesting on principle such representatives of authority as might be encountered on a day-to-day basis. Just how firmly the bias is entrenched will be apparent at the story's conclusion.

Having gone with Hachard one Sunday 2 January to visit Blanqui's grave in the Père-Lachaise, (8) the old man - who is said to be in a dejected, nostalgic frame of mind after his friend's departure that evening - will drop a lighted candle as he prepares for bed. It is a matter of principle for him never to pick anything off the floor (*"La femme de ménage est là pour ça, disait-il"*) (Com 100): he will, therefore, simply light another, and retire for the night... Carried unconscious from his burning home by a policeman who dies in hospital two days later, Burtau himself will succumb to the effects of asphyxiation a day after his rescuer. The narrator, and Hachard, are at his side as the end approaches. His murmured enquiry as to the fate of the policeman (made seemingly from the depths of consciousness) is answered immediately by Hachard:

"L'agent est mort, hier!"

Ces Mots parvinrent-ils jusqu'au moribond? En comprit-il le sens? C'est ce que personne ne saurait dire. Nous avons pu constater seulement qu'un sourire puéril souleva ses fortes moustaches. Il aspira avec effort un peu d'air qu'il rejeta presque aussitôt en soupirant très distinctement: Tant mieux! (Com 103)

Death follows: and the narrator, as he leaves the hospital, finds himself haunted of course by the old man's final words:

...les deux mots que je venais d'entendre ne cessaient de m'obséder. Pourquoi ce "Tant mieux?" Le père Burtau avait-il bien compris? - Était-il capable, ayant compris, de faire cette réflexion de folle cruauté.

Aujourd'hui encore je me pose ces questions sans oser y répondre.
(Com 104-105)

Consisting of some seventy-five small pages in large type, (9) Un Communard is hardly an ample work. Through the person of old Burtau, 'sectaire stupide et intransigeant' (10) Deffoux cannot be said to be glorifying the Commune: neither however is his story a generalised condemnation of the 1871 insurgents. Capable of wishing the death of his rescuer for no better reason than that the latter belongs to a hated breed, Burtau is not an attractive personality. He is however

totally credible, and not merely a further manifestation of some simplistically negative revolutionary stereotype. Not written to fit any obvious ideological framework, Un Communard stands as an interesting, if sobering, character study.

NOTES

1. 'Un Communard' appeared originally with two other stories by Deffoux: 'Foire aux Pains d'épices' and 'Nogent-Joinville'. The volume was published with a preface by Henri Céard (Un Communard, Paris, E. Figuière, 1913). The edition used for reference in this appendix is: Un Communard, Paris, Librairie de France, 'Bibliothèque des Marges', 1922, in-32, 108 pages.
2. See Rachilde, 'Un Communard', Mercure de France, 15 July 1922, p. 452.
3. See Chapter Four of this study, note 1.
4. See Lucien Descaves, Souvenirs d'un ours, Editions de Paris, 1946, Chapter XI, pp. 292-293.
5. Rachilde, op. cit., p. 452.
6. Particularly his domestic help: see Un Communard, pp. 32, 48-49.
7. Ibid., p. 13.
8. The visit is said to take place on the anniversary of Blanqui's death. Blanqui in fact died on 1 January 1881.
9. Many of the pages in the 1922 edition cited contain simply the titles of chapters, or are printed on one side only.
10. Rachilde, op. cit., p. 452.

APPENDIX 2

MAURICE MONTEGUT: LE MUR

By way of contrast to the style in which Communard figures are portrayed in les Massacres de Paris, it is of interest to consider a text violently hostile to the Commune published forty-three years earlier. A semblance of anonymity is maintained throughout le Mur when leading Communards are in question by the use of initials only, or (when this will result in total confusion, several figures sharing the same initial) by provision of the first syllable in the name. In most instances, however, there can be little doubt as to the identity of the individual thus indicated.

Le Mur reflects the tenable view that Raoul Rigault and Théophile Ferré were the most sinister figures of the insurrectionary period; and Montégut, not surprisingly, gives free rein to distortionary, caricatural portrayal in his evocations of the pair. In the brief appearances made by Rigault before the horrors of 21-28 May, the vulgarity and affected uncouthness that were indeed apparently his are conveyed essentially by frequent use of the verb 'foutre', and in derisive mirth and tasteless utterance when enlisting the dwarf Saboulex on 9 May for a reprehensible mission ('*Tu vauz ton pesant de crottin, mon bonhomme! (...) ...tu as l'air d'un c..., mais je m'en fous!*') (M 162). A wickedness and dangerous irresponsibility on Rigault's part (already evident from his commendation early in the novel of Saboulex's murder of the agent Cipriani) (M 16) is again made clear by the task with which he entrusts the avorton:

Il faut découvrir, punir les traîtres, les espions... il m'en faut... s'ils n'existaient pas, il faudrait les inventer... mais il y en a partout, à la pelle! Il faut épurer, intimider, il faut des exemples - ou nous sommes foutus! (M 162)

On a date near the beginning of the semaine sanglante (it may be said that Montégut in his recounting of the seven days pays little

attention to the actual sequence of events) members of the Commune are gathered in the Hôtel de Ville. Some are darkly plotting various horrendous measures to be taken. F..., one of the assemblage comments, has been absent for some hours: the cryptic answer given by R... R... ('...il s'occupe...') (M 252) confirms that he and his sinister partner in crime have between them decided upon some hideous plan. A few minutes later F... enters the room,

...plus nerveux, plus agité que jamais, avec un rayonnement diabolique sur son affreux visage. A un signe de R..., il répondit:

- J'en viens.

Et tout de suite, sans qu'on le lui demandât, dans un groupe, il racontait sa journée. Comme l'empereur romain, il ne l'avait point perdue; il exultait de joie sauvage, de haine satisfaite.
(M 252)

Among those imprisoned at the Palais de Justice, and selected as victims by the atrocious Théophile, were men totally innocent of any crime against the Commune but who had been arrested by the dwarf Sabouleux either because obnoxious to him in their kindly inoffensiveness, or because his chronic idleness and improbity had at some time or another caused him to fall foul of them. Of the number were an Auvergnat named Péchu, inclined to avarice and who had formerly pressed Sabouleux for payment of a debt; a poverty-stricken former music teacher whose love of the piano rendered him guilty in the dwarf's eyes of aristocratic affectation; and a portly Alsatian by the name of Schérer, responsible, it is true, for a derogatory jest as to Sabouleux's dwarf-like stature and impoverished attire. In insane, ghastly glee, Ferré recalls his selection for slaughter of prisoners who, not astonishingly, had displayed little readiness to co-operate:

Avec ses hommes, il était entré, avait fait aligner cette racaille. Aucun ne savait ce qui l'attendait, mais tous avaient de la méfiance. Les listes dans le main, il appelait les noms en vain. Personne ne répondait.

Alors, comme dans les guerres antiques, il s'était résolu à décimer ces cafards... "Un, deux, trois, quatre, cinq, six, sept,

huit, neuf, dix! - sortez des rangs!" Il fallait voir la tête du dixième, toujours une sale tête; le hasard est malin, et le diable veillait. De cette façon, il en avait classé trente environ, plus un, par aventure. (M 253)

With further jeering cynicism and tasteless wit F... tells of the endeavours by Schérer to ascertain the intended fate of his two acquaintances (both among the luckless thirty-one):

- Voilà-t-il pas qu'une sorte de tonneau à pattes sort de la foule, sans qu'on lui eût rien demandé, et qu'il a l'aplomb de m'interroger: "Qu'est-ce que fus allez faire de ces honnêtes chens?" Encore un qui avait l'accent... alsacien, prétendait-il; nous pouffions tous; moi le premier, malgré ma gravité légendaire... mais on n'est pas de bois. Je lui réponds: "Ce que je vais en faire...? de la bouillie pour les chats, mon garçon!"

Ça ne lui a pas plu. Il a éprouvé le besoin de cracher son discours. "C'est une lâcheté, je les connais, ils n'ont jamais fait te mal au prochain... ils sont inoffensifs, et très pons..." Je vous fais grâce de la prononciation. Il me racontait que, si ses amis, - dont il m'a dit les noms, - que j'ai oubliés, - étaient au Dépôt, c'était des histoires d'un colonel nommé Sale-Pouilleux, Sabouleux...

(...)

