

THE ASSEMBLY AT BORDEAUX. EXTRACTS FROM NOTE-BOOKS.

February 14.--Left yesterday at 12.10 P.M. Arrived at Etampes at 3.15.

Wait of two hours, and luncheon.

After lunch we returned to our drawing-room car. A crowd surrounded it, kept back by a squad of Prussian soldiers. The crowd recognised me and shouted "Long live Victor Hugo!" I waved my hand out of window, and doffing my cap, shouted: "Long live France!" Whereupon a man with a white moustache, who somebody said was the Prussian commandant of Etampes, advanced towards me with a threatening air and said something to me in German that he no doubt intended to be terrible. Gazing steadily in turn at this Prussian and the crowd, I repeated in a louder voice: "Long live France!" Thereat all the people shouted enthusiastically: "Long live France!" The fellow looked angry but said nothing. The Prussian soldiers did not move.

The journey was a rough, long and weary one. The drawing-room car was badly lighted and not heated. One feels the dilapidation of France in this wretched railway accommodation. At Vierzon we bought a pheasant, a chicken, and two bottles of wine for supper. Then we wrapped ourselves up in our rugs and cloaks and slept on the seats.

We arrived at Bordeaux at 1.30 this afternoon. We went in search of

lodgings. We took a cab and drove from hotel to hotel. No room anywhere. I went to the Hotel de Ville and asked for information. I was told that there was an apartment to let at M. A. Porte's, 13, Rue Saint Maur, near the public garden. We went there. Charles hired the apartment for 600 francs a month and paid half a month's rent in advance. Then we started out in search of a lodging for us, but could not get one. At 7 o'clock we returned to the station to fetch our trunks, and not knowing where we should pass the night. We went back to the Rue Saint Maur, where Charles is, negotiated with the landlord and his brother, who had a couple of rooms at 37, Rue de la Course, hard by, and came to an arrangement at last.

Alice made this remark:

"The number 13 clings to us. We were thirteen at table every Thursday in January. We left Paris on February 13. There were thirteen of us in the railway carriage, counting Louis Blanc, M. Béchét and the two children. We are lodging at 13, Rue Saint Maur!"

February 15.--At 2 o'clock I went to the Assembly. When I came out again I found an immense crowd awaiting me in the great square. The people, and the National Guards who lined the approaches to the building, shouted: "Long live Victor Hugo!" I replied: "Long live the Republic! Long live France!" They repeated this double cry. Then the enthusiasm became delirium. It was a repetition of the ovation I met with on my

arrival in Paris. I was moved to tears. I took refuge in a café at the corner of the square. I explained in a speech why I did not address the people, then I escaped--that is the word--in a carriage.

While the enthusiastic people shouted "Long live the Republic!" the members of the Assembly issued and filed past impassible, almost furious, and with their hats on, in the midst of the bare heads and the waving caps about me.

Visit from Representatives Le Flo, Rochefort, Locroy, Alfred Naquet, Emmanuel Arago, Rességuier, Floquot, Eugene Pelletan, and Noel Parfait.

I slept in my new lodging at 37, Rue de la Course.

February 16.--At the Assembly today the result of the Paris elections was proclaimed. Louis Blanc was first with 216,000 votes; then came myself with 214,000 votes, then Garibaldi with 200,000.

The ovation extended to me by the people yesterday is regarded by the Majority as an insult to it. Hence a great display of troops on the square outside (army, National Guard and cavalry). There was an incident in this connection before my arrival. The men of the Right demanded that the Assembly be protected. (Against whom? Against me?) The Left replied with the shout of: "Long live the Republic!"

When I was leaving I was notified that the crowd was waiting for me in the square. To escape the ovation I went out by a side door, but the people caught sight of me, and I was immediately surrounded by an immense crowd shouting: "Long live Victor Hugo!" I replied: "Long live the Republic!" Everybody, including the National Guards and soldiers of the line, took up the shout. I drove away in a carriage, which the people followed.

The Assembly to-day elected its committees. Dufaure proposes Thiers as chief of the executive power.

