

Preface

This volume, *Therese Raquin*, was Zola's third book, but it was the one that first gave him notoriety, and made him somebody, as the saying goes.

While still a clerk at Hachette's at eight pounds a month, engaged in checking and perusing advertisements and press notices, he had already in 1864 published the first series of "Les Contes a Ninon"-a reprint of short stories contributed to various publications; and, in the following year, had brought out "La Confession de Claude." Both these books were issued by Lacroix, a famous go-ahead publisher and bookseller in those days, whose place of business stood at one of the corners of the Rue Vivienne and the Boulevard Montmartre, and who, as Lacroix, Verboeckhoven et Cie., ended in bankruptcy in the early seventies.

"La Confession de Claude" met with poor appreciation from the general public, although it attracted the attention of the Public Prosecutor, who sent down to Hachette's to make a few inquiries about the author, but went no further. When, however, M. Barbey d'Aurevilly, in a critical weekly paper called the "Nain Jaune," spitefully alluded to this rather daring novel as "Hachette's little book," one of the members of the firm sent for M. Zola, and addressed him thus:

"Look here, M. Zola, you are earning eight pounds a month with us, which is ridiculous for a man of your talent. Why don't you go into literature altogether? It will bring you wealth and glory."

Zola had no choice but to take this broad hint, and send in his resignation, which was at once accepted. The Hachettes did not require the services of writers of risky, or, for that matter, any other novels, as clerks; and, besides, as Zola has told us himself, in an interview with my old friend and employer,¹ the late M. Fernand Xau, Editor of the Paris "Journal," they thought "La Confession de Claude" a trifle stiff, and objected to their clerks writing books in time which they considered theirs, as they paid for it.

Zola, cast, so to say, adrift, with "Les Contes a Ninon" and "La Confession de Claude" as scant literary baggage, buckled to, and set about "Les Mysteres de Marseille" and "Therese Raquin," while at the same time contributing art criticisms to the "Evenement"-a series of articles which raised such a storm that painters and sculptors were in the habit of

1.He sent me to Hamburg for ten days in 1892 to report on the appalling outbreak of cholera in that city, with the emoluments of ten pounds a day, besides printing several articles from my pen on Parisian topics.-E. V.

purchasing copies of the paper and tearing it up in the faces of Zola and De Villemessant, the owner, whenever they chanced to meet them. Nevertheless it was these articles that first drew attention to Manet, who had hitherto been regarded as a painter of no account, and many of whose pictures now hang in the Luxembourg Gallery.

"Therese Raquin" originally came out under the title of "A Love Story" in a paper called the "Artiste," edited by that famous art critic and courtier of the Second Empire, Arsene Houssaye, author of "Les Grandes Dames," as well as of those charming volumes "Hommes et Femmes du 18eme Siecle," and many other works.

Zola received no more than twenty-four pounds for the serial rights of the novel, and he consented at the insistence of the Editor, who pointed out to him that the periodical was read by the Empress Eugenie, to draw his pen through certain passages, which were reinstated when the story was published in volume form. I may say here that in this translation, I have adopted the views of the late M. Arsene Houssaye; and, if I have allowed the appalling description of the Paris Morgue to stand, it is, first of all, because it constitutes a very important factor in the story; and moreover, it is so graphic, so true to life, as I have seen the place myself, times out of number, that notwithstanding its horror, it really would be a loss to pass it over.

Well, "Therese Raquin" having appeared as "A Love Story" in the "Artiste," was then published as a book, in 1867, by that same Lacroix as had issued Zola's preceding efforts in novel writing. I was living in Paris at the time, and I well recall the yell of disapprobation with which the volume was received by the reviewers. Louis Ulbach, then a writer on the "Figaro," to which Zola also contributed, and who subsequently founded and edited a paper called "La Cloche," when Zola, curiously enough, became one of his critics, made a particularly virulent attack on the novel and its author. Henri de Villemessant, the Editor, authorised Zola to reply to him, with the result that a vehement discussion ensued in print between author and critic, and "Therese Raquin" promptly went into a second edition, to which Zola appended a preface.

I have not thought it necessary to translate this preface, which is a long and rather tedious reply to the reviewers of the day. It will suffice to say, briefly, that the author meets the strictures of his critics by pointing out and insisting on the fact, that he has simply sought to make an analytic study of temperament and not of character.

