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## Translation Theory

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**Translation Theory**

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## Chapter 1

Translation has existed since the Old Testament and has served as a mediator between cultures, writers, and time periods. Modern translation as it is known today, is the product of an evolution of thoughts and schools that have built upon each other. Originally, a good translation was one that was faithful and right; the basic unit was the word and its equivalent was sought in the second language. (10,7). Because most translations were commissioned by the Church or other such institutions, the purpose was to render the document as lexically accurately as possible.

It might be argued that a translation of a sentence in one language is, by definition, a sentence in a second language, which means the same as the original. Under this conception a translator begins with sentences which have meaning in the semantic structure of one language and attempts to construct equivalent sentences using the semantic devices of the second language. Hence semantic theory, built upon syntax and phonology is sufficient to provide an adequate theory of translation. (8,29).

Such translations though, can never be fully accurate because they are written with no regard for history or context. The historical background and influential events of the time are not taken into account. The translation is, therefore, simply a reproduction of the original without any attempt to gear it towards the audience or explain the original. Because every culture, every audience, and every writer is different, no translation can be written without consideration of those variables. (10,8).

After World War II with the first publications of Eugene A. Nida, translation thinking began to shift towards linguistics but was still very normative. Nida published, with Charles R. Taber in 1969, "The second system of translation" in which they outline three stages: 1) analysis, in which the message of the original is analyzed in terms of a) grammar and b) the meanings of both words and combinations of words; 2) transfer, in

which the analyzed message is transferred in the mind of the translator from the source language to the target language, and; 3) restructuring, in which the transferred message is acceptably restructured in the target language. (11,88). In this first phase of linguistics-based translation thinking the central idea is equivalence. The word is still used as the basic unit but techniques such as "componential analysis" and "dynamic equivalence," introduced by Nida, were used "to gauge the degree of equivalence between words and to ensure their correct translation." (10,8). Componential analysis split words into their components, for example "bachelor = male + unmarried." (10,8). However, though the technique is still used and is still useful to translators today, it did not delve deeply enough to be a truly accurate tool. The aforementioned definition of bachelor also describes the words "pope" and "monk" but does not adequately define them. Dynamic equivalence is a message-based concept. It was developed to "faithfully" translate the message of the Bible and is therefore not as useful for literary translation. Another flaw of these techniques is that they are completely ahistorical and without context. Such is evident in the example given above with "bachelor" and "pope." The demonstration of this counterexample is in fact "what froze the first linguistic-based attempts at thinking about translation on a level they could not go beyond, and what proved in the end to have limited relevance to translators and translation scholars: a sentence is always "somewhat more" than a string of equivalent words, and a text is always "somewhat more" than a string of equivalent sentences." (10,8).

The second phase of linguistics-based thinking about translation concentrated on text linguistics. The basic unit was no longer considered to be a contextless word or even sentence but the text as a whole. It took into account the text's function as a form of

communication in a particular manner and situation and within a certain culture. It also recognized that what may be accepted or understood in one culture may not be in the target culture. Thus, text linguistics adds an essential functional dimension to the concept of equivalence. Nonetheless many text linguists still find themselves in the normative mind-set and required to develop some sort of "typology of texts." (10,9). These typologies are usually variations on "Karl Bühler's 'archetypology,' which distinguishes among 'representational' texts (concentrating on what is said), 'expressive' texts (concentrating on the speaker), and 'appellative' texts (concentrating on whoever is spoken to)." (10,9). These typologies are essentially irrelevant since all texts will exhibit qualities of all of the text types. Furthermore, they make too sharp a distinction between literary and non-literary texts. Thus, they should be considered as two extremes on a continuum since a literary text will invariably have features of a non-literary text and vice-versa. For instance, much of Moby Dick could be considered a nineteenth century textbook on whaling. (10,9).

Therefore, because of text-linguistics' view of literary and non-literary texts as two separate and distinct entities, it cannot resolve the conflicting concepts of function and normative translation. Julian House, for instance, attempts to find a translation that "functions as the equivalent" of a given text but also seeks a pragmatic equivalent of the text in terms of grammar. This is nearly impossible if considering, for example, translation wherein one of the languages is English since, many gerund phrases in English are often rendered with infinitive phrases in other languages.

Another approach, which was taken up by Peter Newmark, distinguishes between "semantic" and "communicative" translations. Not surprisingly, semantic translations

concentrate more on the meaning of the source text and which word would convey that same meaning in the target language. Semantic equivalence dominates as the object of such translations. Communicative translation on the other hand, concentrates on creating a cultural adaptation of the source text so the readers will find it easier to understand. Cultural equivalence is the dominant theme of this approach. The main focus of communicative translation is the message of the source text and its "functional" translation.

The concept of equivalence has dominated since the very beginnings of translation thinking. It has been incorporated in normative and linguistic translation and is applicable in both a general and specific sense. This "concept has greatly contributed to the stagnation of thinking about translation." (10,10). The greatest problem with the idea of equivalence is that translators and translation scholars cannot decide on what constitutes real equivalence. As such, some claim equivalence to refer to semantics or meaning or message or a whole host of other variables. Because it has become so vague, it has almost lost all of its significance and many modern translation scholars have chosen to abandon it completely. (10,10). Of course, this too is not without its obstacles. Translation is always trying to recreate a text from one language in another.

The "hermeneutic" approach to translation does ignore the idea of equivalence and instead considers translation to be interpretation. The translator acts as a mediator between two texts and not a seeker of equivalencies. (10,11). But again, the vagueness of the approach has left it open to much criticism. George Steiner is the scholar most often associated with hermeneutic translation but even he cannot escape the objections. Nonetheless, this school has offered one very important insight: that a perfect translation is

not possible. (10,11). This is, of course, relative to the definition of translation that is being used and the school of thought defining it. However, if this is accepted as a true statement, whether or not a certain translation is accepted in a given culture has more to do with power and manipulation than with knowledge and wisdom. Many translations that may not meet the criteria of one or any of the different schools of translation, have been widely accepted and maintained by certain cultures. The King James Version of the Bible is one example. The translation is neither faithful nor true to the original, at least semantically, and yet there are many people who would never dream of parting with it. Such is true for many translations, that they become the norms or standards simply because they were the first version ever heard, not because they are necessarily better.

Alternatives to both linguistics-based and hermeneutic approaches have been developed various scholars. Anton Popovic and Itamar Even-Zohar both attempt to avoid normative thinking about translation that has for so long dominated in the West. "Popovic calls for a descriptive study of existing translations that can be considered one variant of metatext among others (such as the summary, the review, the paraphrase, the adaptation)." (10,11) . Even-Zohar introduced the idea of translation as acculturation seeing it, similarly to the hermeneutic approach, as a negotiation between two cultures.

From these new alternatives to the older schools of translation comes the modern theory of translation. Translation is no longer treated as a process of applying and following rules - the exceptions are too many, especially after the realization that a perfect translation is impossible. The position of the translator is viewed with much greater importance in terms of the influence he exerts over a translation and the role he plays in creating it. He must decide, based on the best evidence he can gather, what strategy will



be most effective in presenting a certain text to the target culture. He must know and be comfortable in both cultures and languages.(2,74). Here the translator must consider his ability to translate a given text rather than the motivation for his translation. Also, translation can no longer be considered a separate and isolated school of thought. Students of translation are simultaneously students of linguistics, literary history, cultural history and philosophy. "The text of translation has often been called a culture's window on the world" and translator has the responsibility of giving that culture a translation they can understand. (10,11).

However, the translator does not act or rewrite within a vacuum, without outside or personal motivation. Every translation is written with some intent other than that of making the original available in a neutral, objective way. (10,11). They are driven by the commissioning person or institution and are limited by culture, times, and the structure of the languages in which they are written and rewritten. The translator is also limited by the very same constraints. He too is influenced and reflects the time in which he lives, the dominant forces at work within both his source and target cultures, and the grammatical limitations of the languages involved. Translation is not simply the meeting of two languages, but also the meeting of all the traditions of those two literatures. (10,12).

The task of the translator is much more involved with context and history included as factors. Another much debated consideration is the audience. Many translation scholars consider the audience to exert a very powerful influence over a translation. An acceptable translation for one audience may be unacceptable for another. Again, motivation has to come into play. Because publishing houses with the goal of selling more books commission most translations today, the audience is often seen as an undeniable influence

in translation. Though the translator himself may not consider his audience, which translator is chosen for a certain text may be a reflection of the goals of the publishing house. For instance, if an English translation is to be sold in France, then a British translator may be preferred over an American one because, British English is taught more extensively in France. Therefore, British English would be more readily understood by a French reader.

According to Walter Benjamin though, the audience should not play any part in the act of translating. He did not consider a reference to the receiver or the idea of the ideal receiver to be fruitful. In fact, he described the concept of the ideal receiver as "detrimental in the theoretical consideration of art." (2,72). Art is not interested in the response of its receiver, nor is it intended for any specific receiver. Therefore, if the original is not written with such intent, neither can that be the basis of a translation.

For Benjamin the translation served as an after life for the original because it became a part of other cultures and literary histories. He talked a great deal about the purpose of translation and the difference between the intended object and the mode of intention. He considered translation to ultimately serve "the purpose of expressing the central reciprocal relationship between languages." (2,73-74). The best way to serve this purpose was to convey the form and meaning of the original as accurately as possible. From this point he discussed the difference between the intended object and the mode of intention. He stated, "while all individual elements of foreign languages – words, sentences, structure – are mutually exclusive, these languages supplement one another in their intentions." (2,75). The example he used was a comparison of the words "brot" and "pain," which *intend* the same object but whose methods or *modes of intention* differ.

The two words, though they mean the same thing or represent the same object, were not interchangeable. (2,75).

Friedrich Schleiermacher set up yet another dichotomy wherein the receiver was significant. In his approach he outlined two distinct methods of translation which strictly defined the translator's role as mediator between the author and the reader. "Either the translator leaves the writer alone as much as possible and moves the reader toward the writer, or he leaves the reader alone as much as possible and moves the writer toward the reader." (2,42). Obviously these two paths leave no room whatsoever for compromise. Any attempt to reconcile or combine the two would lead to utter confusion and chaos. If the translator chooses to bring the reader to the writer then he must compensate through his work for the reader's lack of understanding of the original language. The translator's task is to communicate the same image or impression that he experienced from reading the text in the original language, to the reader in the target language. (2,73). The second has the exact opposite intent. The translator, instead of bringing the reader to the author, takes the author to the reader. The translator attempts to rewrite the text as the author would have originally written it had he known the target language as his mother tongue. Essentially the author is transformed into a native speaker of the target language.

