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THE NOVELS OF ALPHONSE DAUDET: THE INFLUENCE OF
MONEY IN THE FRENCH SOCIETY OF HIS TIME

by

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Thesis Director's Signature

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "André Bourgeois", is written over a horizontal line.

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INTRODUCTION

The concern with money as a motivating force which pervades all aspects of life has interested moralistes of all ages. This is not amazing when one considers that for most everyone most of the time money is supremely important. It means the difference between plenty and poverty, health and sickness, between security and anxiety, comfort and worry. It provides a life of leisure, entertainment, education, and travel whereas the lack of money means continuous hard, exhausting work and the restriction of all the pleasures and privileges mentioned above. Money then becomes "the focal point in the emotionally intense quest for security, status, and self-regard . . ."¹

It is evident that when one speaks of wanting or having money it is not in the narrow sense, referring just to the things one uses for buying what one wants--the francs or dollars or marks. The word is most often rather vaguely used to refer to all the things that can be bought with it. In other words, one thinks of money in the broader sense of income and wealth, and it is in this sense that it is to be studied here. These dollars, francs, or marks are an instrument which permits the possessor to fulfill certain desires. Hourdin has described this role of money in the following manner:

La possession de la fortune donne la puissance et permet au moi de s'épanouir, de satisfaire son

impérialisme naturel et passionné. Cela a été vrai en tout temps et en tout lieu.²

This assessment of the role of money was particularly true for the Second Empire and the Third Republic in France, periods which provided much of the material for Daudet's novels, as the profound economic transformation, which had its roots in the preceding periods, gained in breadth until it determined the intense activity of these times. The possession of capital became increasingly important as the gradual industrialization, the great mechanical inventions, the scientific discoveries, improved communications, and the expansion of the banking system provided a broad new terrain for investors and speculators. As Hsi-wen Tsao has stated in La Question de l'Argent dans le théâtre français sous le second empire, in no period before 1852 had gold and silver exerted such an all-encompassing and all-powerful influence. Previously the hierarchy of classes based upon noble lineage could allay and sometimes compensate for wealth. But, as the reign of the aristocracy disappeared with the successive revolutions of 1789 and after, the commercial and democratic cadre of French society increasingly emphasized the power of wealth instead of that of title or family name. This wealth was no longer measured in land as had been the usual case in the agricultural society of the eighteenth century but more often in gold, stocks, and investments. Thus, the bourgeois financier was gaining in importance while that of the impoverished nobleman diminished.

This transformation of values and exchange of power began

before the Second Empire and was pointed out as early as 1826 by C. Bonjour in the preface to L'Argent.

Avant la Révolution, au lieu d'une noblesse nominale que nous avons aujourd'hui, il existait une noblesse réelle qui avait ses droits et ses privilèges. Il fallait être gentilhomme pour avoir une grande existence sociale; ce titre ouvrait l'accès à tous les emplois, à toutes faveurs; il était par conséquent le point de mire de la plupart des ambitions ... De nos jours, il n'en est point ainsi. Il n'y a plus guère en France que deux classes: les riches et les pauvres; l'aristocratie des écus a remplacé celle des noms.³

This trend continued and intensified so that the histories and memoirs which were written during or about the Second Empire often state that only fortune counted and at every level of society the unique goal of each individual was to make money. This is, of course, an exaggeration as is the following text taken from a newspaper of the times, Rabelais. It does, however, contain certain truths which suggest the mood of the changing and often corrupt period.

Le million règne et gouverne aujourd'hui. Qui n'est pas au moins millionnaire, est un pleutre, un rêveur, un propre à rien, un imbécile. Toute la France a la fièvre jaune. Le million, c'est la toquade de tous ceux qui mettent la main à la pâte industrielle ...

Vive sa Majesté million; le seul million est beau, le seul million est grand, le seul million est honorable, puissant, adorable! Ce n'est même plus le veau d'or devant lequel il faut se prosterner, c'est devant l'âne d'or. Voilà le symbole!

On cherche à parer ces exactions modernes sous le nom d'esprit d'entreprise. Mais les larrons qui se liguent et s'assemblent, pour détrousser les passants, ont aussi l'esprit d'entreprise.⁴

Money was now king and a wealthy man could avoid social restraints such as lawsuits or prison if he manipulated his fortune with any degree of shrewdness. A rich man also ignored the

traditional moral restraints since his conscience abdicated a long time before he acquired wealth in order to facilitate this acquisition. In fact, the so-called "moral elements" in society are subjugated by a big fortune and applaud instead of denouncing the clever although somewhat crooked tycoon. This person who gained power and position because of his money was rarely the miser who amassed these gold coins and restricted their use to the pleasure of possession. Certainly the latter symbolized the money-fever which gripped the expanding and industrializing country by his acceptance of money as the supreme value and his desire to take advantage of the changes to amass more. At the same time the miser is so obsessed by his own lust for gold that he cannot bear to part with it. He concentrates his vital forces on the accumulation of gold coins rather than on the further investments of such money. Ironically, by so doing he greatly restricts the definition of wealth and limits its potential force. Within the complex and interwoven forces of society his role is a relatively limited one and his influence is minor. It is interesting to note that there is no Harpagon in the novels of Daudet, no character for whom money was of prime importance, the very essence of life, but only those characters for whom wealth is an instrument or means to the satisfaction of all ambitions and desires. Balzac's Père Grandet could be considered as a sort of transition between Molière's miser and the money mad heroes and heroines to be found in Daudet's novels, because on one hand Grandet's love for his gold coins is a real sensuous concupiscence while,

on the other hand, he does part with his money in order to increase his fortune and acquire social position.

The reader of these novels cannot fail to notice innumerable references to money or to wealth in such worldly matters as wages, savings, expenditures, investments, loans, dowries, and inheritances. While some of these items are incidental, scattered here and there for an effect of realism, the question of an investment, to take one example, may be a major force of motivation. Money, property, power, and social rank naturally intertwine; an investment may determine a person's entire fortune and as such be a prime mover in the plot.

This concern with the question of money that is evident in these novels is as much a reflection of the literary currents of the nineteenth century as it was of Daudet's personal interests. The desire to describe man and the world as it really is, including such base but motivating forces as money has been universally evident since time began. During the nineteenth century writers whose works differed in both literary merit and subject matter were purporting to give an accurate rendition of life as they saw it. The origins of this movement referred to as realism were usually credited to Balzac and Stendhal by later writers who considered themselves realists such as Champfleury, Murger, Duranty, and also the more talented authors such as Edmond and Jules de Goncourt and Emile Zola. Flaubert, who had not wished it, was also considered a realist and later a naturalist.

Daudet, like his contemporaries, experienced the

influence of realism and its younger brother, naturalism, and he was in close contact with the naturalists and the "friends" of naturalism: Flaubert, the Goncourt brothers, Zola, and Maupassant. With regard to the importance given to observation of manners (or life) and documentation of material used in his literary work, Daudet was clearly close to the naturalists. He tried to study all aspects of French society in order to show the complex and multiple forces that influence men and determine their actions. The influences of money particularly disturbed him since he was convinced that money was being increasingly misused in all ranks of society and all aspects of life.

This trend of realism was complicated by social and political elements. As Tsao has pointed out, "la prédominance des intérêts matériels sous le Second Empire posait sans cesse des problèmes d'ordre social et moral, problèmes qui intéressaient et préoccupaient les sociologues et les réformateurs."⁵ Daudet shared with many French intellectuals a feeling of pessimism which can largely be attributed to the political developments of the period as well as the radical transformation of French society under the impact of the rapid industrialization which took place during the Second Empire. Daudet was not alone when he inveighed against the wild speculations on the stock market, the widespread corruption in politics, and the commercialization of art and literature. Frenchmen were decrying the devitalizing effects of industry more universally and more bitterly than ever before. Nor can these denunciations be attribu-

ted to any particular group or political alignment. Certainly reactionaries were among those sharply critical of the money-fever and materialism, but as Stuart has noted "liberals like Renan and Montégut, Republicans like Pelletan and Quinet, and a socialist like Proudhon also deplored the loss of idealism which the intensified quest for material possessions seemed to entail."⁶

This concern with money as a motivating force which pervaded all aspects of life is certainly not original with the nineteenth century. Since the beginning of the human comedy persons have been motivated by greed, avarice, and the lust for power, and this has always been reflected in literature. In the Middle Ages those satirical works written expressly for the increasingly wealthy bourgeoisie, Le Roman de Renard and the fabliaux, reveal these motives in a malicious portrayal of human nature. In the fifteenth century the farce, Maître Patelin, shows Guillaume to be an excellent example of the shrewd merchant while his wife, Guillemette, is a typical bourgeois housewife eager to save a penny on a good deal. In the sixteenth century DuBellay, bitterly disappointed by a visit to Rome, satirizes the greedy and ambitious courtiers, regrets the decadence of a formerly great and wealthy empire, and reflects on his own poverty with rancor. A century later the avaricious and covetous are portrayed by Molière in such major plays as L'Avare (Harpagon), Tartuffe (Tartuffe), Les Femmes Savantes (Trissotin) and Le Malade Imaginaire (Béline). In recording their observations on human nature La Rochefou-

cauld and La Bruyère do not neglect these baser motives of mankind.

For this study, however, the play by Lesage, Turcaret, which was given at the "Théâtre-Français" in 1709 marks a significant change. Never before had the growing importance of the financier been treated with such satirical realism. Starting with the attacks made by La Bruyère, Lesage enlarged upon them and created a play in which there is no character whose motives are not in some way tainted by the lust for money. Henceforth, the subject appears with greater frequency, and these motives are touched upon in varying degrees of depth. The ugly characteristics of human nature which are brought about by the immoderate love of money like envy, ambition, pride, greed and avarice are shown in such works as Les Lettres Persanes by Montesquieu, the "contes philosophiques" of Voltaire, the novels of Diderot, and even in that exotic pastorate, Paul et Virginie by Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. The ravages brought on by the lack of and the need for money are explored in La Vie de Marianne and L'Histoire du Chevalier des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut.

Nor is the subject ignored by the Romantics at the beginning of the nineteenth century. They also studied this aspect of human nature and denounced what they considered to be society's undue emphasis upon the acquisition of wealth as a measure of a man's worth. In Ruy Blas Hugo bitterly denounced the devouring greed of the courtiers who took advantage of their high places to ruin Spain. In Chatterton Vigny attacked

materialists like the Lord-Mayor Beckford who advised young poets to give up writing verse, a youthful fantasy, and go to work to do something useful and earn a salary, and like the industrialist John Bell, who had become pitiless toward the men he employed in his plant and toward penniless intellectuals like Chatterton even though Bell had been a poor worker at the start of his career.

While varying the point of view, the plays and the great novels of the nineteenth century often discussed the various aspects of the role of money in society. During the first part of the nineteenth century Balzac's extensive literary project stands out as it evokes the complex forces interacting in the struggle for life. Later in the century in the novel series about the Rougon-Macquart, Zola describes the corruption and the depravity of the Second Empire, often in lurid and unforgettable colors. One should also mention Madame Bovary by Flaubert, Renée Mauperin by the Goncourt brothers, and Pierre et Jean by Maupassant as these authors did not hesitate to reveal the baseness and self-interest which influence men's actions. Playwrights like Augier and Dumas also criticized the century by exposing the loss of traditional values to a new pragmatic morality and the frantic search for money to buy position, power, and pleasure. While the works of Daudet are less known and appreciated today than they were when written, it will be shown that their author also examines in depth the role of money: he probes its ramifications in society, often nefarious, and its effects on human nature, usually

debilitating or degrading.

In this study of Daudet's novels we have examined first of all how money affects the lives of the rich and the poor; then we have delved into the activities of the financial, industrial, and political circles; and finally we have pictured the bohemian world of artists, courtesans, and exiled royalty. In order to help explain why this topic was one of those which had particular significance for Daudet we have included a sketchy study of the author's life in which we strove to bring out the fact that money or the lack of it also played an important role in his personal life and no doubt made him particularly aware of the part it plays in the struggle for life. We are aware of the fact that the theme of money has been touched upon in some of the rather scarce critical studies written on Alphonse Daudet, but it was never treated in depth. Most critics are still looking on him as the "graceful" author of Les Contes du Lundi and Les Contes de mon moulin and fail to realize the value of his powerful novels based on Parisian life. We feel that these novels deserve to be studied in a well organized dissertation based on the theme of money since this theme is important to almost every one of them.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

¹Paul B. Trescott, Money, Banking, and Economic Welfare (New York, 1965), p. 4.

²Georges Hourdin, Balzac, Romancier des Passions (Paris, 1950), p. 102.

³Tsao, Hsi-wen, La Question de l'Argent dans le théâtre français sous le second empire (Paris, 1927), pp. 103-104.

⁴Ibid., p. 12.

⁵Ibid., p. 2.

CHAPTER I

THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF

ALPHONSE DAUDET

A study of Daudet's life shows that he had been plagued by money problems during his adolescence and part of his adult life. It appears fairly clear that these unpleasant experiences contributed to the fact that money plays a prominent role in his novels. Many aspects of the life of this author are not commonly known since much of the material that has been written about him is not entirely reliable. Until recently the biographical material has included single chapters in studies devoted to nineteenth century literature, a very limited number of book length studies, and accounts given by Daudet himself, his brother Ernest, and his sons Léon and Lucien. These sources contain such^o contradictory information that they prevent the emergence of a coherent picture of Daudet. In his book, The Career of Alphonse Daudet, Murray Sachs discussed this problem:

The vagueness and inaccuracy which have long enveloped public knowledge of the man and his works make Daudet one of the least "known" of familiar and famous writers. The reality of what he was and what he wrote has been obscured and distorted by his own protean and enigmatic activity, and by the series of misconceptions, half-truths, and myths that have taken hold about him.¹

Several studies which make a serious effort to penetrate

the "legend" surrounding Daudet have been published. Les Années d'apprentissage d'Alphonse Daudet by J.-H. Bofnecque is of value, but its somewhat digressive nature at times obscures the carefully documented study of the formative years of Daudet's life, specifically 1840-1865. Murray Sach's study, cited above, stresses the evolution of the writing career and, therefore, does not provide a complete biography. Thus, it is felt that a readily accessible and concise biography which takes into consideration recent scholarship and shows the role money played in the formation of Daudet is a necessary introduction to this study.

Alphonse Daudet was born in 1840 near the middle of a turbulent, transforming century. During his lifetime France knew four governments: the bourgeois monarchy of Louis-Philippe, the short-lived Second Republic, the glittering Second Empire, and finally the Third Republic. More important, perhaps, than these changing political forms was the transformation France was experiencing due to industrialization, the development of new industries, the improvement of transportation and communications, and the expansion of the banking system. A money-fever seemed to grip the century pushing investments and speculation beyond all bounds. Many persons were fortunate or shrewd enough to take advantage of the changing world, become involved in one of the many projects of government or private enterprise, and make large profits.

This in turn created an affluent segment of society

eager to find amusement, to spend newly acquired wealth on luxury items, and to display them at gala events and festivities. These activities were featured in the press and widely talked about so that the accounts filtered down through the social structure to the "petite bourgeoisie," the artisans, and the workers, all of whom lived in the midst of this ostentatious display but did not participate in it. In short, it was the eternal juxtaposition of the haves and have-nots heightened by the modernization of France which was making a few persons extremely wealthy and reducing the rest to the squalor and misery of poverty.

It was Daudet's destiny to observe and to be personally involved in both aspects of this society before he had done the major part of his writing. These experiences served to impress upon him the varied role that belonged to money and contributed greatly to the formation of his attitudes vis-à-vis these influences.

Before observing the glittering, cosmopolitan life of the rich Daudet knew an extended period of near poverty. His childhood was spent in a home plagued by discord and financial worries. Divergent temperaments and interests prevented his parents from understanding each other throughout life. Ernest Daudet, Alphonse's brother, described their mother as being "une nature rêveuse, romanesque, passionnée pour la lecture, aimant mieux vivre avec les héros des histoires dont elle nourrissait son imagination qu'avec les réalités de la vie ..."2 Her husband Vincent's stubborn, matter-of-fact manner

disappointed her, and his dogmatic attitude and violent nature also put a strain on his business associations in the silk industry. Vincent had started out working in the silk industry with his father. Then in 1828 he went into the silk business with his brother and cousin. Since he was unable to get along with his associates, the business relationship was finally terminated, and Vincent Daudet continued independently and in competition with his former partners. His inaptitude for business was compounded by a national decline in the silk industry, and these conditions jeopardized his firm and caused a severe financial strain. At home he tried to disguise his discouragement by long and vindictive monologues against his competitors and the revolutionaries. Although Madame Daudet dutifully remained faithful to her husband and family, she escaped from this unpleasant situation by spending her free time at church or in her room reading.

Four children were born into this dreary and stern home where formality generally replaced any manifestation of sentiment. Henri was born in 1832, Ernest in 1837, Alphonse in 1840, and finally a little girl, Anna, in 1848. The atmosphere of this home, characterized as it was by emotional disharmony which was aggravated by financial disarray, deprived the children of warm affection and security. This situation inevitably affected Alphonse as he grew up in Nîmes, and its consequences are visible in the mature man and artist. His first reaction was to turn to the family of his wet nurse for this love. He became so attached to them that until he was six he spent as

much time at their home in Bezouze, a small town near Nîmes, as he did at home. The first language he heard and spoke was Provençal. Although he later forgot the language, he remained attached to the countryside of southern France for the rest of his life. Having become acquainted with the peasants of southern France at this early age, he wrote about them later in many short stories and in Le Nabab and Numa Roumestan.

Another immediate consequence of the emotional strains at home was his withdrawal into a solitude peopled by his imagination. This reserve, coupled with outbursts of bad temper, caused him to be considered a "difficult" child. A remark made later by his brother Ernest confirms this: "C'était le plus singulier mélange de docilité et d'indiscipline, de bonté et d'entêtement; avec cela, une soif inextinguible d'aventures et d'inconnu, dont la myopie aggravait le péril."³

In 1845 Alphonse and his older brother Ernest entered the "Ecole des Frères de la Doctrine Chrétienne" whose harsh disciplinary methods he later described in Numa Roumestan. In 1847 Alphonse transferred to a lay school, the Institution Canivet, where his father hoped he would learn Latin, but the boy was not very interested in school. Like his mother he was sensitive and imaginative, a machine à sentir as he later said. He spent much of his leisure time wandering about town observing and making mental note of everything he saw. At other times he acted out imaginary adventures in his father's factory. When he was six or seven the reading of Robinson Crusoe further inspired these activities and probably suggested

to him the term "island" which he gave to his secret hiding places.

When, in an effort to economize, the entire family moved into one section of the factory, the children were delighted. Ernest remembers how the imagination of children transformed the big empty building into a world of adventure:

Nous passions, mon frère Alphonse et moi, les jeudis et les dimanches à courir dans les cours sur lesquelles s'ouvraient les vastes ateliers déserts, à nous faire des retraites mystérieuses dans la machine à vapeur réduite à l'immobilité, à nous rouler sur l'herbe du jardin. Cousins et cousines venaient y partager nos jeux; nos rires bruyants formaient un étrange contraste avec les angoisses de nos parents.⁴

Several years after Alphonse's birth his father's business began declining seriously. The bankruptcy of several important clients, two fires, and several strikes contributed to the decline. The Revolution of 1848, which temporarily stopped all commerce, was the final blow that destroyed his feeble enterprise. Since the factory had to be sold, the family moved briefly to another lodging, and then in the spring of 1849 they left for Lyon.

It is probable that the financial crises which precipitated the move to Lyon were not clearly understood by Alphonse, and he was too young to be embarrassed by the lack of money. While this problem which preoccupied his parents had deprived him of the attention they might otherwise have given to their children, it had also allowed him more freedom than he would have had otherwise. Being so often alone helped him develop a certain independence and self-reliance. It did not, however,

prepare him for dealing with the harsher realities of life and shouldering the responsibility of his own welfare. Instead, he was inclined to retreat into the more inviting world of fantasy created in the old factory. The move to Lyon changed Alphonse's life, as it was there that he first experienced the humiliation and discomfort of marked poverty.

The three boys continued their schooling although the lack of money limited the quality of the education received by the two younger brothers. Henri, fervently religious and inclined toward mysticism, entered a seminary. Ernest and Alphonse were enrolled in a church school (Manécanterie) since their father was unable to pay the tuition at the lycée. In the religious school they were to receive lessons in Greek and Latin in return for performing certain duties during the religious services. When it became obvious that they were not being taught the promised lessons, Vincent Daudet scraped together the necessary funds to pay for Ernest's tuition at the lycée and obtained a scholarship for Alphonse. Unfortunately, this proved to be an unpleasant experience. Following the custom in Nîmes, they appeared at school in smocks which in Lyon were worn only by the children of workers. This attire provoked the irrevocable disdain and the cruel mockery of the other students. In addition, Alphonse's teacher could not remember his name and referred to him as "le petit chose"--little what's-his-name. These first humiliating encounters caused by poverty were long remembered and described with feeling in Le Petit Chose. The realization of his situation was a bitter

blow. The disappointment was compounded by the fact that he had looked forward to moving to Lyon and anticipated an exciting and pleasant adventure.

In contrast to his expectations, the years in Lyon were lonely as the damp, grey city was cold and unwelcoming, and life at home was equally chilling. The father was continually preoccupied with his business which was going from bad to worse. He considered the coup of December 2, 1851, which excluded the return of the monarchy, to be the final blow as he was an ardent monarchist. In any case he had no time for his children and was prone to violent outbursts of temper and periods of moodiness. Although Alphonse's mother was more affectionate toward her children, she could not rise above the depressing situation and help create a happy home. Instead, she was inclined to retreat to her room and cry.

The young boy's first reaction to the lack of money and the tension it caused at home was to flee the depressing atmosphere. One day he rented a boat and rowed up and down the Saône River. This day marked the beginning of an extraordinary existence filled with adventures on the river which lasted more than three years. At the same time he entered into an informal club which rented a room where the curious youths could experiment in debauchery. Boating, however, was Alphonse's first passion. Having no money with which to rent a boat, he obtained the necessary sum by conniving, lying, selling his books, and at least one time, by thievery. His son, Lucien, has recorded this incident of thievery when Alphonse

succumbed to his desire to go boating and took "une pièce de deux francs," the family's allowance for the day.⁵

Because of these extracurricular activities Alphonse attended school infrequently. Ernest had already been forced to leave high school to help his father at work and spare him the burden of the tuition. The loyal brother intercepted all messages from school and wrote excuses in the name of his father. A short story, "Le Pape est mort," written later, describes an incident which took place during this period. Returning, as usual, a long time after classes would have been out, and unable to think of an acceptable excuse, he dramatically announced the death of the Pope. This so stunned his family that no one questioned him further on his tardiness. The following day they were too happy to learn that this wasn't true to scold him.

Alphonse's first literary attempts were made during this period. He began by writing poetry, and several poems written at this time were later published in Les Amoureuses. Encouraged by his brother and mother he also wrote a short novel entitled Léo et Chrétienne Fleury. It was a melodramatic story about a young soldier wrongly executed almost before the eyes of his mother and sister. The manuscript itself was lost before a friend of the young author's father could publish it in a local paper.

In 1855 the oldest brother, Henri, died. The financial problems which had been plaguing them for over ten years finally forced the dissolution of the rest of the family.

Vincent Daudet liquidated his business in 1856 and accepted a position as a traveling wine salesman. He could not pay the fees necessary to permit Alphonse to take the last year of study before the baccalaureate examinations, and so the boy was free to amuse himself as he pleased for almost a year. This extended vacation of reading, talking with his buddies, wandering, and boating, was one of the last carefree periods of his life. Henceforth, he would know the responsibility of having to support himself as well as the hardship of poverty and the loneliness of being far away from his family, especially his mother and brother.

When the family separated, Madame Daudet and Anna went to live with relatives in Nîmes. Ernest supervised the sale of their household goods and then left for Paris. Vincent Daudet was already traveling around France selling wine. As for Alphonse, family connections had obtained for him a position as a study hall master in a boarding school in Arles. In April, 1857 he left Lyon for Arles, traveling by boat on the Rhône River. Later he analyzed his emotions during this departure in Le Petit Chose.

Dieu sait s'il les aimait ces chères créatures qu'il laissait derrière lui dans le brouillard. Dieu sait qu'il aurait volontiers donné pour elles tout son sang et toute sa chair. Mais que voulez-vous? La joie de quitter Lyon, le mouvement du bateau, l'ivresse du voyage, l'orgueil de se sentir homme, homme fait, voyageant seul et gagnant sa vie, tout cela grisait le Petit Chose et l'empêchait de songer comme il aurait dû aux trois être chéris qui sanglotaient là-bas, debout sur les quais du Rhône.⁶

The unsuspecting Alphonse did not realize that in leaving

the fog and mist of Lyon he was also exchanging his carefree independence and undisciplined activities for a lonesome and difficult existence in a thankless job that only the destitute were willing to accept. In Lyon he had been able to escape from the unpleasantness at home and the humiliation at school by retreating to the rented room or going for a boat ride. Unlike Ernest, who was already working, Alphonse had had no responsibilities toward his family. All this changed radically when he began supporting himself by working in the boarding school.

Partially documenting this experience are a photograph of Alphonse showing "un profil maigre et tendre, un teint chaud, des yeux lointains,"⁷ "Les Gueux de Provence: Le maitre d'études," an article written in 1859, and Le Petit Chose, an autobiographical novel written in 1866 and 1868. The latter leaves no doubt that he found his new situation extremely unpleasant as will be discussed in more detail in Chapter two. We do not know what caused Alphonse's rather hurried departure from Arles in November, 1857. In any case, the authorities remembered all the accumulated grievances and resentment against the pion--his lack of authority with his students, his inclination to debauchery, and his aloofness toward his colleagues--and they asked him to leave.

Thus, his effort to support himself was unsuccessful. For the first time, he had been unable to ignore or escape an unpleasant environment. He had been closely supervised, his actions regulated, and his free time stringently limited. The

caricature of the vice-principal, Viot, in Le Petit Chose shows that Alphonse viewed all authority as unjust and that he was attributing his failure to the Machiavellian actions of others. The young boy seemed to forget that he had not always fulfilled his duties and that his escapades had made it necessary for the school to dismiss him, but it is a universal human characteristic to excuse our own mistakes by accusing others. When he wrote about this experience later, he still maintained that he had been unjustly persecuted. In "Les Gueux de Province," 1859, he writes: "Dix-neuf fois maudit le jour où je suis entré dans cette infernale baraque ..." Later in his Histoire de mes Livres he still describes this experience with bitterness: "Livré à toutes les persécutions de ces monstres, entouré de cagots et de cuistres qui me méprisaient, j'ai subi là les basses humiliations du pauvre."⁸ In any case, the experience was an unpleasant one, and even today, Frenchmen who have been educated in public or private schools say that the life of a study hall pion was often as miserable as it was depicted by Daudet.

Although he had been so unhappy, there is nothing to indicate that he had been unduly discouraged by his performance in Arles or by his dismissal. Undoubtedly, he considered the mediocre position to have been boring and below his aspirations. Happy to be liberated, he joined his brother Ernest in Paris. Ernest has described him as he got off the train in Paris:

Je le vois encore, exténué de fatigue et de besoin, mourant de froid, enveloppé dans un vieux pardessus usé, défraîchi, démodé, et pour donner à son équipement une physionomie tout à fait originale, chaussé sur ses bas de coton bleu, de socques en caoutchouc, --ces caoutchoucs qui ont inspiré l'un des chapitres du Petit Chose.⁹

The unusual attire of the young traveler who did not even have a pair of shoes was more evidence of his impecunious situation while at Arles.

The next eight years were years of experimentation during which time a very active Daudet tried writing in several genres and made three trips to the south of France, twice going even further south. He also became familiar with widely separated milieux and people which gave him a view of the highly divided society, of the affluent and the destitute, the wealthy and the impoverished, that was the Second Empire. Living in la bohème of Paris Alphonse knew the misery suffered by most striving artists. As a guest in several "salons" and later as a government employee he observed the contrasting opulence enjoyed by the entrepreneurs, financiers, and politicians of the haute bourgeoisie. The vivid juxtaposition of two ways of life certainly gave someone like Daudet, who was so sensitive to the miseries of the poor, some cause for reflection and probably also indignation at the social injustices which he observed.

