[FOR THE RECORD-UNION.]

SET IN A SILVER SEA!

A ROMANCE BY B. L. FARJEON.

AUTHOR OF "BLADE O' GRASS," "BREAD AND CHEESE AND KISSES," "JOSHUA MARVEL" "KING OF NO-LAND," "THE BELLS OF PENRAVEN," ETC.

CHAPTER XVIII.

RANF CLAIMS EVANGELINE AS HIS OWN.

"I stood like a man in a dream gazing upon this startling union of life and death—of death in its most chilling aspect, of life in its fairest. And yet, although it was apparent to me that the years that had passed since I last looked upon my mother's face had not improved her, the manner of her death was such as she would have deserved had she lived a worthier life. Both sleep and death were peaceful, and the fresh pure breath of innocence flowed over the form of one from whose lips I had never heard the expression of a gentle thought.

"My mother had not been long dead; her body still retained the warmth of life but just departed. She must have hushed the child to sleep, and lying by her side, have yielded up her spirit to its Creator. The fever of her life, expressed in coarse desires and groveling aspirations, was spent. She had lived the full span, but I doubted if there existed a human creature who, hearing she had gone, would have said, 'Rest in peace.' Like a weed run to waste lay my mother; like a sweet and lovely flower lay the child. By what mysterious link were living sunrise and dead night united? I searched the hut for a clue, in the shape of a letter or memorandum, and I made two discoveries, one of a few pieces of gold in a wooden cup, the other of a Bible, on the fly-leaf of which was written in straggling characters which I recognized as my mother's 'Ranf—Mauvain,' and beneath these names, another, 'Evangeline.' There was nothing strange in the circumstance of my mother thus bringing into association the two beings most closely connected with her life; but that their names should be written in a Bible!—Here was matter for reflection. Not only to my knowledge had my mother never possessed a Bible, but I had never known her open the pages of one. The book I held then in my hand was small and was fastened with silver clasps; some of the leaves stuck together, probably from damp, a proof that it had been lately but little used. I put it carefully away, and it is now in the hut in which I am making this record.

"The discovery of the gold and the Bible afforded no clue to the mystery of the child's presence, for the third name, Evangeline, which I supposed to be the child's, was not of any value as testimony. The only other unaccustomed object which rewarded my search was a baby's shoe.

"It hurt me that the sleeping child should be so close to death, and I gathered and made a bed of dry leaves upon the ground, and, softly raising the child, placed her upon it. A spirit of hope and happiness entered my heart as I held the beautiful flower in my arms. The child had been sent to me from heaven; faithfully would I guard the sacred trust.

"I carried the body of my mother from the hut and laid it in the forest's shade, in a spot suitable for a grave, which I determined to dig that night. Then I returned to the hut and sat by the side of the child, waiting for her to awake. I felt that a terrible ordeal awaited me in the moment of her awaking from her slumber. If she shrank from me, terrified at my uncouth appearance, I vowed never to meet the face of man again. I would go and herd with the beasts, as being fit only for the society of the lower creatures of the earth. A judgment was about to be pronounced upon me.

"The child opened her eyes, and looked at me calmly and without fear. I held out my arms to her, and she accepted the shelter. Tears of gratitude rolled down my beard. All my life I had been fighting with demons; now, an angel was on my side.

"I sat with her little hand in mine, and her soft cheek nestling against my hairy face. Only for a few moments did I allow myself the enjoyment of this new and wonderful happiness, being impressed with the necessity of finding a home for the child, in which she could receive womanly care and attention. I knew of but one such within easy distance, a house almost as lonely as my mother's hut, in which in former years I had seen a woman at work; it was called the forest farm. Throwing an old shawl of my mother's round the child, I proceeded in the direction of the farm, taking with me the gold I had found in the cup. The sun was setting when I reached my destination. The rooks were clustering for rest; an old man was driving a cow into a shed; a dog rushed at me, and stood stock-still, arrested in his contemplated attack by my disregard of him, and another, a savage beast, secured by a stout chain, came from his kennel, and growled at me furiously. I took no notice of these creatures, but walked straight to the door of the farm-house, and pushing it open, saw the woman who lived there when I was a lad. She had grown prematurely old; the healthy color in her face had fled, and her hair was almost white. She stared at me in terror, and made as though she would fly from me.

"'There is no cause for fear,' I said; 'I am not a ghost. My name is Ranf.'

"The announcement did not tend to compose her.

"'Ranf!' she cried. 'The deformed son of the evil woman in the hut yonder!'

"'The same,' I replied. 'I carry my credentials on my shoulders.'

"'The good Lord save us!' she ejaculated.

"'Amen,' I said.

"'We heard you were dead.'

"'It is not true, you see. You knew my mother.'

"'I have seen her.'

"'It is she who is dead.'

"'What is that to me?'

"'Nothing. I have come to ask you to do a Christian act.'

"'I will have nothing to do with her,' screamed the woman. 'I will not touch the witch.'

