

STENDHAL, DRAMATIC THEORIST AND PLAYWRIGHT

By CONSTANCE E. HURREN

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

submitted for the degree of Ph.D. in the Faculty of Arts.

"STENDHAL, DRAMATIC THEORIST AND PLAYWRIGHT"

From his childhood Stendhal was fascinated by the theatre, and from the age of seventeen to twenty-two he aimed at achieving fame as a playwright. In spite of failure he made desultory efforts for a further twenty years. His study of eighteenth-century philosophy (French) and English and Italian plays, freed him from his early orthodox views on drama. The influence of the Italian Romantics completed this emancipation, and from 1821 to 1828 Stendhal was accounted a leader in the French Romantic Movement. He advocated the writing of historical drama, modelled on Shakespeare, unrestricted by classical conventions and in prose. "Le Globe" echoes these arguments and a group of writers put his theories into practice. They failed as dramatists, but their plays form a transition between the pseudo-classic and the romantic theatre. After 1834 Stendhal lost interest in the theatre and prophesied that the novel would be the comedy of the nineteenth century.

The "Théâtre" contains an adaptation from Florian, a translation from Goldoni and attempts at original plays, the

most important being "Les Deux Hommes" and "Letellier". These examples reveal Stendhal's lack of creative imagination and his pre-occupation with theory. They also indicate the growth of his methods of building up characters by collecting traits from people he had observed. His tendency to portray himself as the hero is already marked.

There remains the problem of his long and unsatisfactory apprenticeship to the theatre. The fact that drama was traditionally a higher form of literature than the novel, and brought swifter success may have caused Stendhal to persist in his attempts, but by temperament and bent of mind he was unsuitable to be a playwright. He was too self-centred and had a deductive mind that preferred analysing the motives of his characters to depicting their actions. Traces of his early studies are visible in his novels, but the unity of his work as a playwright and novelist is his passion for the study of human nature.

Constance E. Hurren,
Bedford College.
3rd May, 1934.

STENDHAL, DRAMATIC THEORIST AND PLAYWRIGHT

"ON N'EN FINIRAIT PLUS AVEC STENDHAL."

"Essai sur Stendhal",
Paul Valéry, p. 104.

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I. INTRODUCTION

I. INTRODUCTION

Stendhal's love of the theatre is well known to those who have read his correspondence, the volumes of autobiography ("Henri Brulard" and "Souvenirs d'Egotisme") and his books on art and travel. He himself admitted that his interest in drama was more than that of a mere spectator, but until Adolphe Brisson found in the library at Grenoble piles of copybooks filled with unsuccessful attempts at drafting plays, the consistent nature of his ambitions had never been realised.

With the publication of "Pensées ou Filosofia Nova" and "Molière, Shakespeare, la Comédie et le Rire", it is possible to trace the gradual development of Stendhal's ideas on the theatre. At first he enthusiastically followed the pseudo-classical school of criticism, yet twenty years later took part in the struggles that led to the victory of the Romantic Theatre in 1830.

The volumes of the "Journal" corroborate the evidence given by the various dates in the manuscripts of the plays (1801-1834) that Stendhal persisted for many years in his attempts to write for the theatre. The collection of the fragments in the three volumes of the "Théâtre" (Le Divan,

1931) enables us to judge how far his talents were suited to such a task.

The question of Stendhal's interest in opera has not been considered as this is more allied to his passion for music.

These early works have small literary value and Stendhal himself was aware of this, for he never contemplated their being published. In fact, he was extremely reticent about his first efforts and sensitive over his failure.¹ However, a study of the fragments and notebooks gives us an insight into the long preparation that made possible the production of "Le Rouge et le Noir", "La Chartreuse de Parme", and "Lucien Leuwen".

1. "Henri Brulard", Le Divan, 1927, Vol. II, p. 111.

II. VOLUIT NON VALUIT

"Le théâtre tourmente notre auteur et le hante. C'est
une obsession."

A. Brisson, Le Temps, 7 Sept., 1908.

II. VOLUIT NON VALUIT

1

When Stendhal came to write the story of his early life, one of his first memories was a visit to the theatre at Grenoble. It was a dank, ill-smelling and badly lit place, but this did not detract from his excitement, and his impressions were so vivid that even after forty years had elapsed he could recall the details of the production of "Le Cid".

After his mother's death, he passed a lonely childhood and his chief amusement was reading, in which he was encouraged by his grandfather, Henri Gagnon, who lent him, not children's books, but the classical works of the French Theatre. Before he was ten years old, the boy was acquainted with the plays of Corneille, Racine, Molière, Destouches and Voltaire.

Reading did not satisfy him and from the age of seven he was determined to write for the theatre. He seems to have started about 1793 with an attempt at tragedy, followed in 1795 or 1796 by a sentimental comedy, based on one of Florian's tales.

1. Although Beyle did not take the name "Stendhal" until the publication of "Rome, Naples et Florence" (1817), it is simpler here to use the pseudonym throughout.

Two years later he started visiting the theatre in secret, escaping from the house on the pretext of meeting cousins. He would wait in the queues from four to six o'clock, and return home when the curfew rang at nine.

At the Ecole Normale he followed the courses of literature but was mainly interested in mathematics. However, when he reached Paris in 1799, he made no attempt to enter for the examination at the Ecole Polytechnique for which he had been studying. His cousin, Pierre Daru, found him a place in the War Office, and he relieved the monotony of work by discussing Shakespeare's plays with a fellow-clerk! In May 1800 he was sent to Milan to join the army, but he never abandoned his ambition to be a playwright and in his own mind he had come not to fight but to observe human nature, in preparation for the time when he should write comedies like Molière.¹ He began reading the theory of drama in Laharpe, made a translation from Goldoni, and one or two plans for future comedies. Finally, he resigned his commission and returned to Paris to study and fulfil his literary destiny.²

All sides of dramatic art appealed to him and in the private readings of plays given by his cousin, Madame Rebuffet, at Auteuil, he discovered his powers of declaiming verse.

1. "Henri Brulard", Stendhal: *Le Divan*. 1927. Vol. II, p.289.

2. Stendhal probably exaggerates the seriousness of his intentions, but he led his sister to believe he had refused a marriage with a wealthy girl, because it would have interfered with his studies. "Correspondance", Paupe-Chéramy, 1921, Vol. I, p. 84.

Later he developed this talent by joining elocution classes, first under Larive and then with Dugazon. (He hoped this actor would take the leading part in his comedies when they reached the stage of being produced!) He studied French, English and Italian plays, works on dramatic criticism and theory, and the philosophical writings of the previous century. His chief recreation was the theatre, and in spite of his small, irregular allowance and frequent lack of food and clothing, he managed to pay his entrance to the pit, sometimes three or ¹ four nights a week.

Like the rest of the audience, he took part in the quarrels between the actresses. The whole theatre world was agitated then by the jealousies between La Duchesnois, who was an ugly but clever and sweet-voiced actress, and the beautiful and inexperienced Mademoiselle Georges. On April 19th, 1804, Stendhal wrote an indignant article, under the name of "Junius", defending La Duchesnois against the unfair criticisms by Geoffroy in the "Débats". Later he rewrote it and sent it to the actress, to whom he had just been introduced by Crozet.

It is during this period that Stendhal made his most serious attempts at writing drama. He abandoned most of the ideas as soon as he had set them down, but he worked regularly for months on "Les Deux Hommes".² "Letellier" was his next

1. See Appendix I.

2. "Les Deux Hommes" and "Letellier" are two separate fragments which are sometimes incorrectly spoken of as one play. See "Stendhal, the Romantic Rationalist". Fineshriber, 1932, p. 25.

effort, but that was set aside for his love-affair with the actress Mélanie Louason, who introduced him to the theatrical world of Marseilles.

From 1806 to 1814 he followed all the Napoleonic Campaigns, but never lost his interest in the theatre, seeing¹ and reading plays whenever possible, and occasionally organising² private theatricals. Even at the height of his success, when he had achieved wealth and promotion, he sometimes regretted having forsaken his early ambition. "Je songe à revenir to my true talent, if I have a talent, that of comic bard."³ He carried his manuscripts everywhere and from time to time made an effort to complete "Letellier" and to annotate Molière and Shakespeare. His first thought on arriving at Koenigsberg after the retreat from Moscow was to go to the theatre. Once back in Paris he was given four months' rest or light duty. Immediately he returned to his old life of study, convinced that his talent would best reveal itself in the writing of plays.⁴

After the fall of Napoleon, Stendhal's military career was ended and while waiting for a post in Paris he began his

1. In the ruined hamlet of Saint Polter he sat down to read Alfieri's "Uno". "Journal" (Ed. Champion), Vol. III, p. 34.

2. "Correspondance" (Paupe et Chéramy), Vol. I, 3rd Dec., 1807, p. 312.

3. "Journal", Vol. III, p. 62. 20th March, 1810.

4. "Mélanges de Littérature" (Le Divan), Vol. III, 1933, p. 127. Stendhal.

first book, "Vies de Haydn, Mozart et Métastase", the only original parts of which are the criticisms of Racine, Shakespeare and the Italian dramatists. His next production was "L'Histoire de la Peinture en Italie" and it would seem that he had at last realised where his talents lay and smothered his youthful hopes, but the theatre still fascinated him:-

"Raisons pour ne pas faire les troisième, 4e, 5e, et 6e volumes de l'Histoire de la Peinture en Italie.

Depuis qu'à douze ans j'ai lu Destouches, je me suis destiné to make co, à faire des comédies. La peinture des caractères, l'adoration sentie du comique fait ma constante occupation.

Je n'ai que trop de regrets d'avoir passé deux ans à voir comment Raphael a touché les coeurs. Je cherche à oublier ces idées et celles que j'ai sur les peintres non décrits....

Mais je n'en crois pas moins sage, à 34 ans moins 3 mois d'en revenir à Letellier et de tâcher de faire une vingtaine de comédies de 34 à 54. Alors je pourrai finir la Peinture, ou bien, avant ce temps, pour me délasser de l'art de komiker."¹

Stendhal spent most of 1818 and 1819 in Milan, visiting the theatres and meeting the critics and dramatists who were seeking to create a new national drama. He was enthusiastic about this revolution of the "Romantics" against the old classical school of literature, and made an attempt himself to produce a romantic comedy "La Comtesse de Savoie", but like the other projects it remained unfinished.

In the autumn of 1821 Stendhal came over to England with the sole object of seeing Shakespeare's tragedies acted. ²

1. "Correspondence", Vol. II, 30 Sept., 1816.

2. "Souvenirs d'Egotisme", Stendhal, p. 98.

The production of "Richard III" with cuts and interpolations to suit contemporary taste displeased him intensely and he wrote an indignant letter to the "Theatrical Examiner" against the "Modern Pretender who resolves to give us his paltry sentiments instead of the great thoughts of Shakespeare".¹

During the years 1821 to 1830 Stendhal was able to use the theories on drama which he had gradually accumulated, for he became French Correspondent and Dramatic Critic to various English Reviews. His articles appeared in the New Monthly Magazine, the London Magazine, the Athenaeum and the Paris Monthly Review. He also spread his ideas in the literary and philosophical salons, which he visited regularly. At Mme de Tracy's he had opportunities for discussing English literature with Sarah Newton (wife of Victor de Tracy), who was an enthusiastic reader of Shakespeare. At Lady Morgan's also he met people with a similar interest in English drama, but the most important salons for him were those held by Stapfer and Delécluze (art critic to the "Journal des Débats"), where the young writers of the left wing of the Romantic movement met together. Stendhal was the most enthusiastic of these rebels against the reactionary critics. Being twenty years older than the rest of the company and having read and travelled extensively, he led the discussions and stirred

1. "Stendhal et l'Angleterre", D. Gunnel, 1909, p. 237. In both 1821 and 1827, Stendhal did his utmost to encourage the English players who went to Paris to produce Shakespeare and Sheridan.

the audience by his startling paradoxes and heated arguments.

He was mostly content to inspire others to write but he made two more fruitless efforts to produce a comedy, completing a few scenes of "La Gloire et la Bosse" and "Francesco Paolo". When he was in despair, unable to obtain money for his books and articles, he wondered if there would be any chance of success in a drama on "The Death of Crescentius".¹

In 1834, during his "exile" as consul in Civit  Vecchia, Stendhal made a plan for a drama to be based on Tasso's love story. However, after this had proved a failure, he bitterly declared his era to be one in which comedy had become impossible, and prophesied that the novel would be the only medium for comedy in the XIXth century.

In "Henri Brulard", Stendhal alludes to his unfulfilled ambitions, excusing himself thus:-

"Les bassesses infinies et l'esprit de conduite n cessaire pour faire jouer un drame m'ont emp ch  d'en faire bien malgr  moi et il n'y a pas huit jours que j'en avais des remords abominables. J'en ai esquiss  plus de vingt, toujours trop de d tails, et trop profonds, trop peu intelligibles pour le public b te comme M. Ternaux dont la r volution de 1789 a peupl  le parterre et les loges."²

He forgets that the public had no chance to show their intelligent appreciation of his plays, since he never completed one!

1. "Chroniques Stendhaliennes" in "Le Divan", May and November, 1929.

2. "Henri Brulard", "Le Divan", Vol. II, p. 111.

Adolphe Brisson is thus justified in saying that the theatre haunted Stendhal. From 1793 to 1834, for more than forty years, he cherished the idea of being a second Molière, in spite of his obvious lack of talent. Yet the years of study were not fruitless for they helped him to observe men and women and to analyse their emotions, gifts which were revealed when he began to write psychological novels.

III. STENDHAL AS A DRAMATIC THEORIST

III. STENDHAL AS A DRAMATIC THEORIST

i. Stendhal and the Art of Play-Making. In Preparation.

The literary education which Stendhal had received before leaving Grenoble was derived from three main sources — conversation with Henri Gagnon, secret reading and the classes at the Ecole Centrale.

Stendhal's grandfather, Dr Gagnon, a splendid example of eighteenth century culture, was an admirer of the philosophers who produced "L'Encyclopédie" and especially of Voltaire. To him Stendhal owes the direction of his interests to literary and philosophical studies, and more particularly the conception that all his learning should lead towards this goal — "la connaissance du coeur humain". From him also Stendhal received his first training in the art of thinking clearly and expressing his ideas with precision. Exaggeration, sentimental or rhetorical style, in fact, anything of an uncontrolled or artificial nature was despised by the doctor, and to escape his frowns it was necessary to use simple and accurate expressions, and to avoid all vulgarisms.¹

1. "Henri Brulard", Stendhal, Le Divan, 1927, Vol. II, p. 83.

It is impossible to judge Stendhal's taste in literature at this time from the account he gives in "Henri Brulard" of his early choice of reading-matter, for these statements are naturally coloured by the views he had acquired later. He assures us that he found Racine extremely dull and even hypocritical, and that the versification annoyed him because it was less precise and clear than prose. He could appreciate Corneille for the lofty nature of the passions expressed by the chief characters, but Voltaire seemed to him merely childish. In point of fact, he must have admired Racine and Voltaire or he would not have read so many of their plays.

It was in Grenoble that he first discovered Shakespeare and borrowed all the volumes of Letourneur's translations. He wrote later concerning this English dramatist:-
 "Je crus renaître en le lisant."¹

In comedy only the sentimental appealed to him, for being too young to have an intellectual appreciation he judged with his feelings and his sensitive nature revolted against satirical wit. He could not bear plays that mirrored the follies of men and women, nor the dramas of middle-class life which recalled the dull, unhappy environment from which he longed to escape. On the other hand, he remembers being touched to the point of weeping by one of the "most ridiculous of Destouches' comedies"².

1. "Henri Brulard", Vol. II, p. 58.

2. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 124.

This tendency was increased by the novels that he read in secret, such as "La Nouvelle Héloïse", "Mémoires d'un Homme de Qualité" and Duclos' "Mémoires Secrets". In particular his imagination was stimulated by Laclos' "Les Liaisons Dangereuses". From this he learnt the practice of a form of self-analysis by which (as it is carried out after the manner of Valmont and Madame de Merteuil) even the most spontaneous of emotions are tested and checked by the intellect, and love becomes an exact science with its plan of attack methodically worked out. The results of this study are shown in his own unhappy love-affairs and in his detached observation of others' passions.

The course of lectures at Ecole Centrale gave Stendhal his general literary background and trained him in the methods which he followed later when organising his own studies. Although he says ungratefully (in "Henri Brulard")¹ that the knowledge which Dubois-Fontanelle imparted to him seemed superficial, and even false, in point of fact he is indebted to this professor for his first ideas on drama. Fortunately² Dubois-Fontanelle's lectures were later collected and printed in Paris, so that we can have direct knowledge of what Stendhal was taught. The first chapter in this book deals with the problem of style: our thoughts must be precise and clearly

1. "Henri Brulard", Vol. II, p. 109.

2. "Cours de Littérature", Dubois-Fontanelle, 1813.

expressed, and to obtain these qualities we should make a study of the sequence of ideas. Fontanelle then sidetracks into an account of the philosophers Condillac, Locke and Helvétius and their conception of the way in which the mind receives messages from the senses and interprets them, theories which were no doubt further explained to Stendhal in the course on Philosophy by the Abbé Gattel. Fontanelle then discourses on Montesquieu's theory that the differences of climate, soil and time are responsible for the diversities in the human race. The second volume gives the general history of tragedy and the modern developments of the theatre in Italy, Spain, England and France. Dubois-Fontanelle is definitely classical in his criticism, acknowledging the supremacy of Corneille, Racine, Crébillon and Voltaire, and blaming those who, like Alfieri, would alter the old dramatic conventions. A similar account is given of European comedy in Volume III, but the only important point in this section with regard to Stendhal's future theories is the emphasis laid on the superiority of comedy of character.

When he settled in Paris to begin his career as a dramatist, Stendhal fully realised that his previous education was insufficient and that he would need further instruction before attempting to write a play himself. In his curious independent way, he devised a general scheme of study

without appealing for advice to his father, to his old masters or to anyone with ^{an} intimate knowledge of the theatre. Further, he made no effort to discover at first hand the possibilities and limitations of the stage, and though he attended classes under Larive and Dugazon, it was only for elocution.

In planning his reading he applied the principles observed in his philosophical studies, and presumed that as the trained thinker (in order to secure clear and precise expression) follows up the sequence of his ideas to their origin, so must the dramatist examine the nature of tragedy and comedy, and the "springs of laughter", before proceeding to write. Also, as the theatre presents an imitation of life, he should investigate the workings of human personality expressed by individuals and by society, both in the present and in the past. In fact, the power of analysis is an ¹ essential gift for a playwright. At the same time the student of drama should read the great tragedies and comedies of different nations and examine the general technique of play-writing. Thus Stendhal planned for himself these lines of study — philosophical, literary and technical, and compounded his theories from all three.

Philosophy to him meant the art of observing and ² portraying human passions, and accordingly he worked with

1. "Pensées", Le Divan, 1931, Vol. I, p. 36. Stendhal desired to be able to reply exactly to questions such as "What is man? What is laughter and remorse?"

2. "Théâtre", Le Divan, 1931, Vol. II, p. 94.

great enthusiasm on Condillac, Helvétius and Cabanis, even though he could not always follow their arguments. His chief sources of knowledge were Destutt de Tracy's "Eléments d'Idéologie" (comprising "Idéologie", "La Grammaire", and "La Logique") and Montesquieu's "De L'Esprit des Lois". Admittedly, he made great demands on his study of philosophy, hoping thereby to discover the secret of producing the greatest possible comedies and poems, and also the art of gaining the maximum happiness in life!¹ To add further to his knowledge of men and women, he followed the lives of famous kings and statesmen in the works of Saint-Simon, Voltaire and Mirabeau. Also, to gain insight into private life in past centuries, he read real and fictitious "Mémoires", like those of Duclos, Marmontel, Madame de Guines and Madame de Genlis.

His main text-book on the nature of laughter was a translation of Hobbes' "Humane Nature, or the Fundamental Elements of Policey" (1650) from which he took abundant notes, now published in the "Pensées". Also, as he mentions Poinsinet de Sivry at this time,² it is possible that he already knew this author's "Traité des Causes Physiques et Morales du Rire".

In his choice of literature Stendhal followed closely the lines set down by Dubois-Fontanelle, as may be seen from the work he planned for his sister Pauline, which was really

1. "Journal", Vol. I, p. 137.

2. "Pensées", Vol. I, p. 261, mentioned as the translator of Aristophanes.

a parallel course to his own. Her list reads thus:-

"Le Cid", "Horace", "Cinna", "Rodogune" and "Polyeucte"; "Radamiste" and "Zénobie"; "Mérope" and "Zaïre". "Je finis en te recommandant de lire sans cesse Racine et Corneille, je suis comme l'Eglise, hors de là point de salut."¹

He himself carried out these instructions, reading an act of Racine every night before retiring, and a play of Corneille's every morning, excepting when he had an English lesson.²

It has been suggested³ that Stendhal had not yet developed the cosmopolitan taste in literature which was so characteristic of him later, and that he still considered the French theatre to be the most perfect. A paragraph in the "Pensées" gives a different impression, for there he expresses the desire to visit London for the purpose of comparing English and French tragedy, a wish that was fulfilled fourteen years later.⁴ We have evidence also from the "Journal" that Stendhal was reading Alfieri, Goldoni, Gozzi, Machiavelli and various collections of Italian playwrights and all the French translations of Shakespeare.

For the technical side of drama, he procured a copy of Dubois-Fontanelle's lectures and supplemented these with

1. "Correspondance", Paupe-Chéramy, 1921, Vol. I, p. 32.
2. Ibid., p. 41.
3. "Racine et Shakespeare", Edit. Champion, 1925. Préface, p. xv.
4. "Pensées", Vol. I, p. 100 (May, 1803).

the eight volumes of literary history of Laharpe — "Lycée", in which he establishes the French Classics as the perfect models whose methods cannot be improved on. Boileau's "Art Poétique" and Cailhava's "De l'Art de la Comédie" complete the list.

It now remains to see what conception of drama Stendhal had as a result of pursuing such varied courses of study.

ii. 1801 - 1805.

Most of the evidence for Stendhal's early ideas on drama is drawn from remarks jotted down in his diary, in letters to Pauline or in his notebooks (which are reproduced in the volumes entitled "Pensées. (Filosofia Nova)"). These comments were made at random during his reading, and do not in any way constitute an orderly treatise on dramatic theory, nor as yet did Stendhal wish to write as a theorist, but merely kept notes for his future guidance in composing plays. It is possible, however, by collecting the most important and frequently occurring of his remarks, to deduce what theories were acceptable to him at this time on such matters as the subjects of tragedy and comedy, their treatment, and

the importance of character-drawing. We can also observe the modifications of these ideas owing to the influence of his philosophical reading, and find the seeds of those arguments which more than twenty years later formed the doctrine of "Racine et Shakespeare".

As a writer Stendhal desired to isolate himself (intellectually) from his own age and become a citizen of that century which was most favourable to the production of genius, and therefore to imagine himself as a contemporary of Corneille.¹ His efforts to gain this "citizenship" were restricted to the close study of the language used by the classics. He hoped to make this instrument of expression his own, and as a means of acquiring facility in writing verse collected rhymes and poetical phrases from Corneille,² Racine and La Fontaine.³ Another method of practice in writing was to translate foreign epics into French verse.⁴

To definitions Stendhal was inclined by his early training in mathematics and his reading of ideology. He was optimistic enough to hope to devise one that would indicate the aim of both tragedy and comedy and also explain how they were to be created!⁵ He failed, but in the search produced

1. "Pensées", Vol. I, p. 13.

2. N.B. Stendhal at this time wished to produce his comedies in verse. See p. 97.

3. "Mélanges de Littérature", Vol. III, Le Divan, 1933, p.1.

4. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 335.

5. "Pensées", Vol. II, p. 18.

interesting comparisons between these forms of literature. His opinion is that in tragedy we identify ourselves with the sufferer and through his experiences are enabled to realise ourselves more fully, whereas in comedy we consider the protagonist objectively as someone whom we might have to encounter.¹ Elsewhere he mentions that tragedy is founded on sympathy and comedy on judgment, definitions that are supported by modern critics.

According to Stendhal, tragedy should be almost entirely concerned with the passions and neglect the portrait of society, for tragic characters are essentially individualistic, fulfilling their destiny whatever the cost and disdaining all criticism of their fellow-men.² Moreover, as human passions remain unchanged from age to age, the representation of them does not grow out of date,³ and thus a great play has every chance of becoming immortal. Such subject-matter should be treated so as to give a moral significance and one that is easily understood by everyone.

The dramatic action should arise from the opposition of characters or from conflicting passions within one person. Stendhal attempted to work these out mathematically:

1. Ibid., pp. 265-266.

2. "Correspondance", Vol. I, p. 105.

3. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 106.