On the one hand, these times were exceedingly favorable for economic growth due at least in part to the discovery of gold in California in 1849, and in Australia and New Zealand shortly after, together with newly organized credit

facilities which brought a substantial increase in the money supply and a mildly inflationary period. The inflation of prices (30 per cent from 1851 to 1873) and the even greater increase of profits stimulated all production. At the same time statistics show that personal wealth also increased.

"... de 1829-1831 à 1849-1851, la valeur de l'annuité successorale, augmente de 30%; pour une même période de vingt ans, elle augmente, de 1849-1851 à 1869-1871, de 50%."¹⁰ The new court of Napoleon III- the renovation of Paris, and the two Expositions Universelles (1855, 1867), dominated the scene, attracted visiting royalty, and stunned Parisians by the display of luxury and pomp of these spectacles.

While these times were called "les beaux jours du Second Empire," and many forces joined together to expose the prosperity, the misery that was pushed into the background could not be hidden from one who came from a family of the petite bourgeoisie and lived among the poor bohemians. While Daudet was still in Nîmes, a famine swept the country in June of 1853, and the crops did not reach their former abundance until 1857. An epidemic of cholera broke out in October, 1853 and was not eradicated until the end of 1855. In addition, the Garonne, the Allier, and the Cher flooded in June of 1855. The following year France suffered two disastrous floods, that of the Rhône in May of 1856 and of the Loire in June of 1856. In addition, France was often at war, fighting in Italy in 1859, in Mexico from 1862 to 1867, and in 1870 in a disastrous war with Prussia. Small wonder that La Gorce character-

ized the period of growth and development as a time of "souffrances et jouissances."

While absorbing the atmosphere of these changing times that were so troubled beneath the glittering facade, Daudet did not incorporate them into his initial works. He first wrote poetry while sharing a garret room with Ernest who supported them both on his meager salary. The stringent budget which had dictated every expense was later described in Le Petit Chose. As Alphonse started exploring Paris, he began, in the salons and in la bohème, a doubly interesting period. Daudet is extremely vague when talking about the salons where he recited his poetry. He has written about them in Trente Ans de Paris, "Mon premier habit" and "Les Salons Littéraires," and in Souvenir d'un homme de lettres, "Les Salons ridicules." He does mention that he sometimes had to stay home because he did not even have a presentable suit. "Mon Premier Habit" describes the gaucheries, the naiveté, of the young man when the generosity of his brother did obtain a suit for him. The contrast between the elegant new attire and the timid poet, forced to walk the long distance from the soirée to Monmartre because a cab was too expensive, emphasizes the plight of the young artist. Shivering with cold because he has no overcoat he stops on the way home to spend three sous on a bowl of cabbage soup in les Halles. Reminiscences like this, which Daudet published later, are interesting since they document these lean years when he lived in la bohème of Paris and like all the bohemians, subsisted on very meager resources. He

knew the misery of this existence--the dark, bare rooms, no money for cafés, no place to eat dinner--and later painted the vileness and privation in his novels.

In general, his references to this life are vague. When he writes about the irregular life of this world in Les Femmes d'Artistes, Jack, and Sapho, he is describing not only what he has witnessed but also activities in which he once participated with enthusiasm. We know that he was a member of the group which frequented the Brasserie des Martyrs, familiarly called la Brasserie. There he rubbed shoulders with his contemporaries now well known, Champfleury, Castagnary, Baudelaire, Duchesne, Delvau, as well as others whose names have long since been forgotten. The vast majority were as Daudet's son Lucien later described them:

poètes sans talent, politiciens sans avenir, médecins sans malades, avocats dont les seules plaidoiries étaient destinées aux cafés,--tout ce qu'on appelait alors la Bohème, qui a toujours existé et qui existera toujours quels que soient les cataclysmes mondiaux, et qu'Alphonse Daudet engloba plus tard sous le nom de Ratés. Dans la fumée des pipes, l'odeur de l'alcool et de la bière, des femmes circulaient sous prétexte d'Art.¹¹

The young Daudet was extremely attractive to women, and a description by Theodore de Banville leaves no doubt as to why.

Une tête merveilleusement charmante, la peau d'une pâleur chaude et couleur d'ambre, les sourcils droits et soyeux. L'oeil, enflammé, noyé, à la fois humide et brulant, perdu dans la rêverie, n'y vit pas, mais est délicieux à voir. La bouche voluptueuse, songeuse, empourprée de sang, la brune, l'oreille petite et délicate, concurrent à un ensemble fièrement viril, malgré la grâce féminine.¹²

Yet little is known about Alphonse's personal life at this time.

His liason with Marie Rieu, obviously an accepted fact by his acquaintances, is largely ignored or omitted in any accounts written later by Alphonse or his family. All that can be deduced with certainty is that they met during his first winter in Paris, 1857-1858. The first edition of Les Amoureuses was dedicated "A Marie R...", and the fact is accepted that she posed for the heroine of Sapho written twenty-five years later.

Les Amoureuses, a small volume of just twenty-one poems which was published in the summer of 1858, contributed little to its author's reputation or purse. He continued to live at the expense of his brother until the following spring, 1859, when he began supporting himself as a journalist. The novice wrote for several publications, notably the Figaro which was then under the direction of Villemessant.

Journalism was a means of resisting poverty by amusing the public. His articles, suggested by his experiences, observations, or editors, were usually soon forgotten. Although Daudet felt that much of the material he was writing was of inferior literary quality, this employment enabled him to support himself and initiated him in the highly competitive world of journalism. Daudet was very much in need of money, and he appreciated the fact that he was one of the lucky bohemians who managed to find a paying position. He also realized that this was a demanding profession in which only the ruthless, cynical, and hypocritical managed to survive while real talent was often perverted or destroyed. Among the writers and editors the overriding ambition appeared to be to make money and use this

wealth to gain entrance into the important bourgeois and aristocratic homes. It was a "no holds barred" fight in which no means, however base, was rejected if it promised success.

This corrupt atmosphere repulsed Daudet, and he was elated when a reprieve from journalism was made possible in the spring of 1860 by his appointment to the post of third secretary to the Duc de Morny, Président du Corps Législatif, and half-brother to Napoleon III. The advantages of this new employment were numerous and affected both the literary efforts and the precarious financial situation of the striving author. For the first time since he had left home he could enjoy a degree of financial comfort and security because of his reliable post. While paying better than journalism ever had, the position was more honorary than functional and permitted leisure time too.

This new employment also extended Daudet's familiarity with Paris as he now came into daily contact with the political circles of the Second Empire. It was soon evident to him that the monied interests enjoyed an enormous influence during the period and that the complex and interwoven forces of finance, commerce, and politics dominated not only the press but almost every sphere of life. In fact, the concentration of power was in the hands of an oligarchy of the industrial bourgeoisie. A collaborator of Proudhon, Georges Duchêne, stated that in 1862 one hundred and eighty-three persons controlled "vingt milliards de francs d'actions et obligations, un véritable empire industriel."¹³ Cognizance of this concentration of power which encouraged the corrupt ways of the modern

industrial society appears later in Daudet's novels.

At the moment he spent some of his newly acquired leisure time writing articles and stories. The Duc de Morny did not require very much work from his third secretary, and this seems to be why Daudet stayed on the staff. Since childhood he had resented any impingement on his freedom. This is a recurring theme in his articles and short stories. In 1860 he published "Le Chien et le Loup," a parody of La Fontaine's fable of the same title. "Le Chien," a journalist by profession, speaks warmly of the security of his position. Skeptical, "le Loup," a poet, extols his freedom to do as he pleases and to write what he wants. Each is so convincing that "le Chien" resigns to write poetry the same day that "le Loup" applies for a position as a journalist. Later in his novels, Daudet will explore more thoroughly the dilemma of the creative person in a commercial society.

While earning his living, first as a journalist, then as secretary to the Duc de Morny, Daudet was also trying to write a successful play. Like Balzac, he was convinced that the theater was the surest and quickest path to fame and financial success. "La Dernière Idole," written in collaboration with M. Lépine and produced in February, 1862, was warmly received. This success was followed by two plays received with some interest, "L'oeillet blanc" and "Les Absents." In 1864 the author mentions two other plays in his correspondence: "Le Frère aîné," which had been accepted by a theater, and "L'Honneur du Moulin," which had been rejected everywhere.

While trying to establish himself as a dramatist Daudet also continued to write verse despite the relative failure of Les Amoureuses. He found exercising his intellect and his sensibility within the framework of verse an ennobling challenge and took particular pride in his major poetic achievements, such as "La Double Conversion," a story in verse published in 1861.

During these years Daudet's poor health was aggravated by the harsh Parisian winters. Following the advice of his doctor he went south during the winter of 1861-62. Weary and ill, he stopped in Nîmes to visit his mother and then proceeded to Algeria. The poor cannot usually indulge themselves by trips, relaxation, and treatments for bad health. Daudet could not have afforded the luxury of this trip as he was still very short of money. Morny had generously financed his trip to the south of France, and Daudet's cousin Reynaud, with whom he traveled to Algeria, undoubtedly bore the burden of expenses for that trip. Later the cousin was to consider himself ill repaid because of certain unflattering resemblances to literary creations of Daudet, Chapatin and Tartarin.

This opportunity to get away from Paris had been eagerly seized. It enabled Daudet to forget the sordid existence of la bohème, his entanglement with Marie Rieu, and his responsibilities to Morny. In the south among family he had fewer financial worries. In addition, he had sincerely loved the south as a child and enjoyed the opportunity to visit there again. The trip was also a source of inspiration and led to the creation of a number of well-known works several years

later: Chapatin, le tueur de lions, Histoire de Tartarin de Tarascon, and a number of short stories including "La Mule du Cadi" and "Le Caravansérail."

Daudet took another vacation from his position with the Duc de Morny the following December. Influenced no doubt by the success of his previous trip, he fled Paris again, going this time to Corsica. There he found the noisy activity of the island, dominated by kitchen politics and gambling, very depressing. Not wishing to be reminded of the ruthless play of forces which dominated the Parisian scene he gratefully accepted an offer of the use of a room in a lighthouse on a small island off the coast. This trip inspired accounts written later and dispersed throughout Les Lettres de mon Moulin, Robert Helmont, and La Fédor.

The following winter, 1863-64, the unsettled young man spent several months in the south of France. His need to leave Paris seems to have been particularly critical this time. In the first letter from mon moulin, which was sent to Villeme-sant for publication in the Figaro, he explains the feeling of lassitude and distaste which he experienced in Paris.

Explique mon mal qui voudra! Le fait est qu'après m'être endormi un soir le cerveau plein de flamme et le coeur bourré de belles choses, je me réveillai le lendemain la tête vide et le coeur froid. Mes amis les plus chers me devinrent tout d'un coup insupportables. Ni livres, ni maîtresses, rien ne me disait plus ... tout m'ennuyait, tout m'excédait, même ma gouvernante,--un joli chérubin blond qui n'a pas sa pareille pour les tomates farcies.¹⁴

Staying with Madame Ambroy, the widow of one of his uncles, and her four sons, Daudet enjoyed the security and

warmth of a happy home which received him as a fifth son. He was granted permission to occupy one of the four windmills in the area whenever he wished. When tired of this spiritual retreat he would leave to explore the surrounding villages and participate in the local festivities, usually in the company of Mistral and their mutual friends. Other times he would visit Mistral at Maillane, often talking with him all night. For Daudet these excursions and midnight discussions were a continuous source of inspiration for stories later incorporated in Les Lettres de mon moulin.

At the moment he was experimenting in a number of genres: poetry, sketches, short stories, and plays, but he had not yet written a durable work. He seemed unable to concentrate on any one endeavor, and his friends considered him to be a promising young writer who would never amount to much. On the other hand, Daudet now moved with ease in many different Parisian groups. He was a frequent guest at several salons and was also acquainted with the political circles of the Second Empire. The events of 1865 effected many changes in this whirlwind existence. The Duc de Morny died, and Daudet left his position soon after, complaining that vacations were now infrequent and duties long. In need of a source of income, he began writing for the Figaro after a two-year silence. The first representation of Henriette Maréchal, given at the Théâtre-Français on December 15, 1865, and attended by Daudet, radically changed the life of the unsuspecting bachelor. Among those Parisians present was a middle class family, Monsieur and

Madame Jules Allard and their twenty-one year old daughter, Julia. During the intermission the young people, who were seated directly opposite each other in the theater, took special notice of each other.

Cognizant of Daudet's interest in the young girl, Ernest arranged a meeting between his brother and the Allards. The meeting was a success, Alphonse and Julia continued to see each other, and their marriage took place on January 20, 1867. The marriage of Daudet coincides with a period of new literary activity and the publication of his first novel. It is traditional to attribute the productivity of these years to the influence of his wife. Brought up "dans le culte de la littérature," she had published a bluette in a parnassian magazine L'Art when she was eighteen. Interested in her husband's work and understanding the problems of an artist, she was a constant source of inspiration and strength and even corrected rough drafts and proofread copy from the printer.

In addition to the obvious influence of his wife, the fact that Daudet was almost thirty also encouraged him to work more seriously. At this age the realization that he had not yet accomplished anything he considered important weighed heavily upon him. Psychologically he was ready to settle down and accept the responsibility of a wife and then a son, Léon, born in November, 1868. He willingly divorced himself from his youthful friends and acquaintances of the cafés. In contrast to the directionless activity of his past life, the stability of a home and the warmth of a family provided an atmosphere conducive to extended periods of work. While the author did

not yet have a reliable income or secure financial position, he was optimistic about his future prospects. In the prologue to Les Femmes d'Artistes he appears to be describing his personal feelings at this time:

Je suis heureux complètement heureux. J'aime ma femme à plein coeur. Quand je pense à mon enfant, je ris tout seul de plaisir. Le mariage a été pour moi un port aux eaux calmes et sûres, non pas celui où l'on s'accroche d'un anneau au risque de s'y rouiller éternellement, mais une de ces an-ses bleues, où l'on répare les voiles et les mâts pour des excursions nouvelles aux pays inconnus. Je n'ai jamais si bien travaillé que depuis mon mariage.¹⁵

In contrast to his father, Alphonse always took a keen and active interest in his children: Léon, who was born in 1868; Lucien, in 1880; and Edmée, in 1886. Deprived of a warm family life as a child, he took particular care to provide one for his children. Devoted to his wife, he later explained to Lucien that he had tried to regulate his life so he would not hurt her. Thus unlike Numa Roumestan, he never resembled the Provençal proverb, "Joie de rue, douleur de maison."

Daudet began working during his wedding trip, adding the second part to "Histoire d'un enfant," written the previous year. The entire work was published as Le Petit Chose in 1868. The sales of this novel, although not spectacular, did signify a respectable literary debut and encouraged the author to continue. At the same time he was working on two other books, Les Lettres de mon Moulin which appeared in book form in 1869, and Tartarin de Tarascon which was published in serial in 1869 and in book form in 1872. All three works were inspired in varying

degrees by personal experience and refer to the regional traits and attitudes of southern France.

When the Franco-Prussian War broke out in 1870, Daudet had just broken his leg and was unable to enlist. Later that year, with Paris under siege, he joined the National Guard. During the Commune Daudet and his family moved to the Allard property in Champrosay. While the fighting and unrest continued, he was writing at a feverish pace. Distressed by the war, his patriotic instinct aroused, he drew more and more of his material from that which he observed around him. An initial grouping of these writings about the siege of Paris was published in book form in 1871 as Lettres à un absent. Later he drew three more volumes from this journalism: Contes du Lundi, 1873, Robert Helmont: Etudes et paysages, 1874, and Femmes d'Artistes, 1874. Much of this material was never republished. Daudet edited it, scrapped a great deal, and arranged the best into two collections of short stories: second editions of Les Lettres de mon moulin and the Contes du lundi.

Daudet was also writing for the theater. Le Sacrifice, staged in 1869, and Lise Tavernier, 1872, failed miserably. These plays were quickly followed by the failure of L'Arlésienne in 1872. After this third disappointment Daudet was very close to renouncing all literary aspirations and accepting a job somewhere as a civil servant. The frustration of the failure of his last three plays, coupled with severe financial difficulties, had left him completely discouraged. It was only after his wife's insistence that he decided to continue to write.

Daudet was living beyond his income in expectation of a success which had not come. He always returned home with flowers or candy for his wife and a toy for the baby. Reacting against his penny-pinching days of his bachelorhood, he spent lavishly in cafés and restaurants. He often helped less fortunate friends, paying for a pair of shoes or a new suit. In addition, old debts incurred in Lyon were still unpaid. All the expenses of the young household had to be met by the only reliable income, an annuity which M. Allard had given his daughter.

Realizing that he was following in his father's footsteps, mismanaging his money and heading for bankruptcy, Alphonse turned to his wife. He admitted that he couldn't balance the budget and asked her to take charge. With this encouragement she drastically reduced the household expenses at Champrosay where they were living. She also took care of Léon and did most of the housework herself. Because of his wife's willingness to make these sacrifices and contribute in any way she could to easing his difficulties, Daudet decided to continue despite the doubts plaguing him in addition to his financial worries.

In May of 1873 Alphonse began concentrating on a novel which he had finally decided to call Fromont jeune et Risler aîné. The failure of L'Arlésienne had caused him to realize that Paris was quickly growing weary of his subject matter:

Je me disais que les Parisiens se lasseraient bientôt de m'entendre parler des cigales, des filles d'Arles, du mistral et de mon moulin, qu'il était

temps de les intéresser à une oeuvre plus près d'eux, de leur vie de tous les jours, s'agitant dans leur atmosphère; et comme j'habitais alors le Marais, j'eus l'idée toute naturelle de placer mon drame au milieu de l'activité ouvrière de ce quartier de commerce. L'association me tenta. ...¹⁶

The south of France could no longer be Daudet's spiritual refuge nor his major literary inspiration. He had finally accepted his responsibilities in Paris, and henceforth, his literary endeavors would reflect his changing interests. He would write about various aspects of society which interested or angered him. In this world, as he knew it from personal experience, money was an important factor.

He himself was plagued with debts until 1873 when M. Allard and one of his brothers-in-law offered him sufficient funds to pay all of them. At the same time he became drama critic for the Journal Officiel and his wife became a literary critic, writing under the pseudonym of Karl Steen. This employment and the help from his father-in-law had a tremendous psychological as well as material effect on Daudet. His father-in-law's expression of confidence was as reassuring as the fact that he was finally solvent and able to support his family through his new employment. Later in his career when he wanted to describe the effects of the lack of money, he would only have to remember certain periods in his life. In addition he would always have a greater understanding and sympathy for the suffering and anguish experienced by the poor and unsuccessful. Even when he was at the height of his career, Alphonse would remember those who were less fortunate than he. Lucien tells

us that he always took one particular cab, the shabbiest of the lot, out of sympathy for the owner. This and similar gestures were typical of Daudet throughout his life.

For the present, Daudet worked harder and more enthusiastically than ever before. Rising every morning at five o'clock, he began writing at seven. At about nine his wife joined him in the study, correcting proofs or working on her own material. When Mme Allard visited them, she wrote to her husband: "Ce n'est plus une maison, c'est une usine de littérature."¹⁷

Although unsuccessful as a playwright, Daudet was becoming known as a writer of short stories and winning notice from distinguished literary men. In the early seventies his acquaintances with Flaubert and Edmond de Goncourt ripened into lasting friendships. Emile Zola was an intimate of Flaubert and Goncourt, and through them he frequently encountered Daudet. The principal place of meeting was Flaubert's home on Sunday where the gathering included Taine, Catulle Mendès, Hérédia, Hennique, Céard, Claudel, Paul Alexis, Charpentier, Guy de Maupassant, and Ivan Turgenev. The latter gradually came to be included in the inner circle comprising Flaubert, Goncourt, Zola, and Daudet.

In 1874 the publication of Fromont jeune et Risler aîné was Daudet's first major success. Murray Sachs points out that "sales were rapid, and higher than for anything he had ever published previously. Almost overnight, Daudet found his future was assured financially."¹⁸ Daudet's elation as it was

later described by his older son Léon can be attributed to his joy at finally receiving a healthy sum for his work as well as to the pride of a real success.

Fromont jeune et Risler aîné venait de paraître depuis une bonne quinzaine et mon père n'avait pas encore été en demander des nouvelles à son éditeur, le cher Georges Charpentier.

"Ah, ma foi, je me risque. Viens avec moi, Léon. A tout à l'heure, Julia."

La librairie était alors quai du Louvre. C'était une grande boutique bien éclairée. Nous entrâmes et Charpentier, voyant son auteur, s'écria: "Tu tiens le succès, le grand succès. On en demande cinq cents par jour, je retire à dix mille, et ça ne fait que commencer. Passe donc à la caisse."

Papa était rayonnant: "Peut-on, dit-il, me payer en or?"

--Certainement."

Je vois encore les rouleaux, que l'on mit dans un petit sac. Nous rentrâmes tout de suite à la maison. Ma mère lisait dans le salon.

--Tiens, dit l'auteur de Fromont jeune.

Il tira les louis de sa poche et les éparpilla par la pièce. Puis il m'invita "à la danse de l'or," que nous exécutâmes en riant.

--Ce n'est pas fini. Je vous emmène ce soir tous deux dîner chez Champeaux, place de la Bourse.¹⁹

In this gay celebration one sees the relief of the author who has been haunted by professional doubts which were always heightened by the constant lack of money. This is not Harpagon dancing around his chère cassette, but rather the elation of a man who sees this gold as a double symbol of his literary talent and the future security of his family.

This book was followed by two immensely popular novels, Jack in 1876 and Le Nabab in 1877. Part of Le Nabab's success was due to the fact that some of the events in the book were historical and publicly known. Recognizing this and interested in capitalizing on this lesson, Daudet again chose a subject

which was of interest to the Paris of 1879 when he dealt with the problems of deposed monarchs in Les Rois en Exil (1879).

Numa Roumestan was published several years later in 1881.

During the relatively short period between the years of 1874 and 1881 Daudet attained wide fame and an international reputation.

By 1881 . . . Daudet was one of France's and the world's leading novelists. . . . In the France of that year only Emile Zola was held to have greater power as a novelist of realism, and only recently deceased Flaubert was recognized to be a greater master of style and form. In less than ten years Daudet had gone from an interesting minor writer on regional themes to the heights of international celebrity as a literary interpreter of the contemporary world.²⁰

While the author was becoming a serious writer and skilled novelist, he was also mastering the problems of career management. Murray Sachs has noted that "Daudet earned a formidable reputation as a shrewd negotiator and exploiter of his literary property for maximum gain. . ." ²¹ This was certainly the natural reaction of a man who had known the anxieties of poverty and wished to avoid them for himself and spare his family sufferings similar to those that he had experienced in his youth. His foresight enabled him to achieve that financial comfort that he had previously never enjoyed.

While knowing a secure, bourgeois home, his life was, henceforth, haunted by poor health. The first symptom, which resembled rheumatism, necessitated uninformative consultations with doctors and futile sulphur baths. Despite this obstacle, the courageous man rose above the irony of his destiny and continued to write. The objectivity of his former novels gives

way to open commitment to certain ideas or themes. L'Évangéliste, 1883, was an attack against religious fanaticism inspired by the experience of his sons' tutor. Sapho, 1884, describing a long liason between a young student and a lorette was also conceived as a thesis novel.

1884 was also the year in which Daudet began using morphine to deaden the pain which now gave him no respite. He consulted the famous doctor Charcot, who told him, incorrectly it is now known, that he had a disease of the spinal cord. The patient was actually suffering from syphilis, probably contracted during the years of la bohème. Lucien has written that from 1885 on, his father's life was divided into three distinct areas.

D'abord la maladie (la Doulou). Ensuite le travail, l'oeuvre qui continue comme si la maladie n'existait pas et enfin l'amour de la vie qui, à présent que la vie physique se réduit et se réduira de plus en plus, devient l'amour de l'humanité.²²

The birth of a daughter, Edmée, in 1886 made Daudet temporarily forget his physical suffering. During the last eleven years of his life this little girl was his pride and joy. Since their home in Champrosay was too small for the growing family, Daudet bought a larger house surrounded by a park. He was surprised and elated to be a landowner and experienced a natural pride and comfort in the fact that the former pion was now a man of substance. When in 1887 he learned what he must have strongly suspected, that his disease was incurable, the countryside became for him a refuge and a liberation. As

walking became extremely painful for the semi-invalid, the family took frequent buggy rides. Evident once again was Daudet's instinctive sympathy for others and his generosity in front of misery which his own success had only augmented. During a typical ride the carriage stopped often so that he could give a coin to one, buy a basket from another.

Amazingly, he continued to write despite the intense pain. His next novel, L'Immortel, dealt with the Académie Française and appears to have been the result of a disillusioning and disappointing experience. Daudet had been encouraged, and according to Goncourt, actually tempted to present his candidacy to the Académie Française. When he learned of the clandestine politics a candidacy necessitated, he decided against it. A scathing satire of the entire procedure was included in L'Immortel (1888). Although the idea was conceived and work had been begun on the novel by late 1884, Daudet became sidetracked by Tartarin. Having learned in 1881 that his illness was incurable he wished to guarantee financial security for his family while there was still time. Thus, he accepted a contract and promptly wrote Tartarin sur les Alpes which was published in 1885. He also published two volumes of memoirs in 1888 entitled Trente ans de Paris and Souvenirs d'un homme de lettres.

Despite the fact that Daudet was taking heavy doses of medicine almost daily, he continued to write. When the pain was too great he read. He also continued to concern himself with the welfare of others and welcomed to his home aspiring writers

such as Hugues Le Roux, Paul Margueritte, and René Boylesve. Daudet encouraged them in their work, attempted to find them employment, and sought to bring their writing to the attention of potential editors. The encouragement that he gave to the young Provençal writer, Batisto Bonnet, was typical. Although Daudet was an invalid when they met in 1890, he taxed his strength to help the younger man. He found him work, encouraged him to write, and proposed to translate his books from Provençal into French. Bonnet's book describing their friendship, Le "Baile" Alphonse Daudet, is an expression of his reverence and gratitude.

In what might have been desperation, the doctor Charcot prescribed an unusual and excruciating treatment. The patient was suspended in mid-air by his chin. Needless to say, this only resulted in greater discomfort. Daudet also went to the baths at Lamalou and Nérès. During these trips to "le pays de Douleur", as he called it, he began taking notes for La Douleur.

Devant la glace de ma cabine, à la douche, quel émaciement! Le drôle de petit vieux que je suis tout à coup devenu. Sauté de quarante-cinq ans à soixante-cinq. Vingt ans que je n'ai pas vécus... Bruits de la douche, voix sonores et cliquetis des épées dans le fond. Tristesse profonde que cela me cause, cette vie physique que je ne peux plus. Pauvres oiseaux de nuit, bat-
tant les murs, les yeux ouverts sans voir.²³

Unable to take even a short stroll without help, Daudet rarely went out. Writing was so painful that he dictated most of his work. La Petite Paroisse, which was written at this time, and published in 1895, reflects his determination to avoid inflicting his suffering on others. Disturbed by the bitter

criticism of his last book L'Immortel, he had resolved to be kinder, a marchand de bonheur.

Le Trésor d'Arlatan was composed in a burst of inspiration in 1896. The same year he also published a collection of short stories, La Fédor. He did not live to see the publication of his last novel, Soutien de Famille, in 1898. During dinner on the evening of December 16, 1897, while discussing the play Cyrano de Bergerac, written by the young writer Rostand whom he admired, Alphonse Daudet stopped abruptly and fell back against his chair dead. He left behind a slim volume of poetry, a large collection of short stories and reminiscences, a collection of plays, and fourteen novels, three of which were about Tartarin.