"...Que l'un était charbonnier, l'autre musicien... (une noire, une blanche!) de pons citoyens, et il répéta sa question: "Qu'allez fus en faire!..." J'étais agacé tout de même. J'ai répondu: "Les fusiller - et toi avec, si tu m'emm...!" Et le cochon m'a répondu, d'un air tranquille: "Oui, je fus emm...!" Je l'ai collé dans le tas, et en route! Nous les avons conduits au pont Neuf. Sur le terre-plein, à côté de la statue de Poule au Pot, contre la balustrade, on les a rangés... et - voici le drôle de l'aventure, - l'Auvergnat s'est jeté à plat ventre, en beuglant, pendant que le vieux pâle, chantait la marche funèbre de Chopin, en battant la mesure; maboul ce vieux-là! J'ai commandé le feu... Ils sont tombés, pêle-mêle, les bras en avant, repliés sur les yeux... seul, le soi-disant Alsacien, restait debout, saignant de partout; alors, il a crié: "Vive l'Allemagne!" et a piqué sa tête... Hein? Vive l'Allemagne! un Prussien, parbleu! et l'on prendrait des gants! (M 253-255)

The call uttered by the Alsatian testifies not to any double identity as a spy but to a repudiation on his part of a people capable of such internecine atrocity. F...'s account (intended of course to convey an abjectness of monstrous proportions) is provided, Montégut writes,

...avec un accompagnement épileptique de grimaces, de gestes, une pantomime effroyable, et des bonds de gorille ivre de sang.
(M 255)

The story of the hostages as supplied by Montégut may well have a firm base in reality: it hardly conveys however the precise truth as to Ferré's role in what is certainly an inglorious aspect of the Commune's brief history. Elements included are taken from the two episodes relating to deaths of prisoners in which Ferré had been involved directly: the execution of the Versaillais spy Veysset on 24 May, and the shooting that night of Monseigneur Darboy, Judge Bonjean, the abbé Deguerry and three Jesuit priests. Ferré - directly responsible for, and a witness to Veysset's end on the Pont-Neuf, in front of the statue of Henri IV - signed a warrant that evening authorising the execution of six hostages at la Roquette. It is not in fact certain, despite Vallès' supposition to the contrary,(2) that he personally favoured this particular retaliatory measure: and he was not in any case present at the executions, a fact which Montégut - although clearly a reader of Lissagaray's Huit Journées de mai derrière les barricades - chooses to disregard.(3) In the reaction before the firing squad of the Auvergnat Péchu, who flings himself to the ground; and in that of the Alsatian Schérer who remains standing after the first volley, Montégut would seem to have noted the description supplied by Lissagaray of Bonjean's and Darboy's final moments.(4)

Ludovic Charmes of le Mur - led by his socialistic, humanitarian illusions into joining the Commune, and shuddering at Ferré's appalling commentary ('*Il frissonnait. Tels étaient donc les hommes qu'il avait suivis?*') (M 255) will receive proof now of Rigault's demonic sadism:

- *Et ceux-là sont les plus heureux, conclut R...*
- *Comment, dit Ludovic... que voulez-vous dire?...*
- *Que ceux qui restent au dépôt mourront plus mal... On les grillera!*
- Charmes sursauta, il crut à une bravade cynique.*
- *Vous ne ferez pas cela?*

R... , farouche, se redressa de toute sa hauteur, et, d'une voix tonnante:

*- Je le ferai, moi! moi-même, de ces deux mains que voici...
Et, si les autres renâclent... Moi, moi seul, et c'est assez!*

Des souvenirs classiques hantaient ces cerveaux en délire.

- Mais, cria Ludovic désespéré, ils ont des femmes, des enfants!

- Je m'en fous!

- La postérité...!

- Je m'en fous!

Et R... tourna le dos à Charmes. (M 255-256)

Montégut would seem here to be drawing upon an episode which, if distressing, is less horrific than the eventuality implicit above. By way of retaliation for the death of his friend Théodore Sapia (killed outside the Hôtel de Ville on 22 January 1871) Rigault had decreed, during the night of 22-23 May, the immediate execution at Sainte-Pélagie of Gustave Chaudey. Three gendarmes were also shot on Rigault's order that night. Charmes' impassioned cry concerning the wives and children of hostages coincides with a plea by Chaudey as he was led to execution that Rigault think of his (Chaudey's) dependants. The reply as given both in Montégut's text and in Maxime Du Camp's account of Chaudey's death is, however, the same.⁽⁵⁾ When in time Montégut recounts the deaths of several among the Commune's leaders, its one time Police Chief will be dismissed in a suitably vitriolic sentence:

*Perdu de crimes irrémissibles, R... R... s'était offert aux balles, était tombé, horrible, cynique, logique avec sa vie.
(M 410)*

A further portrayal in le Mur merits consideration if only because such a contrast to its equivalent in Cassou's novel. F...'s exultant recounting of his exploits with the hostages had been interrupted by a dramatic, if somewhat inconsiderate entrance:

...la porte s'ouvrit grande, brutalement poussée. Un homme entra, dans une allure préméditée, composée, mais impressionnante, pourtant. C'était un officier supérieur, chamarré d'or, ceint d'écarlate. Les bras croisés, comme un lutteur, les regards noirs et fixes, il s'avavançait. Son nom courut dans les groupes.

- Domb...

Le général Domb..., accusé de trahison, avait été appelé devant le Comité de salut public. Il répondait à cet appel. Dans le milieu de la salle il s'arrêta; et violent tout de suite, il criait:

- Il paraît que je trahis!... Qui m'accuse?

Un silence lourd pesa sur l'assemblée. Tous les chefs baissaient les paupières, personne ne répondit. Domb... les bras restés croisés, frappant le parquet d'un pied fébrile, promenait un regard circulaire, chargé de défis. Devant l'attitude du Comité, il sourit amèrement.

- Je vous donne une heure pour réfléchir. Je ne sors pas de l'Hôtel de Ville... à vos ordres!

Puis, comme à son entrée, repoussant avec fracas les battants de la porte, il sortit, faisant: pouah! Nul n'essaya de l'arrêter. Il descendit un étage, alla s'asseoir à la table des officiers où il dîna. A la fin du repas - (l'heure était passée), il fit le tour de la salle, serra la main à chacun, sortit sans un mot. Et, comme l'a dit un témoin, tout le monde comprit qu'il se ferait tuer. (M 256-257) (My underlining)

There is little suggestion here of the distress and vulnerability evident in Cassou's representation. Dombrowski in le Mur is something of a foreign impresario, striking an attitude from the moment of entry, smouldering and intense of gaze, and outraged at the accusation of treason. He is suitably defiant and contemptuous of the sorry assemblage who, it is implied, stand in cowering shame when confronted by this deliberately imposing display of anger. Montégut has taken the essence of this passage from Lissagaray's Huit Journées de mai, (6) introducing however certain elements underlined above which add to the tension and drama (or the comedy) of the moment. In Dombrowski's entrance, a reader of the twentieth century acquainted even superficially with a certain type of western is almost put in mind of a Mexican bandit held in terror by inhabitants of a small border town, and who, of an evening, is in the habit of appearing dramatically and unceremoniously amidst the patrons of the local saloon.

There is, it is true, a member of the Commune who provides a contrast in le Mur to the likes of R... R... and F... Said to be upright and honest (M 192-193) the Financial Delegate Francis Jourde (F...J...) will sob convulsively as during the semaine sanglante, he looks upon the destruction of his beloved Ministry,

...où, pendant deux mois, il avait vécu, resté sans tache au milieu des souillures, sans tentation au milieu des richesses. C'était là qu'il avait appliqué, chaque jour, sa pensée constante, entière, à réhabiliter une cause méprisable, par une intégrité personnelle au-dessus des soupçons. (M 259-260)

Montégut's portrayal of Rigault and Ferré would alone suffice however to place him in the company of one such as Henry Morel, whose often extreme representation of the Commune's leading figures is indicated in the Introduction to this study.

NOTES

1. The novelist and critic Maurice Montégut was born in Paris in 1855 and died there in 1911. Le Mur, as noted elsewhere in this study, was published by E. Dentu in 1892; all quotations are taken from that edition.
2. L'Insurgé, chapter XXXIII
3. See les Huit Journées de mai derrière les barricades, Brussels, Bureau du Petit Journal, 1871, pp. 100-101.
4. Ibid., p. 102.
5. See Maxime Du Camp, les Convulsions de Paris, Vol. 1, Paris, Hachette, 1878, p. 229.
6. Les Huit Journées de mai, p. 48: 'Dans la salle du Trône (de l'Hôtel de Ville), un membre de la Commune nous apprit l'arrivée de Dombrowski. Il avait été appelé par le Comité de salut public, sur certaines rumeurs aussi vagues que ridicules. Introduit devant le Comité, dès la porte, croisant les bras et

promenant son regard sur tout le monde, il s'écria violemment: "Il paraît qu'on dit que je trahis!" - Personne ne répondit. Le membre de la Commune Dereure rompit le silence: "Si Dombrowski trahit, je trahis donc aussi! Je réponds de lui comme de moi." On laissa sortir Dombrowski. Il alla s'asseoir à la table des officiers, dîna avec eux; à la fin du repas, il fit le tour de salle et, sans mot dire, serra la main à chacun. Tout le monde comprit qu'il se ferait tuer.'

APPENDIX 3

PAUL AND VICTOR MARGUERITTE: LA COMMUNE

In la Commune - constituting the fourth volume of their tetralogy Une Epoque - Paul and Victor Margueritte(1) set out to provide an all-embracing historico-fictional appraisal of the period from 18 March to 28 May 1871. In a technique not unreminiscent of that adopted by Zola in la Débâcle, in which each character was to personify one '*état d'âme psychologique*'(2) of the France of 1870-1871), the brothers incarnate in their various personae the attitudes within Paris and at Versailles during the seventy-two days of the Commune. The novel is written, as its dedication shows,(3) in horror of civil war: energies within Paris that should have been used by the Government of National Defence in resistance to the foreign invader are now finding unnatural outlet (Paul and Victor Margueritte make clear) in hostilities towards compatriots. Such internecine warfare can only be deplored, of course, so long as Prussian forces are able to look gleefully upon the internal divisions of the vanquished.