We dined at home for the first time. I had invited Louis Blanc, Schoelcher, Rochefort and Lockroy. Rochefort was unable to come. After dinner we went to Gent's, Quay des Chartrons, to attend a meeting of the Left. My sons accompanied me. The question of the chief executive was discussed. I had the following added to the definition: appointed by the Assembly and revokable by that body.

General Cremer came this morning to enlighten us concerning the disposition of the army.

February 17.--At the Assembly Gambetta came up to me and said: "Master, when can I see you? I have a good many things to explain to you."

Thiers has been named chief of the executive power. He is to leave

to-night for Versailles, the headquarters of the Prussians.

February 18.--To-night there was a meeting of the Left, in the Rue Lafaurie-Monbadon. The meeting chose me as president. The speakers were Louis Blanc, Schoelcher, Colonel Langlois, Brisson, Lockroy, Millière, Clémenceau, Martin Bernard, and Joigneaux. I spoke last and summed up the debate. Weighty questions were brought up--the Bismarck-Thiers treaty, peace, war, the intolerance of the Assembly, and the case in which it would be advisable to resign in a body.

February 19.--The president of the National Club of Bordeaux came to place his salons at my disposal.

My hostess, Mme. Porte, a very pretty woman, has sent me a bouquet.

Thiers has appointed his Ministers. He has assumed the equivocal and suspicious title of "head president of the executive power." The Assembly is to adjourn. We are to be notified at our residences when it is to be convened again.

February 20.--To-day the people again acclaimed me when I came out of

the Assembly. The crowd in an instant became enormous. I was compelled to take refuge in the lodging of Martin Bernard, who lives in a street adjacent to the Assembly.

I spoke in the Eleventh Committee. The question of the magistracy (which has petitioned us not to act against it) came up unexpectedly. I spoke well. I rather terrified the committee.

Little Jeanne is more than ever adorable. She does not want to leave me at all now.

February 21.--Mme. Porte, my hostess of the Rue de la Course, sends me a bouquet every morning by her little daughter.

I take little Georges and little Jeanne out whenever I have a minute to spare. I might very well be dubbed: "Victor Hugo, Representative of the People and dry nurse."

To-night I presided at the meeting of the Radical Left.

February 25.--To-night there was a meeting of the two fractions of the Left, the Radical Left and Political Left, in the hall of the Academy, in the Rue Jacques Bell. The speakers were Louis Blanc, Emmanuel Arago,

Vacherot, Jean Brunet, Bethmont, Peyrat, Brisson, Gambetta, and myself. I doubt whether my plan for fusion or even for an entente cordiale will succeed. Schoelcher and Edmond Adam walked home with me.

February 26.--I am 69 years old to-day.

I presided at a meeting of the Left.

February 27.--I have resigned the presidency of the Radical Left in order to afford full independence to the meeting.

February 28.--Thiers read the treaty (of peace) from the tribune to-day. It is hideous. I shall speak to-morrow. My name is the seventh on the list, but Grévy, the president of the Assembly, said to me: "Rise and ask to be heard when you want to. The Assembly will hear you."

To-night there was a meeting of the Assembly committees. I belong to the eleventh. I spoke.

March 1.--There was a tragical session to-day. The Empire was executed,

also France, alas! The Shylock-Bismarck treaty was adopted. I spoke.

Louis Blanc spoke after me, and spoke grandly.

I had Louis Blanc and Charles Blanc to dinner.

This evening I went to the meeting in the Rue Lafaurie-Monbadon over which I have ceased to preside. Schoelcher presided. I spoke. I am satisfied with myself.

March 2.--Charles has returned. No session to-day. The adoption of peace has opened the Prussian net. I have received a packet of letters and newspapers from Paris. Two copies of the Rappel.

We dined en famille, all five of us. Then I went to the meeting.

Seeing that France has been mutilated, the Assembly ought to withdraw. It has caused the wound and is powerless to cure it. Let another Assembly replace it. I would like to resign. Louis Blanc does not want to. Gambetta and Rochefort are of my way of thinking. Debate.

