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Life and works of Charles-Louis Philippe

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THE LIFE AND WORKS
of
CHARLES-LOUIS PHILIPPE

by

Mildred Frances Ammer

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

State University of Montana
1931

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THE LIFE AND WORKS OF CHARLES-LOUIS PHILIPPE

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PART I
INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is threefold: (1) to review the works of the French novelist, Charles-Louis Philippe; (2) to show how his life influenced his philosophy; and (3) to show how his philosophy of life is revealed in his works.

Not a great deal is known of his life which, indeed, was a brief one, but we have begun with some notes gleaned from his letters, his novels, and other sources. To understand a man's works, we must know something of his life.

Each novel and collection of short stories has been reviewed with the aim of showing the nature of the work and the philosophy expressed. An attempt has also been made to classify the author's works.

Finally, the conclusion deals with some general characteristics of the author, some criticisms of him and an attempt to answer these criticisms as a result of a careful study of his works and life.
Part II.

SOME NOTES ON THE LIFE OF CHARLES-LOUIS PHILIPPE

The life of Charles-Louis Philippe is not particularly interesting and it is far from exciting or even varied because his life was largely mental -- a life of thought rather than one of action. For that very reason, however, it is interesting to know the few events of his life to see what relationship they bear to the philosophy expressed in his works; we will find that his childhood experiences and his adult life, which was of short duration, did influence his philosophy and thus help to explain it. This will be explained and illustrated later when his works are reviewed.

Charles-Louis Philippe was born August 4, 1874 at Cerilly in the department of the Allier River near the city of Moulins in the central part of France -- the Bourdonnais region. His father was a shoemaker -- just another way of saying that Philippe was reared in very moderate circumstances and, therefore, his many references to poverty are based on actual experience. It must have cost his family a real effort to send him to school because higher education in France is costly, even though one has a scholarship.

Philippe first attended the lycée of Montluccon and later spent three years in the lycée of Moulins. His life there will be described in detail as he related it to us in "La
Mere et l'\'\'enfant\'\' 1 He showed special aptitude in the field of mathematics but was a good scholar in general; this was undoubtedly the father's justification for making the sacrifice in order to send him to school.

When Philippe was seventeen years old, he began preparing himself for the competitive examination for entering the Ecole Polytechnique in Paris. He spent three years in serious preparation and during that time became imbued with the love of poetry and began to write verse. It is interesting to note that his first literary efforts were in the field of poetry because he was not destined to be a poet, and it is only for his novels that he is known and remembered. In 1894, at the age of twenty, he decided that he stood no chance of being successful in his examinations for entrance into the Ecole Polytechnique. From that time on, he became more and more absorbed in writing. The next year, at the age of twenty-one, he went to Paris to work. After many fruitless searches, he finally secured a position as clerk in the department of illumination of the Fourth District. In November, 1896, in a letter to his mother, he described his duties in this capacity:

"Je reçois les demandes d'autorisation d'éclairage au gaz ou à l'électricité. Je les enregistre et je les donne aux piqueurs qui vont visiter l'installation. Après quoi, j'envois la permission d'éclairage."

He continued to occupy that position for a number of years and did some writing at the same time. But it is worthy of mention that Philippe did not depend on his writing for a living; for that reason, his works are not the result of catering to a public or an eccentric editor as is so often the case with young authors, and Philippe did not have to experience that period of disappointment and readjustment which is so disheartening because of the financial worry it entails. It is true that Philippe had very little money and was certainly not financially independent but he did not consider his writing as his sole means of livelihood. He wrote many short sketches and "contes" which were published in the newspaper "Le Matin" and which have been collected and published in book form under the title "Contes du Matin." Another volume of short stories taken from the paper, "Le Canard sauvage" is entitled "Chroniques du Canard sauvage." He was also recognized by the "Nouvelle Revue Française" which is a literary paper of note. It published most of his books and when he died, it dedicated an entire number to his memory, including not only critical articles by literary characters who knew him personally but also some of his letters and other shorter works.

In October, 1898, Philippe received a slight promotion. Writing to his mother, he said, "J'ai reçu ma nomination pour
aller aux égouts." In December, he wrote, "Je suis bien installé dans mon nouveau service et je ne m'y trouve pas trop mal."4

Through the efforts of Maurice Barrès, Philippe secured a position in the Hotel-de-Ville as inspector of stalls and shop fronts. This position meant greater remuneration and more time for himself as there were not many stalls in the fashionable quarter of the Faubourg Saint-Germain to which Philippe was assigned.

There is a break in the letters of Philippe to his mother — from 1900 to 1907. During that period, he visited Cerilly and his father died. In 1907 in a letter to his mother, he attempted to console her thus:

"Pense à tes enfants, dis-toi qu'ils te restent et qu'ils ont pour toi assez d'amour pour que tu sentes bien que tu n'es pas seule au monde. Tout ce qui est arrivé devait arriver un jour. Nous garderons de mon père un pieux souvenir, sa vie nous servira d'exemple. Son portrait sera auprès de moi sur ma table; bien des fois dans la vie je me rappellerai ses paroles et elles seront pour moi le meilleur des conseils mais il faut se soumettre à la destinée, maman. Il faut accepter la vie et la mort puisqu'elles sont plus fortes que nous.

"J'en ai pris mon parti, je vis avec ma douleur. Mais la chose à laquelle je ne pourrais pas m'habiter, ce serait ta tristesse. Il faut employer tout ton courage mon pas à oublier, je sais bien que ni toi ni moi ne pourrions le faire, mais à t'occuper, à penser à ta vie et à ta mort, à te dire qu'il te reste encore du bonheur sur la Terre puisque ma sœur et moi nous t'aimons de tout notre cœur.

4. Ibid. Le 12 décembre 1898.
"Tu ferais tant de peine à ton Louis si tu n'étais pas courageuse, ma bonne maman. Je ne pourrais pas accepter la pensée que tu te consommes de chagrin. Non, je ne le pourrais pas. Il faut que je sache que ma maman se tient bien droite, qu'elle a pris son parti de l'inévitable et qu'elle vit dans la paix avec la pensée de ses enfants qui l'aiment."

Later in 1907, he began "Charles Blanchard" -- a simple sketch of his father's childhood.

On December 21, 1909, at the age of thirty-five, Philippe died from typhoid fever. Philippe had been at the "maison de santé, rue de la chaise" for seventeen days and had been ill at home for five or six days before that. He was unconscious from Saturday until Tuesday when he died. Thus ended the uneventful life of the young man who has given us some very interesting literature filled with a vital philosophy based on a real contact with life.

PART III. WORKS

CHAPTER 1

CLASSIFICATION OF WORKS

It seems that no one has classified the works of Charles-Louis Philippe, but they fall naturally into four different groups, according to subject matter and treatment. The writer has chosen arbitrarily to designate these groups as A, B, C, and D.

There are three works which deal with life on a simple plane, showing the joys and hardships which it involves without emphasising any particular phase unless it be poverty. These three books are: "La Mère et l'Enfant" (1900) which is one of Philippe's best known books in countries outside of France as well as at home; "Le Père Ferdrix" (1903) which deals with an old man who is blind as well as poverty-stricken; and "Charles Blanchard" (1912) which is an attempt on the part of the author to present the life of his father in such a way as to show his amiable nature and to have a written example of a worthy life which might inspire others. Let us call these three books, Group A.

There is one book which is exceedingly hard to classify because it embodies some of the characteristics of Group A and some of Group B. This book is "Croquignole" (1906) which in the first pages resembles "Le Père Ferdrix," and
"Charles Blanchard" in that it deals with the ordinary circumstances of life of several men who pursue their daily tasks simply and undramatically; the closing pages differ from the works of Group A in that the problem of prostitution is presented and the denouement is both dramatic and pessimistic -- comparable to that of "Marie Donadieu." We will consider this book as a transition from Group A to Group B.

In Group B, we will place those books which deal with the serious problem of prostitution in relation to poverty: "La Bonne Madeleine et la Pauvre Marie" (1898); "Quatres Histoires de Pauvre Amour" (1897); "Marie Donadieu" (1904); and "Bubu de Montparnasse" (1901).

Group C comprises a delightful series of short stories or sketches, some purely descriptive, some purely philosophical, and some a happy mingling of the two. Many of these were written for Paris newspapers where they appeared first. They were later assembled and published in book form. Thus, "Contes du Matin" is a collection of such sketches which appeared regularly during a long period of time in the newspaper known as "Le Matin." Another collection is in book form under the title of "Chroniques du Canard sauvage," the stories in this collection having first appeared in "Le Canard sauvage." The other collection is entitled "Dans la Petite Ville."
Group D will include Philippe's letters: "Lettres de Jeunesse à Henri Vandeputte," published in 1911; and "Lettres à sa mère," published in 1928. These might have been included in Group A as far as content alone is concerned because they do treat everyday life simply and naturally and are at the same time philosophical. However, since they are in a different form, being real letters written to real people and not intended for publication, it seems better to classify them separately.

This classification is entirely on the basis of subject matter and treatment, having no regard for a chronological division. Since Philippe died at such an early age (thirty-five), his entire novel-writing period covered no more than fifteen years. His first novel, "Quatre Histoires de Pauvre Amour," appeared in 1897, just twelve years before his death. Most of his short sketches were written while he was in Paris and he went there at the age of twenty-one. Thus, since Philippe wrote only about twelve or fifteen years, it hardly seems worth while to divide such a short period into smaller classifications; it is really just one long period because there are no definite breaks -- no sudden ceasing of one type of writing and beginning of another type. In fact, his letters to his mother reveal that he was engaged in writing two different types of books at the same time, that is, the writing of the sketches went
on almost without interruption at the rate of one or more a week for the various newspapers; and the novels came in any order whatever at the same time as the sketches.
CHAPTER 2.
"LA MÈRE ET L'ENFANT"

"La Mère et l'Enfant" is one of Philippe's best known works and it is well, for it is also the most characteristic. It shows the true Philippe who saw the beauty and interest in simple everyday life -- in the growing conceptions of a child and its relations with its mother. He not only saw these things but he knew how to tell them simply and clearly. This work is largely autobiographical. It is a tribute to his mother who loved him and cared for him so unselfishly when he was ill and we know that he was a delicate child who needed much care at all times and especially during one serious illness at the age of seven. It must have required skill to care for and direct a delicate child like Philippe who lived largely in the world of thought and imagination.

In regard to his starting school at the age of five, he says,

"J'eus cinq ans, et ma mère m'envoyait à l'école. . . . Aller à l'école! Un petit garçon de cinq ans est encore chancelant sur le chemin de l'école."

"Cinq ans, six ans, et sept ans se suivent et se ressemblent."