"I have selected persons," says he, "absolutely swayed by their nerves and blood, deprived of free will, impelled in every action of life, by the

fatal lusts of the flesh. Therese and Laurent are human brutes, nothing more. I have sought to follow these brutes, step by step, in the secret labour of their passions, in the impulsion of their instincts, in the cerebral disorder resulting from the excessive strain on their nerves."

EDWARD VIZETELLY SURBITON, 1 December, 1901.

Chapter 1

At the end of the Rue Guenegaud, coming from the quays, you find the Arcade of the Pont Neuf, a sort of narrow, dark corridor running from the Rue Mazarine to the Rue de Seine. This arcade, at the most, is thirty paces long by two in breadth. It is paved with worn, loose, yellowish tiles which are never free from acrid damp. The square panes of glass forming the roof, are black with filth.

On fine days in the summer, when the streets are burning with heavy sun, whitish light falls from the dirty glazing overhead to drag miserably through the arcade. On nasty days in winter, on foggy mornings, the glass throws nothing but darkness on the sticky tiles-unclean and abominable gloom.

To the left are obscure, low, dumpy shops whence issue puffs of air as cold as if coming from a cellar. Here are dealers in toys, cardboard boxes, second-hand books. The articles displayed in their windows are covered with dust, and owing to the prevailing darkness, can only be perceived indistinctly. The shop fronts, formed of small panes of glass, streak the goods with a peculiar greenish reflex. Beyond, behind the display in the windows, the dim interiors resemble a number of lugubrious cavities animated by fantastic forms.

To the right, along the whole length of the arcade, extends a wall against which the shopkeepers opposite have stuck some small cupboards. Objects without a name, goods forgotten for twenty years, are spread out there on thin shelves painted a horrible brown colour. A dealer in imitation jewelry, has set up shop in one of these cupboards, and there sells fifteen sous rings, delicately set out on a cushion of blue velvet at the bottom of a mahogany box.

Above the glazed cupboards, ascends the roughly plastered black wall, looking as if covered with leprosy, and all seamed with defacements.

The Arcade of the Pont Neuf is not a place for a stroll. You take it to make a short cut, to gain a few minutes. It is traversed by busy people whose sole aim is to go quick and straight before them. You see

apprentices there in their working-aprons, work-girls taking home their work, persons of both sexes with parcels under their arms. There are also old men who drag themselves forward in the sad gloaming that falls from the glazed roof, and bands of small children who come to the arcade on leaving school, to make a noise by stamping their feet on the tiles as they run along. Throughout the day a sharp hurried ring of footsteps, resounds on the stone with irritating irregularity. Nobody speaks, nobody stays there, all hurry about their business with bent heads, stepping out rapidly, without taking a single glance at the shops. The tradesmen observe with an air of alarm, the passers-by who by a miracle stop before their windows.

The arcade is lit at night by three gas burners, enclosed in heavy square lanterns. These jets of gas, hanging from the glazed roof whereon they cast spots of fawn-coloured light, shed around them circles of pale glimmer that seem at moments to disappear. The arcade now assumes the aspect of a regular cut-throat alley. Great shadows stretch along the tiles, damp puffs of air enter from the street. Anyone might take the place for a subterranean gallery indistinctly lit-up by three funeral lamps. The tradespeople for all light are contented with the faint rays which the gas burners throw upon their windows. Inside their shops, they merely have a lamp with a shade, which they place at the corner of their counter, and the passer-by can then distinguish what the depths of these holes sheltering night in the daytime, contain. On this blackish line of shop fronts, the windows of a cardboard-box maker are flaming: two schist-lamps pierce the shadow with a couple of yellow flames. And, on the other side of the arcade a candle, stuck in the middle of an argand lamp glass, casts glistening stars into the box of imitation jewelry. The dealer is dozing in her cupboard, with her hands hidden under her shawl.

A few years back, opposite this dealer, stood a shop whose bottle-green woodwork excreted damp by all its cracks. On the signboard, made of a long narrow plank, figured, in black letters the word: MERCERY. And on one of the panes of glass in the door was written, in red, the name of a woman: *Therese Raquin*. To right and left were deep show cases, lined with blue paper.