Of the principal authors considered in this study, the Margueritte brothers' viewpoint with respect to the Commune would seem closest then to that conveyed by Gustave Geffroy in l'Apprentie; which appeared in fact the same year. While it was the brothers' obvious intention to provide a balanced representation of the period evoked (they are unqualified, it may be noted, in condemnation of the Versailles repression) their bourgeois background might be felt at times to lend the text a degree of artificiality. La Commune (639 pages in length) is hardly characterised either by a vivid, original style.

Noteworthy in the novel is the inclusion of a working-class family designed specifically, it is clear, to counter those legends representing the Commune insurgent either as a looting, drunken ruffian, or as the misguided dupe of knaves. The old shoe-repairer and veteran of 1848 Pierre Simon, his companion of fourteen years Thérèse, his two sons Louis

and Anatole and his niece Rose, are seen to embody all the soundest, most appealing plebeian attributes: staunch patriotism and devotion to the republican ideal, a keen sense of duty, exemplary diligence, strong family sense and total, selfless courage. The union of Simon and Thérèse (representative of many among the working classes of the time in that it has not received the endorsement of the Church) is presented as a marriage in the truest sense of the term; at odds with bourgeois convention certainly, but marked by a devotion and fidelity not necessarily characterising the legalised partnerships of social superiors.

It cannot be said that in the members of the Simon family (or indeed in most other characters in the novel) the Margueritte brothers are portraying individuals of subtle or complex psychology.⁽⁴⁾ A typing of the character of Pierre Simon, the underscoring of his working-class identity, is achieved by the simplest of means: by references to the calluses on his hands and fingers (C 136, 228), his flat, snub-nosed face (C 5, 148), his tousled hair (C 5, 136, 201, 232, 286, 430, 546). An impression of gruff tenacity is created by periodic mention of Simon's '*front têtu*' (C 201), '*(son) front dur*' (C 459) and by not infrequent reference to '*une franchise bourrue*' (C 5), '*un dédain bourru*' (C 204), '*un geste bourru*' (C 285), '*l'espoir bourru dont il faisait montre*' (C 458). Thérèse, who seemingly constitutes a model of plebeian womanhood,

...gaie, digne, toujours vaillante, chantante, ménagère accomplie, guérissant d'un bobo et d'une peine, ferme et tendre à la fois, enseignant ce qu'elle savait, la droiture et la simplicité...
(C 158)

is for her part characterised in thought, word and deed by uprightness and by devoted attention to the wants of her family. Mention is made repeatedly then of her '*loyauté simple*' (C 458), '*son bon sourire simple*' (C 284), '*sa simplicité de femme*' (C 464). Through the cousins Rose and Louis (who are seen predominantly in function of their love for each other) a theme essential to la Commune (and to be examined later)

finds representation. Fifteen-year-old Anatole, a Gavroche-like character '*...bon à tout faire, leste à tout dire, de riposte et d'attaque*' (C 150), having all the bagou commonly attributed to the Parisian, is again true to type, a resourceful adolescent as agile in body (he is twice described as '*leste comme un singe*' (C 17, 548)) as he is of mind.

It is in the Simons' rapports with bourgeois acquaintances - principally the historian Jules Thédénat, and the young artist Martial Poncet - that the Margueritte brothers will most readily incur charges of condescension towards the working classes. The links between Thédénat the scholar and Simon the shoe-repairer (both ardent republicans united in humanitarian sympathies, but separated by immense social and educational barriers) are suggested at the outset when the thoughts of Martial - who is marching with his battalion at the place de la Bastille on 26 February - are recorded:

...ceux dont Martial se sentait le plus près, son coeur à l'unisson des leurs, c'étaient, aux deux extrêmes, son glorieux ami l'historien Thédénat, dont l'esprit d'élite éclairait le présent comme il ressuscitait le passé, et ces humbles qui marchaient du même pas que lui, ces Simon aux mains calleuses et au regard droit. Il les connaissait depuis peu, s'étant rencontré dans leur boutique avec Thédénat, qui en eux aimait le bon sens du peuple, prenait plaisir à leur procurer de l'ouvrage, à causer entre temps, dans une entente familière où la clairvoyance d'en haut et l'intuition d'en bas se rejoignaient. (C 7)

Celebrated, brilliant, venerable Thédénat is then joined to the honest, horny-handed Simons in a bond of mutual trust and understanding in which, by intimation, the plebeian family is suitably conscious of the honour accorded it by the old man. Thédénat, '*le voyant de l'Histoire*' (C 237), modelled seemingly on such personalities as Jules Michelet, Edgar Quinet and Victor Hugo,⁽⁵⁾ is presented in la Commune as the interpreter par excellence of events. His apartment in the rue Soufflot is said to overlook the Luxembourg Gardens and the city. The glimmer of his lamp, '*...(qui) chaque soir s'allumait au-dessus de la ville*' (C 572); '*...cette petite clarté qu'on voyait de loin, fixe à travers la nuit...*' (C 631) serves almost a leitmotif function in the text; a tiny beacon, a

flicker of Justice and Truth, visible above the metropolis considered by him (as by many writers and fictional characters) to represent the forces of the Future.

The political conscience of the Simon males ('...ces frères inférieurs, en qui, pour la première fois, il apercevait des égaux') (C 8) is said to have heightened Martial Poncet's own awareness of, and attachment to, the republican ideal (C 8). Republican sympathies on the young artist's part stop short, of course, of solidarity with the Commune; on 22 March, when on his way to visit his parents, Martial will be wounded in fact by a stray fédéré bullet during the demonstration by the 'Friends of Order' on the place Vendôme. In a scene taking place in Thédénat's study at the end of March, the Margueritte brothers' paternalism, and their wish to provide an equitable representation, are both in evidence. Simon, who has called upon Thédénat to return a sum of money lent him (had it not been for the historian's beneficence, the Simon family would in all likelihood have faced eviction after 10 March),⁽⁶⁾ is somewhat embarrassed to find that Lucien and Martial Poncet are also present. If much has changed in Paris since the insurrection, and if the people are now triumphant, Simon (who himself feels quiet exultation on this score) does not forget that he is but a humble working man; nor, apparently, that the natural order has been reversed. Martial and his father, it is suggested, extend their hands in frank and open friendship; not so the discomfited shoe-repairer:

Si la poignée de main de Martial et de son père avait été sans arrière-pensée, Simon n'avait pas tendu ses doigts calleux sans malaise. Un sentiment indéfinissable, fait de l'incertitude de la situation, des déplacements instables qui en résultaient, le contraignait, - une conscience nette de la distance sociale, qui, malgré les convictions républicaines et la bonhomie personnelle de ses interlocuteurs, le séparait d'eux. Et avec cela, le sourd enivrement, après une vie servie, humiliée, de la revanche prise par ceux de sa classe, à leur tour les puissants! Surtout un embarras de se retrouver, là, dans ce cabinet de savant, avec ses gros souliers et son tablier de cuir, en face de Martial blessé par un coup de fusil de fédéré... (C 136-137)

Lacking in education or savoir-vivre, the plebeian Simon is then uneasily aware of his jarring presence here in the study of the scholar Thédénat. He stands, horny of hand and tousled of hair, in garb befitting his class and occupation, before Martial Poncet the bourgeois, formerly a comrade-in-arms but no longer so, and bearing (almost symbolically) the wound inflicted by one of Simon's kind. However marked the continuing consciousness on the part of the shoe-repairer of the social barriers between himself and these members of the bourgeoisie, he will be permitted on this occasion - respectfully, and with due acknowledgement of his listeners' goodness and openness of heart - to expose the social hypocrisies unchallenged by so many during the nineteenth century; and that, it would seem, even Thédénat and Lucien Poncet prefer not to face. If Simon himself deplores the executions of the generals Lecomte and Clément Thomas, he is aware that it is a question on which more can be said:

...convenez-en, Messieurs, si les soldats avaient tiré comme ils ont tiré en 48... (...) si au lieu des deux généraux tués par on ne sait qui, il y avait eu des milliers d'ouvriers fusillés au nom de la loi, se serait-on indigné, à l'Assemblée, de ce massacre de pauvres gens, autant qu'on l'a fait pour le meurtre de Lecomte et de Clément Thomas?... Je ne dis pas ça pour vous, qui avez le coeur aussi large que l'esprit. Mais je ne peux pas m'empêcher de penser, d'un côté à toutes les tombes oubliées, à la fosse commune des martyrs de Juin, et de l'autre, à la chapelle expiatoire du général Bréa... Sur cette victime-là, toute la société s'attendrit. C'est un meurtre qui la touche, les autres, ça ne compte pas...

Ces paroles dites simplement, sans amertume, sonnaient trop juste pour que Thédénat et Poncet eussent envie de les relever. D'un coup, elles avaient touché le tuf, les vérités inavouées que le mensonge social recouvre. Le visage de Simon s'était éclairé d'une lumière obscure. Il avait raison, tous le reconnaissent, et cette entente n'allait pas sans gêne. (C 138-139)

The parallel between 1848 and 1871 is established on several occasions in the course of the novel. In what might be considered a less than subtle use of symbolism, the Margueritte brothers include as a leitmotif a bullet wound in the thigh received by Simon in June 1848 and which - according as he is aware of it or not - serves as a gauge of his state of mind. While on 26 February 1871 (during the three-day

manifestation marking the anniversary of the Republic) and again in the glorious sunshine of 28 March (when the Commune is officially proclaimed) he will feel none of the usual discomfort (*'Alerte, il allongeait sa jambe blessée, lourde d'habitude; jamais elle n'avait été si légère'*) (C 147), the heavy sensation is seen to return on subsequent occasions as any chances the revolution may have had of definitive success recede, then fade completely.