He sums up simply the life of a child at this period -- he sleeps, plays, eats, goes to school, and enjoys himself.

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7. Ibid., 58.
He adds,

"Enfin, vous êtes de la tendresse, un cœur et des livres, et puis vous avez une âme flexible que l'on prend à deux mains et que l'on redresse afin d'en faire l'âme pure et bonne d'un homme juste et généreux."

At the age of seven came the illness which began with a toothache. The tooth was pulled but the ache continued, and the swelling increased. The doctor diagnosed it as an abscess,

"une grosseur, une tumeur, on ne sait quoi... Ma pauvre tête entière était malade. Je sentais cela sur mon front, sur mes cheveux, dans mon cerveau, sur ma nuque, comme une grosse main appuyée qui me faisait courber la tête."

He describes his suffering -- how the pain increased and Day passed into Night, Night into Day again without bringing any relief. The old bourgeois doctor advised rubbing and some bitter medicine, neither of which helped the suffering child. It is Louis's opinion that the doctor did not understand the illness and was not sure enough of himself to advise a surgical operation. The child grew weaker and his interest in life lessened. Finally, the doctor realized the necessity of an incision. After the incision was made, there was a suppurating wound. Here, Louis makes use of an opportunity to show the effect of motherly love and care:

"Parfois, maman changeait les pansements avec ses bons

9. Ibid., 61.
doigts, mais un toucher, une caresse, en passant, remu
tent la vie douloureuse d'un malade et l'agitent.
Alors elle me prenait sur ses genoux et me bercait. Or,
il y avait en son sein une chaleur qui m'endormait, le
soir, loin des aboës cruel, auprès d'une mère dont les
deux ailes me recouvrent.\textsuperscript{10}

Since none of the doctor's prescriptions brought about
any improvement, he finally suggested that they consult an-
other doctor. Philippe utilizes the opportunity to express
his views on the medical profession. He feels that too many
leisurely young men go into the profession without sufficient
preparation and without the necessary earnestness of purpose.
They are interested more in the financial and social possi-
bilities of the profession than in the rendering of service
to the suffering.

Philippe makes us share with him the hopes that he and
his mother entertained during the first few days under the
new doctor's care. Then, we begin to despair with them when
we see the lack of results and we feel the mother's sorrow
when she sees her child slowly wilting away,

"Alors, puisque le médecin n'y pouvait rien, mamar
s'arranges pour me guérir elle-même. Les médecins qui
ont fait des études connaissent beaucoup de maladies,
mais pour guérir un malade il faut l'examiner avec cet
instinct que donne une grande bonté. Dans les hopitaux,
de vieux chirurgiens et de jeunes internes pratiquent
toute la science des écoles, or beaucoup d'hommes
meurent parce qu'on ne sait pas les soigner avec amour.
La Bonté est plus forte que la science humaine."\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{10}. Philippe, La Mère et l'Enfant, p. 64.
\textsuperscript{11}. Ibid., 71.
That last thought is very much a part of Philippe's philosophy of life.

With her goodness, motherly love and understanding, Philippe's mother finally succeeded in nursing him back to health. Philippe does not fail to show his gratitude for this and the entire book is really a tribute to his mother.

At the age of twelve, Philippe entered a new world which he describes for us very much in detail. He adds,

"Avant ce temps-là, j'avais vécu une vie renfermée (comme celle des petits oiseaux, vous dis-je). Au monde il y avait moi et les sentiments qui naissaient de l'action de mes organes. Les jeux, les souffrances et mon attachement à ma mère bornaient l'horizon comme de grandes limites, et si grandes qu'au-delà l'on ne comprenait pas ce qui pouvait se passer."

After describing the town on Sunday, the quiet and repose, and also the holidays including the merry-go-round, "chevaux de bois," he adds,

"Mais à douze ans, j'ai surtout connu ma petite maison. Enfant blessé, je devins studieux, et fils d'une bonne mère, je vécus auprès d'elle ou il faisait bon."

This is a reference to the illness which we have just described and which finally resulted in an operation to remove part of his jaw because the bone was infected, thus leaving a mark; this explains his reference to himself as an "enfant blessé." It is undoubtedly true that this illness left its mark morally, too, making the sensitive little

12. Philippe, La Mère et l'Enfant, p. 94.
13. Ibid., 98.
child still more self-conscious. 14

To illustrate Philippe's concise way of summing up a situation, note how he states the whole aim of a life:

"Un bruit d'outils sur le bois, c'est mon père; des pas qui travaillent, c'est maman; des livres et des imaginations, c'est moi." 16

What an alive and unusual way of saying what the ordinary author would state tritely like this: "My father was a shoemaker; my mother, a busy housewife; and I, an imaginative book-loving child."

Occasionally, there is a note of regret with an over-tone of self-pity -- common to those who live a life of contemplation and imagination. Speaking of the enjoyment experienced in reading about Robinson Crusoe and the sadness at realizing finally that he was not a real person, Philippe adds,

"Vous êtes un beau songe comme ceux des enfants de douze ans, et vous ressemblez aux songes d'un bonheur auquel je n'ai jamais goûté." 16

He thus intimates that he was deprived of any great happiness, and certain statements in his letters show the same note.

Due to Philippe's small stature, his sickly nature, and his lack of any physical beauty made worse by the scar from the operation on his jaw, he was not the type of person

15. Philippe, La Mère et l'Enfant, p. 99
16. Ibid., 105
to command attention or even to be assured of the consideration due him. He presents this problem and the solution his mother found for it. To do this, he has "L'Avenir" (the Future) speak to his mother:

"Madame, vous avez un garçon de douze ans. Je le connais, puisqu'il est le premier à l'école ... J'ai mis votre enfant à la tête des autres parce qu'il est intelligent et je l'ai mis un peu en dehors à cause de sa petite taille et à cause de son visage. Vous savez, Madame, que les hommes ordinaires, la vie les juge à leur visage, et c'est pour quoi vous ne devez pas laisser votre enfant parmi les hommes ordinaires ... Et puis être défiguré ... Madame, il faut s'y prendre de bonne heure. Je suis comme l'instituteur qui enseigne que l'État offre des bourses dans les lycées aux enfants comme le vôtre. C'est un bienfait, Madame, dont vous allez profiter. Votre fils sera bachelier et les bacheliers, ce sont les médecins, les vétérinaires et les conducteurs des Ponts et Chaussées. La vie leur est bien douce, et quel bonheur d'avoir un métier qui remplace la fortune et qui donne tant de considération que l'on peut s'y passer d'être beau."17

Philippe continues at some length this imaginary conversation between his mother and "L'Avenir" and then adds:

"Voici pourquoi je subis le concours pour l'obtention des bourses dans les lycées et collèges."18

He was successful in the examination and obtained the scholarship at the lycée. He was extremely happy at first but he soon discovered that a student who is not paying his own expenses is not treated with a great deal of consideration and respect by the other students, and he missed his mother's companionship and love,

"Les jeux sont bons, mais l'amour d'une mère est bien

17. Philippe, La Mère et l'Enfant, p. 114-5.
18. Ibid., 117.
meilleur, lui qui vous couvre les épaules et qui vous
tint chaud à tous les instants. Les jeux c'est du
plaisir, mais l'amour d'une mère c'est du bonheur."

Philippe describes his great solitude and sorrow living
in the lycée -- a life without warmth or friendly contact --
just a cold study of science and nothing but impersonal con-
tacts and severe discipline. He concludes that a child of
twelve is too young to leave his mother and that in so doing
he is deprived of those joys of childhood in such a way that
there is a lasting effect. He feels that a child at the age
of fifteen has developed sufficiently to endure the hard con-
tacts of school life and thus does not suffer so much. He
came to that conclusion by observing his fellow-students.

Much of Philippe's philosophy is in poetic form, such as
this passage which is beautiful in form as well as in thought:

"Mais le ciel de Pâques! Le ciel de Pâques est fait
tout entier avec de la lumière. Il est blanc, bleu et
brillant. On dirait qu'il a dissous le soleil, on di-
rait encore qu'il est tout couvert de rosée. Et puis
j'ai tort de parler du ciel. Depuis la Terre jusqu'au
ciel, l'air est brillant et bleu comme le ciel de
Pâques. Oh! printemps! Les haies en fleur, le ciel,
la Terre et mes quinze ans se contemplant, comme des
amis qui se connaissent depuis hier, mais qui sentent
qu'ils se connaîtront toujours, et comme des amis dont
l'amitié fut soudaine et qui se confient déjà leurs
sentiments profonds."

We can agree with him that his thoughts did "form a
part of nature and contain a little of its beauty."
The last chapter of this fascinating book deals with Louis's thoughts and actions at the age of twenty. He begins by saying, "Je me souviendrai toute ma vie du soir où j'eus vingt ans." He seemed to feel his twenty years entering his chilled heart and he was sad because they were not what they should have been:

"Lorsque j'avais douze ans, je pensais: 'À vingt ans, tu seras on ne sait quoi, grand astronome ou général, mais tu seras quelqu'un de très grand parce que tu es allé au lycée et que tu y fus le premier de la classe.' Lorsque j'avais quinze ans, j'étais plus précis: 'À vingt ans, tu seras sorti de l'Ecole Polytechnique et l'on te verra, pareil aux officiers d'artillerie, passer dans ta petite ville comme une image de guerre et de gloire.'

He finally decided he had no chance whatsoever of passing the examination and he was not even certain that he wanted to enter the Ecole Polytechnique. He went home to Céilly and was influenced greatly by his parents' decisions in regard to his future. His mother sought help from a rich gentleman, M. Gaultier, who recommended Louis for a position in Paris but Louis received no appointment -- not even a reply. Louis was not at all happy in accepting the aid of M. Gaultier because it was against his philosophy as shown in these statements:

"J'ai honte parce que demander une faveur aux riches c'est entrer dans le cortège de leurs protégés et de leurs serviteurs. C'est demander: 'Mon bon Monsieur, voulez-vous me rendre un service? Grâce à votre fortune, vous le pouvez.' Or, demander cela, c'est s'in-

22. Philippe, La Mère et l'Enfant, p. 159.
23. Ibid., 160.
oliner devant la fortune et le pouvoir."24

Louis seems to protest against the injustice of class distinction in this speech directed to the bourgeois class:

"Vous avez créé des bourses dans les lycées et collèges pour que les fils des ouvriers deviennent pareils à vous. Et lorsqu'ils sont bacheliers comme vous, vous les abandonnez dans leurs villages. Vous gardez pour vous les riches professions qu'ils devaient avoir et vous riez, vous avez vingt ans, quelques-uns des vôtres sont des poètes! Et cela démontre que si l'on est fils d'ouvrier, il ne faut pas s'élever au-dessus de sa classe."25

Philippe concludes the story with his securing a position in a chemist's office in Paris at the meagre salary of about seventy-five cents a day -- the foot of the ladder, he terms it.