"l'homme est:

a. fils Oreste vengeur, Rodrigue.

b. frère

c. amant Oreste amant, Achille, etc.

(combinaison 2 à 2 = $m(m-1) = 6(6-1) = 30$)

(combinaison diff. = $m \frac{(m-1)}{2} = 6 \frac{(6-1)}{2} = 6(5) = 15.$)¹

An original notion, prompted by his own sense of inferiority as regards wealth and social position, is his explanation as to why the dramatic chooses men of high rank for his tragic heroes. In our early years we see happiness as the exclusive possession of the more fortunate classes and soon realise that this happiness will probably always lie beyond our reach. Perhaps it is our desire for vengeance that makes us enjoy witnessing a tragic situation such as Agamemnon suffering in spite of his great riches and power.²

Stendhal considers domestic tragedy to be the worst form of literature. By dealing with people similar to ourselves and who are in unhappy circumstances, it only reminds us of our own experiences, and leaves us more miserable than before. Moreover, only lack of observation can allow authors to produce characters entirely good or entirely bad, and also the constant reference to "virtue" is not true to real life.

Comedy is the best form of drama for it gives us a picture of life which we can understand as being similar to

1. "Pensées", Vol. I, p. 32. In the second equation the first bracket is given as $(m \frac{m}{2} = 1)$ which must be a misprint.

2. "Pensées", Vol. I, pp. 25-26.

our own. At the same time it gives us pleasure, as it is represented from an amusing angle. To achieve this end comedy must show us characters in the act of mistaking their way to happiness. Such, according to Stendhal is the definition of the "ridiculous" in life. This is an original theory based on the study of philosophy. His masters (Condillac and Helvétius in particular) had taught him that the aim of life is to seek after happiness.¹ If then through some weakness of character, a man wanders from the path which leads to his goal of happiness, he will appear ridiculous. He will seem even more absurd if he is pursuing the same ideal as we are,² but loses his way through lack of some gift which we possess.

If a man's actions bring him happiness, they must have been right for him and accordingly may not be judged by others as comic. Even excess of passion may not be considered as ridiculous unless it is accompanied by loss of happiness. Strength of passion makes for dignity in human life, and though we may not understand or sympathise with a man's outlook (as in the case of a miser), we have no right to laugh at him if he achieves what he considers to be success and happiness. Further, Stendhal believes that passion, being incompatible with forethought, excuses even the most foolish of deeds, and a villain's actions must be carried out

1. See "L'Apologie des Passions", in "Le Prérromantisme Français", Monglond, 1930, pp. 186-189.

2. "Pensées", Vol. II, p. 182.

callously, in cold blood, if he is to be made despicable.¹

The comic dramatist should have two objects in view, namely, amusing and improving his audience. Like a second Hercules² he will aim at "cleaning the Augian stables" of the vices which do the greatest harm to society. Stendhal argues that it is possible for us to be thus chastised and cleansed of our follies, as we tend to compare ourselves with the characters before us³ on the stage. On the other hand, he contends that our vanity is to be pleasantly gratified by the sense of superiority arising from our knowledge that we should never have been as foolish as they are. In fact, the play that produces constant laughter is the one that most frequently impresses us with our own perfection of character.⁴ The characters must not be, however, of too low a type, or their life^{is} so different from ours that comparison becomes impossible, and the effect is then neither comic nor moral (as in the case of Chrysale in "Les Femmes Savantes"). Stendhal does not seem to perceive the contradiction between this statement and the idea of the moral effect of comedy. The object of a play cannot be at once to persuade us of our excellence and to draw attention to our faults.

1. "Théâtre", Vol. II, p. 168.

2. "Pensées", Vol. II, p. 304.

3. Cf. Marmontel, "Eléments de la Littérature", Vol. XII (Le Comique), p. 498.

4. "Pensées", Vol. II, p. 280, and par. 3 on p. 355.

As for the different types of comedies, Stendhal set no value on those that were merely concerned with intrigue, and the technical difficulties of unravelling a complicated plot never interested him. He admired the comedy of manners, for it holds a mirror to society and from it can be deduced the contemporary conceptions of justice, goodness, happiness¹ and their opposites. This form is at a disadvantage, however, for should the dramatist succeed in killing the particular vice against which he rails, the comedy risks becoming out of date.² He suggested that this might have been the reason why "Les Précieuses Ridicules" and "L'Avare" were no longer attracting audiences, although Harpagon would still be popular in the provinces where such characters could be found.³

Stendhal naturally preferred comedy of character, as it was the study of human personality that always fascinated him. In his own plays he hoped to make the plot depend entirely on the actions of the chief personage who would then be something more than a mere figure in a stereotyped, sentimental intrigue.⁴ Similarly, the dramatic conflict in the comedy should arise from the opposition of the

1. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 207.

2. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 187. Cf. Cailhava, "De L'Art de la Comédie", 1728, Chap. XXII.

3. "Pensées", Vol. II, p. 172.

4. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 298. Cf., p. 303, and Dubois-Fontanelle, op.cit., Vol. III, p. 33.

two chief characters,¹ or of a character and the situation in which he is placed.²

The character-drawing should be as complete as possible and yet avoid exaggeration and caricature. The dramatist can only reveal the nature of his hero by depicting his habits, for sudden isolated movements of passion are of no value as indicators of character.³ Since habits arise from the continued effect of the mind on the emotions, and the passions are not to be introduced into comedy, the comic element must be found in the mind (l'esprit). This definite separation of "head" and "heart", suggested to Stendhal by his study of Hobbes,⁴ leads him to a curious theory about the method of creating characters. The playwright will imagine his protagonist in a certain situation, proceed to allot him emotional qualities and finally give him a suitable intellect. Stendhal finds that the difficulties are great: if his mind is too good, the protagonist will not be likely to act in a ridiculous manner, but, on the other hand, if he is too weak-headed, the spectator will despise him and so be unwilling to make the comparison on which comedy depends. When Stendhal suggests implanting his

1. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 210. Cf. Destouches, Prefaces to "L'Ambitieux" and "L'Envieux".

2. Cf. Cailhava, op. cit., Chap. XXIV.

3. "Pensées", Vol. II, p. 188.

4. Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 120-121. Analysis of Hobbes' theories.

own intellect in his heroes (so that they may have the best kind of mind possible!) he realises that his mind bears the imprint of his character and will therefore only be suited to those who also resemble him in temperament.¹

He attempts to discover mathematical formulæ for the composition of his characters. Since, according to Montesquieu, the climate and the form of government are the determining factors of a nation (and so of individuals) a formulæ may be worked out thus: a = passion, c = climate and l = legislation. The person will then = acl, and the variants of character will be ac'l, acl', ac'l' according to the different powers of c and l.²

His natural bent of mind, intensified by the study of ideology, leads Stendhal to concentrate on the analysis of character. He feels that the audience will only understand the hero and be amused by him if the sequence of his ideas³ and the chain of motives behind his acts are laid bare. From an isolated deed or even from a number of anecdotes, we cannot draw definite conclusions, but if we know the causes that precede the particular resultant, we shall have an insight into the character of the person concerned.⁴

1. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 218.

2. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 172.

3. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 286. Cf. "Journal", Vol. I, p. 183.

4. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 240.

A detailed report of all that a man said and did during one day, given to an actor, would enable him to make a correct impersonation, but such an impersonation would only be completely understood by those who already knew the man. On the other hand, a "god" could disclose in his report the motives which lay behind each word and deed, and so enable the actor to represent a character of interest to everyone. To some extent we are all "gods", for after having noted in ourselves the outward indications of the passion that is animating us, we apply our observations when analysing our companions¹.

Stendhal's theories on laughter are adopted almost entirely from Hobbes' conclusions that the passion of laughter arises from a sudden realisation of our own superiority over another, or even over ourselves (if we are looking back at some past event), provided that at the moment of laughter our emotions are not aroused by the sense of possible danger, or by sympathy.² Stendhal continually thinks over this definition, emphasising its different points. He is most interested in the question of our feeling of personal excellence,³ which brings him back to the old

1. Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 179-180.

2. Hobbes, "Humane Nature" frequently analysed in the "Pensées", particularly Vol. I, p. 117; Vol. II, pp. 173-8.

3. "Pensées", Vol. II, p. 88.

problem of the spectator comparing himself to the characters on the stage. He admits that pride and spitefulness play a part in the production of laughter, because of the delight we take in seeing a pretentious man humiliated. Vanity, however, is the main characteristic of the spectator and the dramatist must seek to flatter him by creating heroes as perfect as possible (except for the one weakness which makes them comic) so that he may feel himself to be the most excellent person on earth.

The definitions of "le ridicule", "le plaisant", and "la sottise", which occur so frequently in the "Pensées", seem to have been copied from Cailhava and Marmontel, and accepted without further discussion, but the problem of "l'odieux" troubled Stendhal. Characters manifesting the usual weaknesses of human nature will appear "odious" to the spectator, for they remind him of his own experiences. Consequently, the first care of the dramatist must be to set his characters sufficiently in perspective so that the spectator shall not become aware of the chance of a parallel danger in his own life. If it is desired to introduce a thoroughly despicable character, he must always be presented in company with a comic personage, so that the audience is kept amused and does not rivet its attention on the example of odiousness. In any case, it is easy to go beyond the

bounds of comedy, and Stendhal considers that Molière has passed these limits in "Le Tartuffe".

Thus far, Stendhal has apparently accepted most of the orthodox ideas on dramatic theory and technique, though his reflections on comedy have led him to dissent from the usual judgments of Molière's plays.¹ Yet as early as 1802,² he begins to doubt the validity of the critics who could not appreciate any piece which was not closely modelled on the seventeenth-century drama, and determines in future to "délaharpiser"³ his views and formulate his theories entirely on his own observations.⁴

The first indication of his growing independence of judgment is his reiterated demand for "naturalness" in both the actions and speech of a given character. "Le naturel" in action⁵ means for him conduct conforming to his own standards, and he criticises adversely many French dramatists for producing "unnatural" characters. Voltaire's heroes, for instance, do not behave naturally, but act in a self-conscious manner,⁶ whereas really noble characters are unaware of their greatness and simply follow the path of duty. Similarly,

1. See pp. 31, 32, and preceding paragraph.

2. "Correspondance", Vol. I, p. 33 (August, 1802).

3. "Journal", Vol. I, p. 88.

4. "Pensées", Vol. II, pp. 220-221.

5. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 344.

6. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 153. Cf. Criticism of "Adélaïde de Guesclîn" in "Journal", Vol. I, p. 130.

most of the contemporary playwrights are guilty of "manque de naturel" and "exagération dans les sentiments". In order to acquire this desirable quality in his own writings, Stendhal proposes to study the Italian, Goldoni, who more than any other writer gives the spectator a feeling of "naturalness".

Stendhal blames ~~the~~ French tragedy for the unnatural style in which the characters speak, constantly introducing eloquent passages during tense moments. He pours ridicule on Racine and Voltaire for their never-ending tirades in which ten lines are given where two words would suffice, and on Beaumarchais for the verbose and bombastic speeches in his domestic drama.

The French theatre may also be criticised for the inclusion of maxims, ~~and sentences~~, but most of all Stendhal objects to its tendencies to lyricism. He contends that if a man is experiencing intense emotion, either of suffering or ecstasy, he cannot at the same time recite long tirades about it. The moment he turns his mind inwards to examine his feelings, he objectivises them and the feeling of pain or pleasure is temporarily lulled. On this account

1. "Pensées", Vol. I, p. 306.

2. "Journal", Vol. I, p. 119.

3. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 257.

4. "Pensées", Vol. I, p. 47 and p. 115, criticism of Chénier's "Fénelon". Cf. criticism of "Oreste" (de la Touche) in "Journal", I, p. 196.

Voltaire once more is subject to criticism¹ and even Corneille is not exempt though his character-drawing is generally "sublime". Such passages as Rodrigue's soliloquies on his love for Chimène, and the duty that lies before him, are pronounced "unnatural",² and psychologically untrue. Lastly, this love of eloquence causes the poets to neglect the dramatic action in their plays,³ and consequently the French theatre has become weak, lacking energy of movement and feeling.

This desire for a simple style leads Stendhal to consider the relative value of verse and prose. He is still hesitant about the use of prose although it is a precise and accurate medium, and he attempts to versify his own comedies. He admits that rhythm gives verse a musical quality lacking in prose,⁴ but comes to the conclusion that prose is easier to write, and being similar to the language of the spectator⁵ gives him a greater sense of reality. Stendhal's growing distrust of poetry may have been partly due to his own inability to write verse, but he was definitely influenced in this direction by Fénelon's "Lettre à l'Académie".⁶

1. "Journal", Vol. I, p. 155.

2. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 178.

3. See criticism of Crébillon: "Pensées", Vol. I, p. 107.

4. "Pensées", Vol. I, p. 241.

5. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 75 and 178.

6. See Fénelon, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-33, 58, 61-62, and R. Gavel, "Racine, Fénelon et Stendhal", *Rev. d'Hist. Litt.* July-Sept., 1932.

One consequence of these ideas is his increasing dislike of Racine. The elegant style now seems to him stilted, cold and overburdened with epithets.¹ Like Fénelon, he objects to Thérémène's long speech at the end of "Phèdre", and he also condemns as false the famous line in "Andromaque":- "Je t'aimais inconstant, qu'aurais-je fait fidèle?"² as he thinks Hermione would probably have been less passionate if Pyrrhus had been faithful. Far from accepting Racine as a model, Stendhal frankly admits that he despises him,³ and is determined never to write a tragedy drawn from the "ridiculous Greek mythology".⁴

As his enthusiasm for the French playwright wanes,⁵ he turns more and more to the study of Shakespeare, in whom he finds that "naturalness" which makes for a perfect representation of life on the stage. The English poet reveals not only the passions but the very depths of character⁶ in his people, and to imitate him is to imitate Nature.⁷

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1. "Théâtre", Vol. II, p. 73.
 2. "Pensées", Vol. II, pp. 26-27.
 3. "Correspondance", Vol. I, p. 298.
 4. "Pensées", Vol. II, p. 355.
 5. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 227.
 6. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 341.
 7. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 190.

He appreciates the historical plays, especially "Richard III". As early as 1804 he suggests that French dramatists would find a mine of success if they chose as subjects the lives of their national heroes.¹ Dubois-Fontanelle had probably given him this idea when he prophesied that the French theatre in the future would deal with history.² Stendhal in his list of possible tragedies, includes plays on Mahommed, Henri IV, Cromwell and Caesar and it is interesting to note that one of these — Cromwell³ — was popular with playwrights twenty years later. Among the subjects on which he desired to write himself after the manner of Shakespeare are:-

- "La Descente de Quiberon! en 3 actes, le premier en Angleterre, les deux autres à Quiberon.... Personnages: Louis XVIII? Pitt, etc."
- 2. "L'Avènement de B(onaparte) au trône et le jugement de Moreau"
- 3. Henri IV. (Shakespeare, part ii)
- 4. "Alexis", la mort de ce malheureux fils de Pierre le Grand.....⁴

Another indication of Stendhal's breaking away from the influence of Laharpe and the older critics is the change in his views on the question of "absolute beauty" in art and literature. From Montesquieu he learnt that though by nature

1. "Journal", Vol. I, p. 107.

2. Dubois-Fontanelle, "Cours de Belles Lettres", 1813, Vol. II, p. 439.

3. "Pensées", Vol. I, p. 56.

4. Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 321-322.

all men are similar, the effects of climate, custom and the different forms of government have produced the existing variety of races. Helvétius taught him that the differences are due to the varying types of education. In any case, it was obvious to him that even within one nation, successive generations live in slightly different conditions and consequently will have different ideas, which in turn will need new forms of expression. The doctrine of "absolute beauty" which the pseudo-classic playwrights and critics upheld so obstinately, must therefore be false, and a new conception of beauty is to be expected from each generation. Comedy, in particular, will vary in its subjects from age to age, if it is to be a successful "mirror" of society.¹ For example, an ambitious man in the time of Louis XIV aimed at gaining and retaining a position at court, whereas under Louis XVI he would have desired to achieve a life of luxury, and now his only care would be to amass wealth. Tragedy, it must be admitted, deals with ~~the~~ human passions which do not change, yet the dramatist should remember that his subject needs to be presented from a fresh angle for a modern audience. The people's taste has been perfected in the 130 years since the days of the classical theatre and this is shown by the lack of enjoyment²

1. "Pensées", Vol. I, p. 63, and Vol. II, p. 10.

2. Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 150 and 151.

felt by those who go to the revivals of Corneille, Racine and Molière, although literary snobbery prevents them from admitting it. As a result of the Revolution the Frenchman is more akin to the Roman Republicans and needs more vigorous plays like the Greek and English tragedy.¹ Stendhal finds his ideas corroborated in an article from the "Journal des Spectacles" (2 juillet, 1804) whose author remarks that tragedies which used to affect deeply audiences of 1784 are no longer successful.²

iii. 1810 - 1816.

After 1805, Stendhal ceased collecting ideas in the book of "New Philosophy" (or "Pensées"), but continued to note in his diary any thoughts that occurred to him after visiting the theatre. In 1811, with the help of Crozet, he wrote short commentaries on several plays of Molière and Shakespeare, and rearranged his former theories on Laughter.³ His first books "Vies de Hadyn, de Mozart et de Métastase", "L'Histoire de la Peinture en Italie" and "Rome, Naples et Florence" contain numerous passages on the problems of drama.

1. "Pensées", Vol. I, pp. 150 and 151.

2. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 251.

3. Contained in "Molière, Shakespeare, La Comédie et le Rire", Le Divan, 1930.

These and his criticism of particular playwrights show his increasing independence of judgment.

Throughout this period, whenever he had leisure to read, he followed his old course of studies on philosophy, literature and the technique of the theatre. He delved with even greater enthusiasm into the works of Cabanis,¹ Biran, Destutt de Tracy, Hobbes, Montesquieu, Helvétius.¹ He maintained his former interest in the Italian, French and English drama, supplementing his knowledge of Shakespeare by studying the famous preface to Johnson's edition.² In the matter of theory, however, his taste had changed considerably; he became more bitter in his invective against Laharpe and the critics who had ruined the judgment of the French,³ and tried to forget the ideas he had found in Marmontel and Cailhava.⁴ Already he spoke contemptuously of the members of the Academy (in particular of M. Auger) as "bougres plats".⁵

The books that influenced him most at this time were the English literary magazines, especially the Edinburgh⁶

1. "Molière, Shakespeare, La Comédie et le Rire. Note to p. 231. Le Divan, 1930.

2. "Journal", Vol. II, p. 394.

3. "Histoire de la Peinture", 1854, p. 80.

4. "Molière, Shakespeare, etc.", p. 224.

5. "Journal", Vol. IV, Ch. XLVIII.

6. "Correspondance", Vol. II, 28 Sept., 1816, p. 8.

and the Quarterly Reviews. These papers condemned the ultra-patriotic spirit of the French who placed their great dramatists above all others, refused to change their novels, in spite of the present decadence in their own theatre, and still continued to regard Shakespeare as a barbarian.¹

In 1813,² immediately after its publication, Stendhal read the translation of Schlegel's lectures ("Cours de Littérature") and the margins of his copy are full of notes dated 1814, 1815, 1816 and 1819, which are generally comments on the absurdity of Schlegel's ideas.³ However, Stendhal did appreciate the chapter on Shakespeare,⁴ and certainly it was this book which first introduced to him the idea of a "natural and romantic" tragedy, deriving its motives from still current modes of thought and behaviour.⁵ From it he also gained the conception of a "romantic" comedy, poetical and "gai" like Shakespeare's.⁶ Stendhal was thoroughly acquainted with Mme de Staël's works, and

1. See abstract from an article in "Mélanges de Littérature", Vol. III, pp. 147-9.

2. This disproves François Montel's theory that Stendhal's "romanticism" developed after his reading the article on Schlegel in the Edinburgh Review of 1816. See "Le Romantisme de Stendhal" in "Le Figaro", 21 August, 1926, p.6.

3. Cf. "Racine et Shakespeare", Préface, p. xli.

4. "Mélanges de Littérature", Vol. III, p. 140.

5. "Dramatic Art and Literature", Schlegel, 1846, p. 263.

6. "Molière, Shakespeare, La Comédie et le Rire", p.263. Cf. "Hist. de la Peinture", 1854. Note to p. 223.

in spite of his constant biting criticism, there is no doubt that her ideas did enable him to substantiate his own theories on relativity in taste and the necessity for a new type of literature to suit contemporary readers.

The effect of this study may be deduced if we investigate, as before, Stendhal's general ideas on tragedy and comedy. There is little said about tragedy, for this kind of drama now irritated him, partly because of his own¹ inability to produce one, but also because his Dauphinois nature with its fear of being duped, mistrusted its "prétentions à émouvoir".

The essential element of comedy is still considered to be the protagonist's mistaken action or habit which leads him from the goal of happiness towards which he is striving.² This conception leads Stendhal to make adverse criticisms of "Les Femmes Savantes" and "The Merchant of Venice". He denies that the "blue-stockings" are made ridiculous, since they are not disappointed in their desires to impress people with their pretended learning.³ Similarly, although Shylock as a character is perfectly drawn, he cannot be considered a comic figure, because he has not mistaken the road which leads to his goal of happiness — wealth.⁴

1. "Journal", Vol. III, p. 299.

2. "Mélanges de Littérature", Vol. II, p. 167. Cf. "Rome, Naples et Florence", Le Divan, 1927, Vol. I, p. 39.

3. "Molière, Shakespeare, etc.", p. 45.

4. Ibid., p. 206.

Stendhal admits that it is getting more difficult to find subjects for comedy. Under Louis XIV, society was clearly divided into different classes, and anyone who did not adhere to the customs of his rank was considered eccentric and ridiculous.¹ These conditions no longer exist, and a man has the right to behave as he likes. Let him seek happiness where he will, none may account him ridiculous unless he mistake his way. There is a further difficulty, for the society which has grown up since the revolution is not sufficiently well established to allow satirists to mock its weaknesses.

One important change occurs in Stendhal's theory on comedy and this concerns the moral effect of plays. He now contends that the first aim of comedy is to arouse laughter.² The idea that it should castigate the follies of society is only another of the absurdities propagated by Laharpe.² He argues that if comedy is to impress men with the stupidity of their actions, it will have to show the unhappy results that arise from behaviour such as theirs.³ The plays will then be neither amusing nor pleasant, and the spectator, instead of taking the admonition to heart, would just dismiss them as failures. Comedy, therefore, should leave

1. "Rome, Naples et Florence", Vol. I, p. 231.

2. "Molière, Shakespeare, etc.", p. 252.

3. "Mélanges de Littérature", Vol. II, p. 167.

moralising to the preacher and be content with making weaknesses of character appear ridiculous.¹ This new point of view is probably only due to Stendhal's growing independence and to his somewhat rebellious nature, but he may have been influenced by Schlegel's similar ideas on the matter.²

Stendhal still considers the study of character to be the most important part of a dramatist's work. The dramatic action should arise from the struggle between passion and duty within a character, or from the opposition of two personalities,³ but in both cases, the author should aim at disclosing the secret motives that have produced the action. There is one fresh suggestion on the matter of character painting: the playwright should draw on his own experience when making the analysis of his characters, instead of merely copying the portraits in existing plays.⁴ He should also take real people as models for his creations, make a "nosological" list of their passions and habits, and examine the natural and social ties that bind them to their fellowmen.⁵

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1. "Mélanges de Littérature, Vol. II, p. 167.
 2. "Dramatic Art and Literature", 1846, Schlegel, p. 187.
 3. "Journal", Vol. III, pp. 159-160.
 4. "Histoire de la Peinture, 1854, pp. 206-7.
 5. "Journal", Vol. III, pp. 159-160.

Stendhal's theories on the nature of laughter remain unchanged, and he continues to judge humorous anecdotes on the basis of "the sudden sense of superiority" felt by the listener. He formulates some new conclusions, the first ~~which~~ being that indignation destroys the state of mind necessary to the appreciation of the comic. Low or unin-¹telligent characters, therefore, cannot be amusing as they arouse this indignation. Also, if an angry man goes to the² theatre he is so occupied by the thoughts of his own wrongs that he cannot enter into the spirit of the play. Likewise the man who is deeply in love finds it difficult to laugh³ because he is engrossed with his own search for happiness.

Stendhal attempts an original piece of analysis — the cause and nature of the smile (as distinct from laughter) which he thinks arises from the sudden vision of another⁴ person's happiness. Shakespeare has created characters like Jessica who radiate joy, and we smile rather than laugh at⁵ them.

