

Author's Dedication

ALEON DAUDET

A l'auteur
du VOYAGE DE SHAKESPEARE,
du PARTAGE DE L'ENFANT,
de L'ASTRE NOIR,
de FANTOMES ET VIVANTS,
du MONDE DES IMAGES,
de tant de chefs-d'oeuvre,
A l'incomparable, ami
en témoignage
de reconnaissance et d'admiration

M. P.

Translator's Dedication

To

MRS. H——
on her Birthday

OBERON, in the ATHENIAN glade,
Reduced by deft TITANIA'S power,
Invented arts for NATURE'S aid
And from a snowflake shaped a flower:
NATURE, to outdo him, wrought of human clay
A fairy blossom, which we acclaim to-day.

HEBE, to high OLYMPUS borne,
Undoomed to death, by age uncurst,
XERES and PORTO, night and morn,
Let flow, to appease celestial thirst:
Ev'n so, untouched by years that envious pass
YOUTH greets the guests to-night and fills the glass.

HESIONE, for monstrous feast,
Against a rock was chained, to die;
Young HERCLES came, he slew the beast,
Nor won the award of chivalry:
E. S. P. H., whom monsters hold in awe,
Shield thee from injury, and enforce the law!

C. K. S. M.

Part 1

Chapter 1

The Duchess de Guermantes

The twittering of the birds at daybreak sounded insipid to Françoise. Every word uttered by the maids upstairs made her jump; disturbed by all their running about, she kept asking herself what they could be doing. In other words, we had moved. Certainly the servants had made no less noise in the attics of our old home; but she knew them, she had made of their comings and goings familiar events. Now she faced even silence with a strained attention. And as our new neighbourhood appeared to be as quiet as the boulevard on to which we had hitherto looked had been noisy, the song (distinct at a distance, when it was still quite faint, like an orchestral *motif*) of a passer-by brought tears to the eyes of a Françoise in exile. And so if I had been tempted to laugh at her in her misery at having to leave a house in which she was 'so well respected on all sides' and had packed her trunks with tears, according to the Use of Combray, declaring superior to all possible houses that which had been ours, on the other hand I, who found it as hard to assimilate new as I found it easy to abandon old conditions, I felt myself drawn towards our old servant when I saw that this installation of herself in a building where she had not received from the hall-porter, who did not yet know us, the marks of respect necessary to her moral wellbeing, had brought her positively to the verge of dissolution. She alone could understand what I was feeling; certainly her young footman was not the person to do so; for him, who was as unlike the Combray type as it was possible to conceive, packing up, moving, living in another district, were all like taking a holiday in which the novelty of one's surroundings gave one the same sense of refreshment as if one had actually travelled; he thought he was in the country; and a cold in the head afforded him, as though he had been sitting in a draughty railway carriage, the delicious sensation of having seen the world; at each fresh sneeze he rejoiced that he had found so smart a place, having always longed to be with people who travelled a lot. And so, without giving him a thought, I went

straight to Françoise, who, in return for my having laughed at her tears over a removal which had left me cold, now shewed an icy indifference to my sorrow, but because she shared it. The 'sensibility' claimed by neurotic people is matched by their egotism; they cannot abide the flaunting by others of the sufferings to which they pay an ever increasing attention in themselves. Françoise, who would not allow the least of her own ailments to pass unnoticed, if I were in pain would turn her head from me so that I should not have the satisfaction of seeing my sufferings pitied, or so much as observed. It was the same as soon as I tried to speak to her about our new house. Moreover, having been obliged, a day or two later, to return to the house we had just left, to retrieve some clothes which had been overlooked in our removal, while I, as a result of it, had still a 'temperature,' and like a boa constrictor that has just swallowed an ox felt myself painfully distended by the sight of a long trunk which my eyes had still to digest, Françoise, with true feminine inconstancy, came back saying that she had really thought she would stifle on our old boulevard, it was so stuffy, that she had found it quite a day's journey to get there, that never had she seen such stairs, that she would not go back to live there for a king's ransom, not if you were to offer her millions—a pure hypothesis—and that everything (everything, that is to say, to do with the kitchen and 'usual offices') was much better fitted up in the new house. Which, it is high time now that the reader should be told—and told also that we had moved into it because my grandmother, not having been at all well (though we took care to keep this reason from her), was in need of better air—was a flat forming part of the Hôtel de Guermantes.