The memory of his older brother Jean-Louis (father of Rose, and *'... le compagnon et le maître de sa jeunesse...'*) (C 147) is constantly in Simon's mind during the Commune period. Totally committed to the struggle for democratic triumph, Jean-Louis had pined into an early grave a few years after the further deathblow dealt the Republic in December 1851:

C'en était bien fini, des beaux espoirs!... La République, saignée en Juin, avait achevé d'agoniser au guet-apens du Deux-décembre. Il n'entrerait point dans la terre promise! (C 148)

On 28 March 1871 (which at the time seems annunciatory of the awaited social transformation) Pierre Simon is joyful at the prospective unfolding for the younger generation of opportunities unknown to its forerunners. He feels regret, of course, that his dead brother cannot witness for himself the proclamation of a government in which lower-class influence is no longer negligible (*'Pauvre Jean-Louis! Qu'il eût été heureux de voir triompher enfin la cause qui, à ses yeux, incarnait le bonheur des humbles, inaugurerait un règne de justice'*) (C 147); and is reminded, as one might expect, of the events of twenty-three years before:

Comme il rayonnait, cet après-midi d'avril 48, lorsqu'un peu de soleil, sous le ciel doux et couvert, était venu éclairer la fête de la Fraternité, les Champs-Élysées noirs de monde jusqu'à l'estrade dressée à l'Arc de Triomphe, trois cent mille hommes aux mains unies!... (...) Deux mois après, les ateliers nationaux fermés, canons et fusils crachaient la mort sur le peuple jeté à la rue, écrasaient l'insurrection de la faim.

"Du pain ou du plomb!" Simon entendait encore le cri douloureux et terrible... (C 147-148)

The attack on Courbevoie by Versailles forces is, for Simon, a shattering of the dream. His thoughts are bitter as, during the state funeral for those fallen on 3-4 April, he recalls his own exultation both on 26 February, and upon proclamation of the Commune:

Naïf, fou qu'il avait été! Compter sans les éternels ennemis, les classes d'oppression, tout le passé embusqué pour étrangler l'avenir! Ceux d'autrefois, les hobereaux et les prêtres, ceux d'à présent, les bourgeois, qui le ventre rempli depuis la Révolution, n'avaient qu'une idée, à tout prix garder leur place à table, et empêcher de s'y mettre les affamés, le peuple surgissant. (...)

(...) Allons, c'était toujours la même chose: 71 recommençait 48. Encore une fois le peuple se battait et mourait pour ses droits. C'est tout près d'ici qu'aux journées de Juin, devant la barricade près de l'église Saint-Paul, il était tombé, portant le cher fardeau, Jean-Louis blessé... Sa jambe lui parut plus lourde. Il lui sembla qu'il en souffrait. (...) La chair des humbles, on pouvait tailler dedans, il en restait toujours! (C 233-234)

If Simon feels anger at the deprivation and repression that is the usual lot of those of his class, he will not be permitted to entertain illusions for long as to the worker's ability to manage without bourgeois assistance. Assuming initially that his own sincerity and commitment typify the fédérés en bloc, he has had occasion to revise his thinking as April draws to a close.⁽⁷⁾ The sombre thoughts attributed to him at Issy on the 30th:

Ah! dame, on n'était pas entre ducs et marquises! Ce n'était pas sa faute à lui, Simon, si les messieurs comme Martial Poncet les avaient lâchés, si on restait entre soi, du populo! (C 368)

constitute of course an implicit acknowledgement that the cause can prevail only if aid is forthcoming from those of sufficient education and experience (counting, therefore, among the socially privileged) to assist the untutored working man. As he considers the various personalities about him on this particular morning, the shoe-repairer is seen to feel particular admiration for an engaging young bourgeois Pierre Dury, elected as lieutenant in Martial's stead (*'Tout le monde aimait sa*

figure franche, ses yeux clairs qui regardaient en face, sa parole chaude et entraînante') (C 368) and a Russian not unreminiscent of Zola's Souvarine, the enigmatic prince Lévidoff ('...qui vous avait (...) une énergie à faire frémir, âme et nerfs d'acier!') (C 369). Both men have of course renounced social position so as to contribute to progression of the cause of Justice.

The clear intimation in the above passage that the worker cannot exercise responsibility unaided will be confirmed later in the novel by one whose life has been dedicated to the attempted furtherance of social equity. The collectivist Jacquenne, a (fictional) member of the Communal Council to whom has been attributed a significant role in the events culminating in 18 March, will make angry reference to plebeian incapacity in the business of government:

*- Et ces ouvriers stupides voudraient nous gouverner! (...)
Ces gens-là ne sont pas mûrs. Il faut que la barre reste encore dans nos mains, longtemps. Il faut que ce soit nous, bourgeois, qui forgions, qui fondions la République!* (C 487)

When in hiding in Thédénat's apartment after the semaine sanglante, Jacquenne broods a further time upon the shattering of his dreams and illusions:

L'expérience était faite... Le peuple n'était pas mûr encore, ne le serait de longtemps pour succéder, avec chance de mieux faire, aux pourris qui l'asservissaient... Il eût fallu que le mouvement d'en haut répondît à celui d'en bas; que toute la bourgeoisie éclairée et moyenne prît en main, partageât la besogne... (C 620)

In a conclusion of this sort, Jacquenne offers some affinity with an actual participant in the Commune - far removed from the collectivist in almost every respect, and for whom Paul and Victor Margueritte felt considerable admiration. In the course of their research for Une Epoque, the brothers had approached Louis Rossel's mother and sister with a view to consulting notebooks left by the young man. They had encouraged the two women to think of publishing the material; when the Mémoires et

Correspondance de Louis Rossel appeared in 1908, Victor Margueritte wrote the preface. Rossel's conviction, resulting from his experiences during the Commune, that the people was as yet unfit to exercise power, was expressed in his notebooks in terms recalling those used by Jacquenne.(8) It is of some interest, perhaps, account having been taken of this particular message in la Commune, to compare such a viewpoint with the rather different one conveyed in Lucien Descaves' la Colonne and Philémon vieux de la vieille.

Simon fights during the semaine sanglante with a dogged, feverish despair. Hopes cherished have come to nought; the Commune has been ill-served by many of its adherents both high and low. All that remains for him now, amidst the chaos and destruction of the movement's death throes, is to combat until he himself falls before the gunfire of the eternal oppressors:

Aux gars comme lui (...) et les fils, de se retrousser les manches et de donner leur vie pour la cause, puisqu'ils ne pouvaient rien d'autre. Bien sûr, on les avait assez longtemps subis, tous les moulins à paroles, les porteurs d'écharpes, ces beaux messieurs de la Commune et de la Comité, bons pour faire et dire bêtises sur bêtises et après vous planter là. Parbleu! s'il n'avait écouté que son premier mouvement quand il avait vu les incendies, il aurait comme beaucoup d'autres posé son fusil: "Ça, non, je n'en suis plus!..." Mais quoi, ici on vous fusillait comme des chiens, là on flambait des pierres qui n'en pouvaient mais, des monuments qui appartenaient à la France. Personne n'avait plus sa caboche!... Après tout, de mauvais chefs avaient beau déshonorer le parti, ça ne devait pas empêcher les partisans de le bien servir jusqu'au bout...

(...)

Allons! ce n'était pas lui, ni les fils peut-être, qui verraient luire ce soleil dont il avait cru saluer l'aube, à la proclamation de la Commune! (...) Mieux valait vendre sa peau, tâcher de rendre un peu de mal à ceux qui vous en faisaient tant!... Après, on pourrait mourir. Ainsi, on aurait entièrement rempli sa mission de pauvre bougre! Ça valait toujours mieux que d'aller claquer de fièvre à Cayenne! Et puis, ça ne serait peut-être pas du sang tout à fait perdu.

C'est avec cet engrais-là qu'on fécondait les lendemains de revanche, la terre encore stérile où quand même finiraient par se lever le bon grain, les victorieux épis. Voilà! Rien n'allait vite. Il fallait du temps. Ni le soleil de Juin, ni le soleil de

Mai n'avaient suffi pour que la moisson mûrit. N'importe, il faudrait bien que cela changeât! Un autre soleil dorerait l'horizon, vers lequel l'humanité était en marche... Ce serait trop simple si l'histoire n'était qu'un cercle où l'on devait tourner sa vie, comme des esclaves la meule. Parce que 71 venait de recommencer le beau rêve, puis le cauchemar de 48, il n'était pas dit que le progrès s'arrêterait là. Les jeunes après eux redresseraient le drapeau. Lui, il avait son compte. Bientôt, tout à l'heure, il s'en irait retrouver Jean-Louis.