The need for "le naturel" in both character-drawing and style is now more stressed than before. If a dramatist wants his characters to live through the centuries he must

1. Ibid., Vol. IV, 17 Feb., 1813.
2. "Histoire de la Peinture"; note to p. 223.
3. "Journal", Vol. IV, 18 Feb., 1813.
4. "Molière, Shakespeare, etc.", p. 233.
5. Ibid., pp. 219-220.

portray the incidents of the play in a natural manner,¹ for there is strength in the work of a writer who ~~portrays~~^{depicts} exactly what he sees, even if his subject be mediocre.² (Critics who object to this method of treating comedy are idiots.)³ Again, if he desires to write well he must aim at producing a simple style which like a transparent varnish will protect the colours and even make them more brilliant without actually changing them.⁴ Stendhal criticises more severely than ever the endless flow of eloquence in the French plays which turns them into a series of odes. He particularly objects to Emilie's soliloquies in "Cinna", Act I, for a woman in such a state of agitation would surely express herself in short, broken sentences.⁵

He is still undecided about the value of verse as a medium for the theatre, for though fully aware of its defects, he cannot help wishing his own comedy ("Letellier") were written in poetry, and even suggests paying to have it versified.⁶ He tends more and more, however, to agree with Fénelon that poetry makes for loss of shades of meaning and impairs preciseness of expression.

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1. "Histoire de la Peinture", 1854, p. 241 (notes).
 2. "Journal", Vol. IV, 4, 5 April, 1813.
 3. Ibid., Vol. IV, 19 Feb., 1813.
 4. "Vies de Haydn, etc.", Le Divan, 1928, pp. 372-3.
 5. "Journal", Vol. III, p. 368.
 6. Ibid., Vol. IV (plac. 28.iii).

His admiration for Shakespeare has grown considerably and he constantly compares him with Racine, no matter what kind of a book he is writing. In fact, a critic of "L'Histoire de la Peinture en Italie" takes him to task for these digressions, and for his disparaging remarks on Racine.¹ Stendhal praises the English playwrights for having created not merely figures mouthing the writer's brilliant tirades, but living, passionate men and women who move the audience by their sincerity. He likewise appreciates Shakespeare's natural, normally proportioned portraits of human personality in which are realised that intimate relationship between the physical and emotional nature (a point which he had just been studying in Cabanis).

There is another hint of Stendhal's desire to see historical drama written.^{1a} He suggests that scenes taken from Macirone's novel on "Murat" would provide good subject-matter for "future Shakespeares" in France.²

Stendhal's studies of the changes of taste in art and music led him to confirm his theory on the relativity of beauty. The generation of 1814 differ widely in outlook from their parents who lived in pre-Revolution times, and accordingly demand a new theatre that will adequately express

1. "Journal de Paris", 12 Nov, 1817, published in Le Divan, Jan., 1925, p. 29.

2. "Rome, Naples et Florence", Vol. III, pp. 26-27.

their views.¹ Only the unreasonable, "hide-bound" critics insist that the playwrights must still follow the models of the seventeenth century. As yet, however, Stendhal is not in entire sympathy with the German romantic writers in their quarrel against the classics, and prophesies that they will be considered equally ridiculous by future writers.² Personal independence of taste is what he demands, and if only one man preferred Racine to Shakespeare, he would have a right to his opinion and it would be mere pedantry to accuse him of bad taste because everyone else disagreed with him.³

iv. 1821 - 1842.

When Stendhal returned to Paris in 1821, he had lost this tolerant attitude, for intercourse with the Italians⁴ had brought about the final crystallisation of his theories, and he was now an enthusiastic supporter of Romanticism. In Italy, the young writers were not concerned merely with a reaction against narrow literary conventions, but their

1. "Vies de Haydn, etc.", p. 213.

2. "Histoire de la Peinture en Italie", 1854, p. 222 (notes).

3. Ibid., p. 182.

4. See p. 15.

movement was coloured by political desires. They hoped to produce works that should be a means of binding the people together and of creating a new national spirit. Accordingly, they chose as their medium the theatre, since drama is the form of literature most closely in touch with the people and has in consequence the swiftest and most powerful effects. Critics like Berchet and Ermès Visconti demanded plays that should give a true picture of Italian life, being the exact expression of the dramatist's ideas, untrammelled by pedantic rules. The subjects were to be taken from Italian history in order to arouse the spirit of the people by revealing to them the traditions of the past and their own link with such times. To ensure the maximum of enthusiasm on the part of the audience, the dramatic "illusion" should not be spoilt by conventional restrictions as to time and place. Such ideas were put into practice by playwrights like Manzoni and Silvio Pellico, though they did not seek to break entirely with the classical tradition. Manzoni, in particular, aimed at following the masters of the French Theatre, with these slight reservations — technique should give way to genius, and arbitrary rules to truth of presentation. Stendhal was thrilled by this movement, and in 1818, being already a "romantique furieux", tried to give his support by

writing an article "Qu'est-ce que le Romanticisme?"¹ which dealt chiefly with the problems of the Unities.

After living in circles where progressive ideas were current, Stendhal was naturally disappointed to find the French theatres still producing the same répertoire as in 1805, with but few additions, and even those on strictly classical lines. He noticed that the audiences were equally conservative, going to the plays, not to be moved to pity and sympathy, but to pride themselves on the correctness of their judgment according to the standard set up by Laharpe and the critics.² Books like the "Lycée" sold better than the texts of Racine and Molière!³ The only remedy against the prevailing bad taste was to write pamphlets!

Stendhal was convinced that the French theatre needed a revolution similar to the Italian, and suggestions to this end creep into all his books, even those on love or music — "De l'Amour" and "La Vie de Rossini". He never loses an opportunity of introducing the subject in the criticisms of French drama, written for the English periodicals,⁴ and the two pamphlets "Racine et Shakespeare" are direct propaganda. By collecting the ideas scattered among the passages of wit

1. N.B. "Romanticisme": the word was coined by Stendhal.

2. "La Vie de Rossini", Le Divan, p. 102.

3. "Racine et Shakespeare", pt. ii, Vol. I, p. 123.

4. Cf., p. 16.

and sarcasm directed against M. Auger and the supporters of the classical tradition, it is possible to ascertain Stendhal's final theories on drama.

The basis of his demand for a new "romantic" theatre is the idea of relativity as opposed to the absolute in taste.¹ He repeats his old argument that the French have lived through times of rapid and vast changes and cannot be expected to enjoy plays that were suitable for their fathers.

"Strange as it may appear, there has been a less modification in the French character from the year 1500 and the reign of Francis I to the year 1780 and the reign of Louis XVI than from 1789 to 1824. The combustible materials that were gathering force and volume for 280 years, at length exploded and changed everything around them. Never has there been an instance of sons so widely differing from their fathers, as is exemplified in the new generations in France as compared with the old stock."²

Generations that are so dissimilar will naturally have different conceptions of what is perfect in art and literature;³ in fact, taste is entirely a personal matter and there are as many ideas of beauty as there are individuals. Only the lazy-minded who have not studied ideology still cling to the notion of the Absolute.⁴ It necessarily follows that

1. Cf., pp.42 and 51.

2. New Monthly Magazine (Hist. Reg.), March 1825, p. 128. cf. "Souvenirs de Soixante Années", 1862, p. 237. E. Delécluze. In 1830 Stendhal still complains that the defenders of the classic theatre refuse to acknowledge this change.

"Mélanges de Littérature", Vol. III, p.349.

3. "Racine et Shakespeare", Vol. II, p. 241.

4. Ibid., p. 238.

the tragic playwrights must cease their blind imitation of the classics, and create a theatre with the object of pleasing the audience, without regard to the ancient rules. They should write not for the Court alone, but for the people, who are no longer worshippers of the gods, but Christians. Similarly the writers of comedy should seek fresh inspiration by observing the follies of contemporary society, and so eliminate from their stage the worn-out types drawn from Court life.

What kind of comedy is to replace the present type of "épître sérieuse coupée en dialogue et abondante en morale"¹, the "uncomic" comedy which is

"nothing more than a series of long-winded monologues, frequently well-written and sometimes witty, but totally destitute of well-combined and probable incident, and possessing no interest but that arising from a false and mawkish sentimentality, entirely foreign to the nature of true comedy"?²

Stendhal always holds to his idea that comedy is occasioned by the wanderings of men from the path that leads to happiness.³ He admits that it was easier to find subjects in the time of Molière, for then there were definite standards of behaviour for each class, and any deviation from these was enough to make people appear ridiculous, whereas now

1. "La Vie de Rossini", Vol. I, p. 123, note.

2. "The Plays of Clara Gazul", The London Magazine, July 1825, p. 401.

3. "De L'Amour" (Champion), Vol. I, p. 229, and "La Vie de Rossini" (Le Divan), Vol. II, p. 232 (note).

peculiarity of conduct is no longer regarded as an offence, and before a spectator laughs at a character he says to himself: "but perhaps the man is happy in his own way"¹. The dramatist must also remember that the conception of happiness has changed and that now accumulation of wealth is the general ambition of most men.² There is a further obstacle, for if the writer successfully portrays the absurdities of contemporary life, the censors will promptly ban any lines that might be taken as derogatory to the government or its supporters.³ Stendhal himself disagrees with the introduction of political allusions in comedy, not from respect for the government, but from an artistic standpoint. A play so written is likely to fail, for the dramatist will arouse the audience to indignation and so kill all chances of producing laughter. If he does receive applause, it is only for his bravery and cunning in having escaped the censor.

In "Racine et Shakespeare" we are given a sketch of the type of comedy Stendhal advocated. The story is of one

1. "Sketches of Parisian Society", New Monthly Magazine, Jan. 18, 1827, Vol. XIX, p. 285. Cf. p. 45.

2. "Racine et Shakespeare", Vol. II, pp. 166 and 172.

3. Stendhal shows a certain courage in his open attacks on the censorship, e.g.: "The people are aware that they can enjoy no dramatic amusement under the government of the Bourbons, except on condition of supplying in imagination all that the folly of the censor strikes out of a new comedy." "Proverbes Dramatiques", The London Magazine (New Series, Vol. II), May, 1825, p. 20.

Lanfranc,¹ a poet who tries to get his comedy produced. He goes direct to the committee of the Théâtre Français, neglecting the usual stage of intrigue with influential people. His failure is followed by the infidelity of his mistress who marries an Englishman for his money. In despair he writes a pamphlet revealing the treatment he has received at the hands of the committee, and is imprisoned at Sainte-Pélagie for libel. Stendhal asserts^{that} "Lanfranc" would be a "romantic" play because it would disobey the unities of time and place and be written in prose, and, more particularly, because the events would reflect the actual life of 1825. It seems to us as "uncomic" as the plays he has just criticised, so presumably it is the various disappointments on the road to happiness that caused him to call it a comedy!

Stendhal frequently complains that the Paris audiences have lost the power of appreciating fine wit, being too intent on money-making and politics.² The dramatist under the state lacks the king's protection and is checked by the censorship and ~~the~~ fear of imprisonment. The only chance of rejuvenating the theatre is to find a new kind of play.

Thus Stendhal turns his attention again to tragedy, but not to the old type with its mythological and legendary

1. "Racine et Shakespeare", Vol. I, p. 82.

2. "La Vie de Rossini, Vol. II, p. 20.

subjects, which, in the hands of contemporary writers becomes merely an epic poem or a collection of odes. Such a play may be well written, but its subject-matter is thread-bare and it contains no study of human nature.¹ For the new kind of tragedy the dramatist will draw his subjects from old French annals. The play should then have at least one advantage in that it provides a pleasant method of learning history,² but, above all, it will inspire the people with the same spirit of enthusiasm that possessed the French heroes of old.³ Two or three suitable stories such as "Edouard II et Mortimer", "Robert d'Artois et Edouard III", "L'Assassinat de Montereau", "Les Etats de Blois" and "Jeanne d'Arc et les Anglais",⁴ may be found in each of the volumes written by Froissart and Buchon. It is curious that although Stendhal objected to comedy's dealing with political subjects, all the scenes he proposes for historical drama (with the exception of "Jeanne d'Arc") are stories of revolt against the monarchy. He realises that there may be some difficulty in the choice of plot for French history is so blood-thirsty and probably the kings, being ashamed of their ancestors, will oppose the romantic theatre which

1. "New Monthly Magazine", Sketches of Parisian Society, 20 June, 1828, Vol. XXIII, p. 92.

2. "Racine et Shakespeare", pt. II, Vol. I, p. 127.

3. Ibid., p. 105.

4. Ibid., pp. 126 and 47. Cf. New Monthly Magazine, "Sketches of Parisian Society", March 1828, Vol. XXII, p. 377.

sets history down accurately instead of hiding the facts behind the dignity of the Alexandrine line.

Stendhal gives the outline of a model historical tragedy — "Le Retour de l'Île d'Elbe".¹ A messenger brings the news to Napoleon at Elba that he is to be transported to Saint Helena. He makes his escape immediately, thanks to the drunken state of the English spy. The second act shows him regaining the loyalty of his soldiers at Laffrey, near Grenoble. In the third act, once again Napoleon forgets the revolutionary ideas to which he owes popular support, and seeks power for himself. He is next seen on the Champ de Mars with his brothers and finally on the field of Waterloo. The play was to end with Napoleon's arrival at Saint Helena and his vision of six years of torment before the final peace of death.

This type of tragedy could not possibly be written if the old rules of the unities were observed. The poet must have freedom to extend the action in time and space, and the only unity that should be recognised is the "unity of action". Certainly the classic playwrights succeeded in spite of these obstacles, but there is no need for modern poets to suffer in similar way.

1. "Racine et Shakespeare", pt. II, Vol. I, p. 151.

"Ils [the classics] s'élançaient dans la carrière chargés de fers et ils les portaient avec tant de grâce que des pédants sont parvenus à persuader aux Français que de pesantes chaînes sont un ornement indispensable dès qu'il s'agit de courir."¹

Stendhal's arguments are borrowed from Johnson's² Preface to Shakespeare's Works and Ermès Visconti's³ "Dialogo". There is no doubt that he found similar ideas in Manzoni's "Lettre à Monsieur Chauvet: Sur les Unités" and he most probably read Mercier's "Du Théâtre" and "Nouvel Examen de la Tragédie Française". He does not actually mention these last two books, and the likeness between their ideas might be due to the fact that Mercier himself used Johnson's article. The similarity in their expressions — "hommes de Collège"⁴ [pedants] "les chaînes pesantes" (of the unities) "les mots simples et entrecoupés", "tirade à périodes", and their ideas on the imitation of Shakespeare and the use of prose, seem to offer sufficient evidence for such a conclusion, and further, it is unlikely that Stendhal would have neglected such an important enemy of the pseudo-classics.

1. "Racine et Shakespeare", pt. II, Vol. I, p.103.
 2. Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 14-19. Cf comp. of texts by D. Gunnel, "Stendhal et L'Angleterre", 1909, p. 340.

3. "Racine and Shakespeare", Vol. II, pp. 10-23. Cf. comp. of texts by P. Martino. Preface to "Racine et Shakespeare", pp. LXXIV-V.

4. Cf. "L'Humeur et le Génie de Stendhal", H. Babou. Revue Nouvelle, 1 April, 1864, p. 408.

Stendhal points out the falseness of the argument that the disregard of the unities would prevent the spectator's feeling that real events are taking place on the stage.¹ No spectator ever imagines that he is witnessing real life, but "moments of illusion" may occur when he is so deeply moved that he experiences for himself the sufferings of the hero.² Such moments give the tragedy its power, but perfect "illusion" would be unbearable and the mildest of dramas would fill us with horror.³ With regard to the unities of time and place, since the spectator is obliged to use his imagination in order to "telescope" hours of time into minutes and to accept a stage for a palace, why should he not use it a little more and allow long lapses of time between the acts, and frequent changes of place? It is easy to allow the "telescoping" of time, for we do that unconsciously when considering past or future events in our own lives. The observation of ^{the} unity of place often strains rather than aids the imagination, and consequently makes the play dull.⁴ If drama is to reveal the change of passions these pedantic rules must be abandoned.

1. "Racine et Shakespeare", Vol. II, p. 16, and Vol. I, p. 10.

2. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 19.

3. Cf. Marmontel: "Eléments de la Littérature", Vol. XIV, p. 90.

4. Criticism of Duval's "Princesse des Ursins", Jan. 18, 1826. "Sketches, etc.", New Monthly Magazine, Vol. XVI, p. 218. Cf. criticism of Ancelot's "Marie de Brabant", The London Magazine, Nov. 1825, p. 414.

The chief obstacle to the creation of moments of illusion is, however, not the neglect of the unities but the use of verse, which introduces a cold, artificial atmosphere and prevents the spectator from being emotionally stirred. The more perfect the lines, the less chance there is of success, for the audience ceases to feel with the character in order to admire the beauty of the author's verse. Unfortunately, the French have grown used to this and the contemporary plays are "insupportably tiresome, full of pompous commonplaces and false, exaggerated sentiments".

Not only does the verse attract an undue share of the spectator's attention, but it forces the poet to neglect clarity and precision of style. Such cries as "Qui te l'a dit?" and "Soyons amis, Cinna", are perfect, expressing exactly the emotion felt by the character, yet as soon as the dramatist writes in verse, he has to fit in extra words to complete the rhythm and even add a redundant line to follow the rhyme.² This artificial style is made worse by the fact that so much of the French language is not allowed in poetic diction. Stendhal gives the example of Legouvé's rendering of Henry IV's wish:

"Je voudrais que le pauvre paysan de mon royaume
pût du moins avoir la poule au pot le dimanche,"

1. New Monthly Magazine (Hist. Reg.), Vol. XII, 1824, p. 509, col. 2.

2. "Racine et Shakespeare", Vol. I, p. 146 (note). Cf. Fénelon, op. cit., p. 61.

in which each object is expressed by a periphrasis¹ instead of by the proper term which is considered "vulgar".

An even greater objection to verse is that it causes the playwright to concentrate on the production of perfect lines instead of perfect portraits. The golden age of literature is at an end because the dramatists would rather polish their verse than portray "the workings of the human heart",² and their figures, being but shadows of shade, "appear indistinct, unreal and without the slightest stamp of individuality — mere vain abstractions that talk and fret their hour in elegiac verses"³. The French still prefer a play like Soumet's "Elisabeth de France", which contains fine passages for declamation but no ideas.⁴ Even an author like Manzoni fails to break entirely away from tradition and is led by his facility for writing verse into "eloquent and elaborate paraphrase, where he should have uttered but the abrupt cries and broken accents of passion",⁵

Stendhal gives another curious reason for his dislike of verse, due probably to his typical Dauphinois fear of being gulled — he distrusts its power of captivating the

1. "Racine et Shakespeare", pt. i, Vol. I, p. 42. Cf. pt. ii, Vol. I, p. 97.

2. New Monthly Magazine, "Sketches, etc.", June 10, 1829, Vol. XXVI, p. 95.

3. London Magazine, July, 1825, "The Plays of Clara Gazul", p. 403.

4. The Athenaeum, Literary Letter from Paris, June 4, 1828.

5. Paris Monthly Review, April, 1823, p. 261.

mind and stealing its power of judgment. His final argument is that verse was invented to help the memory, and has been retained to give the poet the pleasure of overcoming an obstacle. Playwrights who continue to use verse are merely clinging to "barbarous" customs,¹ for the Alexandrine is nothing but a "cache-sottise". Poetry may be the most perfect medium for mythological tragedy, but drama which is to imitate modern life and to reveal character must be written in prose.

To whom, then, is the young playwright to turn for help in composing the ideal play, — the historical drama, freed from the unities and written in prose? Will he follow the methods of the French or the English theatre? In spite of the title of Stendhal's two pamphlets and such statements as "Le combat à mort est entre le système tragique de Racine et celui de Shakespeare"², the greater part of his argument does not, in point of fact,³ go to censure of Racine and praise of Shakespeare. Indeed, he frequently speaks of Racine as a great genius, and the highest praise he could give to Silvio Pellico was to say that for sweetness of versification and tenderness of feeling, he might be called

1. "De l'Amour". Edit. Champion, Vol. II, p. 149.

2. "Racine et Shakespeare" was a convenient war-cry already in use. Cf. Ch. Dupin's "Lettre à Milady Morgan sur Racine et Shakespeare", 1818.

3. "Racine et Shakespeare", Vol. II, p. 35.

the Racine of Italy.¹ The truth is that Racine, like all great writers, was a romantic for his own generation, and were he living in the nineteenth century would write different plays, just as Caesar would fight with different weapons. Stendhal's only reproach is that he allowed versification to hinder him (as the heavy armour of old hampered the paladins!) from clearly expressing his deep insight into the movements of the human heart.² In fact, Stendhal is really attacking the prejudiced critics and the imitators of the classics rather than the great writers themselves. He speaks of the pseudo-classics thus:

"The Classiques never advert to what is reasonable or unreasonable: in nature or out of nature: but only to what is legal, i.e., what is authorised by Racine's example."³

Racine is no longer to be imitated: Shakespeare is to be the model for the romantic playwrights. Admittedly those who seek to follow him would be reduced to despair if they attempted tragedies like "Othello" and "Hamlet", but they could easily copy the chronicle plays, which show how an exciting period of history may be poignantly and accurately portrayed. They will benefit especially by studying Shakespeare's art, his methods of observing men and women and his

1. Paris Monthly Review, April 1823, p. 261.

2. "Racine et Shakespeare", Vol. II, p. 219.

3. "Letters from Paris", The London Magazine, April 1825, p. 604 (Vol. I, New Series).

true and passionate way of setting down what he has seen.

Even here, Stendhal does not advise blind imitation¹ of the master. The dramatists should remember that although contemporary France is in some ways like that of Elizabethan England and therefore needs a similar type of drama, society has become more civilised. Audiences will² no longer allow the representation of actions like the burning-out of Arthur's eyes; they are either repulsed by the horror of the deed, or amused at the painted brush handles which Hubert carries for heated bars of iron. Neither should the French writers copy the mixing of tragic and comic tone in one play, for the object of tragedy is to stir our emotions whereas comedy merely arouses our curiosity, and Stendhal will not concede that one play can successfully achieve two such different aims. Lastly, let the dramatist beware of reproducing Shakespeare's long³ and eloquent speeches, abounding in imagery, or he will fall into the same unnatural style as is found in the French theatre. In all probability, there will be no need⁴ for models, either English or French, as soon as the young playwrights have established this new form of dramatic literature — the national and historical drama.

1. "Racine et Shakespeare", Vol. I, pp. 45, 81 (note), Vol. II, p. 29.

2. Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 144-5.

3. Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 144-5.

4. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 28.

To provide an extra chapter for his rather slight pamphlets, Stendhal collected together his old ideas on laughter, illustrating Hobbes' definition by examples drawn from Joubert's "Traité du Ris" (1579) and Poinsinet de Sivry's "Traité des Causes Physiques et Morales du Rire" (1768). From Joubert he borrows three distinct points, namely, the anecdote of the man falling in the mud,¹ the idea that laughter is instantly checked by fear of danger and by pity,¹ and the classification of laughter according to the sense that has been deceived.² Poinsinet de Sivry may be the person Stendhal mentions as questioning Hobbes' ideas.³ From de Sivry, Stendhal seems to have adopted the theory that laughter may be increased by a kind of physical "sympathy" (as happens in the case of a yawn), and also by a sympathy of the mind.⁴ Sentimental, whimsical humour still gives him the most pleasure, and though he recognises Molière as the greatest writer of comedy, he still dislikes the satirical style:

"J'aime à trouver, quand je vais me délasser au théâtre, une imagination folle qui me fasse rire comme un enfant."⁵

1. "Racine et Shakespeare", Vol. I, p. 26. Cf. Joubert, op. cit., p. 16.

2. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 150. Joubert, Vol. I, Chap. II & III.

3. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 146. Cf. De Sivry, op. cit., pp. 21-22.

4. Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 147-8. Cf. De Sivry, op. cit., pp. 52-60.

5. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 32.

After 1830, being isolated in Civit  Vecchia, Stendhal ceased to pay much attention to matters of the theatre, and produced no more articles or pamphlets. In fact, he grew thoroughly discouraged about the whole question, for the Paris audiences were being attracted by plays that he considered to be neither accurate portraits of human personality nor exact reproductions of history. Moreover, he felt that the theatre was losing its hold on the people. In the time of Coll  and Diderot, it had been the centre of Society, but sociability was now too great an effort and the would-be spectators stayed at home to read newspapers and novels, rather than eat a hurried dinner and then go to an uncomfortable and stuffy theatre! Those who did go in no way resembled the cultured audiences that supported Moli re and Racine. With the advent of democracy the theatres had become filled with people completely unable to appreciate wit. It was not because they were unintelligent, or, as Stendhal sarcastically remarks, they would not have succeeded in making large fortunes and gaining good positions. The fact was they had no interest in anything else! The dramatist had at

1. The English playhouses had shown Stendhal the value of comfort and he makes suggestions for a theatre like the Opera Houses in London and Milan, with seats two feet wide separated by arm-rests. He also insists that there should be a spacious vestibule and good ventilation! "M moires d'un Touriste", 1927, pp. 342-3.