At the age when a Name, offering us an image of the unknowable which we have poured into its mould, while at the same moment it connotes for us also an existing place, forces us accordingly to identify one with the other to such a point that we set out to seek in a city for a soul which it cannot embody but which we have no longer the power to expel from the sound of its name, it is not only to towns and rivers that names give an individuality, as do allegorical paintings, it is not only the physical universe which they pattern with differences, people with marvels, there is the social universe also; and so every historic house, in town or country, has its lady or its fairy, as every forest has its spirit, as there is a nymph for every stream. Sometimes, hidden in the heart of its name, the fairy is transformed to suit the life of our imagination by which she lives; thus it was that the atmosphere in which Mme. de Guermantes existed in me, after having been for years no more than the shadow cast by a magic

lantern slide or the light falling through a painted window, began to let its colours fade when quite other dreams impregnated it with the bubbling coolness of her flowing streams.

And yet the fairy must perish if we come in contact with the real person to whom her name corresponds, for that person the name then begins to reflect, and she has in her nothing of the fairy; the fairy may revive if we remove ourself from the person, but if we remain in her presence the fairy definitely dies and with her the name, as happened to the family of Lusignan, which was fated to become extinct on the day when the fairy Mélusine should disappear. Then the Name, beneath our successive 'restorations' of which we may end by finding, as their original, the beautiful portrait of a strange lady whom we are never to meet, is nothing more than the mere photograph, for identification, to which we refer in order to decide whether we know, whether or not we ought to bow to a person who passes us in the street. But let a sensation from a bygone year—like those recording instruments which preserve the sound and the manner of the various artists who have sung or played into them—enable our memory to make us hear that name with the particular ring with which it then sounded in our ears, then, while the name itself has apparently not changed, we feel the distance that separates the dreams which at different times its same syllables have meant to us. For a moment, from the clear echo of its warbling in some distant spring, we can extract, as from the little tubes which we use in painting, the exact, forgotten, mysterious, fresh tint of the days which we had believed ourself to be recalling, when, like a bad painter, we were giving to the whole of our past, spread out on the same canvas, the tones, conventional and all alike, of our unprompted memory. Whereas on the contrary, each of the moments that composed it employed, for an original creation, in a matchless harmony, the colour of those days which we no longer know, and which, for that matter, will still suddenly enrapture me if by any chance the name 'Guermantes,' resuming for a moment, after all these years, the sound, so different from its sound to-day, which it had for me on the day of Mile. Percepied's marriage, brings back to me that mauve—so delicate, almost too bright, too new—with which the billowy scarf of the young Duchess glowed, and, like two periwinkle flowers, growing beyond reach and blossoming now again, her two eyes, sunlit with an azure smile. And the name Guermantes of those days is also like one of those little balloons which have been filled with oxygen, or some such gas; when I come to explode it, to make it emit what it contains, I breathe the air of the Combray of that year, of that day, mingled with a

fragrance of hawthorn blossom blown by the wind from the corner of the square, harbinger of rain, which now sent the sun packing, now let him spread himself over the red woollen carpet to the sacristy, steeping it in a bright geranium scarlet, with that, so to speak, Wagnerian harmony in its gaiety which makes the wedding service always impressive. But even apart from rare moments such as these, in which suddenly we feel the original entity quiver and resume its form, carve itself out of the syllables now soundless, dead; if, in the giddy rush of daily life, in which they serve only the most practical purposes, names have lost all their colour, like a prismatic top that spins too quickly and seems only grey, when, on the other hand, in our musings we reflect, we seek, so as to return to the past, to slacken, to suspend the perpetual motion by which we are borne along, gradually we see once more appear, side by side, but entirely distinct from one another, the tints which in the course of our existence have been successively presented to us by a single name.

