SOME NEW BOOKS.

Rochefort's Autobiography.

It is an unusually entertaining book which M. HENRI ROCHEFORT has given us under the title of *The Adventures of My Life*, in two volumes, arranged for English readers, and translated by ERNEST W. SMITH. (Edward Arnold). It is well known that the author's life has been full of strange vicissitudes. He himself compares his career to that of a man on a switchback railway, continually plunged from the highest summits into the darkest depths. For example, it was but a few months after the day when the populists threw down the Sainte Pélagie prison doors to liberate Rochefort and carry him in triumph to take his seat in the National Defence Government that he was dragged to Versailles in chains and threatened with death. He rehearsed, he tells us, his execution in the narrow cell of the Versailles prison when it was declared to be imminent, as he had no desire to be taken unawares. As it turned out, death at the hands of a firing party was replaced, in his case, by a slower, though, as it was believed, a no less sure mode of execution, namely, perpetual incarceration in a fortified place. He was transported to the most cannibalistic part of the antipodes, but, when friends and enemies alike believed that he had been melted by the tropical heat, he was suddenly discovered taking a header into the Pacific Ocean, and turning up again in Europe. Rochefort's life has been even more varied than agitated. As the son of a dramatic author, and himself the writer of several vaudevilles, as journalist, Deputy, and outlaw, he has moved in all classes of society. He has traversed life in the midst of ups and downs, rubbing elbows with many celebrated men, and playing a rôle in many a catastrophe.

I.

It is well known that M. Henri Rochefort, like that other French tribune of the people, Mirabeau, was of noble birth. He tells us in this book, however, that, although the title of marquis belongs to him, the early years of his life were spent in the most middle-class fashion. He can recall his mother seated near the window of their apartment in the Rue Jean Jacques Rousseau, mending his clothes or making his sister's gowns. Although related to very great families, they were, in fact, quite poor. The immense estates owned in the province of Berri by his grandfather, the Marquis de Rochefort Luçay, fell a prey to the Black Band during the very earliest of the revolutionary manifestations. Although a spendthrift and a gambler, this grandfather, we are assured, was a most refined and intelligent man. He foresaw that a veritable social overthrow would result from the local risings, riotings, and disturbances that were signalled throughout the length and breadth of the country in 1785. He emigrated at about the same time as the King's brother, the Count de Provence, afterward Louis XVIII., and in order to live at Coblenz he was obliged to raise money on his Berri estates at exorbitant rates of interest. Anticipating, moreover, that the properties of the Emigrés would be confiscated, he eventually sold his castles and forest before the laws against the Emigrés were promulgated. In this way he sacrificed about two million dollars' worth of real estate. The entire village of Gargilesse, which was situated near George Sand's literary home of Nohant, once belonged to Rochefort's family, and they enjoyed in the locality the rights of "*haute, basse et moyenne justice*." It appears that explosions of independence and liberalism are to be found in the records of the family as having occurred even in the mediæval period. Guy de Rochefort, the Chancellor of France, who created the Grand Council (afterward the Conseil d'État), to control the financial and even the political vagaries of the powers that were, gave expression to hitherto unheard-of sentiments in the address with which he inaugurated the sittings of this Commission. "Remember," he said, "that Kings are made for the people, and not the people for Kings." The author's great-uncle, too, Philibert de Rochefort, early adopted the principles of the Revolution, although he was a marquis's son, and Lieutenant of the Marshals of France for the province of Issoudun, where, in his position of judge on questions of honor, he exercised a moral magistracy over the nobility of the neighborhood. While his brother was waging war with Condé's army at the beginning of 1794, Philibert de Rochefort obtained a certificate of citizenship at the hands of the Council of the Issoudun Commune. This certificate, which has been recently published, sets forth that "Citizen Rochefort, noble though he may be," had shown himself in every circumstance to be a true republican and a zealous defender of liberty and equality.

Fortunately, or unfortunately for the author of these volumes, the precaution which his grandfather had taken to sell his property did not turn to his profit. The purchasers had arranged to pay for the estates in paper currency, and, shortly after the transfer, the two million dollars in paper had shrunk to less than ten thousand dollars in gold. When the Marquis de Rochefort Luçay returned quite penniless to France, the salvage of his former splendor consisted of his knight's cross of the Order of St. Louis and his Lieutenant-Colonel's commission in Condé's army. As the sale of his property had been regularly and legally effected, he had no share in the distribution of the famous "Emigrants' Milliard" which was exclusively employed to indemnify those who had suffered from the confiscation laws. The Marquis's wife had not accompanied her husband into exile, but concealed herself in Paris, where, toward the end of 1792, she was arrested. To her grandson it is still a mystery how she managed to escape appearing before the Revolutionary Tribunal. It is suggested that she may have owed her escape to her son, a great pet of the jailers, who, by misspelling the name of a prisoner in whom they took an interest, were able to save him from the scaffold. Rochefort's father, after he grew up, vegetated in Paris, until the fall of the Empire, when he left for the Isle of Bourbon. He held there the rank of General Secretary, but, in reality, had the powers of a Governor. On the overthrow of the Bourbon régime he fell back on the writing of plays as a means of support. It was on Jan. 31, 1831, that Henri Rochefort was born. As his mother already had three children, all girls, he was sent into the country to be nursed, and when he returned, at the age of three, he had acquired the peasant dialect. When he was six years old, he was taken to visit his father's sister, Mme. de Saint Maur, whose husband was the widower of the Duc de Rivière's sister. It was this duke who, while Ambassador at Constantinople, had the good fortune to purchase the Venus de Milo for a mere song. It seems that Admiral Dumont d'Urville, who first saw the statue, observed that it then had both arms. One hand held an apple; the other was on the border of the chlamys, which had evidently been uplifted to show Paris her foot. If the Duke had been less disinterested, and, instead of offering the statue to Louis XVIII., had given it to his sister, the Venus de Milo might now have been in Rochefort's family.