The first method lends much more importance to the audience because the reader's understanding of the original language dictates the course of the translator. However, the difficulty with this method does not lie in ascertaining the reader's understanding of the original. The translator is certainly comfortable in the original language but, regardless of how fluently he reads it, it will always remain foreign to him. "The translator's goal must be to provide his reader with the same image and the same pleasure as reading the work in

the original language offers the man educated in this way." (2,74). However, how can he communicate that image in the native language of the reader and still retain the foreign aspect of the text?

In the second method since the author is taken into the world of the reader, the translator must avoid recreating a "foreign" impression. On the contrary, his task is to create the same images and impressions for the readers of the translation as the native readers of the original experienced. Both tasks are difficult if not impossible and must not only be lexically but linguistically equivalent as well. The impression that the translator receives from reading the original is derived both from *what* the text communicates and *how* the text communicates. How the author expresses himself and manipulates the language to convey his message is often just as impressive as his message. Certainly the translator cannot recreate the whole text in the same style or manner as the original, but he can do so in individual parts, inserting where possible, similar styles or allusions. Therefore the impression made by the original language is still communicated, though in single parts rather than in the totality of the translation. (2,76).

Walter Benjamin sees translation as having a potentially enriching effect on language. Instead of adapting the language of the original to the language of the translation, the target language should be adapted and expanded to recreate the style of the original. This is especially evident when considering poetry: the sonnet and haiku have been adopted by almost every major language even though they didn't always exist or even seem applicable in every language. In his essay "The Task of the Translator," Benjamin cites Rudolf Pannwitz who explains this concept very well:

Our translations, even the best ones, proceed from a wrong premise. They want to turn Hindi, Greek, English into German instead of turning German into Hindi, Greek, English. Our translators have a far greater reverence for the usage of their own language than for the spirit of the foreign works . . . the basic error of the translator is that he preserves the state in which his own language happens to be instead of allowing his language to be powerfully affected by the foreign tongue. Particularly when translating from a language very remote from his own he must go back to the primal elements of language itself and penetrate to the point where work, image, and tone converge. He must expand and deepen his language by means of the foreign language. It is not generally realized to what extent this is possible, to what extent any language can be transformed, how language differs from language almost the way dialect differs from dialect; however, this last is true only if one takes language seriously enough, not if one takes it lightly. (2,81).

Thus, in considering translation, attention must certainly be given to how and why translation occurs but also to the legacy it leaves. The translation of ideas and of structures can have a profound effect on the target language as Benjamin and Pannwitz point out. It may also serve as the primary medium by which one literature influences another or others. It often serves a pedagogical purpose, teaching about the broader problem of acculturation, how cultures relate to each other, which is becoming more important as the world grows smaller. (10,127). Quite often translation is the only contact one culture may have with another therefore, serves as the only vehicle of understanding between the two. Such is true especially of remote or isolated cultures. The role that translation plays, as mediator is multifaceted. As a mediator between time periods it may play its most important role. Few people today read Egyptian hieroglyphics, Old French, so for many, translation is the only exposure to those cultures available to them.

## Chapter 2

The task of the translator, from a practical standpoint, is to apply his knowledge of the two languages and cultures to a specific translation of a specific text. He must first determine how structurally faithful he wants the final translation to be to the original. However, he must determine to what extent it is possible to remain faithful to the original while still creating a coherent writing in the target language. Even if the two languages involved are in the same linguistic family, “it is relatively impractical to try to impose the rules of one language on another.” (10,16). Translators do not feel obligated to retain a certain grammatical category when what they have to say is better expressed in another.

“Language is also the expression and repository of a culture.” (10,17). Because so much of the culture is tied up in the language, many expressions are very difficult to translate into another language. Words originally used to describe or name an object or concept that formerly existed in that culture remain long after the object or concept has ceased to exist. Often those words pick up additional meanings over time that may be completely different from their original intent.

Idiomatic expressions pose another problem for translators. They are expressions that are totally unique to one culture and semantically may not even make much sense in the original. The problem can be easily solved if a similar expression exists in the target language: “hangover” for instance, can be translated in French as “la gueule de bois.” The expressions are semantically equivalent and demonstrate the same level of language but the actual words have completely different meanings. The English, if translated literally

into French, would be “suspendre par-dessus” and the French, if translated literally into English, would be “the wooden mouth.”

Looking specifically at translating Flaubert’s Un coeur simple, these are not the principal obstacles that the translator faces. The biggest obstacles are more grammatical in nature because of the “simple” language employed by Flaubert. He does not use a great many allusions or idiomatic expressions. The difficulty arises from the basic construction of the French language. The main problems faced by the translator in Un coeur simple are nuance, elliptical construction, reflexive verbs and the third person pronoun “on.” Nuance presents a problem when two words, which could be considered synonyms, are used in the same sentence. The example used later in this chapter involves the two words “ruelle” and “passage,” which could be considered synonyms. The problem of elliptical construction is more grammatical than lexical. In French, elliptical construction is often employed and makes sense. In English, however, it is not as widely used or accepted, therefore, the translator must determine how to structure his translation such that it is coherent without losing anything from the original. Reflexive verbs in French, are employed to avoid the passive voice however, English does not usually permit this tactic. Thus, the translator faces the dilemma of restructuring the English sentence such that the verb remains in the active voice or is changed to the passive voice. A very clear example is the verb “se trouver,” which means, literally, to find oneself. In French the verb is often used to designate the location of an object. English syntax, however, very rarely allows objects to find themselves so the translator must devise an alternative solution. “On” is probably the hardest grammatical construct that French presents because of the number of meanings it

may convey. The pronoun may be used to mean the first person plural, the third person plural, or the third person impersonal, “one” in English.

The rest of this chapter will present a comparison of two translations of Flaubert’s Un coeur simple. The first translation is by A. J. Krailsheimer and the second by Olivia J. Bradley. The comparison will look specifically at the problems presented by the French text and how the two translators chose to resolve them. A more general comparison of the selected excerpts and passages will also be included to show how the translations differ on other levels.

### Nuance

“Cette maison, revêtue d’ardoises, se trouvait entre un passage et une ruelle aboutissant à la rivière.” (5,19).

“This house, faced with slates, lay between an alley and a lane running down to the river.” (6,1).

“This house, roofed in slate, was situated between a path and an alleyway ending at the river.” (Liv,1).

“Passage” and “ruelle” can be considered synonymous. Their literal translations are: passage- passage; way; route; alley(way); and ruelle- alleyway. (1,582;735). Both English definitions include “alleyway” which limits the translator’s choice in his translation. Krailsheimer resolves the problem with “ally” and “lane” while Bradley chooses “path” and “alleyway.” Both translations convey the same meaning and are acceptable because English provides a number of equivalent words. Bradley’s translation remains truer to the French though, by choosing “alleyway” for “ruelle” and “path” for



“passage.” Path is a better choice because it conveys the same idea as “passage,” a small passageway but not a paved road or lane.

### **Elliptical Construction**

“Au premier étage, il y avait d’abord la chambre de “Madame,” très grande, tendue d’un papier à fleurs pâles, et contenant le portrait de “Monsieur” en costume de muscadin.” (5,20).

“On the first floor there came first “Madame’s” bedroom, very large, papered in a pale floral pattern, and containing a portrait of “Monsieur” dressed as a dandy of days gone by. (6,3).

“On the second floor first there was “Madame’s” room, which was very large, covered with pale flowered wallpaper, and containing the portrait of “Monsieur” very finely dressed.” (Liv,1).

Flaubert uses elliptical construction to elaborate on the description of the room. Krailsheimer mimics his form in English, choosing to recreate the ellipses. Bradley on the other hand chooses to restructure the sentence with a relative pronoun to describe the room. In so doing, she forces the descriptive clause to use active verbs, whereas the first translation is able to maintain the same grammatical structure. The only other significant difference between the two translations is that Krailsheimer’s says “first floor” and Bradley’s says “second floor.” This stems from a cultural difference between French and English. French designates a ground floor and then begins enumerating those above while English, begins enumerating with the ground floor.

“Une lucarne au second étage éclairait la chambre de Félicité ayant vue sur les prairies.” (5,20).

“A skylight on the second floor provided light for Felicite’s room which looked out over the meadows.” (6,4).

“A skylight on the third floor illuminated Felicite’s room, which had a view onto the prairies.” (Liv,2).

Both translators, in this example, agree that a subject is necessary for the sentence to make sense in English so they replace the gerund phrase from the French with a relative clause. This provides the necessary subject for English. Otherwise, the translations differ in their translation of “éclairait.” Krailsheimer chooses “provided light” and Bradley chooses “illuminated.” Bradley’s choice is closer to the original and is less wordy than that of Krailsheimer.

“Dès la cinquantaine, elle ne marqua plus aucun age; - et, toujours silencieuse, la taille droite et les gestes mesurés, semblait une femme en bois, fonctionnant d’une manière automatique.” (5,21).

“Once past fifty she could have been any age; and with her perpetual silence, straight back, and deliberate gestures she looked like a wooden dummy, driven by clockwork.” (6,4).

“Once she reached fifty, she no longer showed any age; and always silent, her postures stiff, her movements measured, she seemed wooden, automatic.” (Liv,1).

The first translation maintains the structure of the first independent clause, maintaining the introductory prepositional phrase. However, Krailsheimer then uses the passive voice for “ne marqua plus” whereas Bradley uses the active voice. In the second clause, Krailsheimer uses a prepositional phrase to avoid the elliptical construction and Bradley follows the same grammatical structure of the French. Lastly the two translations differ in that the first creates a similar comparison in English to translate the one from the

French while the second, condenses it to a simple description. The analogy that Krailsheimer uses though, doesn't really make sense in English and sounds rather awkward.

### **Reflexive Verbs**

“Cette maison, revêtue d’ardoises, se trouvait entre un passage et une ruelle aboutissant à la rivière.” (5,19).

“This house, faced with slates, lay between an alley and a lane running down to the river.” (6,1).

“This house, roofed in slate, was situated between a path and an alleyway ending at the river.” (Liv,1).