He apologizes to his mother for having dwelt on his unhappiness and trials when he had intended to write only of her. Then he adds,

"C'est la vie qui se dresse entre nos mères et nous, et qui les cache. Mais nous l'aimons quand même, et si nous sommes tristes parfois, c'est quand la vie nous empêche de penser à nos mères."26

25. Ibid., 180.
26. Ibid., 186.
CHAPTER 3
"LE PÈRE PERDRIX"

In "Le Père Perdrix," Philippe tells us of a poor old blacksmith who became partially blind and was forced to quit work. He had always worked and he had no other means of income except from that daily toil. Work, moreover, is often necessary for one's peace of mind even if it were not for the financial necessity. Philippe expresses it thus:

"Il n'y a que le travail pour nous. Pendant cinquante ans il avait levé le marteau sur l'enclume, comme on le doit, car notre vie se compose d'une enclume et d'un marteau."

It is evident that Philippe's life followed that formula. He had to work for everything he received in life and the returns were not very great -- in money or in happiness.

The little city where Perdrix lived is described as a quiet little city

"ou l'on était divisé, classé de par une science sociale importante comme la science humaine, ou l'on distinguait des catégories, ou l'on posait des principes comme en histoire naturelle, ou l'argent servait de base comme les vertèbres et élevait un homme dans l'échelle de l'être."

There were two classes of workingmen: the very poor, and those in slightly better circumstances. There was also the bourgeois class which Philippe has described

28. Ibid., p. 25.
rather ironically,

"On reconnaît les gens de souche bourgeoise à une certaine hardiesse de leur allure rappelant leur arrière grand-père qui, du temps de la Révolution, achetait un domaine pour une paire de bœufs et parcourait les rues de son village avec son premier orgueil de propriétaire."

Père Perdrix's doctor, Monsieur Edmond Lartigaud, was typical of this bourgeois class, as Philippe sees it. His wife had been a maid when young (a member of the working class); she had been a heavy drinker and had not succeeded in overcoming the habit. Their two children, Paul and Georgette, had practically no respect for a mother who was intoxicated most of the time. Paul was a lazy, worthless boy who failed in everything he attempted and was perfectly satisfied to waste his time just walking around town, talking, and drinking.

Another interesting family in the little city is the Bousset family composed of Pierre, a cart-builder, his wife, his daughter, Marguerite, and his son, Jean, who has just been admitted to the Ecole Centrale, having passed the examination with honors. The father, Pierre, in his childhood had suffered greatly from poverty, for his father had died and he and his mother had to work hard to make a living.

"Il apprit que le monde est dur comme du fer, qu'il attaque nos destinées à coups de poing et qu'il faut Parfois plier les épaules pour ne pas être cassé. Il

se renferma dans ses idées, vécut pour lui-même et surveilla sa bourse."

The advice Pierre gave his son before he left for Paris to enter the Ecole Centrale is summed up in these topic sentences:

"Conduis-toi toujours bien."31
"N'emprunte jamais rien à personne."32
"Obéis toujours bien à tes maîtres."33
"Ne te fache jamais."33
"Enfin, mon petit, fais toujours pour le mieux."34

Pierre's advice is good and it shows us Philippe's ideal as to a code of living.

Finally, the Perdrix family was listed with the bureau of charity which gave them bread, exempted them from taxes, gave them a small amount of money at specified dates. La Mère Perdrix secured housework, cared for the sick, and did other odd jobs to earn a little money.

The three married children came to visit Pere Perdrix and their mother. They had a celebration which consisted in eating and drinking nearly all night. When the children were ready to leave, Pere Perdrix begged his daughter, Marie, to stay with him. She finally decided to please him by staying to help her mother with the work. The inhabitants of the town began to talk about the addition of an-

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31. Ibid., 50.
32. Ibid., 51.
33. Ibid., 52.
34. Ibid., 53.
other member to the Perdrix family when it was the Bureau of Charity that was feeding them. Besides, they reasoned that Père Perdrix had nourished those three children; now, they were all well and earning money; therefore, it was their turn to take care of him. Public sentiment became so strong in regard to this that on the recommendation of the mayor, Père Perdrix's name was erased from the Bureau of Charity.

One day the next year, Jean Bousset came home and announced that he had "quit his job." The fact of the matter is that he practically had to quit due to his insolence to the director in an attempt to secure an increase in salary for some of the other workers, including his brother-in-law. This gave Pierre Bousset a chance to say,

"Les parents, il faut toujours les tenir à distance. Ils s'en font accroire et des fois pour les excuser on est conduit à commettre tout un tas de bassesses."35

Jean Bousset was not successful in getting another position and he spent his time with Père Perdrix when not looking for work. Finally, his parents "étaient mortifiés jusqu'au fond de leur orgueil,"36 to think that their son could not secure a position and due to the inquisitiveness of their friends and the many questions they had to answer. Finally, there was a quarrel and Jean left home. Some time

36. Ibid., 199.
later, Jean returned to the little town -- not to his parents, but to Père Perdrix.

After Mother Perdrix died, Jean Bousset secured a position in Paris and took Père Perdrix there with him. They lived simply and almost happily for some time until Père Perdrix, who was then sixty-eight years old, felt that he was a burden to the young man whom he loved so well and who loved him. He went for a walk alone and fell from the bridge into the Seine...

"Le Père Perdrix" reveals the true Philippe with his deep affection for the poor and unfortunate. Because of this sincere love for his characters, he is able to depict them very sympathetically. We feel a personal interest in the poor old blind blacksmith, in his hard-working wife, and in Jean Bousset whose life is so closely interwoven with Père Perdrix’s. They are real people whose hardships and worries are our own. Philippe accomplishes all this in his own simple unaffected style whose merit lies in its simplicity and sincerity of tone.
CHAPTER 4
"CHARLES BLANCHARD"

The third book in Group A is "Charles Blanchard" which was written in 1907 but not published until 1913, after Philippe's death. This book is not a completed novel but rather several different versions of the life of the child, Charles Blanchard, who in real life was Philippe's father. Philippe had written "La Mère et l'Enfant" to honor his mother, and he wrote "Charles Blanchard" to picture to the world the life of his father -- a beautiful life which might serve as an example. He had planned to write this work for some time but did not concentrate his efforts on the actual writing of it until after his father's death in April, 1906.

In a letter to his mother dated May 2, 1907, we note this reference to his book:

"Je travaille à un nouveau livre qui sera sur mon père. Je ne te l'avais pas dit encore. Du reste il n'en est qu'au commencement. Je suis sa vie pas à pas, il me semble que je l'accompagne; je retrouve ses idées, ses façons de voir les choses. Il me sert de guide; je me rappelle tout ce qu'il me racontait. On n'est pas mort tout entier quand on a laissé aux siens de pareils souvenirs..."

Another reference to it in a letter to his mother, May 12, 1907 is worthy of being quoted because it shows Philippe's purpose in writing the book:

37. Philippe, Lettres à sa mère, 2 mai 1907.
"Tu me dis, ma chère maman, que mon père ne voulait pas que je fasse un livre sur lui. Ce livre je l'avais déjà commencé avant sa mort, et il n'était pas tout à fait ce que mon père aurait pu croire. Je tiro de sa vie le bel exemple qu'il m'a donné; mon père ne pouvait pas m'empêcher de penser qu'il avait toujours accompli son devoir et de l'exprimer à ma façon. Je suis bien sûr d'ailleurs qu'il aurait accepté avec orgueil et avec joie l'hommage que je lui en aurais fait, et le chose surtout qui l'aurait frappé, c'est qu'il aurait compris que j'avais fait ce livre parce que je l'aimais de tout mon cœur. Je voudrais que ce livre soit un beau livre et qu'il apprenne à ceux qui le liront qu'un homme loyal et courageux qui était mon père a vécu une vie de travail."

Besides picturing the childhood days of his father in the character of Charles Blanchard, Philippe also attempts to have him reflect his own attitude toward poverty, the influence of poverty in the life of a child, and its effect upon his mental make-up. This is shown in the following quotation from the chapter on the "Chevaux de bois" when Charles Blanchard would have given anything to possess the one cent necessary for a ride on the merry-go-round, but he was too poor for even so small an amount:

"Ce fut ainsi que Charles Blanchard, à l'âge de dix ans, prit au milieu des hommes la place du pauvre. On est pauvre, tout d'abord, pour des raisons d'argent. Il suffirait d'un sou parfois pour qu'on ne le devint pas. Bientôt il est trop tard. La pauvreté n'est plus dans leur poche, la pauvreté s'est fixée dans leur cœur."39

38. Philippe, Lettres à sa mère, le 12 mai 1907.
Philippe knew the outcome he desired for his character -- the solace and comfort of work as a partial solution for the great problem of poverty. But he could not come to a decision as to the means of bringing his character to this realization. That explains the numerous versions of this work and the fact that it was never published as a complete work, although the various versions have been gathered together and published as a book. Philippe at first presented the child as very poor and unhappy, a victim of Cold and Hunger; later, he decided to have a happy Charles Blanchard and he then wrote a new version. Nor could he decide how to introduce the incident of the "Chevaux de bois" and therefore, we find three or four variations of that chapter. Philippe seemed dissatisfied with parts of each but he must have also been satisfied with parts of each for he saved them all and decided on no one in preference to the others.

This book is an interesting study. It is not a "novel" and it was not Philippe's intention to write a novel. In fact, he had little regard for a novel as such; he considered plot as unimportant in itself. This may explain the fact that many of his works have practically no plot and might not even be considered novels. Philippe's purpose in this book was to picture "le Pauvre" and "la Pauvreté" as well as to give a picture of the thought life of his father. There were very few incidents of great impor-
tance in that life as it was told to him by his father; in fact, there was very little to tell except that it was a life of work and poverty. It was the task of Philippe, the author, to supply the living part of the narration -- the thoughts that motivated the life of his character; in doing this, he cannot help mingling his philosophy with what he believed to be his father's -- or Charles Blanchard's. Therein lies much of the interest of the book -- the fact that it presents a study of Philippe's philosophy.
"Croquignole" is not quite as "innocent" a book as the three we have just considered, "La Mère et l'Enfant," "Le Père Perdrix," and "Charles Blanchard," although it does have some of their characteristics. Nor is it quite as outspoken as those of the next group, especially, "Bubu de Montparnasse," and "Marie Donadieu." Therefore, we are considering it separately.

On first reading this book, one is apt to be disappointed or disgusted or perhaps both. There is not much story element and the author's purpose in writing it is not at all evident. In fact, he gives the impression of hardly knowing himself just what his purpose is or just what conclusion he wishes to reach. A re-reading, however, discloses more merits, although the book still remains a mystery and one is apt to re-read it a number of times for that very reason.