During the daytime the eye could only distinguish the display of goods, in a soft, obscured light.

On one side were a few linen articles: crimped tulle caps at two and three francs apiece, muslin sleeves and collars: then undervests, stockings, socks, braces. Each article had grown yellow and crumpled, and

hung lamentably suspended from a wire hook. The window, from top to bottom, was filled in this manner with whitish bits of clothing, which took a lugubrious aspect in the transparent obscurity. The new caps, of brighter whiteness, formed hollow spots on the blue paper covering the shelves. And the coloured socks hanging on an iron rod, contributed sombre notes to the livid and vague effacement of the muslin.

On the other side, in a narrower show case, were piled up large balls of green wool, white cards of black buttons, boxes of all colours and sizes, hair nets ornamented with steel beads, spread over rounds of bluish paper, fascies of knitting needles, tapestry patterns, bobbins of ribbon, along with a heap of soiled and faded articles, which doubtless had been lying in the same place for five or six years. All the tints had turned dirty grey in this cupboard, rotting with dust and damp.

In summer, towards noon, when the sun scorched the squares and streets with its tawny rays, you could distinguish, behind the caps in the other window, the pale, grave profile of a young woman. This profile issued vaguely from the darkness reigning in the shop. To a low parched forehead was attached a long, narrow, pointed nose; the pale pink lips resembled two thin threads, and the short, nervy chin was attached to the neck by a line that was supple and fat. The body, lost in the shadow, could not be seen. The profile alone appeared in its olive whiteness, perforated by a large, wide-open, black eye, and as though crushed beneath thick dark hair. This profile remained there for hours, motionless and peaceful, between a couple of caps for women, whereon the damp iron rods had imprinted bands of rust.

At night, when the lamp had been lit, you could see inside the shop which was greater in length than depth. At one end stood a small counter; at the other, a corkscrew staircase afforded communication with the rooms on the first floor. Against the walls were show cases, cupboards, rows of green cardboard boxes. Four chairs and a table completed the furniture. The shop looked bare and frigid; the goods were done up in parcels and put away in corners instead of lying hither and thither in a joyous display of colour.

As a rule two women were seated behind the counter: the young woman with the grave profile, and an old lady who sat dozing with a smile on her countenance. The latter was about sixty; and her fat, placid face looked white in the brightness of the lamp. A great tabby cat, crouching at a corner of the counter, watched her as she slept.

Lower down, on a chair, a man of thirty sat reading or chatting in a subdued voice with the young woman. He was short, delicate, and in

manner languid. With his fair hair devoid of lustre, his sparse beard, his face covered with red blotches, he resembled a sickly, spoilt child arrived at manhood.

Shortly before ten o'clock, the old lady awoke. The shop was then closed, and all the family went upstairs to bed. The tabby cat followed the party purring, and rubbing its head against each bar of the banisters.

The lodging above comprised three apartments. The staircase led to a dining-room which also did duty as drawing-room. In a niche on the left stood a porcelain stove; opposite, a sideboard; then chairs were arranged along the walls, and a round table occupied the centre. At the further end a glazed partition concealed a dark kitchen. On each side of the dining-room was a sleeping apartment.

The old lady after kissing her son and daughter-in-law withdrew. The cat went to sleep on a chair in the kitchen. The married couple entered their room, which had a second door opening on a staircase that communicated with the arcade by an obscure narrow passage.

The husband who was always trembling with fever went to bed, while the young woman opened the window to close the shutter blinds. She remained there a few minutes facing the great black wall, which ascends and stretches above the arcade. She cast a vague wandering look upon this wall, and, without a word she, in her turn, went to bed in disdainful indifference.

Chapter 2

Madame Raquin had formerly been a mercer at Vernon. For close upon five-and-twenty years, she had kept a small shop in that town. A few years after the death of her husband, becoming subject to fits of faintness, she sold her business. Her savings added to the price of this sale placed a capital of 40,000 francs in her hand which she invested so that it brought her in an income of 2,000 francs a year. This sum amply sufficed for her requirements. She led the life of a recluse. Ignoring the poignant joys and cares of this world, she arranged for herself a tranquil existence of peace and happiness.