II.

At the age of 12 Henri Rochefort was sent to boarding school in the Collége Saint Louis. Recalling his school experience, he says that he has been incarcerated in a great number of prisons, including the iron cage between the decks of the vessel which transported him to New Caledonia, yet his heart was light on entering these various jails compared with what he felt when he walked for the first time through the passages of the Saint Louis College, then situated in the Rue de la Harpe. The body alone is held captive in prison, whereas French boarding school life is a system of imprisonment accompanied by a surveillance which haunts you from the time you put your stockings on in the morning until you return to bed. Such a school, Rochefort tells us, is a physical, intellectual, and moral hell.

At the age of 18 Rochefort left the Collége Saint Louis with a degree, and, as his parents could not afford to support him, he became a tutor in the family of the Comtesse de Montbrun. He was employed for two hours a day, and received for his services $7.50 a month. Presently he set to work to write plays, but received not the least encouragement to follow his literary bent. He wrote some articles for a paper started by Alexandre Dumas the elder, but his preconceived anxiety on the score of payment was completely justified. Twenty dollars he earned by writing a novel entitled "Mazarin's Nieces," which had been ordered from Eugene de Mirecourt, a literary man of doubtful reputation. Rochefort prepared a draft, which Mirecourt in his turn submitted to his publishers as his own work. By and by he got $20 a month for searching for documents concerning the Philippine Islands, for use in a series of articles to be written by Paul Merruau for the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. About the same time (1851) he became an auxiliary clerk in the Inventions Office at the Hotel de Ville. He was thus employed at the time of Louis Bonaparte's coup d'état. He tells us that when he was at Brussels, many years afterward, Victor Hugo, whose speech in the Chamber of Peers in favor of the abrogation of the law of exile had contributed to the return of King Jerome to Paris, related that Prince Napoleon had burst into his house on the morning of Dec. 2, 1851, in a towering rage against his cousin. Prince Napoleon had been very intimate with Victor Hugo and his friends. He accordingly gave free reign to his indignation, and declared that the miserable Louis was a disgrace to the family. "If-even," he added, "he belonged to the family, the dirty bastard. But we all know he doesn't. The King of Holland took measures to disavow the paternity. I hope he will get himself shot. It would be a good riddance for everybody, and, above all, for his family." Victor Hugo never saw the Prince again. Several days after this outburst, the hot-headed Napoleon entered the Élysée, and his Republican indignation was appeased at the cost to France of 2,000,000 francs a year until 1870.

It is, perhaps, not surprising to find that M. Rochefort has something unpleasant to say about Marie Antoinette and the Empress Eugénie. His grandmother, who witnessed the former's execution, used to say that there was only a small crowd around the scaffold, and that the Queen, frightfully overcome, looked as if she was bent double. She was almost lifted on to the plank, where she fell without a movement. Rochefort declares it to be indisputable that the sufferings of the Queen during the last few months of her life were disproportionate to the crimes attributed to her. He says: "Maria Theresa's daughter, vitiated by the abominable example of her mother, the most shameless woman of the times, came to Paris filled with ideas of pleasure." He goes on to assert that the diamond necklace affair, concerning which the court and the King himself knew all the secrets, was simply the result of Marie Antoinette's precocity in her passion for pleasure of every sort. "My grandfather, and afterward my father, were very intimate with the Marquis d'Autichamp, a gentleman of unbounded bravery and of absolute devotion to the royalist cause. At the court of Louis XVI. he was called 'the handsome' D'Autichamp.' Although he was no longer a young man when Marie Antoinette arrived in France, she soon noticed him and he became one of her first favorites. In spite of her love of change, he remained the adviser to whom she invariably addressed herself when she was in one of the numerous scrapes into which she slid so easily. It was of D'Autichamp that she sought advice when the frightful necklace scandal burst, and showed the Queen of France in the character of the kept woman of a cardinal." What Rochefort proceeds to relate is scarcely credible, but he avers it to be absolutely true. "Dazzled by the hare-brained prodigality, the superb presence, and the high gentlemanly breeding of young Rohan, who had visited Vienna several times before being appointed Ambassador there in 1772, Marie Antoinette, neglected by her imperial mother, whose cupidity went so far as to permit her daughter to want for everything, allowed herself to be betrayed by the audacious prince, who pretended that he could not live under two millions a year and that no woman could resist him. So I repeat on the authority of the Marquis d'Autichamp that Louis XVI. simply had—assuming he took it—what was left by the man who, later on, was to become Grand Almoner of his court. It is, therefore, not surprising, when the husband refused to give 1,600,000 francs for the necklace she had set her heart upon, that the wife should have appealed to the other man." M. Rochefort professes to be able to add of his own knowledge that the Princess Rohan de Rochefort, fiancée of the Duc d'Enghien, possessed a very suggestive correspondence, which had passed between her uncle, Cardinal Rohan, and the Queen. After the death, however, of the man who, subsequently to the necklace incident, was only known by the nickname of Rohan-Collier, and, after the arrest of the Duc d'Enghien at her residence, the Princess threw the packet of letters into the fire, lest they should fall into the hands of the authorities. It is well known that at the time of the necklace scandal public opinion demanded a victim. Mme. de la Motte and an obscure confederate were sacrificed. Rochefort insists that the innocence of the convicted woman, to whom an acquittal had been promised in return for her silence, was so notorious that the Emigrés always regarded her as a political victim. Her husband, the Count de la Motte, in spite of having been sentenced by default to hard labor for life for alleged complicity in the affair, continued to be received in the best society, constituted by the court of the exiled princes in London. Louis XVIII. compensated him for the injustice he had suffered by giving him a pension of $20,000. Rochefort points out that this would have been a shocking favor had it been conferred upon a man who, after robbing the sister-in-law of the reigning monarch, had done all in his power to dishonor her. The author's concluding observation on this subject is that Marie Antoinette's ferocious egotism, and the heartlessness with which she abandoned her best friends, ended in alienating everybody. Even those whom she had successively received into the most intimate friendship recoiled from her. It was with terror that they watched her push the King and the kingdom to the brink of the precipice. Thus it happened that when the knell sounded, the Queen only found Count Fersen, the latest of her favorites, to protect her. He was the man who contributed to prepare the flight to Varennes.