These novels were works of maturity, the first, Le Petit Chose, was published when he was already twenty-eight. Both the content and the point of view in these works were influenced by experiences of the author's adolescence and young manhood. Daudet, himself, has confirmed the lasting effect of his formative years:

Plus je regarde, plus je vois et compare, plus je sens combien les impressions initiales de la vie, de la toute enfance, sont à peu près les seules qui nous frappent irrévocablement. A quinze ans, vingt ans tout au plus, on est achevé d'imprimer. Le reste n'est que des tirages de la première impression.²⁴

Among the important factors of these early years should certainly be the hardship and humiliation of poverty which haunted the boy from Nîmes to Lyon and Arles. This spectre pursued him even in Paris where he had to accept employment

that was distasteful to him because his literary endeavors could not support him. Even after his marriage in 1867 his small income from plays and journalism was inadequate for the needs of the Daudet family. The author did not really achieve any degree of financial security until as late as 1873 when his father-in-law helped him pay his outstanding debts. Anyone who has gone through such financial difficulties cannot help, if he later becomes a writer, to attach a great importance to the question of money.

In addition, Daudet's early experiences in Paris acquainted him with the diversity of society in the Second Empire. He saw the great discrepancies in wealth and opportunity, the vast differences between the brilliant society of les salons and the miserable existence of la bohème, between the elegant ladies and the abject lorettes. On the one hand this left him few illusions as to the motives of man since he had witnessed the wheeling and dealing of the industrialists and the debauchery of la bohème. At the same time Daudet was too close to the poor and could not help sympathizing with their plight while he condemned the corruption of those intent on making money regardless of the means. This was the natural reaction of someone who had for years been the victim of a money hungry society ruled by an oligarchy of industrialists and financiers, which emphasized science, inventions, and material progress while offering little remuneration to the young artist.

Even after having achieved financial security and public

recognition of his work, Daudet forgot neither the early experiences with poverty nor his critical observation of society. Instead, they are repeatedly touched upon in his novels as he comments on the implications of the class structure, the shrewd operations of industry and finance, the corruption of politics, and the consequences of a money oriented society on the artistic world.

NOTES

CHAPTER I

- ¹ Murray Sachs, The Career of Alphonse Daudet, A Critical Study (Massachusetts, 1965), pp. 7-8.
- ² Ernest Daudet, Mon frère et moi (Paris, 1882), p. 33.
- ³ Ibid., p. 46.
- ⁴ Marcel Bruyère, La jeunesse d'Alphonse Daudet (Paris, 1955), p. 57.
- ⁵ Lucien Daudet, Vie d'Alphonse Daudet (Paris, 1941), p. 25.
- ⁶ Oeuvres Complètes Illustrées, Edition Ne Varietur (Paris, 1931), t. 2, p. 30.
- ⁷ Jacques Henry Bornecque, Les années d'apprentissage d'Alphonse Daudet (Paris, 1951), p. 93.
- ⁸ Oeuvres Complètes, t. 2, p. vii.
- ⁹ Ernest Daudet, p. 192.
- ¹⁰ Georges Dupeux, La Société Française 1789-1960 (Paris, 1964), p. 136.
- ¹¹ Lucien Daudet, pp. 39-40.
- ¹² Ibid., p. 40.
- ¹³ Dupeux, p. 138.
- ¹⁴ Oeuvres Complètes, t. 3, p. 140.
- ¹⁵ Lucien Daudet, p. 99.
- ¹⁶ Oeuvres Complètes, t. 19, p. v.
- ¹⁷ Lucien Daudet, p. 101.
- ¹⁸ Sachs, p. 80.
- ¹⁹ Léon Daudet, Quand vivait mon père (Paris, 1950), pp. 16-17.

²⁰Sachs, p. 122.

²¹Ibid., p. 123.

²²Lucien Daudet, p. 183.

²³Ibid., p. 193.

²⁴Oeuvres Complètes, t. 16, p. 33.

CHAPTER II

EARLY WORKS (1858-1874)

In the early period of Daudet's career before he began writing his Parisian novels, he experimented with a number of genres including poetry, sketches, vignettes, short stories, plays, and novels, in which he treated the universal themes of love, nature, liberty, and death, as well as more current topics like the War of 1870, the Commune, and quotidian life in the south of France and in Paris. Daudet's maturation and changing interests are reflected in his literary evolution during the early years of his writing career. As an adolescent he wrote poems which relied heavily upon themes borrowed from the Romantic poets that he admired. When he moved to Paris as a young man his poems and the short stories that he started writing began to treat additional themes: his desire for intellectual freedom and his search for love and companionship. While Daudet worked in Paris and began traveling some, returning to the Midi and making a trip to Algeria, he enlarged his material to include anecdotes and reflections on the Midi and the war in France. Already here and there in these sketches, vignettes, and short stories he examines the faults and vices brought about by the immoderate love or need of money. In short but poignant scenes he illustrates the psychological and physical ravages caused by the lack of money.

Finally, in his largely autobiographical novel, Le Petit Chose, he illustrates more extensively and in greater detail the influences of poverty upon the growth and education of a young boy. A discussion of these early works published between 1858 and 1874 will form a basis for a more complete understanding of Daudet's later works. The young author's growing concern for social values in France gradually introduced itself into his writings, until the study of manners, which was at first nonexistent, begins to play an important and not always secondary role in his work.

It is interesting, but not very surprising, that the man who later devoted his energy and creative powers to a study of manners in which the theme of money and all its ramifications was important began his career writing poetry in which he borrowed from the Romantic poets, and short, imaginative fantaisies. First, as Arnaud Lanoux has so wisely pointed out in his study of Guy de Maupassant, the fièvre lyrique often overwhelms the adolescent only to yield to maturity and fade away. Daudet was certainly not the only writer of his times whose first allegiance was to verse steeped in the notions of Romanticism. Zola began his literary career in 1858 and 1859 by writing poetry and also a fairy tale entitled La Fée Amoureuse, which reminds one of the fantaisies that Daudet was writing. Those texts, as well as the few letters of Zola that have been preserved, indicate that he had romantic notions about life and love, and that he was filled with the kind of idealism often possessed by young men.

Maupassant also began his career by writing verse, starting when he was only thirteen, and he continued to do so during the seven years he spent under the tutelage of Flaubert. The same year that the short story "Boule de Suif" was published in Les Soirées de Médan (1880) and received the unreserved acclaim of his colleagues, a collection of his poems, Des Vers, also appeared.

These natural inclinations toward romantic notions which are evident in many adolescents were encouraged by the cult of Romanticism which was still very strong among school boys in the provinces. In a journal which he kept at school, Flaubert reveals that as early as 1831 he was wildly enthusiastic about Victor Hugo and Alexandre Dumas and spent much of his time reading their poetry and theater. While at school in Rouen from 1832 to 1839 this admiration was encouraged by the romantic exaltation of his schoolmates who still worshipped the melancholy of René. While Zola was in school, he and his two close friends, Baptistin Baille and Paul Cézanne, shared a similar devotion to the great Romantic poets.

Daudet, like many of his contemporaries, was early a devotee of the Romantics, and those texts that remain from among his earliest publications reflect this influence. The first three works that he published in book form were two volumes in verse, Les Amoureuses, 1858, and "La Double Conversion," 1861, and a volume containing six fantasies in prose, Le Roman du Chaperon-Rouge, 1862. Daudet wrote many other sketches and stories for various newspapers and journals in

Paris between 1858 and 1862. Most of the material he never deemed worthy of including in one of his books. These three volumes are representative of his earliest writing, and their subject matter differs rather sharply from that of the novels of his maturity. Although all the pieces except a few of the poems were written after Daudet moved to Paris, they reflect only very indirectly his life there. The turbulent atmosphere of la bohème, the visits to several salons, and the association with Morny are rarely if ever mentioned. The frequent trips south have not yet inspired any piece which Daudet considered worthy of publication in book form. In addition, any comment on French manners is made only in passing, and the theme of money is not developed at all.

The first work, Les Amoureuses, contains twenty-one poems and the principal theme is love. Usually the poems describe the suffering incurred by men when they love because of the cruel, domineering, and unfaithful nature of women. Many of the most interesting heroines or anti-heroines in Daudet's later novels, like the adulterous Sidonie, the cold and unfeeling Madame Autheman, or the foolish courtesan Fanny Legrand, will reflect more pointedly this same concept of women. For the present, however, the subject is treated in a spirited and witty fashion.

Daudet continued to write in verse and cultivated this detached, mocking tone despite the fact that Les Amoureuses had not been widely or wildly acclaimed. "La Double Conversion," which followed, was a short story in octosyllabic verse of

about twenty pages in length. A Catholic, André, and a Jewess, Sarah, meet one Sunday in a park and fall hopelessly in love. Their parents forbid a marriage because of their different religions. At first André and Sarah quarrel about which one should convert, so they separate. Miserable apart, they simultaneously offer to convert to the other's religion.

The story is a mixture of the sentimental and the cynical, of the real and the fanciful; its light gay tone is that of a fantasy. Love triumphs as it should in all fairy tales, and the sentimental are pleased with the seemingly happy ending. On the other hand, certain realistic details already force one to realize that long before the publication of his novels, Daudet was already an accurate observer. He chose to depict an event, unusual it is true, in the lives of middle class Parisian families and tried to render an accurate and recognizable portrait of the characters and surroundings. For instance, he describes the awakening of the Marais district in Paris early Sunday morning:

On ouvrait déjà les boutiques,
On entendait se quereller
Les porteurs et les domestiques
Les grandes charrettes rouler,
Les chiens et les enfants hurler.¹

Moreover, the fact that religion really didn't count for much is a cynical commentary on society. No doubt this was a revelation of the author's religious skepticism as well as an analysis of what he had often observed around him. A few years later in Le Petit Chose (1868) he would reveal other personal concerns such as the need for money which plagued him

and so many others in France.

Daudet's next volume contains six short stories selected from among the many that he had published in various newspapers and reviews. These selections of fantasies resemble "La Double Conversion" in style and approach as they are a mixture of the gay and the serious, of the imagined and the real. Four of the fantasies are sentimental and entertaining stories about love, in which satire is minimal. The other two are representative of a second vein of fantasy cultivated by Daudet. "This was the vein of satirical fantasy, in which the intent is to comment directly and consciously upon some aspect of contemporary society."² The topics are of a broader social import, and the tone is witty and mocking rather than cloyingly charming. The framework is often a fable or legend which the author re-interprets in a new and meaningful way.

"Le Roman du Chaperon-Rouge" is a charming parody of the story of little Red Riding Hood. Each day she starts out to see her grandmother, and each day she takes the route through the woods because it is shady and pleasant. Polonius, a character borrowed from Shakespeare, cautions her against her carefree bohemian existence and advises her to take the highway which goes directly to her destination. Little Red Riding Hood rejects his suggestion and invites him to join her in the stroll through the woods. He declines, and she goes by herself. Inevitably she is eaten by the wolf that she knew was lurking in the shadows. Prepared for this fate, she readily accepts it as the necessary price for freedom and happiness.

Magically reappearing the next day, she again takes the same route through the woods. This subject--the conflict between freedom and security--recurs often in Daudet's works of this period. As usual, he rejects the ordered life of society, electing to follow the advice of little Red Riding Hood instead of that of the foolish Polonius.

The theme is often enlarged to suggest the conflict between imagination and reality, between art and commerce. "Un Concours pour Charenton" raises this conflict in an ingenious manner. It questions the accepted norms by asking who is crazy--the man who ignores the accepted realities to live in his imagination or the man who lives according to society? The story takes place at Charenton where the inmates are holding interviews to fill a vacancy. They view as unacceptable candidates for the mental institution a man hopelessly in love with a woman he has seen only once, a poet who talks to himself and wanders the streets with a little bird in each pocket, a musician who has written a sonata in la, a stockbroker who never stops naming his stocks, a scientist who has nearly killed himself with his experiments, and a successful businessman who now mourns inconsolably after his lost youth. Love, money, art, ambition--these normal desires of man would upset the peaceful routine of the asylum. Charenton may be inhabited by the whimsical and freakish, but the genuinely insane are on the outside. While the story is amusing, it is seriously questioning the accepted norms of society. Those in the asylum are not required to deal with essentially meaningless

institutions or become concerned over the trivia which clutter the daily routine. Theirs is a much fuller life because they realize the immeasurable value of the imagination, of the intangible.

These are the works of someone who is more interested in maintaining his personal freedom than in becoming involved in the social ills of his time. Later, in the short stories and novels published after 1870, he will examine the question of personal liberty with regard to the position of the artist in a materialistic society. These earliest works, however, whether concerning freedom or love, in prose or verse, do not yet reveal the keen interest in the evolving times or the deep concern for mores that prompted the novels that portray the Second Empire and the attitude evident in the Third Republic. The next three volumes contrast sharply with the detachment from society and youthful romantic notions of the earliest works. The young author transposes the financial hardships of his family and its effects on his adolescence to the fictional world of his first novel, Le Petit Chose (1868). These harsh realities of life also enter, although to a lesser degree, the two delightful works published shortly afterwards, Les Lettres de mon Moulin (1869) and Tartarin de Tarascon (1869 in serial, 1872 in book form).

Following after the fantasies which touched only obliquely on social conditions, Daudet's first novel, Le Petit Chose, was also his first attempt to portray the world around him in a serious and realistic manner. The novel is about the

Eysette family which resembles very closely the author's own family; the hero, Daniel Eysette, reminds one of Daudet himself. The story centers around the growth and maturation of Daniel Eysette, and, helped no doubt by his personal experiences, Daudet gives a vivid and moving portrayal of the effects of poverty on the growth and development of an intelligent and sensitive boy.

As the book opens the Eysettes are being plagued by grave financial problems. Later, when Daniel looks back to his childhood he realizes the misfortune of his family. "C'est une vérité, je fus la mauvaise étoile de mes parents. Du jour de ma naissance, d'incroyables malheurs les assaillirent par vingt endroits."³ Only during his earliest childhood in Nîmes was Daniel unaware of the harsh realities of poverty, and even then his upbringing was being affected by it. He was growing up without any real parental guidance or discipline because the declining family business preoccupied his parents during their every waking moment. He and his brother Jacques were left alone to amuse themselves, and when their father's factory closed for lack of business, they took it over as their personal playground. Since Daniel was too young to be ashamed or embarrassed by the shabbiness of his clothes or his family's declining fortunes, he was for the moment very happy.

This changed radically when the family moved to Lyon. For the first time Daniel knew the physical pain and suffering of poverty as well as its humiliating stigma. He describes in some length their miserable quarters and unhappy existence.

Oh! l'horrible maison! Je la verrai toute ma vie: l'escalier était gluant; la cour ressemblait à un puits; le concierge, un cordonnier, avait son échoppe contre la pompe ... c'était hideux.⁴

Ces promenades de famille étaient lugubres. M. Eysette grondait, Jacques pleurait tout le temps, moi je me tenais toujours derrière; je ne sais pas pourquoi, j'avais honte d'être dans la rue, sans doute parce que nous étions pauvres.⁵

In the second passage the place given to the word pauvres at the very end of the sentence cleverly emphasizes the point Daudet was trying to make here and, perhaps, unconsciously brings out the relationship between poverty and a feeling of shame.

Not only did M. Eysette's inability to find employment that would support his family cause their unhappiness, but it was also responsible for the limited and inferior education that his children received. Jacques and Daniel attended a church school where there was no tuition, but there was also very little learning. Eventually, their father obtained a fellowship to the high school for Daniel and scraped together the necessary money to send Jacques too. Even when the boys were able to attend school they did not benefit fully from the opportunity because they lived in lodgings so cold and damp that they had to study in bed in a futile attempt to keep warm.

The lack of money was finally responsible for the dissolution of the Eysette family. When they could no longer afford to live together they separated, and each child was sent away to support himself. Jacques went to Paris; Daniel went to work as a study master in a boarding school in Arles even

though he was unprepared and unsuited for the job. Years later as he described his life there he still wrote bitterly about the experience which poverty had forced upon him.

Je voudrais en parler sans rancune, ces tristes-
ses sont si loin de nous! ... Eh bien! non, je ne
puis pas; et tenez! à l'heure même où j'écris ces
lignes, je sens ma main qui tremble de fièvre et
d'émotion. Il me semble que j'y suis encore.⁶

As a study master the youth was too young and too puny to command the respect of his students. Also, he was too inexperienced to deal successfully with his colleagues and acquaintances. It was also Daniel's first confrontation with the social hierarchy, and he made the foolish and almost fatal mistake of punishing the one student from a wealthy, aristocratic family. Despite the fact that his action had been justified, he was publicly reprimanded and nearly lost his job.

This was not the only humiliating experience suffered by the vain and self-conscious adolescent while he was at the school. On his arrival he was mistaken for a student. After this reception Daniel tried to gain the acceptance of his colleagues by telling them that he was actually from a very rich family which had temporarily banished him. Although they believed him at first, they were not fooled for long.

Daniel was equally concerned about the impression he made in town. Taking his students, some poorly dressed or unable to march properly, on a walk through town was torture:

Comprenez-vous mon désespoir de me montrer dans
les rues de Sarlande en pareil équipage, et le
dimanche, surtout! Les cloches carillonnaient,
les rues étaient pleines de monde. On rencon-
trait des pensionnats de demoiselles qui allaient

à vêpres, des modistes en bonnet rose, des élégants en pantalon gris perle. Il fallait traverser tout cela avec un habit rapé et une division ridicule. Quelle honte! ...⁷

The young studymaster was particularly cruel to one student, Bamban, who always arrived more dirty and bedraggled than the others. One day he saw that Bamban resembled le Petit Chose in Lyon in that he wore a smock and was ridiculed by his professors. From that day on he helped Bamban with his work and treated him with kindness. Whether true or not, this incident reveals the sympathy for the poor and unfortunate which Daudet first felt because of his own poverty and which he continued to express throughout his life and writings.

In addition to all these problems, the new studymaster had no notion of how to manage money; he reacted against the years of family hardship by living too expensively for his meager salary and incurring substantial debts. In the long run these experiences were preparation for the difficulties that he would encounter later in Paris. The immediate result, however, was his betrayal by the fencing master, a so-called friend, who had asked him to ghost write some love letters. Later this evil-minded man used the letters to convince the school authorities that Daniel had seduced a young domestic. Disgraced and discouraged, the young boy sadly looked at his life. Had he been able to afford to leave he could have resigned himself to the embarrassment of his departure. But he had no money, no way of finding a new position, and overwhelming debts. In a desperate, although somewhat melodramatic move, the lad decided

that suicide was the only answer. He might actually have succeeded in hanging himself in the gymnasium if he had not been interrupted by the timely arrival of his one friend, the Abbé Germane. Thanks to the generosity of the good Abbé Daniel left Arles to join his brother in Paris with his debts paid off, still in disgrace, but not in a coffin.

In Paris Daniel's life was happier because he could live with his brother and write poetry instead of putting up with the students in Arles, but materially he was not much better off. The brothers had to live on Jacques' meager salary, so they still had very little money. This raises the problem of the artist in society, as Daniel vacillates between pursuing his literary career and associating himself with Pierrotte, a manufacturer of china, and his family. While Jacques visited the Pierrottes, Daniel stayed home because this practical, business-minded bourgeois family was everything his youthful idealism abhorred. Subconsciously he also feared that he would become discouraged and give up his literary career for the comfortable, if somewhat narrow, life enjoyed by the small merchants of Paris.

Youth may scorn the crassness of commercialism, but it often yields to the temptations of the flesh. After only a few months in Paris Daniel met a seductive courtesan named Irma Borel who amused herself by dabbling in the arts and entertaining a group of would-be artists. Irma and the young poet ran off together and tried to support themselves as comedians in a theater on the outskirts of Paris. Their

meager salaries could not even pay the rent on their crowded dismal eighth floor room, and Daniel, who had learned very little from his unhappy experience in Arles, began incurring large debts.

This miserable existence continued until the older brother found Daniel, borrowed money from Pierrotte to pay the debts, and took the poet away from Irma. Thus Daniel is once again bailed out of trouble, and probably is none the wiser for it. He is, however, ashamed of his actions, sorry for the trouble and expense he caused Jacques, and discouraged by the sordid and impoverished existence that he and Irma had led. Thus the would-be writer decided to renounce both the independence of bachelorhood and the uncertainty of his literary endeavors. He rejects the sensual pleasure-seeking world which Irma offered and joins the secure regulated world of the Pierrottes by marrying Pierrotte's daughter and entering the china business.

One senses, however, that this admission of the necessity of making money and the involvement with business is a capitulation, not a triumph. Although Daudet has given a realistic portrayal of the growing up of a young man and has vividly recounted the hardships of poverty, he still feels that there is a stigma inevitably associated with any involvement with society and its institutions. This idea, often present in his earlier works, is echoed here despite the limitation of elements of fantasy and the attempt to portray characters and incidents accurately.

Despite these reservations the novel represents the first time that Daudet came to grips with the real world in his literary endeavors. As such the book is evidence of the marked change in the young man's attitude; he had once conceived witty poems and fantasies, but is now more realistically oriented. Having graduated from the harsh school of reality, he recognizes the necessity of paying the bills and keeping a roof over one's head. He sees that without money a family has no social position, no means of advancing, and no funds to provide for children. The poverty of the Eysette family deprived the children of a warm home life and good education. Instead of the carefree fun of adolescence they knew the humiliation of being poor and the cruel ridicule of the more fortunate. At first Daniel was forced into a job he is too young and too ill-equipped to handle competently. He then tried his pen on poetry only to be discouraged by the hand-to-mouth existence of bohemia. Having at last reconciled himself to the necessity of money and the acceptance of life within the social structure, he marries and enters the bourgeois world of commerce. In future works this echo of contempt for society will be transformed into constructive criticism as he examines the Second Empire and the Third Republic, including his reflections on the importance of money. These studies did not, however, immediately follow Le Petit Chose.

Daudet was working on two books of a very different nature: his famous collection of short stories, Les Lettres de mon Moulin, and his most successful attempt at comedy, Tartarin

de Tarascon. These two books have in common their source of inspiration as Daudet turned away from Paris and remembered his happy visits to the South of France, Algeria, and Corsica, which he made between 1861 and 1864.

Les Lettres de mon Moulin (1869) were supposedly letters written by a Parisian to describe to his fellow Parisians what he saw on his travels. The stories are not exclusively about Provence although most of them do appear to take place in the south of France. Only one story, "Le Portefeuille de Bixou," is specifically about Paris; it constitutes one of his earliest études de mœurs. Based on Daudet's personal experiences, it is a bitter commentary on the world of journalism, which he considered to be ruthless and unscrupulous. For fifteen years a journalist, Bixou, entertained the Parisians with his biting satire and cruel caricatures. He deliberately inserted innuendoes and slanderous comments in his articles because this type of journalism was well-paid and sold newspapers. By virtue of a vicious pen Bixou was one of the most highly paid columnists and lived extremely well. Then blindness struck him down at the height of his power and good fortune. No longer able to glean news from his observations around Paris, the famed journalist was suddenly without income. In his new poverty Bixou develops a more critical opinion of his former profession. He launches into a long and bitter tirade against the literary coterie which earned a living by hypocrisy, pettiness, and mediocrity. He now deplores the depths to which men sink in order to obtain fame and wealth.

While this story appears to be a factual commentary on existing corruption, others are frankly a mixture of the real and the imagined, of grim reality and delightful fantasy. Yet even in these sketches an awareness of the large role that money plays in daily life begins appearing. "L'Elixir du Reverend Père Gaucher" satirized a well-known fault and showed that even the Church was not above temptation when money was concerned. The order of les Pères blancs was almost destitute when Father Gaucher discovered the secret recipe to a marvelous elixir. Soon no house in Provence was without a small brown bottle of this brew, and it in turn constituted the wide fame and immense wealth of the order. Father Gaucher, who had previously been considered rather foolish, was now very respected because he had brought fortune to the order. Unfortunately, the poor Father, who spent all his time making the elixir, also found it irresistible. Under its influence he sang ribald songs and came to vespers tipsy. For the safety of his soul he asked to be relieved of his duties. This would have been disastrous to the finances of the order. Instead, the ingenious Fathers saved their wayward brother and their revenues by agreeing to pray for his soul while he made the elixir.

Whether realistic like "Le Portefeuille de Bixou" or fantaisiste like "L'Elixir du Reverend Père Gaucher," these comments on the crasser motives of mankind appear again in the comic novel Tartarin de Tarascon. Tartarin was inspired by a cousin who had traveled with Daudet to Algeria. This cousin had a mania for hunting, which the author exaggerated

and modified in a short story written in 1863 called "Chapatin le tueur de lions." Returning to this story after writing Le Petit Chose, Daudet reworked the idea. Enlarged and improved, it was published in serial form in 1869 as Barbarin de Tarason. When an important family in Tarascon named Barbarin threatened him with a lawsuit, he was forced to find yet another name for his hero. Only then did he hit upon the happy choice of Tartarin de Tarascon with its suggestive alliteration. This was the definitive title of the book published in 1872.

The content of this novel is still very different from the study of manners in the later works. Instead of examining society Daudet created a truly comic figure and wrote a story which was pure entertainment. In Provençal there is a word which sums up the spirit of the book: galéja, which means "to laugh, to jest." Tartarin de Tarascon reveals that Daudet possessed this faculty for gaiety and jest which was instinctive to the Provençaux. The story is about a delightful character, Tartarin, who lives in contented bachelorhood in Tarascon, where he astounds the town with his accounts of past exploits of heroism and daring. Had someone taken time to reflect seriously on these great deeds, he might have noticed that no one could actually remember when Tartarin had ever left Tarascon. The truth is that Tartarin was cursed with a dual nature; he was Don Quixote and Sancho Panza in one man. He would have been off in search of real adventure, ready to confront any man or beast, if he didn't enjoy drinking a cup of

hot chocolate by his hearth. Unfortunately for Tartarin-Sancho, the Tartarin-Quixote in him talked too often about a projected lion hunt, and Tartarin was forced to undertake this expedition to convince the townspeople of his valor.

While the story was clearly written to entertain, certain aspects of the plot reveal a concern with the material realities of life. Although certainly not rich, Tartarin could afford to outfit himself handsomely for his lion hunting expedition in Algeria. In an effort to duplicate the conveniences of home he spared no expenses and ordered the latest model in tents, a portable medicine chest, outfits designed specifically for a safari, large quantities of foodstuffs, and two handsome trunks.

In Algiers the great hunt is delayed indefinitely when the hunter falls helplessly in love with a lovely Algerian woman named Baïa. Tartarin is too credulous to realize that the lovely and irresistible Baïa is a brazen courtesan interested exclusively in his French francs. His naïveté is still laughed at today in certain quarters of Algeria:

... vous entendriez encore aujourd'hui les Maures causer entre eux, avec des clignements d'yeux et de petits rires, d'un certain Sidi Tart'ri ben Tart'ri, Européen aimable et riche qui--voici quelques années déjà--vivait dans les hauts quartiers avec une petite dame du cru appelée Baïa.⁸

This dupery had been organized by the one so-called friend that Tartarin had encountered on his voyage, a man of dubious origins who called himself Prince Grégory du Monténégro. The prince and Baïa joined forces and invited all their

friends to enter into the pillage of the foolish foreigner:

Quatre ou cinq fois par semaine, ces messieurs venaient passer la soirée chez Sidi Tart'ri, lui gagnaient son argent, lui mangeaient ses confitures, et sur le coup de dix heures se retiraient discrètement en remerciant le Prophète.⁹

Tartarin-Sancho might have lost his last franc to these scoundrels if Tartarin-Quixote had not aroused him to action and to hunt the lion. This part of his trip came to a disastrous end for a very mundane reason: the scheming prince, who had willingly accompanied Tartarin, stole his wallet and all the money he had left. Furthermore, the only lion that Tartarin killed was an old blind lion used by a Mohammedan religious order to solicit alms. For his mistake the disappointed hunter had to pay an indemnity of 2500 francs which he just barely raised by selling all his handsome equipment.