"'Witch or no witch,' I said, discovering the reputation my mother had gained for herself, 'she is done with this world. I come on behalf of the living, not the dead. See here, dame; you will not turn me away—you would not have the heart! I have no home to offer this little one. She needs a woman's care; I have gold, and can pay you.'

"'Yes, yes,' muttered the woman; 'we are poor.'

"I knew that my object was gained, and I gave the child into her arms. She looked at our faces, comparing them.

"'Not yours?' she asked.

"'Mine,' I replied, boldly.

"'I have seen some of Nature's tricks,' she said, 'but never such a trick as this.'

"'Nature owed me reparation,' I said, 'and she makes it in the form of this child. It is a trick on the right side, dame! Better the little one should be comely and fair than in my likeness.

"'It is better; yes, it is better; but I am thinking of the mother.'

"'The child has no mother.'

"'Dead?'

"'Dead,' I repeated, mechanically.

"Then, the woman's poverty being on my side, I made terms with her, paying her in advance, and saying I should come every day to see my child. So I tenderly kissed the little one and left.

"It was night before I got back to my hut. Everything was as I had left it; nothing had been disturbed. I was careful in my observation of things, deeming it possible that some person connected with the child would visit the hut. There was, however, no sign. Another duty was to be performed before I retired to rest; my mother's grave was not yet dug. It was soon done, and in the solemn stillness of the night I laid the inanimate clay in its forest bed. I covered it with sweet herbs and piled the earth above it. 'Good-night, mother,' I said; 'your death has brought sunlight to my soul.' Then I threw myself upon the bed of leaves I had made for Evangeline, and enjoyed such repose as had not visited me for years.

"I was up early in the morning, and off to the forest farm. The child had been well cared for, and to my delight seemed to recognize me. She came to me willingly, and I took her into the open, and talked and sang to her, making her laugh, and laughing with her. I was enjoying my own childhood, of which I had been robbed. Everything in earth and air wore a new robe, the robe of spring. The clouds were brighter, the earth more fragrant, the woodland voices sweeter than they had ever been. Such happiness, Evangeline, did you bring to a man driven almost to despair by misfortune and injustice.

"Months passed without the occurrence of any event to disturb my new and better life. No person came near the hut to inquire for Evangeline; the mystery which surrounded her was not touched by time. Needless to say here that it occupied my thoughts. From whom had my mother obtained the child, and for what reason had so sweet a flower been doomed to seclusion and to companionship utterly unsuitable to childhood? I could supply no answer to these questions, and fearful that my happiness should be disturbed, I kept myself secluded, and sought no society but that of Evangeline and the woman who had charge of her.

"I renewed my woodland studies. I had no longer any books to assist me, but I found sufficient to interest me in the forest around my hut. Who is it who said, placing his hand upon a mossy glade, 'Beneath this palm is more than enough for the study of a lifetime?' It is true. We need not go abroad to learn.

"At length a new direction was given to the calm current of my life. The hunting season commenced, and as in the days of Mauvain's prosperity the forest resounded with the music of the horn, the barking of dogs, and the voices of men. I recognized at once the importance of this change, and out of the possibilities which might spring from it I could extract no good sign for me or Evangeline. My thoughts naturally reverted to Mauvain. Had he returned from exile, and renewed his old life of selfish pleasures? Curiosity conquered prudence, and one morning I found myself on the road leading to the fine house in which I had left my mother when I went forth into the world. Yes, it was tenanted, and by a gay company. What did this forebode to me? Discovery? How avoid it? To fly from the forest was not to be thought of. There was no place in the world for me, and I dared not subject Evangeline to a renewal of the sufferings I had undergone.

"I retraced my steps to the hut, so wrapt in thought that I did not observe the approach of a storm. Night came on quickly with the darkening of the clouds. The wind howled around my hut; the rain poured down in a deluge.

"It was only the day before that I had discovered the dream-flower; I had searched for it for weeks, the spot in which it originally grew having undergone change from tempest, perhaps from such a tempest as that now raging through the forest. It was well to be indoors on such a night. Heaven help those poor creatures who, in such weather, have no roof to cover their heads. That is a phrase, 'Heaven help,' a phrase with a hard meaning, brought into common use by man's inhumanity.

"I was busy with the flowers, distilling the liquid from the slender stems, when, in the midst of the storm, I heard a beating at the door. Had discovery come? Had I been seen and tracked? I waited in silence. The knocking was renewed.

"'Do the dead live here?' cried a voice.

"'No,' I answered.

"'Open the door,' cried the man without, in an insolent tone, 'or I will beat it down.'

"The threat did not alarm me; the door was securely barred, and more than a man's strength was needed to force an entrance.

"'Your tone is not civil,' I said; 'seek shelter elsewhere.'

"'There is none near. I have a lady with me; for the love of God give her shelter till I obtain assistance to convey her home! If you refuse it will be worse for you in fine weather than it is for us in foul!'

"A little reflection was sufficient to convince me that my best course was compliance. I unbarred the door, and a man entered, carrying in his arms a young and beautiful woman in a state of insensibility.