What form was assumed in my mind by this name *Guermantes* when my first nurse—knowing no more, probably, than I know to-day in whose honour it had been composed—sang me to sleep with that old ditty, *Gloire à la Marquise de Guermantes*, or when, some years later, the veteran *Maréchal de Guermantes*, making my nursery-maid's bosom swell with pride, stopped in the *Champs-Élysées* to remark: "A fine child that!" and gave me a chocolate drop from his comfit-box, I cannot, of course, now say. Those years of my earliest childhood are no longer a part of myself; they are external to me; I can learn nothing of them save as we learn things that happened before we were born—from the accounts given me by other people. But more recently I find in the period of that name's occupation of me seven or eight different shapes which it has successively assumed; the earliest were the most beautiful; gradually my musings, forced by reality to abandon a position that was no longer tenable, established themselves anew in one slightly less advanced until they were obliged to retire still farther. And, with *Mme. de Guermantes*, was transformed simultaneously her dwelling, itself also the offspring of that name, fertilised from year to year by some word or other that came to my ears and modulated the tone of my musings; that dwelling of hers reflected them in its very stones, which had turned to mirrors, like the surface of a cloud or of a lake. A dungeon keep without mass, no more indeed than a band of orange light from the summit of which the lord and his lady dealt out life and death to their vassals, had given place—right at the end of that '*Guermantes way*' along which, on so many summer afternoons, I retraced with my parents the course of the

Vivonne—to that land of bubbling streams where the Duchess taught me to fish for trout and to know the names of the flowers whose red and purple clusters adorned the walls of the neighbouring gardens; then it had been the ancient heritage, famous in song and story, from which the proud race of Guermantes, like a carved and mellow tower that traverses the ages, had risen already over France when the sky was still empty at those points where, later, were to rise Notre Dame of Paris and Notre Dame of Chartres, when on the summit of the hill of Laon the nave of its cathedral had not yet been poised, like the Ark of the Deluge on the summit of Mount Ararat, crowded with Patriarchs and Judges anxiously leaning from its windows to see whether the wrath of God were yet appeased, carrying with it the types of the vegetation that was to multiply on the earth, brimming over with animals which have escaped even by the towers, where oxen grazing calmly upon the roof look down over the plains of Champagne; when the traveller who left Beauvais at the close of day did not yet see, following him and turning with his road, outspread against the gilded screen of the western sky, the black, ribbed wings of the cathedral. It was, this 'Guermantes,' like the scene of a novel, an imaginary landscape which I could with difficulty picture to myself and longed all the more to discover, set in the midst of real lands and roads which all of a sudden would become alive with heraldic details, within a few miles of a railway station; I recalled the names of the places round it as if they had been situated at the foot of Parnassus or of Helicon, and they seemed precious to me, as the physical conditions—in the realm of topographical science—required for the production of an unaccountable phenomenon. I saw again the escutcheons blazoned beneath the windows of Combray church; their quarters filled, century after century, with all the lordships which, by marriage or conquest, this illustrious house had brought flying to it from all the corners of Germany, Italy and France; vast territories in the North, strong cities in the South, assembled there to group themselves in Guermantes, and, losing their material quality, to inscribe allegorically their dungeon vert, or castle triple-towered argent upon its azure field. I had heard of the famous tapestries of Guermantes, I could see them, mediaeval and blue, a trifle coarse, detach themselves like a floating cloud from the legendary, amaranthine name at the foot of the ancient forest in which Childebert went so often hunting; and this delicate, mysterious background of their lands, this vista of the ages, it seemed to me that, as effectively as by journeying to see them, I might penetrate all their secrets simply by coming in contact for a moment in Paris with Mme. de Guermantes, the princess