Returning on foot to his little house in Algiers where he expected to find his faithful Baia, he interrupts her entertaining several friends with an "aimable orgie turcomarseillaise." With his last illusion destroyed, both friendship and love discovered to be false, Tartarin can only cry out against the thieves and hypocrites that he has encountered: "Mais c'est donc tous des gredins dans ce pays? ..." He has one small sweet taste of vengeance when he forces a muezzin to permit him to sing out his disappointment from one of the minarets:

La Allah il Allah ... Mahomet est un vieux farceur ... L'Orient, le Coran, les bachagas, les lions, les Mauresques, tout ça ne vaut pas un viédase! ... Il n'y a plus de Turcs ... Il n'y a que des caroteurs ... Vive Tarascon! ...¹⁰

Then Tartarin leaves Algeria for home, a wiser but poorer man. He has discovered that great deeds and lofty ideals are for novels while life is composed of more ordinary events and baser motives. Even in the wild and mysterious East men are interested in getting ahead and are only too willing to use someone else's purse to do so. Even on the new frontiers the great adventurers of yesterday have been replaced by the scheming and conniving who expend their energies formulating crafty plots and unscrupulous deals. Thus, the ugly realities of life are apparent in the entertaining and amusing comedy that was Tartarin de Tarascon.

This book was not immediately followed by those works so appropriately subtitled "Moeurs parisiennes" or "Etudes Parisiennes." From the time Daudet finished Tartarin in 1869 until he began writing Fromont jeune et Risler aîné in 1874, he divided his efforts between drama and journalism. None of the plays was successful, and much of the material written for various reviews was second rate. Recognizing the mediocracy of some of this work, he selected only the best pieces for publication in book form in the following volumes: Lettres à un absent (1871), Contes du lundi (1873), Robert Helmont: Etudes et paysages (1874), and Femmes d'Artistes (1874). Many of the short stories and sketches in these volumes are studies of manners which bring to the foreground the question of money and its many ramifications.

The first volume, Lettres à un absent (1871), is about some of the events surrounding the Franco-Prussian

War--specifically the siege of Paris in 1870 and the Commune. During the siege Daudet was a member of the National Guard in Paris. Participation in the war and civil strife aroused in him a strong patriotic instinct and love of country which is evident throughout this book. Only two of the vignettes or letters remind one of the delightful fantasies included in Lettres de mon Moulin. The rest are accounts witnessed or imagined of the varied incidents of bravery, pathos, or egoism which accompany such cataclysmic events.

The collection of short stories published in 1873 as Contes du Lundi reflects a change in Daudet's writing and merits a more detailed study. While continuing to write about incidents related to the war and including personal reminiscences, he enlarged his subject matter to include short sketches on Parisian life. The volume was arranged in two sections. The first, entitled "La Fantaisie et l'histoire", contains more reflections and observations on war-torn France. Among these stories about the war are several in which Daudet reflects upon the avarice and egoism which so often motivates mankind. When Alsace was lost to the Prussians, not all Alsacians remained loyal to France. "La vision du juge de Colmar" is about one Alsatian, Monsieur Dollinger, who was torn between his easy life and his country. In a delightful blend of fantasy and realism the story describes the predicament of Monsieur Dollinger. He is so comfortably situated on his leather cushion in the courthouse that he remains to dispense German justice. But he feels out of his element. When he dozes, he

dreams that he is in the stocks, ridiculed and hated by the Alsacians. Then the dream changes, and he is witnessing his own funeral. Bismarck himself places on his tomb his round leather cushion, symbolizing "la magistrature assise" and dooming him to eternal ridicule.

Monsieur Dollinger was not the only Alsatian to "sell-out" to the enemy. The avaricious peasant not only made money by selling to the Prussians, but also scorned those who refused to use the war for their personal gains. Daudet describes this situation in a poignant scene entitled "Le Bac." A rich peasant, Père Chachignot, speaks for those who have no sympathy for anyone who refuses to take advantage of a lucrative situation:

C'est eun' bête! ... Il pouvait faire sa fortune avec les Prussiens. C'est lui qui n'a pas voulu ... Du jour qu'ils sont arrivés, il a fermé son cabaret et décroché son enseigne ... Les autres cafetiers ont fait des affaires d'or pendant la guerre; lui n'a pas seulement vendu pour un sou ... Pis que cela. Il s'est fait mettre en prison avec ses insolences ... C'est eun' bête, que je te dis ... Est-ce que ça le regardait, lui, toutes ces histoires! Est-ce qu'il était militaire! ... Il n'avait qu'à fournir du vin et de l'eau-de-vie à la pratique; maintenant il pourrait me payer ... Canaille, va! je t'apprendrai à faire le patriote!¹¹

As is often the case, hard times bring out the worst as well as the best in men. The war revealed those Frenchmen who were only too eager to place their own personal interests above those of their country. For those like M. Dollinger the love of the affluent life had obscured the moral issues of the conflict so that they preferred to transfer allegiance rather than sacrifice security. On the other hand, the

constant and grueling toil of the peasant, victim of the fluctuating market and the unpredictable elements, did not allow him the luxury of choosing sides. He sold his goods to the highest bidder and took money from any hand.

Avarice, egoism, indifference, complacency--these motivating forces were treated again in a series of short sketches on Parisian life which are in the second part of the book, "Caprices et Souvenirs." In these stories, Daudet is largely preoccupied with the misfortune and suffering which surrounded him and appeared at every corner, in every niche of the city. Awareness, coupled with an observing eye and the talent for creating interesting anecdotes, made Daudet a convincing and moving reporter of Parisian life:

C'est qu'en ce grand Paris, où la foule se sent inobservée et libre, on ne peut faire un pas sans se heurter à quelque détresse envahissante qui vous éclabousse et vous laisse sa marque en passant.¹²

In each story, regardless of the class or profession described, the cult of the golden calf with all its sinister ramifications was present. The realization of any enterprise, even one that was essentially artistic or literary, seemed to involve cold cash. "Avec trois cent mille francs que m'a promis Girardin" is about a writer with more plans than talent, whose journal has recently gone bankrupt. Undaunted by this recent disaster, he has another scheme, and is going to request the necessary money from a financier. As is often the case, in formulating his new enterprise the poor dreamer already sees himself com-

missioning articles, hiring writers, and increasing subscriptions. His hope of success sustains him as he hurries along the street in a threadbare suit while furtively nibbling a penny roll.

Turning to another class, "Arthur" shows how the long, grueling work day, which was rewarded by the meagerest wages, usually affected the life of the Parisian worker. In an effort to relieve the hard routine and buy a small share of relaxation he would squander his wages on brief moments of pleasure and dissipation in the local bars while completely ignoring his wife and children who were hungry and cold in their dismal lodgings. Even those who were basically nice, decent fellows like Arthur had become brutal and inconsiderate because of their harsh life. After spending most of his wages in a bar on payday, Arthur returned home, penniless, and beat his wife in drunken anger and futile frustration at his dismal condition.

In an effort to maintain themselves just a little bit better than the working class, the small merchants were a grasping and greedy lot. Calculating self-interest motivates an entire family of storekeepers in "Maison à Vendre" as they cajole and bully their elderly father to sell his little house and garden in the country and turn the money over to them. The ruthless competition of their trade left no room for sentimentalism or filial concern. They were all accustomed to looking for the quick profit and their father's property represented another good business transaction. "Les boutiquiers causaient,

discutaient entre eux en jouant au tonneau, et le mot argent sonnait sec dans ces voix aigres comme les palets qu'on heurtait."¹³

The desire for the basic comforts of life made persons seem completely indifferent to the suffering around them while they looked after themselves. In "Un Teneur de livres" a morgue clerk whistles happily as he walks to work along the damp, foggy quais. The prospect of breakfast in his familiar office made him completely content with his lot. "Ce sont là de ces bonheurs d'employé, de ces joies de prison que connaissent seulement ces pauvres êtres rapetissés dont toute la vie tient dans une encoignure."¹⁴ Like so many in Paris, rich or poor, he has become immune to the suffering of those who have less than he. He is not even moved to pity by the sight of a young girl who had been driven to suicide by dire poverty. He might have been asking about the mail, so carelessly does he refer to her: "Est-ce qu'il y a quelque chose pour nous?" After reading her suicide note he returns to his breakfast with a shrug of his shoulders.

Similar sketches on Parisian life were again included in Daudet's next book, Robert Helmont: Etudes et Paysages (1874). The first part of the book is entitled Robert Helmont, journal d'un solitaire 1870-1871. It is an account of the war written from the viewpoint of a man who was isolated in the countryside and forced to hide from the Prussians. The journal gives life to the obscure victims of the war and describes the distress of those who were forced to retreat to Paris,

leaving behind them their land, their farms, and their homes. The journal also reveals the unmitigated ferocity of the French peasant who had witnessed the destruction of his farm. To the peasant, his farm--the land, livestock, and crops--was more important than wife, family or country. It was his wealth, a livelihood, a security for old age, and an inheritance for the next generation. The peasant's life was spent in one long untiring effort to increase the productivity and enhance the value of his land. He came to love it and desired to possess it in a savage and carnal way. This powerful lust for the land will be described later with brutal force in La Terre (1887) by Zola. In view of the peasant's consuming passion for the land, it is not surprising that he guarded it as some would gold. When one old man, Goudeloup, saw his farm and with it, his life's work and love, destroyed by the Prussians, he avenged its loss with fierce determination and cold efficiency. Systematically he trapped and killed as many Prussian soldiers as he could.

Following this journal is the section of the book entitled "Etudes et Paysages." It includes sketches of Corsica, Provence, and Algeria, reminiscences of Daudet's childhood, and several fantasies. Among the more sobering stories, however, are the sketches of different aspects of life in Paris which were also included. Daudet has entitled two of these as "études historiques." They are accounts of the death of the Duc de Morny and of the rise and fall of a nabab. The latter is the story of a man who tried to use his large fortune to buy

his acceptance into the social and political worlds of Paris. Both these sketches eventually were to provide material for a future novel, Le Nabab, and they will be discussed in the chapter treating this novel. Four other sketches or short stories are entitled "moeurs parisiennes." In subject matter they closely resemble the Parisian sketches in Contes du Lundi which also described the working class and the petite bourgeoisie. This was, however, the first time that he had been so explicit in stating the intent or nature of his writing by such a subtitle.

All four stories examine how persons of small means managed to scrape together a living of sorts. In contrast to the affluence of the upper crust, these lost souls were beaten into the ground by the hard work necessary to make poverty-line incomes. These stories might easily be propaganda for higher wages or better working conditions if Daudet had so wished. He chose, however, to arouse the reader's sympathy and concern by these anecdotes but to leave any conclusions or reforms to be suggested by the reader himself.

Of these four stories, "Le Singe" shows most vividly the debasing effects of poverty as it describes the inevitable transformation of all young workers into drunkards or drudges. The story is specifically about a young man and woman who are both workers. When this couple married, they could only afford a small room in a crowded, dirty apartment building, but optimistically thought that their mutual love would sustain them. Ten years later they have succumbed to the sordid

environment. Surrounded by drunks in the building the man had begun drinking too, and no longer returned home until he had spent his wages in the bars. The girl, once so pretty and courageous, stayed home with their children, letting the apartment remain dirty while she commiserated with the neighbors. This eternal whining and crying made her so ugly that she was nicknamed "le singe."

Two other stories show just how hard the workers had to toil for their meager wages. In "Le Père Achille" Achille is a laborer while his wife spends lonely and fatiguing days working alone as a seamstress. Even with both of them working they can afford only the barest necessities and nothing new had been bought for the household since the couple was married almost twenty years before. Reacting against a similar situation, the couple in "Le Couloir" had tried to augment their income dishonestly. For the few happy days that this brought them they must pay with prison sentences.

The fourth story is about another effort to make a living, this time by a bourgeois family trying to establish a small photography studio in Paris. The whole family takes part in the effort: the children wait breathlessly for clients; the wife arranges the room while her husband checks his equipment. There is a note of desperation in all these activities since the family has no more funds and is entirely dependent on the day's profit for room and board. Such situations where money is needed so badly can warp the moral values until money becomes the overriding concern; it is placed

above all other considerations. In this instance the family is momentarily assured of success as their enterprise is frequented by several customers.

Soon after Robert Helmont: Etudes et Paysages, Daudet published another volume of short stories, Femmes d'Artistes (1874). The unity of this work is defined in the avant-propos by one of the characters:

C'est écrit--remarque bien--par un homme marié, très épris de sa femme, très heureux dans son intérieur, un curieux qui, passant sa vie au milieu des artistes, s'est amusé à croquer quelques-un de ces ménages dont je te parlais tout à l'heure.¹⁵

The series of vignettes were offered by the author as irrefutable proof of the impossibility for the artist to find happiness in marriage. In illustrating this by discussing many differently assorted unions he continues to explore the artistic milieux, the life of la bohème, and that of la petite bourgeoisie. These marriages, whether between artists or persons of different stations in life, generally proved disastrous. One important factor which caused dissension was the lack of any money or security which plagued the artist. While the artist's dedication to his work often enabled him to rise above these financial difficulties, his family usually could not. In "Madame Heurtebise" a young girl of the petite bourgeoisie whose family owned and operated a jewelry store was intrigued by the idea of marrying a famous man. After marrying a young poet she criticized him incessantly and ridiculed his friends. She accused him of being a poor provider and bitterly regretted that she had not married a reliable, though

anonymous merchant or businessman. In "Les Voies de Fait" the wealthy wife bitterly accuses her artist husband of marrying her for her fortune. She cannot believe he is as indifferent to money as he appears and would now prefer a serious bourgeois whom she could understand.

In these stories the wives were too accustomed to evaluating persons by their bank rolls. The lack of money and the ensuing debts or stringent economies familiar to the artist's home provoked bitter arguments and serious doubts which precluded any marital harmony. This dissension caused by the different values of the spouses grew beyond all logical proportion until it dominated and destroyed the union.

Other artists bowed to the exigencies of clothing and feeding a family, but their work suffered because of it. In "La Bohème en Famille" a sculptor named Simaise had once done promising work. Then the necessity to support his family forced him to produce more mediocre pieces because they sold well. Despite this, he had not been able to give his daughters a sound education. Instead they were exposed to the unordered and unpredictable life typical of artists, and it exerted an unfortunate influence. The four girls were gay and vivacious but slightly wild in their behavior. Although very popular at dances they would never be able to find a respectable bourgeois willing to marry them.

Through these stories Daudet was showing that the life of an artist is not meant to be shared by a family. In a world that worshipped the golden calf only an extraordinary

woman, sensitive, perceptive, and understanding, would be able to live happily with the temperamental and poverty stricken artist. This woman was so nearly impossible to find that it would be better not to try. Generally, material concerns which an artist could sometimes overlook would overwhelm his wife and family, making them discontented with their lot and dissatisfied with the titular head of the family.

Daudet never republished Robert Helmont or Femmes d'Artistes, deeming them unworthy of further attention. He did, however, continue to utilize material about Paris similar to that in the short stories already discussed not only in short stories but also in a novel he was beginning. It is not surprising that the writings of the period between 1858 and 1874 culminated in this novel which was about commercial enterprises in Paris during the Second Empire. This interest in the realities of life and the acceptance of their importance had been developing gradually for over fifteen years while the romantic and whimsical elements in his writing diminished. Certain lines in Daudet's earliest works are evidence of the fact that he had a shrewd and observing eye. Le Petit Chose clearly shows that the author was personally aware of the possible and probable effects that an acute lack of money exercised on the maturation process. Several stories and certain references in Les Lettres de mon Moulin as well as Tartarin de Tarascon, both written at the same time that Le Petit Chose was composed, show that Daudet was also able to see the influences that money exercised on other persons, professions, and institutions.

Finally, the volumes published later, Contes du lundi, Robert Helmont: Etudes et Paysages, and Femmes d'Artistes, indicate that Daudet was increasingly preoccupied by French society. He composed anecdotes about the different classes and professions as well as commented generally on the base and noble motives of mankind.

Thus, Daudet's early works are not limited to those charming short stories about the Midi which have always entertained children and adults alike and which reappear with amazing frequency in the anthologies and French readers. To limit even these early writings to this stereotype would be to ignore over half the writings from the period and to deny the author his richness of subject matter and variety of approach. On the other hand, a consideration of all the works shows the literary evolution which culminated in the great Parisian novels. Examination of all the early works brings to light the fact that the theme of money--the moral degradation and legal crimes men commit to obtain it, the ravages of poverty, and the privileges of affluence--was present in Daudet's works before the Parisian novels where it was more fully and more extensively developed.

NOTES

CHAPTER II

¹Oeuvres Complètes, t. 1, pp. 80-81.

²Sachs, p. 41.

³Oeuvres Complètes, t. 2, p. 4.

⁴Ibid., p. 13.

⁵Ibid., p. 14.

⁶Ibid., p. 53.

⁷Ibid., p. 49.

⁸Ibid., t. 4, p. 93.

⁹Ibid., p. 95.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 129.

¹¹Ibid., p. 27.

¹²Ibid., p. 98.

¹³Ibid., p. 123.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 94.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 36.

CHAPTER III

THE RICH AND THE POOR

The disparities of position and fortune that Daudet noted in his novels among the fictional characters which he placed within the Second Empire and the Third Republic are historically accurate. The inequality of fortune encouraged a general effort among the various self-interest groups within the population to gain political and economic control of France and contributed to the turbulence which characterizes the entire nineteenth century. The events of 1848 encouraged the sense of class or alignment among the members of the middle class, the working class, and the inhabitants of rural France. The upper middle class or grande bourgeoisie had already exerted itself and realized certain ambitions when 1830 brought the promotion of this class and the demotion of the aristocracy. In February of 1848 the middle classes had one ambition: "Prendre la place de la grande bourgeoisie, pour recueillir les avantages accaparés par cette dernière."¹ Selfish but naïve, the middle class expected to use the workers as allies to overthrow the government and then grant them only a minimum number of concessions and exclude them from any real power. In actuality, the bloody days of June culminated in a pact which was made among all elements of the bourgeoisie and which was detrimental to the working class, a group

not yet united as a political force and still working for extremely low wages. The grande bourgeoisie regained political control of the country while the lower bourgeoisie had only formed a more concrete conception of its lack of political and economic power and its aspirations towards both more material wealth and a louder voice in the government.

The working class in Paris associated itself with the February revolution as it had previously done with that of 1830. Although it was now intent on avoiding the frustrating defeat, it was again defeated by a coalition of the middle classes. This isolation of the group and its subsequent suppression stimulated the growth of a class consciousness and began more serious efforts on the part of the group to assert itself and demand a larger portion of the country's wealth.

The rural population certainly arrived last at a consciousness and perhaps never really formed a cohesive group. Their isolation from each other and from the turbulent events in Paris, as well as the rigorous existence of the countryside, are important factors in the lack of unity among the peasants. It has also been shown by J. Lhomme in La Grande Bourgeoisie au Pouvoir that the prices of agricultural products rose considerably, by 17 per cent between 1835 and 1850, then by 44 per cent between 1850 and 1862, and finally by 9 per cent in 1872.² This amelioration of the rural economy was a large factor in the general lack of opposition to the Second Empire among the peasant population.

In actuality then, the population of the Second Empire

was divided into a number of smaller groups or classes based on occupation, education, and most important--wages. The panorama of this period which is given in Daudet's novels, illustrates the diversity of groups and disparity of conditions as the population from the aristocracy to the workers and peasants, are represented. This tableau suggests the efforts of each group to maintain itself in competition with the rest of the population and the struggle to acquire a larger portion of the national wealth and enjoy a larger degree of affluence. It shows the effects of increased wealth on those luckier ones who managed to climb higher in the structured society and the nefarious influences of poverty on those who were unable to improve their lot.

In keeping with the tendencies of the naturalist literature, however, those persons from the lower stations of life, specifically the petite bourgeoisie and the workers, are extensively studied. This latter group, the working class, was composed of craftsmen or artisans who worked in small shops or by themselves as well as those who were employed in the larger establishments such as the mines and factories. Statistics show that in 1851 there were only one and one-half million people employed in establishments having ten or more workers, while twice as many, or three million, were still in smaller workshops.

Aussi, ce qui caractérise l'industrie française pendant une grande partie du XIX^e siècle, c'est la coexistence de formes archaïques, petit atelier où vivent côte à côte patron et compagnons, fabrique dispersée à main-d'oeuvre semi-artisanale du type

XVIII^e siècle, et de la forme moderne de la fabrique concentrée.³

Conditions, however, were uniformly bad as the working day was very long, twelve hours in the provinces and eleven hours in Paris, places of work were unhealthy, and available lodgings were sordid. Until 1860 inflation absorbed all salary increases, and the buying power of this group was not improved. Between 1851 and 1857 the price of agricultural produce increased by 25% while the salary for men increased by 14 to 19% and that of women by 7 to 9%.⁴ After this date the salaries increased more than the cost of living, and this group enjoyed 20 to 30 per cent more buying power and began to share in the progress of the nineteenth century. Relatively speaking, however, these improvements were insignificant, and the working class, which toiled for an affluent society, did not participate in its prosperity or enjoy its luxuries. It remained in abject poverty, and the debilitating effects of this condition were inescapable, except for those persons of unusually strong character. This intolerable situation is depicted in Fromont jeune et Risler aîné and in Jack.

Désirée Delobelle, an appealing young girl whose pathetic story appears in Fromont jeune was one of the many who worked long hard hours at home to provide a luxury item for a brilliant society. These little domestic shops existed throughout Paris, and Daudet had searched hard to find the appropriate profession for his heroine:

Ah! j'en fouillai des maisons sombres, cette année-là, j'en grimpai des escaliers froids à rampe de

corde, cherchant mon milieu idéal dans le nombre infini des petits métiers. Je désespérais, à la fin; mais mon entêtement devait trouver sa récompense. Un jour, rue du Temple, sur un cartouche de cuir bouilli, dans un de ces cadres où, pour la commodité des chalands, sont inscrites et affichées toutes les industries d'une maison, je lus ces lettres d'or fané qui m'éblouirent:

OISEAUX ET MOUCHES
POUR
MODES⁵

Désirée, a slightly lame girl, spent her day in an armchair creating elegant little creatures that seemed ready to fly away from the tiny lodging to some gala ball. She and her mother had to work into the night just to support the family. The financial pressures were aggravated by the fact that Désirée and her mother also supported Monsieur Delobelle who had not worked since they left the provinces. An actor, Delobelle was waiting for some intelligent director to discover him. In the meantime he considered it necessary to maintain the proper dress, to entertain his fellow artists, and to refrain from looking for any other type of employment. As he said repeatedly, "Je n'ai pas le droit de renoncer au théâtre!" The egotist found it quite natural that his wife and daughter endured hard work and privation in order that he remain faithful to what he considered to be his sacred genius and would have been very surprised if someone had ever accused him of being a vain and selfish ass. Mother and daughter willingly devoted themselves to the same goal, absolutely blind in their belief in Monsieur Delobelle's talent; their faith in his future sustained them in their work. Many birds were decorated to maintain his style of living!

For years Désirée did not question the monotonous life of poverty because she was nurturing the hope that someday Risler's younger brother, Frantz, would love her and marry her. All the time that his attentiveness seemed to promise her this escape from her armchair and stuffed birds to a new and happier life, she was able to work diligently. In her case, the lack of money, instead of developing ugly characteristics, had, to the contrary, developed the qualities of patience, hard work, and thriftiness. The same perseverance and sense of honor which Maupassant so powerfully portrayed in Madame Loisel, the heroine of "The Diamond Necklace," motivated Désirée and enabled her to continue working and to believe in the future. These qualities which are so typical of the industrious segment of the Parisian petite bourgeoisie are poignantly described by Daudet who considers them to be the basis of the strength and moral fiber of the nation.

For Désirée, however, the hardship and drudgery finally overwhelmed her when Frantz left Paris without even saying good-bye. Disappointed in love and with no promise of escape, Désirée's existence appeared more miserable and somber than before. She could no longer endure her life, and so she sought deliverance in death by throwing herself in the Seine. As she left home headed toward the river, she finally realized that she had sacrificed her youth to her egotistical parents, and she cursed her destiny. But fate did not want Désirée to drown; someone pulled her out of the river, and the police took her home. She died several days later, as much from her shame at having attempted suicide as from pneumonia.

The most immediate cause of Désirée's despair had been Frantz' departure and the loss of any hope for a less difficult life. Those actually responsible, however, were her parents who had unpityingly required that she sacrifice her youth to support them. The circle of guilt should also be enlarged to include the cruel and impersonal economic system which catered to a luxury-seeking society and at the same time increased the margin of profit by underpaying the artisan. Consequently, the artisan tried to compensate for meager wages by working longer hours in order to make both ends meet. Those who could not endure this demanding pace fell by the wayside, victims of an industrializing society in which workers were expendable while the overriding concern was profit.

The significance of this episode is twofold. First, Désirée's plight was exemplary of this situation in France and accurately reflected the scale of values of the Second Empire. In addition, the pathetic overtones of the episode movingly dramatize the effects of the harsh economic system upon an underpaid and suffering work force. Unable to participate in the affluence of the Second Empire, and deprived of even the hope of a better future, they slowly lost all desire to work and even to live.

This example was typical since artisans like Désirée and her mother were scattered all over Paris, working in their private lodgings or gathered in small groups in workshops. The naturalists paid particular attention to this group of persons. Just three years later, in L'Assommoir,

Zola was depicting the work of the Lorilleux, who, in their tiny lodgings, spent their days soldering gold links to make chains. Another example taken from Fromont jeune is the friend of Désirée Delobelle, Sidonie Chèbe, who resembles the Lorilleux rather than Désirée in that the mean life and hard work had made her grasping and selfish.

Sidonie Chèbe was apprenticed to the owner of a shop where the workers made jewelry from imitation stones, paper flowers, and other decorative objects. While they worked in a small fifth floor room, their thoughts were elsewhere--on the latest styles, the gala events of the haute société or what they would do if rich. Unfortunately this was just wishful thinking, and like the majority of working girls, they made do with what they had. For entertainment when their long working day was over they put new ribbons in their hair and went to the local dance hall as does Gervaise's daughter in L'Assommoir, the famous to be Nana, who also started by working in an artificial flowers workshop.

This harsh life with its small mean pleasures could never satisfy the ambitious Sidonie. She was more serious in her desire to partake of the opulence around her and was meditating her own vengeance on the world which condemned her to string false pearls every day. In contrast with Désirée Delobelle, the lack of money developed in Sidonie nothing but envy, craftiness, and hatred. As she grew older these feelings saw their fruition in vicious acts of vengeance and a selfish accumulation of luxuries.

The ugly nature and evil aspirations of Sidonie were due at least in part to her youthful experience before entering apprenticeship when she had observed the fabulous world of the successful from closer range. A family friend named Risler was employed in a factory that was owned and operated by the Fromont family. Having heard Risler praise the darling little girl so often, Madame Fromont invited her to a Christmas party given for her daughter Claire. From then on Sidonie often visited Claire and her cousin Georges; this contact with the more affluent segment of society which so few working girls ever experienced served to whet Sidonie's appetite for a similar life. No doubt she did not realize the abyss that separated her from the Fromonts. For three years she savoured these borrowed moments and became very accustomed to gracious living. Then Claire was sent to a convent school. Sidonie still visited occasionally when Claire returned home, but Claire's girlfriends from the convent soon made her realize how visible her own poverty was. This unexpected discovery of the differences between their lives was a brutal awakening for the ambitious girl. Realizing the enormity of her desires and the near impossibility of fulfilling them, she became increasingly resentful of the society in which she lived and for which she worked.

The unwise kindness on the part of Madame Fromont had made of Sidonie a déclassée when she was still a child. The visits with the Fromont family gave her the desire and ambition to better herself socially and financially but provided no

respectable means to do so. It is the frustration and poverty of persons like Sidonie, here, or of Valérie Marneffe in La Cousine Bette which explains the blooming of these great courtesans who lived like queens during the Second Empire.

For Sidonie, the ascension to the demi-monde was slow and almost thwarted. While still bitter and discontented she had to enter the apprenticeship at the flower shop but did not forget her taste of luxury or resign herself to living without it. Her own existence seemed so drab and monotonous by comparison. Even holidays offered no reprieve. Sometimes Risler took the family to the countryside. Rising at four in the morning--the poor always pay for their pleasure--they took a crowded train out to the suburbs. But the wild flowers could not compare with the exotic bouquets she remembered in the Fromont home. At other times a walk on the crowded Parisian streets in the lavender dress which was lengthened each year was the only amusement. Thus, each day at work she was conscious of the Fromont factory located nearby. The whirling of the machines, the noise of the workers--they promised money, unlimited money, which she wanted and for which she waited.