The plot is simply that Croquignole, a poor clerk in an office, inherits 40,000 francs and immediately begins to dissipate and enjoy life in the way he had always dreamed of when he was poor. He rebelled against the daily routine of office work and the fact that so much of the time there was not even any work to do but he had to remain there until six o'clock. He feels as though he is a beast of burden
being urged on by a cruel master, the "administration."

"Travaille, Croquignole, l'administration veut que tu travailles! Tu n'as rien à faire, Croquignole?
" L'administration veut que tu restes ici à ne rien faire," 40

As we read that, we wonder if it is not Louis himself speaking through Croquignole for he, too, had to work in an office because he was poor, and he rebelled against it although he was not kept at all busy and it left him time to write. But, perhaps he was thinking of those who are not kept busy and who have no outside interest like his.

Another time, Croquignole thinks:

"Qu'est-ce qu'un travail qui ne vous fait pas avancer dans le monde?" 41

Just what his idea of "advancement" was, we do not know but it was probably not a very high ideal considering Croquignole's nature.

He continues to work in the office for some time after receiving the money but finally with the statement, "J'étouffe" he departs and is gone for two years spending his money freely on Madame Fernande in particular. He became interested in her just after inheriting the money and her interest in him was undoubtedly due to his having inherited it. One of Croquignole's fellow-workers, Claude Buy, becomes acquainted with Angelo Lenveu through Madame Fernande who

41. Ibid., 49.
lives in the same apartment. Angele is a good young woman who earns her living by sewing while Madame Fernande, in a conversation with Angele, reveals her secret of obtaining clothes and luxuries.

Claude goes to visit Angele quite regularly and helps her with the work by running errands and by getting the meals while Angele sews. He treats her with the greatest respect and they enjoy many evenings together. One day when Croquignole comes to visit Mme Fernande and finds that she is not in her room, he enters Angele's room and asks her when Mme Fernande will return. She tells him and then invites him to sit down and wait. Croquignole thinks this is an opportunity and he takes advantage of it although he realizes that Angele is not of the same character as Madame Fernande.

The next day at the office, he invites Claude to lunch with him and then tells him what happened. Claude can scarcely believe it and he is extremely sad because he had intended to marry Angele. He will not be consoled and he resolves never to see her again. She waits for him, impatient and lonely. She even goes to his office to meet him, but he does not speak to her. She sends him a telegram asking if he will come to see her again. His answer is:

"Excusez-moi, Angele. Je n'aurais jamais cru cela de vous. Je n'irai plus vous revoir. --Claude." 42

42. Philippe, Croquignole, p. 236.
Angel is disconsolate and cannot work any more. She asks for a vacation, goes home, and commits suicide.

Croquignole returns after two years' travel in far parts of the world; he visits his old friends at the office and he comments on how dreadfully "stuffy" and boresome it is. The next morning, Fericien receives a letter from him saying that he had returned to visit them to see if he would be able to endure that work again but he found that just a quarter of an hour gave him a headache. He decided that he would die like a man of society with some money in his pocket instead of waiting until he had spent his last cent. He writes,

"C'est tres bien, c'est tres digne. Quand on a eu l'habitude d'avoir de l'argent, on ne peut pas attendre d'en être à son dernier sou.
"Alors, je décide de mourir comme un homme du monde, avec mille balles en poche. J'arrange bien ma petite affaire, je vais m'y mettre. Je ne regrette rien de ce qui me reste, je regrette seulement ce que j'ai perdu."43

In this letter, he also refers to Emé Fernande,

"Elle m'a quittée. Elle est allée avec un type qui avait quatre-vingt mille francs."44

He also regrets the unhappiness he caused Claude,

"Tu lui raconteras tout. Tu lui diras que j'aurais bien dû ne jamais lui faire de peine."45

The next morning the papers print the notice of Croquignole's suicide by revolver.

43. Philippe, Croquignole, p. 262.
44. Ibid., 263.
45. Ibid., 264.
Felicien's remark to Croquignole in the first part of the book is significant in that Philippe was probably intimating the outcome to be expected when Croquignole finally gave up his work,

"J'ai toujours cru qu'avoir à gagner leur pain quotidien sauverait les hommes."

It is certainly true that as long as Croquignole remained at his work, he did not get into a great deal of mischief but it took only two years to complete his ruin after he gave up his work.

Philippe also has Claude Buy express this idea:

"Vous avez vu, comme moi, des gens qui avaient des rentes. Moi, monsieur, je les regarde, je réfléchis, je me dis: 'Ce n'est pas possible. Il n'est pas possible qu'il y ait des gens qui vivent à ne rien faire.' Je ne les envie pas, je m'imagine que mes yeux m'induisent en erreur. Monsieur, il y a une parole: 'Tu gagneras ton pain à la sueur de ton front.' Je crois fermement à la vérité de cette parole."

As we think about this book, these questions arise: Just why did Philippe have Croquignole inherit some money? Why did he have him steal the honor of Angele whom Claude loved? Why did he have him commit suicide? Why did he have Angele commit suicide? Although we may be able to answer most of them to our own satisfaction for a time, we are not sure and they make us realize how difficult it is to determine Philippe's purpose and we must conclude that

47. Ibid., 53.
this book is

"un des plus mystérieux de ceux qu'a écrits Philippe. Il est si rempli d'indécision, si joyeusement et saintement ému de rencontrer dans la vie toutes ces choses qui sont gaies et toutes ces choses qui sont tristes, toutes ces choses qui sont riches et qui sont pauvres, qui sont vertueuses et qui sont vicieuses, qui sont belles et qui sont laides ou qui ne savent pas ce qu'elles sont, qu'il fait penser à un germe incertain ou l'univers s'accumule dans la virtualité de ses forces indifférentes."

CHAPTER 6

"LA BONNE MADELEINE ET LA PAUVRE MARIE"

This book is really composed of two stories -- one rather happy although with a note of sadness, "La Bonne Madeleine," and the other of despair, "La Pauvre Marie." They both deal with young girls who are apprentices as dressmakers. Madeleine is a beautiful young girl with a heart that is pure and lovable. Her influence on her younger brother is proof of that. She is dealt with so sympathetically that we are made to feel that she is Philippe's own sister. He says in concluding the story:

"Et voici qu'aux jours de mes vingt ans, j'ai conté ton histoire et la mienne. J'ai dit tout ce que je savais de toi pour que les belles âmes qui liront cette histoire apprennent qu'il était jadis, dans une petite ville, une jeune fille si bonne que sa bonté dura long-temps après sa mort." 49

That may have been his purpose in writing it but it seems as though there was also a note of bitterness. It seems that Philippe is attempting to show the evil effect of love in one way and the necessity of it in another. Madeleine was happy and contented doing her work and bringing joy to her little brother and others. Then one day she fell in love. Her parents kept her home and refused to let her see her lover, until Madeleine pined away and died. Philippe explains the

mother's action thus:

"Les mères n'aiment pas cela, parce que les jeunes filles bientôt penseront souvent à ces garçons des dimanches, puis l'Amour naîtra. Et l'Amour, Madeleine, c'est un geste horrible qui renverse les vierges dans les prés."  

That is not a pretty thought but it seems to have been a part of Philippe's philosophy when in that particular mood. It is more strongly shown in the second story, "La Pauvre Marie," which deals with a pitiful little dressmaker who is lame and deformed besides being very poor. Although her clothes and her form differ from those of other girls her age, her heart is too much like theirs. She wants to love and to be loved but no one even notices her. One day, Berthe, who is also a dressmaker announces that she is to be married. Poor Marie is very happy over it, thinking of her small part in the wedding and hoping that she will be noticed by some young man there. She carefully plans the song she will sing after the dinner and she pictures to herself the touching effect it will have. She regrets the fact, though, that she cannot dance and is invited only to the dinner.

As she walks home from work that night, she feels the despair of it all more keenly than ever.

"Ah! que lui faisaient le ciel et l'air de la nuit, que lui importait, à elle, qu'il y eut des beautés et des bonheurs! Le monde pouvait être doux comme

50. Philippe, La Bonne Madeleine et la Pauvre Marie, p. 25.
The wedding only increased her despair for she was made to feel that she was too ugly even to think of Love. They did not even appreciate her voice because she was not pretty. Marie had always tried to remain optimistic and had never entirely given up her hope that some day a good man would recognize her merits and love her for her purity and intelligence in spite of her deformity, but not even the workman who came to put in a new window would as much as notice her. Finally, as she grew older her bitterness increased:

"Marie a compris la vie comme elle devait la comprendre. Depuis qu'un menuisier en fermant la porte l'a enfermée, elle n'a jamais voulu sortir. Elle a compris que ceux qui peuvent marcher et qui sont robustes doivent aller par les chemins longtemps mais ceux qui sont infirmes doivent rester dans leur maison. Il y a une vie pour chacun de nous: belle pour ceux qui sont beaux et laide pour ceux qui sont laids. Marie s'est résignée à la sienne, mais non sans avoir fait des réflexions amères. Est-il possible de ne pas se plaindre de ce qui blesse? Marie s'est dit: La vie est faites de grosses actions matérielles, aussi les grosses âmes peuvent parcourir le monde en y trouvant des joies, mais les âmes délicates ont beaucoup à souffrir. Elle s'est dit encore: Je vis sans amour. Le monde pense que l'amour est un sentiment pur, un fluide subtil, et qu'il éclaire les hommes. Ce n'est pas vrai. Si l'amour était un sentiment pur, onaimerait une femme parce qu'elle est bonne. S'il était un fluide subtil, il se communiquerait d'un cœur à un autre et l'on n'aurait pas vu une jeune fille

penser à des jeunes gens qui ne pensaient pas à elle. Enfin, si l'amour éclairait les hommes, quelqu'un aurait bien compris que mon cœur était plein de tendresses. On s'est mis à aimer Berthe, on a embrassé Antoinette et Louise non pas parce qu'elles ont de grandes qualités, mais simplement parce qu'elles ont un visage agréable. L'amour est un sentiment grossier."

That sentence concludes the book and we wonder just how much importance Louis meant to attach to it. The same idea is found in some of his other books, particularly "Marie Donadieu," and "Bubu de Montparnasse."

This book leaves us with no clear picture of memory of a story but rather with a number of impressions -- thoughts that are the result of viewing emotion first-hand -- the emotion caused by the kindness and sweetness of Madeleine and finally the sorrow because of her death,

"Madeleine -- flour -- douce devait mourir ainsi, dans ses quinze ans de mai, pour que l'Amour et ses tempêtes ne pussent froisser sa chair légère."  