In this example “se trouvait” is the verb in question and poses a problem for the English translator because its literal translation is “to find oneself.” In English, few houses ever “find themselves” so the translator must decide on a different verb and then decide whether to use the passive or active voice. In this instance, Krailsheimer chooses the verb “lay” and maintains the active voice but, though the sentence is grammatically correct, his is not a frequent use of the verb in English. One could argue that in his translation, it is an example of bringing the target language to the original. Bradley chooses “was situated” for her translation, using the passive voice.

### **On**

“A vingt-cinq ans, on lui en donnait quarante.” (5,21).

“At twenty-five she was taken for forty.” (6,4).

“At twenty-five one would say she was forty.” (Liv,1).

“On” used in the French brings in a third party judgement in that someone, upon meeting her, would think that she was forty years old instead of twenty-five. The “on” in Flaubert also frequently implicates the narrator and the reader, which adds an even greater dimension to the text. Krailsheimer’s translation loses this inclusion of a third party since he chooses to use the passive voice and eliminate the pronoun entirely. Bradley’s translation does include this element but uses the English impersonal pronoun, “one” which is not as common as its French counterpart. However, it is not awkward here.

“Il ajoutait qu’on desirait l’établir. Du reste, il n’était pas pressé, et attendait une femme à son gout.” (5,23).

“He added that his people wanted him to settle down, but he was in no hurry, and was waiting for a wife who would suit him.” (6,5).

“He added that they wanted to settle him down. Furthermore, he wasn’t in a hurry, and was waiting for a wife to his liking.” (Liv,2).

The meaning of the impersonal pronoun in this instance is not terribly ambiguous but it is not specific either. Krailsheimer, though translates it more specifically as “his people” than does Bradley who translates it as “they.” The second retains what is left unclear and indefinite from the French. Also in the first, the two sentences are combined whereas the second leaves them in the same form as the original.

“On fut encore une demi-heure avant d’atteindre Trouville.” (5,29).

“It took a further half-hour to reach Trouville.” (6,11).

“It took another half-hour to reach Trouville.” (Liv,2).

The two translations are almost identical in this example, both translating “it” for “on.” This is a fairly irregular use of the impersonal pronoun in French since it usually denotes “one”, “we”, or “they” in English. The decision of the translators to use “it”

reflects an adaptation of the French to the English since “it took” is a more frequently used expression of time than “we took” or “they took.”

### Chapter 3

Madame Bovary by Flaubert presents another interesting case study for examining the difficulties of French to English translation. The two translations that will be used in this comparison are by Paul DeMan and Olivia J. Bradley. Most of the excerpts are taken from the third chapter and examine the problems presented by "on," indirect discourse, elliptical construction, and verb tense. Indirect discourse is sometimes difficult to render in English because it is incorporated within a predominately narrative passage or it is a mental dialogue that one of the characters has with himself. The verb tense may be problematic when the literal translation and the actual meaning differ.

#### On

“Nous étions à l'étude, quand le Proviseur entra, suivi d'un nouveau habillé en bourgeois et d'un garçon de classe qui portait un grand pupitre.” (3,3).

“We were in class when the headmaster came in, followed by a new boy, not wearing the school uniform, and a school servant carrying a large desk.” (4,1).

“We were in study hall when the headmaster entered, followed by a new boy not dressed in the school uniform, and by an assistant carrying a large desk.” (Liv, 1).

The first sentence of the novel does not contain "on" but creates an important reference for the pronoun. Because of this introduction of the first person plural pronoun, "on" may be used to denote "we" along with its many other possible translations. Also, the reader is invited into the narration with "nous." It adds a personal dimension to the text as well as more ambiguity to the translation of "on" when it is employed. The two translations in this example really do not differ significantly. Bradley's translation assistant rather than servant does, however, flow better in English.

The significance of this example is Flaubert's use of "nous," which has been the subject of much debate by translation scholars. This is the only time in the novel that he uses the first person plural pronoun. Thereafter he switches to "on" without any preparation or explanation. The question remains unanswered as to why he did this.

"Resté dans l'angle, derrière la porte, si bien qu'on l'apercevait à peine, le nouveau était un gars de la campagne, d'une quinzaine d'années environ, et plus haut de taille qu'aucun de nous tous." (3,3).

"The new boy, standing in the corner behind the door so that he could hardly be seen, was a country lad of about fifteen, and taller than any of us." (4,1).

"Remaining in the corner, behind the door, so that he could hardly be seen, the new boy was a guy from the country, about fifteen years old, and taller than any of us." (Liv, 1).

The "on" used in this sentence is very ambiguous because it could be translated literally to mean "one," "they," or "we" and still make perfect sense in English. Bradley avoids the problem entirely by using the passive voice as does De Man. The sentence simply makes better sense in the English if the "on" is left out.

"Le père Rouault n'eut pas été fâché qu'on le débarrassait de sa fille, qui ne lui servait guère dans sa maison." (3,22).

"Old Rouault would not have been sorry to be rid of his daughter, who was of no use to him in the house." (4, 17).

"Old Rouault would not have been sorry to have his daughter taken off his hands, who was hardly any use to him in the house." (Liv, 2).

"On" in the French could be literally translated "anyone" or "someone" in English. Bradley, again though, chooses to avoid any ambiguity with the passive voice. De Man also chooses this tactic.

"Il prenait ses repas dans la cuisine, seul, en face de feu, sur une petite table qu'on lui apportait toute servie comme au théâtre." (3,23).

"He took his meals in the kitchen, alone, opposite the fire on a little table brought to him already laid as on a stage." (4, 17).

" He ate his meals alone, in the kitchen, facing the fire, on a little table brought to him already served, as in the theater." ( Liv, 4).

"On" in this excerpt is ambiguous because the reader is left with no idea of who is serving him. The use of the impersonal third person pronoun effectively keeps the emphasis on Rouault and draws no attention to the server. The translations achieve this same effect with the passive voice.

"Lorsqu'il s'aperçut donc que Charles avait les pommettes rouges près de sa fille ce qui signifiait qu'un de ces jours on la lui demanderait en mariage, il rumina d'avance toute l'affaire." (3, 23).

"When, therefore, he perceived that Charles's cheeks grew flushed if near his daughter, which meant that he would propose on one of these days, he mulled over the entire matter beforehand." (4,17).

"When he noticed, then, that Charles blushed around his daughter, which meant that one of these days he would ask for her in marriage, he pondered the whole affair in advance." (Liv, 4).

Flaubert's use of "on" is unique because, unlike the previous examples, it refers to a specific person, Charles. In most cases the pronoun is much more ambiguous. Both translators use "he" to refer to Charles and to avoid using his name twice in the same sentence. The context eliminates any problems that might arise from using "he" to refer to two different people in the same sentence.

### **Indirect Discourse**

"Mais le jardinier qu'ils avaient n'y entendait rien; on était si mal servi!" (3,21).

"But their gardener understood nothing about it; servants were so careless!" (4,16).



"But the gardener that they had understood nothing of it; they were so poorly served!" (Liv, 2).

This sentence could easily be a direct quote. Flaubert's use of indirect discourse and an exclamation draws the reader into the story as if he is actually being addressed. This same effect is more difficult to achieve in English. DeMan's translation loses the exclamation but flows better than Bradley's. Bradley's is lexically more faithful to the original.

"Puis il se demanda ce qu'elle deviendrait, si elle se marierait, et à qui? Helas! le père Rouault était bien riche, et elle!...si belle!" (3,22)

"Then he asked himself what would become of her--if she would be married and to whom? Alas! old Rouault was rich, and she!-- so beautiful!" (4,16-17).

"Then he wondered what she would become, if she would marry, and whom? So beautiful!" (Liv, 5).

Here Flaubert's use of indirect discourse brings the reader in on Charles's inner thought. He gives Charles's inner thought an adds dimension, almost of a conversation with the reader. De Man's translation does a better job of recreating this effect in the English. Bradley's has less of this dimension and reads more like a narration.

### **Elliptical Construction**

"Elle se rassit et elle reprit son ouvrage, qui était un bas de coton blanc où elle faisait des reprises; elle travaillait le front baissé; elle ne parlait pas. Charles non plus." (3,21).

"She worked with her head bent down; she did not speak, nor did Charles." (4,16).

"She sat down and went back to her work, a white cotton stocking that she was mending; she worked with her forehead bent, she didn't speak. Nor did Charles." (Liv,1).

In this example, Flaubert makes a sentence of a dependent clause that should be attached to the preceding sentence. De Man breaks up the preceding sentence into two and incorporates the ellipse into the second. His translation conforms more to the rules that govern English grammar. Bradley, though, chooses to maintain the same form as the French.

### Verb Tense

"Des mouches, sur la table, montaient le long des verres qui avaient servi, et bourdonnaient en se noyant au fond, dans le cidre reste." (3,21).

"Some flies on the table were crawling up the glasses that had been used, and buzzing as they drowned themselves in the dregs of the cider." (4,15-16).

"Some flies, on the table climbed the side of the glasses that had been used, and buzzed while drowning at the bottom, in the remaining cider." (Liv, 1).

In the French, the confusion is with the expression "qui avaient servi." Because of the relative pronoun, literally translated, the glasses were used, which both translators effectively convey. This is an example of where French uses the active voice while English must use the passive voice.

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**A Simple Heart**  
**By Gustave Flaubert**  
Translated by Olivia J. Bradley

## I

For half a century the housewives of Pont l'Evêque envied Madame Aubain because of her servant, Félicité.

For one hundred francs a year she cooked and cleaned, sewed, washed, ironed; she knew how to bridle a horse, fatten the fowl, whip butter, and she remained faithful to her mistress, - who, nonetheless wasn't an agreeable person.

She had married a handsome young man without fortune, who died at the beginning of 1809, leaving her two very young children and a great many debts. At that time she sold her property, except for the farm at Toucques and the farm in Geffosses, where the annuity reached 5000 francs at the very most, and she left her house a Saint-Melaine to live in another that was less expensive. It had belonged to her ancestors and was located behind the market.

This house, roofed in slate, was situated between a path and an alleyway ending at the river. Inside, it had different levels that tripped one up. A narrow hall separated the kitchen from the parlor where Mme Aubain remained all day long, seated close to the window, in a wicker armchair. Eight mahogany chairs were lined up against the paneling, which was painted white. An old piano under a barometer supported a pyramidal pile of boxes and cartons. The yellow marble fireplace in the style of Louis XV was flanked by two wing chairs with tapestry covers. The clock in the center represented a temple to Vesta, and the entire apartment smelled a little moldy, because the floor was lower than the garden.