A sa jambe raide l'élança la vieille douleur. Oui, oui, c'était comme en Juin! Des balles pour les pauvres!... Et la rage de toute sa vie humiliée, de sa digne et laborieuse misère, toute sa rancoeur de Parisien des deux sièges, l'écrasement, - ah! certes momentanément, mais pour lui final, - de ceux de sa classe, lui remontaient aux lèvres, dans le cri haineux dont il huait l'approche des soldats: "A bas les assassins du peuple!" (C 550-552)

After exchange with Thérèse of a poignant final gaze ('...un regard profond, une douleur d'adieu') (C 552) this humble champion of a cause defeated advances to meet death:

...en une folie où il y avait du désespoir et du défi, en un dernier sursaut de fièvre, il escalada les pavés, brandit son chassepot. (...) Il éleva la crosse, cria: Vive la République! et fit feu. Et en même temps, atteint d'une balle en plein front, il ouvrit les bras, tournoya. Thérèse avait beau s'élancer. Le corps, abattu d'un coup, s'était écrasé à ses pieds. (C 552)

Simon's younger son Anatole will succeed in escaping from this barricade. When the reader next encounters him (in the Père Lachaise on the evening of 27 May) the boy's mood is, as one might expect, decidedly at variance with his usual light-hearted gouaillerie:

Une amertume indicible altérait la blague d'Anatole. (...) il vivait en fièvre ces jours d'action, s'étourdissant pour ne pas penser, et malgré lui repensant aux siens demeurés là-bas! (...) L'âme révoltée du père l'enrageait: dans sa frêle robustesse, son obscur instinct, il incarnait, filial, toute la révolution d'une race d'humbles, encore une fois écrasée. (C 590-591)

Anatole's ultimate fate - death? transportation? - is not specified. Taken prisoner at the place de Puebla and placed in one of the convoys intended for Versailles, he is said, in the last direct

reference to him, to be whistling softly through his teeth, '*...autant pour exhaler sa rage que pour narguer le cavalier devant lui...*' (C 595). After this, the adolescent becomes merely one among innumerable anonymous victims of reactionary vengeance: human cattle reviled, tormented, tortured, exposed to atrocious suffering within Paris itself, and in the conservative stronghold. The semaine sanglante is seen, indeed, to seal the fate of all five Simons: bereft of her family at the conclusion of the 'seventy-two days', Thérèse will put an end to her life.

The preface written by Victor Margueritte for the Mémoires et Correspondance de Louis Rossel is of relevance not merely in its assessment of the Commune, but because relating indirectly to the brothers' characterisation, in their 1904 novel, of the Simon family:

On sait que sous les convulsions de Paris, la face épileptique, il y eut un plus profond mouvement, le soulèvement d'un peuple gros de légitimes rancunes et de justes espérances, un lendemain meilleur qui voulait naître.

L'heure seule, fit inopportun, criminel, cet inconscient travail...

Et puis si longtemps, l'histoire de ces vaincus ne fut écrite que par les vainqueurs! On sait à présent, on sait, que s'il y eût trop de mauvais bergers, trop de brebis galeuses, dans ce troupeau égaré, l'immense majorité était faite de laborieux et d'humbles, au coeur sincère, ardemment patriote. (9)

Through the Simons, the purest elements in the Commune's fighting forces receive tribute. Created very definitely for a purpose, the five seem almost model plebeians, near-perfect specimens of their kind. Instruments in the novel rather than genuine human beings, they provide, furthermore, a means by which the Margueritte brothers may illustrate their own view of the people's appropriate role in the social order. The portrayal in la Commune of this particular working-class family might be considered to provide a useful further dimension, within this study, to the discussion of Philémon vieux de la vieille, and even l'Apprentie.

The verdict Thédénat will pronounce on the Commune in the book's final pages may well cause some surprise to a late twentieth century

reader: it is in keeping, nonetheless, with the spirit of the novel. Six years afterwards, the historian is discussing the events of 1871 with Lucien Poncet:

Osons nous pencher sur ce chaos! Ce qu'il y avait au fond, tout au fond de la Commune? - Le communisme! Rêve de malheureux qui, ne trouvant pas dans le présent de quoi suffire aux droits sacrés de l'existence, s'élancent avec colère vers un meilleur avenir... Vin frelaté qui trompe, exaspère leur soif... A nous, qui fermement aussi souhaitons l'avenir meilleur, mais ne le voudrions voir naître que dans la joie, à nous d'en hâter l'approche, puisqu'en nous résident encore l'intelligence et la force, tout ce qui achèvera de nous manquer demain, si nous nous le laissons arracher, au lieu de le partager de bonne grâce!... Un peu de franchise; tous, les privilégiés, nous pouvons dire: Meâ culpa!... Savaient-ils lire, ceux qui ont brûlé la bibliothèque du Louvre! Savaient-ils qu'ils se suicidaient, ceux qui ont tué l'archevêque!... Savaient-ils, ces enfants qu'on a ramassés dans la rue, les mains noires de pétrole et de poudre?...

Thédenat se tut; puis, ayant murmuré le vers d'Hugo:

Oh! patrie! oh! concorde entre les citoyens!

il releva le front:

- Ah! si tous les heureux pouvaient entendre l'avertissement de Rossel: "Il y a dans la société une classe nombreuse, industrielle, puissante parce qu'elle est groupée; à laquelle ne s'appliquent ni vos lois sur l'héritage, ni vos lois sur la famille, ni vos lois sur la propriété. Changez vos lois, ou bien cette classe essayera obstinément de se créer une société à elle, où il n'y aura ni famille, ni héritage, ni propriété." (C 637-638)

While not of course uttered specifically to this end, Thédenat's words are an indirect justification of the bitterness Simon had felt towards the socially favoured; and an apparent testimony, on the Margueritte brothers' part, to the accuracy of the shoe-repairer's realisation that guidance was needful from above. Not unreminiscent of Emile Zola's explanation (in a letter of December 1885)(10) of the lesson to be drawn from Germinal, the message is, manifestly, of the 'them and us' variety.

In the second part of this appendix, another facet of la Commune is considered. A discussion of the love of Rose and Louis Simon - and of the parallel relationship, within the novel, between Pierre Du Breuil and

Anine Bersheim - may be seen to complement material examined in those portions of the thesis relating to l'Ami de l'Ordre, Philémon vieux de la vieille and les Massacres de Paris. The forces of life, love and nature, in the months of war and insurrection, are linked inevitably (in la Commune as in other texts) with those of death and destruction.(11)

Taking place as it does in springtime glory, the love of Rose and Louis Simon seems a further expression of the spirit of optimism initially characterising the insurrectionary period, and in keeping with the supposed dawning of a new Golden Age. The relationship would appear on the face of it astonishing, even equivocal; Rose and Louis are, after all, first cousins who have lived all their lives as brother and sister.(12) In likely accordance with their symbolic function, the two are seen to make a superbly handsome couple. Of faded prettiness at the outset owing to the rigours of the siege (C 429), dark-eyed, dark-haired Rose will blossom after 26 February (it is on Louis' return from the ramparts, following rumours of imminent Versaillais entry, that he and Rose become suddenly aware of their true feelings for each other) and soon be of a loveliness that grows all the more radiant as the romance itself blooms (C 429). Tall, blond, blue-eyed, broad-shouldered, of a 'rayonnante beauté guerrière' (C 350), Louis - who bears no apparent resemblance to either his father or his brother - seems of an almost godlike physique (C 549).

The burgeoning of young Simon's love for his cousin is linked intimately in his mind with the advent of proletarian triumph: until the semaine sanglante, springtime adoration and revolutionary aspiration are, for him, as one. When marching with his battalion in the sunshine of 28 March, Louis has constantly in his mind's eye the vision of his sweetheart:

...devant lui se ployait la taille élancée de Rose, resplendissaient les yeux noirs et tendres. Le fantôme clair dansait dans la splendeur du jour, sur le fourmillement de cette multitude joyeuse, à travers le flot ardent de ses idées. Il l'associait à la beauté de cet instant, où s'épanouissaient, en un éclat d'aube, les années de vicissitudes, souffertes ensemble, et ces derniers mois où après

tant d'autres ils avaient plus cruellement pâti de la faim, du froid, et ces semaines, closes d'hier, trépidantes d'espérances et de doutes. (...)

(...)