"'Who in the devil's name are you?' he asked, when he had laid his burden down.'

"'A misshapen man,' I replied, 'upon whom you need not waste a thought. Do you belong to one of the hunting parties?'

"'Yes, and having been overtaken by the storm, have lost our way in this bewildering forest. My lady here, whom I was attending, got separated from her party; her horse threw her, and mine ran away, like a sensible and unfaithful brute, when I jumped down to assist her.'

"'What do you propose to do?'

"'To go for a carriage, if you will show me a way out of this wilderness.'

"I asked him in what direction he wished to go, and he answered in the direction of Mauvain's house. He did not mention Mauvain's name, and for my part, troubled as I was by the thought that this adventure was almost certain to bring me bad fortune, I did not prompt him to it.

"The lady lay insensible upon the ground, and I said it would be best to wait till she recovered, else she would be terrified at finding herself alone in my lonely hut. So we waited awhile, and presently she opened her eyes. Then the man, speaking in a more deferential tone than that he used to me, explained to her the position of affairs, and begged her respectfully to keep within the shelter they had gained until he succeeded in bringing her a carriage to convey her from the forest. There was reason in his words, for the storm had increased in fury, and it was impossible for so delicate a creature to venture out in it afoot.

"'But I cannot stay here alone,' she said, after assenting to the plan; 'it would be too terrible.'

"'If you will have courage for a few minutes,' I said, 'I will return when I have shown your servant the way out of the forest.'

"She consented by a gesture, and I accompanied her servant from the hut, and put him on his road.

"'If any one speaks to you of this,' he said, 'you will bear me harmless.'

"Hope shone upon me in this expression of fear. 'You have a hard master, then?'

"'Hard and soft,' he replied.

"'I understand. Hard to those beneath him, soft to those above him.'

"'You are right and wrong; it is dangerous to anger him.'

"'Is my lady his wife?'

"'No.'

"'His daughter?'

"'No.'

"'A blood relation, then?'

"'Ask no more questions. What she is to him and he to her is none of your business.'

"'True. I will hold you harmless on one condition.'

"'It is cool of you to make conditions. What am I to do in return?'

"'Say nothing of me. Do not mention that you have seen such a man as I in the forest.'

"'That is easy. Agreed.'

"'Enough said, then. Follow this path to the left for a quarter of a mile and you will see the house before you.'

"I was about to leave him when he laid his hand upon my shoulder.

"'I warn you,' he said. 'Be civil to my lady or you will find yourself in a hornet's nest.'

"'You are more fool than knave,' I replied. 'Speed swiftly back and take my lady home to my lord.'

"I myself sped quickly to my hut, with a feeling curiously mingled of pity and contempt for the fair creature to whom I had given shelter. 'What she is to him and he to her is none of your business.'

These words seemed to brand the woman with shame.

"But when I saw her sitting at my table with an expression of deepest sadness on her face, pity only filled my breast. Truly she was fair, and innocent, and pure-minded, unless nature lied. Her servant had maligned her.

"'I returned as soon as I could,' I said; 'I will stay outside the hut if you wish it.'

"'Why should you do that?' she asked, with a wistful look.

"'I am not generally a favorite,' I said bluntly; 'my shape is against me.'

"'You are to be pitied for it.'

"Her plaintive voice brought tears to my eyes, and she, observing them, asked me to pardon her.

"'You have seen misfortune,' she said.

"'The bitterest; but I have lived through it. It is not often that man or woman, looking upon me for the first time, have given me greeting as kind as yours.'

"'I, too, have seen misfortune,' she said with a sigh. 'Do you live here alone?'

"'Yes.'

"'Have you no kindred? Are you utterly, utterly alone?'

"'No,' I said softly, 'I have a child.'

"She turned from me with a sob of grief, and for a little while no further words were spoken. I wondered to see so young and winsome a woman in such trouble, but life's storms spare neither high nor low, rich nor poor. It occurred to me that her sorrow might have some association with a child, and I was about to ask her, when I noticed—her left hand being ungloved—that she wore no wedding-ring; so I refrained, and waited until she chose to break the silence.

"'You have a child! How happy you must be! A girl?'

"'Yes.'

"'I hope, not——' But she stopped suddenly, and bit her lip, with red blood showing on her face.

"'No,' I said, 'not like me.' She is well formed.'

"'I am glad—forgive me.'

"'There is nothing to forgive.'

"'Love is expressed in your voice. You would not like to lose your child.'

"'I should not care to live without her.'

"She shivered, as though she were cold. There was a fire in the hut, and I urged her to draw nearer to it for warmth, but she refused. On the table, imbedded in earth, lay some shoots of the dream-flower. She asked the name of the flower, and I told her.

"'The dream-flower!' she said, in a low tone. 'Does it really make you dream'?

"'It has in it qualities which induce sleep, and, sometimes, happy dreams.'