2. Notes on "Le Rouge et Le Noir" (1834) "M langes de Litt rature", Vol. III, p. 417. Cf. "Correspondance", Vol. III, p. 168.

one and the same time to please cultured men (like Stendhal himself) and to amuse these rich dullards, which was impossible.¹

Occasionally, however, in his letters, Stendhal discusses odd points of dramatic theory, but he merely repeats his old ideas and definitions.² He was particularly faithful to the notion that prose should be used in the theatre,¹ and less than two years before his death mentioned this to Balzac:

"Combien Voltaire, Racine, etc., tous enfin, excepté Corneille, ne sont-ils pas obligés de faire des vers chapeaux pour la rime. En bien, ces vers occupent la place qui était due légitimement à de petits faits vrais."³

In one instance only^{does} he modify his opinions, and that is in estimating the relative greatness of Racine and Shakespeare. He sees now that the aim of literature is not to give an exact representation of life, but to produce a "beau mensonge", an "imitation of Nature" that will please the spectator or reader. These playwrights created equally great though dissimilar "imitations", and the disparity between their outlook on art is due to their having written in a different age and for a different audience.⁴

1. "Mél. de Litt.", Vol. III, pp. 430-1.

2. E.g., (a) The nature of comedy and the ridiculous, in "Correspondance", Vol. III, p. 167 (1836); (b) Lack of subjects for comedy, "Mémoires d'un Touriste", p. 306.

3. "Correspondance", Vol. III (30 Oct., 1840), p. 260.

4. "Mélanges de Littérature", Vol. III, pp. 308-9.

In spite of these occasional references, Stendhal has at last lost interest in the study of drama. Even in "Racine et Shakespeare" he had wondered if the novel would not replace comedy,¹ as it was able to escape the severities of censorship. By 1836, he was convinced that the dramatist who did not wish to stoop to writing low comedy must turn to the "comédie-roman",² and that this type of novel would become the comedy of the nineteenth century.

v. Stendhal and Contemporary Critics and Playwrights.

Until recently the histories of French literature have discussed the growth of the Romantic Movement without making any reference to the part Stendhal played in it, although his contemporaries acknowledged his influence.

1. "Racine et Shakespeare", pt. II, Vol. I, p. 119 (1823). Cf. Notes on "Promenades dans Rome" (1838), Soirées du Stendhal Club, 1908, Vol. II, p. 174, and "La Comédie est Impossible en 1836". "Mélanges de Littérature", Vol. III, p. 421.

2. This form of literature is presumably the novel pervaded by the comic spirit which Stendhal was himself trying to write. Certainly in "Lucien Leuwen" and "Lamiel" he consciously aimed at creating amusing characters, even to the extent of producing caricatures, like the doctor Sansfin ("Lamiel").

See (a) "Lucien Leuwen", A. Rousseaux, La Revue Universelle, I, Sept., 1929, p. 626.

(b) "Lamiel", E.D. Forgues, "Le National", 1 April, 1842. ("Un Ami de Stendhal", L. Pinvert, 1915, p. 29.)

(c) The additional character written for "La Chartreuse de Parme". (Mélanges de Littérature, Vol. I, p. 299, pp. 297-301.)

He sought to spread his ideas by publishing pamphlets and talking with other writers in the literary salons. Judging by the reviews, the first part of "Racine et Shakespeare" made very little stir, for though some of the critics were amused by his style, none of them accepted his theories. This failure may have been partly due to the early date (1823), for "La Muse Française" or "Le Globe" had not yet appeared to prepare the public for such ideas. It seems that many of the readers appreciated Stendhal's wit and banter, but they could not understand his arguments¹. The second part received better notices, because by 1825 Stendhal had gathered a few supporters from the group who met at Delécluze's salon, and also, other manifestos had appeared, such as Guiraud's "Nos Doctrines" in "La Muse Française". "Le Globe"² was particularly enthusiastic and warned the critics that if two such pamphlets were published annually, these new ideas would soon be victorious.

Despite these "puffs", and the excellent reviews Stendhal himself wrote in the English periodicals, his pamphlets and articles seem to have had a small circulation and cannot be said to have greatly influenced on French thought. Yet he was frequently spoken of as one of the early leaders of the romantic movement. Delécluze was not

1. "Victor Jacquemont: Lettres à Stendhal", P, Maes, 1933, pp. 121-2.

2. "Le Globe", 7 April, 1825, Vol. II, p. 455.

blind to the weaknesses in Stendhal's ideas and arguments, but paid tribute to him as "the man who made the most active contribution to the work of preparing the literary revolution"¹. Emile Deschamps welcomed the possibility of his replying to M. Auger's attacks on romanticism.² Viennet in his "Epître Aux Muses" on the Romantics, ranks Stendhal with Lady Morgan and Schlegel as the "chief missionaries"³ of the movement. Louis Spach, private secretary to the French ambassador in Rome, alludes to him in 1831 as having been an Iconoclast, brutally overturning the sacred Aristotelian laws of drama, gliding like a serpent into the official temple of drama there to spit forth his venom!⁴

Evidently Stendhal must have owed this position as "hussard de la troupe"⁵ to his power of making others enthusiastic for reform. With his knowledge of English, German and Italian literature, and his independence of mind and spirit, he inspired those around him to turn from a narrow, prejudiced and nationalistic outlook. He became a

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1. Delécluze, "Souvenirs de Soixante Années", p. 231.
 2. "La Guerre en temps de Paix", La Muse Française, May 1824, p. 86.
 3. "Epîtres et Satires", Viennet, 1845, p. 202 (wrongly quoted in "Racine et Shakespeare", préface, CIX).
 4. "Les Souvenirs ... de Louis Spach sur Stendhal", Ch. E. Simon, Stendhal Club, No.9, 1925, p. 9.
 5. "Courrier des théâtres, de la littérature et de la mode", 2 April, 1825.

guide not so much for the public as for the critics and
the writers themselves.¹

It must be remembered that he had no sympathy with the poets who formed the "Cénacle" and that his influence was mainly exerted on the group of young intellectuals that gathered around Delécluze, forming the "left" wing of the Romantic movement. It was from this circle that Dubois drew most of his contributors to "Le Globe", and this paper contains many echoes of Stendhal's ideas. For example, Dubois himself in considering the various definitions of romanticism, asserts that it is "essen-²tially the expression of contemporary civilisation". Vitet repeats the absurd idea that all great writers have been romantic:

"Tous ces grands hommes [writing of Sophocles and Racine] ont été romantiques pour quelques heures et les voilà classiques pour de longs et interminables siècles."³

The phrases used in the criticism of plays frequently recall Stendhal's writings in the English reviews. J.J. Ampère may be quoted as an example, for he says of Mérimée:

1. "Causeries du Lundi", 1869, Sainte-Beuve, 2 Jan., 1854, p. 321 (cf. p. 303).

2. "Du Romantisme Considéré Historiquement", Le Globe, 1 Oct., 1825. Cf. "Notice sur Le Kain", Le Globe, 15 July, 1824, p. 635.

3. "De l'Indépendance en Matière de Goût", L. Vitet, Le Globe, 2 April, 1825, p. 445.

"On sent que l'auteur en les écrivant
[his plays] ... n'a point songé à une école,
à un système mais au naturel et à la vérité."¹

Like Stendhal the writers of "Le Globe" are most concerned with drama and affirm that the theatre is the real field of battle "on which classic and romantic 'troops' will finally settle their differences"². They advocate the production of historical drama with subjects chosen from the wars and chivalry of the Middle Ages. History is to be studied accurately,³ not for the dry-as-dust facts,⁴ but for the human interest (another Stendhalian trait). The playwrights should take the opportunity of seeing Shakespeare's historical tragedies and model their work on them.⁵

Stendhal's friends did not all agree with him about the question of style. Stapfer, J.J. Ampère and Paul-Louis Courier insisted that verse was essential for good drama. They all admitted, however, that poetic diction and elegant periphrasis were to be avoided. Duvergier de Hauranne's criticism of Ancelot's "Le Fiesque" recalls Stendhal's arguments:

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1. "Théâtre de Clara Gazul", Le Globe, 4 June, 1825.
 2. Criticism of Desmarais' "Essai sur le Classique et le Romantique", D. de Hauranne, Le Globe, 11 June, 1825. Cf. his article "Du Romantique", 31 March, 1825.
 3. "Du Mélange du Comique et du Tragique", Le Globe, Vol. III, 10 June, 1826.
 4. Criticism of "Rienzi de Drouineau", Dubois, Le Globe, 2 Feb., 1826.
 5. "Le Théâtre Anglais", Le Globe, 30 Aug., 1827.

"Mais le système contre lequel je m'élève c'est enfin celui qui craignant de prononcer le mot propre, dès que le mot est d'usage familier, le remplace par une périphrase harmonieuse, par une image qu'on appelle poétique."¹

It has only been possible to surmise Stendhal's influence on "Le Globe" from the knowledge of his intimacy with its contributors and the similarity of their ideas, but there is definite proof that some of the young playwrights tried to put his theories into practice. Delécluze assures us that Stendhal's doctrine made a vivid impression on his listeners and that the writing of historical dramas in prose became a fashion. Rémusat, Vitet, Cavé and Dittmer, and Mérimée were the most enthusiastic of his "disciples"².

Charles Rémusat, who had been working for some time towards a revolution in the theatre,³ in February and March, 1824, read aloud at Delécluze's salon two historical plays "L'Insurrection de Saint Domingue" and "La Féodalité", which aimed at giving vivid expression to the customs and passions of past times. Unfortunately, these are lost, so it is impossible to tell whether Rémusat had used any of the subjects suggested by Stendhal.

1. "Le Fiesque d'Ancelet II", D. de Hauranne, Le Globe, 14 Dec., 1824.

2. Delécluze, op. cit., p. 246.

3. "La Révolution au Théâtre", Ch. Rémusat, "Le Lycée Français", V, 1820.

Vitet may have followed Stendhal's advice in his choice of material for "Les Barricades" and "Les Etats de Blois"¹ for this particular period is often mentioned in "Racine et Shakespeare". Certainly "La Mort de Henri III"² had already been suggested and Vitet was the first to dramatise this event. Like Stendhal, he was interested in the manners of the period and in the character of his heroes, and sought to create "une poésie de comédie et de roman de moeurs: mélange d'art et d'analyse"³. His work is accurate from the historical and psychological standpoint, and in this differs considerably from the romantic drama of 1830. His style is realistic and the kings and soldiers speak as they might have done, had modern French been their language.

Cavé and Dittmer showed their gratitude in a definite way, for the portrait of the supposed M. de Fougeray (their pseudonym) at the beginning of "Les Soirées de Neuilly" is a caricature of Stendhal himself. The plays in this volume are all of historical subjects. In "Les Stationnaires" the different outlook of the three types of men, the monarchist, the republican and the worshipper of Napoleon, recalls Stendhal's frequent remarks on the

1. Cf. "Racine et Shakespeare", Vol. I, p. 122. "La Mort du Duc de Guise à Blois".

2. Cf. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 150.

3. "Les Etats de Blois", 1828. Préface, lxx; cf. "Les Barricades", 1830, Préface, vi.

rapid changes that had taken place within the last three generations. "Malet, ou une Conspiration sous l'Empire"¹ is the first attempt at a Napoleonic subject, and justifies Stendhal's idea that recent events would offer vivid material for drama.

Mérimée's plays are the most effective applications of the doctrine contained in "Racine et Shakespeare". While still a law student, he met Stendhal through a common friend Lingay,² towards the end of 1821 or the beginning of 1822. After obtaining his degree, Mérimée left Paris for a few months and began to experiment in the writing of drama. His education had been severely classical, and Lingay, to whom he looked for help at this time, was a supporter of the classics. On his return to Paris, Mérimée linked up again with Stendhal's circle and was introduced to many of the literary salons, and there is no doubt that the romantic tendencies in his work may be traced to this friendship. Admittedly, he retained his independence of judgment and often laughed at Stendhal's paradoxical arguments, but he agreed that the problem of romanticism

1. Victor Jacquemont, whom they would have met through Stendhal, may have provided the authors with documentation, as his father had been caught up in Malet's first conspiracy and imprisoned, in spite of his innocence. "Victor Jacquemont. Lettres à Stendhal", P. Maes, 1933. Preface.

2. See "La Jeunesse de Prosper Mérimée", P. Trahard, 1925.

was mainly concerned with the theatre, and that there was a need for plays accurately rendering historical events by means of natural characters speaking in a natural style.

At one time, Stendhal and Mérimée even attempted a collaboration, which was, however, speedily broken up:

"Notre héros avait commis un crime et était tourmenté de remords. 'Pour se délivrer d'un remords, dit Beyle, que faut-il faire?' Il réfléchit un instant:- 'Il faut fonder une école d'enseignement mutuel.' Notre drame en resta là." (1823)¹

Mérimée's first play was "La Bataille"² and though the influence of Byron is obvious throughout, suggestions for the chief character (a sugar-merchant turned soldier) may possibly have come from Stendhal, who had met such types during his work in Marseilles. The next play, "Cromwell", was read before the group at Delécluze's salon in 1824, and this was recognised to be one of the examples applying Stendhal's theories.³ Unfortunately this has been lost, but the "Théâtre de Clara Gazul" remains as the best example of the attempts at realistic drama. As M. Jourda points out, Stendhal had already indicated the possibilities of such subjects as "Les Jacques Bonshommes" and "Le Capitaine"

1. "Henri Beyle. Notice Biographique", P. Mérimée, 1874, p. 9.

2. Trahard, op. cit., p. 138.

3. Delécluze, op. cit., p. 224. Cf. Trahard, op. cit., pp. 144 and 176.

de Buch à Meaux" and this may have inspired Mérimée to write "La Jacquerie"¹. Stendhal himself writes of this collection of plays with an enthusiasm that never appears in his other criticisms:

"There is in the development of the characters ... a keenness of observation, a felicity of tact, and an accurate painting of the living manners ... together with a deep knowledge of the human heart and its master passions."²

Curiously, he does not seem to object to the melodramatic elements of Mérimée's work, although he condemned the ordinary melodrama on the stage.

Despite Stendhal's praise and the favourable reviews in the "Globe", it must be admitted that the plays written according to the theories of "Racine et Shakespeare" were not successful. They failed chiefly because Stendhal's followers were ignorant (as he himself had been when he attempted to write comedy) of the actual conditions and limitations of the theatre. Too much theory and too little practical knowledge was the cause of their weakness. They did not even write with the hope of having their plays produced, but remained content to read them in the salons. Stendhal explains this as being the result of the strict censorship which was mainly directed towards any play about to be produced.³ Vitet in particular, repeatedly affirms

1. "Petites Notes Stendhaliennes", Le Divan, Feb.-Mar., 1933, pp. 316-7.

2. "Foreign Publications", New Monthly Magazine (Hist. Reg.), August, 1825, p. 365.

3. "Sketches, etc.", New Monthly Magazine, March 17, 1828, pp. 375-77.

that he is not trying to write a play, but is merely re-producing certain periods of history in a dramatic form.¹ Cavé and Dittmer have the same outlook, for in the preface to "Malet" they disclaim all responsibility for inventing the plot, and state that they are merely copying history.² Unfortunately, their desire for accuracy made them fear to use their imagination.

In point of fact, the revolution in the theatre was achieved by writers who were directly opposed to most of Stendhal's ideas. Being poets, they allowed their imagination to play on historical themes and cared little for pedantic accuracy, provided the "atmosphere" and local colour was suggested. Also they wrote in verse, and Hugo for his part definitely attacks Stendhal's suggestion that prose is necessary, accusing him of confounding "art" and "nature". He says that it may not be natural for a Spanish hero to speak in verse, but neither would he normally speak in French. Admittedly, in the eighteenth-century plays the language had degenerated into jargon, but the "distinguished reformers" are mistaken in concluding that verse is incompatible with natural and exact expression.³ Hugo's attempt to harmonise the grotesque and the beautiful,

1. "Les Barricades", Vitet, 1830, Préface, p. v.

2. "Théâtre Romantique, 1833, M. de Fougerey, pp. 175-6.

3. "Préface de Cromwell", Hugo. Oeuvres Complètes, pp.47, 53, (Drame, Vol. I).

and the melodramatic display of emotion in his plays, shocked Stendhal's sense of logic and his delicacy of feeling.¹

It cannot then be said that the historical drama had much influence on the actual romantic theatre, nevertheless, Stendhal's followers played an important part in the preparation of the literary revolution. As Vitet admits, they provided in their plays a kind of compromise during the transition stage when people were beginning to take an interest in history, yet had not definitely decided against the classical theatre. Further, they helped to develop the new form of drama, and without their work it would not have been possible for the Romantic theatre to come so quickly to fruition, a fact which Dumas openly acknowledges in his preface to "Henri III et sa Cour".²

1. Cf. Review of "Cromwell, Drame par Victor Hugo", *Le Globe*, 6 Dec., 1827, p. 29.

2. *Théâtre I. Dumas*, 1874, p. 115 (written in 1829).

vi. The Doctrine Evolved.

It is obvious that Stendhal did not contribute any outstanding ideas to the existing body of dramatic theory. The chief interest in the study of his early writings lies in the discovery that the most important of the theories set forth in "Racine et Shakespeare" had been slowly evolving in his mind for nearly twenty years. The concept of relativity in taste on which depends Stendhal's definition of romanticism had its roots in his study of Montesquieu which began about 1803. Likewise his interest in history which later helped him to realise the possibilities of historical drama, developed with his extensive reading of memoirs and histories during the same period. Even his love of Shakespeare and the idea of imitating his plays have been traced back as far as 1804. Also, his dislike of verse, though at first counterbalanced by the traditional opinions of the critics whom he was studying, began to make itself felt at this time. Apart from these ideas, much of the early work is full of prejudice, contradiction and even absurdity.

During the years in Paris, Stendhal concentrated mostly on investigating the nature of comedy and produced the original definition that comedy implies the mistaking

of one's way to happiness. This is an unsatisfactory and narrow view of comedy as it concerns only the protagonist's fate as an individual and not as a member of society. Comedy is born of the gregarious spirit of man and its duty is to ridicule those follies of human nature which, though not sufficiently serious to cause tragic events, are likely to destroy the harmony of society. Again, by not allowing a person to be mocked unless he has wandered from his own particular path of happiness, Stendhal forces the audience to view the situation through the eyes of the character himself, and so refuses to allow them the right to apply their own standards of happiness and behaviour. A man may often be considered ridiculous even though his eccentricities bring him no loss of happiness.

When considering the problems of character-study, Stendhal reveals his ignorance of the complexity of human nature and of the need for synthesis in creation of living characters. Arithmetical additions of certain qualities of mind and heart, and applications of mathematical formulae are absurd methods for creative writing, and leave us with little hope for Stendhal's success as a playwright. Such suggestions do, however, show that he was an enthusiastic student, ready to apply any new

knowledge to the problem in hand. It must also be granted that these analytical methods were of use to him later when he turned to the dissection of emotion in "De L'Amour"¹.

Unfortunately, shallowness of thought is characteristic of Stendhal's later work, and "Racine et Shakespeare" is by no means a serious, critical study of the two great playwrights or of dramatic theory in general. According to Victor Jacquemont's statement,² Stendhal had in readiness a serious work on this matter but produced this more superficial pamphlet as the public was not yet ready for such advanced ideas. After reading the rest of his articles, which are all in the same style, it is difficult to believe that this was the case.

Stendhal's early admiration for Racine and his later dislike of him would both appear to be unsupported by real knowledge. Although he had read the tragedies frequently, his criticisms seem to consist of arguments culled from other writers or inspired by his own personal prejudice. Nor in his love of Shakespeare does he reveal any deep insight into poetic beauty. In the English dramatist he appreciates only the psychologist who has plumbed the depths of human nature. Even so he did not realise that with Shakespeare the knowledge was gained intuitively and not by slow documentation. He frequently

1. Cf. "Pensées", Vol. I, p. 125.

2. "Victor Jacquemont", Lettres à Stendhal, P. Maes, 1933, p. 44.

speaks of the tragedies as representing life in its "natural proportions", but this is hardly true of "King Lear", "Macbeth" or "Othello". Again, although he spent much time investigating comedy and laughter, he did not recognise Shakespeare's gifts as a comic poet, except in such an obviously amusing character as Falstaff. Most of all, he failed to appreciate the high poetic quality of Shakespeare's work. Much of the beauty was inevitably lost in translation but Stendhal even took exception to what remained, namely, figures of speech, eloquent dialogue and lyrical passages.

Before making his suggestions for the regeneration of the theatre Stendhal did not take pains to enquire into the fundamental differences between the classic and the romantic outlook. He proposes that dramatists shall follow Shakespeare in the disregard of the unities but remain faithful to the classical simplicity of tone. Like so many critics he did not realise that these problems are not just technical matters, but depend on the different conception of drama in the two schools. The classic theatre deals with crises, and its interest lies in the revelation of the mind of the characters. This psychological action takes place in realms not bounded by time or space; only the actual deed by which the passions are

1. "Molière, Shakespeare, La Comédie et le Rire", Le Divan, 1930, pp. 197-8.

exteriorised is so limited. The romantic drama represents all the action before the crisis and so must be free to expand both in time and space. Similarly there is no place for humour in a piece concentrated on one tragic crisis, but if the play deals with a whole life or a prolonged period, a mixture of tone may be allowed. Stendhal would have his followers adopt the romantic type of action without allowing the relaxation of tension that goes with it.

In the demand for a theatre in prose Stendhal was following De la Motte, Fénelon and Mercier, but to their arguments that prose is more precise and accurate than verse, he adds that prose is more suitable since it is more "natural". He complains of the classical writers allowing their characters to be eloquent when they are under the stress of emotion. Certainly in these conditions it is natural to become inarticulate, but the dramatist must be freed from the restrictions of realistic portrayal and be allowed to make things seem true rather than be true. Stendhal granted the need for dramatic conventions when discussing the unities (probably because his arguments were not his own), and yet refused to acknowledge it with regard to matters of style. Nevertheless, he was justified in criticising the contemporary

poets for using a language that had become artificial and stilted and for concentrating their attention on polishing their verse rather than on developing the characters.

As for the suggestions regarding subject-matter in the new drama, it must not be imagined that Stendhal was the first to advocate in France the writing of historical plays after the manner of Shakespeare. As early as 1747, ~~the~~ ¹Président Hénault had tried in his "François II" to give historical events in a dramatic form, acknowledging his debt to the English dramatist, although he looked upon him as a somewhat "barbarous monster". Voltaire had ²also proposed dramatising French history, and Mercier, ³Collé, ⁴Lemercier, ⁵Chénier, ⁶Raynouard, and ⁷Duval had all shown the possibilities of using historical material, although they differed over technical problems and the advisability of imitating Shakespeare. Even Geoffroy, (dramatic critic for the "Journal des Débats") whom

1. "Deux Pièces de Théâtre en Prose", 1757. Prés. Hénault, Préface, p. 2.

2. Mercier, "La Destruction de la Ligue", 1778.

3. Collé, "Partie de Chasse de Henri IV", 1766.

4. Lemercier, "Pinto" (1800) and tragedies.

5. Chénier, M.J., "Charles IX" and "Henri VIII" (1801).

6. Raynouard, "Les Templiers" (1805) and "Etats de Blois" (1814).

7. Duval, A., "La Jeunesse de Henri V" (1806), "Le Faux Stanislas" (1809).

Stendhal so despised, urged authors to choose national subjects and suggestions for introducing comparatively recent history on the stage may be found in an anonymous pamphlet of 1819.² Roederer was then writing historical pieces for his private theatre, and Gain-Montaignac must have been working on the plays that were afterwards published posthumously in 1820.³ There is every probability, too, that the "battle" between the supporters of the classics and the romantics would have been fought out in the theatre in any case even if Stendhal had not concentrated his efforts on drama, since a playwright's success or failure is swift, definite and far-reaching. Stendhal may be partly responsible for the rise in favour of the English theatre as a model rather than the German, which had been popular for a few years. He must also be credited with having inspired that group of critics and writers whose work prepared the way for the romantic theatre, even if it did not bear much fruit itself.

1. "Geoffroy et la Critique Dramatique sous le Consulat et l'Empire", Ch.-M. Desgranges, 1897, p. 156.

2. "La Régénération du Théâtre", see "Chronologie du Romantisme", R. Bray *Revue des Cours et Conférences*, 30 Dec., 1931.

3. Stendhal was acquainted with the work of most of these pioneers, even with that of the Président Hénault. (See "Théâtre de Clara Gazul", "The London Magazine", July 1825, p. 464.) He must also have known Raynouard's "Les Templiers" as Mélanie Louason made her début in this play at Marseilles in 1805.