paramount of the place and lady of the lake, as if her face, her speech must possess the local charm of forest groves and streams, and the same secular peculiarities as the old customs recorded in her archives. But then I had met Saint-Loup; he had told me that the castle had borne the name of Guermantes only since the seventeenth century, when that family had acquired it. They had lived, until then, in the neighbourhood, but their title was not taken from those parts. The village of Guermantes had received its name from the castle round which it had been built, and so that it should not destroy the view from the castle, a servitude, still in force, traced the line of its streets and limited the height of its houses. As for the tapestries, they were by Boucher, bought in the nineteenth century by a Guermantes with a taste for the arts, and hung, interspersed with a number of sporting pictures of no merit which he himself had painted, in a hideous drawing-room upholstered in 'adrianople' and plush. By these revelations Saint-Loup had introduced into the castle elements foreign to the name of Guermantes which made it impossible for me to continue to extract solely from the resonance of the syllables the stone and mortar of its walls. And so, in the heart of the name, was effaced the castle mirrored in its lake, and what now became apparent to me, surrounding Mme. de Guermantes as her dwelling, had been her house in Paris, the Hôtel de Guermantes, limpid like its name, for no material and opaque element intervened to interrupt and blind its transparency. As the word church signifies not only the temple but the assembly of the faithful also, this Hôtel de Guermantes comprised all those who shared the life of the Duchess, but these intimates on whom I had never set eyes were for me only famous and poetic names, and knowing exclusively persons who themselves also were names only, did but enhance and protect the mystery of the Duchess by extending all round her a vast halo which at the most declined in brilliance as its circumference increased.

In the parties which she gave, since I could not imagine the guests as having any bodies, any moustaches, any boots, as making any utterances that were commonplace, or even original in a human and rational way, this whirlpool of names, introducing less material substance than would a phantom banquet or a spectral ball, round that statuette in Dresden china which was Madame de Guermantes, kept for her palace of glass the transparency of a showcase. Then, after Saint-Loup had told me various anecdotes about his cousin's chaplain, her gardener, and the rest, the Hôtel de Guermantes had become—as the Louvre might have been in days gone by—a kind of castle, surrounded, in the very heart of Paris, by

its own domains, acquired by inheritance, by virtue of an ancient right that had quaintly survived, over which she still enjoyed feudal privileges. But this last dwelling itself vanished when we had come to live beside Mme. de Villeparisis in one of the flats adjoining that occupied by Mme. de Guermantes in a wing of the Hôtel. It was one of those old town houses, a few of which are perhaps still to be found, in which the court of honour—whether they were alluvial deposits washed there by the rising tide of democracy, or a legacy from a more primitive time when the different trades were clustered round the overlord—is flanked by little shops and workrooms, a shoemaker's, for instance, or a tailor's, such as we see nestling between the buttresses of those cathedrals which the aesthetic zeal of the restorer has not swept clear of such accretions; a porter who also does cobbling, keeps hens, grows flowers, and, at the far end, in the main building, a 'Comtesse' who, when she drives out in her old carriage and pair, flaunting on her hat a few nasturtiums which seem to have escaped from the plot by the porter's lodge (with, by the coachman's side on the box, a footman who gets down to leave cards at every aristocratic mansion in the neighbourhood), scatters vague little smiles and waves her hand in greeting to the porter's children and to such of her respectable fellow-tenants as may happen to be passing, who, to her contemptuous affability and levelling pride, seem all the same.

In the house in which we had now come to live, the great lady at the end of the courtyard was a Duchess, smart and still quite young. She was, in fact, Mme. de Guermantes and, thanks to Françoise, I soon came to know all about her household. For the Guermantes (to whom Françoise regularly alluded as the people 'below,' or 'downstairs') were her constant preoccupation from the first thing in the morning when, as she did Mamma's hair, casting a forbidden, irresistible, furtive glance down into the courtyard, she would say: "Look at that, now; a pair of holy Sisters; that'll be for downstairs, surely;" or, "Oh! just look at the fine pheasants in the kitchen window; no need to ask where they came from, the Duke will have been out with his gun!"—until the last thing at night when, if her ear, while she was putting out my night-things, caught a few notes of a song, she would conclude: "They're having company down below; gay doings, I'll be bound;" whereupon, in her symmetrical face, beneath the arch of her now snow-white hair, a smile from her young days, sprightly but proper, would for a moment set each of her features in its place, arranging them in an intricate and special order, as though for a country-dance.