"'Ah!' she sighed. 'If I could dream my life over again! Of what might have been! Of love so sweet and beautiful, of love so base and treacherous! I should commence with my childhood, and I should linger there, among calm and happy days. Let me think of them, let me think of them, and of those who loved me! If I could have died then, with loving hands clasping mine! But it was not to be. I was doomed to live and suffer. Father, sister, child, torn from me——'

"She had risen, and was standing by the side of a shelf on which was the baby's shoe I had found in the hut on my return home. She took it from the shelf, and pressing it to her lips, burst into a passion of blinding tears, and sank to the ground, crying:

"'O, baby! baby! O, my heart! my heart!'

(To be continued.)

SENIOR'S CONVERSATIONS

WITH DISTINGUISHED PERSONS DURING THE SECOND EMPIRE, FROM 1860 TO 1863.

[Continued from the RECORD-UNION of May 8th.]

The work of Nassau William Senior, entitled "Conversations with Distinguished Persons During the Second Empire, from 1860 to 1863," affords a mine of material of an historical and personal character. He had unusual opportunities for intimacy with his famous French contemporaries. The extracts below are but samples selected from the pages of the two volumes of the work referred to.

A Sermon by Pere Felix.

[Appleton's Journal for May.]

(April 14, 1861.) I went in the morning to hear the Pere Felix preach at St. Clotilde. The whole nave and aisles of the great church were full. There must have been four or five thousand auditors. It was a charity sermon for a society which takes care of young workpeople when they first enter the factories. It has at present ten thousand young persons under its protection. The preacher told us that the "classes ouvrieres" were the masters of France; that the higher classes, the middle classes, and the army only registered their decrees. "The fate of the country," he said, "is in the hands of the working classes, and the working classes are led, not by their older members, who are timid, not by their middle-aged members, who are prudent, but by their youngest members, who are governed, not by their timidity, not by prudence, but by passion, by the love of excitement, by caprice, by envy. You have heard of the *enfant terrible*, the *enfant terrible* is the *gamin de Paris*. All our revolutions have been made by children.

"Now, what is the training which we give to these children who are the masters of our destinies? Is it moral? Is it religious? What is the creed? It is this:

"What is God?

"God is nature; God is the highest power in nature, the human mind. God is in yourselves.

"What is Satan?

"A scarecrow.

"What is duty?

"The pursuit of happiness.

"What is happiness?

"The satisfaction of our desires.

"What is heaven?

"This world, if you are happy in it.

"What is hell?

"This world, if you are miserable in it.

"What is the object of government?

"Equality.

"What is equality?

"That no man have an undue share of the means of happiness.

"What are the means of happiness?

"Wealth.

"How is equality to be produced?

"By taking from the rich and giving to the poor.

"Such, my brethren, is the catechism which the unprotected child learns in the *atelier*. The object of our society is to protect it from these maleficent influences; to arm it with the knowledge, the feelings, and the habits, which may enable it to detect the sophistry, despise the folly and abhor the wickedness of its misdirected companions. If you wish to save society from a revolution more frightful that any that has preceded it, if you wish to save the happiness of the higher classes and the souls of the lower, give your time and your money to this holy work. And with these words I put my sermon under the protection of the Immaculate Mother of God."

From St. Clotilde I went to breakfast with Merimee. I gave him a sketch of the sermon.

Merimee—There is much truth in Pere Felix's remark that our revolutions are caused by children. On the 23d of February, 1848, I was in the Rue Richelieu. A battalion was marching down the street. Three boys stood across it; they cried out that the troops should not pass without killing them. The men hesitated, the officers were afraid of responsibility, and, in fact, the battalion halted for a quarter of an hour and then retired.

Senior—Were they National Guards?

Merimee—No, troops of the line. The *gamins* were armed and utterly indifferent to life, whether their own or that of others. They would have shot three men of the first rank, and the soldiers, if they had killed them, would have been execrated as the butchers of the citizens.

Austrian and Russian Soldiers.

(Thursday, April 25, 1861.) General Trochu* called on me. We talked of different armies.

Trochu—In our own, the best troops are the infantry of the line, taken from the plow. They are sober, docile, brave, proud of their country and of their profession; and, though anxious to return to their friends and to their little properties, perform zealously their duties.

Senior—We hear much more of the Zouaves.

Trochu—The Zouaves have wonderful *elan*; they are a useful portion of our army; but I doubt whether they are worth what they cost. They are ill disciplined and marauders, and so set a bad example. They are taken from different regiments, which are thus deprived of their most active and energetic soldiers.

Senior—What think you of the Piedmontese? Fenelon described them to me as good third-rate.

Trochu—So I should have called them, from what I saw of them in Italy. In the Crimea they did nothing. But now, swamped as it is by a rabble of Tuscans, Romans and Neapolitans, the Italian army can be worth little—I had almost said nothing. The best troops in the world are the English, and the best portion are the infantry and artillery. Never in the history of war did only two guns do such service as Major Dickson's did at Inkerman. Never did troops stand such an attack as your Guards did on that day. Ours could not have done it. I saw the field. There was an uninterrupted line of dead Guardsmen—every man seemed to have fallen at his post. It is fortunate that your army is so small. If it were as large as ours is, it would conquer the world.