At an annual rental of 400 francs she took a small house with a garden descending to the edge of the Seine. This enclosed, quiet residence vaguely recalled the cloister. It stood in the centre of large fields, and was approached by a narrow path. The windows of the dwelling opened to the river and to the solitary hillocks on the opposite bank. The good lady, who had passed the half century, shut herself up in this solitary retreat, where along with her son Camille and her niece Therese, she partook of serene joy.

Although Camille was then twenty, his mother continued to spoil him like a little child. She adored him because she had shielded him from death, throughout a tedious childhood of constant suffering. The boy contracted every fever, every imaginable malady, one after the other. Madame Raquin struggled for fifteen years against these terrible evils, which arrived in rapid succession to tear her son away from her. She vanquished them all by patience, care, and adoration. Camille having grown up, rescued from death, had contracted a shiver from the torture of the repeated shocks he had undergone. Arrested in his growth, he remained short and delicate. His long, thin limbs moved slowly and wearily. But his mother loved him all the more on account of this weakness that arched his back. She observed his thin, pale face with triumphant tenderness when she thought of how she had brought him back to life more than ten times over.

During the brief spaces of repose that his sufferings allowed him, the child attended a commercial school at Vernon. There he learned orthography and arithmetic. His science was limited to the four rules, and a very superficial knowledge of grammar. Later on, he took lessons in writing and bookkeeping. Madame Raquin began to tremble when advised to send her son to college. She knew he would die if separated from her, and she said the books would kill him. So Camille remained ignorant, and this ignorance seemed to increase his weakness.

At eighteen, having nothing to do, bored to death at the delicate attention of his mother, he took a situation as clerk with a linen merchant, where he earned 60 francs a month. Being of a restless nature idleness proved unbearable. He found greater calm and better health in this labour of a brute which kept him bent all day long over invoices, over enormous additions, each figure of which he patiently added up. At night, broken down with fatigue, without an idea in his head, he enjoyed infinite delight in the doltishness that settled on him. He had to quarrel with his mother to go with the dealer in linen. She wanted to keep him always with her, between a couple of blankets, far from the accidents of life.

But the young man spoke as master. He claimed work as children claim toys, not from a feeling of duty, but by instinct, by a necessity of nature. The tenderness, the devotedness of his mother had instilled into him an egotism that was ferocious. He fancied he loved those who pitied and caressed him; but, in reality, he lived apart, within himself, loving naught but his comfort, seeking by all possible means to increase his enjoyment. When the tender affection of Madame Raquin disgusted him, he plunged with delight into a stupid occupation that saved him from infusions and potions.

In the evening, on his return from the office, he ran to the bank of the Seine with his cousin Therese who was then close upon eighteen. One day, sixteen years previously, while Madame Raquin was still a mercer, her brother Captain Degans brought her a little girl in his arms. He had just arrived from Algeria.

"Here is a child," said he with a smile, "and you are her aunt. The mother is dead and I don't know what to do with her. I'll give her to you."

The mercer took the child, smiled at her and kissed her rosy cheeks. Although Degans remained a week at Vernon, his sister barely put a question to him concerning the little girl he had brought her. She understood vaguely that the dear little creature was born at Oran, and that her

mother was a woman of the country of great beauty. The Captain, an hour before his departure, handed his sister a certificate of birth in which Therese, acknowledged by him to be his child, bore his name. He rejoined his regiment, and was never seen again at Vernon, being killed a few years later in Africa.

Therese grew up under the fostering care of her aunt, sleeping in the same bed as Camille. She who had an iron constitution, received the treatment of a delicate child, partaking of the same medicine as her cousin, and kept in the warm air of the room occupied by the invalid. For hours she remained crouching over the fire, in thought, watching the flames before her, without lowering her eyelids.

This obligatory life of a convalescent caused her to retire within herself. She got into the habit of talking in a low voice, of moving about noiselessly, of remaining mute and motionless on a chair with expressionless, open eyes. But, when she raised an arm, when she advanced a foot, it was easy to perceive that she possessed feline suppleness, short, potent muscles, and that unmistakable energy and passion slumbered in her soporous frame. Her cousin having fallen down one day in a fainting fit, she abruptly picked him up and carried him—an effort of strength that turned her cheeks scarlet. The cloistered life she led, the debilitating regimen to which she found herself subjected, failed to weaken her thin, robust form. Only her face took a pale, and even a slightly yellowish tint, making her look almost ugly in the shade. Ever and anon she went to the window, and contemplated the opposite houses on which the sun threw sheets of gold.