But the moment in the life of the Guermantes which excited the keenest interest in Françoise, gave her the most complete satisfaction and at the same time the sharpest annoyance was that at which, the two halves of the great gate having been thrust apart, the Duchess stepped into her carriage. It was generally a little while after our servants had finished the celebration of that sort of solemn passover which none might disturb, called their midday dinner, during which they were so far taboo that my father himself was not allowed to ring for them, knowing moreover that none of them would have paid any more attention to the fifth peal than to the first, and that the discourtesy would therefore have been a pure waste of time and trouble, though not without trouble in store for himself. For Françoise (who, in her old age, lost no opportunity of standing upon her dignity) would without fail have presented him, for the rest of the day, with a face covered with the tiny red cuneiform hieroglyphs by which she made visible—though by no means legible—to the outer world the long tale of her griefs and the profound reasons for her dissatisfactions. She would enlarge upon them, too, in a running 'aside,' but not so that we could catch her words. She called this practice—which, she imagined, must be infuriating, 'mortifying' as she herself put it, 'vexing' to us—'saying low masses all the blessed day.'

The last rites accomplished, Françoise, who was at one and the same time, as in the primitive church, the celebrant and one of the faithful, helped herself to a final glass, undid the napkin from her throat, folded it after wiping from her lips a stain of watered wine and coffee, slipped it into its ring, turned a doleful eye to thank 'her' young footman who, to shew his zeal in her service, was saying: "Come, ma'am, a drop more of the grape; it's d'licious to-day," and went straight across to the window, which she flung open, protesting that it was too hot to breathe in 'this wretched kitchen.' Dexterously casting, as she turned the latch and let in the fresh air, a glance of studied indifference into the courtyard below, she furtively elicited the conclusion that the Duchess was not ready yet to start, brooded for a moment with contemptuous, impassioned eyes over the waiting carriage, and, this meed of attention once paid to the things of the earth, raised them towards the heavens, whose purity she had already divined from the sweetness of the air and the warmth of the sun; and let them rest on a corner of the roof, at the place where, every spring, there came and built, immediately over the chimney of my bedroom, a pair of pigeons like those she used to hear cooing from her kitchen at Combray.

"Ah! Combray, Combray!" she cried. And the almost singing tone in which she declaimed this invocation might, taken with the Arlesian purity of her features, have made the onlooker suspect her of a Southern origin and that the lost land which she was lamenting was no more, really, than a land of adoption. If so, he would have been wrong, for it seems that there is no province that has not its own South-country; do we not indeed constantly meet Savoyards and Bretons in whose speech we find all those pleasing transpositions of longs and shorts that are characteristic of the Southerner? "Ah, Combray, when shall I look on thee again, poor land! When shall I pass the blessed day among thy hawthorns, under our own poor lily-oaks, hearing the grasshoppers sing, and the Vivonne making a little noise like someone whispering, instead of that wretched bell from our young master, who can never stay still for half an hour on end without having me run the length of that wicked corridor. And even then he makes out I don't come quick enough; you'd need to hear the bell ring before he has pulled it, and if you're a minute late, away he flies into the most towering rage. Alas, poor Combray; maybe I shall see thee only in death, when they drop me like a stone into the hollow of the tomb. And so, nevermore shall I smell thy lovely hawthorns, so white and all. But in the sleep of death I dare say I shall still hear those three peals of the bell which will have driven me to damnation in this world."