In "La Pauvre Marie" we have also a succession of various emotions -- pity, hope, sorrow, and despair -- all embodied in the poor little deformed seamstress, Marie, who resembles "un petit enfant qui tend les bras à ce qui brille, et toute chose est brillante."

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53. Ibid., 26.
54. Ibid., 64.
CHAPTER 7

"QUATRE HISTOIRES DE PAUVRE AMOUR"

This book is composed of four stories: "Le Journal de Roger Jan," "La Chair de Trois Gueux," "Le Clair Amour et l'Innocence," and "Le Pauvre Amour en Chair." It is hardly correct to call them stories as they bear no relation to stories in the usual sense of the word -- they are just moving pictures of the author's state of mind. In the first, "Le Journal de Roger Jan," we view his mind through his diary in which he records all of his thoughts, most of which are not at all inspiring. They are filled with "desire" and finally, the fulfillment of that desire which came after he decided to go to Number 26 where women of that profession lived. Referring to his decision, he said,

"Comment cela s'est-il brutallement décidé? Pourquoi? dans toute grande décision il y a des parts d'inconscien-
ce."55

There is truth in that statement, and I believe it is Philippe himself speaking, although it would not be fair to say that Roger Jan is always the mouthpiece of Philippe, for he undoubtedly says many things with which Philippe, the man, would be entirely out of sympathy.

Roger Jan comes to this conclusion:

"Aurait-on en soi-même ses raisons d'être heureux?

Je le crois."

He arrives at that decision after the "acte" when he dis-

"de ce que l'Humanité clame à grands cris heureux, je
n'ai pu jouir."57

"L'amour c'est la volupté. Mais la volupté n'est pas."58

Leaving that subject, Roger Jan next tells us about his
friend at college with whom he could walk for hours without
talking,

"It vint un temps où nous nous promenions sans causer,
car nos silences se comprenaient."59

Philippe was undoubtedly not a great conversationalist and
he must have had many friends with whom he communicated
silently. A universal truth is contained in this incident:
one day, Roger Jan's best friend borrowed twenty francs from
him; "Maintenant, il m'évite, pour ne pas me les rendre,"60
Philippe voiced this thought in another book, "Le Père Per-
drix" when Jean Bousset's father advised his son before his
departure for Paris and one of his most emphatic statements
was in regard to borrowing money: "N'emprunte jamais rien
da personne."61

In this diary, Roger Jan protests against the attitude
of parents toward their children. He feels that they have

56. Philippe, Quatre Histoires de Pauvre Amour, p. 150.
57. Ibid., loc. cit.
58. Ibid., 152.
59. Ibid., 155.
60. Ibid., 156.
no right to despotsically demand respect and love from them just because they are responsible for their coming into the world. He considers parents rather selfish in general; they want their children to be "ornaments" for them; they want them to satisfy their pride, and they often begrudge the time and money they cost but they never fail to demand respect and love from them. Roger Jan concludes his "Journal" saying,

"Je veux mourir. Ah! c'est trop dur! On m'ennuie, je m'ennuie. Il faut aller dans la paix."62

"La Chair de Trois Gueux" is a brief picture of three tramps, Antoine, Pierre, and Jean who while sleeping out in the open air watched the lovers wandering hand in hand through the woods at night. It recalled to them their experiences with women. Each recounted his and

"quand des hommes arrêtent leur esprit, puis le lancent tout entier, en ferveur, vers quelque coin de la vie, -- oublieux de l'alentour, ils iront comme des dieux à la conquête furieuse de l'idéal. Tels, Antoine, Pierre, et Jean, étendus en la nuit fauve, sentirent la grande force du rut mouvementer leur être, et leurs énergies furent élues pour la poursuite sans fin, ce soir d'une femme. . . ."63

Their search completed and their desire fulfilled,

"Ils se regardèrent, hagards, Jean ouvrit les livres, sentant passer à travers lui des regrets divins et fit, d'une voix ou se concrétisait toute la douleur de la nuit et de la vie: 'Oh! oh!' Puis ils partirent, infiniment."64

63. Ibid., 176.
64. Ibid., 181.
This last thought shows the author's purpose, perhaps, in introducing such a story.

"Le Clair Amour et l'Innocence" is what the title implies -- a simple little incident of innocent love. The young boy recalls how he used to hate his small stature because girls liked big strong men; other times, he thought how girls liked intelligent boys and was glad that he ranked first in school. He adds,

"Voici comment Aline, L'Amour est triste ou joyeux, selon les instants." 65

He tells of the lonesome days he spent in the lycée away from Aline, the joy of seeing her again, the sorrow of their separation when her family moved away. He regrets that every love must end.

"Mon coeur en mon corps n'est plus qu'un rien et tout l'Automne venant proclame la fin du rêve en la fin des choses." 66

The last story in the group, "La Pauvre Amour en Chair," is the opposite of a pretty picture -- it deals with the physical desires of a young man and his disillusionment on the fulfillment of them.

This story contains the germ of "Marie Donadieu" and "Bubu de Montparnasse," some of the scenes in the last two books being identical with that of the short sketch. However, through it all, we see Philippe pardoning benevolently rather than condemning.

65. Philippe, Quatre Histoires de Pauvre Amour, p. 186.
66. Ibid., 201.
CHAPTER 8
"MAFIE DONADIEU"

In this book, we see a Philippe who is entirely different from the author of "Père Perdrix," and "La Mère et l'Enfant." The beginning of this book is similar to the others -- a rather unpretentious picture of country life centering around the pretty little Marie Donadieu whose mother had left her and run away with an engineer. Marie's grand-parents and particularly her grandfather, Basile, thought the world of her. Although Basile had been pretty severe with his own daughters, he was very lenient with Marie, almost to the point of "spoiling" her. He loved her so much he could not refrain from tiptoeing into her room to kiss her while she slept even at the risk of waking her and being scolded by the grandmother.

Marie was sent to a convent to be educated and later, she was given the opportunity to study music by making a weekly trip to Lyon where her aunt lived. There she met a young student, Raphael Crousat, who became interested in her. He would wait for her while she took her lesson and then they would go for a walk. One day, he induced her to go to his room to see some of his paintings. That was Marie's first step away from the path her grand-father wanted her to follow. After that, she decided to go to
Paris with Raphael, and with her aunt's aid she invented a plausible story to tell her grandfather; she was to be the companion of a Madame Grouzat and in return for it she was to receive a small salary. She hesitated, fearing that her grandfather would not consent, but her Aunt Amelie reassured her, saying,

"Ton grand-père t'aime et, que ce soit un grand-père ou un amoureux, quand un homme vous aime, c'est comme quand un âne porte du sel et qu'il veut passer la rivière." 67

Raphael left Marie alone during the day and Marie wearied of this life which had become uninteresting, for "elle n'aimait pas le travail et ne voyait en lui que la répétition d'un geste, que l'abdication de tous les autres gestes." 68 Thus, she began to wander alone through the streets of Paris and a young doctor named Paul began conversation with her and eventually invited her to visit him at his office. This affair came to an end shortly, and it was not long before another one began. As Marie was walking along the street, a group of men obstructed her way and seized her by the arms, making her enter a restaurant where they forced her to drink with them. After the other three men had gone, one named Maurice Delavallee remained, visiting with Marie about his experiences in the Congo where he lived. When they parted that evening, they planned a meeting for the following day,

68. Ibid., 105.
and the affair continued until Maurice had to return to the Congo. Marie had told him she was living with her mother so when he left, he said

"Au revoir, mon vieux. Ce sera pour dans trois ans. Ne t'apporterai une défense d'éléphant. Ne sois pas mariée. Reste avec ta mère. C'est encore ce qu'il y a de mieux."69

Then she remembered the lie she had told and inwardly blamed him for being responsible for the lie. The author explains it thus:

"Les femmes se portent avec une telle tendresse que tout d'elles leur semble bon et justifié et qu'elles retournent le mensonge à celui qui fut cause qu'elles mentirent."70

Maurice did not invite Marie to go with him so Marie had to content herself with Raphael again. During the time she lived with Raphael, she became acquainted with Jean Bousset, one of Raphael's best friends and a character whom we met in "Père Perdrix." When Raphael went away he entrusted Marie to Jean's care and friendship saying,

"Mon vieux, elle va rester ici huit ou quinze jours. Je te la laisse. Monte donc dîner le soir, elle te fera la cuisine."71

Thus began the friendship which developed into too great an intimacy. Finally, Jean wrote to Raphael to tell him of it and express his sincere regret that it happened, but he adds, "Tu ne peux plus être heureux avec Marie, car tu sais

69. Philippe, Marie Donadieu, p. 143.
70. Ibid., loc. cit.
71. Ibid., 151.
Raphael returned immediately and his first words to Marie were, "Tu es folle, Marie." Her answer was, "Oh! Oui, j'étais folle." When Jean arrived that evening, Raphael showed no anger but stated simply that he received Jean's letter the morning before and left as soon as he could. Jean answered, "Tu dois m'en vouloir" but Raphael showed his broad-minded philosophy by answering,

"Mais non, je ne t'en veux pas... Je ne t'ai pas haï quand j'ai reçu ta lettre. Comment dirais-je? J'ai fait de la philosophie, j'ai pensé: Il s'est produit telles circonstances et c'est ainsi qu'agit l'homme dans la sincérité de son cœur."

Jean's answer resembles that of a little boy who has done wrong and cannot really understand what or why,

"Tu vois, ici, c'est mon cœur, ici, c'est ma tête, il me semble que ce soient deux pays éloignés. Je ne saurais ce que je dois faire qu'un peu plus tard. Tu vaudrais mieux que moi. Je te le dis. J'ai cru longtemps que l'homme se jugait dans la paix et par sa pensée. Eh bien, non!"

Later, he says that he never before realized that two friends could hurt each other as they had done. We are forced to sympathize with him. Raphael gave Jean a chance to talk with Marie alone but she refused to go with him. Raphael and Marie returned to Lyon and then Marie decided to visit

73. Ibid., 212.
74. Ibid., 216.
75. Ibid., 217.
her grandfather. He was not at all pleased to see her because he had found out how she was living; he talked with her for a short time but would not let her go to the house to see her grandmother. He gave her her mother's address in Lyon saying,

"Ta mère n'est pas morte, comme nous te l'avions dit. Ta mère t'a quittée quand tu étais toute petite et t'a laissée à notre charge. Tu ne l'as jamais connue parce que nous avions toujours cru qu'elle ne méritait pas de te connaître. Aujourd'hui vous êtes au même point toutes les deux, C'est pourquoi j'ai voulu savoir son adresse. Je me suis adressé à une agence. Elle se fait appeler Madame Desvignes. Tu vois que tu avais de qui tenir. Quant à nous, nous avons pris la responsabilité de t'élever et voilà où ça nous a conduits."76

It is really a pitiful picture -- the old grandfather who adored the little girl, Marie, and planned so much for her future and would have given anything to make her happy, then to have her follow her mother's footsteps in spite of the good environment and all attempts to make her life what it should be.