March 3.--This morning the Mayor of Strasburg, who died of grief, was buried.



Louis Blanc called in company with three Representatives, Brisson, Floquet and Cournet. They came to consult me as to what ought to be done about the resignation question. Rochefort and Pyat, with three others, are resigning. I am in favour of resigning. Louis Blanc resists. The remainder of the Left do not appear to favour resignation en masse.

Session.

As I ascended the stairs I heard a fellow belonging to the Right, whose back only I could see, say to another: "Louis Blanc is execrable, but Victor Hugo is worse."

We all dined with Charles, who had invited Louis Blanc and MM. Lavertujon and Alexis Bouvier.

Afterwards we went to the meeting in the Rue Lafaurie-Monbadon. The President of the Assembly having, on behalf of the Assembly, delivered a farewell address to the retiring members for Alsace and Lorraine, my motion to maintain their seats indefinitely, which was approved by the meeting, is without object, inasmuch as the question is settled. The meeting, however, appears to hold to it. We will consider the matter.

March 4.--Meeting of the Left. M. Millière proposed, as did also M. Delescluze, a motion of impeachment against the Government of the

National Defence. He concluded by saying that whoever failed to join him in pressing the motion was a "dupe or an accomplice."

Schoelcher rose and said:

"Neither dupe nor accomplice. You lie!"

March 5.--Session of the Assembly.

Meeting in the evening. Louis Blanc, instead of a formal impeachment of the ex-Government of Paris, demands an inquiry. I subscribe to this. We sign.

Meeting of the Left. They say there is great agitation in Paris. The Government which usually never receives less than fifteen dispatches a day from Paris has not received a single one up to 10 o'clock to-night. Six telegrams sent to Jules Favre have not been answered. We decide that either Louis Blanc or I will interpellate the Government as to the situation in Paris, if the present anxiety continues and no light is thrown upon the situation.

A deputation of natives of Alsace and Lorraine came to thank us.

March 6.--At noon we lunched en famille at Charles's. I took the two

ladies to the Assembly. There is talk of transferring the Assembly to Versailles or Fontainebleau. They are afraid of Paris. I spoke at the meeting of the Eleventh Committee. I was nearly elected commissioner. I got 18 votes, but a M. Lucien Brun got 19.

Meeting in the Rue Lafaurie. I proposed that we all refuse to discuss the situation in Paris, and that a manifesto be drawn up, to be signed by all of us, declaring our intention to resign if the Assembly goes anywhere else than to Paris. The meeting did not adopt my plan, and urged me to speak to-morrow. I refused. Louis Blanc will speak.

March 8.--I have handed in my resignation as a Representative.

There was a discussion about Garibaldi. He had been elected in Algeria. It was proposed that the election be annulled. I demanded to be heard. I spoke. Uproar on the Right. They shouted: "Order! Order!" It all reads very curiously in the "Moniteur." In face of this explosion of wrath I made a gesture with my hand and said:

"Three weeks ago you refused to hear Garibaldi. Now you refuse to hear me. That is enough. I will resign."

I went to the meeting of the Left for the last time.

March 9.--This morning three members of the Moderate Left, which meets in the hall of the Academy, came as delegates from that body, the 220 members of which unanimously requested me to withdraw my resignation. M. Paul Bethmon acted as spokesman. I thanked them, but declined.

Then delegates from another meeting came with the same object. The meeting of the Central Left, to which MM. d'Haussonville and de Rémusat belong, unanimously requested me to withdraw my resignation. M. Target acted as spokesman. I thanked them, but declined.

Louis Blanc ascended the tribune (in the Assembly) and bade me farewell with grandeur and nobleness.

March 10.--Louis Blanc spoke yesterday and to-day--yesterday about my resignation, to-day about the question of Paris. Grandly and nobly on each occasion.

March 11.--We are preparing for our departure.

March 12.--Many visits. My apartment was crowded. M. Michel Levy came

to ask me for a book. M. Duquesnel, associate director of the Odéon Theatre, came to ask me for Ruy Blas.