Her soliloquy was interrupted by the voice of the waistcoat-maker downstairs, the same who had so delighted my grandmother once, long ago, when she had gone to pay a call on Mme. de Villeparisis, and now occupied no less exalted a place in Franchise's affections. Having raised his head when he heard our window open, he had already been trying for some time to attract his neighbour's attention, in order to bid her good day. The coquetry of the young girl that Françoise had once been softened and refined for M. Jupien the querulous face of our old cook, dulled by age, ill-temper and the heat of the kitchen fire, and it was with a charming blend of reserve, familiarity and modesty that she bestowed a gracious salutation on the waistcoat-maker, but without making any audible response, for if she did infringe Mamma's orders by looking into the courtyard, she would never have dared to go the length of talking from the window, which would have been quite enough (according to her) to bring down on her 'a whole chapter' from the Mistress. She pointed to the waiting carriage, as who should say: "A fine pair, eh!" though what she actually muttered was: "What an old rattle-trap!" but

principally because she knew that he would be bound to answer, putting his hand to his lips so as to be audible without having to shout:

"*You* could have one too if you liked, as good as they have and better, I dare say, only you don't care for that sort of thing."

And Françoise, after a modest, evasive signal of delight, the meaning of which was, more or less: "Tastes differ, you know; simplicity's the rule in this house," shut the window again in case Mamma should come in. These 'you' who might have had more horses than the Guermantes were ourselves, but Jupien was right in saying 'you' since, except for a few purely personal gratifications, such as, when she coughed all day long without ceasing and everyone in the house was afraid of catching her cold, that of pretending, with an irritating little titter, that she had not got a cold, like those plants that an animal to which they are wholly attached keeps alive with food which it catches, eats and digests for them and of which it offers them the ultimate and easily assimilable residue, Françoise lived with us in full community; it was we who, with our virtues, our wealth, our style of living, must take on ourselves the task of concocting those little sops to her vanity out of which was formed—with the addition of the recognised rights of freely practising the cult of the midday dinner according to the traditional custom, which included a mouthful of air at the window when the meal was finished, a certain amount of loitering in the street when she went out to do her marketing, and a holiday on Sundays when she paid a visit to her niece—the portion of happiness indispensable to her existence. And so it can be understood that Françoise might well have succumbed in those first days of our migration, a victim, in a house where my father's claims to distinction were not yet known, to a malady which she herself called 'wearying,' wearying in the active sense in which the word *ennui* is employed by Corneille, or in the last letters of soldiers who end by taking their own lives because they are wearying for their girls or for their native villages. Françoise's wearying had soon been cured by none other than Jupien, for he at once procured her a pleasure no less keen, indeed more refined than she would have felt if we had decided to keep a carriage. "Very good class, those Juliens," (for Françoise readily assimilated new names to those with which she was already familiar) "very worthy people; you can see it written on their faces." Jupien was in fact able to understand, and to inform the world that if we did not keep a carriage it was because we had no wish for one. This new friend of Françoise was very little at home, having obtained a post in one of the Government offices. A waistcoat-maker first of all, with the 'chit of a girl' whom my