When Madame Raquin sold her business, and withdrew to the little place beside the river, Therese experienced secret thrills of joy. Her aunt had so frequently repeated to her: "Don't make a noise; be quiet," that she kept all the impetuosity of her nature carefully concealed within her. She possessed supreme composure, and an apparent tranquillity that masked terrible transports. She still fancied herself in the room of her cousin, beside a dying child, and had the softened movements, the periods of silence, the placidity, the faltering speech of an old woman.

When she saw the garden, the clear river, the vast green hillocks ascending on the horizon, she felt a savage desire to run and shout. She felt her heart thumping fit to burst in her bosom; but not a muscle of her face moved, and she merely smiled when her aunt inquired whether she was pleased with her new home.

Life now became more pleasant for her. She maintained her supple gait, her calm, indifferent countenance, she remained the child brought

up in the bed of an invalid; but inwardly she lived a burning, passionate existence. When alone on the grass beside the water, she would lie down flat on her stomach like an animal, her black eyes wide open, her body writhing, ready to spring. And she stayed there for hours, without a thought, scorched by the sun, delighted at being able to thrust her fingers in the earth. She had the most ridiculous dreams; she looked at the roaring river in defiance, imagining that the water was about to leap on her and attack her. Then she became rigid, preparing for the defence, and angrily inquiring of herself how she could vanquish the torrent.

At night, Therese, appeased and silent, stitched beside her aunt, with a countenance that seemed to be dozing in the gleam that softly glided from beneath the lamp shade. Camille buried in an armchair thought of his additions. A word uttered in a low voice, alone disturbed, at moments, the peacefulness of this drowsy home.

Madame Raquin observed her children with serene benevolence. She had resolved to make them husband and wife. She continued to treat her son as if he were at death's door; and she trembled when she happened to reflect that she would one day die herself, and would leave him alone and suffering. In that contingency, she relied on Therese, saying to herself that the young girl would be a vigilant guardian beside Camille. Her niece with her tranquil manner, and mute devotedness, inspired her with unlimited confidence. She had seen Therese at work, and wished to give her to her son as a guardian angel. This marriage was a solution to the matter, foreseen and settled in her mind.

The children knew for a long time that they were one day to marry. They had grown up with this idea, which had thus become familiar and natural to them. The union was spoken of in the family as a necessary and positive thing. Madame Raquin had said:

"We will wait until Therese is one-and-twenty."

And they waited patiently, without excitement, and without a blush.

Camille, whose blood had become impoverished by illness, had remained a little boy in the eyes of his cousin. He kissed her as he kissed his mother, by habit, without losing any of his egotistic tranquillity. He looked upon her as an obliging comrade who helped him to amuse himself, and who, if occasion offered, prepared him an infusion. When playing with her, when he held her in his arms, it was as if he had a boy to deal with. He experienced no thrill, and at these moments the idea had never occurred to him of planting a warm kiss on her lips as she struggled with a nervous laugh to free herself.

The girl also seemed to have remained cold and indifferent. At times her great eyes rested on Camille and fixedly gazed at him with sovereign calm. On such occasions her lips alone made almost imperceptible little motions. Nothing could be read on her expressionless countenance, which an inexorable will always maintained gentle and attentive. Therese became grave when the conversation turned to her marriage, contenting herself with approving all that Madame Raquin said by a sign of the head. Camille went to sleep.

On summer evenings, the two young people ran to the edge of the water. Camille, irritated at the incessant attentions of his mother, at times broke out in open revolt. He wished to run about and make himself ill, to escape the fondling that disgusted him. He would then drag Therese along with him, provoking her to wrestle, to roll in the grass. One day, having pushed his cousin down, the young girl bounded to her feet with all the savageness of a wild beast, and, with flaming face and bloodshot eyes, fell upon him with clenched fists. Camille in fear sank to the ground.

Months and years passed by, and at length the day fixed for the marriage arrived. Madame Raquin took Therese apart, spoke to her of her father and mother, and related to her the story of her birth. The young girl listened to her aunt, and when she had finished speaking, kissed her, without answering a word.