If we look for the fundamental desire that prompted Stendhal to write "Racine et Shakespeare", and abstract all the borrowed arguments, contradictions and prejudices, we find a characteristic demand for true representation of human nature, to be written in simple, realistic language. The romantic plays overshadowed his efforts by their greater appeal, but later the theatre became more psychological in its outlook and more realistic in its medium, thus justifying Stendhal's fervently expressed ideals.

IV. STENDHAL AS A PLAYWRIGHT

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i. Plays in "Théâtre", Volume I.

Stendhal's most serious attempts to write for the theatre were made during his stay in Paris from 1802-1805. We have seen how he tried to formulate theories about the nature of tragedy and comedy, but that was not enough; before daring to begin writing he wanted to be sure of his methods and wasted still more time considering the order of procedure. First the plot should be sketched and a list of the characters drawn up, describing their respective qualities, failings and ambitions. After this the acts and scenes should be drafted and the dialogue written in prose. Finally the speeches should be versified and the play would be complete!

Alas! Stendhal never succeeded in reaching this last stage and frequently did no more than think out possible titles. The tragedy "Zizin et Clémentine",¹ suggested by the story in the second volume of "Le Génie

1. "Pensées", Vol. I, pp. 33-34.

du Christianisme", was to have shown the struggle between love and religious devotion in the heart of Clémentine. This play, like the dramas "L'Avènement de Bonaparte"¹, "La Descente de Quiberon"¹, "L'Usurpateur"², "Le Soldat Croisé Revenant chez ses Parents"³, "Ariodante"³ (from Ariosto) and "La Mort d'Alexis", was never brought to fruition. Likewise there is no trace in the early manuscripts of these tentative ideas for comedies — "La Soldatomanie, ou la Manie du Militaire"⁴, "L'Homme du Monde"⁵ (from Goldoni's "Il Cavaliere di buon gusto") "L'Homme Qui Craint d'Être Gouverné"⁶, "Les Provinciaux", "Le Courtisan"⁷, "La Sotte Impatience"⁷, "Les Deux Amis"⁸ or "L'Aventure Nocturne"⁹, (from the Italian of Federici). The suggestion for "Le Faux Métromane" about which Stendhal wrote so enthusiastically to Crozet, was similarly neglected, but the remarks in the letter are of value as they

1. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 321.

2. "Journal", Vol. II, p. 391.

3. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 23.

4. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 8.

5. Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 94-95.

6. "Pensées", Vol. I, p. 321.

7. "Journal", Vol. I, p. 167.

8. "Pensées", Vol. II, p. 302.

9. "Journal", Vol. I, p. 23. Cf. also "Paméla", "La Coquette Corrigée", "Le Séducteur", "Théâtre", Vol. I, Préface, p. vi.

10. Letter of 8 June, 1804, Le Divan, July-Aug., 1928, p. 305.

illustrate his tendency to reflect his own experiences in the life of his heroes:

"Je pense à la drôle d'existence d'un homme qui fait des vers, d'un métromane, surtout quand il veut les faire bons. Que de joie pour un bon vers accroché, que de peine quand il a passé sa journée sans rien accrocher."¹

"Selmours".

The first play in Volume I of the "Théâtre" is "Selmours", which Stendhal composed at Grenoble in 1795 or 1796. Most of the scenes in prose are completed and the beginning of an act in verse is included. A second and almost similar version of the intrigue has also been printed. Stendhal openly acknowledges that he borrowed his theme from Florian's "Selmours". The story is of an English nobleman whose only fault is his desire to please everyone. Selmours' love for the widow, Mistress Hartley, is reciprocated and their marriage duly arranged, when suddenly Selmours hears that his guardian, Mekelfort, has died leaving him as sole legatee. He is to inherit this wealth unconditionally, but Mekelfort, in a private letter attached to the will, begs him to marry his illegitimate daughter, whose existence has hitherto been unknown. Selmours dares not do what he instinctively knows to be

1. Letter of 8 June, 1804, Le Divan, July-Aug., 1928, p. 305.

right, that is, to marry Mistress Hartley and hand over half the inheritance to the daughter, Fanny Forward, but seeks advice from everyone. Finally, he makes this offer to Fanny's mother, but Mrs Forward refuses, hoping to force Selmours into a marriage. One, Robert Pikle, nephew by marriage to Mistress Hartley, is in love with Fanny, and comes, incognito, to challenge his rival to a duel. Moved by the tears of Robert's father, Selmours shoots with his pistol pointed upwards. Thus he saves his opponent's life, and a reconciliation is brought about. Mrs Forward is persuaded to accept Fanny's alliance with Robert and so two happy marriages are made.¹

Stendhal only alters his material in order to obey dramatic conventions. The unities of time and action are inherent in Florian's version, but the characters move between London and Oxford. Stendhal wishes to observe the unity of place (extended to include one whole town),² and to satisfy this condition, makes Mrs Forward live on the outskirts of London, instead of in Oxford. By so doing, he omits the charming scene where Selmours surprises Fanny in the grounds surrounding her home, singing the lament of the maiden who was married for money. Stendhal also changes the scene of Robert's challenge,

1. "Nouvelles Nouvelles", Florian, 1792.

2. "Théâtre", Vol. I, p. 14.

making it take place in Selmours' rooms in town, instead of at an inn near Oxford.

Stendhal creates two scenes which Florian had merely indicated — the conversations which Fanny has with her mother and with Robert. In the second version, he makes another addition, for Mrs Forward is to consult Mr Pikle about her claim on Selmours' wealth, and to meet Robert and order him to give up Fanny. Instead of Mr Pikle, it is Fanny who by her pleading will persuade Selmours to act so generously, and this scene will put into action the ideas expressed by Julie in her letter to Milord Edouard.¹

Florian's conception of the characters is followed exactly but in the first version a few changes are made in the names — Eliza Hartley becomes "Emilia Biron" and Fanny Forward "Charlotte". Maids and servants are also to be introduced, probably in order to follow more closely the classical form of comedy.

The dialogue, with the exception of the new scenes, is a patchwork of phrases taken from Florian's narrative, or has been borrowed, word for word, from the original speeches.² The style of the part Stendhal wrote recalls "La Nouvelle Héloïse" and the sentimental comedies of the time:

1. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 71. This is the first indication in Stendhal's writings of his admiration for Rousseau.

2. See Appendix II.

"Cruelle vertu, les devoirs que tu nous imposes, sont bien durs. Je connais Selmours, il m'aime ... O mon ami, ô Selmours, je serai aussi malheureuse que toi. Je t'adore. Je ne peux vivre sans toi. Si je te perds, je t'imiterai. Je saurai à ton exemple me délivrer d'une vie qui ne serait qu'un long supplice." (Mrs Biron, Act I, sc. iv.)¹

In the scene between Charlotte and her mother, Stendhal succeeds in making the speeches characteristic — Mrs Forward is determined and ambitious, and her daughter, though always respectful, is not feeble or easily ruled.

Miss Charlotte: "Si je ne craignais point de déplaire à ma mère, je lui observerais qu'il vaudrait peut-être mieux accepter les offres de Mr. Selmours. Pourrai-je jamais être heureuse avec un homme qui ne sent aucune inclination pour moi et qui deviendrait mon époux comme par force?

Mrs Forward: Je vois qui vous inspire ces raisonnements d'enfants; c'est votre passion insensée pour le jeune fou de Robert. J'ai déjà tâché plusieurs fois de la déraciner de votre [coeur]. Vous ne vous convenez en aucune manière. D'ailleurs je n'ai pas besoin de vous donner des raisons: une fille sage et bien née doit suivre en tout les volontés de sa mère. Je vous défends absolument de revoir Robert ni de penser à lui. Si je peux forcer Mr. Selmours à vous épouser vous serez sa femme. (Act II, sc. v.)"²

Two speeches were written in verse, but the lines neither rhyme nor scan, as this example shows:-

1. "Théâtre", Vol. I, p. 28.

2. Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 37-38.

"..... Mais il a un cousin
 Dont le père autrefois fut fort utile au sien
 Et, ne mettant point de bornes à sa reconnaissance,
 Il ne veut point sans lui faire votre alliance."¹

About the time Stendhal was composing this play the study of mathematics began to fascinate him and this may partly account for his never finishing the comedy. His explanation is that it resembled too closely the domestic dramas² which he disliked as not being a natural expression of the French temperament.

"Les Quiproquo".

The next fragment, "Les Quiproquo", consists only of a scheme which Stendhal began to make March 7, 1801, while he was with the army at Reggio. It is possible that the intrigue was taken from some Italian comedy, for it is a complicated story of abductions carried out by spies and "sigibées". A French and an Italian both plan to elope with the heroine and one party carries off the mother by mistake! This is the first time that Stendhal reveals his delight in Italian stories with their passionate and energetic crimes.

1. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 76.

2. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 57.

"Le Ménage à la Mode".

"Le Ménage à la Mode" was to be a comedy of contemporary Paris life. The first date on the manuscript is June 13th, 1801, and apparently by July 12th Stendhal had finished outlining the plot, for he mentioned it in his diary.¹ The project was laid aside after another effort in December, and never taken up again.

The story is somewhat similar to that of "Gli Amori di Zelinda e Lindoro", which Stendhal had seen in May 1801. Pauline, the heroine (probably named after his sister) is an orphan, loved by M. d'Arnanche, his son Le Chevalier and also Dumas, the family secretary, but she is faithful to her lover, Velson. Similarly, Zelinda is a poor but honest girl, sheltered in the home of Don Roberto whose son and butler both desire her, but she keeps her love for Lindoro, Roberto's secretary. In both plays the wife is jealous and orders the girl from the house.

"Zélinde et Lindor".

"Les Amours de Zélinde et Lindor", the last fragment in this volume, is a translation of Goldoni's play, which

1. "Journal", Vol. I, p. 23. H. Martino has omitted this date and concludes that the project was not started on until December. "Théâtre", Vol. I, p. 91.

Stendhal completed in sixteen days,¹ after having borrowed the text from a bookseller in Milan on May 27th, 1801. He himself excuses the work on the pretext of haste, and suggests² that it should be considered only as a rough draft but no corrected version has been found.

According to a note on the title-page,³ he proposed to omit the incident of the second act which concerns the prima donna, and it has been stated that he actually did this,⁴ but the translation and the text in the complete works of Goldoni⁵ tally speech by speech. Although this play might well have been printed, after a few corrections had been made, Stendhal seems to have forgotten about it as soon as his enthusiasm was satisfied by the effort of translating.

1. Stendhal's note stating that he finished the translation on the 20 prairial does not tally with the diary which gives 23 prairial and is probably more correct. See "Théâtre", Vol. I, p. 360, and "Journal", Vol. I, p. 13.

2. "Théâtre", Vol. I, p. 360.

3. Op. cit., p. 105.

4. Op. cit., p. 103.

5. Goldoni "Opere Commedia", Vol. XXI, Venegia 1922.

ii. "Théâtre", Volume II.

"Ulysse".

Stendhal made a note in his diary¹ that a tragedy entitled "Pénélope" might be taken from Bitaubé's translation of the Odyssey and this title is also included in the list of possible plays which Stendhal drew up in 1801 while he was still in Italy.² He began to sketch the characters a few months later and changed the title to "Ulysse", basing his intrigue on the story of the suitors' plotting against Telemachus. He knew that the Abbé Genest has used this same material for "Pénélope" and he most probably consulted this play. The only difference in their respective lists of characters is the part of the heroine. In Genest, she is Iphise, Eurimachus' daughter, who loves Telemachus and so is placed like Chimène between conflicting passions of love and duty. Stendhal replaces this rôle by a certain Princess Mélante, one of Ulysses' relations, to whom Antinous pays court in order to make her spy on Penelope. He realised almost at once that this kind of tragedy was beyond his powers, and wasted no more time on the plan.

1. "Journal", Vol. I, pp. 40-41, 9 December, 1801.

2. "Théâtre", Vol. I, Préface, p. iv.

"Hamlet".

Stendhal had always been fascinated by "Hamlet" ever since he first read the translation by Letourneur. In his diary of 11 November, 1802,¹ he mentions having studied certain parts of the play, and actually began his rendering of the story a week later. His knowledge of English was still too elementary to permit his understanding the original text, and instead of using the translations by Letourneur or Laplace, he based his version on Ducis' adaptation. He accepts the alteration in the part of Ophelia whereby she is placed in a similar position to Chimène, and her love for her betrothed is opposed to her duty as Claudius' daughter. Like Ducis also, he reduces the characters to the usual number in French tragedy, thus omitting Laertes, Horatio, Fortinbras, Rosenkrantz, Guildenstern and the players. Polonius is replaced by a general named Casimir. The unity of tone is preserved as the humorous scene with the grave-diggers is omitted, and the action is further simplified by the exclusion of the play within the play.

In consequence, the plot bears but a slight resemblance to that of Shakespeare's tragedy. Even the events leading up to the opening of the play are altered, for according to the prologue Hamlet's father, Alfred,

1. "Journal", Vol. I, p. 48.

had wanted to introduce into Denmark reforms based on the institutions of more southern races, and so estranged the nobility and the clergy. Claudius, his brother, aided by these discontented people, raised a revolt, but was vanquished and subsequently pardoned by Alfred. Seeing all chance of gaining the throne lost, he seduced Gertrude, and by assuring her that Alfred knew of her unfaithfulness and was about to kill them both, obtained her assent to the murder of the king. Putting forward the pretext that Hamlet was too young, he caused himself to be crowned.

Stendhal sets the action in motion by making Claudius explain to his general that Gertrude is wearying him with her remorse; that Hamlet seems to have divined the manner of his father's death, and that security is only possible if Hamlet can be killed in battle, apparently by accident. In the following scene, Hamlet admits to Ophelia that his sadness is due to his father's call for vengeance. By the beginning of the second act, Hamlet has learnt the name of the murderer, and lets Ophelia into his confidence, whereupon, naturally, she begs for her father's life. Hamlet refuses to leave with the army, and Claudius determines to poison him at supper. In the third act Gertrude, on being accused by her son, admits her part in the crime. It is arranged that she shall retire

to a convent and help Hamlet regain the throne. Ophelia entreats her father to abdicate and so save his life, but he refuses. Hamlet considers committing suicide, when suddenly he is told that Claudius wishes to marry him to Ophelia at once. He refuses to obey this command. The fifth act shows Claudius' remorse at his daughter's madness, and his determination to kill Gertrude. He is assassinated by conspirators whom Hamlet has collected together, but the prince in the moment of triumph hears of Ophelia's death and kills himself.

In "Les Mémoires d'un Homme de Qualité" Stendhal had found a situation which he wanted to reproduce in his "Hamlet",¹ whereby Claudius would stand, dagger in hand, by his daughter and threaten to kill her if Hamlet approached with his followers. Unfortunately, he discovered that Antoine Lemierre had used the idea in "Hypermnestre",² so he gave up working on this subject until such a time as he could produce a play better than that of Lemierre's.

1. "Théâtre", Vol. II, p. 50. This situation must be adapted from the story in Part VIII, of "Mémoires d'un Homme de Qualité" where Doña Pastrino outwits Don Diego and his followers, who come to capture her brother and to rescue Diana whom he has carried off. She brandishes her dagger, threatening to kill Diana who is lying at her feet, if anyone advances to lay hands on her brother. "Mémoires et Aventures d'un Homme de Qualité", Prévost, 1783, Vol. II, p. 56.

2. "Hypermnestre", A. Lemierre, Répertoire du Théâtre Français, Vol. VI, p. 84.

Stendhal had not yet sufficiently studied human nature to be able to appreciate the character-drawing in "Hamlet", and in adapting the play he misses the point of Shakespeare's presentation of a thinker being forced to action, continually postponing his vengeance and suffering remorse from his own weakness. He seems only to have appreciated the spectacle of passion (the soul's energy), active even if towards disastrous ends.

Stendhal only completed the dialogue of the first scene, and this is in simple prose with one or two lines that recall sentimental drama:-

"Mais que devins-je lorsque j'appris de cette âme franche et candide, qu'elle souffrait autant que moi de la tristesse d'Hamlet, et qu'elle n'en savait pas mieux la cause."¹

One speech that Stendhal planned to introduce is reminiscent of the language of melodrama:-

"Depuis que mon père m'a chargé de sa vengeance, je ne me connais plus. Je ne veux plus rien tièdement. Une fureur secrète m'anime, je me sens entraîné, j'ai soif du sang de Boleslas."²

1. "Théâtre", Vol. II, p. 40.

2. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 45.

"Les Deux Hommes".

"Les Deux Hommes" (being the most nearly completed of all the fragments) gives the best opportunity for judging Stendhal's gifts as a dramatist.

He first contemplated creating the character of a young philosopher in love, and was probably inspired by Destouches' "Les Philosophes Amoureux". He soon developed this idea by adding a contrasting character — a young man of the world — and renaming his comedy "Les Deux Hommes". The meaning of the title is obvious, but there were already in existence several plays, such as "Les Deux Frères" (Rochefort or Moissy) and "Les Deux Amis" (Dancourt), wherein two characters are opposed in a similar way.

From remarks in his diary and in the "Pensées", and from the odd dates noted on the manuscript of the fragment, we know that he began to write towards the end of January 1803, and continued steadily until the end of April, but after this ceased working on the play and made no further additions until January 1804. He seems to have spent most of May of this year trying to rewrite the dialogue in verse, but after another attempt in August he abandoned the play and never touched it again.

The story centres around an ambitious widow, Madame Valbelle, who is determined to arrange the marriage of her

son Charles so that he may enter high political circles. The only obstacle is Charles's love for his cousin Adèle. To overcome this, Mme Valbelle plans that Hector Chamoucy, whose ambition is to marry a rich woman, shall accept Adèle. This proposition is opposed by Charles' uncle, who has been responsible for his education and who not only sympathises with the lovers, but objects to Adèle's being married to a fashionable young man, estranged from his mother. Mme Valbelle sets herself the double task of making Charles believe Adèle is unfaithful, and reconciling Mme Chamoucy and her son. This last effort is foiled by the Abbé Delmare, Hector's tutor, who had brought about the estrangement because, being now freed from his vows by the Revolution, he wants to marry Mme Chamoucy. He has already caused her husband to be imprisoned and falsely announced his death. Mme Valbelle persuades Hector to carry off Adèle while Charles is sent to Paris to help his uncle's friend (who turns out to be M. Chamoucy). Charles on his return, challenges his rival to a duel, but Hector refuses to fight and moreover will not admit Adèle's innocence. Mme Valbelle, cured of ambition by her fears for her son's life, renounces her plans for his marriage, and by admitting her part in the abduction of Adèle, forces Hector to confess that the girl was innocent. Charles and

Adèle are once again united and finally M. Chamoucy comes home and drives out the hated Delmare.

Stendhal made six plans for the division of this intrigue into acts and scenes, but the only variation is in the order of events, except for the two following changes: the first plan includes a scene (which was afterwards rejected) wherein Delmare betrays Hector by assuring Charles that Adèle is not in love with his rival: in the second and later plans, Mme Valbelle pretends that she has promised to pay a large sum to M. Clérac if Charles's marriage with his daughter is not concluded. In order to free his nephew, Valbelle promises to settle this matter.

The plot thus contains an abduction and a duel, comic material so frequently used by the Italian and French playwrights of the eighteenth century. In addition, Stendhal introduced the vices of ambition for money and political power which were especially characteristic of French society after the Revolution.

The unity of action is kept, for the proposed marriage between Mme Chamoucy and Delmare is not merely of secondary interest. It affects the main issue in that Delmare does his utmost to prevent Mme Valbelle from succeeding as he fears that Hector, once he is reconciled with his mother, will discover how his tutor has robbed him, and refuse to agree to the marriage.

The unity of place is made possible by the fact that both men love the same woman and the plot is centred around her home. As for the limit of time, it is not clear whether Charles is meant to return from Paris the same day, after having obtained M. Chamoucy's freedom, but as Auteuil is so near the capital, this is probably what was intended.

In these plans, Stendhal shows a good sense of dramatic tension and finishes each act so that the spectator's curiosity would be aroused and his interest sustained. Unfortunately, he is not so successful in the actual dialogue, the last scenes of acts II and III, in particular, giving no hint of what will follow. The tension is also lessened by the introduction of so many soliloquies, possibly in obedience to Alfieri's idea that confidants should not be used. Seven of the thirty-eight scenes were to be in this form, and some of the speeches in the other thirty-one scenes are long enough to be monologues.¹

Stendhal further weakens the plot by repeating situations with hardly any variation. Twice Charles becomes jealous and doubts Adèle's love for him (Acts III, i, and V, ii, iii), and twice they make up their quarrel (Acts I, vii, and IV, ii).

1. See Valbelle's speech on the perfect life, "Théâtre", Vol. II, pp. 238-240.

The theme of the plot is to be found in Stendhal's philosophical reading. The idea is that education is the greatest factor in the development of men:

"Je montre que l'éducation philosophique a produit un homme vraiment honnête, tandis qu'au contraire l'éducation dévote a produit un homme faible inclinant à la scélératesse."¹

Stendhal owed this theory to Helvétius, and frequently alludes to his philosophy as being the only true system of thought. Children who are given an education based on reason will be naturally happy and virtuous, instead of bored and cynical.

For the characters of his lovers, Stendhal draws on "La Nouvelle Héloïse" and "Emile". Charles is to be a "jeune Emile, amant fougueux", vivacious and yet naïve.² Adèle, the charming young coquette like Sophie, will be transformed by her love for Charles, and become a second Julie.³ Valbelle's description of the joys of domesticity recalls the Wolmar household and Saint-Preux' judgments of Parisian life:

1. "Théâtre", Vol. II, p. 78.

2. Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 88 and 89.

3. Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 80 and 91.

"Le bonheur n'est point dans ce qui nous environne, il est tout dans nous. Ceux que nous voyons si couverts de broderies et si enviés par la multitude ne sont point heureux Ce que donne le bonheur ce sont les affections douces. C'est avec une fortune médiocre, le plaisir de se sentir aimé par une femme, des enfants, des amis, et voilà ce qu'on ne trouve point parmi les grands et parmi leurs imitateurs."¹

The reconciliation scenes between Charles and Adèle were inspired by M. Guérin's drawing "Le Racommodement".

For Chamoucy especially, Stendhal seeks inspiration in books, basing his character on the villains of "Le Séducteur"², "Tom Jones à Londres"³, "Le Curé de Wakefield"⁴, "Le Méchant"⁵ and "Le Joueur"⁶. Delmare is to be a hypocrite of the same family as Tartuffe and Bégearss, and ideas for his conduct were to be taken from the History of the Duke of Orleans⁷. Valbelle is to be another Cléante or Ariste⁸ while Mme Valbelle is to resemble the ambitious mother in "Amélie Mansfield" (a novel by Mme Cettin) and to imitate Iago's tactics when she tries to separate Charles and Adèle. When he actually came to building up the characters,

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1. "Théâtre", Vol. II, p. 238.
 2. Marquis de Bièvres.
 3. Choudard Desforges.
 4. Goldsmith.
 5. de Gresset.
 6. Regnard.
 7. "Théâtre", Vol. II, p. 92.
 8. From "Le Tartuffe" and "Les Précepteurs".

Stendhal borrowed little from these models beyond the passages inspired by Rousseau.

For the first time he drew also on his own experience, and openly admitted that he had in mind his cousin's household at Auteuil,¹ and that Mme Rebuffet and her daughter were the models for Mme Valbelle and Adèle. The ambitious traits in Mme Valbelle's nature were to be copied from a Mme Cardon, the mother of one his friends. In the portrait of Delmare, he took his first revenge on his old tutor the Abbé Raillanne, and to complete the character proposed adding details from the life of the critics Laharpe and Geoffroy.² He states that the hero is to be a self-portrait:³ accordingly, Charles will spend his youth in Le Dauphiné and be well-read in literature and philosophy, but unaccustomed to social life. He will then come to Paris and follow a military career. In point of fact, Stendhal does not desire to draw an accurate self-portrait, but to embody his idealised conception of himself as a sensitive, passionate young man:

"Dans Charles j'ai à peindre cette première impression que le monde, vu imparfaitement, fait sur une âme neuve, ardente et voyant tout en bien.... Cet enthousiasme de vertu et de bonheur, la chose la plus touchante qui existe."⁴

1. Cf. p.12. "Théâtre", Vol. II, p. 64.

2. "Théâtre", Vol. II, p. 91.

3. Ibid., p. 76. Cf. note in letter on "Le Faux Métromane", Le Divan, July-August, 1928, pp. 305-6.

4. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 82.

For the grouping of his people, Stendhal intends to follow Destouches' methods. Charles and Chamoucy are to be opposed first as the products of a philosophical and religious education.¹ In politics they are antagonistic for their opinions are respectively those of the republican and monarchist. Charles is to be an example of a true and passionate lover, while Chamoucy is a seducer. Even their manners are contrasted, for Charles will be charming, kindly and gay, and Chamoucy bored, cynical and witty after the fashion of Voltaire.² Stendhal does not feel that these protagonists will give him sufficient scope for displaying all the virtues and vices of the two systems of education, and decides to include the tutors Valbelle and Delmare. These last characters, although they have occurred frequently in comedy since the time of Terence, were probably immediately suggested to Stendhal by Fabre d'Eglantine's "Les Précepteurs" in which Ariste and Timante and their pupils are contrasted.