On the second floor first there was "Madame's" room, which was very large, covered with pale flowered wallpaper, containing the portrait of "Monsieur" very finely dressed. It communicated with a smaller room, where one could see two baby beds

without mattresses. Next came the sitting room, always closed, and filled with furniture covered with sheets. Then a corridor led to a study; books and papers covered the shelves of a library encircling on three sides a large desk of black wood. Two panels in the back disappeared under ink drawings, gouache landscapes, and engravings by Audran, souvenirs of a better time and of a vanished luxury. A sky light on the third floor illuminated Félicité's room, which had a view onto the prairies.

She got up at dawn so as not to miss Mass and worked until evening without interruption; then, when dinner was finished, the dishes in order and door securely fastened, she raked the ashes over log and went to sleep in front of the hearth, her rosary in hand. No one was more stubborn in bargaining. As for cleanliness, the polish of her casseroles was the despair of the other servants. Thrifty, she ate slowly, and gathered the crumbs of her bread from the table with her finger. A twelve pound loaf baked just for her and which lasted twenty days.

In every season she wore a calico scarf fastened in the back with a pin, a hat hiding her hair, grey stockings, a red skirt, and over her blouse an apron, like hospital nurses.

Her face was thin and her voice high pitched. At twenty-five one would say she was forty. Once she reached fifty, she no longer showed any age; and, always silent, her postures stiff, her movements measured, she seemed wooden, automatic.

## II

She had had, like anyone else, her love story.

Her father, a mason, died falling from a scaffold. Then her mother died, her sisters scattered, a farmer took her in and employed her at a very young age to watch the

cows in the fields. She shivered in rags, drank pond water lying flat on her chest, was beaten over nothing, and finally was driven away for a theft of 30 sous, which she hadn't committed. She entered another farm, was put in charge of the poultry, and because she pleased the owners, her friends were jealous of her.

One night in August (she was 18 then), they took her to the fair in Colleville. Immediately she was dazed, stupefied by the noise of the fiddlers, the lights in the trees, at the colored patterns of the costumes, lace, gold crosses, this crowd of people jumping about in time. She was standing modestly off to the side, when a rich looking young man, who was smoking a pipe, invited her to dance. He bought her cider, coffee, cake, a scarf and imagining that she had guessed, offered to see her home. At the edge of a field of oats, he brutally threw her down. She was frightened and began to scream. He ran off.

Another night, on the road to Beaumont, she tried to pass a large hay wagon that was moving slowly, and brushing close to the wheels she recognized Theodore.

He approached her calmly, excusing himself for everything, saying that it was "the fault of the drink."

She didn't know how to respond and wanted to flee.

Straightaway he spoke of the harvest and the noteworthy of the parish, because his father had left Colleville for the farm at Ecots, meaning that they were now neighbors. "Ah" she said. He added that they wanted to settle him down. Furthermore, he wasn't in a hurry, and was waiting for a wife to his liking. She lowered her head. Then he asked her if she was thinking of marriage. She replied, smiling, that it wasn't nice to make fun of people. "But I'm not, I swear!" and with his left arm he held her around the waist; she walked on supported by his embrace, they slowed down. The wind was soft, the stars shown, the enormous hay wagon swayed before them, and the four horses dragging their

feet, kicked up the dust. Then without being told, they turned to the right. He kissed her once again. She disappeared into the shadows.

The following week, Theodore persuaded her to see him again.

They met at the back of the farmyard, behind a wall under an isolated tree. She was not innocent as most young ladies are – she had learned from the animals – but her reason and instinctual sense of honor kept her from giving in. This resistance exasperated Theodore's desire, so much so that to satisfy it, or naively, perhaps, he proposed to marry her. She hesitated to believe him. He protested vehemently.

Soon he confessed something upsetting, his parents, last year, bought him a substitute for the army; but he could be called again at any time; the idea of serving frightened him. This cowardice was proof of tenderness for Félicité; her own redoubled. She slipped out at night and arriving at the meeting place, Theodore tormented her with his worries and pleas.

Finally, he announced that he would go himself to the Prefecture to get the information, and bring them the next Sunday between eleven and midnight.

The moment arrived, she ran toward her love.

In his place, she found one of his friends.

He told her that she wouldn't see him again. To avoid the draft, Theodore had married an old, very rich woman, Mme Lehoussais, from Touques.

This was a colossal disappointment. She threw herself on the ground, screamed, called on God, and moaned all alone in the country until sunrise. Then she returned to the farm, declared her intention of leaving; and, at the end of the month, having received all of accounts, she packed all of her things into a handkerchief, and went to Pont l'Evêque.



In front of the inn she asked some questions of a lady in a widow's hat who was in fact looking for a cook. The young girl didn't know much, but seemed to have so much good will and so few demands that Mme Aubain concluded by saying: "All right! I accept you!"

Félicité, fifteen minutes later, had settled in her house. At first she lived there in a state of fear caused by "the type of house" and the memory of "Monsieur" hovering over everything. Paul and Virginia, the first seven years old, the other just four, seemed to her to be made of some very precious material; she carried them on her back like a horse, and Mme Aubain forbid her to kiss them every other minute, which mortified her. Nonetheless she was happy. The pleasure of the environment made her sadness melt away.

Every Thursday, the usual visitors came for a round of Boston. Félicité would prepare the cards and foot warmers in advance. They arrived at eight o'clock sharp and left before the stroke of eleven o'clock.

Each Monday morning, the second hand dealer who lived under the alley would spread out his goods on the ground. Then the town would fill with the buzzing of voices, where the whinnying of horses, the bleating of sheep, the snorting of pigs, mixed with the noise of the carriages in the street. Around noon, at the peak of the market, a tall old peasant, his cap backward, hook-nosed would appear on the doorstep; it was Robelin, who farmed Geffosses. A little while later - it was Liébard, who farmed Toucques, small, red, obese, wearing a grey vest and leggings fitted with spurs.

Both offered their landlady chickens or cheeses. Félicité invariably foiled their tricks; and they left filled with respect for her.

At undetermined times Mme Aubain received a visit from the marquis of Gremanville, one of her uncles, ruined by debauchery and who lived in Falaise on the last plot of his lands. He always arrived at lunch time, with a horrible dog who got the furniture dirty with his paws. Despite his efforts to appear as a gentleman, lifting his hat every time he said: "My late father," habit lead him on, he poured one drink after the other, and came out with bawdy remarks. Félicité politely pushed him outside - "You've had enough Mr. Gremanville. Another time!" And she closed the door.

She opened it with pleasure to Mr. Bourais, a former attorney at law. His white tie and bald head, the crop of his shirt, his ample brown frock coat, his way of curving his arm while taking snuff, his whole person produced in her that feeling that is only given at the spectacle of extraordinary men.

Since he managed Madame's properties, he closed himself off with her for hours in Monsieur's study, and was always afraid of compromising himself; he infinitely respected the magistrature and had claims of knowing Latin.

He gave them an illustrated geography book to instruct the children in an agreeable way. They represented different scenes from around the world, cannibals with feathers on their heads, a monkey carrying a young lady, Bedouins in the desert, a whale being harpooned.

Paul explained the etchings to Félicité. This was her whole literary education.

The children's was formed Guyot, a poor devil employed by the office of the mayor, famous for his fine handwriting and who sharpened his pocketknife on his boot.

When the weather was clear, they would go off early to the farm at Gefosses. The yard sloped down, the house in the middle; and the sea, in the distance, looked like a patch of grey.

Félicité took from her bag slices of cold meat, and they ate lunch in an apartment that connected to the dairy. It was the sole remnant of a country house, now disappeared. The wall paper, in scraps, rustled with the air currents. Mme Aubain lowered her head, overwhelmed with memories; the children didn't dare speak. "Well go play then!" she said; and they took off.

Paul went up to the barn, caught birds, skipped rocks in the pond, or hit with a stick the large barrels which resonated like drums.

Virginie fed the rabbits, hurried to gather blueberries and ran so quickly that her little embroidered pants showed.

One autumn night, they returned through the pastures.

The quarter moon lit up one part of the sky and fog was drifting like a scarf over the windings of the Toucques. Cattle, spread out in the middle of the field, calmly watched these four people pass. In the third pasture a few of them got up and looked around at each other and in front of them. "Don't be afraid!" Félicité said; and muttering a sort of complaint she stroked the back of the one closest to her; it made an about-face and the others followed. But, when the next pasture had been crossed, a frightening bellowing arose. It was a bull, hidden by the fog. It advanced on the two women. Mme Aubain was going to run, "No, no not so fast." They hurried nonetheless and heard from behind the loud snorting coming closer. Its hooves, like hammers, beat the grass of the prairie; he was galloping now. Félicité turned around and dug up dirt with both hands, which she threw in its eyes. It bowed its head, shook its horns and trembled with fury while bellowing horribly. Mme Aubain, at the end of the pasture with her two little ones, looked frantically for a way to cross the high side of the ditch. Félicité was still backing

away in front of the bull, and continuously throwing clods of grass and earth to blind it, screaming at the same time "Hurry up! Hurry up!"

Mme Aubain descended into the ditch, pushed Virginie, Paul next, fell several times trying to climb the embankment and finally managed it with a courageous effort.

The bull had backed Félicité against an open-work fence; its slobber splashed up on her face, one second longer it would have gored her. She had time to slip through two of the bars of the gate and the huge animal, completely surprised stopped.

This event, for many years, was the topic of conversation at Pont l'Evêque. Félicité took no pride in it, not even realizing that she had done anything heroic.

She was exclusively concerned with Virginie – because she had developed a nervous condition as a result of this fright, and Mr. Poupart, the doctor, recommended sea bathing at Trouville.

At that time the baths were not very frequented. Mme Aubain got some information, consulted Bourais, and made preparations as if for a long trip.

Her luggage left the night before, in Liébard's cart. The next day he brought two horses, one with a lady's saddle and a velvet back rest; and on the hindquarters of the second, a rolled up sort of coat forming a kind of seat, on which Mme Aubain rode, behind him. Félicité took care of Virginie, and Paul got on Mr. Lachaptois's donkey, lent with the condition that it be well taken care of.

The road was so poor that the eight kilometers took two hours. The horses sank up to their pasterns in mud, and made brisk jolting movements from their haunches to get out of it; or else they stumbled against ruts; other times, they had to jump. Liébard's mare, in certain places, stopped suddenly. He waited patiently for her to start walking again; and he talked of the people whose properties bordered the road, adding moral

reflections to their stories. In this way, in the middle of Toucques, as they were passing beneath windows surrounded by nasturtiums, he said, shrugging his shoulders, "Here is where a certain Mme Lehoussais, who instead of taking a young man . . ." Félicité didn't hear the rest; the horses trotted along, the donkey galloped; they all took a path, a gate opened, two boys appeared and they descended in front of liquid manure, right on the threshold of the door.