As soon as Marie returned to Lyon, she wrote her mother a note, the answer to which was an invitation to dinner. Their conversation dealt mainly with men -- the mother inquiring about Marie's love affairs. Marie told her in particular about Raphael and Jean, and her mother advised her to find Jean and go back to him:

"Marie, tu viens de dire quelque chose de très intelli-

76. Philippe, Marie Donadieu, p. 245.
Dame. Tu as dit: 'Et comme il pensait beaucoup plus
que moi, jamais je ne désirais autre chose.' Peut-
être d'ailleurs n'est-ce pas bien exprimé, mais c'est
là le secret du mariage et tu vas voir que tout en
découle.'77

Marie decided then to find Jean since she could not be
happy without him -- waiting every moment hoping to see him
or hear him knock at her door. She went to his room, entered,
and said she was returning to him but he informed her that he
did not really love her he discovered after having the time
to reflect. He explained to her that he had not seen things
in their true light before:

"Vous autres, femmes, depuis trop longtemps vous nous
trompez. Un jour viendra où l'homme donnera moins d'im-
portance à ce qui l'a trompé. Il y aura comme une science
nouvelle, je te l'annonce, comme une science nouvelle de
la résistances des matériaux. Le mariage repose sur une
erreur. La femme ne peut pas vivre seule; alors, elle
attire l'homme pour ne pas vivre seule, alors elle l'ab-
sorbe pour mieux sentir qu'en aucun point de sa moelle
elle n'est seule. L'amour est dévorant."78

We wonder if that is Philippe's opinion of love and marriage --
it is possible that it is since he never married; but let us
examine the contents of a letter written to his mother,
June 13, 1907:

"Il est bien certain que je ne suis pas l'ennemi du
mariage. Je m'aperçois de jour en jour davantage qu'il
est bon d'avoir une famille et de sentir que sur la
Terre on laissera quelqu'un derrière soi. J'éprouve de

77. Philippe, Marie Donadieu, p. 265.
78. Ibid., 511.
plus un grand besoin d'affection et je voudrais pendant le temps où je serai de ce monde m'apercevoir que j'y suis utile à une famille que j'aurais créée. Mais la question n'est pas tout à fait si simple qu'elle le semble. C'est que je ne suis pas un homme comme les autres. Je passe mon temps à travailler, faire des livres est pour moi le but que j'ait donné à la vie. Je vois bien en quoi une femme pourrait me gêner dans mon travail, mais je ne vois pas du tout en quoi elle pourrait m'être utile. Elle m'enlèverait beaucoup de mon temps et beaucoup de ma liberté d'esprit."

Jean then sent Marie away telling her she could look for another man. Her answer concludes the book: "Il faut déjà beaucoup de foi pour chercher." The author draws no conclusion for us but we are made to feel the pity of the whole situation. Philippe never judges -- never condemns; he sympathizes and thus, his readers are also tolerant.

79. Philippe, Lettres à sa mère, le 13 juin 1907.
80. Philippe, Marie Donadieu, p. 316.
CHAPTER 9

"BUBU DE MONTPARNASSE"

The atmosphere of the book is given with the opening picture of "le boulevard Sébastopol" in Paris the morning following the celebration of the Quatorze Juillet, when the stores and shops are all closed and the carriages and pedestrians are hurrying past and everything gives the appearance of "une vie alcoolique et fatiguée." 81 "La vanité, la gaieté, la luxure marchaient dans les lumières. . . Paris semblait un chien las qui court encore après sa chienne. Les filles publiques faisaient leur métier." 82 The keynote of the book is thus given.

Pierre Hardy, a young man of twenty who has been working as a designer in Paris only six months, walks through those Parisian crowds with uncertainty. He lives in a poorly furnished hotel where people of doubtful respectability live. His only refuge is his friend, Louis Buisson, who works as a designer in the same office where Hardy works. They are the best of friends, feeling free to tell each other all their innermost thoughts.

"Une telle amitié nous encourage à vivre, en prolongeant nos plaisirs et en nous consolant de nos chagrins." 83

82. Ibid., 7-8.
83. Ibid., 21-22.
There were times, however, when Pierre felt that this friendship is insufficient -- he, too, desires the companionship of women so he wanders through the streets where the "filles publiques" are plentiful. As he is listening to a group of people singing songs which are not of the best, a young girl speaks to him. He becomes interested and as they walk away, he offers her a glass of beer. Berthe Metenier returns home after midnight that night, and as she enters, her "amant," Maurice Belu, opens his eyes to see how much money she has "earned" and reproaches her for getting so little. He thinks:

"C'est idiot d'avoir une femme qui ne sait pas travailler."\(^{84}\)

Bubu's creed is: "Il faut de l'argent et une femme."\(^{85}\)

Bubu had met Berthe at a dance one holiday -- le Quatorze Juillet. They arranged meetings and saw each other every day. Finally, Berthe left her father's home to go and live with Bubu, although she continued to work as a flower girl for some time. At the end of a month, Bubu was beating her for little disobediences and Berthe, being of a retiring mild disposition, accepted these corrections, crying. She regretted having left her father. In about two years, Bubu's

\(^{84}\) Philippe, Bubu de Montparnasse, p. 38.
\(^{85}\) Ibid., 45.
money had dwindled away and the little that Berthe earned was not sufficient so one day he said to her:

"Ma petite femme, si quelqu'un te fait des propositions quand tu sortiras de l'atelier, vas-y, ça nous fera toujours un peu d'argent."96

Thus, Berthe Metenier became a prostitute.

Pierre Hardy makes an appointment with her for a second rendez-vous and he treats her like a sweetheart she notices, but

"Il était impossible de profiter de son cœur au delà de cinq francs parce que c'était tout ce dont il disposait. Quant à l'amour, elle en avait trop usé. Elle savait de quoi se compose l'amour depuis qu'elle laissait les maîtres après elle courir, qui profitent de toutes les faiblesses et satisfont tous leurs besoins. Elle savait qu'il faut convertir l'amour en espèces, car l'amour est fatigant, et c'est l'argent qui réconforte."87

Berthe thought of the hopelessness of her situation. In order to earn enough for clothes and food she had to do that "work."

When Bubu learns that Berthe has contracted syphilis, he becomes worried for fear that he may have it, too. He goes out to find some of his old friends and chat; the first one he meets is Grand Jules who has had syphilis for some years. He reassures Bubu telling him that it is not so bad. Then they drink together:

"Boire, c'est de la joie, et quand on est déjà plein de joie, boire, cela nous comble et nous enivre."88

86. Philippe, Bubu de Montparnasse, p. 63.
87. Ibid., 80.
88. Ibid., 107.
Berthe has to go to the hospital and from there she writes to Pierre who loves her even more now that she is ill. His friend, Buisson, says to him:

"Il faut aimer les filles qui souffrent. J'ai toujours cru que, si nous ne pouvions pas les sauver, c'est parce que nous ne savions pas assez les aimer."89

Louis Buisson then recounts the story of a young girl who married an immoral man who made her support him with the money she earned as a prostitute. He regrets the fact that he did not save her from such a life:

"J'aurais dû la sauver, comprends-tu cela: J'aurais pu la sauver! Ah! pourquoi ne l'ai-je pas assez aimée? . . . Une femme existe au monde que j'aurais pu sauver."90

Pierre then writes to Berthe telling her he will not abandon her because of her illness but that their relations with each other will have to be different; they will be friends and he encloses some money. Berthe's answer is extremely bitter; she is certain that Pierre is responsible for her illness and she hates him.

Berthe is in the hospital a month and a half and during that time, Bubu is practically starving and becomes impatient waiting for her to return and earn some money for him. Finally, he steals some money, cigarettes and tobacco from a cigar store and is caught by the police.

89. Philippe, Bubu de Montparnasse, p. 125.
90. Ibid., 130.
When Berthe comes out of the hospital, she has no money so she goes to see Pierre whom she no longer believes guilty due to the sincerity of his denial. Then she goes to live with her sister, Blanche, who is also a prostitute but has no "souteneur" like Bubu.

Speaking of "filles publiques" Philippe says,

"Elles vivent et sont un grand troupeau côté à côté, Blanche, Berthe et d'autres où l'une est auprès de sa voisine comme un exemple et comme un enseignement... Il y a le trottoir, les chambres d'hôtel, et les pièces d'argent, tout un commerce où l'on vend son âme pendant que l'on vend sa chair."91

Pierre Hardy had contracted "the disease" and in spite of that, he bears no grudge against Berthe but pities and befriends her instead. His friend, Louis Buisson, sympathizes with her, too. He says to Pierre,

"Une fille publique nous a trouvés. Nous lui apprendrons que sa vie n'est pas bonne et nous mettrons un peu plus de bonté dans la nôtre pour qu'elle la comprenne et pour qu'elle l'aime. Je ne sais pas si nous pourrons la sauver, mais je sais qu'il n'y a pas de limites à la Bonne Parole."92

They question her and she makes this statement: "Vous croyez que l'on fait ce que l'on veut."93 She had been forced into that life and there was no choice. When her sister is taken to the hospital and Berthe has no place to live, she goes to Pierre and asks if she may stay with him. He pities her.

91. Philippe, Bubu de Montparnasse, p. 177.
92. Ibid., 195.
93. Ibid., 196.
and wants to help her. One day while she is taking a walk she goes into a church and prays, but almost immediately afterward she goes to a cabaret and drinks more than ever.

Shortly after that, she receives news that her father has died. She must have some black clothes for the funeral and in order to buy them she has to go out and earn some money. While she is at home for the funeral, she is more or less disregarded by the other members of the family. They make all decisions without even consulting her.

"Elle sentait qu'elle n'était pas honnête, et parmi tous les signes groupés autour d'un mort, comprenait qu'il est beau d'être honnête."94

She thinks over her life and how little it means:

"Je ne sais pas ce qu'on a dans la peau quand on fait ce métier. On a bien raison de dire que le bien mal acquis ne profite jamais. Il me semble qu'en travaillant dans la fleur il y aurait moyen d'être tranquille. Je serais occupée toute la journée, et de cette manière je n'aurais pas envie de dépenser tant d'argent. Et puis, quand on est sage, on est toujours récompensé."95

There is a moral in Berthe's life and it is contained in that last thought: "When one is good, one is always rewarded."