He also wishes to portray the struggle of love against duty in the manner of Corneille. Charles's respect for his mother and his love for Adèle are at variance and Stendhal hesitates but finally decides that love shall be the victor.

1. Ibid., p. 78.

2. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 209.

The following indications of Stendhal's methods show that his characters were conceived and built up theoretically, and narrowly escaped being lay figures around which abstract qualities were grouped:-

"Madame Valbelle, dominée par l'ambition.		
Delmare	"	" désir de richesses.
Charles	"	" amour.
Chamoucy	"	" désir de fortune et de vanité, etc."1

The title would suggest that the characters of Charles and Chamoucy are to be equally important, but Stendhal's object was to show the advantage of the philosophical education. Hence it follows that Charles is the more important of the two. Before he appears, the impression is given that he is a strong character. His tutor has perfect faith in him and compares him favourably with Chamoucy:

"A vingt ans il a tous les talents utiles et agréables, une vertu profondément fondée et tout ce qu'il fait pour parvenir à tout, si dans ce siècle la vertu élève les hommes."2

Madame Valbelle, although she did not approve of his education, admits he is talented, and only objects to his excessive frankness, which has brought him so many enemies.

Charles does not justify his reputation. He is supposed to be a philosopher, superior to the ways of the

1. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 70.

2. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 239.

world, whereas the result of his training is to make him afraid of the world:

(To his mother) "Oh! si vous avez quelque tendresse pour moi, daignez me conduire dans ce monde que je ne connais pas et qui est plein de précipices."¹

His mother realises his weakness:

"Il ne connaît pas le monde et malgré toute sa philosophie ce fantôme l'effraie quelquefois."²

When he first appears he is treated like a child by Mme Valbelle, over the question of his marriage:

Mme Valbelle: "Bien mon fils. Dis-mois une chose, serais-tu bien aise d'être Colonel?"

Charles: Comment, colonel? Je ne suis que lieutenant

Mme Valbelle: J'ai conclu pour toi une alliance superbe; tu épouses une fille charmante qui n'a dix-huit ans et qui a quarante mille livres de rente, tu es fait colonel.....

Charles: Et quand épouserai-je, maman?

Mme Valbelle: J'espère que tu ne seras pas fâché d'avoir un beau-père tel que M. de Clérac?

Charles: Non, maman, mais je vous avouerai que ce mariage m'étonne."³

1. Ibid., pp. 286-7.

2. Ibid., p. 311.

3. Ibid., pp. 242-243.

Apparently Charles yields at once to his mother's suggestions, and only complains bitterly to his uncle about his misfortune, never attempting to alter the course of events by facing the problem and making a definite decision. Stendhal was to have shown in him the conflict of passions, but instead of being a strong character with powerful affections drawing him in opposite directions, Charles is only a weak, whining youth. In addition, he accepts statements without proof, and too readily suspects Adèle of being unfaithful. When he sees his rival kneeling before her, he is immediately convinced of her guilt, and his behaviour is brusque and uncontrolled. In the last act, he changes no less quickly, and without proof, to a belief in Adèle's innocence.¹ Only in the challenging scene does he speak with any determination and courage. Certainly it cannot be said that Stendhal has succeeded in producing a portrait of himself or of his ideal self.

The contrast between Charles and Chamoucy is not clearly drawn. They are not really pitted against each other, for the action arises from the activity of Mme Valbelle which is counteracted by Delmare's and Valbelle's efforts. This means that the action is not controlled by either of the main characters, as Stendhal had planned.²

1. "Théâtre", Vol. II, pp. 341-2.

2. See p. 32.

Chamoucy is not a second Lovelace or Beverley, for he does not succeed in fascinating Adèle, and when she agrees to marry him, it is only because she has quarrelled with Charles. As a villain he shows some dexterity in the scene with Adèle, when he throws himself at her feet and makes a declaration of love just as he sees Charles approach, but this is his only act which is not planned by Mme Valbelle, who seems to have him completely under her control. He dares not accept Charles's challenge, lest Mme Valbelle should turn against him and ruin his reputation.

Stendhal has created a sympathetic figure in Valbelle, who is ready to sacrifice his own wealth in order to make Charles happy. His sentimental speeches about family life seem a little out of character, since he is an old soldier and a confirmed bachelor. Mme Chamoucy hardly takes any part in the action, and her scenes with Delmare are left unfinished. Adèle is a colourless heroine who acts on the impulse of the moment, but who is genuinely devoted to Charles.

Stendhal's interest seems to have concentrated chiefly on Mme Valbelle, for she is a living personality, a determined woman who makes every effort to realise her ambitions. The whole intrigue depends on her, and Charles, Chamoucy and Adèle are mere puppets in her hands. Even

Valbelle begins by urging Charles to give up all idea of his marriage, ^{with Adèle,} rather than displease his mother. Her cleverness is particularly shown in these scenes: Act IV, i, when she induces Chamoucy to suggest the abduction;¹ Act IV, vii, when she persuades Valbelle to send Charles to Paris, saying that the separation will be a test of his love for Adèle, when she really wants him to leave Auteuil so that Chamoucy may have a chance to carry out the plan.² She shows her cunning in Act III, i, when, like a feminine Iago, she quickly turns Charles from a state of confidence to jealousy:

Charles: "Mais depuis elle m'a assuré de son amour, elle m'a juré qu'elle n'avait jamais aimé Chamoucy.

Mme V.: Tu es bien jeune, mon ami. Tu ne sais pas qu'il est plus aisé de se justifier par des serments que par des preuves.

Charles: Vous savez quelque chose, maman, j'en suis sûr. Dites-le moi sur le champ, je vous en supplie

Mme V.: Tu prends la chose trop vivement, mon ami, je t'assure que je ne sais rien..... Les meilleurs mariages ne sont pas ceux qui sont formés par l'amour, une douce convenance de caractères rend plus heureux, Adèle a beaucoup d'esprit, beaucoup de finesse, je suis sûre qu'elle te rendra heureux.

Charles: Ciel! n'en être pas aimé! Le voile tombe. C'est clair. Je ne m'apercevais de rien, moi, avec mon peu d'usage.

1. "Théâtre", Vol. II, pp. 312-323.

2. Ibid., pp. 327-8.

Mme. V.: Inquiétude d'amant. Elle t'aime. Mais à mesure que tu connaîtras le monde tu verras qu'on aime souvent mieux épouser un homme d'un caractère sûr, que son amant. Le premier lien est éternel, le second peut se rompre.

Charles: O Maman, que me dites-vous?

Mme V.: Rien, mon fils, que de général....."¹

There were to have been comic scenes between the servants, and amusing arguments between Valbelle and Delmare, but these were never completed. In spite of Stendhal's careful analyses of laughter and ridicule and their causes, there is no vestige of humour in his comedy, and it remains as grave as any "comédie sérieuse".

The style of the prose dialogue is simple like that of natural conversation, with the exception of a few speeches after the manner of Saint-Preux:

"Si jeune et connaître si bien l'artifice. O ville de corruption et d'artifice, voilà donc tes enfants. Non, je ne te goûterai jamais, délicieux plaisir d'être aimé, jamais je ne retrouverai les heures délicieuses qu'elle m'a données ce matin. O bonheur! et si voisin du désespoir. Voilà donc la vie: un instant d'illusion et des siècles de douleur. Je n'étais pas né pour le bonheur...."²

Prose, however, was only to be used for outlining the speeches which should finally be produced in the alexandrine meter. There are four scenes versified and these are included at the end of this volume of the "Théâtre".

1. Ibid., pp. 284-5.

2. Ibid., pp. 305-6.

In his diary he complains that from April 26th to May 21st (1804) he had only completed sixty-eight lines, and there are frequent notes in his papers giving the same impression about his lack of talent:

"Après m'être cassé la tête depuis dix heures du matin jusqu'à quatre pour faire deux (vers) et demi, je vais à la Montansier."¹

"Un jour, je faisais 8 vers, les 2 jours suivants, j'en faisais un."²

The results were not worth such efforts. Many of the lines have too many syllables, the couplets end in commonplace rhymes and the inversions are clumsy. They show some improvement, however, on the first attempt in "Selmours":

Charles: "Adieu, d'un malheureux gardez quelque mémoire,
A faire son malheur vous trouvez^{de} de gloire,
Et peut-être qu'un jour vous le regretterez:
De vos cruels mépris vous vous repentirez.
Vous plaindrez tant d'amour payé de perfidie;
Peut-être à votre tour, de votre amant trahie,
Malheureuse, les pleurs ne seront plus pour vous
Un sujet de mépris."³

The reason for Stendhal's abandoning this play on which he had worked so long, is probably that he became discouraged by the difficulties of versification, but would not be content to finish it in a medium which he considered unworthy of the theatre.

1. "Journal", Vol. I, p. 90. "La Montansier" was a theatre on the site of the present "Théâtre Palais Royal".

2. "Le Divan" Chroniques Stendhaliennes, July-Aug., 1928, p. 304.

3. "Théâtre", Vol. II, p. 396.

iii. "Théâtre", Volume III.

"Letellier".

The various titles, "L'Intérieur d'un Journal", "Le Bon Parti", "Quelle Horreur", "Le Pervertisseur", "L'Eteignoir" and "La Cheminée de Marbre", were given in turn to this comedy. The dates jotted in the margins of the manuscript and the references in Stendhal's diary show that although the ideas for the plot were floating in his mind as early as October 1803, he did not start sketching the plan until August of the next year. Until November he worked regularly on the play but then his love-affair with Mélanie Louason began to absorb all his attention and only when she left Paris for a few weeks in March 1805, had he the leisure to add more suggestions. He entirely neglected the comedy during the time at Marseilles, but as his love for Mélanie began to fade, he turned for consolation to his old ambition. For four years the papers were set aside until the summer of 1810 when he was at Plancy on leave, and with the help of Crozet devised new plans and added fresh characters. The next entries are May 1811, and September 1812, the latter date referring to the time of his illness during the Russian Campaign. In 1816, 1820,

1. Cf. Pensées, Vol. I, p. 208.

2. M.P. Martino suggests that in 1820 Stendhal brought "Letellier" up to date by calling it a "romantic comedy". It was "La Comtesse de Savoie" that Stendhal so described.

and 1821, he made desultory efforts to finish the play, and nine years later tried for the last time to create a comedy out of this chaos of odd notes. On one of these final pages there is a remark which links up the play with Stendhal's work as a dramatic theorist. There had been friction between Vitet and himself, and he remarks that it is not a "Henri III"¹, that he is going to write, but a comedy against calumny.²

"Letellier" was first planned as a one-act play, with its plot centred on a critic and journalist, one Letellier, whose ambition is to attack all the living and dead authors who may have supported the philosophers of the eighteenth century. He and Saint-Bernard are the leaders of two parties upholding respectively the ideals of despotism and orthodox religion. They are hostile towards a young playwright, Chapelle, who has written a comedy against them, because they had unjustly criticised an actress whom he loved.³ By some rash act, Chapelle falls into Letellier's power, and the critic nearly succeeds in stopping the performance of this play, but his vanity is

See p. 132, and "Stendhal", P. Martino, 1914, p.60. The editors of the "Correspondance" made a similar mistake. See Vol. II, p. 169.

1. See p.77.

2. "Théâtre", Vol. III, p. 269. This friction was due to their rivalry as musical critics, and also to Vitet's severe criticism of "Armance". See Le Divan, "Petites Notes Stendhaliennes", Jan. 1934, p. 34.

3. Cf. Stendhal's own defence of La Duchesnois, p. 10.

so great, that on hearing his accomplices boast of having ruined Chapelle, he discloses his possession of the letter, which is their weapon against the playwright. By flattery he is induced to give this up, so that ultimately Chapelle is freed, the play is produced and Letellier is ruined.

Stendhal imagined so many different situations in which his protagonist might be placed, that he had soon outlined forty scenes and five acts. Consequently the plot, which was continually being altered, is a "patchwork" made up from these different suggestions, and does not develop logically. There is no unity of action, for the first three acts were devoted to preventing Chapelle's play from being acted, and the last two, to the rivalry between Letellier and Saint-Bernard. As for the rules about time and place, Stendhal decided to begin by sketching his scenes in the manner of Shakespeare, afterwards reducing them to the usual classical order. Unity of place seems to him absurd, but since the rule is accepted by the public he complies with it, and makes Letellier, Garasse, and their enemy, Chapelle, all live in the same house.

The comedy was to fulfil these objects — to defend the philosophers, Voltaire, Rousseau and Helvétius; to attack those who seek power by calumny; to ridicule the supporters of despotism and religion, the critics who condemn other writer's work, but never produces anything themselves,

and lastly, the uneducated public who accept blindly what they read in the papers. It was Alfieri who had inspired Stendhal with such hatred of despotism that he wrote:

"Mon protagoniste est l'ami du despotisme, car je ne puis mettre en scène le despote lui-même, qui d'ailleurs serait un mauvais sujet de comédie, étant de sa nature très odieux et très ridicule."¹

This is very different from his later judgments of Napoleon, and years after he added a note to that effect:

"Je vous en demande pardon, ô grand par excellence."²

He was even more embittered against the clergy, for he felt that the public did not realise to what extent they were misled by these supporters of the old régime:

"Le public ne regarde pas ceux qui lui prêchent la religion comme assez dangereux. Il sait bien qu'il ne croira jamais aux balivernes qu'ils prêchent et il se contente de les mépriser comme des imbéciles de bonne foi ou comme des charlatans du Pont-Neuf; ils ne voient pas qu'ils se servent de la religion pour prêcher le despotisme."³

The words underlined sum up exactly Stendhal's opinion of the priesthood and might have been taken from any one of his books.

It is amusing to see him ridiculing the critics when he himself was guilty of the same fault, for the fact

1. Cf. "Pensées", Vol. II, pp. 39-40.

2. "Théâtre", Vol. III, p. 23.

3. Ibid., p. 144.

that he found it impossible to write a play did not make him more generous in his criticism of contemporary drama.

For the first time, Stendhal determined to model his characters entirely on real people, and to consult other plays only on matters of technique. According to the last plan (1830) the "Comte de Tilian" and "Marie de Monluc" (a variant of Chappelle's mistress Mme Saint Martin), were to resemble Merimée and Mme de Rubempré.¹ "Vardes" and his friends, three gay young men in Paris, would be copies of Martial Daru, Ligne and Stendhal himself. Chappelle, the hero, was another self-portrait:

"Chappelle est moi, heureux, travaillant à Paris, adorant sa maîtresse Mme de xxxx arrivant à la plus grande célébrité par des ouvrages de génie."²

The remaining characters were also to be copied from actual men though Stendhal only knew them through their works. Saint-Bernard was to represent Chateaubriand, with his emphatic style of writing, and his habit of being poetical when he should reason, and intellectual when he ought to move his readers. The literary "coterie" of which Saint-Bernard was to be the leader would be an imitation of the "coterie des Déjeuners" which supported P. Daru, Picard and others about 1810, as candidates for the Academy.

1. Delacroix's cousin whom Stendhal apparently had once loved.

2. "Théâtre", Vol. III, p. 268.

Patouillet, another of the pedants, was a portrait of Bonald, the defender of the principle of monarchy.

Letellier, named after Michel Le Tellier, Louis XIV's jesuit confessor, was to be a quintessence of all the critics and men of letters whom Stendhal detested, — Laharpe, Fiévée, Petitot, Jondot, Fontanes, and especially Geoffroy. He was not personally acquainted with the writer for the "Journal des Débats", but had always disliked him for his attacks on the philosophers of the eighteenth century and his treatment of the actress, La Duchesnois. He also blamed him for pedantic writing, lack of taste and for constantly adverse criticism given without any constructive suggestions.¹ In order to make a successful caricature of the critic, he read all Geoffroy's articles in the "Débats" for the year 1810, copying out any paragraphs which in his opinion, were sufficiently ridiculous to insert in the speeches. The name of Letellier's friend may have been taken from the jesuit Garasse, who wrote venomous pamphlets against Rabelais, Montaigne and Pasquier. If so, the choice of names in both cases reveals Stendhal's prejudice against the jesuits.

1. It is interesting to compare this estimate of Geoffroy as a critic, with one Stendhal made twenty-two years later when he no longer had any personal grievance against him: "His articles might more properly be termed satires than critiques: yet still besides the amusement they give, they are also instructive, the writer was a man of excellent taste." "Foreign Publications", New Monthly Magazine, Historical Register, Jan. 1826, p. 31.

For this comedy, Stendhal turned away from the type of intrigue he had used hitherto. He considered it would be a weak method, worthy only of vaudeville, to depend on a slight action, like a daughter's love-affair, to reveal Letellier's character. Sentimental interest might be allowed in a scene between Chapelle and his mistress, but the rest of the plot would be centred around Letellier himself, in his capacity of critic and journalist. The situations in which his various weaknesses of character might place him would provide ample material. Fifteen different scenes could be devoted to displaying his vanity, for such a man would boast of his achievements in private to his wife and servants, in his office before his fellow-journalists, and in the literary salons. He would aspire to be the leader of public opinion, persuading everyone to decry the works of Voltaire and the philosophers, and might hope to make even the Government acknowledge his power. As a journalist, he would be proud of his articles which are daily chapters making up a book more valuable than any of the philosophical productions. His dishonesty could be shown in his work, for he might accept gifts from authors and then alter the review he had just made of their books, or receive money from an actress on condition that in his criticism he understated her age. His pedantry could be indicated by his habit of digressing from the

main subject of his article in order to introduce an erudite allusion.

In this play Stendhal had definite plans for the introduction of comic scenes. His first method was by exaggerating Letellier's vanity, the critic's pedantry and the absurd mistakes of the ignorant, rich merchants. Then, like the philosopher in "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme", Letellier might commit the very act he was condemning in others, for example, having blamed the philosophers for their caustic writings, he would himself send out epigrams against Chapelle, or just as he is writing in praise of the Christian philosopher who is always calm and gentle, he might flash into a temper because his wife comes in and interrupts him. A third method would be a kind of dramatic irony; the more Letellier speaks ill of Saint-Bernard, hoping to rob him of the leadership of the "coterie", the more he serves his rival's purpose, for the electors had only hesitated to choose Saint-Bernard because they feared he was friendly with Letellier. The efforts to ruin Chapelle by calumny would likewise only hurt Letellier's own reputation.

Stendhal wrote one scene that is quite amusing; Letellier and his friend Garasse are visited by Fougeard, the wealthy, ignorant man whose ideas are all gleaned from the newspaper.

Letellier: "L'éducation ne fait rien, monsieur, j'ai toujours vu en vous le sentiment inné du bon goût. Vous êtes une de ces plantes rares destinées par la nature à orner la société.

Fougeard (souriant): Votre journal m'a entièrement changé. Chaque matin sa lecture me réjouit, et il m'est presque aussi nécessaire que le thé..... Auparavant, je ne parlais jamais spectacle (je ne savais que dire sur les spectacles) quoique j'eusse une loge à tous. Actuellement, j'ai une opinion à moi, et l'on m'écoute.

Letellier: Ce n'est pas encore là le triomphe qui m'est le plus doux. Vous étiez philosophe et vous ne l'êtes plus.

Fougeard: Vous vous tromper, mon cher, je les ai lus tous cinq ou six fois, avec beaucoup d'attention, mais j'ai la gloire de n'y avoir jamais rien compris, et si les Français avaient été bien sensés ils auraient mis Condillac et Rousseau aux petites maisons.

Letellier: Voilà parler en vrai Français, attentif à conserver la gloire nationale."¹

Only four other scenes and the speech to the pedants were completed, and these are all in prose. Stendhal had given up hope of writing verse himself though he thought he might commission someone else to versify his work.² The real interest of this fragment is that we have here the first indication of Stendhal's later methods of writing (which were successful in the novel) whereby he collected various traits of character (mostly from people he had known) and from all these details built up the new characters.

1. "Théâtre", Vol. III, pp. 42-44.

2. "Journal", IV (plac 28 iii).

Translations from Alfieri.

Stendhal had admired and studied Alfieri's tragedies ever since he began educating himself to be a dramatist, and he tried to translate two of the plays, "Bruto Primo" and "Filippo". He started on the first in 1804, but only completed two scenes. The translation is more exact than that of "Zélinde et Lindor" and the style is generally dignified and moving:

Brutus: "Voilà le jour, l'instant tant désiré qui arrive à la fin; mon ancien et sublime dessein peut enfin aujourd'hui recevoir un corps, et une vie. Foi d'époux malheureux et offensé, tu peux maintenant te faire citoyen vengeur: toi-même tu béniras ce sang innocent et si alors tu veux verser le tien, qu'il ne soit pas au moins répandu en vain pour la vraie patrie....."¹

The second attempt was made much later, though even in 1804 Stendhal had contemplated writing an opera "Don Carlos"², in which Isabella should bemoan her rank and desire in vain humble obscurity and love. In 1817, he suggested translating "Filippo" as a gift for his friend "Maisonette"³ (Joseph Lingay), but nothing was done until July 1819. A note on the manuscript: "Voir la vérité dans l'histoire de Llorente"⁴ is an early indication of that desire for

1. "Théâtre", Vol. III, p. 281.

2. "Journal", Vol. I, p. 125.

3. "Correspondance", Vol. II, 30th Oct., 1817.

4. "Théâtre", Vol. III, p. 347.

historical accuracy, which later Stendhal demanded from the writers of the new "romantic" drama. The translation is more free, less concise than before and consequently loses in intensity. Once again, Stendhal abandoned the project before two scenes had been finished.

"Les Médecins".

There is no plan worked out for this comedy, which was to be based on Goldoni's play "La Finta Ammalata". The idea came to Stendhal on June 9th, 1804, and two days later he jotted down the story in which a young girl from the provinces falls in love with the doctor who is called in to attend her.

Parts of the intrigue were to be borrowed from "L'Amour Médecin" and the characters copied from Goldoni's play. Only the chief doctor would be drawn from life and the model for him was a certain M. Bayle from Stendhal met at his cousin's house in Paris. It is interesting to see that Stendhal was determined to read Cabanis, Brown and Darwin, in order that his doctors should speak accurately of their work. Perhaps the need for this study caused him to give this idea up without further consideration!

"La Maison à Deux Portes".

This fragment was apparently included in the "Théâtre" on account of its biographical interest. Although the title is borrowed from Calderon, the text is thought to be a letter from Mélanie, after her separation from Stendhal, and this explanation seems reasonable.¹

"Il Forestiere in Italia".

Stendhal began this play in August, 1816, and according to the sub-title it was an opera written by Mario Malvolio for Signora Violante Anfossi. There are two problems; is this the name of a real author, or just another of Stendhal's disguises, and is the fragment original work or an adaptation from an Italian play? As there seems to be no playwright so named and "Twelfth Night" is mentioned several times in the notes, it is probable that "Malvolio" is a pseudonym. On the other hand, Stendhal, on five different occasions, compares his version with an Italian text, which suggests that he was working from another play. Since some of these notes on the translation occur in the scenes that are reminiscent of "Twelfth Night", apparently, it must have been the Italian playwright who combined the popular theme of the

1. See "De la Maison à Deux Portes", Le Figaro, 8 August, 1931.

Frenchman's insolent behaviour when abroad,¹ with the revenge scenes after the manner of Malvolio, but this play has not yet been traced.

In Stendhal's version, the letter is laid down to trap the young Frenchman, Saint-Félix, who is courting the Countess Bina. By his witticisms he arouses the anger of an Italian captain and a lawyer and the countess's maid helps them to get their revenge. The letter they compose is not nearly as clever as Shakespeare's, but the main ideas are the same: the lady cannot speak openly and the missive must not be mentioned; the finder is to dress up (in pale green stockings, not yellow, as with Malvolio), talk politics and be surly with servants. In this version the maid is present with the two men when the victim reads his letter, but there are no amusing asides as in Shakespeare.

"La Comtesse de Savoie".

This is perhaps the most interesting of these last fragments for it was planned to be a "romantic comedy", which is an additional proof that Stendhal, having known the Italian Romantic Movement, was in advance of the French literary world. He mentions this play as early as March,

1. Cf. "Le François à Londres", Boissy, L. de, 1727; "Le François à Turin", Dorat, G.J., 1779.

1820, in a letter to the Baron de Marest: "Je fais depuis longtemps et j'ai repris par vos avis, une comédie romantique." The dates on the manuscript are November, 1820, and January, 1821.

The plot is taken from the short novel "La Comtesse de Savoie" written by the Countess de Fontaines before 1713. Voltaire had also used parts of the story in "Tancrède" and "Artémire", and probably Stendhal first heard of the book through these plays.