Mère Liébard, on seeing her mistress, lavished demonstrations of joy on them. She served a lunch of sirloin, tripe sausage, chicken fricassee, sparkling cider, a fruit tart, and plums in brandy, accompanied by compliments to Madame, who seemed in better health, to Mademoiselle, who had become "magnificent", to M. Paul who seemed particularly "filled out", without forgetting their late grandparents whom the Liébards had known, having been in the service of the family for several generations. The farm, like them, seemed somewhat ancient. The beams of the ceiling were worm-eaten, the walls were black from smoke; the tiles were grey with dust. An oak dresser held all sorts of utensils, pitchers, plates, pewter bowls, wolf traps, sheep shears; an enormous syringe that made the children laugh. There wasn't a single tree in the three courtyards that didn't have mushrooms at the base, or a clump of mistletoe in its branches. The wind had brought down several of them. They started growing again from the middle; and all of them bent under the weight of their apples. The thatch roofs, all of them with same velvety brown color but with varying thickness, resisted the strongest gusts of wind. The cart-shed, however, was falling into ruin. Mme Aubain said that she would take care of it and ordered the animals to be harnessed again.

It took another half-hour to reach Trouville. The little caravan decided to walk in order to pass Les Ecores; it was a cliff overhanging the boats; and three minutes later, at

the end of the quay, they entered the courtyard of the Golden Lamb, David's mother's house.

Virginie felt less weak, from the very first days, which was the result of the change of air and the action of the sea baths. She took them wearing a shirt for want of a swimsuit; and her nurse dressed her in a customs cabana used by the bathers.

In the afternoon they went away with the donkey, past the Rochers Noires, near Hennequeville. At first, the path climbed between terrains cut by valleys like the grass of a park, then arrived at a plateau where pastures and cultivated fields alternated. At the edge of the path, in the tangles of thorns, holly bushes grew; here and there a large dead tree made zigzags against the blue sky with its branches.

Almost always they rested in a meadow, having Deauville on the left, Le Havre on the right, and the sea facing them ahead. With the sun shining on it, it seemed sleek like a mirror, so calm that they could barely hear its murmur; hidden sparrows chirped, the immense canopy of the sky covered everything. Mme Aubain, sitting down, worked on her sewing; Virginie close to her, braided rushes; Félicité picked lavender flowers; Paul, who was bored, wanted to leave.

Other times, having crossed the Touques by boat, they looked for shells. Low tide revealed sea urchins, godfishes, jellyfish; and the children ran to catch the flecks of foam blown by the wind. The sleepy waves fell on the sand and rolled along the length of the shore which stretched beyond sight but, on the land side was bordered by the dunes, which separated it from the Marais, a large prairie in the form of a racetrack. When they came back that way, Trouville, in the distance, at the bottom of the hill, grew with each step and with all of the unequal houses seemed to bloom in a gay disorder.

On the days when it was too hot, they didn't leave their rooms. The dazzling light from outside made bars of light between the slits of the slatted blinds. There wasn't a single noise in the village. Below, on the sidewalk, there was no one. This extensive silence increased the impression of tranquility. In the distance, the hammers of caulkers beat the hulls, and a heavy breeze brought the smell of tar.

The main entertainment was the return of the boats; as soon as they had passed the buoys, they started to tack. The sails were lowered to two thirds of the mast; and with the foresail billowed like a balloon, they advanced, gliding through the lapping waves, up to the middle of the port, where the anchor suddenly fell. Then the boat pulled up to the quay. The sailors threw the quivering fish onto the planks; a line of carts waited and women in cotton hats rushed forward to take the baskets and embrace their men.

One of them, one day, approached Félicité, who a little while later entered the room completely overjoyed. She had found a sister; and Nastasie Barette, Leroux's wife, appeared holding a nursing infant to her breast, another child by her right hand, and to her left a little ship's boy, his fists on his hips and his beret over his ear.

After a quarter hour, Mme Aubain dismissed her.

They frequently met them outside the kitchen or on the walks that they would take. The husband never appeared.

Félicité grew very fond of them. She bought them a blanket, shirts, a stove; obviously they were exploiting her. This weakness bothered Mme Aubain who didn't like the familiarities of the nephew – because he used the familiar “tu” with her son – and, since Virginie was coughing and the season wasn't good, she went back to Pont-l'Evêque.

Mr. Bourais advised her on the choice of a college. The one in Caen was considered the best. Paul was sent there, and bravely said his good-byes, satisfied to go live in a house where he would have friends.

Mme Aubain resigned herself to the separation from her son, because it was unavoidable. Virginie thought about it less and less. Félicité missed the uproar he caused. But a preoccupation came to distract her; from Christmas on, she took the little girl to catechism each day.

### III

When she had made a genuflection at the door, she walked up the lofty nave between the double line of chairs, unfolded Mme Aubain's pew, and looked all around her.

With the boys on the right and the girls on the left, they filled the choir stalls; the priest was standing close to the lectern; stained glass of the apse depicted the Holy Spirit above the Virgin; another showed her on her knees before the Baby Jesus, and behind the tabernacle, a group of wooden figures represented Saint Michael striking down the dragon.

The priest first gave an abbreviated Biblical history. She believed that she saw Eden, the flood, the tower of Babel, the villages in flames, the people who died, the idols turned over; and from this bedazzlement she kept a respect for the Most High and fear of his anger. Then she cried listening to the Passion. Why had they crucified him, who cherished the children, fed the multitudes, cured the blind and had wanted in mildness, to be born among the poor, on the dung heap of a stable. The sowing, the harvest, the presses, all of the familiar things that the Gospel talked about, were found in her life; the



passage of God had sanctified them; and she loved the lambs more tenderly because of her love for the Lamb, and the doves because of the Holy Spirit.

She could hardly imagine His person; for He was not only a bird, but also fire and other times, wind. It was perhaps His light that flutters about at night on the edges of the swamps, His breath that pushes the clouds, His voice that makes the bells harmonious, and she remained in adoration delighting in the coolness of the walls and the tranquility of the church.

As for dogma, she understood nothing, did not even try to understand. The priest spoke, the children recited, she ended up falling asleep; and woke up suddenly when, leaving, they banged their clogs on the stone paving.

It was in this way, by listening, she learned the catechism, her religious education having been neglected during her childhood; and from then on she imitated all of Virginie's practices, fasting as she did, confessing with her. On Corpus Christi, they made an altar of repose together.

The anticipation of the first communion tormented her. She fussed over the shoes, the rosary, the book, the gloves. With such trembling she helped Virginie's mother dress her!

All through the entire mass, she suffered torments. Mr. Bourais obstructed her view of one side of the choir, but facing her the group of virgins wearing white crowns over their lowered veils formed a sort of field of snow; and she recognized from afar the dear little one by her delightful, slender neck and her contemplative attitude. The bell rang. Heads bowed, there was silence. At the sounds of the organ, the choristers and congregation started singing the Agnus Dei; then the boys filed out; after them, the girls got up. Step by step, and hands joined, they went towards the illuminated altar, knelt

down on the first step, received the host in turn, and returned in the same order to their stalls. When it was Virginie's turn, Félicité leaned forward to see her; and with the imagination given by true affection, it seemed to her that she herself was that child; her face became hers, her dress covered her, her heart beat in her chest, when she opened her mouth, while closing her eyelashes, she almost fainted.

Early the next day, she arrived at the sacristy so that the priest could give her communion. She received it devoutly but did not taste the same delights.

Mme Aubain wanted to endow her daughter with every accomplishment; and since Guyot could teach her neither English nor music, she resolved to send her to boarding school with the Urselines of Honfleur.

The child raised no objections. Félicité sighed, finding Madame insensitive. Then she thought that perhaps, her mistress was right. Such things were beyond her capacities.

Finally, one day an old car arrived at the door; and out stepped a nun who came to get Mademoiselle. Félicité put the bags on the upper deck, made some recommendations to the coachman, and placed six jars of jelly and a dozen pears in the chest, along with a bouquet of violets.

Virginie, at the last minute, was overcome by a large sob; she hugged her mother who kissed her forehead while repeating, "Now, now! Be brave! Be brave!" The step was taken up, the car left.

Then Mme Aubain collapsed; and that night, all of her friends, the Lormeau family, the housekeeper, Mme Lachaptois, those Rochefeuille girls, Mr. De Houpeville and Bourais showed up to console her.

The separation from her daughter was at first very painful. But she received a letter three times a week, wrote her on the other days, walked in her garden read a little bit, and in this way filled the emptiness of the hours.

Every morning, by habit, Félicité went into Virginie's room, and looked at the walls. She missed not having to comb her hair anymore, to lace her boots, to tuck her into bed, - and to no longer see her sweet face, to no longer hold her hand when they went out together. In her idleness, she tried to do needle point. Her clumsy fingers broke the threads; she couldn't concentrate on anything, had lost sleep, according to her own word, was "drained."

To take her mind off it, she asked permission to receive her nephew Victor.

He arrived Sunday after mass, with rosy cheeks, his chest naked, and smelling of the country he had crossed. Immediately, she laid out his place setting. They ate facing each other; and eating as little as possible herself, to save the expense, she fed him so much food that he would fall asleep. At the first stroke of vespers, she woke him up, brushed his pants, knotted his tie, and took him to church, leaning on his arm with maternal pride.

His parents always instructed him to bring something back with him, a packet of brown sugar, some soap, brandy, sometimes, even money. He brought his old clothes to be mended; and she accepted this job, happy for an occasion that forced him to come back.

In August, his father sent him to learn coastal navigation.

It was vacation season. The children's arrival consoled her. But Paul became capricious and Virginia was no longer young enough to be addressed familiarly which was an awkward barrier between them.

Victor went successively to Morlaix, Dunkerrque and Brighton; on returning from each voyage, he offered her a gift. The first time, it was a box decorated with shells; the second a coffee cup, the third gingerbread man. He was growing, had a nice height, a bit of moustache, good, honest eyes, and a little leather hat, worn tilted in the back like a pilot. He amused her with his stories, filled with nautical terms.