III.

With regard to the Empress Eugenie, who is here spoken of as Mme. Bonaparte, we are told that Rochefort used to see her while she was still Mlle. de Montijo, riding in the Bois de Boulogne. "In the course of my morning walks," he writes, "I nearly always saw an Amazon with suave expression and drooping eyelashes, whom I noticed rather attentively for two reasons. The first was that she resembled one of my cousins; the second was because she was usually accompanied by a gentleman on horseback, whom I had seen at important picture sales, and whom I afterward discovered was one of Banker Aguado's sons. Stories of the early meetings between the Emperor and his fiancée, and her published portraits, enabled me to identify the Amazon with the drooping eyelashes, which, I suppose, she knew how to raise at the right moment." At this period, it seems, the color of her hair bordered upon auburn. It was not copper-colored, and still less carroty, but had the veritable Venetian and Titianesque tint. Two years later her hair gradually became lighter, thanks to a *paillettes d'or* powdering. This extinguished the brilliancy of her locks. The fashion was soon adopted by the cocodettes of the Second Empire. The explosion of incredulity with which the rumors of this marriage were received, and the general stupefaction exhibited when the news became official, are well known. The family called imperial, by which is meant the Princess Mathilde among others, was especially exasperated. The wickedest stories and the bitterest quatrains emanated from the Emperor's relatives. M. Rochefort points out that Napoleon III., who was never very Parisian, aggravated the opposition by the sort of challenge he inserted in his "manifesto." He had the want of tact to say in his matrimonial announcement that he was marrying a woman he loved and "respected." As if a man ever had the cynicism to avow that he married a woman he did not respect. It was a clear way of saying to his people, "Perhaps you don't respect her, but it is different with me."

Pietri, who was attached to the Empress's secretarial staff after her marriage, told Rochefort, on the eve of the Orsini trial, that the Empress had implored the Emperor to sign the assassin's pardon in advance in case he was condemned to death. "How," asked Rochefort, "can you explain this interest in Orsini? He tried to murder her, and just missed his mark." The answer was: "Nobody at the Tuileries can make it out. The Empress had an attack of hysteria when the Emperor refused to listen to her pleading. She even went so far as to reproach the Emperor with hardness of heart toward a man who, after all, had only fulfilled a patriotic mission." It is suggested that she may have been prompted by fear lest the vengeance of Italian republicans should be drawn down upon her husband's and her son's head, or that, with her Spaniard's superstition, she may have been afraid that the blood of this man might recoil upon herself and her child. There is no doubt, we are assured, about her repeated efforts to save Orsini from the scaffold. She reached a point at which the Emperor would have given way to her entreaties if his ministers had not resisted. They drew up a list of persons killed and injured by the bombs, and unanimously threatened to resign if the execution were not carried out. But for this incident Orsini would have saved his neck. On the day of his execution the Empress remained locked in her boudoir and would receive no visitors. For a long time after the catastrophe she imagined herself to be surrounded by murderers. On the discovery of another plot she immediately sent for her chief secretary. He found her in a state of feverish agitation. She was still in her dressing gown, which every now and then slipped down and exposed her shoulders. "I beg your Majesty's pardon," he said respectfully. "But I would be permitted to mention that under the secretary is a man." "A man under the secretary!" screamed the Empress, as she left the desk and rushed around the room. "Oh heavens! Help! Help!"

IV.

In the same chapter Rochefort adverts to the thoughtlessness or cynicism which led Louis Napoleon, who should have known of the escapades of his grandmother, to indulge in the singular prophecy anent the future of his wife, "She will have the virtues of Josephine." The escapades of Josephine before, during, and after her marriage with Napoleon have scandalized public opinion in France to such an extent that her grandson could not have been ignorant of her reputation. M. Rochefort tells us that he has the proof of such knowledge, for when, as a member of the Government of the National Defence, he went to the Tuileries on Sept. 5, 1870, to make a list of the Emperor's papers, he found a note from Josephine addressed to Barras's secretary in terms similar to the following: "Tell Barras that I cannot sup with him this evening. Bonaparte returns to-night." Napoleon III. himself had carefully put this missive away in a green box, which he kept in a pigeon hole of his desk. He had endorsed it with the words "*à conserver*," in his own handwriting.

A curious plot against the Emperor, of much later date than Orsini's, is recounted by Rochefort. It will be remembered that, in spite of the endeavors of de Morny's band to make Paris a city of pleasure, it became gradually more and more a centre of discontent, of protest, and even of conspiracy. What is less generally known is that a sort of republican police was organized by the side of the Imperial police. Its members watched the Emperor closely, knew the hours he left the Paris, the objects of his afternoon walks, and often of his nocturnal escapades. A regular woman-hunter, of adventurous temperament, and, beyond a doubt, courageous, he sometimes went, after midnight, to the residence of the Countess de Castiglione, the beautiful Italian whose portrait was exhibited in the Salon of 1859. These nocturnal excursions without escort suggested to a group of young men the idea of kidnapping the Emperor. One of them afterward explained all the details of the scheme to Rochefort and gave him proof of the existence of the plot. The affair would have been all the more sensational because, if it had succeeded, the hero of the December *coup d'état* would have suddenly and utterly disappeared and nobody would ever have imagined what had become of him. The plan, although at first sight fantastic and even clownish, was remarkably well combined. The conspirators purchased an old wagon used for the emptying of cesspools, with all the gear necessary for the work. Disguised as sewer scavengers they waited a few yards from the house, near the Champs Elysées, occupied by Mme. de Castiglione, for the imperial lover either to enter or to leave the place. As he got out of his carriage or remounted he was to have been seized, hurled into the receptacle opened to receive him, and trotted off to be shot as refuse into the sewage repository at La Villette. From this tragic-burlesque end, which would have recalled that of Heliogabalus, killed by the prætorians in the latrines of his palace, Napoleon III. was saved by one of those chances which nobody could provide against. The Emperor, who carried his love of women to erotomania, suddenly took a dislike to his Italian, and replaced her at twenty-four hours' notice by the wife of one of his illegitimate cousins. Still, on three consecutive nights, the professional wagon stood for two hours at a stretch almost at the Countess's door, without the police suspecting anything beyond the preparations for one of those sanitary operations which will be indispensable until the "all-in-the-sewers" system has been established in France as it has long existed in England. The noise, or one might say the odor, of this plot spread vaguely in Paris. It was even said that the Italian Countess was in the secret, and that, in the ardor of her patriotism, she had lent her eyes as the bait of the snare laid for the enemy who held the capital of Italy with a French garrison. M. Rochefort denounces as entirely erroneous this supposition, which would have made Mme. de Castiglione a Judith, repairing her dishonor by the death of Holofernes. The author's characteristic comment is that Napoleon was for her an oppressor of whom she demanded nothing better than to be oppressed.