He follows the original closely, dividing the story into twenty-eight scenes, but alters the ending in order to make it more "romantic", so that now the hero, after having overcome the villain in the lists, is to be assassinated, and the Countess, seeing her lover dead before her, will kill herself. In practice here, as well as in his theory, Stendhal demands a realistic picture of life: "Faire les scènes ainsi, dans toute la liberté romantique; n'étant fidèle qu'à la nature."²

He disregards the unities of time and place, but thinks of reducing the constant changes of scene from France to England, once he has outlined the plot. As for the medium, he definitely gives up all idea of writing verse:

1. "Correspondance", Vol. II, 3 March, 1820; cf. letter 20 Oct., 1820, p. 211. This is probably the play referred to in "Souvenirs d'Egotisme", Le Divan, 1928, p. 8.

2. "Théâtre", Vol. III, p. 363.

"Que dites-vous de ce dégoût croissant pour les vers? Comme je fais une comédie en prose, serait-ce la jalousie de l'impuissance?"¹

In the two scenes that were completed, Stendhal had an opportunity to express his admiration for Spanish pride and honour, which he had been taught to love by his great-aunt Gagnon, whose highest word of praise was "C'est beau comme le Cid". The princess's speeches are full of dignity and courage:

Isabelle (in the chapel, to the general who had returned with news of defeat):

"Arcos, défendez le palais, quand vous vous verrez sur le point d'être forcé, mettez-y le feu. Songez à abrégé tout ceci en faisant brûler rapidement cette chapelle. Songez qu'il ne faut pas que le farouche Alvar puisse reconnaître la dépouille mortelle de la Princesse de Léon.

Arcos: Madame, je vous obéis. Voilà le poignard arabe que votre frère prit au farouche Almazar et qu'il me donna..... Je vous en supplie, Madame, servez-vous-en pour terminer votre vie dès que vous verrez la flamme. Que tant de beauté ne soit pas défigurée..."²

"La Gloire et la Bosse".

Stendhal explains that the idea for "La Gloire et la Bosse" came from an article in the "Débats" of 30 January, 1826, by Duvergier de Hauranne, but it is difficult to imagine how this review on a book of law could have inspired him.

1. "Correspondance", Vol. II, p. 212; 20 Oct., 1820.

2. "Théâtre", Vol. III, pp. 368-9.

The story is of a young writer who works only to give expression to his creative impulses and neglects the duties of social life. His books fail, and to save himself, he becomes as dishonest as the rest of the authors and intrigues to assure some measure of success. He begins by marrying an editor's daughter, although she is a bad-tempered hunchback.

The only situation of the play which is not based on Stendhal's own experience is the scene where Gélimer is asked to join in the criticism of a poem, and, like Alceste with Oronte, offends the author by his frankness. The rest of the characters may be traced to Stendhal's acquaintances. The hunchback is sketched partly from an English woman, Miss Clarke, "une pie-grièche à demi-bossue",¹ to whom Fauriel introduced him, and partly from a girl whom apparently he might have married himself — the niece of M. Bertin, founder of "Le Journal des Débats".² Amélie, whom Gélimer loves passionately, probably represents Mme de Curial,³ who was Stendhal's mistress at this time, and M. de Lassans, her jealous husband. The old lady, who good-naturedly tries to make the haughty young writer realise

1. "Souvenirs d'Egotisme", pp. 73-4.

2. "Si j'avais épousé la fille sans jambes de M. Bertin de Vaux, j'aurais six mille francs de ces deux volumes ('Promenades dans Rome')." "Correspondance", Vol. II. Letter to the Baron de Maresté, 10 March, 1829, p. 496.

3. "Théâtre", Vol. III, (Préface, H. Martineau.), p. 374.

how ridiculous his behaviour is, may be Madame de Tracy.

Gélimer is another self-portrait. So devoted is he to his writing, that under the stimulus of coffee he works far into the night, and his valet tries in vain to make him live a normal life. Gélimer is sincere, outspoken, popular with women, but regarded with suspicion by many people. The old lady tries to make him understand this:

"Votre conduite est une insolence continue. Vous prétendez être heureux à votre manière. Vous vous moquez des bassesses des grands, de la bêtise des industriels;¹ vous n'allez jamais chez les femmes ennuyeuses, si vous y allez on voit trop que c'est pour Mme de Lassans....."

"Vous dites dans un lieu public: 'Je ne mets pas mon nom dans mon manteau afin que si je tue quelqu'un et que la police trouve mon manteau dans la bagarre, on ne sache pas qui c'est.'"

Gélimer: "En bien! Idée folle qui m'est venue peut-être à cause des propos doucereux et affadissants des gens avec qui je dînais."²

This certainly may apply to Stendhal, for he delighted in mystifying people, and says of himself that he scandalised most of his friends: "J'étais un monstre ou un Dieu."³

It is interesting to note that Gélimer's ambition is to succeed as a novelist and not as a playwright (as

1. Cf. Stendhal's "Complot contre les Industriels", 1825, to which another allusion is made on the following page of the play.

2. "Théâtre", Vol. III, pp. 384-8.

3. "Souvenirs d'Egotisme", p. 75.

Chapelle in "Letellier) for at this time, Stendhal was writing his first novel, "Armance", published in 1827.

"Francesca Paolo".

"Francesca Paolo", a fragment written in 1830 in the form of a letter to Mme Curial, is to be found in the first volume of the "Mélanges de Littérature"¹. The plot was taken from an Italian story which Stendhal reproduced fully in the "Promenades dans Rome"². Fabio is to be exiled for having killed a man who boasted of being loved by Francesca. Before leaving the country he goes secretly at night to say good-bye to his mistress, and as he leaves the house is surprised to find another man outside. It is his brother, Cercara, who, unknown to him, loves Francesca and hopes to win her affections. Fabio begs his brother to be the mediator between Francesca and himself, during his exile. Cercara cannot believe that his brother is preferred, and decides to prove the truth by taking Fabio to his cousin's house, and watching Francesca's reactions when she sees him. Her cry as she comes into the room convinces Cercara that Fabio is loved.

Unfortunately Stendhal never finished this play, but the opening scenes are well written, and the necessary

1. "Mélanges de Littérature", Vol. I, pp. 47-48, and in "Correspondance", Vol. II.

2. "Promenades dans Rome", Le Divan, Vol. III, pp. 8-18.

details of past facts neatly introduced. The characters are vigorous and passionate, and their language is often moving:-

Francesca: "Reste encore un moment; la nuit est si obscure que personne ne te verra sortir; et quand on te verrait près de cette maison, que m'importe? N'est-ce pas pour la dernière fois que je t'embrasse...."

Fabio: "Grand Dieu! voilà quatre heures! Je veux prendre une mèche de tes cheveux.

Francesca: Ame de ma vie, souviens-toi que je t'aime; surtout plus de soupçons; je mourrai plutôt mille fois que de t'être infidèle."¹

"Torquato Tasso".

Stendhal began to draft "Torquato Tasso" in November, 1834, following Goldoni's version of the subject, but analysing the characters' reactions according to his own experiences. The hero, Tasso, would be a portrait of himself as he was when he timidly loved the Countess Daru during the years 1810-1811. For the part of the jester, he would use certain incidents which he saw happen to a man named Wolff, during his stay in Brunswick in 1801.

Only the outline of the plot was finished, for Stendhal realised that Tasso's timidity would naturally

1. "Mélanges de Littérature", Vol. I, pp. 47 and 48.

prevent him from expressing his love, and so on the stage his part would be dull, whereas in a novel his emotions could be fully described.

Thus, after twenty years of failure, Stendhal, realising where his talents lay, abandoned the hope of writing a play, and henceforth concentrated his energies entirely on the production of novels.

IN CONCLUSION

FROM FAILURE TO SUCCESS

"Je me croyais du Génie — où diable avais-je
puisé cette idée? — Du génie pour le métier de
Molière et de Rousseau."

"Henri Brulard", Vol. II, p. 109.

FROM FAILURE TO SUCCESS

It is often difficult to discover how and when a man first realises what is to be his particular work in life. It may be as Maeterlinck hints, that we come to fulfil an appointed task, though we spend years finding what it is. This seems to have been the case with Stendhal, for from his earliest childhood he was determined to achieve literary fame. He never contemplated following his father's career, perhaps because of the inherent lack of harmony between them, nor did he think of taking up the profession of his much loved grandfather. His family more or less forced him to enter the army, and thanks to his conscientious work and the influence of his cousins, he rose to a high rank, but he was never a soldier at heart.

If we may not know why Stendhal felt himself destined to write, we may try to solve the problem of his long and unsatisfactory apprenticeship to the muses of the theatre. He began writing about the age of ten and his first great novel¹ was published when he was forty-eight! It is easy to understand why the theatre itself fascinated Stendhal. In his dull home-life there was no outlet for

1. "Le Rouge et le Noir", 1831.

his passionate nature, except in the hatred of his father, his tutors and his aunt Séraphie. Although he loved Dr Gagnon and his great-aunt Elisabeth Gagnon, he was too awed in their presence to express that affection. His taste for music was as yet hardly developed, and poetry had been ruined for him by enforced exercises in Latin prosody. Consequently, apart from his reading, there remained only the sentimental comedies at the theatre to satisfy his emotional needs. Moreover, at the theatre he found an object for his adoration — the actress, Mlle Kubly. The plays also provided him with a wider field for that "study of human nature" to which his grandfather was continually urging him. When he came to Paris, his interest in drama was further encouraged by Martial Daru and his friends, who were keen "amateurs de théâtre".

Stendhal's choice of the theatre as a medium for the expression of his ideas may have been further influenced by the traditional values that placed Epic, Tragedy and Comedy above the newer form of the novel. He certainly was not lacking in ambition and at first hoped to complete an epic, "Pharsale"¹, as well as his plays. It must also be granted that during the time he was studying in Paris material considerations actuated his desire to become a

1. "Pensées", Vol. II, p. 306; and "Mélanges de Littérature", Vol. I, pp. 325-347.

great dramatist. He wanted money, position in society, an actress for a mistress, and Victorine Mounier for a wife, all of which he was sure would come to him if he could only achieve success quickly. Since the playwright gained recognition and wealth far more rapidly than the novelist, Stendhal would be likely to choose the former career.

The various dates on the fragments of plays (1796-1834) show that Stendhal persisted long in his ambition, even after he had discovered the medium which was really suited to him. Only very gradually did he turn towards the novel, yet as a child he had preferred Cervantes and Rousseau to satirical comedy. As early as 1802¹, he contended that the theatre should leave to the novel the task of portraying domestic and pathetic situations. After his own experiments in writing plays, he began to realise the limitations of the dramatic form, and felt that it would be easier to describe a person like Saint-Bernard ("Letellier") than to make the audience deduce his character from what they saw². From 1814 onwards, he developed his skill in reproducing analyses of human behaviour by writing those anecdotes which form the original part of "Vies de Haydn, etc.", "L'Histoire de la Peinture en Italie", "Rome, Naples

1. "Pensées", Vol. I, p. 22.

2. "Théâtre", Vol. III, p. 248 (1812).

et Florence", "De L'Amour" and "Vie de Rossini". In 1825, he defended the novel against the pedants who would not recognise it as a legitimate form of literature, and contended that "Tom Jones", "Werther" and "La Nouvelle Héloïse" were of far greater value than the contemporary plays¹. He also prophesied that comedy would soon be replaced by the novel². Destutt de Tracy may have confirmed him in this opinion, for he said that the novel would be the only form in which a true representation of life could be given³. In 1827, Stendhal produced his first novel "Armance", and finally devoted himself entirely to the "comédie-roman", the comedy of the nineteenth century⁴.

The problem has been raised as to why he took nearly thirty-five years to discover the true outlet for his talents. One reason is, that although he was always keenly interested in literature, he never proposed to follow the career of a "man of letters". Even when he was writing his articles for a living he considered himself a "dilettante". It must also be remembered that at least eighteen years of his life were spent in the army and the diplomatic service, and that much of his leisure was also devoted to

1. "Racine et Shakespeare", Vol. II, p. 182.

2. Ibid., pt. II, Vol. I, p. 119 (notes).

3. "Mélanges de Littérature", Vol. III, p. 417.

4. See p. 71.

travel, art, music and love. Another explanation may be that his method of self-education was at fault. When he was studying in Paris the only suggestions for his reading came from the library catalogue, and his only critic was a student from the Ecole Polytechnique. Instead of joining a theatrical company as Molière had done, getting first-hand knowledge of stage-craft and meeting all kinds of people, he shut himself up in his study to philosophise about the nature of drama and the principles to be followed by the playwright. Had he been studying under suitable guidance, he would probably have been led much sooner to apply his talents to the writing of novels.

There is no need to emphasise Stendhal's failure as a playwright. Even "Les Deux Hommes" which is the most nearly completed of all the fragments, has a weak plot, and excepting for Mme Valbelle, offers a succession of weak characters. On the other hand, no one can deny the greatness of his novels, which plumb the hidden depths of human nature and present a variety of intense, vivid personalities. Obviously Stendhal's gifts were not those required by the dramatist. Of all those who have studied him closely, M. Paul Valéry¹ alone asserts that he was talented in this direction, and that the times were not ripe for the kind of play he would have written. It would

1. "Essai sur Stendhal", 1927. Paris. P. Valéry, pp. 33-34.

seem that both by temperament and bent of mind Stendhal was unsuited to be a playwright.

Although he delighted in observing his companions, he was nevertheless an egotist. His excessive shyness and embarrassment in company had made him build up an armour of wit and banter with which to protect himself. Even though he had visited salons regularly for years, he was always the "thorny hedgehog", carefully hiding his deepest emotions from the company. As a compensation for this weakness, he had the feeling that his sensitiveness made him superior to the people around him. The natural result was that he stood apart from his contemporaries, judging their prejudices and stupidities with bitter irony and contempt. Aloofness is a particularly undesirable trait for a man who desires to be a comic playwright, for if his work is to hold a mirror to society he should be able to mix easily with all types of men. Aloofness would be less of an obstacle to the novelist who seeks to re-live his own experiences in the life of the hero, and who draws the rest of the characters "subjectively", depicting them as he himself sees them. Contempt for one's own age is the very antithesis to the qualities of a great comic playwright, who must surely have faith in men, or his criticisms of society are merely destructive.

"Contempt is a sentiment that cannot be entertained by comic intelligence. What is it but an excuse to be idly minded, or personally lofty or comfortably narrow, not perfectly humane?"¹

Stendhal was "personally lofty", or he would not have written "Que m'importe ^{les} / ² autres?" or dedicated his works to the "Happy Few",³ who might be able to appreciate them.

Further, this egotism, which was increased by his lack of sympathy with his companions at home and in the army, led to constant introspection. Stendhal looked inwards, and from the results of the analysis of his own feelings deduced what others might be suffering. The dramatist certainly does work in this way also, but depends far more on the "objective" method, aiming at discovering by observation and sympathetic imagination what another person is feeling, even if he himself has not had a similar experience.

A far more important factor than this self-centred outlook is the natural trend of Stendhal's mind. He did not possess the power to create characters as living beings, but tried to build them up according to mathematical formulae, to patch together various qualities of "head" and "heart",⁴ and to copy existing characters or real people.

1. "An Essay on Comedy and the Uses of the Comic Spirit", G. Meredith, 1897, p. 63.

2. Julien Sorel's words. Cf. W.H. Fineshriber, op. cit., p. 53.

3. Epigraph: "L'Histoire de la Peinture en Italie".

4. See pp. 33, 124, ^{etc.} The fact that Stendhal paid so much attention to the theory of drama also indicates a lack of imagination.

All these methods show lack of imagination in the initial creative step. Given a story and the characters already outlined, he could retrace accurately all the delicate movements of passion. The more intimate and slower moving form of novel is suitable for the expression of these "petits faits", whereas stage perspective demands a certain simplification and boldness of outline, which Stendhal did not and could not achieve.

The most important obstacle to Stendhal's success as a playwright was his analytical, deductive mind, which he further trained by his studies in ideology. He had little interest in the deeds by which a certain passion might be exteriorised, but would trace out the smallest detail of the workings of the mind and heart which led up to the fulfilment of the act. This desire to find out the secret motives that lie behind a course of action, inspired all his observation and gave him from the very beginning a false conception of drama:

"Les tragédies et (les) comédies ... ce ne sont, à les bien prendre, que des 'analyses en vers, de passions et de sentiments'.¹"

The dramatist is limited in revealing the nature of his characters to the portrayal of action and reported speech,² whereas the novelist may "get inside" his characters and

1. "Stendhal", P. Martino, 1914, p. 29.

2. Stendhal himself realised this limitation and saw that his "Filosovia Nova" would be a better medium for the analysis of character than any play. "Pensées", Vol. II, p. 111.

follow up the train of thought and the interplay of motives. This is particularly true in the case of Stendhal where the actual deeds are described in one or two lines, but the preparation for them has taken pages and pages.¹

Stendhal failed to create a single living play. His desire was strong and he had the will to persist in his efforts, but he lacked the power to observe and portray life objectively.

"Let [the poet] be aware of saying to himself, 'I will gird up my loins and write a play. Shall it be a Phaedra, or a Semiramis, or a Sappho or a Cleopatra?' A drama conceived in this reach-me-down fashion will scarcely have the breath of life in it."²

Is it possible, then, that all these years of apprenticeship were wasted, or did they play their part in the development of his mind and so assist the production of the great novels? It is not easy to discover in the later works many traces of his dramatic studies, but it is interesting to find him still thinking in terms of the theatre, planning his novels in scenes rather than chapters, and writing for spectators instead of for readers. In a note to "Lucien Leuwen" he writes:

1. For example, the presentation of the bouquet to Armance, and Julien's grasping Mme Rênal's hand in the garden.

2. "Play-Making", W. Archer, 1912, p. 21.

"Scène à faire. Position des deux interlocuteurs....
je ne veux pas me donner la peine de faire le
dialogue avant d'être sûr que j'emploierai
cette scène."¹

There is a similar note on another page, criticising the
dialogue between Lucien's father and Madame Grandet:

"Ennobler tout ceci ou le parterre siffle: c'est
le joint de la cuirasse."²

Probably Stendhal's familiarity with the theatre and
his early practice in writing plays helped him to create
the dramatic situations that occur so often in his books.
He is especially good at bringing his characters together,
as, for example, Lucien and Madame de Chasteller when they
are sitting at the little table, playing chess in her
drawingroom, or Julien and Madame de Rênal when they first
meet at the gate, on the day that he comes to be tutor to
her children.

Still more noticeable is Corneille's influence on
Stendhal's conception of will-power and heroism. Both
writers create characters who act self-consciously, building
up an image of an ideal self to whose standards they are
bound to conform. These people determine their line of
conduct by conjecturing what some great man would have done
in similar circumstances, and having planned their own path

1. "Lucien Leuwen". Note to p. 320.

2. Ibid. Note to p. 330.

of behaviour, they must follow it exactly, whatever the course of events, to convince themselves of their strength of will. Failure to do this would make them unworthy of themselves and of those they love. For example, Julien becomes the lover of Mme de Rênal and Mathilde, and in both cases it is because he feels that he owes it to himself to place them in his power. Admittedly, Stendhal was¹ by temperament and by family tradition,² in sympathy with this "espagnolisme", so the reading of Corneille may only have deepened an existing tendency.

Above all, throughout the whole of Stendhal's work we may trace one underlying ambition — "connaître le coeur humain". In 1803 he wrote:

"Quel est mon but? D'être le plus grand poète (comique) possible. Pour cela connaître parfaitement l'homme."³

More than thirty years later he styled himself "an observer of human nature". Of this then we can be sure, that while he was closely observing the people around him (in order to discover new traits that would suit characters in his

1. Cf. Lamiel, the feminine Julien ["Lamiel"] and Octave: "Du moment que j'ai aperçu le devoir, ne pas le suivre à l'instant, en aveugle, sans débats, c'est agir comme une âme vulgaire, c'est être indigne d'Octave." "Armance", Le Divan, 1928, p. 84.

2. See p.

3. "Théâtre", Vol. I, préface, p. ii. Cf. "Pensées", Vol. I, p. 216.

plays), he was developing that insight into human nature which enabled him to create novels. This thirst for knowledge of the workings of the human mind is the link between Stendhal, the Playwright who failed, and Stendhal, the **N**ovelist who succeeded!

APPENDIX I.

STENDHAL AND THE PARIS THEATRE

1802 - 1805.

From April 1802 to May 1805, when he left for Marseilles, Stendhal was only away from Paris for two holidays of three months' duration. During these three years, he visited with amazing regularity "La Comédie Française", "Le Théâtre Louvois", "Les Gymnases", "Le Théâtre de la Montansier", "Le Théâtre de l'Impératrice", and the smaller theatres on the Boulevards. In his diary and notebooks, he mentions having seen the following plays, and as he went to many of them twice, and to certain favourites (like "Cinna") eight or nine times, he must have averaged during his thirty-one months in Paris over three plays a fortnight. This list also shows that Stendhal was chiefly interested in comedy, for there are only thirty-one tragedies mentioned, as against a hundred and seven comedies.

TRAGEDIESChénier, M.J.:

Fénelon, ou les Religieuses de Cambrai	1793
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Corneille, P.:

Le Cid	1636
Horace	1639
Cinna	1639
Polyeucte	1642
Rodogune	1646
Nicomède	1652

<u>Corneille, Th.:</u>			
Ariane ...	1672	<u>Lemercier:</u>	
		Agamemnon ...	1793
		Isule et Orovèse	1802
<u>Ducis:</u>		<u>Racine:</u>	
Hamlet ...	1769	Andromaque ...	1667
Macbeth ...	1784	Britannicus ...	1669
Othello ...	1792	Bajazet ...	1672
		Mithridate ...	1673
<u>Du Ryer:</u>		Iphigénie ...	1674
Scévole ...	1646	Phèdre ...	1677
		Esther ...	1689
<u>Guymond de La Touche:</u>		<u>Rotrou:</u>	
Iphigénie en		Venceslas ...	1647
Tauride ...	1757		
Oreste		<u>Voltaire:</u>	
		Oedipe ...	1718
<u>Le Belloy:</u>		Adélaïde de Guesclin	1734
Gaston et Bayard	1771	Sémiramis ...	1748
Gabrielle de		L'Orphelin de la	
Vergy ...	1777	Chine ...	1755
<u>Le Franc de Pompignan:</u>			
Didon ...	1734		

COMEDIES

<u>Andrieux, Fr.:</u>		<u>Beaumarchais:</u>	
Les Etourdis	1787	Le Barbier de	
Le Trésor ...	1804	Seville ...	1775
Molière avec		La Mère Coupable	1792
ses Amis ...	1804		
<u>Baron:</u>		<u>Bièvre, Marquis de:</u>	
L'Homme à Bonnes		Le Séducteur ...	1783
Fortunes ...	1686		
<u>Barthe:</u>		<u>Boissy:</u>	
Les Fausses		Le Babillard	1725
Infidélités	1768	Les Dehors Trompeurs	
		ou L'Homme du	
		Jour ...	1740
		<u>Brueys:</u>	
		L'Avocat Patelen	1706

- Brueys et Palaprat:
Le Muet ... 1691
- Bursay (trans. of Kotzebue):
Misanthropie et
Repentir ... 1800
- Chazet et Lafortelle:
L'Amant Soupçonneux
- Chazet et Sewrin:
La Leçon Conjugale 1804
- Chéron:
L'Homme à Sentiments
ou Le Tartuffe de
Moeurs ... 1789
- Collin D'Harleville:
L'Inconstant ... 1786
L'Optimiste ... 1788
Le Vieux Célibat-
aire ... 1792
Les Moeurs du Jour 1800
- Corneille, P.:
Le menteur ... 1642
- Dancourt:
La Maison de Cam-
pagne ... 1688
L'Été des Coquettes 1690
La Parisienne .. 1691
Les Bougeoises à la
Mode ... 1692
- Demoustier:
Le Conciliateur ... 1791
Les Femmes ... 1793
- Desaudras:
Minuit ... 1791
- Desfaucherets:
Le Mariage Secret 1786
- Desforges, P.J.B.:
Le Sourd ou L'Auberge
Pleine ... 1790
La Femme Jalouse 1800
- Destouches:
Le Philosophe
Marié ... 1727
La Fausse Agnès 1736
(Not played before 1759)
Le Dissipateur ... 1753
- Dorat:
La Feinte par Amour 1773
- Du Fresny:
Mariage Fait et
Rompu ... 1791
- Duval, Alex:
Les Héritiers .. 1796
Projets de Mariage 1798
Le Tyran Domestique 1804
- Etienne:
La Jeune Femme
Colère ... 1804
- Fabre d'Eglantine:
Le Philinte de
Molière ... 1790
L'Intrigue
Epistolaire ... 1791
- Fagan:
La Pupille ... 1734
Les Originaux .. 1738
(arranged by Dugazon 1802)
- Faur:
Le Confident par
Hasard ... 1801
- Favart:
Les Trois Sultanes 1761
- Favières:
Hermann et Verner
(fait historique) 1803

<u>Florian:</u>			
Le Bon Ménage ...	1782		
<u>Guillemain:</u>			
Les Pointus ...			
<u>Goldoni:</u>			
Le Bourru Bien-faisant ...	1771		
<u>Imbert:</u>			
Le Jaloux sans Amour ...	1781		
<u>La Chaussée, N. de:</u>			
Le Préjugé à la Mode ...	1735		
La Gouvernante ...	1747		
<u>La Fontaine, J. de:</u>			
Le Florentin ...	1685		
<u>La Liborlière, Belin de:</u>			
La Cloison ...	1803		
<u>La Tresne, J.T. de:</u>			
Les Questionnaires	1804		
<u>Lautier:</u>			
L'Impatient ...	1778		
<u>Le Grand:</u>			
L'Aveugle Clairvoyant ...	1716		
<u>Lesage:</u>			
Turcaret ...	1709		
<u>Longchamps:</u>			
Le Séducteur Amoureux ...	1803		
La Fausse Honte	1804		
<u>Manteufel, E. de:</u>			
Les Deux Pages	1789		
<u>Marivaux:</u>			
La Première Surprise de L'Amour ...	1722		
Le Legs ...	1736		
Les Fausses Confidences ...	1737		
L'Epreuve Nouvelle	1740		
<u>Mercier:</u>			
La Maison de Molière	1787		
<u>Moissy:</u>			
Les Deux Frères ...	1768		
<u>Molière:</u>			
Sganarelle ...	1660		
Le Misanthrope ...	1666		
Le Médecin Malgré Lui	1666		
Amphitryon ...	1668		
George Dandin ...	"		
L'Avare ...	"		
Tartuffe ...	1669		
Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme ...	1670		
Les Femmes Savantes	1672		
L'Ecole des Maris	1680		
<u>Montfleury:</u>			
La Femme Juge et Partie ...	1669		
<u>Monvel:</u>			
L'Amant Bourru ...	1777		
<u>Pain et Vieillard:</u>			
Le Père d'Occasion	1803		
<u>Picard:</u>			
Les Amis de Collège	1795		
Médiocre et Rampant	1797		
Le Voyage Interrompu	1798		
La Voisine ...	1802		
Les Tracasseries ..	1804		
Le Bouffon ...			
<u>Piron:</u>			
La Métromanie ...	1738		

- Poisson:
Le Procureur Arbitre 1728
- Procope:
La Gageure ... 1716
- Pujoulx:
Les Dangers de L'Absence
ou Le Souper de
Famille ... 1788
- Quinault:
La Mère Coquette ... 1664
- Regnard:
Le Joueur ... 1696
Le Retour Imprévu 1700
Les Folies Amoureuses 1704
Les Menechmes ... 1705
- Richaud-Martelly:
Les Deux Figaro ... 1790
- Roger:
Caroline ... 1800
- Rousseau, J.B.:
La Ceinture Magique 1701
- Sedaine:
Le Philosophe sans
le Savoir ... 1765
La Gageure Imprévue 1768
- Vigée:
L'Entrevue ... 1788
- Voltaire:
Nanine, ou Le Préjugé
Vaincu ... 1749
- Weiss, Faugres et Patrat:
Le Médecin Conciliateur
(trans. from Kotzebue) 1801

Stendhal's Library
1804.