On Monday, July 14, 1819 (she never forgot the date), Victor announced that he had signed on for an ocean voyage, and the night after the next, by the steamship from Honfleur, was going to join his schooner, that would then leave from Le Havre. He might be gone for two years.

The prospect of such an absence perplexed Félicité; and to tell him goodbye again, that Wednesday night, after Madame's dinner, she put on her clogs, and hurried across the four leagues that separated Pont l'Evêque from Honfleur.

When she was in front of the Calvary, instead of taking a left, she took a right, got lost in the shipyards, retraced her steps; the people that she accosted advised her to hasten. She went all around the dock, filled with ships, ran into the ropes; then the land dipped, the light intertwined and she thought she was crazy, seeing horses in the sky.

On the edge of the pier, others neighed, frightened by the sea. A hoist that was lifting them off, lowered into a boat where the voyagers were bustling about between the casks of cider, the baskets of cheese, the sacks of grain; one could hear the chickens cackling, the captain swearing and a ship's boy rested his elbows on the davit, indifferent to everything. Félicité, who hadn't recognized him, screamed "Victor!" He raised his head; she rushed forward, when the ladder was pulled up suddenly.

The packet boat, which the women hauled in singing, left the port. Its frame creaked; the heavy waves whipped its bow. The sail had turned, no one could be seen

any longer; - and, on the sea, made silver by the moon, it made a black patch that grew pale, sunk into darkness, disappeared.

Felicite, while passing close to Calvary, wanted to recommend to God what she cherished most and she prayed for a long time, standing, her face soaked with tears, her eyes to the clouds. The city was sleeping; the customs officers walked around; and water fell continuously through the waves in the locks, with a torrential noise. Two o'clock rang.

The convent parlor would not open before the day. Tardiness would certainly annoy Madame; and despite her desire to embrace the other child she returned. The girls from the inn awoke as she entered Pont l'Evêque.

The poor boy, would be rolling over the waves for months! His previous voyages hadn't frightened her. From England and from Brittany, one came back, but America, the colonies, the Islands; they were lost in an uncertain region, the other end of the world.

From then on, Félicité thought exclusively of her nephew. On sunny days, she tormented herself over thirst; when there were thunderstorms, she feared lightning. Listening to the wind that groaned through the chimney and blew the slate off the roof, she saw him whipped by that same storm at the top of a shattered mast, his whole body bent behind a sheet of foam, or even, --memories of the illustrated geography book—he was eaten by savages, trapped in woods by monkeys, pining away on a deserted beach. And she never spoke of her worries.

Madame Aubain had her own for her daughter. The nuns found that she was affectionate but delicate. The smallest emotion overexcited her. She had to give up the piano.

Her mother required a regular correspondence from the convert. One morning, when the postman hadn't come, she grew impatient; and she paced in the sitting room, from her armchair to the window. It was really extraordinary! For four days, no news! So that she could console herself by her example, Félicité said to her:

"Me, Madame, it's been six months since I received..."

"From whom then?"...

The servant replied softly:

"But...from my nephew!"

"Ah your nephew!" And, shrugging her shoulders, Madame Aubain took her pacing back up again, which was to say: "I didn't think of that!"...Moreover, I couldn't care less! A ship's boy, a rogue, some deal! ...While my daughter . . . Imagine that!..."

Félicité, though brought up on adversity, was indignant with Madame then forgot.

It seemed quite simple to her to lose one's head over a little one.

The two children had equal importance; a bond to her heart united them, and their destinies should be the same.

The pharmacist informed her that Victor's boat had arrived in Havana. He had read this news in a gazette.

Because of the cigars, she imagined Havana to be a country where one did nothing but smoke, Victor circulated among the blacks in a cloud of smoke. Could one "in a case of need" return by land? What was the distance from Pont l'Evêque? To learn the answer, she asked Mr. Bourais.

He got out his atlas, then began some explanations of longitudes; and he had a big priggish smile at Félicité's stupefaction. Finally with his pencil box, he indicated in the

indented line of an oval patch an imperceptible black dot, adding: "Here it is." She leaned over the map; this network of colored lines confused her, without teaching her anything, and Bourais, inviting her to say what bothered her, she asked him to point out the house where Victor was living. Bourais raised his arms, he sneezed, laughed enormously; such candor delighted him; and Félicité didn't understand why, - her intelligence was so limited that she was waiting perhaps for a near portrait of her nephew.

Two weeks later Liébard, at the usual time of the market, entered the kitchen, and gave her a letter that her brother-in-law had sent. Neither knowing how to read, she turned to her mistress.

Madame Aubain, who was counting the stitches of a sweater, put it down next to her, opened the letter, shuddered, and in a low voice, with a serious gaze:

"It was very bad news . . . they say that . . . your nephew . . ."

He was dead. Nothing more was said! Félicité fell to a chair, leaning her head against a partition, and closed her eyes, which had become pink all of a sudden. Then, her forehead lowered, her hands dangling, her gaze fixed, she repeated at intervals:

"Poor young fellow! Poor young fellow!"

Liébard sighed as he watched her. Madame Aubain trembled a little.

She proposed that she go see her sister in Trouville.

Félicité responded, with a gesture, that she didn't need to.

There was a silence. Liébard judged it a good time to leave.

Then she said: "This doesn't mean anything to them!"

Her head fell back; and mechanically, from time to time, she lifted the long needles from the worktable.

Some women passed in the yard with a stretcher used for hanging out laundry.

Seeing them through the window, she remembered her was; having left it to soak the night before, it had to be rinsed today; and she left the apartment.

Her board and washbasin were on the low side of the Touques. She threw a pile of shirts on the bank, rolled up her sleeves, and picked up her beater; and the hard strokes that she made were heard in the other gardens near by. The prairies were empty; the wind made ripples on the river; on the bottom tall weeds stretched out like the hair of bodies floating in the water. She held back her pain, she was very strong until the evening; but, in her room, she let herself go, lying flat on her mattress, her face in her pillow and her fists against her temples.

Much later, from the captain himself of Victor's ship, she learned the circumstances of his death. They had bled him too much at the hospital, for yellow fever. Four doctors tended to him at once. He was dead immediately, and the chief had said:

“Oh well, another one!”

His parents had always treated him barbarically. She preferred not to see them again; and they made no advance, either from forgetfulness or from the hardness of the poor.

Virginie weakened.

Difficulty breathing, coughing, a constant fever and blotches on her cheeks indicated some deeper illness. Mr. Poupart had advised a stay in Provence. Madame Aubain made the decision and immediately brought her daughter home, away from the climate of Pont l'Evêque.

She made an arrangement with a man who rented carriages, who took her to the convent every Tuesday. There was a terrace in the garden where one could see the Seine. Virginie went for walks there on her arm, walking on fallen vine leaves. Sometimes the



sun, shining through the clouds, would make her blink her eyes as she watched the sails in the distance and the horizon, from the Tancarville chateau to the lighthouses of le Havre. Then they would relax under the barrel vault. Her mother had gotten herself a little cask of excellent wine from Malaga; and, laughing at the idea of being tipsy, she drank two drops, no more.

Her strength came back. Autumn passed gently. Félicité reassured Madame Aubain. But one night that she had run an errand in the neighborhood, she found Mr. Poupart's carriage in front of the door; and he was in the hall. Madame Aubain tying up her hat.

"Give me my footwarmer, my purse, my gloves, quickly now!"

Virginie had pneumonia; it might be hopeless.

"Not yet!" the doctor said; and the two of them got into the car, amidst the whirling snowflakes. Night was approaching. It was very cold.

Felicite hurried into the church to light a candle. Then she ran after the carriage, which she caught up with an hour later, jumped lightly onto the back, where she sat among the cables, when she remembered: "The house is not locked! What if thieves came?" And she got down.

The next day, at dawn, she arrived at the doctor's. He had gone home, returned to the country. Then she stayed at the inn, thinking that strangers would bring a letter. Finally, at dusk, she took the carriage from Lisieux.

The convent was at the end of a steep alleyway. Towards the middle, she heard strange sounds, a death knell. "It is for someone else", she thought; and Félicité struck the knocker violently.

After several minutes she heard slippers approaching, the door opened, and a nun appeared.

The nun solemnly said, "she had just passed on." At the same moment, the death knell of Saint Leonard rang again.

Félicité went up to the third floor.

From the doorway of the room she recognized Virginie, lying on her back, her mouth open, and her head back under a black cross leaning toward her, between the immobile curtains, less pale than her face. Madame Aubain, clutching the foot of the bed, let out bursts of anguish. The Mother Superior was standing to the right. Three candlesticks on the chest of drawers made red splashes and the fog was turning the windows white. The nuns led Madame Aubain away.

For two nights Félicité did not leave the dead girl. She repeated the same prayers, splashed holy water on the sheets, sat back down, and watched over her. At the end of the first evening she remarked that her face was becoming yellow, her lips growing blue, her nose pinched, her eyes sunken. She kissed them several times; and would not have been terribly surprised if Virginie would have opened them; for such souls the supernatural is perfectly simple. She dressed her, wrapped her in the shroud, placed her in the coffin, put a wreath over her, and laid out her hair. It was blond and extraordinarily long for her age. Félicité cut a large lock of it, of which she put half in her bosom, determined to never let it go.

The body was taken back to Pont l'Evêque, according to the instructions of Madame Aubain, who followed the hearse in a closed car.

After the mass, it took another forty-five minutes to reach the cemetery. Paul walked at the head of the procession sobbing. Mr. Bourais was behind, next the

important inhabitants, the women, covered in black cloaks, and Félicité. She thought of her nephew, and having not been able to pay these last respects, felt added sadness as if burying one with the other.

Madame Aubain's despair was boundless.

At first she revolted against God, finding Him unjust for taking her daughter –she who had never done anything wrong and whose conscience was so pure! But no! She should have taken her to the Mediterranean. Other doctors might have saved her! She accused herself, wanted to join her, cried out in distress in her dreams. One, more than the rest, obsessed her. Her husband, dressed like a sailor was returning from a voyage and told her, in tears, that he had received orders to take Virginie. So they schemed together to find a hiding place somewhere.

One time, she returned from the garden, very disoriented. Just before (she pointed to the exact spot) father and daughter had appeared to her, one next to the other and they didn't do anything; they looked at her.

For several months she stayed in her bedroom, without moving. Félicité reproached her gently; she had to save herself for her son and for her husband, in memory of "her".

-Her? Madame Aubain responded as if waking up. "Oh! Yes! Yes! You won't forget it?" She alluded to the cemetery, from which she was strictly forbidden.