(...) (Depuis le 27 février) il avait vécu dans un enchantement, illuminant tout du reflet de son espoir, accompli aujourd'hui. Dans l'avènement de la Commune, il saluait tout ensemble la religion de sa jeunesse - le culte du père! - et son propre bonheur, soudain fleuri. (...) Il marchait dans la plénitude de sa joie, tout lui semblait possible, dû: l'essor de son amour, la victoire de ses idées... (C 148-149)

Unleashing within him a depth and intensity of emotion hitherto unexperienced, the young man's love for his cousin serves then to dispel, in significant measure, any possible doubt, concern or gloom on his part as the revolution seems increasingly in jeopardy. During the state funeral on 6 April for the dead of two days earlier, Louis feels little of his father's resentment as, once more, the anticipated era of Justice threatens to elude the working classes:

Ces semaines de soleil et d'azur, fouettées du vent vif de la révolution, c'était pour lui l'ivresse d'aimer, le visage rayonnant de Rose. La perspective de se battre demain, loin de l'affliger, lui apparaissait comme naturelle, un épanouissement de sa vigueur et de sa joie. (C 232)

It will be at Vanves, during the night of 9-10 May, that Louis and Rose first give themselves to each other completely. Grazed by a bullet only hours before, Louis might be said (not insignificantly) to have cheated death. Asleep when Rose arrives at the fort, he opens his eyes to find her beside him:

Un long baiser les rendit à eux-mêmes (...). Il n'y avait plus qu'eux, en cette minute de périls et de catastrophes, rien qu'eux avec leurs âmes qui s'épousaient du regard, leurs chairs frémissant de se joindre. (C 435)

...un air à la fois vif et tiède entrant par la fenêtre ouverte, avec toute l'ivresse de la nuit, le fécond fleuve de sève du printemps. Ils étaient comme ivres de leur amour, et en même temps ils éprouvaient une anxiété indicible. C'était l'avertissement de la brève minute, du temps qui fuit insaisissable, de la mort autour d'eux. Elle mêlait une griserie funèbre, une exaltation de plus au vertige de leur sens, à ce soulèvement de vie qui les élançait l'un vers l'autre. (C 436)

On this occasion as on many another (not least 6 April) the forces of life and love are seen to be inextricably linked with those of violent death. The couple's passion - intrinsic to life and to nature, to '*la loi éternelle de la vie*' (C 437) - is representative, by implication, of all that is soundest in human experience; the antithesis (within the context of *la Commune*) of the ugliness of internecine warfare. Dawn is breaking when Rose and Louis awaken; again the glories of spring (so much more in harmony with their mood, it is suggested, than are the unnatural follies engulfing them and countless others) succeed temporarily in casting civil war from their scheme of things:

Tout le frais matin pénétra dans la chambre, les enveloppa d'un bain d'azur et d'or. Eperdument, ils se sourirent, et dans le fond d'eux-mêmes, en même temps que dans le ciel radieux, c'était comme une aurore qui se levait, un soleil de paix et de joie. (C 437)

Nature is seen then to foster the mood of hope and optimism most in keeping with Louis' and Rose's state of mind. At no time, however, will it be forgotten that this idyll is taking place in the shadow of death and destruction: a fact underscored even more saliently when, three days later, the couple again make love:

Ils s'étaient retrouvés le soir du 13 - entrés comment? - dans l'enceinte du fort. Abri plus dangereux que tous les autres, amas de décombres informes, affûts brisés, canons gisants (sic) parmi les cadavres et les ruines. Ils avaient passé là une nuit inoubliable, où le danger imminent, la mort suspendue n'avaient été qu'une ivresse de plus, un souffle de flamme qui embrasait, jusqu'à l'anéantissement délicieux, leur amour... (C 453)

The 'cat-and-mouse' game which Louis and Rose almost encourage death to play with them, will manifest itself in more ways than one. When attempting, with other combatants, to escape from Vanves during the night of 13-14 May, the couple (and initially the entire group) find themselves lost underground, in the galleries beneath the fort. The account of the Communards' interminable walk in the shadows and darkness of airless, narrow passages may put the reader in mind of the subterranean atmosphere created in *Germinal*, and of the trapped miners' frantic search for a way

out of the flooded mine. Superficial resemblances are to be noted between Zola's description and that featuring in la Commune: both groups - hastening through a labyrinth of passageways - are of course in doubt as to the direction to take; the brothers use, furthermore, as Zola had done, the image of a city underground. Terrified and exhausted, Rose faints; and Louis, who has stooped to gather her into his arms, finds that a few seconds have sufficed to separate them from those ahead. Similarly, Etienne Lantier, as he pauses to lift Catherine who is on the verge of collapse, is prevented by a rockfall from joining the other miners. (13)

Rose and Louis, who live and love in the ever-ominous presence of death, and for whom the brothers are planning an appropriately symbolic end, will eventually be rescued from the gloom and darkness in order to enjoy further - if only for a few days more - the light and movement of the spring season. The spirit of optimism that is again theirs seems patently ironic as on 21 May the couple enjoy the final Sunday concert given by the Commune at the Tuileries:

(Ils) étaient heureux de fêter, par cette distraction, le dimanche de délivrance et de joie qui leur riait aux yeux, leur caressait l'âme de son éblouissant soleil, de son ouverture d'illimités horizons. (C 493)

Louis' mood during the semaine sanglante contrasts (as on 6 April) with that of his father. The young man will experience in street battle an exaltation of the senses transcending anything he has known before; a fusion of love, vigour, awareness that he is defending ideals meriting the ultimate sacrifice... the thrill (again ironic, no doubt, given the imminence of violent death) of living to the full:

Il tournait la tête, souriait. Rose était derrière lui. Il savoura l'exaltation de vivre à plein, dans un paroxysme d'énergie, de sacrifice et d'amour. Une douleur grave se mêlait à cette ivresse de l'instinct: le sentiment de la défaite, l'effondrement de la cité des songes. A terre, tout l'échafaudage de la société future! Du moins éprouvait-il, sous les yeux du père et surtout des femmes, un réconfort d'orgueil, à risquer sa vie pour les idées du vieux,

les siennes, à défendre ce pavé qui était sien, sa ville, sa rue, sa maison!... Cette heure si précaire, qui minute à minute, seconde à seconde, roulait au gouffre, elle s'illuminait, palpait d'autant plus affreuse et magnifique. Jamais (...) semblable torrent de feu n'avait couru dans ses veines... Il ressentait tout à la fois, dans cet épanouissement de l'être, l'horreur des ténébreuses carrières et la divine réapparition du jour... Il planait, comme un dieu, au-dessus de la mort et de la vie. (C 548-549)

Rose ('...révoltée, ardente, toute l'âme du combattant de Juin, de son père mort ressuscitée en elle, en même temps qu'elle était devenue femme') (C 549) seems now an embodiment, not only of the spirit of revolution, but of womanhood:

Bras nus, cheveux fous, elle revenait toujours à Louis, l'enveloppait de sa présence et de son fluide. Comme une fleur sauvage, elle exhalait un âcre parfum de sève; il la respirait toute, ils se possédaient du regard. (C 549-550)

The triumph, within the context of la Commune, of love over bloodshed and oppression, is apparent soon afterwards as Rose and Louis stand before their brutal, foul-mouthed executioners. The Versailles soldiers sense dimly, fleetingly that they are in the presence of an extraordinary power: if within the range of ordinary experience, this love assumes an exceptional quality because representative of the forces of life: forces that (as it no doubt seemed in 1904) would be ever greater than those of butchery, fratricide and destruction:

(Rose et Louis) se tenaient à la taille, bravant les fusils d'un sourire de haine et de mépris, de la rayonnante splendeur de leurs visages fiers où s'exhalaient, dans un éclat suprême, toutes les forces de la vie, l'orgueil de leur amour, plus puissant que la mort... (C 554)

Points of resemblance are several between the romance of Louis and Rose and that of Pierre Du Breuil and Anine Bersheim. In both cases, love is seen to provide a fount of hope, transcending the present and allowing anticipation of future peace and happiness; for the working-class couple the insurrectionary period is, as has been seen, one of almost total optimism. Just as the apparent imminence of death adds a

certain piquancy to the love of Rose and Louis (above all at Vanves) so the sentiments shared by Du Breuil and Anine seem heightened in the ambience of war that has seen their declaration of love:

...sans qu'ils s'en rendissent compte, avec l'égoïsme impérieux et fatal de l'amour, peut-être savouraient-ils davantage la paix joyeuse de leurs âmes, au milieu de l'affreux tourbillon de cette guerre, et l'exaltation de la vie dans l'enveloppement de la mort.
(C 398)

The leitmotif of nature's beauty (recurring often in la Commune) serves to underscore the opposing states of mind of Louis Simon and Pierre Du Breuil in the climate of civil war. Whereas to young Simon the glories of springtime rejuvenation are seemingly reflective of on the one hand his love for Rose, on the other the social renouveau heralded by the Commune, the entire insurrectionary episode will be for Du Breuil one of inner conflict in which personal conscience and military obligation are increasingly opposed. The courtship of Du Breuil and Anine takes place with the seeming compliance of nature: love for the couple - as for Rose and Louis - is clearly synonymous with open air, clear skies and all the positive forces of Life.⁽¹⁴⁾ The contrast between these two people who look, of course, to the future, and their claustrophobically reactionary entourage at Versailles entrenched firmly in beliefs of the past, is suggested by a scene in which, within the drawing room of the aged Madame de Grandpré, the lovers engage in a kind of spiritual evasion:

Ils respiraient, dans ce salon clos, à la lueur factice des lampes, tout l'espoir des libres jours, une griserie d'horizon frais, la splendeur de la terre et des bois. (C 398)

In a further touch, presumably an intentional indication of the analogy to be drawn between the two romances blossoming at different social levels, the fragrance of violets - in one scene pinned to the bodice of Anine Bersheim (C 125), in the other carried by Rose Simon (C 349-350) - is evocative, for Du Breuil as for Louis, of the charms of their respective sweethearts.

Evidence of nature's eternal processes is then a balm for the officer during these days of civil war, heightening his ever-present need to live and love, and instilling a gladness of heart all too often clouded by sudden foreboding, and awareness of the inexorable passage of time. Constricted in behaviour and outlook by the mores of their social milieu, Du Breuil and Anine are obliged to observe a code of conduct that has no place in the courtship of Louis and Rose. The plebeian couple - aware in themselves that death could, at any moment, separate them forever - are seen at Vanves to make love with the implicit blessing of nature. For Du Breuil and Anine, conventions they would themselves find it unthinkable to transgress prevent - until such time as they can be man and wife - too open a display of feeling. When they take leave of each other soon before Du Breuil is to enter Paris as a member of the 'Forces of Order', it is with the knowledge (not of course expressed outright) that time may yet deny them the chance to be as one:

Du Breuil tira sa montre, en écouta les battements précipités. Il eut un geste de désespoir, perçut la fuite du temps. Il fallait s'arracher l'un à l'autre... Jusques à quand? Pour la première fois, un élan les jeta poitrine contre poitrine. Leurs visages se touchaient; leurs lèvres furtivement cueillirent, sur leurs joues empourprées d'un sang brusque, la fleur déjà fanée de l'instant.