At night, Therese, instead of going into her own room, which was on the left of the staircase, entered that of her cousin which was on the right. This was all the change that occurred in her mode of life. The following day, when the young couple came downstairs, Camille had still his sickly languidness, his righteous tranquillity of an egotist. Therese still maintained her gentle indifference, and her restrained expression of frightful calmness.

Chapter 3

A week after the marriage, Camille distinctly told his mother that he intended quitting Vernon to reside in Paris. Madame Raquin protested: she had arranged her mode of life, and would not modify it in any way. Thereupon her son had a nervous attack, and threatened to fall ill, if she did not give way to his whim.

"Never have I opposed you in your plans," said he; "I married my cousin, I took all the drugs you gave me. It is only natural, now, when I have a desire of my own, that you should be of the same mind. We will move at the end of the month."

Madame Raquin was unable to sleep all night. The decision Camille had come to, upset her way of living, and, in despair, she sought to arrange another existence for herself and the married couple. Little by little, she recovered calm. She reflected that the young people might have children, and that her small fortune would not then suffice. It was necessary to earn money, to go into business again, to find lucrative occupation for Therese. The next day she had become accustomed to the idea of moving, and had arranged a plan for a new life.

At luncheon she was quite gay.

"This is what we will do," said she to her children. "I will go to Paris to-morrow. There I will look out for a small mercery business for sale, and Therese and myself will resume selling needles and cotton, which will give us something to do. You, Camille, will act as you like. You can either stroll about in the sun, or you can find some employment."

"I shall find employment," answered the young man.

The truth was that an idiotic ambition had alone impelled Camille to leave Vernon. He wished to find a post in some important administration. He blushed with delight when he fancied he saw himself in the middle of a large office, with lustring elbow sleeves, and a pen behind his ear.

Therese was not consulted: she had always displayed such passive obedience that her aunt and husband no longer took the trouble to ask her opinion. She went where they went, she did what they did, without a

complaint, without a reproach, without appearing even to be aware that she changed her place of residence.

Madame Raquin came to Paris, and went straight to the Arcade of the Pont Neuf. An old maid at Vernon had sent her to one of her relatives who in this arcade kept a mercery shop which she desired to get rid of. The former mercer found the shop rather small, and rather dark; but, in passing through Paris, she had been taken aback by the noise in the streets, by the luxuriously dressed windows, and this narrow gallery, this modest shop front, recalled her former place of business which was so peaceful. She could fancy herself again in the provinces, and she drew a long breath thinking that her dear children would be happy in this out-of-the-way corner. The low price asked for the business, caused her to make up her mind. The owner sold it her for 2,000 francs, and the rent of the shop and first floor was only 1,200 francs a year. Madame Raquin, who had close upon 4,000 francs saved up, calculated that she could pay for the business and settle the rent for the first year, without encroaching on her fortune. The salary Camille would be receiving, and the profit on the mercery business would suffice, she thought, to meet the daily expenses; so that she need not touch the income of her funded money, which would capitalise, and go towards providing marriage portions for her grandchildren.

She returned to Vernon beaming with pleasure, relating that she had found a gem, a delightful little place right in the centre of Paris. Little by little, at the end of a few days, in her conversations of an evening, the damp, obscure shop in the arcade became a palace; she pictured it to herself, so far as her memory served her, as convenient, spacious, tranquil, and replete with a thousand inestimable advantages.

"Ah! my dear Therese," said she, "you will see how happy we shall be in that nook! There are three beautiful rooms upstairs. The arcade is full of people. We will make charming displays. There is no fear of our feeling dull."

But she did not stop there. All her instinct of a former shopkeeper was awakened. She gave advice to Therese, beforehand, as to buying and selling, and posted her up in all the tricks of small tradespeople. At length, the family quitted the house beside the Seine, and on the evening of the same day, were installed in the Arcade of the Pont Neuf.

When Therese entered the shop, where in future she was to live, it seemed to her that she was descending into the clammy soil of a grave. She felt quite disheartened, and shivered with fear. She looked at the dirty, damp gallery, visited the shop, and ascending to the first floor,

walked round each room. These bare apartments, without furniture, looked frightful in their solitude and dilapidation. The young woman could not make a gesture, or utter a word. She was as if frozen. Her aunt and husband having come downstairs, she seated herself on a trunk, her hands rigid, her throat full of sobs, and yet she could not cry.