V.

After writing for some time for the *Figaro*, Rochefort started the *Lanterne*, which, however, was presently seized, and the editor had to go into exile. This was in 1868. While in Brussels he saw a good deal of Victor Hugo. The latter was at this time 70 years old, but, in spite of his long life of struggle and uninterrupted labor, he showed no sign of age or weariness. His beard had become a little grayer, but his complexion was fresh, and his beautiful forehead, beneath which glances of remarkable penetration darted out like arrows, still retained a marble-like polish. Many people picture a great poet as always walking in the aureole of his glory. M. Rochefort tells us that no more erroneous idea could be formed of Victor Hugo. He was very fond, it seems, of provoking and maintaining discussions, and accepted with thorough good faith the force of any arguments advanced. In the philosophical and literary debates which arose almost daily in the household, he treated M. Rochefort and his sons as upon an equal footing with himself, and never assumed the autocracy that his genius gave him. A little incident accounts for the sympathy which the poet showed for the newcomer from the first moment of their acquaintanceship. One day M. Rochefort made a wager with his son Charles that he would repeat the Caravane, one of the finest passages of the Châtiments, from beginning to end, without missing a syllable. The volume was held open while he recited the four hundred lines without a slip. He continued by reciting four other long poems of the master, and Victor Hugo was so astonished at this feat of memory applied to his own work that tears flooded his eyes. After that it is easy to understand why he regarded M. Rochefort almost as one of the family. The existence led by the great writer at this period is described; it would be hard to imagine one more rigorously regular. Every evening, no matter how interesting the conversation might be, or how great the number of visitors, he went to bed as the clock struck 10, to rise the next morning at 6 o'clock. This slavery to duty was carried to the point of asceticism. He only quitted his bedchamber in the early morning to take a cold douche. From 6 o'clock until 11 o'clock in the morning Victor Hugo's time was entirely devoted to his work. At the last-named hour his working day ended. Then he had a heavy luncheon and made it a matter of *amour propre* to show off his appetite. Nobody was allowed to go to his garret and interrupt him upon any excuse during working hours. Notwithstanding this, he invited M. Rochefort several times to go and see him at work. One day when he heard him on the stairs he asked him to come in. The visitor opened the door of a tiny room and stepped inside with all sorts of precautions for fear of treading upon the wet sheets of manuscript, which were lying about on the mantelpiece, the bed and the floor. A proof of the rapidity with which Victor Hugo worked was that the ink on the medium-sized bluish paper he used was scarcely dry before a second sheet was well nigh completed. He invariably wrote with goose-quill pens, which spluttered occasionally and left blots en route. His manuscript was so spaced that each page contained ten lines at the outside. M. Rochefort asked him one morning how much he had earned when he threw one of his pages of copy aside. "About a hundred francs a page," he answered.

Victor Hugo has been accused of avarice. The truth, according to Rochefort, is that every day while he lived in Brussels he had five or six guests at his table, without counting his own children, and Rochefort, who was living in his family. "The most casual acquaintance that came from Paris to shake hands with me was invited to dinner, and I was often ashamed at introducing strangers to whom he showed himself as hospitable and thoughtful as if he had known them for years." At the same time the author of these volumes protests that his admiration for the great poet never led him to shut his eyes to his failings. They were not very serious, indeed, and consisted almost exclusively of preoccupations concerning the false judgments of public opinion and of old literary prejudices which sometimes caused him to be unjust. When he was not influenced by personal animosity, the impartiality, clearness, and exactness of his appreciation were most striking. We are told that all his admiration was centred upon La Fontaine, whose style impressed him to such a degree that he appeared to be jealous of him. He was always haunted, too, by Auguste Barbier's "Iambes." "There are," he said, "some remarkable lines in his work which probably he could not write again, and which certainly nobody else could write. Some of them might have been penned on the barricades." His good faith prompted him to be more outspoken than he would have been, had the pride existed which has been so often imputed to him by those who knew nothing of the man. Not only did he unhesitatingly and unreservedly bow down before any work which he proclaimed great and beautiful, but he loved to do so. On the other hand, he would never go back upon his disapproval; for instance, Rochefort endeavored to get him to read Stendhal's "Rouge et Noir." "I tried to read that thing," said Victor Hugo: "how could you get further than the fourth page? You understand dialect, then?" "I know it is not well written," replied Rochefort. "Still, in his language and actions, the personality of Julien Sorel is none the less the type which represents the passions, audacities, ambitions as well as the incoherencies and violences of human activity. Every young man at a given moment has been more or less a Julien Sorel. Unless you admit that, how can you explain the success of a book which has already engrossed two generations?" "But," rejoined Victor Hugo, obstinately, "I'm not engrossed in French grammatical errors. Every time I try to decipher a phrase in your favorite book, it is as though I were having a tooth drawn. The only works which have a chance of traversing centuries are those that are properly written. Do you think if Voltaire's 'Candide' were in the same style as 'Rouge et Noir' we should still read it? Montesquieu lives because he is well written. M. Stendhal can never live because he did not conceive for an instant what writing was. Nobody has more admiration than I have for the almost miraculous insight of Balzac. His is a brain of the first order. But it is only a brain; it is not a pen. Style is the art of expressing every sensation by the aid of words. Read Balzac again. You will very soon notice that he is ignorant of his language, and almost invariably fails to convey the excellent things he wants to say. For this reason his hour to sink into oblivion will come much sooner than is thought."