Quand leurs bras se dénouèrent, après l'étreinte passionnée, ils éprouvèrent comme une stupeur, si proches, pourtant à mille lieues, tout l'inconnu entre eux. Demain! Ce n'était plus le temps, l'irréparable temps qu'ils écoutaient fuir, c'était le meilleur d'eux-mêmes, leur bonheur et leur vie, qui s'éloignaient... (C 481)

The image of the blossom immediately faded is suggestive no doubt of a love destined - in contrast to that of Rose and Louis - to remain unfulfilled.

Similarities between the two couples have been apparent throughout the novel: it is, however, only on Wednesday 24 May that something akin to a linking of these parallel destinies will take place. Witness to the taking of the barricade in the rue Soufflot, Du Breuil will intervene seconds too late in an attempt to prevent the execution of Rose and Louis. Ephemeral contact of a sort is said to be made between the

horror-stricken Versailles officer and the two lovers defiantly awaiting the bullets of the foe:

Une seconde d'intraduisible émotion subitement lia les regards de Du Breuil et des jeunes gens.

(...) En une fulgurante vision, Du Breuil évoquait Anine, leur bonheur. (...) Une poignante pitié l'avait pris aux entrailles; mystérieusement entraînent dans sa vie ces êtres désormais inoubliables, jeunes et beaux, s'aimant comme Anine et lui. Crier, agir, les sauver, instinct qui le dressait sur ses étriers, d'un cri rauque:

- Arrêtez!

Mais une fracassante décharge tonnait. Rose et Louis foudroyés tombèrent. Leurs bras ne s'étaient pas dénoués. (C 554-555)

Dismay on Du Breuil's part at this execution will be aggravated, of course, by many further instances of traditionalist excess. Sickened by the cruelty displayed in repression, the officer is convinced that in this massacre of compatriots the army has betrayed its near-sacrosanct function: defence of the nation as a whole. The image of the lovers shot down on the afternoon of the 24th is constantly in the officer's mind during those days of life remaining to him. It is as though he is instinctively aware that the execution of this couple prefigures his own end, and extinction of happiness for himself and Anine:

...l'attitude de ces jeunes gens, hier inconnus, aujourd'hui indissolublement mêlés à sa pensée, le poursuivait de la sombre poésie de cette mort enlacée. Ce bonheur tranché en pleine sève, profondément l'émouvait; une mystérieuse analogie lui faisait penser à leur bonheur, à Anine et à lui... (C 602)

Use in the above passage of the noun sève - recurring not infrequently in la Commune in lyrical descriptions of the forces of nature (C 250; 350; 391; 436; 449) - reinforces the parallel conveyed constantly in the novel between love, and nature's eternal life-giving process.⁽¹⁵⁾ The execution of Rose and Louis seems to Du Breuil - despite the young couple's manifest scorn for, and consequent triumph over, the nature of their death - not merely a negation of his own future with Anine, but a transgression of the fundamental law of existence. Du

Breuil himself will be fatally wounded by the bullet of a fédéré sniper on Sunday 28 May. As in his dying moments the confused scenario of his life passes before him, he is haunted by the faces of the two lovers whose end he had been powerless to prevent:

...dans l'incohérent défilé des visions récentes, (il voit) ces deux amoureux enlacés, qu'il n'a pu sauver...

L'invisible assassin de tout à l'heure est maintenant là, au pied du lit; il a le visage de Louis, tient sa Rose par la main...

(C 611-612)

Love is seen in la Commune to provide a means by which the Margueritte brothers can further indicate their approval or censure of certain characters, and the attitudes to which they subscribe. The romances of Rose and Louis, Du Breuil and Anine (romances that would in normal circumstances incarnate hope for the future) and even the loving, durable partnerships of Pierre Simon and Thérèse, Jules Thédenat and his wife, Lucien and Agathe Poncet, may be placed in contrast to the domestic situation of ultra-conservative Georges de Grandpré; coldly indifferent, it is suggested, in marital relations and whose childless wife views with a touch of envy the true love of Du Breuil and Anine (C 294). This is in keeping with the impression of Versailles society - represented principally in the novel by de Grandpré and his aged mother, and the no less aged comte de la Mûre - as the very antithesis of progress. In conversation with Du Breuil soon after 18 March, Thédenat had expressed an attitude towards Versailles ('...à mes yeux, c'est un tombeau! Les revenants qui vont l'habiter ne le feront pas vivant, n'y ressusciteront ni le passé, ni le roi') (C 94) that is, in fact, not unreminiscent of the view attributed to young Jean Barbier in Bas les Coeurs.(16)

The theme of springtime romance taking place in the shadow of death is to be found in a number of texts relating to the Commune. Only superficially acquainted before the semaine sanglante, Etienne Colomès and Phonsine of Philémon vieux de la vieille had grown to know each other well (as seen in Chapter Five of this study) following Colomès' request for refuge on Wednesday 24 May. Nature, as it seems to Colomès and Phonsine in 1900, was intent that year on lightening the hearts of

Parisians after the rigours of the siege, hoping to create a mood in harmony with the planned universal springtide, and favouring the bloom of love. Spring's semi-connivance in the furthering of romance is again a theme of le Mur by Maurice Montégut; as is of course a heightening of emotions caused by awareness that death might be close at hand. Huge, jovial, worthy, slightly dim-witted Jacques Maillandru and his sweetheart from childhood Françoise Moireau will romance illicitly during the Commune period; and for the two adolescents Guillaume Sandric and Fanchette, these months will be crucial in their emotional awakening:

Ils s'aimaient. La fuite échevelée des événements farouches précipitait, activait leurs sentiments intimes; tout allait vite dans ces jours de chaos, la vie dans la mort.

(...) Leur passion ingénue avait poussé, plante bizarre, sous le ciel froid de la guerre; elle fleurissait au soleil voilé de fumée des grandes émeutes, oubliée par l'orage, habituée à la foudre, vivace au milieu des ruines. (M 271)

The two fifteen-year-olds are almost literally thrown into each other's arms during the semaine sanglante. Guillaume, who has received a serious head wound a few days before, is being cared for by Fanchette in the cellar of their tenement building. A bomb explodes on the ground floor above:

...le choc fut si fort, la détonation si nette, si instante, que la "petite" roula dans les bras de son ami, et comme elle croyait qu'ils allaient mourir, elle chercha ses lèvres, se collant à lui.

C'est ainsi qu'ils se retrouvèrent, en rouvrant les yeux; le péril était passé, plus loin, mais l'étreinte se prolongeait... (M 274)

The pairing of love and death in an atmosphere of springtime receives significant treatment in les Massacres de Paris. The scene in which Théodore Quiche and Marie-Rose Siffrelin first make love (during the night of 1-2 May) bears indeed some superficial resemblance to the account of Rose's and Louis' initial night together at Vanves. For Marie-Rose (as for Rose herself) a light still burning at the bedside prevents any feeling of intimacy with the loved one:(17) it is however as though both couples are united with the complicity of the darkness and

- more importantly - in a total, if temporary, unconsciousness of the perils facing the Commune. As Quiche writes in his journal:

...je soufflai la lampe et je me retournai. Marie-Rose ne fut plus qu'une ombre au fond de ma chambre, mais une ombre où il semblait que se fût concentrée toute la force de la nuit et de l'été.

(...)

(...) Par la fenêtre, le souffle de la nuit entrainait nous caresser en riant. (...) nous oubliâmes l'heure qui devait nous reprendre l'un à l'autre, le canon et le feu qui nous cernaient de partout. Le temps et la mort s'abolirent. (MP 197-198)

The imminence of death and Quiche's feverish, almost defiant preoccupation with love is underlined further in subsequent passages. On 21 May, both he and Marie-Rose are aware in themselves - and despite an officer's apparently confident announcement to the contrary at the conclusion of the Tuileries concert - that the Commune and its defenders are marked for death (*'J'avais le goût de la mort dans la bouche et je le retrouvai aux lèvres de Marie-Rose'*) (MP 263). During the night of 22-23 May, as Quiche lies awake beside the barricade at the place Blanche, his thoughts turn to Marie-Rose who is elsewhere in the city and doomed, almost certainly, as he himself must be:

Morte comme moi et comme moi vivante, Marie-Rose est à l'autre bout de Paris, et je la touche. On va nous tuer, Marie-Rose, ou plutôt, moi qui déteste la mort, c'est moi qui vais me jeter sur la mort, quand le matin dressera la mort de l'autre côté de la barricade, oui, Marie-Rose, c'est moi qui vais me jeter sur elle avec ton amour gonflé en moi comme une vague. (MP 275)

Again two days later, having followed Dombrowski's corpse to the July Column, Théodore makes his way back through the crowds with Marie-Rose in full consciousness that the time for love will soon be no more:

...tenir cette femme dans mes bras, une dernière fois encore, m'étendre sur elle, bouche à bouche, derrière un mur, avant que le mur s'écroule et que le feu nous submerge. (MP 295)

NOTES

The original edition of la Commune (Paris, Plon, n.d. (but 1904)) has been used for citation of references. Quotations from le Mur by Maurice Montégut and les Massacres de Paris by Jean Cassou have been taken from the editions cited in Chapter Six and Appendix Two respectively.