Sidonie's first opportunity to escape from this existence came when Claire renewed their acquaintance and invited her to stay at the Fromont country home. Georges, Claire's cousin, was also there. Sidonie immediately recognized in this weak young man a means by which she could legitimately enter the longed for other world of ease and affluence.

Calculating every move and using all her feminine wiles, she ensnared the unsuspecting boy. Her charm and her coquetry, slightly vulgar to be sure, captivated him, and he promised to marry her. For Sidonie, "le premier baiser d'amour n'avait éveillé que des idées d'ambition et de luxe."⁶

Georges might actually have married Sidonie if it had not been for Monsieur Fromont's sudden death. His last wish was that Georges and Claire be married and that Georges continue the business in partnership with his experienced employee, Risler. To Sidonie this was treason. She was furious, but all she could do was contemplate the wonderful fortune that was escaping her and the unspeakable mediocrity to which she was being condemned forever. Helplessly angry, she went to bed and stayed there for weeks. Then one day her conniving mind found the obvious solution, and she confessed to her mother the "secret of her unhappiness": she loved Risler in spite of the twenty years or more difference in their ages.

When Risler heard this unexpected news, he fell hopelessly in love and wanted to marry the young girl. She had arrived; the factory and all it promised were hers now. It is not surprising that Sindoie's mother summarized the match in the following manner: "Ma fille épouse Fromont jeune et Risler aîné." This calculating attitude toward marriage which was exemplified by Sidonie and her mother is an echo of the behavior of the wealthier bourgeoisie for whom the augmentation of one's income was a prime consideration in

decisions of strategic importance such as marriage. Although few girls of Sidonie's station in life could expect to find a match as advantageous as she had, they could hope to better themselves in some small measure by a shrewd choice of husband.

In a sense Sidonie was more dangerous than those who were overtly the paid companions of wealthy, established businessmen. In her disguise of respectability as a lawful wife she was given more freedom and responsibility by her husband; consequently she was more easily able to strip him of his wealth and betray his confidence and love. This marriage, which will be discussed later in this chapter, became the story of her insatiable desire for the luxuries and pleasures of wealth which would destroy the happiness of those around her.

Among the working girls in Paris Sidonie was one of the "lucky" ones who significantly increased her lot. Most resembled the girls with whom she worked who resigned themselves to the hard work and poverty which accompanied their station. A few rebelled and strove to escape, but the way led to prostitution, with the prettiest and most intelligent ones making their way up to the demi-monde while the majority of them rolled lower and lower into the gutters. Sidonie was one of the few who connived her way to wealth and respectability. Those like Désirée who were too virtuous to try prostitution and too scrupulous to lie and cheat had no reprieve. The alternatives were grim: resignation or suicide. This sensitive portrayal of the various alternatives facing the working girls is the first of many examples which

illustrate Daudet's understanding of the social structure and his profound sympathy for its victims.

While the lives of Désirée and Sidonie show how difficult life was for the artisans, the workers in the factories and mines faced an even more harsh and demanding routine for which they also received minimum wages. Jack describes how they worked hard, under miserable conditions, and struggled to make both ends meet. They knew long periods of unemployment and the lack of money while bills piled up and they feared being evicted from their lodgings. The descriptions in both Fromont jeune et Risler aîné and Jack reflect actual conditions during the Second Empire, as Daudet carefully researched a number of different locales in order to portray them with accuracy.

The hero of this novel, Jack,¹ was the illegitimate son of a courtesan named Ida de Barancy. Unfortunately for him, his mother became involved with a selfish and egotistical man named D'Argenton who was extremely jealous of Ida's affection for Jack and resented having to support this intruder. Consequently, D'Argenton schemed to separate them and succeeded in forcing Ida to allow her son to be trained as a worker at the iron foundries of Indret in spite of his mental acumen and frail physical condition. Henceforth, the boy had to support himself.

¹The life of Jack is a fictionalized account of the life of a young acquaintance of Daudet, Raoul D....

Jack's initiation as a worker was also the beginning of his physical and intellectual decline. A description of the conditions where he worked explains this by showing how miserable the laborer's life was and how pitilessly he was sacrificed to industrial advancement. At Indret Jack was subjected to the damp and the fog that crept into the factories and mixed with the intense heat, the odors of oil and fire, the fine black dust, and the steam. Each room was packed with men and machines, and the noise was deafening. Jack first worked at the vise in a room where a hundred men were pounding iron. Despite the weight of the tools, the blisters on his hands, and his aching body, Jack worked until it seemed that he himself had become a tool. He always kept a certain respect, almost a fear, of the enormous machines. The others, more accustomed to the brutal life, were reminded that the machines command respect when a new machine was put into operation. One of the workers helping to raise it into place was caught in the mechanism and severed in two.

This was the earsplitting noise and noxious atmosphere in which the workers were forced to toil in order to provide bread and a roof for themselves and their families. It is not surprising that they had no time or energy for study to better themselves. When Jack first went to Indret his friend, Doctor Rivals, gave him many books so he could continue his studies. Unfortunately, the fatigue of work, the necessity of practicing his new skills during his day off, and the lack of guidance in his studies soon discouraged him, and

he put away his books. After four years of hard labor the changes in his appearance were dramatic:

Le Jack de ce temps-là lui faisait l'effet d'un Jack d'une race supérieure et plus fine, qui n'avait rien laissé de ses cheveux blonds, de son grain de peau rosé et doux, à ce grand diable, tanné, efflanqué, aux pommettes rouges, au dos voûté, aux épaules hautes si maigres sous la blouse.⁷

Jack also had a hacking cough and was subject to fevers.

This experience was not unusual since young children and also women were often employed in the factories and mines. The partial mechanization of these establishments due to the scientific progress of the century made it possible as well as highly profitable to replace men by women and children in the jobs which required relatively little physical force.

... les femmes sont payées deux fois et même trois fois moins que les hommes, les enfants ne reçoivent qu'un salaire dérisoire. Aussi, dès 1847, comptait-on, dans les établissements occupant plus de dix ouvriers, à côté de 670 000 hommes employés, 254 000 femmes et 130 000 enfants.⁸

The brutal transformation of Jack caused by the rude life of the factory is historically accurate and was the fate of all children born in the working class since they were sent to the factory as soon as they were old enough, in order to augment the family income. A doctor in Nantes, A. Guépin, documents the debilitating effects of these conditions:

Parmi les maladies des tisserands qui composent en grande partie cette dernière classe, les plus communes sont les catarrhes et les phthisies pulmonaires, le rhumatismes chroniques, les névralgies, et peut-être plus particulièrement la névralgie faciale, l'angine, l'ophtalmie. Les enfants, sans parler des scrofules qui se présentent chez eux avec les formes les plus hideuses, sont décimés, dès leur première enfance, ...⁹

Despite Jack's physical deterioration, his wages had not been augmented because he could not acquire this skill that was too strenuous for his frail body and completely foreign to his nature. At the suggestion of Roudic, with whom he lodged, he decided to sign up as a stoker on the transatlantic vessel, Cydnus. This decision was motivated by the knowledge that he would make twice as much money on the ship. The heat was unbearable in the winter and inconceivable in the summer. A normal breath of air was so cold by comparison that only a gulp of liquor, almost pure alcohol, could warm him. Shoveling coal in the hot, humid atmosphere reeking with oil and coal dust while swaying to the ship's movement took brute force and determined resistance. From the first day his life was "Feu dedans et feu dehors, flamme sur flamme, alcool sur charbon, c'est ainsi désormais qu'il allait vivre!" ¹⁰

After three years as a stoker the changes in Jack's mental and physical state were more pronounced:

Vêtu de sa vareuse en laine bleue, la figure encore noire de son ancien métier, les traits grossis, déformés sous une couche de hâle où la petite moustache blonde ressortait avec une couleur d'épi brûlé, les yeux rouges et sans cils, le teint enflammé, les joues creuses, désœuvré, découragé, enveloppé de cette torpeur qui suit les grandes catastrophes ... ¹¹

Thus, the sinister prediction of Doctor Rivals had come true and the new atmosphere to which Jack was exposed had exercised its influence. He was so changed that his mother, who scarcely recognized him, was ashamed of her boy. The alert youth of exceptional intellectual curiosity had lost his former will power and purpose in life and moved through each day like a

sleepwalker. While conscious of his deteriorated condition, the downtrodden worker was helpless to combat it because of physical and moral exhaustion.

Only after he left this debilitating environment and returned to a house his mother owned in the country did he begin to resemble his former self. This natural rehabilitation might have been successful if the wounds of his years of work had not been so deep. His body, however, was too weak, and he died, another victim of the hardships of industrialization.

Jack's seeming advantages--a superior intelligence and better education than most workers--were to no avail when he was subjected to the conditions in which the worker lived and worked. Jack's experience is a dramatic illustration of the ordeals that workers were subjected to in order to support and maintain the prosperous economy of the Second Empire. Like the girls in the shops and ateliers, they were the victims of industrialization, pawns in the desperate game to get rich. While their labor in the new and expanding industries made one segment of the society extremely wealthy, they reaped only ills and abuses.

Many lived like Jack in poverty until they died of exhaustion, while others, like several characters in Jack, succumbed to the temptation of a less rigorous existence. The man known in this novel as Ribarot or "le camarade de Bélisaire" was a drunkard who had not worked in years. Drink, combined with his lazy nature, made him a pleasure-

seeking habitué of the cafés who depended on his parasitic relationship with Bélisaire for food and lodging. Often the presence of one such person would encourage his associates into the same sordid existence. Zola's L'Assommoir depicts this as Coupeau's drinking finally engulfs Gervaise too.

Nantais was another character in Jack who sought relief through the cafés from the hardships of the Indret factories. In his desire to realize an escape from the unmitigated drudgery of his existence, he began gambling. As often happened, he incurred large debts which he could not pay. Desperate for money he stole his cousin's dowry by forcing her step-mother, who was his mistress, to help him.

The presence of these unsavory characters gives Jack an added dimension. It is often pointed out that Daudet had a penchant for the poor and the suffering as shown by the fact that he wrote about them frequently and compassionately. His personal feelings did not, however, blind him to the harsher realities of life, and he was able to recognize human frailties among the poor as well as the rich. He noted how poverty could corrupt a man and tempt him to steal, or discourage a man so that he retreated into inaction. As such, his novels reflect the trend among the naturalists to study and understand these classes which had been largely ignored by literature. The merit of Daudet is not only to have seen these effects, but to have recognized their causes and revealed them to the reading public.

In effect, the material and psychological sufferings

endured by workers in the factories and mines had demoralizing effects on the class as a whole. The rapid increase of alcoholism, for example, was one of the results because men and also women turned to liquor as the only available distraction that helped them to forget the terrible monotony of their work in the factories and to escape from the hideous misery of their cold, dingy lodgings and hungry children. As Dupeux has pointed out, the proletariat, which lived and died in these factories during the age of industrialization, paid in many different ways the costly price of the economic development during the Second Empire.

Misère physiologique (dans le département de la Loire, la durée moyenne de la vie, au milieu du XIX^e siècle, est de 59 ans pour les cultivateurs, mais de 42 ans pour les passementiers et de 37 ans pour les mineurs) et misère morale (démoralisation, alcoolisme, cupidité même, car l'ouvrier a souvent tendance à refuser de faire instruire ses enfants pour les envoyer au plus tôt à l'usine d'où ils rapporteront un salaire, si maigre soit-il) l'ont profondément marqué.¹²

While Daudet may have understood, he never excused these weaknesses among the poor by virtue of the fact that they were poor. Instead, he showed that while some had become lazy and dishonest, there were others besides Jack who succeeded in maintaining an honest and industrious life. A widow, Madame Weber (Jack), sold bread every day to support herself and her son. While not the easiest life for a woman alone in Paris, it was respectable. Another reliable worker in Jack was Roudic. This man entered the iron foundries as a youth and proved to be a competent worker who was soon promo-

ted to foreman and given a small raise in salary. By thrift and economy he was able to scrape together enough money to buy a small house and to put aside a small sum of money for his retirement. In Fromont jeune et Risler aîné Sigismond Planus was the loyal cashier who had been with the company for thirty years. Honest to a fault, he scrupulously guarded the company's interests. These characters represent an ideal which Daudet liked to think did exist in some small corner of France. The presence of such persons in his novels forms a counterpart to those characters motivated by avarice and greed and is evidence of his overriding faith in human nature.

Yet even for these workers who tried, it was very difficult to support a family on the low wages. It was necessary for women and children to work and keep the same long hours as the men. Fromont jeune et Risler aîné describes women working in factories who have to use their half-hour lunch period to rush home to tidy the house, to feed a child, or to care for an elderly person. In Jack the widow Madame Weber rose at five in the morning to sell bread. Unable to take her little boy with her, she left him at home tied to a chair. Although he was not happy, he was relatively safe and out of mischief.

What the novel does not indicate is that this little boy must have been one of the hardier children to have survived past infancy. His future promised neither the education nor recreation that the children of the middle class could expect. He would, instead, be sent to work in the factories

when just six or seven in order to provide the bread that fed him. The influence of the insalubrious conditions coupled with the malnutrition that plagued all those in the working class resulted in the incredibly short life expectancy of one and one-half years for every child at birth according to a study done in 1827 among weavers and spinners, while the life expectancy at birth of children born into the families of merchants and businessmen was twenty-eight years.¹³ The fact that Madame Weber's son could expect the same fate as Jack was, perhaps, glossed over by Daudet.

The man who worked continuously from childhood could find only the most sordid lodgings which were extremely expensive because of the rising cost of living and the low wages. Jack's friends Bélisaire and Madame Weber could not afford to marry and set up housekeeping without first finding a lodger to share expenses. Sharing an apartment was a common practice among the workers, and this example is unusual only in that so few persons lived in the one room. Research done during the period indicates that families of five or six, and sometimes two families together, were packed into "une chambre de trois à quatre mètres, chambre humide, mal éclairée, mal aérée; ou bien, sous les toits, dans des greniers trop froids en hiver, trop chauds en été."¹⁴

When Bélisaire did find someone, his wedding was typical of that celebrated by the poor. Whereas the bourgeoisie usually devoted two days to the occasion, one for the civil ceremony and another for the religious ceremony, the

poor combined both into one long, fatiguing day. They also walked to the ceremonies as a coach would be too expensive. If the bridegroom were able, then he entertained the group in a restaurant or café. Even such a meager celebration was paid for by months of savings and would not be repeated soon or often.

When Bélisaire and Madame Weber were married, the wedding party dined at a restaurant for what seemed to them to be the enormous sum of one hundred sous per person. This gave everyone the precarious illusion of wealth and made them progressively gayer. Only Bélisaire's family made some disgruntled comments because they were unhappy at losing the vache à lait of the family. Because the group was generally having such a good time, other persons in the restaurant joined them. In the midst of this frivolity the deep love and affection of the newly married couple affirms that happiness is possible no matter what one's station in life.

In contrast to this cheerful scene, the wedding scene in Zola's L'Assommoir strikes a more somber note. The celebration of the marriage of Gervaise and Coupeau takes place in an atmosphere of vulgarity and sordid poverty. The gay, festive spirit and warm affection in Jack is reduced to petty bickering and physical appetite in L'Assommoir. Everyone had to pay for the cost of his own dinner, and there were comical but saddening scenes when the restaurant owner asked for an extra sum of money which no one wanted to pay. Symbolically perhaps, the sun shined for Bélisaire while it rained in

torrents on Coupeau's wedding day. Zola was describing what he called "la déchéance d'une famille ouvrière, dans le milieu empesté de nos faubourgs."¹⁵ Daudet was showing the opposite: that the effects of heredity and environment were strong but not necessarily irrevocable, and that even the poorest citizens of France could find some measure of happiness and respectability.

Misfortunes were epidemic, however, and when they occurred the poor found health facilities to be as inadequate as their housing. Although charity hospitals were improved during the Second Empire, and two convalescent homes were established in Paris, they were so few in comparison to the needs that the sick were almost relieved to hear the doctor pronounce them ill enough to be admitted. Daudet was able to describe the conditions in these hospitals in Jack because of the first-hand reports that a young friend, Raoul D..., had sent him from such a hospital, in addition to his own visits to Raoul while he was there. Daudet specifically states that he restricted his descriptions to rather brief passages since the brothers Goncourt had already depicted the atmosphere of hospital life in Soeur Philomène (1860).

Daudet later confirmed the fact that he had used this material collected during the illness of his friend Raoul D... to describe Jack's treatment in a charity hospital. When Jack was ill he waited for the doctor in a crowded room. There, in front of the others, the doctor gave each sickly person a cursory examination. Some were dismissed as still

too well to be admitted to the charity hospital, and only the "lucky" ones, of whom Jack was one, were admitted. Even the doctor who examined him, accustomed as he was to the deplorable health of the poor, was moved to pity by Jack's state. He ordered the boy to be taken immediately to a hospital where he lay on a cot until a bed was vacant. The place was so crowded that incoming patients had to wait until death freed a bed in one of the wards.

These pictures of the working class show the feelings of envy, hate, resignation, and despair that the poor experienced because of their lack of money. They also express Daudet's conviction that an honest and virtuous life was possible even though exceptional under the adverse conditions which plagued the working class. Roudic, Bélisaire, Madame Weber, and Jack accepted their life and tried to make it bearable. Others gave up and sank lower and lower into drinking, gambling and thievery. Occasionally someone like Sidonie succeeded in climbing up from this wretched life. For the misery and suffering of all these persons Daudet expressed sympathy and compassion. His attitude was summed up in the dedication of Jack: 'livre de pitié, de colère et d'ironie.'

Despite Daudet's personal optimism, the conditions described in Jack create the impression that this measure of happiness, even though very small, was rare and lend credence to the graphic conclusion drawn by Villermé in 1840.

Il faut admettre, dit Villermé, que la famille dont le travail est si peu rétribué ne subsiste avec ses gains seuls qu'autant que le mari et la femme se portent bien, sont employés pendant toute l'année, n'ont aucun vice et ne supportent d'autre charge que celle de leurs deux enfants en bas âge. Supposez un troisième enfant, un chômage, une maladie, le manque d'économie, des habitudes ou seulement une occasion fortuite d'intempérance, et cette famille se trouve dans la plus grande gêne, dans une misère affreuse, il faut venir à son secours.¹⁶

In confirming this picture the novels present a memorable tableau of the somber life of the worker, the effort to earn the daily bread and stay alive despite adverse conditions of a hostile destiny. They ignore, however, that complaint, sometimes barely audible, sometimes a bitter outcry, which disturbed the oppressive atmosphere of the forty years from 1830 to 1870. The years between 1851 and 1871 saw the rise of the worker movement which demanded the right to coalition and association in order to achieve higher pay and better working conditions. Bitter discontent was manifested after 1864 in an outbreak of strikes. The obvious fact that the worker did not participate in the immense wealth of the Second Empire and the tragic consequences of this injustice are attested to by Daudet's novels, but they do not show the growing labor movement as do the works like Germinal by Zola.

Daudet also wrote about the peasants and the conditions in rural France although not as extensively as he had about the worker. This was probably because his novels are mainly about Paris where the peasant did not play a prominent role. When Daudet did mention this group, he relied upon the

information which he acquired during trips to the Midi and on his childhood memories. The peasants portrayed by him are usually industrious, honest people from the Midi who enjoy a better than average standard of living.

Typical of this portrayal is Divonne, the aunt of Jean Gaussin (Sapho). This young peasant woman was married to Césaire Gaussin despite the objections of his class-conscious bourgeois family. If Divonne had been from one of the well-off peasant families in Provence that had become rich tilling the soil and working hard in the vineyards and olive groves, the Gaussins might have accepted the marriage. She was, however, the daughter of a fisherman who came to the Gaussin residence three times a week to do sewing and mending. The fierce pride of the bourgeois could not admit a penniless peasant into the family. Both Divonne and Césaire Gaussin were scorned until the illness of Césaire's sister-in-law brought the family together. The task of running the sister-in-law's household and raising her children fell to Divonne whose loving devotion and capable management finally overrode her lowly origins and gained her the love and admiration of the class conscious family. Years later, each time her nephew Jean thought of home, he thought of her.

... la première figure évoquée, le premier nom prononcé c'était Divonne, la paysanne au grand coeur qu'il sentait cachée derrière la gentille-homme et la tenant debout par l'effort de sa volonté.¹⁷

Madame Jansoulet, the mother of le Nabab was a woman of similar strength and fortitude. When her son suddenly

became rich, he had given her Saint-Romans de Bellaigue, a vast château on the banks of the Rhône which had once been inhabited by some farmer-general during the reign of Louis IXV. The magnificent estate, renovated and refurnished, was completely foreign to Madame Jansoulet's simple tastes and peasant origins. She was unable to become accustomed to this splendor and preferred to live in the steward's quarters. There she maintained an economical and well-ordered life, considering herself

comme dépositaire de ce bien magnifique, qu'elle gardait pour le compte de son fils et voulait lui rendre en bon état, le jour où, se trouvant assez riche, fatigué de vivre chez les "Turs," il viendrait, selon sa promesse, demeurer avec elle sous les ombrages de Saint-Romans.¹⁸

The appearance of such basic women on the Parisian scene was a brutal contrast to that corrupt society. As such, they represent a certain ideal of honesty and purity. Divonne's nephew Jean, who was living in Paris, realized this. As he became more and more degraded by his sordid liaison with Fanny Legrand, he was ashamed to speak of Divonne in front of his mistress. It was as though he were degrading his aunt by associating her in any way with Fanny. Likewise, when Madame Jansoulet arrived in Paris, she contrasted abruptly with the political intrigue and corruption that was engulfing and destroying her son, le Nabab. She was like a breath of fresh air from the countryside that refreshed the Parisians who had grown accustomed to the sordid atmosphere of their city.

Unscrupulous and greedy peasants did exist, of course, and Daudet did not ignore them. The Valmajour family in Numa

Roumestan was among this group. Although their story took place during the Third Republic (1873), it would have been the same during the Second Empire since rural living conditions remained basically unchanged after 1860. Valmajour was a young and handsome tambourine player who was admired by Numa and his sister-in-law, Hortense, at a festival in Provence. Later they paid a visit to the small farm where Valmajour lived with his father and sister, Audiberte. Enthusiastically, Numa suggested that they come to Paris where Valmajour's artistic talent would be appreciated and bring him large sums of money. After the mention of money the Valmajour family seriously considered Numa's proposition. They worked hard to make a living from their property as Audiberte explained, perhaps with some exaggeration.

Elle recommençait à geindre sur les vignes, la gar-
 ance, le vermillon, les vers à soie, toutes les
 richesses du pays disparues. Il fallait trimmer au
 soleil, travailler comme des satyres ...¹⁹

This arduous and hazardous existence made them greedy for an easier and safer life. The desire for lucre shone in their eyes as their minds contemplated the unbelievable sum of two hundred francs for each performance. Soon after Numa's visit they sold their farm and moved to Paris.

The disastrous results of this move illustrated the debilitating effects of a radical change of environment and loss of income. These peasants were unaccustomed to crowded lodgings, busy streets, and damp, cold weather, and felt like strangers in a foreign country. Valmajour no longer

resembled a handsome young prince of the Midi who had fascinated Hortense. To earn money he became a cheap entertainer in a vulgar show at le skating. With a powdered face, waxed moustache, and ridiculous costume of yellow and blue, he mimicked the ancient troubadours. Since Numa could not make good his exaggerated prediction of two hundred francs for each performance, he tried to impress the Valmajour family with his ministerial authority. When this failed, he simply ignored them and their predicament, which was worsening daily because of their need for a dependable income. Because Numa had refused to help them, Audiberte tried to get money by blackmailing Hortense into marrying her brother. Then, in a desperate and vindictive gesture, she revealed Numa's marital infidelity to his wife. In a sense she was only adopting the ignoble ways of Paris in a futile effort to survive.

The peasant in Daudet's novels has several functions which are shown by the characters discussed above. First, the peasant often represents an ideal which is opposed to the corruption pervading the Parisian scene. Thus, Madame Jansoulet is completely indifferent to the enormous wealth of her son and the luxurious home that is given her while all around her persons are using the vilest means to obtain part of her son's fortune. Secondly, the move of the peasant from the provinces to Paris often results in his debasement. This illustrates the corruption prevalent in the large city. It also suggest an idea dear to the naturalists and already mentioned in connection with Jack: the influence any

environment exerts on those who are exposed to it, and only exceptional persons are able to withstand the effects of unfavorable conditions.

The workers and the peasants were not the only groups who found it difficult to make a living in Paris. The petite bourgeoisie also struggled to make both ends meet. Miss Fricker described them as "un trait d'union entre ce peuple et la classe dirigeante."²⁰ Their way of life was closer to that of the masses of workers than to that of the more powerful classes on whose decisions they were dependent, and the poorest among them were often assimilated by the working class. Aware of their tenuous positions, they reacted by extreme class consciousness--striving to maintain that nuance of difference between themselves and the worker.

Daudet described this group in Fromont jeune et Risler aîné and Le Nabab. He was personally acquainted with this group of people which was composed largely of clerks, salesmen, and minor civil servants. His own father had tried many of these employments after failing as a small manufacturer, and the family had experienced the same financial problems as the petite bourgeoisie. In 1870 Daudet moved to the Marais district of Paris. There he resided at the Hotel Lamoignon, a building animated by dozens of shops and small factories. This area of Paris had been used by religious orders in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. With the reign of Henri IV the nobility moved into the area. The Hotel Lamoignon was built for Diane de France, daughter of Henri II. After the

Revolution the area rapidly changed hands, becoming dominated by small industrialists and shopkeepers. Living here re-acquainted Daudet with the life of the petite bourgeoisie, and his instinctive compassion in the face of suffering made him sympathetic to its struggles and needs. Nevertheless, he was perceptively objective, distinguishing between the hard working members and social parasites.

Ferdinand Chèbe (Fromont jeune) falls into this second category. He had been a salesman until a fall from his horse put an end to all work. He used this accident as an excuse for his own laziness, pretending that he could not accept any job which required him to sit down. He spent the rest of his life supposedly looking for le commerce debout, becoming "un de ces bourgeois paresseux et à projets comme il y en a tant à Paris."²¹ Having long since spent his wife's dowry, he and his family had to live on a small pension which Madame Chèbe received. The daughter, Sidonie, was sent to work to learn a trade while her father idled away every day. Basically he was a very selfish and lazy person who was anxious that someone else support him.

The Chèbes were very conscious of their social status. Madame Chèbe, long resigned to her husband's idle ways, had only one wish--not to be mistaken for a worker's wife. This deeply ingrained vanity had no basis in reality as many workers' wives were better off than she was, and her own daughter was employed in a workshop. Monsieur Chèbe, more envious by nature, was jealous of the financially secure and

rising bourgeoisie. He begrudged his daughter her visits to the well-to-do Fromont family because he was not invited too. At her wedding to Risler he resented the fact that the wealthy Georges Fromont was given the place of honor. These rich bourgeois, he mused, have too much: "Tout aux Fromont et rien aux Chèbe. ... Et ces gens-là s'étonnent qu'on fasse des révolutions! ..." ²² Although the middle classes had not succeeded in deposing the grande bourgeoisie during the Revolution of 1848, this failure had in no way diminished their envy, and they still coveted the wealth of the upper classes and the power and position that accompanied it. Nevertheless, the dissatisfied group would not make another attempt to capture the political power until the 1870's.