VI.

A chapter is devoted by Rochefort to the murder of Victor Noir, a crime which had much to do with the final overthrow of the Second Empire. It was Rochefort himself whom Prince Pierre Bonaparte insulted and intended to assassinate. But it so happened that, before Rochefort's seconds had arrived, Paschal Grousset's, of whom Victor Noir was one, were admitted to the apartment of the Prince, who straightway fired on Victor Noir at close quarters. We are told that, on hearing of the assassination, the Empress let fall a word which depicted the state of mind prevailing at the Tuileries. "Ah, what a good cousin!" she cried, referring to the murderer. She did not worry about the murdered man. It will be remembered that Prince Pierre maintained that he shot in self-defence, Victor Noir having slapped his face. As a matter of fact, his companion, Ulric de Fonvielle, on whom the Prince subsequently turned his weapon, assured Rochefort that not only did his friend not slap Pierre Bonaparte's face, but, on the contrary, held his hat in his gloved hand during the whole of the interview, was calm throughout, and did not make the slightest gesture which could conceivably be regarded as indicating an aggressive intent.

Rochefort saw nothing of the beginning of the Paris Commune, for it was during his illness and convalescence that the revolution of March 18, 1871, broke out. Its incidents were related to him later in the prison where he was confined in company with those who had taken part in it. From the multitude of stories told him the thing which remained the most firmly fixed in his mind was that the necessity of a "bleeding" had been decided upon by Thiers and Ernest Picard, who exchanged despatches on the subject, which were discovered by Olivier Pain during the Commune. This correspondence was put on one side by him, and would have thrown a light upon the secrets and the origin of the movement that ended in the proclamation of the Commune. Unfortunately, after his arrest his wife, who knew that the discovery of any papers of a suspicious nature was enough to get her husband shot, threw these documents into the fire, and the Communists were, therefore, no longer in a position to reveal to the world the Ministerial plot which had for its object the capture of the cannons which the National Guard had in battery on the heights of Montmartre. When Rochefort was able to enter Paris, the Commune had been organized for some time. He found, he says, that the people walked the Boulevard in perfect security, without regulations and without police. "What contributed to discredit Thiers," says Rochefort, "was his undeniable, though unavowed association with the Prussians for the repression of the socialistic movement which had caused Paris to fall into the hands of the revolutionists. If the French army, after two months of siege, had not succeeded in penetrating into the capital, there is no doubt that the Versailles Assembly would have begged Bismarck to send a large Prussian army into the city. The latter would probably have been less ferocious than the other." The author of these volumes thinks that, but for the strategical ignorance of Flourens, and, above all, the blunder of Lullier, the ex-naval officer, who, intrusted with the occupation of the Mont Valerien, had contented himself with the promise given by the officer in command there to evacuate, the Versailles Assembly would have been surrounded and obliged to treat with those whom it called "Communeux." According to Rochefort, the truth is that France was then wavering between a consecration of its republican institutions and the restoration of the throne. Right and patriotism were so manifestly on the side of the Communards that Toulouse, Lyons, and Marseilles, anxious at the strides made by the reaction, revolted, in their turn, against Versailles; and if Thiers, in alarm, had not publicly engaged to maintain the republic, all the large towns would have fallen away from him one after the other." Finding himself in Paris, Rochefort declared himself in favor of the Commune, but did not proclaim himself a partisan of everything it might do. By and by he found plenty of ground for criticism, and eventually he was chased from Paris by the Commune.

VII.

It will be remembered that M. Rochefort escaped from New Caledonia, and ultimately reached San Francisco. Some of his impressions of the United States are amusing. For instance, his experience in a sleeping car astonished him. The system of beds let into the partitions of compartments was, at that time, unknown in Europe. Our author observes that "the American girls in our sleeping car, although probably quite as good guardians of their honor as the French, were more free and easy, and better 'chums.' I had for my bed-neighbor, her fair locks almost touching my crinkly hair, a young lady of twenty, who was travelling alone from San Francisco to New York, where she was to be married. The perfect security in which she lived among such a crowd of men had a really respectable and touching character. She made no fuss about sleeping in the same wagon, and as soon as our heads were on our respective pillows we used to tell stories through the partition. She spoke French fairly distinctly. Her beauty," adds Rochefort, "was, perhaps, of the acquired-taste category. She had somewhat thick, though tempting, lips; still, she spread a resistless charm around her. The other ladies whose society luck had decreed that we should enjoy for eight days were quite as interesting, and had none of the simpering and coquetry which is usually affected by European ladies. They are much more encyclopædic than in our countries; they discuss politics without pedantry, and are thoroughly well informed on contemporary events."

Elsewhere in the same chapter the author remarks: "The American woman is generally respectable; but when she ceases to be, her education, her intellectual superiority, and her natural daring make her the most seductive, that is to say, the most dangerous, of adventuresses. In the great cities of America there is not a low-class *courcuse* who is not well up in the literature and politics of her country. Miss Ada Menken, who played the mute rôle of *écuyère* in the drama 'Fugitives,' at the Gaîeté, was also a lecturer and an authoress. In our latitudes the education of an actress of that description would be just about sufficient to enable her to decipher the love letters that flutter down from the third gallery, and ten times out of twelve she would only be capable of replying to them by a nod of the head. The scandal provoked by the correspondence exchanged between the nephew of the Czar and Miss Blackford showed that, if she had no scruples, this adventuress was not lacking in education or wit."