grandmother had taken for his daughter, he had lost all interest in the exercise of that calling after his assistant (who, when still little more than a child, had shewn great skill in darning a torn skirt, that day when my grandmother had gone to call on Mme. de Villeparisis) had turned to ladies' fashions and become a seamstress. A prentice hand, to begin with, in a dressmaker's workroom, set to stitch a seam, to fasten a flounce, to sew on a button or to press a crease, to fix a waistband with hooks and eyes, she had quickly risen to be second and then chief assistant, and having formed a connexion of her own among ladies of fashion now worked at home, that is to say in our courtyard, generally with one or two of her young friends from the workroom, whom she had taken on as apprentices. After this, Jupien's presence in the place had ceased to matter. No doubt the little girl (a big girl by this time) had often to cut out waistcoats still. But with her friends to assist her she needed no one besides. And so Jupien, her uncle, had sought employment outside. He was free at first to return home at midday, then, when he had definitely succeeded the man whose substitute only he had begun by being, not before dinner-time. His appointment to the 'regular establishment' was, fortunately, not announced until some weeks after our arrival, so that his courtesy could be brought to bear on her long enough to help Françoise to pass through the first, most difficult phase without undue suffering. At the same time, and without underrating his value to Françoise as, so to speak, a sedative during the period of transition, I am bound to say that my first impression of Jupien had been far from favourable. At a little distance, entirely ruining the effect that his plump cheeks and vivid colouring would otherwise have produced, his eyes, brimming with a compassionate, mournful, dreamy gaze, led one to suppose that he was seriously ill or had just suffered a great bereavement. Not only was he nothing of the sort, but as soon as he opened his mouth (and his speech, by the way, was perfect) he was quite markedly cynical and cold. There resulted from this discord between eyes and lips a certain falsity which was not attractive, and by which he had himself the air of being made as uncomfortable as a guest who arrives in morning dress at a party where everyone else is in evening dress, or as a commoner who having to speak to a Royal Personage does not know exactly how he ought to address him and gets round the difficulty by cutting down his remarks to almost nothing. Jupien's (here the comparison ends) were, on the contrary, charming. Indeed, corresponding possibly to this overflowing of his face by his eyes (which one ceased to notice when one came to know him), I soon discerned in him a rare intellect, and one of the most spontaneously

literary that it has been my privilege to come across, in the sense that, probably without education, he possessed or had assimilated, with the help only of a few books skimmed in early life, the most ingenious turns of speech. The most gifted people that I had known had died young. And so I was convinced that Jupien's life would soon be cut short. Kindness was among his qualities, and pity, the most delicate and the most generous feelings for others. But his part in the life of Françoise had soon ceased to be indispensable. She had learned to put up with understudies.

Indeed, when a tradesman or servant came to our door with a parcel or message, while seeming to pay no attention and merely pointing vaguely to an empty chair, Françoise so skilfully put to the best advantage the few seconds that he spent in the kitchen, while he waited for Mamma's answer, that it was very seldom that the stranger went away without having ineradicably engraved upon his memory the conviction that, if we 'did not have' any particular thing, it was because we had 'no wish' for it. If she made such a point of other people's knowing that we 'had money' (for she knew nothing of what Saint-Loup used to call *partitive articles*, and said simply 'have money,' 'fetch water'), of their realising that we were rich, it was not because riches with nothing else besides, riches without virtue, were in her eyes the supreme good in life; but virtue without riches was not her ideal either. Riches were for her, so to speak, a necessary condition of virtue, failing which virtue itself would lack both merit and charm. She distinguished so little between them that she had come in time to invest each with the other's attributes, to expect some material comfort from virtue, to discover something edifying in riches.

As soon as she had shut the window again, which she did quickly—otherwise Mamma would, it appeared, have heaped on her 'every conceivable insult'—Françoise began with many groans and sighs to put straight the kitchen table.

"There are some Guermantes who stay in the Rue de la Chaise," began my father's valet; "I had a friend who used to be with them; he was their second coachman. And I know a fellow, not my old pal, but his brother-in-law, who did his time in the Army with one of the Baron de Guermantes's stud grooms. Does your mother know you're out?" added the valet, who was in the habit, just as he used to hum the popular airs of the season, of peppering his conversation with all the latest witticisms.

Françoise, with the tired eyes of an ageing woman, eyes which moreover saw everything from Combray, in a hazy distance, made out not the witticism that underlay the words, but that there must be

something witty in them since they bore no relation to the rest of his speech and had been uttered with considerable emphasis by one whom she knew to be a joker. She smiled at him, therefore, with an air of benevolent bewilderment, as who should say: "Always the same, that Victor!" And she was genuinely pleased, knowing that listening to smart sayings of this sort was akin—if remotely—to those reputable social pleasures for which, in every class of society, people make haste to dress themselves in their best and run the risk of catching cold. Furthermore, she believed the valet to be a friend after her own heart, for he never left off denouncing, with fierce indignation, the appalling measures which the Republic was about to enforce against the clergy. Françoise had not yet learned that our cruellest adversaries are not those who contradict and try to convince us, but those who magnify or invent reports which may make us unhappy, taking care not to include any appearance of justification, which might lessen our discomfort, and perhaps give us some slight regard for a party which they make a point of displaying to us, to complete our torment, as being at once terrible and triumphant.