Senior—What are the Russians?

Trochu—Very good, indeed; but they have no Generals. It seems an absurdity; but one cause of their failure at Inkerman was their superiority in number. Their columns were so crowded that they interfered with one another, had not room to deploy, and were ravaged by our fire. The Austrians, too, are very good. But, with the exception of Benedek, who is excellent, they were miserably commanded. Hesse was an excellent General in 1854, but he has lost his decision and his presence of mind. He saved us at Magenta by stopping the march of the Austrians on the 2d of June. Giulay never had any merit. Their commissariat was worse managed than our own, which was not brilliant. Both at Magenta and at Solferino we made prisoners of regiments who had not eaten during the day. The first thing they did was to ask for food. The Austrian soldiers began the war under great disadvantages. They expected to be beaten. They believed our troops to be much more superior to theirs than they really are. We equally exaggerated their inferiority. Our confidence and their despondence had a great effect on the campaign. As for the two Emperors, they were about equally useless; but the Austrian, exposing himself to fire and interfering, did perhaps the most harm.

Senior—Did not Louis Napoleon expose himself?

Trochu—Not in the least. In the morning of the 4th of June he crossed the Ticino by the Buffalora Bridge, and found that the enemy were in force at Magenta, on the other side of the Naviglio. He maintained that it was only a reconnaissance, and returned to the right bank, where he remained during the rest of the day, three miles from the battle. I was with my brigade—part of Canrobert's division—at Novara, in the rear, about sixteen miles from Buffalora and twelve from Trecate, where we were to sleep. When we reached Trecate we received orders to advance as quickly as we could to Buffalora. We reached Buffalora in the evening in some disorder from the haste of our march. I found the Emperor before the door of a house, near the bridge, walking silently up and down, and smoking. I asked him for orders, and he answered that I had better cross the bridge and advance toward the Magenta. There the battle was going on, but the Austrians were losing ground. I found several Generals, but nobody who could give me any orders, and at last I was advised to attack a village to our right. I did so, drove out the Austrians, and established myself there for the night. At about three in the morning I was attacked myself, but unsuccessfully.

Senior—That seems to prove that your victory at Magenta was not complete. A thoroughly beaten army does not attack within a few hours.

Trochu—Certainly; and so they seem to have thought at headquarters. For, though we were highly praised, and twelve crosses were given to me to be distributed to my officers, the fact that we had been attacked was carefully concealed. You will find no mention of it in the bulletins or general orders.

*General Trochu was born in 1815, and educated at St. Cyr. He became a Captain in 1843, and was attached to the army of Marshal Bugeaud in Algiers. He was Aid de-Camp to St. Arnaud in the Crimea, appointed Brigadier-General in November, 1854, and commanded in that capacity to the end of the war. He was General of Division in the Italian campaign in 1859. In 1861, when he was appointed Grand Officier de la Legion d'Honneur, he counted twenty-five years active service and eighteen campaigns. His work on the French army in 1867 went through seven editions. He was appointed Governor of Paris in 1870, and during the siege he held the command and directed the operations of all the troops within the walls. In 1871 he was elected a member of the National Assembly, and sat in the Right Center. He retired into private life in 1872.

Clergymen in Society.

Senior—You told us the other day that you never met a clergyman in society. I am invited to meet on Monday the Cardinal Archbishop.

Lasteyrie—I do not envy you; he will be dull, and the cause of dullness. It is thought correct when a mere bishop is present to be formal. What must it be in the presence of a cardinal? Many subjects must be avoided; vices must be treated as sins, and errors lamented, not ridiculed. What remains to be laughed at?

Senior—In Rome the Cardinals are good company.

Lasteyrie—Yes, for there the Church is at home, and therefore at her ease. Here in Paris she feels herself a stranger. During the fifty years that preceded the Restoration, when infidelity was aggressive, an ecclesiastic was always in danger of hearing things which he could not tolerate without some loss of dignity, or reprove without making a scene. The clergy, therefore—even those whose birth, and education, and fortune, would have enabled them to mix in society—gradually withdrew from it. That danger no longer exists; no clergyman in good company would hear anything that could offend him. But the habit has remained, though the cause has ceased. In some country places, where there is a great proprietor—a squire—the cure dines with him on Sunday; but this is rare. In fact, the clergy are seldom fit to be our companions. The ignorance, even of the higher ecclesiastics, and even on their own subjects—theology and Biblical history—is astounding. They never read, they never talk to educated men. Their doctrinal sermons are therefore pitiable. They do not know what are the objections that require refutation, or what are the difficulties that require explanation. The Benedictines for many years before the Revolution had been engaged in the great work called "Gallia Sacra." After the Restoration they resumed it, but made so little progress that it was taken from them, and given to a layman, who in about ten years has done more than the whole Benedictine Order did from 1815 to 1848. The monks, however, having nothing else to think about, are good administrators of their estates, and the clergy in general learn something of human nature, especially of female weaknesses, in the confessional.