M. Rochefort was by no means friendly to Gambetta. This is evident from the tone of the chapter entitled "Gambetta's End; a Woman's Vengeance." The author begins by giving us some astounding details concerning Gambetta's habits, which were communicated by the wife of a former Deputy who was very intimate with the Dictator. It seems that Gambetta spent a week at their country place, and that, after his departure, not only had the floor to be scrubbed, but the curtains and walls to be washed. He inundated the bedroom with his expectorations, and the girl who took his coffee up to him in the morning almost turned sick at the condition of the room. It will be remembered that the official account of the incident which caused his death ran as follows: "M. Gambetta, while handling a revolver this morning, was slightly wounded in the hand. The bullet merely passed through the flesh, and the injury is not serious." The truth was that Gambetta had been wounded not by one but by two bullets, and one of the injuries at least was mortal. Moreover, so far from injuring himself, he had been assassinated. Rochefort says that the wife of one of Gambetta's intimate friends told him all about the drama, its causes, and the most insignificant details concerning it. Among other *liaisons*, Gambetta had one which dated from his youth, to which the woman concerned clung the more tenaciously in proportion to the importance of the situation she hoped to attain. Of low origin, but ambitious and turbulent, she succeeded in becoming the centre of all the plots and manœuvres of the Gambettist entourage. When this woman learned that Gambetta was in the habit of meeting a certain Countess in a little place at Jardies she lost her head completely, hastened to the spot and arrived at the psychological moment. As she had all the keys of the villa, and knew every nook and corner of it, she surprised the lovers and fired on the woman; not on Gambetta, who generously threw himself between the rivals and received two bullets, one tearing the muscles of the arm and the other perforating the breast bone. The arrest of the murderess would have compromised everybody, including the murdered man and almost all the Opportunist chiefs. So they put their heads together to concoct a fable to shield the guilty woman and provide her a little annuity which would permit her to leave Paris. According to Rochefort the allowance is still paid to her.

VIII.

Rochefort was one of Boulanger's friends, and, if they had not fled from France, both would have suffered the penalty to which they were condemned, namely, perpetual transportation. Rochefort says that the question of the subsidies that enabled the Boulangist National Committee to carry on its costly propaganda throughout France was never mentioned in his presence. He declares that he and his personal friends never drew a penny from the party funds. He does not feel called upon to pronounce an opinion between Boulanger's intimate friends' statement on the subject and the story that the money came from the Duchesse d'Uzes, and even from the Orleans family. It is evident enough that one side or the other was deceived, or was deceiving the public. It is manifest, also, that Rochefort believes that the Reactionists would have found themselves mistaken in Boulanger. He writes: "As to the promises the General was alleged to have made to the Orleanists, the Legitimists, and the Bonapartists, these parties would have been incredibly stupid to have taken them seriously in the face of Boulanger's declaration repeated at the various banquets in Tours, Nevers, La Rochelle, and Amiens, where he never missed an opportunity of affirming his republican faith." Our author further asserts that all the criticisms passed upon Boulanger, even the most favorable, are completely erroneous: "He always made me his confidant, and opened his heart to me the more sincerely because he knew that I was incapable of betraying him, or making use of him to serve my own ends. Politics were for him an indispensable, though a secondary, incident. The sole object which he obstinately pursued was the avenging of our disasters and the recovery of the lost provinces. He only looked forward to the moment when, having completely reorganized the army, he should find an opportunity of placing himself at its head to march against the enemy." Recurring to the subject elsewhere, Rochefort reasserts: "It was with the most generous sentiments and to obtain the most noble results, quite without any personal interest, that he (Boulanger) aspired to the Presidency of the Republic; a position that every French citizen has a right to aim at, and which, during the last twenty-five years, has sometimes fallen into the hands of individuals but little qualified to occupy it." We add that Rochefort has no doubt that Boulanger could have effected a coup d'état on the evening of the day when he was elected Deputy for Paris by a huge majority. "Nothing would have been easier to accomplish. Confident as we were of the result of the election, the only thing remaining to be done was to call upon forty thousand of our friends to meet at an agreed spot at midnight, when Gen. Boulanger would put himself at their head, morally supported by the 244,000 votes which had just demonstrated his popularity. On the morrow the Constituent Assembly would have been summoned at Versailles for the revision of the Constitution, and there is no doubt that, under the pressure of events, the Senate would have been swept away." It appears that several members of the Boulangist National Committee urged their chief to profit by the precious opportunity. He resolutely refused to move, acting upon the assumption that it was possible to obtain power in France by legal methods. As M. Rochefort points out, he need only to have glanced at the history of the country to satisfy himself of the contrary.

IX.

M. Rochefort has lived as an exile a good deal in London, and a somewhat unexpected comment of his on the British metropolis deserves reproduction. "The report runs," he says, "that the cost of living is excessive in London. I do not hesitate to declare that it is two or three times less expensive than in Paris. What is more highly paid for there than here is luxuries; the actual necessities of life cost less in London than in Paris. After the banishments of 1871, the refugees would have literally died of hunger anywhere but in England. Some of them lived there on ten and even eight dollars a month." This fact, which is certainly surprising, is thus explained by M. Rochfort: "The resources which the great city offers to the poorest are due principally to the custom, adopted by butchers and fishmongers in London of disposing at nightfall of the stock of provisions laid in for the day. They have too much respect for their customers to supply them with stale meat or fish. Consequently, between half past 6 and 8 o'clock in the evening, the pieces that have been left on hand are sold for a few pence. I used to be astonished, at dusk, to see files of women and children line up before each butcher stall. They were neither beggars nor paupers, but economical people who came to lay in their store at the hour when a cut of salmon or a piece of beef had fallen from the couple of shillings they were quoted at in the morning to a few farthings." The outlaws of the Commune used to club together and sent out to this evening market to obtain at incredibly low prices nourishment of exactly the same quality as that which the rich inhabitants had purchased at its full price in the morning.