On a less ambitious scale, however, many of the petite bourgeoisie connived to separate the wealthy from some of their money. It is historically credible that Monsieur Chèbe was quick to take advantage of his daughter's rich marriage. He saw in her husband, Risler, the possibility of easy wealth for himself and soon obtained a little house in the country from Risler. Like most of the bourgeois living in apartments in Paris, the Chèbes had always wanted their own plot of land. The ambitious father-in-law soon discovered that this unearned good fortune did not satisfy him. He wanted something more pretentious and decided that he would like to open some kind of store in Paris. To obtain this he arranged to meet his son-in-law at the Café Brasserie. By coincidence, his friend Delobelle was also there waiting with

a request for Risler. Naturally each was resentful and suspicious of the other because each wanted Risler's undivided attention and large resources for himself. When their prey did not appear, Delobelle and Chèbe relented out of boredom and began conversing with one another. As is often the case, they envied and disliked the man whose favors they had come to ask. They were irritated because he had the income that they were unwilling to work for. It annoyed them to admit that the fruition of their projects depended on his decisions and his money. Thus, they vented this ill humor on the absent one, speaking of him with derision:

Ce Risler, avec ses airs bon enfant, n'était au fond qu'un égoïste, un parvenu. Ils se moquaient de son accent, de sa tournure, imitaient certaines de ses manies. Ensuite, ils parlèrent de son ménage, et baissant la voix, se faisaient des confidences, riaient familièrement, redevenus amis.²³

When Risler entered the café, the hunters began stalking their victim. He was persuaded by his son-in-law to pay for a store but refused Delobelle's request.

Although of a similar station in life, Monsieur Joyeuse in Le Nabab was as honest and industrious as Chèbe or Delobelle were lazy and deceitful. As an employee of a large bank Joyeuse felt that he was part of a complex and powerful organization and was proud of this association. Actually the possibility of his advancement was extremely limited since he had no influential friends or family although his wife did come from a family of noble origins. Like Madame Chèbe she jealously maintained a style of living suggestive of what she

considered to be her social position. This vanity of class was prevalent at every level in France.

When Madame Joyeuse died, the family began economizing to compensate for her extravagances. Joyeuse and his four daughters lived in a small fifth floor apartment where the oldest daughter, Aline or "Bonne Mamman" as she was nicknamed, was able to run the household with the help of one servant. This woman had been with the family in better days and remained now as a reminder of their former prosperity. Monsieur Joyeuse worked during the day and spent the evenings with his family in the living room where they all gathered so as to use just one light. The sisters lengthened dresses or put new ribbons on old bonnets. The older girls also studied under the direction of Aline. As was often the case in families which had experienced a change of fortune, the oldest, Aline, had received a better education than her sisters, and now she instructed them in their studies.

In short, the individual members of the family were united by mutual love and understanding, and their life exemplified all the bourgeois virtues that should assure a comfortable life and gradual augmentation of wealth: practical knowledge, prudence, order, economy, and reliability. In contrast, the egoism, illusions, and deceit of Delobelle had reduced his family to near poverty, blinded his wife to reality, and corrupted their home so that in desperation their daughter took refuge in suicide.

The virtuous life of the Joyeuses might have come to

a similar and pathetic end when the Baron Hemerlingue arbitrarily dismissed Monsieur Joyeuse from his establishment after ten years of faithful service. Despite the fact that the clerk was then desperately in need of money to replace his salary, he never considered humiliating himself to ask favors or request aid as did the unprincipled Chèbe who tried to swindle or bribe his son-in-law out of money. In this Joyeuse is one of those few exceptions to the general attitude of pragmatism which was shown by Daudet to be prevalent among most members of the bourgeoisie. Instead, the jobless man searched patiently for another situation until a miracle (or the author's indulgence) provided him with an income equal to the one he had lost. A friend who was aware of his predicament sent a young man named Paul de Géry to take accounting lessons from Joyeuse.

The irreproachable actions and exemplary family life of the Joyeuses differed sharply from the corrupt elements which dominated society. Le Nabab is structured so that this contrast is very startling. The first four chapters describe the brilliant society of the Second Empire where the wealthy rising classes dominate the public scene. In private these persons are revealed as base, grasping, and hypocritical. The vilest means were used by persons of high rank and respected reputation to obtain wealth, power, and position. Only after this picture of wealth and corruption has been vividly presented does the reader meet the Joyeuse family. In a small corner of Paris are preserved honesty, moderation, and thriftiness. The contrast is obvious. Although such islands are

scarce in the turbulent ocean of Parisian life, this is where one finds "la vraie famille."²⁴

As the novel unfolds, the juxtaposition of these two atmospheres serves to emphasize the moral rectitude of one and the impure corruption of the other. The education, manners, and virtues of the four daughters are in sharp contrast to the character of Félicia Ruys, the illegitimate daughter of a sculptor who recognized her and raised her in his disorganized bohemian life. She was a sculptress herself and was at ease in the world of la bohème. Both Félicia and Aline Joyeuse were in love with Paul de Géry. His choice was the choice of two different worlds. Aline offered love, affection, and a home; Félicia promised passion and excitement.

These two worlds confronted each other on Sunday when both the rich and the humble visited the Bois de Boulogne. The Joyeuses showed Paul an entirely new aspect of the park, not the long avenues or the lake seen from a moving carriage but the real forest which was hidden behind the well-trimmed hedges. Here, in the middle of Paris, they enjoyed the simple pleasures of a day in the country. A glimpse of the Duc de Mora and Félicia together interrupted the pastoral scene. The flaunting of the illicit relationship between the Duke and Félicia was even more degrading when compared with the love between Paul and Aline.

It is evident that the Joyeuses were meant to illustrate Daudet's respect and admiration for the honest, hard working members of the small bourgeoisie. He felt that "les

qualités qui ont fait la force de la petite bourgeoisie française" should be respected, not ridiculed.²⁵ As he said about a character in Nostalgie de Caserne, "Je n'ai pas le droit de te trouver ridicule." In creating both the Joyeuse family and the Chèbe family Daudet showed the different attitudes that this class encompassed. Chèbe was dissatisfied with his lot and jealous of those who had more than he. As he had insinuated at Sidonie's wedding, this discontent caused many of the petite bourgeoisie to participate in the revolutions which had disturbed France periodically since 1789. On the other hand, Joyeuse accepted his position which required him to work very hard for low wages. He could do this because money was not more important than his family and their happiness together.

Daudet approved of persons like Joyeuse who lived obscurely, modestly, and virtuously. They represented the true backbone and strength of France. Others, however, objected to this part of the book. Zola called it "le coin le moins réussi du roman"²⁶ because the family appeared to him to be contrived and artificial beside the colorful portrayal of the vices of Paris. Thus, the final effect was a mockery of goodness.

Et la pauvre famille Joyeuse disparaît presque entièrement, sous l'abondance et sous la puissance des terribles peintures qui l'entourent. A côté du relief puissant des choses vues, elle devient toute pâle, elle sent trop l'honnêteté conventionnelle. C'est en somme, aimer fort mal l'honnêteté, selon moi, que de lui faire jouer un si pauvre rôle.²⁷

This appears to be an unfair criticism. The tranquil

life of the Joyeuse family might appear banal to some when compared with the turbulent and corrupt society also portrayed in Le Nabab. Yet this element of honesty is universal. Ten years before, la petite Lalie and the blacksmith Goujet-Gueule-d'or appeared in Zola's L'Assommoir. These persons admittedly were also difficult to find. They did, however, exist, and no picture of society was complete without them.

Any discussion of the class structure in France during the Second Empire would be incomplete without mention of the average or middle bourgeois. His comfortable life, well regulated and orderly, often made him the victim of satire by authors from Henri Monnier to Eugène Labiche. He was, however, well-off, depending on investments, property, business or a position in government to assure him of continued security. Daudet studied this expanding group in Fromont jeune et Risler aîné. His original intention was to write about a business association, but as he became interested in the psychology of his characters, he concentrated more on the study of the main character Sidonie than on the business association. Nevertheless, the industrial milieu is still important as it provides the background for the novel.

The Fromont family is among the newly rich families that profited from the events of the turn of the century. The economic liberty which resulted from the Revolution of 1789 encouraged the growth of capitalism and the concentration of enterprises, opened to the bourgeoisie an immense number of possibilities for development, and favored the ascendancy of a

new bourgeoisie of nouveaux riches who resembled the fictional Fromonts. While inflation worked hardship on those segments of the bourgeoisie that depended on fixed incomes or luxury items and the blockade hurt merchants who depended on the ports, there were others, luckier, perhaps less encumbered by scruples, who quickly took advantage of the changing times and rapidly climbed the ladder of success. Fortunes were amassed by shrewd speculation with currency and promissory notes. The sale of confiscated goods favored those able to buy in large quantities and resell later at a profit. Clever men took advantage of the blockade and economic crisis to trade in contrebande and made fortunes by selling war supplies to the government. Dupeux underlines the immoral character of this class of newly rich.

Cette nouvelle bourgeoisie, vite enrichie et peu encombrée de principes, a été sans doute plus brutale que l'ancienne, et certainement plus cynique; car elle a pu traverser, sans encombre, les différents régimes que la France a connus en une génération, et tirer de cet exploit des leçons de scepticisme politique auquel étaient étrangers les bourgeois du XVIII^e siècle.²⁸

While Fromont jeune et Risler aîné takes place during the Second Empire, the Fromont family, like those persons described by Dupeux, had taken three generations to develop their successful business. The grandfather, Monsieur Gardinois, who began the business, was an ambitious old peasant who resembles the above description of those in the nouvelle bourgeoisie. Because of his wealth he was able to dazzle the less fortunate and tyrannize the poor. The son-in-law, Fromont,

was also an enterprising businessman but had learned to move easily in Parisian social circles. The next or third generation, Claire and Georges Fromont, led the elegant and refined life befitting an established fortune and reputation. Georges Fromont was less interested in the business than its income which made available the vices of luxury. Having money at his disposal and being essentially weak-willed, Georges squandered a small fortune on his mistress, Sidonie Risler. On the other hand, his wife, Claire, was essentially unspoiled. She remained considerate and thoughtful towards her friends, loving and respectful towards her husband. In tracing the history of the family Daudet was showing how each successive generation had become more accustomed to the new wealth and more at ease in the Parisian circles.

When Sidonie Risler tried to enter this rich, industrial society of the Marais in which the Fromonts moved, she discovered, as they had, that money alone was not sufficient. A certain comportment was necessary, and Sidonie could not imitate this, although she tried. Since Claire played the piano Sidonie began singing lessons. Claire received visitors one day a week and so Sidonie also had "her day." These superficial actions could not change her vulgar nature which was so obvious when compared with someone more distinguished and elegant like Claire.

Elle était bien elle-même une perle fausse, ronde, brillante, bien sertie, où le vulgaire pouvait se prendre; mais Claire Fromont était une perle véritable, d'un feu riche et discret à la fois, et quand on les voyait ensemble, la différence se

sentait. On devinait que l'une avait été perle toujours, une toute petite perle dès l'enfance, accrue des éléments d'élégance, de distinction qui en avait fait une nature rare et précieuse. L'autre, au contraire, était bien l'oeuvre de Paris, ce bijoutier en faux qui dispose de mille futilités charmantes, brillantes, mais peu solides, mal assorties, mal rattachées: un vrai produit du petit commerce dont elle avait fait partie.²⁹

Since Sidonie could not hide her past, she was not admitted into the society of rich industrialists and manufacturers. The Marais, like Saint-Germain, had its pretensions.

This rejection caused Sidonie to lash back at the Marais and look elsewhere for the satisfaction of her desire for luxurious living. Her vengeance was mercilessly heaped upon her benefactor Claire who had the misfortune of personifying everything that Sidonie wanted to be. "Elle [Sidonie] ne songeait qu'à écraser sa rivale." She found the means at her own doorstep in the person of her first conquest and present husband of Claire, Georges Fromont. " ... pour la première fois elle [Sidonie] se mit à songer qu'après tout cette femme lui avait volé sa place et qu'elle serait dans son droit en essayant de la reprendre." 30

Sidonie was interested in Georges not only to strike back at Claire but also because when she was with him she felt that she was finally accepted in her rightful place among the elegant and distinguished.

Georges, jeune et élégant à côté de Sidonie, avait l'air de son compagnon naturel, tandis que, derrière eux, Risler aîné toujours si calme, si éteint, semblait bien à sa place près de Claire Fromont qui gardait dans ses vêtements un peu sombres comme un incognito d'honnête femme au bal de l'Opéra.³¹

Circumstances offered Sidonie the opportunity to take her place beside Georges when the two families spent the summer together at the Fromonts' summer home in Savigny. Sidonie and Georges were together constantly, and the ambitious girl was already mistakenly identified as "madame Fromont jeune."

"Cette idée qu'on la prenait pour Madame Fromont la rendait très fière ..."³²

Georges was the hopeless victim of a consuming passion in the ensuing liaison but Sidonie relished only her sublime triumph over Claire and Risler.

Ce qu'elle savourait par-dessus tout, c'était l'humiliation de Claire à ses yeux. Ah! Si elle avait pu lui dire: "Ton mari m'aime ... il te trompe avec moi ..." son plaisir eût été encore plus grand. Pour Risler, il avait selon elle bien mérité ce qui lui arrivait. Dans son ancien jargon d'apprentie, qu'elle pensait encore si elle ne le parlait plus, le pauvre homme n'était qu'un "vieux" qu'elle avait pris pour arriver à la fortune. C'est fait pour être trompé, "un vieux!"³³

This was the inevitable reaction of the déclassée born to poverty and desirous of wealth. When the lack of money made the working girl spiteful and ambitious, she fought against her fate with the only weapons at her disposal in order to climb up out of her dismal life. Usually she was only partially successful since she was rarely completely accepted by the established members of the haute bourgeoisie. When Sidonie realized that the stigma of her birth was indelibly marked upon her, the hatred and resentment she had nurtured since a child manifested itself in her deliberate efforts to destroy those who represented the obstacles she could not

circumvent. As a member of the haute bourgeoisie Claire represents the goal Sidonie cannot attain, while the vulgarity of Risler suggests those aspects of her character which prevent her successful ascension. Although she was never accepted into the world of the Marais, she almost destroyed Claire's marriage and did cause Risler's suicide. Before his death, however, the disillusioned husband banished his unfaithful wife from his house and she began the slow descent into the gutter and the return to poverty.

When planning Fromont jeune et Risler aîné Daudet had become increasingly interested in the psychological makeup of Sidonie and decided to devote the main part of his novel to the story of her attempt and failure to enter the world of the Marais and accumulate a fortune. In so doing Daudet illustrated the drudgery of the working girl's life and the ugly characteristics which this existence helped develop. The solution was not, however, the exposure to a better milieu or wealthier class since this gave only the illusion of an escape from poverty and encouraged the working girl to further degrade herself by lying, cheating, prostitution, or other crimes in an effort to climb the social ladder. The novel suggests that the working girl, like all persons, would be better off if she resisted these temptations and devoted her efforts to finding happiness in her own small corner of Paris.

A similar failure to buy one's way into the bourgeoisie is described in Le Nabab. In addition, of all Daudet's novels, this book gives the most detailed picture of the haute société

during the last days of the Second Empire. Daudet was qualified to write about this diverse group because for a time he had lived in the affluent Paris of this era and had been acquainted with several of the more illustrious persons who inspired, at least in part, the novel. The Duc de Mora is a barely disguised version of one of the most powerful persons of the Second Empire, the Duc de Morny, for whom Daudet had been a secretary. As for the principal character, Jansoulet or "le Nabab," Daudet had asserted "J'ai connu le 'Vrai Nabab' en 1864."³⁴ The "Vrai Nabab" was François Bravay, a Frenchman who arrived in Paris in 1863 with a large fortune which he had made in Tunisia and who, like the fictional Nabab, tried to use his new wealth to enter society and politics.

Le Nabab is the story of a very rich man named Jansoulet who wanted to be admitted into the political and social life of Paris. Jansoulet had not always been wealthy. He had been born in Marseille in a street shop where his father sold used nails and where the family lived in abject poverty. When Jansoulet was thirty, he and a friend, Hemerlingue, embarked for Tunisia, following a spur-of-the-moment idea. Thanks to his own hard work, the opportunities in Tunisia for an entrepreneur, and the indulgence of the Bey, he returned to France with a fortune in cash as well as extensive properties in Tunisia.

With his immense fortune ostentatiously displayed Jansoulet entered Paris like "une felouque chargé d'or."³⁵ While he realized that wealth alone did not guarantee his

acceptance in Paris, he hoped to use his money to buy the first stages of his projected ascension: the croix d'honneur and like Poirier before him, a role in politics. Jansoulet's newly acquired fortune did open many doors for him, and he entered the domain of the haute bourgeoisie or the grande bourgeoisie as Lhomme refers to this group which he defines in the following manner:

"La grande bourgeoisie est formée de personnes
1) qui travaillent; 2) qui se sont engagées dans
des activités particulièrement rémunératrices;
3) qui disposent de gros revenus." Les deux premiers critères la distinguent de l'aristocratie foncière, le troisième de la petite et de la moyenne bourgeoisie.³⁶

This class which controlled the economic and political power during the Second Empire was a heterogeneous group.

Il y distingue les groupes suivants: au sommet, une double série d'industriels et de banquiers; à un rang encore éminent, mais un peu en retrait par rapport aux précédents, le grand commerce, les officiers ministériels et hommes de loi étroitement liés au monde des affaires; à un niveau encore inférieur, des fonctionnaires, à condition qu'ils figures suffisamment haut dans la hiérarchie, des avocats, à condition qu'ils aient de la fortune. Peut-être conviendrait-il d'ajouter à cette liste les grands universitaires et des journalistes parisiens, à la conditions expresse qu'ils acceptent de mettre leurs talents au service de la grande bourgeoisie pour en célébrer les mérites.³⁷

As would be expected in the changing world of the Second Empire those persons included first generation successes, ruthless industrialists, financiers with recently made fortunes of questionable origin, and nobility with dubious titles and more debts than family estates. Thus it is not amazing that the sculptress, Félicia Ruys, who was a knowing woman,

condemned these wealthy interlopers and scoundrels as "les vrais bohèmes."

Les vrais bohèmes ne manquent pas pourtant, notre société en est faite, seulement c'est dans votre monde surtout qu'on les trouve... Parbleu! Ils ne portent pas d'étiquette extérieure, et personne ne se méfie d'eux; mais pour l'incertain, le décousu de l'existence, ils n'ont rien à envier à ceux qu'ils appellent si dédaigneusement "des irréguliers..." Ah! si l'on savait tout ce qu'un habit noir, le plus correct de vos affreux vêtements modernes, peut masquer de turpitudes, d'histoires fantastiques ou monstrueuses.³⁸

As suggested in the above passage, these persons are motivated exclusively by the desire to make a fortune and to use it to satisfy personal pleasure, acquire widespread acclaim, and exercise their influence over others. As will be discussed in chapter 4, the means used to attain this fortune were at best dubious and usually highly immoral. A typical member of this society was the Marquis de Monpavon, who came from a rich, aristocratic family which had been ruined by excessive gambling and unwise speculation. Although highly incompetent, he wielded extensive power because of his friendship with the Duc de Mora, President of the Corps Législatif. It is easy to understand that important persons bought his influence with Mora. But the man is so base that he did not feel ashamed to solicit funds from Jansoulet in order to pay his own debts and maintain himself in the style of living which he enjoyed. Such people had positively no code of morality; the roués of the Regency period were not any worse than the elegant members of this decadent society.

The women of this society were also profiting from the

transforming period to advance socially and financially. One such person was the Baronne Hemerlingue, a former slave and harem girl who had been bought and sold several times before she was finally bought and married by Hemerlingue. In Tunisia no respectable woman would have anything to do with this woman even after she was married. In Paris, however, where the sovereigns themselves were inclined toward indulgence, etiquette was more permissive. Since the Baron was wealthy and powerful, his wife was received everywhere.

This indulgence of the Parisians who were willing to overlook disagreeable or embarrassing facts in view of affluence was historically accurate. Rigid social hierarchy had crumbled, and persons of different backgrounds frequented the same circles. The Court itself encouraged this which is easy to understand since the Emperor and the Empress themselves were really some kind of parvenus. In the absence of legitimate nobility, who had nothing but contempt for them, they welcomed wealthy foreigners to the Court. Consequently, the haute société of Paris followed suit, and etiquette was relaxed. Y. E. Clogenson has described the mixture of persons who were accepted in Parisian society.

Dans ce mélange de milieux, les financiers enrichis d'hier jouent les grands seigneurs et font des affaires avec eux, les honnêtes femmes risquent de s'asseoir sur les mêmes canapés que les courtisanes.³⁹

Admission into this society was based upon appearances, fortune, and fame rather than upon family name. "Les milieux sont confondus, les distinctions de l'ancienne Cour ont disparu,

l'argent ouvre les portes des hôtels aristocratiques, de la Cour même." 40

Money was the new key to society since these business-minded people shrewdly recognized that in the desperate struggle to get ahead one should never quarrel with money. In general, whether rich or poor, one acquiesced to those who were richer, for in any language money means power, and a great deal of money means far-reaching power. Daudet was noting with dismay the ever-increasing importance of a person's bankroll, and in Le Nabab he shows how money was pervading the grande bourgeoisie which now controlled the all powerful industrial-financial-political complex. In actuality this group practiced the plurality of functions to such an extent that a family like the Péreires controlled nineteen companies and three and one-half billion in capital in 1862. Furthermore, the directorships of the companies were held by 183 persons who controlled more than twenty billion among them. This concentration of the economic power of the nation in the hands of an oligarchy created an intricate web of forces which Le Nabab describes.

C'est ainsi que, dans l'enchevêtrement de la société moderne, ce grand tissage d'intérêts, d'ambitions, de services acceptés et rendus, tous les mondes communiquent entre eux, mystérieusement unis par les dessous, des plus hautes existences aux plus humbles; ...⁴¹

While Le Nabab gives the most extensive tableau of the grande bourgeoisie, the wine merchant Sauvadon, who appears in Les Rois en Exil, is also one of the many millionnaires parvenus belonging to this group. These parvenus like Sauvadon or

Jansoulet were not evil men, but when one is poor, morality is something an ambitious man can rarely afford. Then as soon as he is rich, it is easy to persuade others as well as himself that success justifies everything. After having acquired this fortune, the parvenu begins to think about a good reputation established through associating with the right people, entering politics, or some other respectable means.

Like Jansoulet, Sauvadon was uncultured but eager for public esteem and respect now that he had made his fortune. He was not as ambitious, however, and did not choose to seek political office but rather tried to become socially distinguished. Thus, the vulgar and ignorant merchant hired a young and intelligent monk named Méraut to tutor him, or as he said, give him "des idées sur les choses." By learning several appropriate formulas about the latest styles, plays, and political events Sauvadon managed to make a rather good impression. As is human nature, he aspired to the honors and titles that he had respected when he was a young man striving to get ahead. Taking advantage of the impoverished situation of many of the outmoded aristocracy, the social climber made his orphaned niece, Colette, a princess for two million francs.

Et Sauvadon trouva que deux millions ce n'était pas trop cher pour figurer dans un coin du salon, les soirs où la jeune princesse de Rosen recevait pour avoir le droit d'épanouir dans une embrasure son large sourire à rebords d'écuelle, entre ses courts favoris aux pompons démodés depuis Louis-Philippe.⁴²

As Sauvadon's life encompasses both lowly origins and aristocracy, Daudet's novels as a whole treat both the very

poor and the very rich. From this tableau of society one may draw certain conclusions about the author's interpretation of the role of money in the lives of these persons. Despite unusual social mobility during the Second Empire, money alone was rarely if ever sufficient for acceptance into the haute société of Paris. A credible façade of gentility and culture was still necessary even for the very wealthy. Both Sidonie and Jansoulet failed to understand this and tried to compensate for their low origins by vulgar ostentation and lavish display of wealth. Madame Hemerlingue, on the other hand, who also was haunted by a scandalous past, was more skillful in her social debut. She adopted Parisian manners and etiquette so completely and so successfully that it was impossible to recognize her as a former harem girl. Thus, highly placed persons felt that they could receive her without fear of compromise while Sidonie and Jansoulet were crushed by the weight of scorn and rejection heaped upon them.

When shrewdly used to influence governments and manipulate business, money could represent great economic or political power. This in turn was too often a source of evil which corrupts and destroys. This fact is emphasized in Daudet's portrayal of the industry, politics, and finances of the Second Empire and will be discussed again in chapter 4. However, it is already evident in his picture of society. The employers and industrialists who never actually appear in Fromont jeune et Risler aîné and Jack are still responsible to a large degree for the miserable destinies of Désirée, Sidonie, and Jack. The

inhuman exploitation of the worker by these entrepreneurs in order to maintain and increase profits was one of the direct causes of the worker's ruined body and warped mind.

It was also inevitable as long as economic power concentrated in the hands of the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie was synonymous with political power. This self-interested oligarchy perpetrated class legislation designed to facilitate the business enterprises of the rich and maintain the worker in an impoverished state of servitude.⁴³

Napoleon III had some vague ideas of the goals that he wanted to attain for France among which was the procurement of the material well-being of the population. He did in fact champion some progressive measures, but the transformation of industry was moving at such a rate that these measures of the government could not keep up. In addition, Napoleon was backed by the industrial and financial bourgeoisie, and he reciprocated by supporting a political course which favored industrial development and financial speculation. In short, as Dolléans summarized his position, "il incarne le règne d'affaires."⁴⁴

As Gobseck had already said, there is an inevitable struggle between the rich and the poor: "Quant au moeurs, l'homme est le même partout: partout le combat entre le pauvre et le riche est établi, partout il est inévitable."⁴⁵ This trend was not disturbed until 1859 when Napoleon's unpopular foreign policy forced him to find a new group of support. He began conciliatory gestures toward the workers and passed some legislation favorable to their cause which resulted in the very

gradual amelioration of their condition.

While touching upon these class struggles and clearly showing his sympathy for the underdog, Daudet does not take up the cudgels for the reforms demanded by the worker movement. As a novelist he remained aloof from these controversies. He hinted at the class conflicts but concentrated on presenting individuals rather than social movements. Daudet studies the desires and fears of the characters as individuals first, and as members of a class second. Jack is first a sensitive youth who falls victim to an egotistical step-father and then a worker. Désirée is a patient and courageous young woman in love and only secondarily a Parisian working girl. Sidonie is a scheming, ambitious woman before she is a déclassée.

As far as the effects of money on their personal lives, its possession is divorced from happiness. Monsieur Chèbe was overjoyed when his daughter Sidonie married Risler. He expected a new and wonderful life now that he would be able to fulfill his fondest dreams. This did not prove to be true as each acquisition bought with Risler's money fell short of Chèbe's expectations. To Chèbe's son-in-law wealth only brought great sorrow because he was too naive and trusting to manage it well. He was blind to the thefts of his business partner, Georges Fromont, and to the extravagances and infidelities of his wife Sidonie, until the two had used most of his fortune against him.

Instead of showing money as the key to many advantages and much happiness Daudet insists that it was possible to rise

above one's condition and find comfort and happiness despite poverty and regardless of class or station: Among the workers, Bélisaire and Madame Weber; among the peasants, Divonne and Madame Jansoulet; among the petite bourgeoisie, the Joyeuse family. While Balzac excels in the portrayal of merchants and those of the petite bourgeoisie like Birotteau and Sauviat, who rise to the top by hard work and shrewdness, Daudet favors those among these groups who make the best of their condition by patience, diligence, and reliability.

In emphasizing the good qualities Daudet differs from his contemporaries and friends like the brothers Goncourt, Flaubert, Zola, and Maupassant. Too often these writers tended to reveal only the sordid debauchery of the workers and peasants and the deplorable mediocrity of the petite bourgeoisie. Daudet's observations, personal acquaintances, and also, no doubt, his optimistic nature convinced him that a tableau of society would not be complete if it showed only the base elements of the lower classes. Thus, he portrayed the generous and kind as well as the mean and greedy persons in the lowest as well as the highest echelons of society.

He even tended to favor the lower social classes in France and is, perhaps, one of the first writers in French literature to give such a warm and understanding portrayal of the poor. In his own novels, the tenderness between two homely, middle-aged workers, Bélisaire and Madame Weber, is never surpassed. The warmth and affection of the Joyeuse family is never equaled in another family. It appears that the absence

of money and material possessions has enabled these persons to appreciate life more fully and to find in it a deeper and more fulfilling meaning than the acquisition of wealth.