Lasteyrie was followed by Circourt.

Senior—M. de Lasteyrie has been talking to us of the ignorance of the French clergy.

Circourt—It is wonderful. Pere Lacordaire was perhaps the most ignorant man that ever entered the Academy. His history and theology were full of originality. Indeed, they were absolutely original, for he invented them as he went on. This gave to his sermons the charm of perpetual novelty. They never resembled one another.

Pere Lacordaire.

Senior—Had Pere Lacordaire much learning?

Montalembert—He must have had some knowledge of law, as he studied it for five years. He had a schoolboy's acquaintance with the best-known classics, and with as much of ancient history as he could get from Justin and Cornelius Nepos. He had picked up the history of his own times from newspapers and conversations. This was about all the history that he knew. Like his master, Lamennais, he was profoundly ignorant of mediæval history. In theology he was a Thomas, in discipline he was an Ultramontane.

Senior—Of course he was an Ultramontane. Having become a Christian, not from inquiry and reasoning, but from a sudden impression, to use his own words, by a *coup de la grace*, he must have relied solely and implicitly on authority, and, as the highest authority, on that of the Pope. He could not have been a Gallican.

Montalembert—Certainly not; he denounced Gallicanism as a disguised schism. His great intellectual qualities were his imagination, his rapidity of conception, and his force and facility of expression.

Senior—That he should have been deficient at first in the qualities for which he afterward was most distinguished is a strong proof that *orator fit*.

Montalembert—I should not say that these were the qualities for which he was *most* distinguished; for, high as were his intellectual excellences, his moral excellences were still higher; and it was to them that his wonderful power as an orator was chiefly due. His impressive and exciting delivery, his clear, and brilliant, and unpremeditated language were merely the forms in which his boundless love of God and of man, of liberty and of piety, was embodied. Never, I believe, did God create a mere human being more approaching to faultlessness. He had no vanity, though continually breathing the incense which most intoxicates, that which is burned before an orator; no love of power, though he reigned over the opinions and the consciences of thousands; no wish for money, or for rank, or even for fame. The possession which he most valued was *un cœur detache de tout*, a heart in which there should be no selfish desires or selfish fears. Perhaps the greatest sacrifice that he made was when he became a Dominican. His passion was freedom. As soon as he took the frock he surrendered his free-will. He invested his superiors—men, as he must have known, far below him intellectually and morally—with absolute power over all his actions, all his habits, almost over all his thoughts. They might have silenced the voice which re-echoed through the whole Catholic world; they might have sent him, at an hour's notice, to China or to Abyssinia; they might have wasted his wonderful talents in the most trivial employments. But he knew how useful the religious orders had once been to his country. He believed that he could reopen France to them. And for such a purpose he was ready to make, and did make, the total and the irrevocable sacrifice of his freedom.

Senior—I am told that he sacrificed to it his life, that the austerities of his profession brought on the disease which carried him off at an age at which he might have expected many years of usefulness.

Montalembert—It is possible—nay, probable—that that may be true. If so, he added to his other qualities that of martyrdom.

Conversation with Renan.

(April 9, 1862). We breakfasted with the Mohls and met M. Renan,* whom Dr. Cureton puts at the head of French Orientalists. I afterward took two long walks with him. I will throw the three conversations together.

We talked of Cureton's edition of the Gospel of St. Matthew in Syriac.

Renan—It is not the oldest copy, for it contains corrections of errors in other copies, but its numerous different readings give to it great value.

Senior—Do you suppose that the Hebrew which we now read is the Hebrew in which Moses wrote?

Renan—I have no doubt that it is. I believe, indeed, that Genesis contains fragments older than the time of Moses; such as the more simple and undetailed history of the Creation contained in the fifth chapter, which makes no allusion to the garden of Eden or to the Fall. All very early books are, to a certain degree, compilations. In Genesis whole poems are sometimes inserted.

Senior—Can you distinguish in Hebrew writings poetry from prose?

Mohl—In lyric poetry the iteration, the repeating, in the two members of the sentence, the same thought under different forms is an obvious mark of poetry.

Renan—In narrative poetry, of which the story of Joseph and the book of Ruth are beautiful examples, the great mark of poetry is the minuteness of the detail; and I think that I perceive a cadence and a measure different from those of prose.

Senior—To what age do you attribute the book of Job?

Renan—To an age in which Hebrew was a spoken language and in its perfection. The style is clear, concise, forcible and picturesque. This disposes of the opinion that it was written during the Captivity, when Hebrew was becoming a dead language, and those who used it wrote stiffly and pedantically. On the other hand, the peculiar institutions which after the time of Josias completely separated the Hebrews from the surrounding nations either did not exist in the author's time, or were not known to him.

Senior—Job is mentioned by Ezekiel.