Stendhal had collected together fifty-nine different works at Claix and Paris when he made his catalogue in 1804. Eighteen of these are plays (French, English and Italian).

Books at Claix.

Molière, 8 vols.
Chefs-d'oeuvre de P. et P. Corneille, 1 vol.
Racine, 5 vols.
Commedia di L. Ariosto.
Shakespear's Beauties.
Shakespeare's Works, 8 vols.
Théâtre de Voltaire. 3 Prem. Vols. in 1 volume.
Tragédies, 1 Vol. (Agamemnon, Ophis, etc.).
Alfieri. 5 Premiers Volumes.
Racine, Phèdre, etc., 1 vol.

being $\frac{11}{33}$ authors mentioned.

Books at Paris.

1 Vol. de Comédies (Philinte, etc.)
Corneille, Chefs-d'Oeuvre, Premier Vol.
Alfieri, Trois derniers Vols.
Regnard, 5 vols.
Beaumarchais; Le Barbier de Séville, Le Mariage de Figaro, La Mère Coupable.
Collin d'Harleville, Le Vieux Célibataire.

being $\frac{7}{26}$ authors mentioned.

APPENDIX II

Comparison of Three Scenes from Stendhal's

"SELMOURS"

with the original from Florian.

Stendhal Plagiarises Florian

These three scenes have been chosen to show that the most interesting part of the play "Selmours" is copied direct from Florian. Stendhal builds up the dialogue from the narrative of "Selmours", or if the speeches are already written, transfers them word for word. The scene between Mrs Forward and Selmours (Act II, iii), and Selmours' soliloquy (Act III, iv) are also borrowed from the original. Stendhal himself composed only three scenes (pp. 37-47), namely, the conversations Charlotte had with her Mother and with Robert, and the dialogue between Selmours and his valet.

Text from Stendhal.¹

Acte I, iii; p. 24.

Selmours

Non, monsieur, je suis affligé, mais non pas incertain. Quels que fussent les droits de mon bienfaiteur avant qu'il m'eût [sic] donné sa fortune, il n'avait sûrement pas celui de disposer de mon coeur, de me faire manquer à mes serments, de me rendre malheureux pour toujours: En bien! je vais me remettre précisément dans l'état où je me trouvais avant sa mort. Je vais renoncer à sa succession,

Text from Florian.¹

pages 23-24.

Non, monsieur, je suis affligé, mais non pas incertain; Quels que fussent les droits de mon bienfaiteur avant qu'il m'eût donné sa fortune, il n'avait sûrement pas celui de disposer de mon coeur, de me faire manquer à mes serments, de me rendre malheureux pour toujours. Personne au monde ne peut me contester cette vérité. En bien, je vais me remettre précisément dans l'état où je me trouvais avant sa mort. Je vais renoncer à

1. Textes: Stendhal: Théâtre, I: Edition Le Divan, 1931.
 Florian: Nouvelles Nouvelles, Troisième édition,
 Paris, 1792.

Text from Stendhal.

p. 24 (Contd.)

rentrer dans ma médiocrité, dans ma liberté et je ne croirai pas trop payer par ce faible sacrifice le bonheur d'être époux de la seule femme que je puisse aimer.

p. 25.

Mr Pikle.

Que dites-vous, monsieur? Vous n'avez donc pas fait attention à ce que vous venez de me dire. Votre oncle vous défend en termes formels de renoncer à sa succession. Osez-vous mépriser

ainsi l'intention manifeste de votre bienfaiteur? Il a compté sur vous pour épouser sa fille. Il vous a fait hériter non pas à cette condition car je distingue. Dans ce cas vous seriez parfaitement libre d'accepter ou de ne pas accepter. Mais il a commencé par vous donner son bien et vous interdire le refus. Ensuite il vous a demandé une grâce que l'honneur, la reconnaissance vous permettent d'autant moins de lui refuser que rien au monde ne vous y contraint. Donc, il a voulu vous dispenser de l'obligation qu'impose une loi, pour vous imposer une obligation bien plus forte que toutes les lois. C'est de votre conscience.....

Selmours.

Mais ma conscience était engagée et rien ne peut....

Text from Florian.

pp. 23-24 (Contd.)

sa succession, rentrer dans ma pauvreté, dans ma liberté et je ne croirai pas trop payer par ce faible sacrifice le bonheur d'être époux de la seule femme que je puisse aimer.

pp. 24-25.

Que dites-vous, monsieur? Vous n'avez donc pas fait attention à la lettre que vous venez de lire. Elle vous défend en termes formels de renoncer à cette succession: elle vous explique le motif de cette défense. Osez-vous mépriser ainsi l'intention manifeste de votre bienfaiteur? Il a compté sur vous pour épouser sa fille. Il vous a fait hériter, non pas à cette condition, car je distingue. Dans ce cas vous seriez parfaitement libre d'accepter ou de ne pas accepter. Mais il a commencé par vous donner son bien et par vous interdire le refus. Ensuite il vous a demandé une grâce que l'honneur, la reconnaissance vous permettent d'autant moins de lui refuser que rien au monde ne vous y contraint. Donc, il a voulu vous dispenser de l'obligation qu'impose une loi, pour vous imposer une obligation bien plus forte que toute les lois, celle de votre conscience.....

Mais ma conscience était engagée et rien ne peut....

Text from Stendhal.Mr Pikle, p. 26.

Ne m'interrompez point, monsieur, et répondez à cette question qui va devenir un dilemme: si votre bienfaiteur vivait encore et que vous vinssiez lui déclarer que vous ne voulez pas épouser sa fille, il est au moins incertain, j'espère, que M. Mekelfort ne changeât ses dispositions et ne donnât sa fortune à quelqu'un qui remplirait mieux son désir. Et aujourd'hui qu'il est mort, comment voulez-vous qu'il les change? Vous n'avez donc plus le droit de choisir. Il faut obéir à sa volonté, à sa prière qui sont des ordres et vous souvenir, monsieur, que l'honneur et le devoir savent compter pour rien les peines de l'amour.

Selmours.

Cela peut être. Mais je comptais que l'amitié les comptait pour quelque chose, et s'expliquait avec moins de rudesse.

Mr Pikle.

Oh! monsieur, la probité, la vérité n'ont pas un style fleuri et tous ceux qui penseront ou parleront autrement que moi sont des imbéciles ou des fripons.

Selmours, p. 27.

Mais vous me permettez de croire malgré ma déférence pour vos lumières, pour votre morale, qu'il existe dans l'univers des hommes aussi vertueux, aussi éclairés que vous. Je les consulterai, monsieur, et s'ils sont tous de votre avis, la mort me délivrera de le suivre.

Text from Florian.

pp. 25-26.

Ne m'interrompez point, monsieur, et répondez à cette question qui va devenir un dilemme: si votre bienfaiteur vivait encore et que vous vinssiez lui déclarer que vous ne voulez pas épouser sa fille, il est au moins incertain, j'espère, que M. Mekelfort ne changeât ses dispositions et ne donnât sa fortune à quelqu'un qui remplirait mieux son désir. Et aujourd'hui qu'il est mort comment voulez-vous qu'il les change? Vous n'avez donc plus le droit de choisir: Il faut obéir à ses volontés, à ses prières, qui sont des ordres, et vous souvenir, monsieur, que l'honneur et le devoir savent compter pour rien les peines de l'amour.

p. 26.

Cela peut être. Mais je croyais que l'amitié les comptait pour quelque chose, et s'expliquait avec moins de rudesse.

pp. 26-27.

Oh! monsieur, la probité, la vérité n'ont pas un style fleuri et tous ceux qui penseront ou parleront autrement que moi sont des imbécilles ou des fripons. [sic]

Mais vous me permettez de croire, malgré ma déférence pour vos lumières, pour votre morale, qu'il existe dans l'univers des hommes aussi vertueux, aussi éclairés que vous. Je les consulterai, monsieur, et s'ils sont tous de votre avis, la mort me délivrera de le suivre.

Text from Stendhal.Mr Pikle.

Vous aurez beau mourir, cela ne prouvera rien. Il est souvent plus aisé de mourir que de faire son devoir, et, comme je l'ai prouvé cent fois..... Il est désespéré. C'est malheureux. Mais les règles de la probité et de l'honneur sont irrévocables.

Mrs Biron.

Ah! mon cher monsieur Pikle, que son état est à plaindre et que je suis malheureuse!

Mr Pikle, pp. 27-28.

Il est beau, madame, de sacrifier ses inclinations à son devoir. Cela était fréquent chez les Romains. Mais nous avons dégénéré de la vertu de nos ancêtres. Le monde se perd, se corrompt et tout tend à sa fin.
..... Je vous verrai dans peu.

Text from Florian.

Vous aurez beau mourir, cela ne prouvera rien. Il est souvent plus aisé de mourir que de faire son devoir, et, comme je l'ai prouvé cent fois...

fin de Acte I, scène iii.

Act I, scene v.

Text from Stendhal.

p. 30.

Mrs Biron:

O mon ami, je vous crois obligé à faire pour votre oncle mort, ce que vous n'auriez jamais fait pour votre bienfaiteur vivant. Il avait, je crois, deux intentions: l'une de laisser son bien aux deux êtres qu'il aimait le plus, sa fille et vous qu'il regardait comme son fils: l'autre de donner pour époux à sa fille un homme sage et vertueux.

Partagez le bien de M. Mekelfort, donnez-en une moitié à Charlotte lorsqu'elle se mariera. Jusqu'à ce temps, administrez-le comme un sage tuteur administre les biens de son pupille. Cherchez un jeune homme qui ait à peu près toutes les qualités que M. Mekelfort chérissait en vous. Je dois croire plus que personne que vous le trouverez difficilement. Donnez-le pour époux à Charlotte avec la moitié du bien de votre oncle.

Text from Florian.

Je ne vous crois pas obligé, dans la plus stricte morale, à faire pour votre bienfaiteur mort ce que vous n'auriez jamais fait pour votre bienfaiteur vivant. Quelle était son intention? il en avait deux, ce me semble: l'une de laisser son bien aux deux êtres qu'il aimait le plus, à sa fille et à vous qu'il assuré avoir choisi pour son héritier depuis qu'il vous a connu: l'autre d'établir sa fille avec un époux estimable qui pût l'aimer, la rendre heureuse,..... Partagez avec sa fille comme un frère avec une soeur: voilà le premier point rempli. Cherchez ensuite pour elle un époux qui ait à peu près toutes les qualités que M. Mekelfort chérissait en vous. Je dois croire plus que personne que vous le trouverez difficilement; mais Fanny qui ne vous connaît pas, aura d'autres yeux que les miens. Jusqu'à ce moment, gardez dans vos mains la dot que vous donnerez à Fanny, en l'administrant comme un tuteur sage qui doit en rendre compte à sa pupille.

Text from Stendhal.Selmours, pp. 30-31.

O ma chère Mrs. Biron, je vous rends grâce, vous avez enfin fixé mon incertitude. Votre avis concilie tous ceux qu'on m'a donnés. Je vais à l'instant chez Mrs Forward: la mère et la fille vont se trouver au comble de bonheur. Elles ne s'attendent guère à l'immense présent que je vais leur porter. Nous assurerons à Mrs. Forward une forte rente viagère. L'intéressante Charlotte avec cinq mille livres sterling de rente, ne manquera sûrement point d'époux. Je la laisserai maîtresse de son choix, je ferai deux heureux. Je le serai moi-même. Personne, je crois, ne pourra blâmer ma conduite quand on verra tous les intéressés me respecter et me bénir. O ma chère Emilia, c'est votre prudence, c'est votre raison suprême qui m'a tiré de l'affreux péril où j'étais! Qu'il est doux pour votre ami de ne jouir d'aucun bonheur qu'il ne le doive à vous seule.

Text from Florian.

pp. 31-32.

Un bon raisonnement dans la bouche d'une maîtresse porte une double conviction. Sir Edouard, persuadé par ce qu'il venait d'entendre, impatient de suivre un conseil qui lui semblait tout concilier, partit dès le lendemain pour aller instruire mistress [sic] Forward de ses généreux desseins. La mère et la fille, se disait-il pendant la route, vont se trouver au comble de bonheur. Elles ne s'attendent guère à l'immense présent que je leur apporte. Nous assurerons à Mistriss Forward une forte pension viagère. L'intéressante Fanny, avec cinq mille livres sterling de rente, ne manquera sûrement point d'époux: je la laisserai maîtresse de son choix. Je ferai deux heureux, je le serai moi-même; et personne, je crois, ne pourra blâmer ma conduite, quand on verra tous les intéressés me respecter et me bénir. O ma chère Eliza, c'est votre prudence, c'est votre raison suprême, qui m'a tiré de l'affreux péril où j'étais! Qu'il est doux pour votre ami de ne jouir d'aucun bonheur qu'il ne le doive à vous seule!

Text from Stendhal.Text from Florian.

Act III, vi.

pp. 53-56.

pp. 54-60.

Mr Pikle (l'embrassant)

Ah! mon ami, c'est à vous de me rendre la vie, Je viens d'apprendre... Est-il vrai

que dans un instant vous allez mesurer avec un jeune homme?

Selmours.

Où, un étourdi, un fou est venu me chercher querelle sur l'amour qu'il me suppose pour Miss Forward, et dans l'instant.
.....

Mr Pikle.

Ah! que dites-vous, monsieur, et savez-vous quel est ce jeune homme?

Selmours.

Je l'ignore absolument. C'est sans doute quelque fou que je corrigerai.

Ah! mon ami, c'est à vous de me rendre la vie. Je viens d'apprendre que demain... Parlez plus bas, interrompt Selmours, en le faisant entrer dans son cabinet. De quoi s'agit-il? Qu'avez-vous? Ce que j'ai, répond vivement M. Pikle, je suis le plus malheureux des hommes. Répondez-moi promptement. Est-il vrai, que dans un café ce soir...?

Cela n'est que trop vrai. Un étourdi, un fou que je ne connais point, qui m'a suivi depuis Oxford, est venu me chercher querelle. Il se dit l'amant de Fanny, de cette fille de Mistress Forward que vous m'ordonniez d'épouser. Assurément, je n'ai nulle envie de lui disputer sa maîtresse: je suis même certain qu'il en est aimé: Mais sa provocation, son insulte, ont été publiques; il n'y a aucun remède à cela, et j'espère demain corriger ce jeune étourdi.

Le corriger! c'est à dire, le tuer! Et savez-vous quel est ce jeune homme?

Je viens de vous dire que c'est l'amant de Miss Fanny....

Text from Stendhal.

pp. 54-55.

Mr Pikle.

C'est mon fils, malheureux, mon fils, le neveu de Mrs Biron. C'est l'unique enfant de votre ancien ami et vous espérez l'égorger dans l'instant! Selmours, je vous estime assez pour croire inutile de vous dire qu'il n'est plus ici question de ce misérable point d'honneur, (reste) de la barbarie, de la férocité de nos aïeux. Votre valeur est connue, elle ne peut être suspecte et vous seriez le dernier des hommes si vous étiez capable de sacrifier à un horrible préjugé l'amour, l'amitié, la nature, le respect que vous devez à ma vieillesse, à mon nom de père, à tous les sentiments du coeur les plus chers, les plus sacrés même à des sauvages... Vous ne me répondez point, vous hésitez de me donner votre parole que vous ne tremperez point vos mains dans le sang de mon enfant, que vous ne m'enlèverez pas le seul appui qui me reste! Quoi! un père, un vieillard, un ami, le frère de votre épouse, vient vous demander en pleurant de ne pas commettre un forfait qui le ferait descendre au tombeau et vous hésitez, Selmours! Grands dieux, voilà donc la vertu? L'homme qui pour sauver sa vie, sa maîtresse, son honneur, ne voudra jamais consentir à s'emparer du bien d'un autre homme, à lui faire le plus léger tort, à le priver du

Text from Florian.

pp. 56-57.

C'est mon fils, malheureux, mon fils, le neveu de Mrs Biron, C'est l'unique enfant de votre ancien ami, et vous espérez l'égorger dans l'instant! Selmours, je vous estime assez pour croire inutile de vous dire qu'il n'est plus ici question de ce misérable point d'honneur, reste de la barbarie, de la férocité de nos aïeux. Votre valeur est connue, elle ne peut être suspecte et vous seriez le dernier des hommes si vous étiez capable de sacrifier à un horrible préjugé l'amour, l'amitié, la nature, le respect que vous devez à ma vieillesse, à mon nom de père, à tous les sentiments du coeur les plus chers, les plus sacrés même à des sauvages... Vous ne me répondez point, vous hésitez à me donner votre parole que vous ne tremperez point vos mains dans le sang de mon enfant, que vous ne m'enlèverez pas le seul appui qui me reste! Quoi! un père, un vieillard, votre ami, le frère de votre épouse, vient vous demander en pleurant de ne pas commettre un forfait qui le ferait descendre au tombeau et vous hésitez, Selmours! Grands dieux, voilà donc la vertu? L'homme qui pour sauver sa vie, sa maîtresse, son honneur, ne voudrait jamais consentir à s'emparer du bien d'un autre homme, à lui faire le plus léger tort, à le priver du

Text from Stendhal.Mr Pikle (Contd).

moindre avantage, cet homme pour un faux honneur, pour un préjugé misérable, atroce, insensé et que lui-même abhorre ne se fait aucun scrupule de priver un ami, un vieillard, un père de son fils, de son fils unique, de son bien le plus précieux, du seul qu'on ne puisse lui rendre, du seul qui ne lui venant que de Dieu doit être sacré aux yeux humains! Et cet homme, ce meurtrier, se croit vertueux et sensible, et cet homme prétend à l'estime! Au nom du ciel, écoutez-moi, Selmours, Robert vous a défié, vous a insulté, hé bien! je viens vous en demander pardon: je viens implorer votre clémence et, si cela ne suffit pas à votre barbare honneur, conduisez-moi ou vous voudrez, indiquez-moi la place de Londres ou vous voulez que je paraisse vous demandant le pardon que je vous demande ici, embrassant vos genoux comme je le fais, en les baignant de mes larmes, en baissant jusqu'à la poussière ces cheveux blancs qui ne vous touchent point.

Selmours (relevant Pikle, d'une voix entrecoupée).

Mon ami, mon ami, soyez sûr, soyez bien certain que je fais tout ce qu'il est en mon pouvoir de faire, en vous engageant ma parole sacrée de ne point attenter aux jours de votre fils; comptez sur cette parole. Mais j'exige à mon tour une grâce de vous, ne vous mêlez point de

Text de Florian.

moindre avantage, cet homme pour un faux honneur, pour un préjugé misérable, atroce, insensé que lui-même abhorre, ne se fait aucun scrupule de priver un ami, un vieillard, un père de son fils, de son fils unique, de son bien le plus précieux, du seul qu'on ne puisse lui rendre, du seul qui ne lui venant que de Dieu doit être sacré aux yeux humains! Et cet homme, ce meurtrier se croit vertueux et sensible, et cet homme prétend à l'estime! Au nom du ciel, écoutez-moi, Selmours, Robert vous a défié, vous a insulté publiquement, hé bien! je viens vous en demander pardon; je viens implorer votre clémence et, si cela ne suffit pas à votre barbare honneur, conduisez-moi ou vous voudrez, indiquez-moi la place de Londres ou vous voulez que je paraisse vous demandant le pardon que je vous demande ici, embrassant vos genoux comme je le fais, en les baignant de mes larmes, en baissant jusqu'à la poussière ces cheveux blancs qui ne vous touchent point.

pp. 58-59.

Mon ami, mon ami, soyex sûr, soyez bien certain que je fais tout ce qu'il est en mon pouvoir de faire, en vous engageant ma parole sacrée de ne point attenter les jours de votre fils; comptez sur cette parole. Mais j'exige à mon tour une grâce de vous, ne vous mêlez point de

Text from Stendhal.Selmours (Contd), p. 56.

ceci; vos soins, vos raisons, vos démarches ne pourraient être que nuisibles. Ne parlez pas à Robert, ne cherchez ni à le rencontrer, ni à le suivre, demeurez tranquille chez vous. Rendez-vous dans une heure chez Mrs. Biron, vous m'y trouverez, je l'espère.

Si vous ne m'y trouvez pas, venez ici, vous prendrez sur mon bureau cette lettre déjà commencée, vous la porterez à Mrs. Biron et vous serez instruit de tout ce que j'aurai fait. Ne m'en demandez pas davantage.

Adieu, Mr. Pikle, j'ose vous promettre que vous serez content de moi.

Text from Florian.

pp. 59-60.

ceci; vos soins, vos raisons, vos démarches ne pourraient être que nuisibles. Ne parlez pas à Robert, ne cherchez ni à le rencontrer, ni à le suivre, demeurez tranquille chez vous jusqu'à demain matin; à huit heures rendez vous ici, vous m'y trouverez, je l'espère; alors vous pourrez servir à notre raccomodement.

Si vous ne m'y trouvez pas vous prendrez sur mon bureau cette lettre déjà commencée, vous la porterez à Mrs. Biron et vous serez instruit de tout ce que j'aurai fait. Ne m'en demandez pas davantage. Dans tous les cas, je vous réponds que votre fils n'aura connu aucun danger. Si vous faites la moindre démarche je ne pourrais plus en répondre. Adieu, monsieur, j'ose vous promettre que vous serez content de moi. Il est minuit, retirez-vous, et laissez-moi le peu d'heures qui me restent pour prendre le repos dont j'ai besoin.

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