Berthe discovered that too late. She resolved to be good but Maurice had too strong a hold on her life by that time and as soon as he was out of prison he found her at Pierre's and made her go back to earn his living again. Her first thought was of death:

"Il la prenait ainsi qu'un objet de sa vie que l'on va

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95. Ibid., 233.
chercher chez celui qu'il avait pris en gage. Elle sentit qu'elle était une chose, une pauvre Berthe informe et malade et avait besoin de s'endormir à jamais pour l'oublier... Et si je ne voulais pas le suivre, il me tuerait... .96

Thus, Berthe was forced to go back to her old life in a world where

"la bienfaisance individuelle est sans force parce qu'il y a l'amour et l'argent, parce que ceux qui font le mal sont implacables et parce que les filles publiques en sont marquées dès l'origine comme des bêtes passives que l'on mène au pré communal."97

96. philippe, Bubu de Montparnasse, p. 246.
97. Ibid., 248.
CHAPTER 10
"CONTES DU MATIN"

The short stories in this collection were written originally for the Paris newspaper, "Le Matin," and were largely derived from the stories Philippe's father had told him many years before. They were written partly for the income but Philippe never wrote just for the money; he always gave his best and was sincere in his purpose. Some of the stories are inferior but many are excellent. They are interesting largely for their pictures of the "poor" whom Philippe paints so well. His definition of the word "pauvres" makes it include all unfortunates, whether it be due to lack of money, ill health, unhappiness, or some other affliction.

As usual, these stories are largely philosophical. As an example, let us examine the story entitled "La Confession" which deals with a young girl, Marguerite M., who leaves home to go and live with a man who has made promises to her. They quarrel and he hits her in the mouth with his fist. Angry, her mouth bleeding, she seizes his knife and stabs him. For this murder, she is sent to prison. Later, she is released for a period but is watched. She becomes ill and goes to the hospital. While there, she writes this brief story of her life and confession. She concludes it with this philosophy which is so typical of Philippe:

"Pendant ma vie privée, j'ai bien réfléchi et aujourd'hui
je comprends qu'il y a deux routes à suivre : la bonne ou la mauvaise. L'une qui, par le travail et la bonne conduite vous procure la joie, le plaisir et la douce paix du cœur, qui n'existe que chez ceux qui font leur devoir. L'autre, qui procure de faux plaisirs méprisables, des déceptions, et le cœur est rempli de remords et regrets superflus.

"En quittant ma maison, je veux réparer mes fautes passées et me réhabiliter aux yeux de toutes les personnes qui m'ont connue, en devenant une bonne petite ouvrière, honnête et laborieuse, ce qui prouvera une fois de plus que s'il y a des détenues libérées qui persévèrent dans le mal, il y en a aussi qui se tournent vers le bien et connaissent la vie car elles ont souffert et ont pu acquérir de l'expérience à leurs dépens. ---Marquérite M. ."98

In a letter to his mother, Philippe refers to these stories,

"Je continue à faire des histoires pour 'Le Matin.' On m'a dit que celles qui ont paru jusqu'à maintenant avaient eu beaucoup de succès. On m'a demandé l'autorisation de les traduire en allemand pour les faire paraître dans les journaux d'Allemagne. Ça me rapportera encore un peu d'argent. En un mot, pour le moment, ça a l'air de vouloir durer."99

Later, he wrote,

"Je continue à faire des nouvelles au 'Matin.' On m'a formellement promis de m'en prendre une par semaine, et en effet pour les deux dernières ils m'ont tenu parole. Je voudrais bien que cela continue."100

Just a short time before his death, he again mentioned them in a letter to his mother:

"Au 'Matin' ça va toujours très bien. Mes nouvelles passent le lundi. Ça m'intéresse beaucoup de les écrire."101

100. Ibid., le 17 novembre 1908.
101. Ibid., le 1 juin 1909.
CHAPTER 11
"CHRONIQUES DU CANARD SAUVAGE"

This book is, like "Contes du Matin," a series of little stories which deal with poor people whom Philippe has known. As usual, he deals mainly with the unfortunate, the poor, the evil-doers. Sometimes, it is not even a story—just an observation or a bit of philosophy derived from some character or some incident. There are several sketches which are not very enjoyable, "Le Vampire de Muy," "Le Crime de Plaisance," and "L'Assassinat d'une Darseuse." They seem to accomplish no particular purpose. There are others, however, which are very characteristic of the author and contain philosophy with which we are in sympathy, for example, "Être pauvre," "Être malade," and "Villéggiatures parisiennes." He praises the poor and tries to show how they are not entirely unfortunate and unhappy. He says,

"Être pauvre, mon Dieu, c'est être semblable à vous... Être pauvre, c'est se rapprocher de vous. Être pauvre, c'est être bon. Je vous remercie, mon Dieu."102

He also shows the advantages of being ill:

"Pour apprendre la vie, mon Dieu, pour vous connaître et vous comprendre il faut être malade. Être bien portant c'est avoir des sens fins et profonds... Je vous ai dit aussi que c'était être heureux. C'est heureux parce que la maladie nous rend tendres, et bons aussi."103

103. Ibid., 118-119.
In "Villégiatures Parisiennes," he glorifies country life as contrasted with life in Paris.

"L'air de Paris n'est pas bon pour les hommes, car il contient trop d'hommes et trop de maisons; or, nous avons besoin de grandes étendues de nature pour y respirer l'odeur des plantes et nous avons besoin d'une grande solitude pour mieux sentir notre vie personnelle."104

Following are a few characteristic bits of philosophy contained in this collection:

"Celui à qui il a été donné de souffrir davantage, c'est qu'il est digne de souffrir davantage."105

"Nous avons beaucoup à vaincre en nous-mêmes avant de penser à vaincre les autres."106

"Ce ne sont pas les hommes qui sont mauvais, c'est l'Institution qui est mauvaise."107

"Il n'y a qu'une science, c'est la science de soi-même."108

We cannot help admiring the philosophy of each of these statements. Although Philippe deals mainly with the unfortunate of this world that does not mean that he recognizes only vice and evil, as this quotation will prove:

"Il y a des jeunes gens si purs que leur vie est un cristal qui reflète leurs pensées en tout ingénuités et dont les gestes se propagent et vivent à l'unisson

105. Ibid., 11.
106. Ibid., 15.
107. Ibid., 38.
108. Ibid., 51.
One story in this group, "Mémoire" seems to be just a slight variation of "La Confession" found in the collection, "Contes du Matin." The story is exactly the same; the only changes are in the title and the name of the principal character, becoming Henriette in "Mémoire."

Philippe's style is exceedingly simple and unaffected in his short stories; he does not consider it necessary to have an elegant complex style, since it is the thought which matters, after all.

CHAPTER 12
"DANS LA PETITE VILLE"

This book, too, is a collection of short stories which deal, for the most part, with ordinary working people -- road-menders, shoemakers, millers, and even beggars. Usually there is no plot of great importance; each story is a picture of some person, some phase of life, some emotional reaction, or some mental state.

The little story, "L'Enfant Tétue," tells about the stubborn child who refuses to teach the songs to the other children because the teacher has punished her for giving the imperative of aller as "va, vasons, vasez," thus making the others laugh. She knows that the success of the program depends upon the songs and since the teacher cannot sing, she is relying on Julie to teach them. Her mother scolds, coaxes, spanks, but to no avail; Julie has made her resolution and will not give in. She is very unhappy about it and wishes she had said, "Oui," but she can not make herself say it now. Philippe has pictured this mental conflict so clearly and understandably that we wonder if, perhaps, he is not telling his own experience. At any rate, he has entered into the mind of the child and pictured her most intimate thoughts in a way that makes us admire his skill and knowledge of psychology. The philosophy of the little story strikes home, too, for it is not only children
who "cut off their nose to spite their face."

In other stories, Philippe deals with "Une Femmme Jalousé," or with a man whose wife has just died; sometimes, it is a man who loves his wife whole-heartedly -- Turpin -- and who dies from genuine sorrow; again, it is a man who is happy to be rid of his wife -- the road-mender Gazet -- who, however, marries again after a short time. Philippe pictures equally well the two types -- the man who sincerely mourns the death of his wife and the one who is made happy by it.

In each case, he enters into the heart of his character and all of the thoughts and actions come from within.

Philippe's philosophy of life is found in all of these little stories which deal with life in the small city. For example, he says in "Le Suicide Manqué," justifying the poor Pere Lomet who committed suicide,

"Quand on ne peut plus travailler qu'est-ce qu'il faut qu'on reste à faire?" 110

He has also expressed this thought in "Père Perdrix,"

"Il n'y a que le travail pour nous." 111

In "Marie Donadieu," and "Bubu de Montparnasse," he shows how good honest work might save a girl from wrong.

There are "Les Deux Mendians" -- le père et la mère Sinturel. Although they are beggars, they are always clean and neatly dressed and everyone loves and admires them.


Sometimes, the impression we receive is a sad one, as in "Les Deux Voleurs," "Le Retour du Prisonnier," and "Le Suicide Manqué," but in most cases each story is a picture of life as it is, without any attempt to make it either happier or sadder than it really is.

Philippe's style is particularly delightful in these "contes" -- always simple and unaffected, an interesting conversational style in the language of the poor -- the peasant, the working man -- the language of everyday usage.

Another collection of short stories less well-known than the three we have just reviewed is entitled "Faits Divers et Chroniques."
CHAPTER 13

"LETTRES DE JEUNESSE À HENRI Vandeputte"

Philippe's letters mean a great deal in the study of his philosophy because in his letters we are sure that he is speaking his own thoughts. In his novels, we are never quite sure which character he is employing to speak his own mind, for there must be characters of various types and it is not always the same one who speaks for the author, nor can the author agree with the thoughts of all of them. In his letters, we need have no fear of misinterpretation -- it is Louis who is speaking at all times.

These letters were written during a period of eleven years, between the ages of twenty-two and thirty-three, to his friend, Henri Vandeputte, who was also an author. They are especially interesting for that reason, for Philippe criticizes his friend's works and thus gives us a glimpse of his theories on literature. For example, he says,

"L'artiste ne doit pas participer à une école. . . . Quelques bonnes gens qui veulent le suivre y perdent leur personnalité. L'artiste est un bon ouvrier qui s'écoute et, dans son coin, avec candeur d'âme, écrit ce qu'il entend. Je ne fais pas de différence entre le beau sabotier d'un village qui fait des sabots comme il les rêve, -- et l'écrivain qui conte la vie comme il la voit. Ah! C'est terrible les écoles." 112

From time to time, he recounts his progress or his ideas

about the book he is then engaged in writing. It was especially interesting to read the letters which showed his enthusiasm over "Le Père Perdrix" and "La Mère et l'Enfant."