Renan—Yes, but not this book. Job was probably an historical personage whom the author of the poem selected as an interlocutor. I suspect that, if Ezekiel had seen the book, he might have thought it too bold. I believe that it belongs to the finest period of Hebrew poetry, the age of Hezekiah, in the beginning of the eighth century before Christ.

Senior—About the time of Homer.

Renan—It is interesting to compare the two great poems of the Aryan and the Semitic races. Both are eminently theistic. The intervention of a God pervades both. But the Homeric gods are distinguished from men and women only by their power and their irresponsibility. They are shrouded in no mystery. They show themselves to us as they showed themselves to Paris, absolutely naked, and a disgusting exhibition it is. The God of Job is enthroned in darkness; He speaks out of the whirlwind. His only attributes are wisdom and power. All that takes place, takes place through his direct interference. If He acts according to any fixed rules, those rules are concealed from us. While Homer's gods are merely powerful bad men, or rather bad children, his men are inferior gods. The gods live with them as lovers, as friends and as enemies. In Job man is a miserable creature, inferior to many of the brutes in strength, in courage and in instinct. What are his relations to God it is the great object of the book to discuss. The Christian relation between God and man, mutual love, is not hinted at. There is some worship, but it is a worship of fear. The great problem debated is, "Is, or is not, God just?" Job begins with a bitter complaint that he ever was born. "Wherefore," he says, "is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul?" His friends answer that it is only to the wicked that life is a misery, and that the good are, on the whole, happy. This Job fiercely denies. "The earth," he says, "is given unto the hand of the wicked. Their houses are safe from fear; they spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave." He maintains that he is an example of the absence of God's moral government. "I will say unto God," he says, "show me wherefore thou contendest with me. Is it good unto thee that thou shouldst oppress me, and despise the work of thine own hands, and shine upon the counsel of the wicked? Thou knowest that I am not wicked, and there is none that can deliver out of thy hand. Thine hands have made me, yet thou dost destroy me. Thou huntest me as a fierce lion. Wherefore, then, has thou brought me forth out of the womb? Are not my days few? Cease, then, and let me alone that I may take comfort a little before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and of the shadow of death. A land of darkness, where the light is as darkness. Oh, that I knew where I might find him, I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments! I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me. Oh, that one would hear me! My desire is that the Almighty would answer me." His prayer is granted, and he is answered out of the whirlwind. But the answer is a magnificent description of the power of God and of the weakness and ignorance of man, and of his humble place in creation. The problem is left totally unsolved.

Senior—The problem really discussed is an insoluble one, the origin of evil. Job assumes that God, as the origin of everything, is the origin of evil, and on that assumption reproaches God with cruelty, first for having created him, and secondly for having unjustly afflicted him. The only attempt at an answer is contained in the last chapter, in which Job is restored to more than his former prosperity, in contradiction to the general spirit of the poem.

Renan—The contradictions in the poem are innumerable. The Semitic races cannot reason. Their languages are almost incapable of expressing abstract ideas. All their notions are concrete. Though the Book of Job is controversial, there is no argument in it. Each interlocutor contents himself with mere assertions and denials; and one assertion and one denial by the same speaker is often inconsistent with another. Job in general maintains that God treats impartially the wicked and the good, but from time to time he affirms that the wicked are always punished. He repeats over and over that there is no life beyond the grave; but in one passage he expresses a belief that God will descend on the earth to avenge him; and, though death will have destroyed the flesh, yet, that he, with his own eyes, will see him. There is no such thing in any Semitic writing as a book, except a narrative. All their moral works are mere strings of sentences, without order and without consistency. Such is the Book of Proverbs, such is the Koran, such is Job. The argument, if argument it can be called, is exhausted in the first speech of Job and the first speech of Eliphaz. The following speeches merely go over and over the same ground, turn and twist and pull at the same knot without loosening it. I am wrong, indeed, when I say that their works are strings of sentences. For a real sentence, consisting of several members, qualifying and illustrating one another, such sentences as are found in Greek, in Latin, in German, in English, and, though less frequently, in French, are unknown to Semitic writers. A single proposition contained in half a dozen words is all that a Hebrew writer ventures on. He repeats this proposition with slight variations till he has done with it, and then passes abruptly to another. There is no discursus in his mind. It is apprehensive, not deductive.

Senior—Do you suppose that the author of the Book of Job was an Israelite?

Renan—Certainly not. Every word attributed to Job expresses the pride, the impatience—the cold, severe, undevout religion of a Bedouin. That he should be quoted as an example of patience is a proof how little the books that are most talked of are read. He bears, it is true, his misfortunes at first with resignation, but it disappears at the end of the seven days, during which he sits on the ground in silence. "After this," says the writer, "Job opened his mouth and cursed his day."

Senior—Do you attribute the Song of Solomon to the same age?