"The Duchess must be connected with all that lot," said Françoise, bringing the conversation back to the Guermantes of the Rue de la Chaise, as one plays a piece over again from the andante. "I can't recall who it was told me that one of them had married a cousin of the Duke. It's the same kindred, anyway. Ay, they're a great family, the Guermantes!" she added, in a tone of respect founding the greatness of the family at once on the number of its branches and the brilliance of its connexions, as Pascal founds the truth of Religion on Reason and on the Authority of the Scriptures. For since there was but the single word 'great' to express both meanings, it seemed to her that they formed a single idea, her vocabulary, like cut stones sometimes, shewing thus on certain of its facets a flaw which projected a ray of darkness into the recesses of her mind. "I wonder now if it wouldn't be them that have their castle at Guermantes, not a score of miles from Combray; then they must be kin to their cousin at Algiers, too." My mother and I long asked ourselves who this cousin at Algiers could be until finally we discovered that Françoise meant by the name 'Algiers' the town of Angers. What is far off may be more familiar to us than what is quite near. Françoise, who knew the name 'Algiers' from some particularly unpleasant dates that used to be given us at the New Year, had never heard of Angers. Her language, like the French language itself, and especially that of place-names, was thickly strewn with errors. "I meant to talk to their butler about it. What is it again you call him?" she interrupted herself as

though putting a formal question as to the correct procedure, which she went on to answer with: "Oh, of course, it's Antoine you call him!" as though Antoine had been a title. "He's the one who could tell me, but he's quite the gentleman, he is, a great scholar, you'd say they'd cut his tongue out, or that he'd forgotten to learn to speak. He makes no response when you talk to him," went on Françoise, who used 'make response' in the same sense as Mme. de Sévigné. "But," she added, quite untruthfully, "so long as I know what's boiling in my pot, I don't bother my head about what's in other people's. Whatever he is, he's not a Catholic. Besides, he's not a courageous man." (This criticism might have led one to suppose that Françoise had changed her mind about physical bravery which, according to her, in Combray days, lowered men to the level of wild beasts. But it was not so. 'Courageous' meant simply a hard worker.) "They do say, too, that he's thievish as a magpie, but it doesn't do to believe all one hears. The servants never stay long there because of the lodge; the porters are jealous and set the Duchess against them. But it's safe to say that he's a real twister, that Antoine, and his Antoinette is no better," concluded Françoise, who, in furnishing the name 'Antoine' with a feminine ending that would designate the butler's wife, was inspired, no doubt, in her act of word-formation by an unconscious memory of the words *chanoine* and *chanoinesse*. If so, she was not far wrong. There is still a street near Notre-Dame called Rue Chanoinesse, a name which must have been given to it (since it was never inhabited by any but male Canons) by those Frenchmen of olden days of whom Françoise was, properly speaking, the contemporary. She proceeded, moreover, at once to furnish another example of this way of forming feminine endings, for she went on: "But one thing sure and certain is that it's the Duchess that has Guermantes Castle. And it's she that is the Lady Mayoress down in those parts. That's always something."

"I can well believe that it is something," came with conviction from the footman, who had not detected the irony.

"You think so, do you, my boy, you think it's something? Why, for folk like them to be Mayor and Mayoress, it's just thank you for nothing. Ah, if it was mine, that Guermantes Castle, you wouldn't see me setting foot in Paris, I can tell you. I'm sure a family who've got something to go on with, like Monsieur and Madame here, must have queer ideas to stay on in this wretched town rather than get away down to Combray the moment they're free to start, and no one hindering them. Why do they put off retiring? They've got everything they want. Why wait till they're dead? Ah, if I had only a crust of dry bread to eat and a faggot to keep

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