We shall probably leave to-morrow.

Charles, Alice and Victor went to Arcachon. They returned to dinner.

Little Georges, who has been unwell, is better.

Louis Blanc dined with me. He is going to Paris.

March 13.--Last night I could not sleep. Like Pythagoras, I was thinking of numbers. I thought of all these 13's so queerly associated with our movements and actions since the first of January, and upon the fact that I was to leave this house on a 13th. Just then there was the same nocturnal knocking (three taps, as though made by a hammer on a board) that I had heard twice before in this room.

We lunched at Charles's, with Louis Blanc.

I then went to see Rochefort. He lives at 80, Rue Judaique. He is convalescent from an attack of erysipelas that at one time assumed a dangerous character. With him I found MM. Alexis Bouvier and Mourot, whom I invited to dinner to-day, at the same time asking them to transmit my invitation to MM. Claretie, Guillemot and Germain Casse,

with whom I want to shake hands before I go.

On leaving Rochefort's I wandered a little about Bordeaux. Fine church, partly Roman. Pretty Gothic flowered tower. Superb Roman ruin (Rue du Colysée) which they call the Palais Gallien.

Victor came to embrace me. He left for Paris at 6 o'clock with Louis Blanc.

At half past 6 I went to Lanta's restaurant. MM. Bouvier, Mourot and Casse arrived. Then Alice. We waited for Charles.

Charles died at 7 o'clock.

The waiter who waits upon me at Lanta's restaurant entered and told me that somebody wanted to see me. In the ante-chamber I found M. Porte, who lets the apartment at 13, Rue Saint Maur, that Charles occupied. M. Porte whispered to me to get Alice, who had followed me, out of the way. Alice returned to the salon. M. Porte said to me:

"Monsieur be brave. Monsieur Charles--"

"Well?"

"He is dead!"

Dead! I could not believe it. Charles! I leaned against the wall for

support.

M. Porte told me that Charles had taken a cab to go to Lanta's, but had told the cabman to drive first to the Café de Bordeaux. Arrived at the Café de Bordeaux, the driver on opening the door of the cab, found Charles dead. He had been stricken with apoplexy. A number of blood vessels had burst. He was covered with blood, which issued from his nose and mouth. The doctor summoned pronounced him dead.

I would not believe it. I said: "It is a lethargy." I still hoped. I returned to the salon, told Alice that I was going out, but would soon be back, and ran to the Rue Saint Maur. I had hardly reached there when they brought Charles.

Alas! my beloved Charles! He was dead.

I went to fetch Alice. What despair!

The two children were asleep.

March 14.--I have read again what I wrote on the morning of the 13th about the knocking I heard during the night.

Charles has been laid out in the salon on the ground floor of the house in the Rue Saint Maur. He lies on a bed covered with a sheet which the

women of the house have strewn with flowers. Two neighbours, workingmen who love me, asked permission to watch by the body all night. The coroner's physician, on uncovering the dear dead, wept.

I sent to Meurice a telegram couched in the following terms:

Meurice, 18 Rue Valois--

Appalling misfortune. Charles died this evening, 13th. Sudden stroke of apoplexy. Tell Victor to come back at once.

The Prefect sent this telegram over the official wire.

We shall take Charles with us. Meanwhile he will be placed in the depository.

MM. Alexis Bouvier and Germain Casse are helping me in these heart-rending preparations.

At 4 o'clock Charles was placed in the coffin. I prevented them from fetching Alice. I kissed the brow of my beloved, then the sheet of lead was soldered. Next they put the oaken lid of the coffin on and screwed it down; thus I shall never see him more. But the soul remains. If I did not believe in the soul I would not live another hour.



I dined with my grandchildren, little Georges and little Jeanne.

I consoled Alice. I wept with her. I said "thou" to her for the first time.

March 15.--For two nights I have not slept. I could not sleep last night.