He even criticizes his own style,

"Mais je suis fort mécontent de moi-même, mon style est en queue de serpent, je n'ai pas le sens du qualificatif, mes idées sont embrouillées et je crains qu'elles ne le soient toujours; il doit y avoir un défaut dans mon esprit." 113

His attitude toward his characters is interesting:

"Quel bonheur de sortir une créature de sa chair et de la faire connaître à de belles âmes pour qu'elles la comprennent." 114

This explains in part the reality of his characters. Some are drawn from his acquaintances -- Berthe Metenier, for instance -- but even those which are products of his imagination embody the characteristics of real people whom Philippe has known, and they live for us.

In looking back over Philippe's work, we are impressed by the note of melancholy which is present in each one. This statement from one of Philippe's letters seems to indicate that Philippe was not wholly unaware of that melancholy note and that he actually liked it:

"Je te remercie beaucoup de m'avoir copié ces vers; sache que j'y ai trouvé un plaisir larinoyant et mélancholique qui est pour moi le plus grand des plaisirs." 115

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114. Ibid., 60.
115. Ibid., 31.
Another time, he says,

"J'aime toutes les choses, mais j'aime surtout ce qui souffre."116

Perhaps that explains his choice of such characters as Père Perdrix, who is blind and therefore suffers; Charles Blanchard, who suffers because of his poverty; and Marie Donadieu and Berthe Metenier who suffer because Fate had chosen to make them prostitutes. All these characters are beautiful, but sad.

Here is Philippe's idea of the aim of a writer:

"Le but est non pas d'être un gros monsieur qui gagne de l'argent et qui règne dans les journaux. Non. Le but c'est d'être un écrivain qui raconte très simplement ce qu'il croit bon, et d'être aimé."117

This statement gives us another view of Philippe's philosophy:

"Je poursuis ma vie avec fatigue et les manifestations de l'existence ordinaire des hommes ne m'étonnent ni ne me passionnent. Il y a pourtant une chose humaine qui m'intéresse: c'est l'Humanité."118

This statement is easily verified by a reading of his books.

He even sympathises with prostitutes; he studies them and tries to explain them:

"Une prostituée, mon ami, est souvent une pauvre créature chaste que la Déstînée a choisie pour faire le mal. Elle n'est plus elle-même, mais une partie du Destin."119

Judging from Philippe's own statements in his letters, his personal life must have been an odd one. He seems to have

117. Ibid., 86.
118. Ibid., 98.
119. Ibid., 110.
liked very few people very well but he did love passionately Vandeputte to whom these letters were written. He says:

"Parfois des amis ou des camarades viennent me voir. Eh bien! On ne me fait pas plaisir quand on vient me voir. On m'arrache à mon travail; on me dérange dans mes habitudes, il me semble qu'on m'arrache à moi-même."

120. Philippa, Lettres de Jeunesse, p. 126.
Philippe's letters to his mother are very interesting because they give us a glimpse of his innermost thoughts.

In one of his earliest letters when Philippe was only twenty-two years old and had been in Paris only a short time, he asked his mother for some furniture so that he would not have to endure the discomforts of a poorly furnished room. He hesitated somewhat about making the request for he realized that it might mean a sacrifice for his parents.

"Vous avez fait beaucoup de sacrifices pour moi, et vous savez d'ailleurs que je vous en suis plus reconnaissant que je ne le saurais dire. Ce que je vous demande ne vous est pas impossible, et ça me rendrait matériellement heureux." 121

In another letter, he explains the nature of his work in Paris -- taking the orders for light, gas, or electricity, and having the "piqueurs" make the installations promptly.

One of his letters resembles very much the common pleas of university students,

"Cette lettre va sans doute vous mettre en colère. Je veux vous demander de m'envoyer dix francs. . . Je ne vous demande pas de me les donner ces dix francs, mais de me les prêter. . . Si vous ne me les prêtes pas, je ne sais pas du tout comment je pourrai faire." 122

In January, 1899, he is worried about the possibility of receiving a smaller salary due to a consolidation of two

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122. Ibid., le 12 décembre 1898.
departments. He explains the situation to his mother and then adds, philosophically,

"J'ai pour principe de ne me désoler qu'une fois que le malheur est venu."123

He very frequently mentions his books, telling his parents of their success or of his progress with a new book.

Philippe's father died April 1, 1907 and the letter of consolation which he wrote to his mother is truly beautiful.124 He then began seriously the writing of "Charles Blanchard" which was dedicated to his father. His letters told his mother of his purpose and progress,

"Je travaille à mon livre. Il avance tout doucement. J'espère en être à la moitié pour les vacances. Tu verras, maman, je fais tout mon possible pour que ceux qui le liront puissent aimer mon père comme je l'aimais."125

On April 1, 1909, he wrote:

"C'est aujourd'hui l'anniversaire de la mort de mon père. Je pense beaucoup à lui."126

Philippe seems to have realized the beauty of his father's life more after his death than before, because he had been inclined to consider his father too stern and material-minded.

123. Philippe, Lettres à sa mère, le 30 janvier 1899.
124. See page 5 where this letter is quoted in full.
125. Philippe, Lettres à sa mère, le 26 mai 1907.
126. Ibid., le 1 avril 1909.
In summarizing the work and philosophy of Charles-Louis Philippe, let us mention first his most outstanding characteristic -- his love and compassion for the poor. One cannot read this author without being impressed by his clearly sympathetic treatment of the poor. He views their hearts from within, for he was one of them; his mind constituted his only superiority over them, and he seemed to derive actual pleasure from classifying himself as one of them:

"Être pauvre, mon Dieu, c'est être semblable à vous. . . Être pauvre, c'est se rapprocher de vous. Être pauvre, c'est être bon. Je vous remercie, mon Dieu."127

Mary Duclaux writes, "He knew the poor and the miseries of the poor, not as an artist knows them, mingled with romance, but as the child of poor people who has felt such things at first hand."128

In speaking of Philippe's tenderness toward the poor and afflicted, we must not mistake his genuine feeling for mere sentimentality, nor is he writing for the purpose of making someone else believe as he does. He has no regard for the "roman à thèse" and should his novels serve such a purpose, it is entirely unintentional on Philippe's part. He is de-

scribing his characters from a thorough knowledge of them — his psychology is almost perfect and when we agree or sympathise, it is not because Philippe has shown us just one side of the picture but it is because he has shown us the true psychological state which brought about such an action and we are forced to see the logic of it. For example, Berthe Metenier, the prostitute, demands our sympathy because of her own character not because Philippe has manipulated a puppet in such a way as to prove his point. Wright has criticized Philippe for calling her a "pauvre petite sainte" considering this "a sympathetic emotionality and sensibility carried to the extreme." Wright's criticism well applies in that instance but it is only rarely that Philippe is carried away to such an exaggeration. Wright also feels that Philippe is a Naturalist but "with less ability than Zola and Maupassant." In two books, "Marie Donadieu," and "Bubu de Montparnasse," Philippe is more a naturalist than anything else but in all of his other books in spite of a melancholy note which is prevalent in all, there is much to be said for his realistic way of treating characters and incidents. In reality, Philippe belongs to no school — he is sometimes a Naturalist, sometimes a

130. Ibid., 840.
Realist, and more often just a Philosopher who is intensely interested in Humanity. All this tends to explain his little regard for plot or other technicalities of story-writing. Sometimes, he does have a fairly good plot as in "Croquignole" but the plot is never of chief interest and it is seldom that the reader even considers it -- the interest is centered in the characters and the philosophy of the author.

Philippe's style has been criticized for préciosité, mannerisms, false simplicity, and bombast. Opinions of style will always vary and if an author's style is complex, he will be accused of a cumbersome, pretentious style; if it is simple, he will be accused of a "false simplicity." One of the admirable traits of Philippe's writing is his simple, clear, conversational style and such a style is generally considered an asset to an author. Lanson says that he has given "d'excellentes exemples du retour à la langue saine, à la phrase correcte. Quel que soit le mérite de ses romans, il vaudra surtout par la leçon de français qu'il a donnée."

Wellington, in an article in the "New Republic," com-

mends the style of Philippe and his followers in these terms: "These writers . . . are linked together not only by literary comradeship, but by the sobriety and subtle beauty of their thought, and the classic simplicity of their style. They are possessed of an artistic dignity and modesty which must forever distinguish them from the bourgeois novelists who are industriously 'making copy' out of the lives of the poor, and the more academic novelists with a social thesis." 133

Philippe describes many common-place feelings and thoughts and he makes many unusual comparisons, such as comparing a mother's strength for protection of her child to a fortress, 134 a comparison which Lasserre criticises. 135 There is originality in such a comparison and there is sincerity; it is not made for outward effect.

Although Philippe himself belonged to no school, he has created unintentionally and unknowingly a school of followers. The most important of these is Marguerite Audoux who was a very good friend and an admirer of Philippe. Her two books, "Marie-Claire," and "L'Atelier de Marie-Claire" are somewhat similar to Philippe's works in that they deal with a poor little girl who was reared by the sisters in a

134. Philippe, La Mère et l'Enfant, p. 35.
135. Lasserre, loc. cit.
convent, then placed as shepherdess with a family and who finally went to Paris and became an overworked, down-trodden little seamstress. This is in part Marguerite Audoux's own life, but the manner of presenting it is similar to Philippe's except that there is far more serenity and less minuteness of detail than we find in Philippe.

Two other less important followers of Philippe are Andre Baillon who wrote "Histoire d'une Marie," and Pierre La Masiere.

Philippe has been compared to Dostoevsky because of his theories on human nature, his interest in the "insulted and injured," the influence of poverty on his mental outlook, and because the center of gravity in his books is also psychological rather than due to plot. Philippe studied and admired both Dostoevsky and Tolstoy. In one book, "Marie Donadieu," he even mentions Dostoevsky:

"Je me souviens que Dostoevsky dans un de ses livres, parle de 'la vie vivante' et dit qu'elle doit être toute simple, que le jour ou quelqu'un l'aura découverte, on en sera étonné." 136

Wright states that Philippe "belongs to the lineage of Rousseau and Dostoevsky, and his stories border on confessions. His chief difficulty is the formation of a plot sufficient for the narrative." 137 We have already stated

that Philippe was not greatly concerned with plot, his chief interests being character and thought or philosophy. Since he has done well what he aimed to do, we hardly dare criticize him for failing to do something which was not a part of his aim.

Philippe's conception of the purpose of the novel is given in translation by Frantz Clement:

"I consider the novel, not as the development of an idea but as something actually experienced and real, like a hand that moves, eyes that see, like the development of the entire body. The thesis novel to me is something extraordinary and not good. I find it really extraordinary that anyone dares make of the novel an excuse for social or sociological studies but that which must be an after creation of men that one has seen. One must feel them to be sure about the reason for their actions. Man is a logical being; he is so-and-so because he cannot be otherwise."

We may conclude that Philippe's novels well conform to this worthy conception.

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