Madame Raquin, face to face with reality, felt embarrassed, and ashamed of her dreams. She sought to defend her acquisition. She found a remedy for every fresh inconvenience that was discovered, explaining the obscurity by saying the weather was overcast, and concluded by affirming that a sweep-up would suffice to set everything right.

"Bah!" answered Camille, "all this is quite suitable. Besides, we shall only come up here at night. I shall not be home before five or six o'clock. As to you two, you will be together, so you will not be dull."

The young man would never have consented to inhabit such a den, had he not relied on the comfort of his office. He said to himself that he would be warm all day at his administration, and that, at night, he would go to bed early.

For a whole week, the shop and lodging remained in disorder. Therese had seated herself behind the counter from the first day, and she did not move from that place. Madame Raquin was astonished at this depressed attitude. She had thought that the young woman would try to adorn her habitation. That she would place flowers at the windows, and ask for new papers, curtains and carpets. When she suggested some repairs, some kind of embellishment, her niece quietly replied:

"What need is there for it? We are very well as we are. There is no necessity for luxury."

It was Madame Raquin who had to arrange the rooms and tidy up the shop. Therese at last lost patience at seeing the good old lady incessantly turning round and round before her eyes; she engaged a charwoman, and forced her aunt to be seated beside her.

Camille remained a month without finding employment. He lived as little as possible in the shop, preferring to stroll about all day; and he found life so dreadfully dull with nothing to do, that he spoke of returning to Vernon. But he at length obtained a post in the administration of the Orleans Railway, where he earned 100 francs a month. His dream had become realised.

He set out in the morning at eight o'clock. Walking down the Rue Guenegaud, he found himself on the quays. Then, taking short steps with his hands in his pockets, he followed the Seine from the Institut to the Jardin des Plantes. This long journey which he performed twice

daily, never wearied him. He watched the water running along, and he stopped to see the rafts of wood descending the river, pass by. He thought of nothing. Frequently he planted himself before Notre Dame, to contemplate the scaffolding surrounding the cathedral which was then undergoing repair. These huge pieces of timber amused him although he failed to understand why. Then he cast a glance into the Port aux Vins as he went past, and after that counted the cabs coming from the station.

In the evening, quite stupefied, with his head full of some silly story related to his office, he crossed the Jardin des Plantes, and went to have a look at the bears, if he was not in too great a hurry. There he remained half an hour, leaning over the rails at the top of the pit, observing the animals clumsily swaying to and fro. The behaviour of these huge beasts pleased him. He examined them with gaping mouth and rounded eyes, partaking of the joy of an idiot when he perceived them bestir themselves. At last he turned homewards, dragging his feet along, busying himself with the passers-by, with the vehicles, and the shops.

As soon as he arrived he dined, and then began reading. He had purchased the works of Buffon, and, every evening, he set himself to peruse twenty to thirty pages, notwithstanding the wearisome nature of the task. He also read in serial, at 10 centimes the number, "The History of the Consulate and Empire" by Thiers, and "The History of the Girondins" by Lamartine, as well as some popular scientific works. He fancied he was labouring at his education. At times, he forced his wife to listen to certain pages, to particular anecdotes, and felt very much astonished that Therese could remain pensive and silent the whole evening, without being tempted to take up a book. And he thought to himself that his wife must be a woman of very poor intelligence.

Therese thrust books away from her with impatience. She preferred to remain idle, with her eyes fixed, and her thoughts wandering and lost. But she maintained an even, easy temper, exercising all her will to render herself a passive instrument, replete with supreme complaisance and abnegation.

The shop did not do much business. The profit was the same regularly each month. The customers consisted of female workpeople living in the neighbourhood. Every five minutes a young girl came in to purchase a few sous worth of goods. Therese served the people with words that were ever the same, with a smile that appeared mechanically on her lips. Madame Raquin displayed a more unbending, a more gossipy disposition, and, to tell the truth, it was she who attracted and retained the customers.

For three years, days followed days and resembled one another. Camille did not once absent himself from his office. His mother and wife hardly ever left the shop. Therese, residing in damp obscurity, in gloomy, crushing silence, saw life expand before her in all its nakedness, each night bringing the same cold couch, and each morn the same empty day.

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