NOTES

CHAPTER III

¹Jean Lhomme, La Grande Bourgeoisie au Pouvoir 1830-1880 (Paris, 1960), p. 199.

²Ibid., p. 209.

³Dupeux, La Société Française, pp. 141-42.

⁴Edouard Dolléans, Histoire du mouvement ouvrier 1830-1871 (Paris, 1953), vol. 1, p. 260.

⁵Oeuvres Complètes, t. 5, p. v.

⁶Ibid., p. 48.

⁷Ibid., t. 6, p. 296.

⁸Dupeux, p. 143.

⁹Dolléans, p. 17.

¹⁰Oeuvres Complètes, t. 6, p. 304.

¹¹Ibid., p. 317.

¹²Dupeux, p. 144.

¹³Dolléans, p. 19.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁵Zola, L'Assommoir (Paris, 1962), p. 7.

¹⁶Villermé, Tableau de l'état physique et moral des ouvriers employés dans les manufactures de soie, coton et laine (Paris, Renouard, 1840), t. 1, p. 122 quoted in Dolléans, Histoire du mouvement ouvrier, p. 19.

¹⁷Oeuvres Complètes, t. 10, p. 48.

¹⁸Ibid., t. 7, p. 149.

¹⁹Ibid., t. 9, p. 55.

²⁰Elsa Fricker, Alphonse Daudet et la société du Second Empire (Paris, 1937), p. 25.

²¹Oeuvres Complètes, t. 5, p. 14.

²²Ibid., p. 6.

²³Ibid., p. 82.

²⁴Ibid., t. 7, p. 73.

²⁵Y. E. Clogenson, Alphonse Daudet, peintre de la vie de son temps (Paris, 1949), p. 76.

²⁶Oeuvres Complètes, t. 7, p. 422.

²⁷Ibid., p. 423.

²⁸Dupeux, p. 131.

²⁹Oeuvres Complètes, t. 5, p. 73.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 74-75.

³¹Ibid., p. 75.

³²Ibid., p. 92.

³³Ibid., p. 95.

³⁴Ibid., t. 7, iii.

³⁵Ibid., p. 44.

³⁶Dupeux, p. 132.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Oeuvres Complètes, t. 7, p. 79.

³⁹Clogenson, pp. 62-63.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 61.

⁴¹Oeuvres Complètes, t. 7, p. 370.

⁴²Ibid., t. 8, p. 101.

⁴³Dolléans, p. 27.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 253.

⁴⁵René Bouvier, Balzac, Hommes d'Affaires (Paris, 1930), pp. 45-46.

CHAPTER IV

INDUSTRY, FINANCE, AND POLITICS

As Daudet incorporated his observations of the Parisian scene into his novels it was only natural that he include the complex and interwoven circles of politics, industry, and finance. The interdependence of these areas had been impressed upon him when he served as secretary to the Duc de Morny, President of the Corps Législatif. Far from restricting his interests to government the Duke exerted his influence in all spheres of endeavor, and the assertion that "Morny est dans l'affaire" was sufficient to assure the success of any business venture. This fact evidently impressed his young secretary since he remembered it and later used it in Le Nabab where the converging worlds of politics, industry, and finance of the Second Empire are portrayed with many details.

This period in French history was one of intense activity and expansion. France had enjoyed economic prosperity during the reign of Louis-Philippe. Le Nabab takes place during the Second Empire, a period characterized by continued prosperity as well as new and dramatic expansion of industry. Napoleon III extended the banking system and joint-stock banks were formed : le Crédit Industriel et Commercial in 1859, le Crédit Lyonnais in 1863, la Société Générale in

1864. These new establishments provided readily available capital for investment and speculation. The adventurous financier, and there were hordes of them at the time, found vast opportunities in the expansion of present industries and the development of new ones.

The lure to play the game, to risk it all on the chance of success was very strong since wealth was quickly becoming the ultimate measure of a man in this highly commercialized bourgeois system. The upper crust of society was opening its doors to the wealthy to such an extent that a new aristocracy, the bourgeois aristocracy of wealth, was gradually replacing the nobility. A man with enough working capital to speculate could make or lose fortunes in industrial endeavors, in banking schemes or in playing at La Bourse (the Paris stock market). By wise or lucky investments in the new businesses he could increase his capital tenfold and more. He could exert his influence on the political bodies of the country indirectly by using his money to lobby or by entering politics himself. Once in the government he enjoyed a new vantage point and was able to turn many projects and schemes for his own personal profit. Those with sufficient resources for establishing a bank could encroach upon all fields of commerce and also government by controlling the placements of large amounts of capital.

With potential benefits so high the adventurous soul was tempted to use any means to get ahead in the highly competitive market place. Looking about him he realized that it

was imperative to have money in order to make his mark, to carve his niche in the world. Thus, to guarantee his success and establish himself he was willing to stoop to acts of a highly dubious nature, following the example of Louis-Philippe himself who used his access to the telegraph lines to learn in advance of the public what investments would be economically sound--a dishonest procedure which Stendhal denounced in his Lucien Leuwen.

Le Nabab is composed as a series of tableaux, each portraying an aspect of this society dominated by the growing influence of this money-fever. In the first of these tableaux, "Les Malades du Docteur Jenkins," Daudet wastes no time in these subtle preparations which lessen the effectiveness of many satirical writers; he comes out punching hard from the very first round, dealing "hammer blows" and severe punishment. Jenkins, a famous and fashionable doctor, is visiting his patients in the privacy of their homes. This picture of society seen from within reveals immediately the decadence, the rottenness of an outwardly brilliant world. Jenkins, who knows well human vanity, sells vitality and youth to an aging and decaying society in the form of arsenic pills. These pills sustain his desperate patients who would give anything, who would sell their soul for a few more moments of pleasure, another triumph, a larger fortune. For them these pills have become indispensable. Of course his patients, the richest and most elegant members of society, pay well for them, and Jenkins is after money before anything else for he knows that in money

there is position and power.

Since finances had entered every field of endeavor, almost everything was bought and sold, and the effort of Dr. Jenkins' wealthy patients to buy good health, prolonged seductiveness, and sexual power was indicative of the contemporary way of life during Napoleon the Third's reign. It is historically true that this trend, which Daudet noted repeatedly, had been greatly stimulated by the Emperor's extension of the banking system. Recognizing that ample credit facilities were fundamental for developing productive enterprises, he encouraged the birth of new banks which in turn amassed capital and made it available for productive enterprises. The quantity of capital available became so great that financiers began investing their funds abroad and view with one another for the most lucrative investments. The struggle in Le Nabab between two wealthy, cosmopolitan financiers, Hemerlingue and Jansoulet or "le Nabab" as he was nicknamed, is an echo of the continual dueling between potentates of finance. Hemerlingue owned one of the largest banking houses in Paris. From this very powerful position he was able to manipulate not only the market but also persons as he wished. Later in the novel he will be actually responsible for the invalidation of Jansoulet's election as a deputy.

Despite the fact that this episode is central to the action of the novel, Daudet gives only a shadowy picture of the banking world. He does not explain how it operated or enumerate the sums of money invested. In this he is different from

Balzac, who gave a detailed and almost incomprehensible study of the many and often crooked operations of the Maison Nucingen. While Balzac's novels would be of interest to social scientists or to economists looking for precise documents on the period, Daudet's would be of little use to such researchers, for he was not interested in the mechanical operations of a bank. Instead, he directed his attention to the mental and moral attitudes of unscrupulous bankers like Hemerlingue and noted that such a man uses his far reaching power unjustly. His tremendous wealth had become a force for evil. Thus, he invalidated Jansoulet's election, not because it had been more corrupt than most other elections, but because Madame Hemerlingue had certain intimate and disgusting reasons to despise Jansoulet. In doing so Hemerlingue complied with his wife's wishes without any regard to his past.

Years before, when they were both poor, Hemerlingue and Jansoulet had traveled together to Tunisia where Jansoulet had helped Hemerlingue become rich. During the years spent in this country Hemerlingue bought and married a slave and harem girl while his friend married a young girl from a good French family living in Tunisia. Madame Jansoulet and the other French women there were aware of the background of the parvenue Madame Hemerlingue and steadfastly refused to receive such a woman in their homes, considering it dishonorable to entertain a former slave as a social equal. Eventually the Hemerlingues returned to France where the harem girl successfully adopted western dress and customs, and the more

indulgent Parisian society reciprocated by ignoring her lowly origins. In addition to her social success, the new Parisian proved to be a shrewd businesswoman who managed her bumbling husband's investments so well that soon he was the head of one of the largest banks in Paris.

Madame Hemerlingue enjoyed the enviable position of respected wife of one of Paris' most wealthy financiers until Jansoulet and his wife arrived in Paris. Madame Jansoulet was not familiar with the permissive attitudes of the capital and still refused to meet the wife of her husband's friend. Her refusal reminded all of Paris of the compromising past of Madame Hemerlingue and rekindled the condescending manner that had once greeted her. Overwhelmed with bitter resentment at these changes the angry woman plotted to use her husband's power and position to avenge herself and destroy her enemies.

This querelle des femmes came between the two old camarades and prevented Hemerlingue from helping his friend as he had once been helped. When Madame Hemerlingue demanded that her husband use his influence to ruin Jansoulet, the banker disregarded everything that had once been done for him. He preferred to please his wife, because his present and future financial successes were entirely dependent upon her business sense. This is an example of how money-fever can change a man, destroy in him every human feeling, and make him the abject puppet of a vain and corrupt woman and a pitiless executioner of his best friend. Hemerlingue coldly ignored Jansoulet's supplications and destroyed him as heart-

lessly as Rougon who stood by and watched his brother Saccard be ruined by another financial potentate, Gundermann, in Zola's L'Argent (1891).

Business relations were equally ruthless in the growing field of industry during the Second Empire. The coup of Louis Napoleon "restored to adventurers the confidence and sense of security they had lost under the Second Republic. . ."¹ The capital made available by the creation of powerful banks and the expansion of present industries and the development of new ones encouraged financial speculation. The shares of the newly developing railroad companies presented the first big opportunity. They were bought and sold many times, and large fortunes were made as these stocks changed hands. The desire for profit soon extended this feverish trading into all domains. The opportunities increased as the railway expansion hastened other development.

The telegraph (another British undertaking), the extension and equipment of ports, the accelerated development of roads and waterways, followed. There was a drainage scheme for the morose Sologne, tree-planting in the Landais. Paris annexed eight suburbs on January 1, 1860 and the map of the city was redrawn. The Louvre was completed; a new opera house was put in hand. Some 25,000 houses were pulled down by the energetic préfet, Haussmann, and replaced by 70,000 new ones. Implacable straight boulevards were driven through warrens of narrow alleys, to the distress of many old Parisians.²

While writing about this exciting period of transformation Daudet makes very few specific references to innovations like the railroads that meant so much to the industrializing country. He makes a general assessment of the activity and concludes with a sweeping condemnation of the corruption that

he felt was prevalent in all domains. This gives a certain universal quality to his works in the sense that they are not dated by references to particular events or inventions and could be describing any highly commercial and bourgeois society.

Because of the rapid expansion and the vast possibilities for quick profits, it is historically true that everyone was tempted to invest in the new and developing industries. The middle class, distressed by rising costs, tried to help the family budget by making a little money in investments. Women saved their pocket money or stole from their husbands in order to speculate. Financiers manipulated the market. At times the rampant speculation exceeded all bounds and gave rise to widespread and virulent criticism. Already in 1840 in Mercadet (or Le Faiseur) Balzac had written "a satire on an epoch of frenzied speculation, when small business gave way to large combinations and stock-companies, when money, not honor, was the god of France."³ The play denounced the evils of gambling on the stock market which ruined so many bourgeois families desirous to spend more than they could afford. The morally debilitating effects of this activity continued to be described on the stage in hard-biting plays such as La Question d'argent (1857) by Dumas fils; Ceinture dorée, (1855), Les Effrontés (1861), Les Lionnes pauvres (1858), and La Contagion (1866) by Emile Augier; and Maison Neuve (1866) and La Famille Benoiton (1865) by Sardou.

Daudet explored this aspect of society in Le Nabab and

showed it to be invaded by shrewd "wheeler dealers" who made large profits by dubious means. One character, Paganetti, was one of the many unscrupulous investors who took advantage of the frenzied desire to invest. He founded La Caisse territoriale, a vast undertaking designed to mine the natural resources of Corsica and transport them to France for sale. It is possible that Daudet knew that Balzac, who was always in need of money, had thought of organizing a company to do some ore-mining in Corsica, seeing in such a venture the source of great wealth. In addition, Daudet's earlier short stories reveal his impression of Corsica to be that of a backward area, largely occupied by cruel vendettas and brutal violence reminiscent of the story of vengeance described by Mérimée in Colomba (1840) and given to spending much time gambling and drinking. An enterprising foreigner could conceivably take advantage of such conditions to develop the natural resources and export them to his advantage.

Such was the plan of Paganetti when he invested millions in his project. When all available funds still proved insufficient, he devised schemes to tantalize the would-be investors among the bourgeoisie. He took subscriptions for a magazine and organized a fund to build a statue to a Corsican hero. The magazine and the marble remained non-existent as he used these for contributions to support himself in a lavish manner. Constantly in need of money to silence creditors, Paganetti viewed the arrival of "le Nabab" with greedy eyes. He convinced Jansoulet to invest large sums of

his fortune in non-existent railroad companies in Corsica. While these financial maneuvers are more clearly described than those of Hemerlingue, the actual transactions in which he was involved are less important than was the attitude of those like Paganetti who were desperately in need of large sums of money to stave off bankruptcy. These men flocked to "le Nabab" like vultures.

The second chapter of the novel, "Un Déjeuner Place Vendôme," shows those who gathered around the wealthy new arrival to the capital. With historical reality that is typical of Daudet the group encompasses the old and the new, the established aristocracy and the hordes of parvenus that were both characteristic of the Second Empire. Included at the luncheon are the Marquis de Monpavon, member of a bankrupt but aristocratic family, the aide de camp of the Bey of Tunisia who had made Jansoulet's fortune, Cardailhac, director of a theater being financed by Jansoulet, Schwalbach the art dealer, assorted persons from the new arrival's native Midi, Tunisians, Moroccans, Egyptians and

toute une bohème parisienne et multicolore de gentilshommes décavés, d'industriels louches, de journalistes vidés, d'inventeurs de produits bizarres, de gens du Midi débarqués sans un sou, tout ce que cette grande fortune attirait, comme la lumière d'un phare, de navires perdus à ravitailler, ou de bandes d'oiseaux tourbillonnant dans le noir.⁴

This colorful and diverse group shared a common goal: the desire to borrow, beg or otherwise separate their wealthy host from some of his gold. The chapter portrays the baseness and deceit to which men stoop when motivated by this

money-fever which appeared to be gripping the Second Empire.

Although each man in the room wanted money for a different reason, they were all equally unscrupulous. Their common attitude was characterized by total indifference to Jansoulet as a person. When he told them at lunch about the poverty of his youth and his clever manipulations in Tunisia, they were utterly bored by his display of emotion. Only when he informed them that he had returned from Tunisia with twenty-five million in cash did they sit up and take notice. By their standards, that was the only accomplishment worthy of praise and envy. "Il y eut une commotion électrique autour de la table, un éclair dans tous les yeux, même dans ceux des domestiques. Cardailhac dit: 'Mazette!' Le nez de Monpavon s'humanisa."⁵ Such an attitude is historically accurate in that it was typical of a period that equated merit with money, wisdom with wealth, and fame with fortune.

Throughout the luncheon, one fixed idea motivated each guest and silence dominated the table as each one meditated his coup, planned his strategy, and prepared to strike when he had cornered his prey.

Ils mangeaient tous nerveusement, silencieusement, en s'observant du coin de l'oeil, et même les plus mondains, ceux qui paraissaient le plus à l'aise, avaient dans le regard l'égarement et le trouble d'une pensée fixe, une fièvre anxieuse qui les faisait parler sans répondre, écouter sans comprendre un mot de ce qu'on avait dit.⁶

A certain joy transforms the eager group when coffee is announced in the living room. The anxious men converge upon their host, vying with each other in order to get rid of

rivals and obtain Jansoulet's help for themselves. Jansoulet's often repeated call, "Bompain ... Bompain ..." as he requests his secretary to bring his check book, marks each donation, gift, and extortion. For the smaller demands the benevolent host reached into a chest of drawers that he always kept filled with "deux cent mille francs en monnaie courante."

C'est à cette ressource constante qu'il avait recours les jours de grandes audiences, mettant une certaine ostentation à remuer l'or, l'argent, à pleines mains brutales, à l'engloutir au fond de ses poches pour le tirer de là avec un geste de marchand de boeufs, une certaine façon canaille de relever les pans de sa redingote, et d'envoyer sa main "à fond et dans le tas." Aujourd'hui, les tiroirs de la petite commode doivent avoir une terrible brèche ...

This passage reveals the sensual pleasure of a Harpagon or a Silas Marner as he fills his hands with gold, caressing the yellow metal. Jansoulet, however, does not hide his treasure. Eager for recognition and hungry for power he vulgarly displays his money as previously a nobleman displayed his coat of arms. The pragmatic adventurer of the Second Empire sees money as a means to buy power, position, and reputation. He is keenly aware that the mere possession of this wealth will attract a certain following and place opportunities in his path which can be multiplied when the gold coins are exchanged for further promises and favors.

Money was honor, family, and country, and this usurpation of traditional values is reflected in the entire scene where the focal point is Jansoulet's tremendous fortune. At least one segment of the industrial and commercial interests is revealed to be a greedy and fawning lot. Daudet shows his

understanding of human psychology when he describes how the humble attitude of each solicitor is transformed when he triumphantly holds his check or pockets his gold coins and the hungry attention the others pay to each lucky recipient.

Le Paganetti, si humble, si plat tout à l'heure, s'éloigne avec l'aplomb d'un homme équilibré de quatre cent mille francs, tandis que Monpavon, portant plus haut encore que d'habitude, le suit dans ses pas et le couve d'une sollicitude plus que paternelle.⁸

In a realistic touch he describes the nervous jealousy of those still waiting for an opportunity to approach Jansoulet as they are obsessed with the fear that the source will be exhausted, the goose of the golden eggs killed, before their turn. "Pendant que ces heureux défilent, d'autres surveillent à l'entour, enragés d'impatience, rongant leurs ongles jusqu'aux phalanges; car tous sont venus dans la même intention."⁹

This chapter repeats on a more grandiose scale the scene from Fromont jeune et Risler aîné already discussed in chapter 3 where Chèbe and Delobelle prey upon the amiable Risler for handouts to finance pet projects. The solicitors show the same indifference, almost disdain, for their prospective benefactor as do the crowd gathered around "le Nabab." The same rivalry and suspicion divides these men as they vie for Risler's attention, and each in his greed wants all the money for himself. In Mercadet Balzac had already depicted a group of creditors flocking around one man. Several years later Daudet is showing that potential borrowers were equally persistent, equally voracious, when they sensed that money was

near. In 1882 Les Corbeaux by Becque develops the effort to extort money into a full length play in which a family is besieged by the creditors of the recently deceased head of the household. While Daudet is often thought of as a sympathetic observer of mankind, such scenes of undisguised rapacity and greed which are in Fromont jeune et Risler aîné and Le Nabab show that he, like the other authors mentioned, had no illusions about the goodness of man.

He recognized that the struggle goes on between those who have and those who have not as well as among the members of each of these groups. During the "Second Empire" the added incentive was the possibility to invest and make a profit, the promise of that carrot dangling from the stick that was always just out of reach but tantalizingly near. Delobelle and Chèbe wanted capital to begin modest enterprises, a theater and a store, respectively, just as Paganetti and his group planned to use their windfalls to finance similar if much larger schemes and money making projects.

Such schemes to obtain capital which were widely prevalent when Daudet was writing were criticized as excessive and economically unsound. Many big deals were also suspected to have been arrived at dishonestly and Daudet's novels leave no doubt as to his opinion with regard to this possibility. The more respectable elements of society tended to be offended when they met socially with the newly rich of industry, finance, or politics. Thus, many looked forward to the revival of a Republic which would exhibit the republican virtues of

justice, sobriety, thriftiness, and decency. They considered the establishment of the Third Republic to be the signal for the regeneration of France, the redemption of the shameless immorality which had marked the end of the Second Empire." A disgusted Daudet felt that this did not prove to be so. He saw the Third Republic as an extension of the Second Empire where corruption continued and increased in the worlds of politics as well as of industry and finance. Daudet shows this to be the case in Numa Roumestan, L'Evangéliste, Soutien de Famille, and L'Immortel.

In reality, power was still wielded by persons of great wealth and the banking families continued to be among the most influential persons in France. We know that starting in 1815 the Haute Banque had been dominated by Swiss Protestants and German Jews. Daudet's novel L'Evangéliste realistically portrays the Autheman family of Jewish religion who had begun a business in the purchase and sale of gold in 1804. During the Second Empire the family became important bankers and financiers as well. It would have been interesting to learn about the Authemans' development of their business as we understand Nucingen's or Du Tillet's rise in the financial world because of Balzac's detailed descriptions.

Balzac was admirably equipped to give such a portrayal as his father had been a notary and he had been formally schooled in this field thanks to an apprenticeship in a lawyer's office. In addition, his own business ventures which ended in bankruptcy proceedings against him and his numerous

dealings with all types of usurers and money lenders as well as legitimate bankers had given him a remarkable insight into business and banking. Thus, as Félicien Marceau has noted, "la banque et l'usure sont abondamment représentées."¹⁰

Daudet had also experienced the hardships of poverty but had been too young to understand the complex bankruptcy proceedings brought against his father, a little man in the world of industry. As a young man in Paris he incurred personal debts and also observed the industrial-financial complex but still only from a distance. Since he could only vaguely imagine the machinations, he only hinted at them or discussed their effects. In keeping with practice he chose to mention only briefly the ascension of the Authemans. He did not describe the series of deals and maneuvers that had established their bank nor did he ever state the Autheman fortune in terms of sums of money or stocks. Instead, their immense wealth is felt as the reader witnesses the oppressive influence it exerts on all of Paris.

The Autheman family appears in a novel describing a religious sect which operated on the fringe of organized religions and was usurping its place. The publication of L'Evangéliste provoked indignation from the public in general as it was felt that all religion had been attacked and criticized unjustly. In response to this Daudet discussed his intentions in an interview that was made public in many newspapers. The interviewer, Louis Sautter, explained that "M. Daudet n'a voulu peindre ni le protestantisme en general, ni

l'évangélisation protestante, ni l'Armée du Salut."¹¹ The book was an attack specifically directed toward religious fanatics and particularly those zealous persons who imposed their ideas on the young and innocent. Written as a study of a case of religious neurosis it was dedicated to a personal friend and well-known physician, J.-M. Charcot.

As Murray Sachs has pointed out, the study of a neurosis falls short since the young victim of religious fanaticism, Eline Ebsen, is not convincingly portrayed.¹² The reader never enters her mind sufficiently to understand her conversion or her abandonment of her family. While the psychological study is disappointing, the portrayal of the proselytizing religious sect directed by a Protestant woman, Jeanne Autheman, is outstanding. The sect described is a perversion of Christian principles, essentially a force for good diverted into a destructive and evil force. Madame Autheman was able to persuade her missionaries to renounce their families, forget their obligations to mothers, husbands, and children, and work uniquely in the service of the mission. To a large degree the success of the mission was directly due to the immense fortune of the Autheman family. The novel illustrates the far reaching power of the financial world and shows how great wealth was too often used as a force of evil.

Daudet chose to analyze the influence of wealth when it falls in the hands of a neurotic and egotistical person: she is Jeanne Autheman, a member of the family by marriage. Since her childhood this strict Protestant woman was gifted

with extraordinary powers of persuasion which enabled her to inspire numbers of conversions to Protestantism. When still very young Jeanne had fallen in love with a young seminary student and discovered the insidious effects of money in an unfortunate manner. Before the couple married Jeanne's family suffered irrevocable financial reverses. The seminary student, who had been less interested in Jeanne than in her family's money, pretended ill health and broke the engagement. Certainly this experience contributed to Jeanne's disdain of men as well as her decision to use money to advance her convictions.

At the time the engagement was broken Jeanne was in an elegant girls' school studying English and geography to prepare for her mission. Also at the school was Déborah Becker, a niece of the Authemans. Through Déborah the wealthy banking family learned about Jeanne and decided to ask her to marry the son and unique heir of this fortune, a timid recluse because of a large and vivid birthmark which disfigured one entire side of his face. For Jeanne this scar was insignificant since all men were equally disagreeable now. Her only reservation was that her husband would not be of her faith, and she only agreed to the marriage when Autheman indicated that he would convert.

Jeanne married for money and immediately began using the immense Autheman fortune in the service of her missionary work.

... car la caisse des Autheman lui fut ouverte et les hautes cheminées de Petit-Port fumaient nuit et jour, l'or se liquéfiait dans les creusets, les fourgons roulaient lourds de lingots, de quoi racheter les âmes de l'univers entier.¹³

Jeanne established her mission at Petit-Port, a small town on the Seine where her in-laws had built their chateau and business in 1832. The missionary built a church and schools in order to convert the only inhabitants of the area, peasants, vegetable farmers, and vine-growers. To entice them to enter the establishment the persuasive woman offered free education to those who would attend church. Human nature being what it is, no one resisted these offers, and the Catholic population began paying lip-service to the Protestantism preached in Petit-Port. To further encourage conversions, gifts of money and clothes were offered to anyone on the day of his first communion.

Le facteur commença, puis le cantonnier et sa femme. Leur "réception" se fit en grande pompe; et quand on les vit vêtus de drap neuf, de bonne laine chaude, avec l'argent clair qui tintait dans leurs poches et la protection du château désormais assurée, cela entraîna beaucoup d'autres.¹⁴

In addition to these benefits, most persons in the small town were in some way dependent upon the Authemans for their livelihood and this arrangement assured the zealot of the devotion and loyalty of her flock. Thus Madame Ebsen received no help when she went to Petit-Port looking for her daughter, Eline, who had converted and then mysteriously disappeared. Important persons like the mayor were closely aligned with the powerful family while lesser ones like the

cab driver were too cautious to say anything against the mission. Even the Catholic priest who had watched his congregation leave him for the monetary benefits of the Autheman religion was afraid to interfere. As one woman whose young, healthy daughter had mysteriously died while at the chateau said: "Comme j'y ai dit à ce juge, même qu'y me voulait retenir en prison à cause de ça, c'est du monde trop riche, y a pas de justice pour ces personnes-là!"¹⁵ It was obvious that the religious devotion in this small town was directly related to the banker's fortune. Since this was the motivation, the result was a congregation of hypocrites in which the fervor and sincerity of other protestant missions was absent.

For purely economic reasons the Catholic priest in Petit-Port could not hope to compete with the mission. His parish had never been able to support him, and he had supplemented his income by selling the fish he caught in his spare time. When the evangelist enticed his congregation away from him with gifts and offers of money, he had no means with which to encourage them to return. In addition, he never really questioned the authority of the financier's wife. Like the rest of his age he was too accustomed to submitting to the superior authority of money. "Habitué d'ailleurs à respecter au village le propriétaire riche, l'influence prépondérante, ce n'est pas lui qui eût osé faire tête aux Autheman."¹⁶

On the other hand, Soeur Octavie, who was the Directrice de l'école des filles, had openly opposed the new mission, and bluntly denounced the converts as mercenary and

hypocritical. It was, however, a losing battle as the family was too strong and finally acted when the good sister succeeded in arousing some suspicions against them. Soeur Octavie accused Jeanne of imprisoning prospective converts and using drugs to influence them; the sudden and inexplicable death of a young girl employed at the chateau lent credence to these accusations. An investigation was started and it concluded, ironically enough, with the dismissal of Soeur Octavie. Thus, one sees the extent to which the banking family could corrupt justice by the very presence of their wealth.

It is interesting to note that even the conversion of Eline Ebsen, which is the focal point of the novel, was facilitated by the Autheman fortune. The evangelist knew that the Ebsens needed money, and so she reached them by offering Eline employment. The young linguist was commissioned to translate a book of prayer. Although the statements made by the book shocked and angered her, she did not refuse this work.