Edgar Quinet came to see me last evening. On viewing Charles's coffin in the parlor, he said:

"I bid thee adieu, great mind, great talent, great soul, beautiful of face, more beautiful of thought, son of Victor Hugo!"

We talked together of this great mind that is no more. We were calm. The night watcher wept as he listened to us.

The Prefect of the Gironde called. I could not receive him.

This morning at 10 o'clock I went to No. 13, Rue Saint Maur. The hearse was there. MM. Bouvier and Mourot awaited me. I entered the salon. I kissed the coffin. Then he was taken away. There was one carriage. These gentlemen and I entered it. Arrived at the cemetery the coffin was taken from the hearse. Six men carried it. MM. Alexis Bouvier, Mourot and I followed, bareheaded. It was raining in torrents. We walked behind the

coffin.

At the end of a long alley of plane trees we found the depository, a vault lighted only by the door. You descend five or six steps to it. Several coffins were waiting there, as Charles's will wait. The bearers entered with the coffin. As I was about to follow, the keeper of the depository said to me: "No one is allowed to go in." I understood, and I respected this solitude of the dead. MM. Alexis Bouvier and Mourot took me back to No. 13, Rue Saint Maur.

Alice was in a swoon. I gave her some vinegar to smell and beat her hands. She came to, and said: "Charles, where art thou?"

I am overcome with grief.

March 16.--At noon Victor arrived with Barbieux and Louis Mie. We embraced in silence and wept. He handed me a letter from Meurice and Vacquerie.

We decide that Charles shall be buried in the tomb of my father in Père Lachaise, in the place that I had reserved for myself. I write a letter to Meurice and Vacquerie in which I announce that I shall leave with the coffin tomorrow and that we shall arrive in Paris the following day. Barbieux will leave to-night and take the letter to them.

March 17.--We expect to leave Bordeaux with my Charles at 6 o'clock this evening.

Victor and I, with Louis Mie, fetched Charles from the Depository, and took him to the railway station.

March 18.--We left Bordeaux at 6.30 in the evening and arrived in Paris at 10.30 this morning.

At the railway station we were received in a salon where the newspapers, which had announced our arrival for noon, were handed to me. We waited. Crowd; friends.

At noon we set out for Père Lachaise. I followed the hearse bareheaded. Victor was beside me. All our friends followed, the people too. As the procession passed there were cries of: "Hats off!"

In the Place de la Bastille a spontaneous guard of honour was formed about the hearse by National Guards, who passed with arms reversed. All along the line of route to the cemetery battalions of the National Guard were drawn up. They presented arms and gave the salute to the flag. Drums rolled and bugles sounded. The people waited till I had passed, then shouted: "Long live the Republic!"

There were barricades everywhere, which compelled us to make a long detour. Crowd at the cemetery. In the crowd I recognised Rostan and Millière, who was pale and greatly moved, and who saluted me. Between a couple of tombs a big hand was stretched towards me and a voice exclaimed: "I am Courbet." At the same time I saw an energetical and cordial face which was smiling at me with tear-dimmed eyes. I shook the hand warmly. It was the first time that I had seen Courbet.

The coffin was taken from the hearse. Before it was lowered into the vault I knelt and kissed it. The vault was yawning. A stone had been raised. I gazed at the tomb of my father which I had not seen since I was exiled. The cippus has become blackened. The opening was too narrow, and the stone had to be filed. This work occupied half an hour. During that time I gazed at the tomb of my father and the coffin of my son. At last they were able to lower the coffin. Charles will be there with my father, my mother, and my brother.

Mme. Meurice brought a bunch of white lilac which she placed on Charles's coffin. Vacquerie delivered an oration that was beautiful and grand. Louis Mie also bade Charles an eloquent and touching farewell. Flowers were thrown on the tomb. The crowd surrounded me. They grasped my hands. How the people love me, and how I love them! An ardent address of sympathy from the Belleville Club, signed "Millière, president," and "Avril, secretary," was handed to me.

We went home in a carriage with Meurice and Vacquerie. I am broken with

grief and weariness. Blessings on thee, my Charles!