1. The literary partnership of Paul Margueritte (1860-1918) and his brother Victor (1866-1942) began in 1896 and terminated in 1908. The boys' father, General Jean-Auguste Margueritte, had been fatally wounded at Sedan in 1870: le Désastre (the opening volume of Une Epoque) bore the dedication '*A la mémoire de notre père le général Margueritte et au grand souvenir de l'armée et de la ville de Metz*'. Both brothers had been educated at the Prytanée militaire de la Flèche. Victor Margueritte was a professional soldier until 1896.

The titles and dates of publication of the four volumes of the tetralogy are as follows: le Désastre (1898); les Tronçons du glaive (1900); les Braves gens (1901), la Commune (1904).

For various assessments of la Commune, see: J. S. Wood, 'la Commune dans le roman', in Images of the Commune/Images de la Commune (editor James A. Leith), Montreal/London, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978, pp. 69-81, see pp. 74-76; Jean Fréville, 'la Commune et la littérature', Europe ('la Commune'), April-May 1951, pp. 73-111, see p. 110; Anne Roche, 'le Roman et la Commune. Jalons pour une description', in 1871. Jalons pour une histoire de la Commune de Paris, Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 1973, pp. 552-582, passim. See also Charles Benoist, 'les Hommes de la Guerre et de la Commune: Chefs et foules (1870-1871)', Revue des deux mondes, 1 December 1904, pp. 675-708.

2. The expression used by Zola when writing to Robert Sherard (author of the preface to Vizetelly's translation of la Débâcle). See Helen Rufener, Biography of a War Novel: Zola's la Débâcle, New York, King's Crown Press, 1946, p. 26; also F.W.J. Hemmings, Emile Zola, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1966 (second edition), p. 254.
3. '*Aux vainqueurs et aux vaincus de la Commune dont la bataille sacrilège acheva sous les yeux de l'étranger de déchirer la France.*
A ces frères ennemis pacifiés dans la mort et l'oubli nous dédions ces pages en horreur et en haine de la plus odieuse des guerres.'
4. In their characterisation throughout la Commune (and in les Tronçons du glaive) the Margueritte brothers make abundant use of the recurring phrase, and of repeated reference (in often closely similar terms) to a particular quality or physical characteristic. The sectarian Jacqueline's flaming eyes, receding forehead,

determined chin and hard grey beard are referred to constantly (les Tronçons du glaive, Paris, Plon, n.d. (but 1901), pp. 49, 161, 326; la Commune, pp. 12, 145, 211, 213, 347); and he is likened to 'un sanglier traqué' (TG 421; cf. C 487); '(un) loup maigre' (C 12); 'un très vieux loup traqué' (C 619). In the case of the young idealist Pierre Dury, frequent mention is made of his frank, agreeable countenance and attractive eyes ('ses yeux clairs qui regardaient en face' (C 368); '(s)es yeux (...) bons et gais' (C 370); 'le visage intelligent, les beaux yeux de Pierre Dury' (C 435); 'ses beaux yeux francs' (C 454); 'Dury (...) les yeux brillants, beau de fièvre et de jeunesse' (C 548). Lévidoff's flaxen hair, delicate complexion and large nostrils are the physical traits usually mentioned in his brief appearances (C 278, 368-369, 371, 454); the dominant feature of his personality is conveyed by reference to 'son air d'énergie froide' (C 278); 'une énergie à faire frémir, âme et nerfs d'acier' (C 369); 'sa froideur précoce' (C 371); 'une volonté froide (...) cette poigne d'acier' (C 454); 'ce logicien glacé' (C 591).

In portrayal of members of the Versailles camp a similar tendency is apparent. Monsieur de Grandpré's life of wealth and ease is indicated by periodic reference to his slender white hands (C 296, 334, 576). The comte de La Mûre - an episodic character in both les Tronçons du glaive and la Commune - seems a walking symbol of antiquated tradition: 'cette figure craquelée de rides, ce teint de vieille porcelaine' (TG 231); 'son teint de vieille porcelaine craquelée' (TG 377); '(le comte) portant beau son visage craquelé' (TG 498); 'son visage d'émail craquelé' (C 445). His daughter is cursorily evoked through reference to '(la) plate et blême jeune fille' (TG 22); 'la sèche et blême personne' (C 438).

It is, however, in evocation of Agathe Poncet (the kindly, vigorous wife of the chemist) that the recurring phrase is used with almost farcical effect: 'Elle était une espèce de Providence bourrue et bonne' (C 318); 'son rude courage' (C 342); 'sa tête bonne et rude' (C 398); 'la bonne et rude compagne' (C 405); 'son âme maternelle, rude et bonne' (C 525), 'le rude et bon visage de Mme Poncet' (C 598).

5. Thédénat is described in le Désastre (Paris, Plon, n.d. (but 1898), p. 57) as '...un vieillard à face d'apôtre, fine, ardente et glabre. Des cheveux de femme, tout blancs et bouclés, encadraient son visage.' This description recalls photographs of Michelet taken in later life. Thédénat's career (he had been appointed to a professorship of history at the Collège de France in 1848, resigning after the coup d'état) (ibid., p. 57) is again reminiscent of a number of leading French intellectuals of the time (Michelet, Quinet, Renan). He is said, furthermore (les Tronçons du glaive, p. 47) to be working on an Histoire de la Révolution: again recalling Michelet, also Louis Blanc and Edgar Quinet.

6. The tenth of March saw the lifting by the National Assembly of the moratorium on rent and overdue bills.
7. The Simon males - models of plebeian integrity - provide a marked contrast with other working-class characters in la Commune who serve in the revolution's ranks: notably the sly, shifty-eyed, iniquitous concierge Louchard, who is skilled as a délateur if in all else unendowed; the puny, ferret-faced bookbinder Tinet; Fernol, a blustering boaster; the ne'er-do-well Rougeard and the mindless giant Jules. All but the last-named are consummate poltroons (Jules will, to his credit, combat valiantly during the semaine sanglante). Characters such as these have near equivalents, of course, in Lucien Descaves' la Colonne.
8. *'Il est un point sur lequel je considère la Commune comme une expérience complète: c'est l'insuffisance des classes ouvrières pour le gouvernement. Il faut, il faut que jusqu'à nouvel ordre l'exercice des fonctions gouvernementales reste aux mains de la bourgeoisie jusqu'à ce que le peuple soit suffisamment instruit. Que le peuple s'instruise donc s'il veut avoir sa part légitime dans la direction des affaires et dans la répartition de la fortune. Mais pour le moment, je dirai le mot sans le mâcher, le peuple est trop nul pour nous gouverner: il n'a pas assez d'idées sérieuses et il a trop d'idées fausses. (...)* Le gouvernement actuel est incapable, vicieux, de mauvaise foi, tout ce qu'on voudra; je le sais bien, puisque j'ai travaillé de tout mon coeur à le démolir. Mais je dois dire que le peuple de Paris, ayant mis son gouvernement à la porte, avait l'air d'un aveugle qui a perdu son chien.'
- Mémoires et Correspondance de Louis Rossel, Paris, P.-V. Stock, 1908, p. 341.
9. Ibid., Préface, ix.
10. See Emile Zola, Oeuvres complètes, Cercle du livre Précieux, Vol. XIV, p. 1449.
11. See (in addition to texts discussed in this appendix) François Coppée, Une Idylle pendant le siège; Jean Richepin, Césarine; Léon Cladel, I.N.R.I.; Jean-Pierre Chabrol, le Canon Fraternité.
The linking of love and death recurs of course throughout the Rougon-Macquart series; notably in la Fortune des Rougon, Germinal and la Bête humaine.
12. The lovers Eugène and Marie Réal of les Tronçons du glaive are also first cousins.
13. See la Commune, pp. 454-457; and Vol. V of Zola's Oeuvres complètes (Cercle du livre Précieux), pp. 381-382.

14. See, for instance, in la Commune, pp. 97, 391-392, 544.
15. Cf. la Commune, p. 565: '*...Louis et (...) Rose fauchés en pleine fleur...*'
16. '*C'est ennuyeux comme tout, Versailles, ennuyeux comme tout. On dirait que c'est mort.*'
17. See les Massacres de Paris, p. 197; la Commune, p. 437.

The theme of love and death in la Commune and le Mur is discussed briefly by J. S. Wood (op. cit., pp. 79-80).

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The bibliography is divided into three parts, each with a number of subdivisions. Section A (five subdivisions) lists sources relating to the Commune itself, or to other relevant literary and historical information. Section B (seven subdivisions) records material consulted with respect to authors discussed in Chapters One to Six, and in the appendices. Section C (three subdivisions) lists secondary fictional source material, and relevant critical information used.

While a case might sometimes be made for inclusion of a given item within a section or subdivision other than that in which it appears, it is hoped that the classification adopted will prove, on the whole, expedient for the reader's purposes.

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