Jewish Life in the Middle Ages.

The student of folk lore will find that *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages* (Macmillan) contains a vast amount of interesting information, but he will have to use his own abilities in shifting and arranging the matter compiled by the author, Mr. ISRAEL ABRAHAMS of London, so as to get a clear historical view of the subject. An absolute disregard for historical consecutiveness characterizes the whole work. Describing a custom that prevailed among the Jews in some parts of Germany in the fifteenth century, the author at one sweep drives his reader back to the Gaonic period, between the seventh and eleventh centuries, citing the authority of rabbis whose central seat was somewhere in Persia; and then again he sends him forward to the rabbinical teachings of Holland or Italy. Among the historical authorities cited by Mr. Abrahams is the romancer Grætz, whose work on Jewish history is full of the wildest hypotheses and most confusing speculations on the events of the early ages, and it is, moreover, extremely subjective and irrationally personal in its description of events of a later day. In his reasoning appears the tendency of the school of modern Jewish students, who would obliterate the past of their religion and their history to secure happiness for the members of their race in the present. But the world takes an interest in the Jewish people simply because of their past, and by arguing their historical vicissitudes and religious peculiarities out of existence, you obliterate their identity and consign them to disintegration. This disposition of Mr. Abrahams appears in these remarks in his preface: "I confess that when I undertook to write of Jewish life in the middle ages, I did so under the impression that Jewish life was everywhere more or less similar, and that it would be possible to present a generic image of it. Deeper research has completely dispelled this belief. Possibly the reader may note with disappointment that my book reveals no central principle; that it is a survey less of Jewish life than of Jewish lives." Further on he says: "The superficial appearance of a national entity has, I fear, originated the movement now popular with some modern Jews in favor of creating a Jewish State, politically independent and perhaps religiously homogeneous. I speak regretfully, because one does not like to see enthusiasm wasted over a conception which has no roots in the past, and no fruits to offer for the future." In these remarks lies the centre of gravity of modern latitudinarian Jewish scholars; the conception of a "central principle" which united the Jews in all the bygone ages "has no roots in the past," and it is therefore a waste of energy or "enthusiasm" to work for a restoration of the people in the future.

Despite such an enunciation of principle on the part of the author, his book bears a different message. It tells of a "Jewish identity," which the passing ages could not obliterate, and which held its own in dire distress as well as in prosperity. Throughout the middle ages there was a solidarity among the dispersed members of the race, which nothing could destroy. The Jew of one part of the world had a feeling of kinship for his brother Jew of another clime, in spite of their dissimilarity of dress, tastes, and manners of living. This solidarity was rooted in the "central principle" of their religious confession, which Mr. Abrahams tries to ignore, and in the sense of responsibility of one for the other, which the learned author cannot ignore, because it lies within the range of the life he depicts. Throughout the ages there was never a divergence of belief among the Jews in all parts of the world, in so far as the principal tenets of their faith were concerned. The Jews of Persia, Africa, and of all parts of Europe believed in God, Revelation, Immortality, and in the union and selection of their people. In their synagogues the same order of prayer was preserved in all the lands of their dispersion. Mr. Abrahams does not speak about these things, for such evidences of a "central principle" do not belong to his programme, but he tells us many things which bear testimony to the same effect.

In the first chapter of the book the author shows us that "the synagogue was the centre of social life" as well as of religious worship among the Jews. He refers the reader to Josephus for proof that, even so far back as the times of the Maccabees, the temple at Jerusalem was the central place for all social movements. The synagogue replaced the temple throughout the dispersion. But, barring a prayer that was recited in behalf of the ruler of the time, politics was excluded from its precincts. There were, however, rare instances in which the Jews as a body displayed political partisanship. In the middle of the fourteenth century the Jews courageously fought for Don Pedro of Castile against his half brother, Henry de Trastamara. A Jewish troubadour of that age, Santob de Carrion, compiled moral and political maxims for the King. In 1188 the Jews of Canterbury prayed for the monks as against the Archbishops in a local dispute. At a much later date the Jews of Rome erected a trophy in front of one of their synagogues in honor of the temporary establishment of a republican Government. "Until the beginning of the sixteenth century they were never for long cut off from the common life around them. Nay, their interests were wider than those of their environment, for they had the exceptional interests of a common religion destitute of a political centre." Thus speaks the author who asserted in the introduction of his work that he could not discover any central principle which united the Jews of the middle ages.

The life within the synagogue reflected the social life of the Jews in all its essential features. Amid a world in which might was right, the Jews learned from their common oppression to respect each other's rights. Any Jew who conceived that he had a grievance against his fellow, had the privilege of interrupting the synagogue service until he had gained a public promise of redress. So fully was this understood by the Governments of Europe that it was occasionally utilized for their own purposes. In the thirteenth century the English Government compelled the Jews to announce in their synagogues quittances of debts due from Christians. By the Castilian code of 1212 the Jews of Spain were, in certain cases in which stolen apparel and furniture had been pledged with them by Christians, to swear on oath in the synagogue that the transaction had been honest in intention on their part. Similar ordinances were enforced by the Governments of Rome, France, and Germany. The voluntary announcements of this kind, too, were at least as numerous as the enforced. It was an ancient custom, dating back to early Talmudical times, for the shamash or verger to announce every Saturday in the synagogue the results of lawsuits, and to inform the congregation that certain properties were in the market. A rabbi of the fourteenth century in Vienna caused a Jew to be branded as a liar and deceiver in a public announcement in the synagogue, because he would not stand by a bargain which he had agreed to verbally. In Frankfort the beadle of the synagogue took his stand before the ark during the services on the Sabbath and proclaimed that certain articles had been stolen or lost, and solemnly ordered that any worshipper who knew anything of the missing property should immediately give information to the authorities. In Italy it was necessary for a Jew who intended to leave his town to publicly announce his intention in the synagogue, and to invite all who had claims against him to proffer them. It is a custom still prevalent in many Jewish congregations for a man who wishes to sell a piece of land to announce in the synagogue that every one who has a claim on the property should lay it before the rabbinical tribunal. Such a proclamation is to be made three times, and a record of it inserted in the deed of sale.