Félicité went there everyday.

At precisely 4:00 she passed by the houses, climbed the hill, opened the gate and arrived in front of Virginie's tomb. It was a little rose marble column, with a paving stone at the base, and oaks surrounded it, enclosing a garden. The flowerbeds disappeared under a blanket of flowers. She watered their leaves, replaced the sand,

kneeling down to better work with the soil. Madame Aubain, when she would go there, felt a relief, a sort of consolation.

Then the years went by, all alike and without anything remarkable except the return of the major holidays: Easter, Ascension, All Saints Day. Personal events marked a date, which was later used as a reference. Thus, in 1825 two glaziers whitewashed the hall; in 1827 a section of the roof, falling in the courtyard, almost killed a man. The summer of 1828 was Madame's turn to offer the blessed bread; Bourais, around this time, disappeared mysteriously; and the old acquaintances, one by one, went away, Madame Lechaptois, Robelin, Uncle Gremenville, who had been paralyzed for a long time.

One night, the driver of the mail coach in Pont l'Evêque announced the July revolution. A few days later a new subprefect was named: the baron de Larsonnière, former consul in America, and who had with him, besides his wife, his sister-in-law with three young ladies, already fairly grown up. They were seen on their lawn, dressed in flowing blouses; they owned a negro and a parrot. Madame Aubain received a visit from them and did not fail to return it. From the moment they appeared in the distance, Félicité would run to tell her. But only one thing was able to move her, the letters from her son.

He couldn't stay with any career, spending all his time in the taverns. She paid his debts for him; he created others; and Madame Aubain would sigh so loudly while knitting close to the window that, Félicité could hear her in the kitchen when she was at the spinning wheel.

They went for walks together along the espalier; and always talked of Virginie, wondering if this would have pleased her, what she would have said in that situation.

All of her little things were kept in a cupboard in the bedroom with the two baby beds. Madame Aubain looked at them as seldom as possible. One summer day she resigned herself; and moths flew out of the armoire.

Her dresses were in line under a shelf where there were three dolls, some hoops, a doll's house, the washbowl she had used. They also pulled out petticoats, stockings, handkerchiefs, and spread them out on the two beds before refolding them. The sun was shining on these poor objects, bringing out the spots and the wrinkles made by the movements of her body. The air was warm and the sky blue, a blackbird was chirping, everything seemed to be alive in a profound sweetness. They found a little plush brown hat for long hair; but it was all moth eaten. Félicité asked to keep it for herself. Their eyes met, filled with tears; finally her mistress opened her arms, the servant threw herself into them; and they embraced, consoling their pain with a kiss that made them equals.

It was the first time in their lives; Madame Aubain was not very forthcoming. Félicité grateful to her as if for a gift and from then on loved her deeply with animal devotion and religious veneration.

The goodness of her heart grew stronger.

When she heard the drums in the street of a regiment of soldiers marching, she stood in front of the door with a pitcher of cider, which she offered the soldiers to drink. She cared for the cholera patients. She protected the Poles; and there was even one who declared that he wished to marry her. But they quarreled; for one morning, returning from the angelus, she found him in her kitchen, where he had let himself in, and fixed himself a salad, which he was eating calmly.

After the Poles, it was Père Colmiche, an old man who had supposedly committed atrocities in '93. He lived on the shore of the river, in the rubble of a pigsty. Young boys

stared at him through the slits in the walls, and threw pebbles that fell on his pallet, where he lay, constantly shaken by a catarrh, with very long hair, blood shot eyes, and a tumor on his arm that was larger than his head. She gave him linens, tried to clean his hovel, and dreamed of settling him in the bakehouse, without him upsetting Madame. When the cancer had burst, she dressed it everyday, sometimes took him some cake, and put him in the sun on a bail of hay; and the poor old man, drooling and shaking, thanked her in a weak voice and, afraid of losing her, reached out his hands when he saw her leave. He died; she had a mass said for the repose of his soul.

That day, a wonderful event befell her: at dinner, Madame de Larsonnière's negro came, carrying the parrot in its cage with its stick, chain, and padlock. A message from the baroness told Madame Aubain that her husband had been promoted to a prefecture and they were leaving that night; and she asked that she accept the bird as a souvenir and a token of her respects.

It had for a long time fascinated Félicité, because it came from America; and that word reminded her of Victor, so much so that she had told the negro. One time she had even said: "Madame would be so happy to have him."

The negro had told his mistress whom, unable to take it with her, rid herself of it in this manner.

#### IV

His name was Loulou. His body was green, the tips of his wings pink, his head blue and his neck yellow.

But he had the annoying habit of chewing on his stick, pulling out his feathers, scattering his droppings, splashing the water from his bird bath; Madame Aubain, whom he annoyed, gave him to Félicité to keep forever.

She worked at instructing him; soon he repeated “Charming boy!” “Your servant, Sir!” “Hail Mary!” He was placed close to the door, and many were amazed that he didn’t respond to the name “Jacquot”, since all parrots were called Jacquot. They compared him to a turkey, to a lump: which infuriated Félicité! Loulou had a strange stubbornness, from the moment someone looked at him he would no longer talk!

Nonetheless he sought out company; for on Sundays, while *those* young ladies of Rochefeuille, Mr. de Houpeville and some new acquaintances: Onroy the druggist, Mr. Varin and Captain Mathieu, were playing their game of cards, he beat the window panes with his wings and thrashed so furiously that it was impossible to hear.

Bourais’s face obviously seemed very funny to him. As soon as he saw him, he started to laugh, to laugh with all his might. The bursts of his voice bounced around the courtyard, the echo reverberated, the neighbors went to their windows, laughing as well; and, so that he wouldn’t be seen by the parrot, Mr. Bourais slid along the wall, hiding his face behind his hat, reached the river and then entered by the garden door; and the looks that he gave the bird were not exactly loving.

Loulou had received a slap from the butcher’s boy once for having put his head in his basket; and from then on, always tried to bite him through his shirt. Fabu threatened to wring his neck, though he wasn’t cruel, despite the tattoo on his arm and his long sideburns. On the contrary! He had a fondness for the parrot, so much that for fun, he would teach it curse words. Félicité, who was frightened by those manners, put him in the kitchen. His chain was opened and he flew around the house.

When he went down the stairs, he pressed the curve of his beak against the steps, raised his right foot, then the left; and she feared that such an exercise might make him dizzy. He became ill, was no longer able to talk or eat. There was a callus under his tongue, like hens sometimes had. She cured him by removing it with her nails. One day, Mr. Paul had the imprudence to blow his cigar smoke up his nose; another time Madame Lormeau teased him with the end of his umbrella, he snapped up the ferrule; finally he got lost.

She had set him on the grass to cool him, left for one minute; and, when she returned, no more parrot! At first she looked in the bushes near the water and on the roofs, without listening to his mistress who was screaming: "Now take care! You are crazy!" Next she inspected all the gardens of Pont l'Evêque; and she stopped passers-by: "You haven't seen, by chance, my parrot?" To those who didn't know the parrot, she described him. Suddenly, she thought she saw him behind the windmills, at the bottom of the hill, nothing! A traveling salesman assured her that he had just seen him, at Melaine, in Mere Simon's boutique. She rushed over there. They didn't understand what she was trying to say. Finally she returned, exhausted, her slippers in tatters, death in her heart; and sitting in the middle of the bench, close to Madame, she told her of everywhere she had been, when a light weight fell on her shoulder, Loulou! What had he done? Maybe he had been on a tour of the neighborhood.

She had a hard time getting over the ordeal, or rather, she never did.

As a result of a chill, she developed a sore throat, a little bit later, an earache. Three years later she was deaf; and she spoke loudly, even in church. Although her sins could be spread to every corner of the diocese without dishonoring her or embarrassing



anyone else, the priest deemed it more suitable to only receive her confession in the sacristy.

Buzzing in her ear bothered her. Often her mistress would say to her: "My God! Are you stupid!" She responded "Yes ma'am," looking around for something.

The little circle of her ideas shrank even more, and the clock bells, the lowing of the cattle, no longer existed. All beings functioned with the silence of phantoms. Only one noise made it to her ears now, the voice of the parrot.

As if to distract her, he repeated the tic tac of the rotisserie, the shrill call of a fish vendor, the saw of the carpenter who lived across the street; and when the bell rang, he imitated Madame Aubain saying, "Félicité, the door! The door!"

They held dialogues, he, spouting out, ad nauseum, the three phrases in his repertoire, and she responding with words that little more sense, but was a pouring out of her heart. Loulou, in his isolation, was almost a son, a lover. He climbed her fingers, nibbled her lips, clung to her bodice; and as she leaned forward shaking her head like a nurse, the large wings of her hat and those of the bird shuddered together. When the clouds gathered and the thunder clapped, he would shriek, remembering perhaps the showers of his native forests. Running water excited him deliriously; he flew frantically, climbed to the ceiling, turned himself completely upside down and went through the window to splash around in the garden; but he came quickly back and jumping on one of the andirons to dry off, showed his beak, then his tail alternately.

One morning during the terrible winter of 1837 that she had put him in from of the fire, because of the cold, she found him dead, in the middle of his cage, hanging head down, his talons clutching the bars. Surely a congestion of the lungs had killed him? She

believed it was poison from the parsley; and despite the lack of any proof, her suspicions led to Fabu.

She cried so much that her mistress told her: "Well, have him stuffed."

She asked the pharmacist, who had always been good to the parrot.

He wrote Le Havre. A certain Fellacher took charge of the matter. But, since the coach sometimes lost packages, she decided to take him herself to Honfleur.

The leafless apple trees lined the sides of the road. Ice covered the ditches. Dogs barked around the farms; and her hands under her cape, with her little black clogs and her shopping bag, she walked nimbly, in the middle of the pavement.

She crossed the forest, passed Haut-Chêne, and reached Saint-Gatien.

Behind her, in a cloud of dust and speeding up because of the descent, a mail coach a full speed was quickly approaching like a whirlwind. Seeing this woman who didn't move, the driver stood up above the hood and the postillon yelled too, while his four horses, that he couldn't pull back, accelerated their pace; the two in front brushed her; with a pull on his reins, he drove them on the edge, but furiously, he raised his arm and with full force, struck her from waist to head with his whip, so hard that she fell on her back.

Her first action, when she regained her consciousness, was to open her basket. Loulou was unscathed, happily. She felt a burning on her right cheek; her hands were red where she touched it. She was bleeding.