Renan—Its age is marked by the verse which compares the heroine to the cities of Tirzah and Jerusalem. Now, from 975 before Christ to 923, Tirzah was the capital of Israel and Jerusalem of Judah. In 923 Omri, King of Israel, built Samaria, and Tirzah disappeared. The poem must therefore have been written during that interval. I am inclined to think that it was written by one of Jeroboam's adherents, not long after the death of Solomon. The reigns of Solomon and David, the only ones under which Palestine was united and powerful, seem gradually to have been invested with a legendary splendor of which their contemporaries knew nothing. Instead of the seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines ascribed to Solomon in the Book of Kings, Canticles gives him only sixty queens and eighty concubines. Instead of four hundred chariots and twelve thousand horsemen, he is accompanied by only sixty guards. His greatest magnificence seems to be a cedar chariot, the bottom plated with gold.

Senior—Of all the books of the Old Testament, Canticles seems to me to be the one of which the scope is least intelligible, and the sacred character the least apparent. It reads to me like a collection of mere amatory songs.

Renan—Of course the Christian interpretation in which Solomon is Christ, and the Shulamite is, according to Protestants, the Church; and according to Catholics, the Holy Virgin; and the Rabbinical interpretation, according to which the two lovers represent the human intellect in love with wisdom, are indescribably absurd. I believe with Ewald and Hitzig that it is a purely secular poem; but I also believe with them that it is a moral drama, that it represents the resistance of a country girl taken from her lover into the harem of Solomon, and her triumph and return to her lover. I believe the dramatis personæ to be the Shulamite girl, the lover and Solomon, with a chorus consisting sometimes of the women of the harem, sometimes of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and sometimes of the villagers of Shulam. In my book I have attempted to divide it into acts and scenes, and to assign his part to each character. It is without doubt most inartificial; the story is obscurely hinted at. The changes of scene are abrupt and incapable of actual representation. Sometimes the actor tells what he is supposed to be doing. It seems to me that the poem is a libretto not intended to be read, but to be the framework of an entertainment consisting of song, dancing, declamation and recitation—perhaps to be acted at a marriage. With all its defects, however, it is one of the most valuable specimens of Semitic poetry. Without it we should not have known that the stiff, austere, Jewish character was capable of tenderness. We should have had no picture of real love, founded on early intimacy, resisting the temptations of a court. We should have had no pictures of the village life and the village scenery of Palestine.

Senior—We should have had Ruth.

Renan—Ruth is charming, but it is not descriptive. It contains nothing equal to the beauty and feeling of the picture of early spring in Canticles:

> Lo, the winter is past,
> The rain is over and gone,
> The flowers appear on earth,
> The time of the singing of birds is come,
> The voice of the turtle is heard,
> The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs.
> The vines with their tender grapes give a good smell;
> Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

Even the Christian perversions of its real sense have borne fruit, and admirable fruit. It is the source of mystical religious poetry—a poetry which has consoled the sorrows, and purified and exalted the devotion of millions.

Hugo's "Les Miserables."

Duvergier came in. We talked of Victor Hugo's "Miserables."

Thiers—It is detestable. The spirit is bad; the plan is bad; and the execution is bad.

Duvergier—It contains some very fine passages.

Thiers—You are a heretic. You have a taste for strongly-seasoned meats. I believe that you could eat high venison. I am almost inclined to think that you read Michelet.

Duvergier—Ought I to be burned if I do?

Thiers—Perhaps not burned, only scorched. I reserve perfect burning for those who can read Victor Hugo.

Idolization of Style by the French.

Senior—When Louis Napoleon wrote the "Idees Napoleoniennes" he was already a practical writer. He had been for years writing in the Pas du Calais journal, *Le Progres*. It is seldom that a writer improves much after he is 50. The only instance of an English writer that I recollect is that of Dr. Johnson, whose best-written work, "The Lives of the Poets," was written after he was 70.

Maury—That may be the case in England, where you enjoy a language freer from arbitrary restraints and idioms than ours is, and where you prefer the substance to the form. *La forme* is our idol. It resembles cookery. The best meat ill cooked is uneatable. Inferior meat well cooked may be delicious. We have been at work refining our style, introducing into it *des malices et des delicatesses*, until to write perfect French is the acquisition of only a long life. Our best writers—Voltaire, for instance—have gone on improving till they died. We spend much of what you would call useless labor on style. We omit ideas worth preserving, because we cannot express them with perfect elegance. We are sometimes in the state of a man speaking a foreign language, *qui ne dit pas ce qu'il veut, mais ce qu'il peut*, but we have created a literature which will live, for it is the style, not the matter, which preserves a book. Good matter ill expressed is taken possession of by a master of style and reproduced in a readable form, and then the first writer is forgotten.

* M. Ernest Renan was in early life intended for the priesthood. He was sent to study at St. Sulpice, and it was at that seminary that his taste for Oriental languages and ecclesiastical studies first showed itself. His turn of mind was far too independent for his intended profession; he therefore left St. Sulpice, and devoted himself to private study. In 1848 he obtained the first place in the "Concours de Philosophe," and at the same the Volney prize for an essay on the "Greek Language in the Middle Ages" was crowned by the Academy. In 1851 he was attached to