The distant Jewish communities in all parts of the world were always in intercommunication with each other. In the Talmudic and Gaonic periods, from the first to the eleventh century, the seats of rabbinical authority were in Persia, in the towns of Sura and Pumbedita, and the "eyes of all Israel" were turned thither for religious instruction. After the disorganization of those schools, all the Jewish communities sought their religious instruction at the hands of the great rabbis that arose in various parts of the world at various times. The central seat of Judaism was where a great rabbi presided over a school of competent scholars, and its location changed from Babylon to Cordova, thence to Cairo, then again to the Rhine country; still later to Holland; in the latest periods to Poland and Russia. And as the spiritual interests of the Jews from all parts of the world gravitated toward the seat of rabbinical learning wherever it was, the most distant communities came into contact with each other, and a constant intercourse between them was the result. The Jews of the most isolated places became familiar with the manners of their brethren, as with their trade, and their social condition in foreign countries. The vehicles of intercommunication were in the first place the messengers of the rabbinical school in authority, who carried the decisions and enactments of the school to the various communities, where they were made known through the local rabbis in the synagogues. Then there were the messengers of the communities that applied to the school for decisions in cases of difficulty which their local teachers could not decide, or in cases of dispute between various communities. There were also many itinerant preachers; students who made long journeys to learn the wisdom and methods of distant rabbis of renown; merchants and artisans who plodded many a weary mile in search of employment or of new markets for their wares; strolling cantors who were ambitious to introduce their new hymns and tunes in as wide a circle as possible; pious pilgrims travelling to the Holy Land, and in some rare instances professional travellers who ventured into the remotest parts of the world to discover the traces of their dispersed co-religionists. The armies of Jewish itinerants who kept up intercourse between the various communities of their brethren always grew larger as Jewish persecutions and expatriation grew more frequent from the time of the Crusades down to the end of the eighteenth century. In this way a very complete system of communication was kept up between remote countries, and news spread very fast. When the ghettos were established, the German Jews had their own regular letter carriers. So complete were their means of communication that Jews were often employed to carry the messages of the Government. The privacy of letters in the hands of Jewish carriers was absolutely safe, for nowhere up to the eleventh century was a case recorded in which such a trust was violated, though there was no rabbinical enactment registered to the effect that it must be kept sacred. It seems that the Talmudic teachings, bearing in general on implicit good faith in private affairs between the faithful, were sufficient for that purpose. But in the eleventh century Rabbi Gershom of Mayence, afterward of Metz, issued an order that every one who read another man's letter without permission should be in contumely (*Herem*), and the mere mention of this order by a formula of five Hebrew letters (*B'h'd'r'g'*) put on the envelope secured the desired privacy better than twenty seals. Among the pious Jews in Russia and the Orient the formula still has the same effect.

The instance just cited furnishes a fair example of the activity of the rabbis during the Middle Ages. Their function was not merely to teach the law and to decide on religious questions, but by the authority which the law invested in them they also had to enforce regulations for the conduct of the faithful in every possible direction of social and communal life. The same Rabbi Gershom was known as the "Luminary of Exile" and also as the "Master of Ordinances," the disobedience of which put a man in contumely or under anathema. It was he who prohibited polygamy to the Jews of Europe. He issued a great many ordinances most of which were accepted and are in force even to this day. Among others these may be mentioned: No writ of divorce can be issued by a rabbi unless the woman declares her consent to the separation. No man may leave his house for a term of eighteen months unless his wife agrees to his absence. A Jew who renounces his faith under compulsion and returns to the synagogue afterward, must never be upbraided by his fellow believers for his temporary apostasy. Ordinances of this kind, for which there was no direct precedent in the written and oral laws, were called *Takanoth*. Some of them were only local, others were promulgated and made binding upon all Israel. But in no place was a *Takanah* binding unless the local rabbi subscribed to it. As other instances of ordinances of this kind the following may be interesting: In Egypt the Mohammedans stole Jewish tombstones, obliterated the inscriptions, and sold them again to Jews. The rabbis of that country checked this abuse by issuing a *Takanah* that no stone should be put as a monument upon a grave unless it was new from the quarry. In many towns in Germany, Italy, and elsewhere non-Jewish fishmongers took to charging exorbitant prices to Jews because they knew that the latter thought much of fish as a dainty dish for the Sabbath; but the local rabbis stopped this extortion and punished the greedy vendors by issuing an order that no Jew should eat fish on the Sabbath for a term of three months. In consequence of corruption in the civil courts a rabbinical ordinance prohibited the Jews from suing their fellow believers before such a court. One such ordinance prohibited gambling, another prohibited selling wine to Mohammedans, still another defined the amount of jewelry and ornaments, and even the colors of the dress a Jewish woman might wear. A local ordinance in Sicily prohibited the adulteration of wine, and the practice of house-to-house begging. A large number of ordinances regulated the prices of house rent in various localities; prohibited Jews to rent grounds tenanted by other Jews without the permission of the latter; fixed the commission to which an agent was entitled for negotiating the sale of a house. In brief, the rabbinical *Takanah* regulated every phase of social and communal life, and extended its sway even into the private life of the Jew, according to the demands of the time and the circumstances. It tended in every case to promote a sense of equity, to guard the "communion of Israel" against the abuse of the outside world, and above all, to maintain the wonderful