She sat down on a pile of stones, dabbed her face with a tissue, then she ate a crust of bread, which she had put in her basket as a precaution, and consoled herself over the wound by looking at the bird.

Arriving at the top of the hill at Ecquemaerville, she saw the lights of Honfleur that flickered in the night like a bunch of stars, the sea, further off, stretched out in all directions. Then a weakness stopped her; and the misery of her childhood, the deception of her first love, the loss of her nephew, the death of Virginie, like the waves of a tide, came back at the same time, and rising to her throat, choked her.

Then she wanted to talk to the captain of the boat, and without saying what she was sending, gave him her instructions.

Fellacher kept the parrot a long time. He was always promising it for the next week; after six months, he announced that a box had been sent; that was the last she heard. She thought she would never see Loulou again. "They must have stolen him from me!" she thought.

Finally he arrived, - and splendid, standing on a tree branch, which was screwed into a mahogany pedestal, one foot in the air, his head tilted, and biting a walnut which the taxidermist, loving the grandiose, had gilded.

She shut him up in her room.

This place, where she permitted very few people, had at once the feeling of a chapel and a bazaar, with all of the religious objects and eccentric other things.

A large armoire blocked the opening of the door a bit. Across from the window overlooking the garden, - a window looked out on the courtyard; a table next to the trestle bed held a pitcher of water of water, two combs, and a cake of blue soap on a chipped plate. On the walls there were: rosaries, medals, several Virgen Mary's, a holy water font made of coconut; over the chest of drawers which was covered with a cloth like an altar, the box covered with shells that Victor had given her; then a watering can and a ball, writing notebooks, the geography print book, a pair of boots, and on the nail of the

mirror, hung by her ribbons, the little plush hat! Felicite took this form of respect so far that she even kept one of Monsieur's frock coats. All of the old things that Madame Aubain didn't want anymore, she took for her room. This was how she had artificial flowers next to the chest of drawers and the portrait of the Count d'Artois in the recess of the skylight.

Loulou was set of a shelf sticking out into the room from the chimney. Each morning, when she woke up, she saw him in the early light of dawn, and then remembered the days gone by and slightest details of insignificant actions without pain but quite tranquilly.

Not communicating with anyone she lived in a torpor as if sleepwalking. The processions of Corpus Christi would bring her out of it. She would collect candlesticks and mats from the neighbors to add to the temporary alter being made in the street.

At church, she always gazed at the Holy Spirit, and noticed that it looked something like the parrot. The resemblance seemed even more apparent in a Epinal print of Our Lord's baptism. With his purple wings and emerald body, it was truly a portrait of Loulou.

Having bought it, she hung it in place of the Count d'Artois – so that, in the same glance, she saw them both. They mingled in her thoughts so that this relation with the Holy Spirit, which became more alive and intelligible in her eyes, sanctified the parrot. The Father could not have chosen a dove to express himself, since those creatures didn't have a voice, but certainly one Loulou's ancestors. And Félicité prayed looking at the picture, but from time to time turning a little towards the bird.

She wanted to join the young girls of the Virgin Mary; Madame Aubain dissuaded her from it.

A considerable event was suddenly upon them, Paul's marriage.

After having first been a notary clerk, then in business, in customs, in the tax office, and having even begun an application for the Waterways and Forests, at 36 years old, suddenly, by an inspiration from heaven, he had found his way: the Registration Office! And displayed such high abilities that an auditor had offered him his daughter, promising him his protection.

Paul, who had become serious, took her to his mother.

She denigrated the ways of Pont l'Evêque, acted like a princess, insulted Félicité. Madame Aubain felt a great relief when she left.

The following week, they learned of M. Bourais's death, in lower Britany, in an inn. The rumor of suicide was confirmed; doubts fell on his integrity. Madame Aubain studied her accounts, and wasted no time learning of the long list of his misdeeds: diversions of arrears, disguised timber sales, false receipts, etc. On top of that, he had a natural child and "relations with a person from Dozulé."

These turpitudes bothered her greatly. During the month of March 1853, she was struck by a pain in her chest, her tongue seemed covered with smoke, leeches did not relieve any of her oppression; and the ninth night she breathed her last, at just 72 years old.

She didn't look that old, because of her brown hair, worn in coils around her pallid face, which had small pox scars. Few of her friends missed her; her haughty ways pushed them away.

Félicité wept for her, not as one weeps for a master. That Madame died before her upset her ideas of things, seemed to her contrary to the order of things, inadmissible and monstrous.

Ten days later (the time it took to arrive from Besancon), the heirs arrived. The daughter-in-law went through the drawers, chose the furniture she wanted to keep, sold the rest, then they went back to the registration office.

Madame's armchair, her pedestal table, her foot warmer, the eight chairs, were gone! The places where the prints had hung were marked by yellow squares. They had taken away the baby beds, with their mattresses and none of Virginie's things were left in the cupboard! Félicité went back upstairs, drunk with sadness.

The next day there was a sign on the door; the pharmacist screamed in her ear that the house was for sale.

She staggered and had to sit down.

What grieved her most was the idea of giving up her room, - so convenient for poor Loulou. Looking at him in anguish, she implored the Holy Spirit, and acquired the idolatrous habit of praying on her knees before the parrot. Sometimes, the sun, entering through the skylight, shone on his glass eye, and created a great beam of light that overwhelmed her.

She had an inheritance of 380 francs a year, left by her mistress. The garden provided her with vegetables. As for clothes, she had what she needed for the rest of her life, and saved on the expense of lighting by going to bed as soon as the sun went down.

She hardly ever went out so as to avoid the second hand shop where some the former furniture displayed. Since her dizzy spell, she dragged one leg; and, her strength fading, Mere Simon, whose grocery store had failed, came every morning to chop wood and pump water for her.

Her eyes weakened. The shutters were no longer opened. Many years passed. And the house didn't lease or sell.

For fear of being made to leave, Félicité never asked for any repairs. The shingles on the roof were rotting; during a whole winter her bolster was soaked. After Easter, she started spitting blood.

So Mere Simon sought a doctor. Félicité wanted to know what she had. But too deaf to hear, only one word reached her: "Pneumonia." She knew it, and she responded quietly: "Oh, like Madame!" finding it natural to follow her mistress.

The time for the altars of repose was approaching.

The first was always at the bottom of the hill, the second in front of the post office, the third towards the middle of the road. There were rivalries over that one; the parishioners finally chose Madame Aubain's courtyard.

The fever rose. Félicité worried over not doing anything for the altar of repose. If she could at least put something on it! The she thought of the parrot. It didn't belong, the neighbors objected. But the priest gave his permission; she was so happy that she begged him to accept, when she died, Loulou, her only valuable possession.

From Tuesday to Saturday, the eve of Corpus Christi, she coughed more frequently. By the evening her face was drawn with the flu, her lips stuck to her gums, she started vomiting; and the next day, in the early morning, feeling very low, she called a priest. Three nuns surrounded her during the Extreme Unction. Then she announced that she needed to talk to Fabu.

He arrived in Sunday clothes, ill at ease in that gloomy atmosphere.

"Forgive me", she said making an effort to stretch out her arm. "I thought it was you who killed him!"

What was the meaning of such nonsense? Suspecting him of murder, such a man as he! And he got indignant, was going to make a fuss "She's lost her mind, you can see that!"

Félicité from time to time spoke to shadows. The nuns left. Mère Simon ate lunch.

A little bit later, she took Loulou, and approaching Félicité, "Go ahead, tell him goodbye."

Even though he was not a corpse, he was worm-eaten; one of his wings was broken, stuffing was coming out of his chest. But, now blind, she kissed him on the head and held him against her cheek. Mère Simon took him back to put on the altar of repose.

## V

The pastures sent the smell of summer; flies were buzzing; the sun made the river gleam, and heated the slates. Mère Simon came back into the room and lightly fell asleep.

The bells of the clock woke her up; they were coming out of Vespers. Félicité's delirium abated. Thinking of the procession, she could see it as it she had been following it.

All of the school children, the singers and firemen walked on the sidewalks, while in the middle of the street, first came: the verger with his halberd, the beadle with a large cross, the school teacher watching over the young children, the nun worrying over her little girls; three of the most adorable little ones, with curly hair like angles, threw rose petals in the air; the deacon, his arms spread, directed the music; and two censers turned around at every step toward the Blessed-Sacrament which the priest, in his beautiful



chasuble, carried under a canopy of velvet, held by four churchwardens. A crowd of people pushed on behind, between the white sheets covering the walls of the houses; and they arrived at the bottom of the hill.

A cold sweat dampened Félicité's temples. Mere Simon wiped it with a cloth, telling herself that one day she too would go that way.

The hum of the crowd grew, was for one moment very loud, then drifted away.

The gunfire shook the tiles. It was the postillons saluting the monstrance. Félicité rolled her eyes, and she said, as softly as possible – "Is he all right?" worrying about the parrot.

Her agony began. A groan, more and more labored, made her sides heave. Bubbles of saliva formed in the corners of her mouth, and her whole body shook.

Soon the roaring of the ophicleides could be heard, the clear voices of the children, the deep voices of the men. Everyone was silent at intervals, and the beating of steps, muffled by the flowers, sounded like a heard on the grass.

The clergy appeared in the courtyard. Mere Simon climbed onto a chair to reach the bull's eye window and in this way, looked down at the altar of repose

Green garlands hung on the altar decorated with English lace. There was little box which held the relics, two orange trees were in the corners, and along the side, silver candlesticks and porcelain vases, from which sprang sunflowers, lilies, peonies, foxgloves, bunches of hydrangea. This gathering of brilliant colors came down obliquely from the first floor to the carpet, spread out over the pavement; and rare objects caught the eye. A wreath of violets encircled a bright red sugar bowl, pendants with Alençon stones glimmered through the moss, two Chinese screens displayed their landscapes, only Loulou's blue head could be seen under some roses, like a lapis plaque.

The churchwardens, the singers, the children arranged themselves on the three sides of the courtyard. The priest slowly walked up the steps, and placed his golden, shining sun on the lace. Everyone knelt down. There was a long silence. And the censers swung with full force, slid up and down on their chains.

A blue cloud of incense rose up to Félicité's room. She flared her nostrils, breathing it in with mystic sensuality; then closed her eyes. Her lips smiled. The beating of her heart slowed little by little, fainter with each beat, softer, like a draining fountain, a disappearing echo; and when she exhaled her last breath, she thought she saw, as the heavens parted, a giant parrot soaring over her head.