Eh bien! à trois sous la prière, il y avait de l'argent à gagner. Elles s'y mettraient à elles deux; après ce volume-là, bien sûr on en aurait d'autres, et, quand on n'était pas riche, il ne fallait pas dédaigner un surcroît de gain, de quoi payer le trousseau de Lina, lorsqu'elle se marierait.¹⁷

To increase her hold on Eline, the shrewd missionary again played upon her desire to augment her meager income by offering her a position in the mission school at an incredibly high salary. Then, by appealing to the mystical nature of the young girl and aided by the administration of trance-inducing drugs, the domineering woman caused Eline to break her

engagement with a young widower and leave her widowed mother to preach the Autheman gospel throughout Europe.

The series of futile attempts made by Madame Ebsen to regain her daughter demonstrate the far reaching influence of financiers. The detailed account of the broken woman's futile efforts emphasize the helplessness of the individual when he confronts the established power structure. Madame Ebsen first visited a girlhood friend, Léonie, who was married to the Comte d'Arlot, deputy and leader of the opposition. Léonie took her to visit Déborah Becker, now the wealthy Baronesse Gerspach. Déborah was shocked at the idea of confronting the wealthy Authemans and tried to explain this. "--Non, ma petite, je t'en supplie ... Tu ne sais pas ce que c'est, dans la banque, d'avoir Autheman contre soi ... On serait brisé comme verre ..."¹⁸

Léonie then turned to Raverand, one of the most influential lawyers in Paris. Having heard the story of Eline's forced conversion, the attorney was extremely interested and thought that her mother had an excellent legal case. When he learned that the case was against Madame Autheman, he quickly renounced all action and simply tried to dissuade Madame Ebsen from so dangerous and futile an action.

The next step was to appeal to the Danish consul since Madame Ebsen was actually a citizen of that country. The consul, Monsieur Desnos, was also a businessman in Paris and would not even consider associating himself with such a procedure. Instead, he vehemently defended the Authemans.

Autheman était son banquier ... La maison la plus riche, la plus sûre; l'honorabilité la plus intacte ... Jamais de telles infamies n'avaient pu se passer chez Autheman ... "L'honneur des Autheman, c'est l'honneur du commerce parisien tout entier."¹⁹

This passage moves from the particular to the general, from the defense of one banking family to that of the whole Parisian commercial interests. The irony of the statement is obvious as it begins with the fact that the Authemans are rich and concludes that they must, therefore, be honorable. This unshakable deference paid to all persons of wealth and the unanimous recognition of their immunity before any authority explains why in so many of life's circumstances the little, the weak, and the poor ones have no recourse to justice.

Thus, no one in the influential circles of Paris would help the distressed woman. Indeed, to try to do so would have been professional suicide. The Autheman fortune facilitated the work of the mission and shielded it from any outside intervention. Realizing this at last, the bereaved mother could only look at the Autheman mansion and contemplate the redoutable fortune it harbored.

... rien qu'un tintement doux et continu d'argent manie, un murmure argentin, voilé, comme d'une source invisible, inoffensive, qui s'alimentait du matin au soir, se répandait dans Paris, la France, et le monde, devenait ce large fleuve impétueux aux remous redoutables qu'on appelait la fortune des Autheman, et qui effrayait les plus hauts, les plus forts, ébranlait les consciences les plus fermes, les mieux remblayées.²⁰

Ironically, the man whose position as a financier in Paris served to shield and protect the mission could find no

solace at Petit-Port. Autheman adored his wife, but she locked her door to him and turned instead to the spiritual fulfillment of a life dedicated exclusively to evangelism. Thus, the man who exercised "un despotisme absolu dans le monde des affaires, et jouissait du respect le plus servile dans celui de toute une société d'hommes de lettres, de droit, d'ouvriers, de paysans et même de dignitaires de l'Eglise" because of his great wealth was rejected at home and miserable in his solitude.²¹ Once again Daudet shows that money can not always guarantee happiness. For Autheman it brought a cold, calculating woman interested in his fortune and cruelly indifferent to his person. After a series of futile attempts to gain this woman's affection, the banker despaired of all hope of happiness and committed suicide.

Meanwhile, only one person came publicly to Madame Ebsen's aid. The Reverend Aussadon, Dean of the Faculty of Theology and a friend of the Ebsens, visited Madame Autheman and demanded to know where Eline was. Madame Autheman obstinately refused to divulge this information: "Je ne sais pas ... Dieu l'a prise ..."²² Because of this heartless refusal, Aussadon informed Madame Autheman that he intended to denounce her actions publicly. The following Sunday he preached against the destruction of the family and the perversion of Christianity. Everyone present understood the allusions to Madame Autheman and her evangelism. Then, when Madame Autheman, present in the congregation, still had the audacity to present herself for communion, Aussadon refused

to administer it to her.

The consequences of this one just act were far reaching. Aussadon lost his position and pension. Madame Ebsen was obliged to go into hiding to escape the authorities who wanted to have her committed to an insane asylum. None of these actions were ordered by the Authemans. They were taken immediately by persons who knew the Autheman fortune and wished to avoid any criticism from this powerful family. These actions were, in effect, the natural and inevitable result of their fortune, "le poids de l'argent, l'universel aplatissement devant l'idole."²³ While Madame Ebsen and the Reverend Aussadon were mercilessly pursued and persecuted, Madame Autheman continued her good work, at peace with her soul.

This commentary on the worlds of finance and commerce increases in importance when one considers that it was based on a true incident which had come to Daudet's attention. His son, Léon, was for a time tutored in German by Madame Lima, a widow who supported herself through her German lessons. One day Daudet noticed that Madame Lima looked particularly sad and asked her the cause. She replied that she had just received a post card from her only daughter. It contained no return address and was the same message that she had been receiving periodically for years. "Ma mère, je vais bien. J'espère qu'il en est de même pour vous. Votre fille en Christ." Madame Lima's daughter had been singled out and converted to an evangelical sect by a lay missionary. She

had renounced her family and begun missionary work throughout Europe. Since then her mother had had no word of her except these post cards which she received occasionally. To support her conviction that her daughter had been forcibly taken from her, Madame Lima produced several drugs that she had found in her daughter's room after her departure. They had been used to induce trances and mental aberrations.

The fact that Daudet was so close to this incident accounts for the intensity of feeling and the tendency to sermonize which is apparent throughout the book. This marks the beginning of a retreat from objectivity and the adoption of a more didactic approach. A recent article by Poujol shows to what extent the character of "l'Évangéliste," Madame Autheman, was based on actual persons. In creating Madame Autheman, Daudet seems to have drawn upon three women from the same family, Madame Jules Mallet, Madame André, and Madame Henri Mallet, daughter-in-law to the former and daughter of the latter. These women were all involved in evangelical missions of a dubious theological nature. In this they were part of what Poujol has called "un véritable foisonnement d'entreprises philanthropiques et religieuses."²⁴ Madame Jules Mallet was the wife of a well-known Protestant banker and the Mallet family was associated with the other Protestant banking families. Thus, in attacking them, Daudet was also attacking "une caste redoutable celle de la haute finance protestante."²⁵ He was reaching beyond the fictional world to attack this segment of society which enjoyed immunity from the

authorities because of its enormous wealth. At the same time he pointed out the universal acceptance of this situation. Since everyone was in some way affected by the financiers, no one was willing to question their actions. Money, which was equated with power, was never challenged, only respected and obeyed. This was also the case in the sphere of politics during both the Second Empire and the Third Republic.

Before the Revolution of 1789 the direction of public affairs had been the monopoly of a very small minority. Since then, however, there had been a continual effort on the part of the masses to depose the privileged aristocrats. The period during which Jansoulet of Le Nabab rose to fame through successful speculation, and Hemerlingue became one of the most powerful bankers in France was also the period during which parliamentary government was being established in France and the bourgeoisie was gaining control of the State. Rising members of the bourgeoisie who were achieving an affluent way of life were increasingly interested in politics for vanity, power, or profit. As early as 1854 in Le Gendre de Monsieur Poirier Augier had ridiculed a parvenu tradesman who married his daughter to an effete aristocrat for the sake of a title and then hoped to obtain a seat in the House of Peers.

Le Nabab suggests the ascendancy of the financial world into the domain of politics during the Second Empire. Since Jansoulet was rich he wanted to be a deputy in the Corps Législatif, and he considered this somehow his due because of his fortune. He saw that this position, like just

about everything else in Paris, could be bought. Paganetti offered him a deputyship in return for investments in La Caisse territoriale. As soon as there was a vacancy, Jansoulet began his campaign, buying votes with parties, donations, and promises. These practices, it is clearly stated, were customary and had been employed by all the other deputies in their turn. The invalidation of Jansoulet's election was not really due to the exposé of his campaign methods but, as has been explained, was due to his feud with Hemerlingue's wife. Thus, Jansoulet's defeat was in no way a triumph of honesty. Rather, it was the inevitable victory of the shrewder use of an immense fortune.

Jansoulet was representative of a new type of politician who had risen to the Corps Législatif from the lower echelons of society. This politician was even more prevalent during the Third Republic. Many had had the good fortune to be elected as deputies to the Assembly at Bordeaux or soon after. These politicians were more concerned about their personal business than the transactions of the State, more interested in their personal intrigues than in political problems. In power they were looking for "des jouissances de luxe, des satisfactions de vanité ou encore la possibilité de s'enrichir."²⁶ Such politicians appear in Numa Roumestan (1881) and Soutien de Famille (1898).

Although Numa Roumestan was subtitled "Moeurs parisiennes," this is misleading. The novel was primarily a study of the confrontation of opposing natures, one typical of the

south of France, the other Parisian in character. Numa Roumestan came from Provence. When he spoke, and he spoke constantly, carried away by the rhythm of his own oratory, he was animated and eloquent. In his effusion he exaggerated and made promises liberally. Numa's wife, Rosalie, who had lived in Paris all her life, was of the opposite temperament: reasonable, reserved, and intelligent.

While the conflict between these two different natures which lived side by side was the main subject, the political activity in France is an important aspect of the novel. Like many others, Numa entered political life after the fall of the Second Empire when he was elected deputy to the Assembly at Bordeaux. In the most limited sense Numa did nothing wrong while serving in this capacity. Certainly he had no wish to use his position to accumulate a personal fortune and would not have considered stealing from public funds or bribing his constituents. Yet when he became Ministre de l'Instruction publique he adopted the morality and method of those around him. Like "le Nabab," who tried to gain Paris' affection by saturating the city with his money, the new minister tried to appease his constituents with promises and favors. Adapting quickly to the competitive existence, the novice proceeded to misuse his authority as minister to obtain what he personally wanted.

One such occasion involved the incompetent director of the Opéra, Cardailhac, whom Numa intended to replace with a better man. Before he had done so, Numa met an enchanting

young girl, Alice, with pretensions toward singing despite her hopelessly nasal voice. After considerable bargaining, Alice had a contract with the Opéra, Cardailhac received a new contract in return for accepting Alice, and Numa had a mistress. In this way Numa corrupted his political office by using it to exchange favors with others. True, he was not as blatant about it as was Jansoulet who paid the press for complimentary articles, attempted to finance the croix d'honneur, and did buy his winning election in Corsica. With Numa no money actually traded hands but goods, which are only money in disguise, were exchanged, and this actually becomes the same.

However, this practice, which was an accepted part of political life as it usually has been and was evident to a certain extent at all levels of politics, pales in comparison with the political corruption depicted in a much later work, Soutien de Famille, where the monied interests have a stranglehold on politics. The novel is subtitled "Moeurs Contemporaines" although this is, perhaps, misleading since Daudet was severely restricted by the illness that finally killed him while he was working on this book. Unable to go out he was forced to write from notes taken ten years earlier. Thus, he set the action in the 1880's even though the book was published in 1898. The tone of the book, markedly different from that of Numa Roumestan, is bitter in its condemnation of the corruption that it describes as rampant in France and ominous in its suggestion that reforms are imperative. Henry Bordeaux discussed this aspect of the book:

On entrevoit les grandes causes qui préparent, si l'on n'y prend point garde, la déchéance de notre pays, et la responsabilité de ceux qui détiennent le pouvoir et n'y voient, comme dirait M. Demolins, que la cueillette des places et des faveurs.²⁷

Soutien de Famille tells the story of the Eudeline family after the death of the father, hounded into suicide by heartless creditors. The elder son Raymond is now responsible for the welfare of the family. He proves unequal to the task, growing up lazy and selfish. His younger sister and brother are the actual providers for the family. After years of self-indulgence Raymond recognizes the truth and attempts to make restitution to his family. The original cruelty which drove the father to suicide was due to the actions of Marc Javel, a deputy in the Chambre de Députés. Javel, along with other political figures, plays an important secondary role. "Indeed, the world of the Palais Bourbon constitutes the principal backdrop of the novel's actions."²⁸

The ascension of the politician, Marc Javel, resembles that of Numa Roumestan. Javel's family owned a small business. They were part of the workers and artisans and small businessmen who made up the lower echelons of Parisian society. Like Numa, he entered politics as a deputy after the fall of the Empire. He was then nominated to the post of Sous-secrétaire d'Etat and finally named Secrétaire de la Marine. Javel was typical of the politicians who became progressively stronger during the Third Republic. In public he extolled the virtues of the Republic and appeared to be a dedicated government official. In reality he was only interested in his own political

career.

This breed of politician was colder and more intentionally calculating than Numa. Personal gain was Marc Javel's prime consideration and without hesitation he foreclosed on Victor Eudeline, a former friend who was in debt to him, and went to court to have the unfortunate man sent to prison. When Eudeline committed suicide in order to spare his children this dishonor, Javel was equally indifferent to the plight of the widow. He only refrained from pressing charges to obtain all his money because he did not want the possible bad publicity to jeopardize his career. Instead, he attended the funeral and hypocritically proclaimed himself the protector of his victim's family.

Once again Duadet portrays friends being separated because one of them places his lust for money above such values as friendship. These actions at the personal level reflect the cruel indifference of a world shaken by rapid change and the general lack of morality of a period preoccupied by materialism. Politics was not exempt as Daudet had already shown in Numa Roumestan, and he further indicates in Soutien de Famille that politicians like Javel were increasing in numbers and corruption.

Il y a la bande à Cadufe, à Barnès, à Valfon, ce ramas de traitants et de jouisseurs qui ne sont au Corps législatif que pour bâcler des affaires, qui trafiquent de leurs votes et dont le plus grand crime est encore d'abaisser un peu plus chaque jour le niveau des consciences, de corrompre l'air autour d'eux; ceux-là, oui, on pourrait s'exercer dessus, leur tanner le cuir en long et en large.²⁹

One common practice, which Daudet indicated was widespread, was to bribe the bookkeeper who issued the deputies' salaries. He was in an ideal position to know when a deputy needed money. This information was useful to anyone who wanted to push a bill through the legislature and was willing to pay for some additional votes. On the other hand, the deputies themselves were deluged with requests from their constituents. Persons who wanted pensions, or exemption from military service, or a tobacco store, converged upon their deputy. He in turn tried to comply in order to maintain his popularity. According to Daudet, the result of these and similar practices was a continual plundering of the State's resources and the domination of the lawmaking process by the monied interest in France.

Pierre Izoard, Chef de la sténographie à la chambre, summed up these practices: "c'est la pourriture de l'argent qui nous gagne!"³⁰ The Third Republic had always resembled the Second Empire in that the monied interests were able to dominate the political scene. Izoard, an old liberal from '48, felt that Gambetta had at least curbed the corruption of the Third Republic while he was influential in his party. During the past five or six years since his death in 1882, however, the vices of the deputies had become blatant.

Izoard bitterly criticized the deputies who accepted bribes and awarded favors: "Ah! les malandrins, ce qu'ils sont en train de faire de cette Chambre, et ce que cette Chambre fera de notre pays ..." ³¹ He pessimistically concluded that this had already destroyed the Republic and all hope that it

would be able to govern sanely and reform the country. "Sans doute l'outillage de la République était excellent, il avait si peu servi! ... Mais nous l'avons faussé tout de suite."³² Izoard openly and loudly condemns this corruption. He berates the deputies for their disregard of professional ethics. His solution would be to close the legislature for several years. Then, he reasoned, the French would learn to go elsewhere for a living, and the deputies contaminated by the corruption would be far away.

This satirical proposition is the only solution to the corruption that is proposed by the novel. As always, Daudet chose to illustrate nefarious conditions in France without suggesting possible reforms. There is, however, a marked difference in the treatment of the subject. Daudet's attitude appears to have become considerably more pessimistic. In Le Nabab Jansoulet is not viewed as a public anathema because he "bought" his election to the Corps Législatif. Numa's shortcomings as a deputy were also viewed as within the normal course of events. In Soutien de Famille, however, the shady transactions of Jansoulet and Numa have multiplied and increased in seriousness, and money is now dominating the political world. No longer viewed as an inevitable and universal ill, it has become the symbol of an irrevocably corrupt society. To emphasize this, one character in the book, Pierre Izoard, speaks at some length about this corruption. At times his discourses become ill-disguised attempts to preach to the reader.

L'Immortel was another bitter attack on the moeurs in France, in which Daudet's opinions are clearly voiced by one of the characters, an artist named Védérine. The book does not deal specifically with the political, financial or industrial circles of Paris, but deals more generally with the attempts of the younger generation to enter any one of these fields. The thesis developed by the book is that these young persons have no genuine interest in any field. They are motivated exclusively by the desire to make money.

L'Immortel was received with admiration or anger by Daudet's contemporaries when it was published in 1888. His criticism of the Académie Française evoked many emotions and he was accused of cruelty, injustice, and pettiness. Daudet recognized the outrage he had caused and justly remarked that the criticism of the Académie had overridden the rest of the book.

Quel tapage! En ai-je soulevé des clameurs? Et remarquez qu'on ne veut voir que l'Académie dans ce livre. On oublie presque tout le reste, les tableaux de moeurs où l'Académie n'a rien à démêler, les chapitres de passion, tout le côté qui regarde la "société," le monde et ses dessous plus ou moins propres, plus ou moins honteux.³³

The subtitle of the book, "Moeurs Parisiennes," suggests Daudet's broader intent and the real interest of the book. The democratic cadre of the Third Republic as seen by Daudet had had little effect on society. As has been mentioned earlier, the Third Republic was described by him as an extension of the Second Empire in which corruption at all levels and in all areas of society was more prevalent.

He considered this to be exemplified by the "struggle-for-lifeurs" who appeared in the younger generation. For these young people, as for young people universally, youth was an age of great energy and great desires, and many of them wanted to affirm their personality, assert themselves, and get the most out of life. Before them was the obstacle, society, with its complicated rules, the hierarchy at the summit of which were their elders and those who had already arrived and the series of almost interminable steps to the top which were to be climbed one at a time. As the perceptive young man contemplated this world he was certain to realize rather soon that those who were ahead of him on this ladder did not always respect the rules of the law or morality. The temptation to follow suit in this new game, to cheat a little in order to win sooner, was very strong.

Youth is the age of great hopes and discoveries, and like the thousands of young people who came each year to Paris from the provinces, Daudet had experienced the aspirations and the disillusionment. This struggle to make oneself known, to be recognized as an artist, and to find a job, Daudet had known even after he was married and trying to establish a home for himself and family. Until the time when his father-in-law approached him and insisted on paying off his long outstanding debts, the young writer had to work doggedly without reaping either fame or fortune. Thus, he understood--indeed had once been--this unhappy youth, avid and discontented, who regarded society and, having summed it up,

had to decide how he was going to realize his ambitions.

Daudet, however, in the final analysis and despite the temptation to do otherwise, remained faithful to his art. Furthermore, nothing indicates that he stooped to lying or cheating, and all knowledge of his character would indicate the contrary. It was only under great pressure that he agreed to accept that one loan from his wife's family, and henceforth he supported himself and his family on whatever he earned as critic or author. Thus, he was extremely harsh in his criticism of someone like Paul Astier who did not share his honesty and diligence.

In addition, Daudet does not appear to have been in the tradition of men like Napoleon--endowed with a sense of conquest and the desire to dominate. He was, instead, a congenial person, satisfied with the more bourgeois comforts of the hearth. He could not identify with the lean and hungry young men possessed by driving ambition and aiming at all encompassing power and enormous wealth that he observed or those that Balzac had so cruelly described in Les Illusions perdues (1837-1843) or that Barrès was to analyze so lucidly in Les Déracinés (1897). Daudet concluded not by admiring the vital force and intense energy that motivated these youth but by condemning their goals as shallow and their method as unscrupulous. This judgment was passed on Paul Astier of L'Immortel as representative of the ruthless and ambitious youth of the Third Republic who had only one goal: to be successful and make a lot of money. As Paul explained, he

needed money to maneuver, to exert himself and build his own personal empire. "... j'aime le pouvoir, je veux monter très haut, tu m'entends, très haut. Mener les événements et les hommes!"³⁴ His philosophy was summed up in Darwinian terms: "Extermine-moi ou je t'extermine."³⁵

The son and grandson of members of the Académie Française, Paul Astier studied architecture at the Ecole des Beaux Arts. His studies completed, the practical and ambitious man was not interested in Rome, the Institut, or les palmes but openly declared that he wanted to make a fortune:

Ce qu'il voulait, c'était la fortune ... Se lancer, brasser des affaires, beaucoup d'affaires, gagner de l'argent tout de suite, voilà ce qu'il ambitionnait, lui, et pas de palmes sur habit vert!³⁶

To achieve this he was willing to connive, scheme, cheat, and otherwise use acquaintances and even his own family. Paul "cynically invoked Darwinism as adequate sanction and justification for his unscrupulous and predatory conduct."³⁷

The idea for the character of Paul Astier came from the "Affaire Lebiez-Barré" which had shocked Paris several years previously. It concerned two well educated young men, Lebiez and Barré, who had come to Paris to make a fortune any way they could. Learning that the woman who delivered their milk had a large investment in stocks they brutally killed her to obtain her money. When their ugly crime was discovered, they defended themselves at the trial by saying that the old morality had broken down and Darwin had shown them that life was a struggle in which the strong survive by killing the

weaker.

Paul Astier professed the same philosophy in his desire to rise to the top. He also knew, as did Rastignac half a century before him, that in order to be accepted into the haute société it was necessary to have money or successfully maintain the façade of wealth and affluence.

A Paris, dans la "Société" l'argent ne joue qu'un rôle occulte. On est censé en avoir, vivre au-dessus de ces misères comme dans les comédies distinguées. Manquer à cette convention, ce serait s'éliminer soi-même de la bonne compagnie.³⁸

Since Paul had no reliable income of his own, he lived off women. The son used his mother's affection for him to cajole her into giving him sums of money. Like Rastignac who solicited the savings of his poor mother and sister in the provinces, this new "struggle-for-lifey" as Paul was called, was indifferent to the privations his adoring mother suffered to give him his handouts and deaf to her supplications.

Tu sais bien que je t'ai tout donné, que je m'habille de mise-bas, que je ne me suis pas acheté un chapeau depuis trois ans, que Corentine lave mon linge à la cuisine tellement je fougirais de donner ces friperies à la blanchisseuse; et tu sais aussi que la pire misère, c'est encore de te refuser ce que tu demandes. Alors, pourquoi le demandes-tu?³⁹

Only an extremely self-centered person would be unmoved by such statements. With passages like the one above Daudet hits the reader with the warped family relationships of the Astier-Rehu. The selfish son visits his mother at home only when he needs money, and then he cleverly takes advantage of the vanity of a middle-aged woman who has long been ignored by her husband. He always compliments her and seems to promise

her love before he makes a request. One sees from these clever moves that the youth is a shrewd and calculating person, determined to have his way and capable of getting it. The picture of this healthy and able young man fawning on his mother until he had her pocket money shows how the need to get ahead had destroyed all sentiment of filial devotion.

In addition, this insatiable appetite for money had not only drained his family's savings but also seriously undermined the love and trust of the family. In an effort to satisfy her son and buy the affection he never seemed to give her, Madame Astier-Réhu had too often requested money from her husband, pretending new furniture or a new rug which never appeared. Now, as she explained to her voracious son, the father no longer listened or believed her. "Seulement, que veux-tu? il se cache, il se méfie ... le paysan terre ses sous, nous lui en avons trop fait."⁴⁰ Astier-Réhu had flatly announced that he would give nothing more to his mange-tout of a son, and all relations between the two were reduced to occasional exchanges of sarcasm.

Thus, the overriding desire to make a fortune, to get ahead, to do something, had finished by perverting the natural family relationships. The son played the role of the gigolo, offering compliments and filial kisses in return for his allowance. In a desperate effort to keep this attention the woman negates her duties as wife and plots and schemes against her husband in order to send handouts to her son. Realizing the intrigues which surrounded him in his own home, and too

weak to master them, the husband abdicated his role as head of the household, renounced his family, and sought refuge in his work. The child, normally a bond between man and wife and a uniting force in a family, had succeeded in dividing the family and reducing it to a vicious struggle for the survival of the fittest.

Daudet was personally appalled by the corruption of the family since he himself was a devoted husband and adoring father. He found warmth and comfort within his own family and viewed a stable family as the basic unit of life in France. Any weakening of its structure inevitably threatened the nation as a whole. Certainly this attitude helps explain why the story of such a scoundrel as Paul Astier concerned and angered him. He saw that the nefarious influence exerted by one like Paul would be far reaching.

As the novel begins the hungry young man was in need of a large sum of money to pay his most pressing debts. Once again the indulgent mother approached her husband for money. In rebuffing his intriguing spouse and maintaining that it was time for their handsome son either to restrict his expenditures or to pay for them himself, Astier-Réhu did let slip that the documents he was collecting were worth "a fortune."

Not ready to make use of this new information and desperate for money, Madame Astier-Réhu humiliated herself to take advantage of the generosity and naïveté of one of her husband's former students, Freydet. The scene repeats that of Paul's request to his mother as the sly woman first complimented

Freydet on his new book, then asked for a loan. Since the author was from the provinces and unaware of the importance of maintaining appearances, he was not shocked by this outrageous demand but overjoyed to be able to help his teacher. Thus we see how the woman now resembles her son--crafty and hypocritical in her efforts to get the money he wants.

Inevitably, the poor woman sank even lower in this never ending search for funds. To satisfy the next demand--this time for twenty thousand francs--the desperate woman made use of her fortuitous discovery and stole three documents from her husband. When she sold them for the necessary sum, she had no remorse, no second thoughts. In her life only her son had ever counted, and since he had become a man he, and not husband or lover, was responsible for her only emotions. Thus she took the check to her son and offered it to him with all her love and concern.

Il ne demanda pas d'où venait cet argent, ce qu'il lui avait coûté, la prit tendrement contre son coeur en ayant soin de ne pas chiffonner le papier: "M'man, m'man ..." et ce fut tout.⁴¹

As Paul carefully holds that piece of paper, one realizes again how this obsession with money has corrupted the family. That check for twenty thousand francs was dearer to Paul than his own mother. It did not concern him that she had cheated and betrayed her husband in order to get this money. He did, however, realize the limitations of this source of income and was actively searching for a wealthier woman to support him.

He first courted the recently widowed and very rich Princess Rosen only to be beaten by the impoverished Prince Athis who was also looking for a rich wife and had abandoned his parfaite amie of many years, the very wealthy and still attractive Duchesse Padovani in order to marry the princess. When Paul learned that he had lost the immense Rosen fortune, he challenged Athis to a duel but lost, gravely wounded. When the thwarted fortune hunter had recovered, he adroitly turned these events to his advantage and proved once again that he could bully or cajole women into doing anything he wanted. He smoothed the smarting ego of the duchess by declaring that his duel had been to avenge her honor. Then he carefully and deliberately courted her, feeding the hungry woman with compliments and affection. As soon as he was certain that he was loved, he abruptly refused to associate any longer with a woman who deemed it below her station to marry him. Tired and grieved, the foolish woman consented to the marriage, and the Duchesse Padovani sacrificed position and title to become Madame Paul Astier, wife of a man twenty-five years her junior.

Thus, at the end of the novel, Paul Astier is on the threshold of fortune and fame. He had succeeded not by his own merit but by his ruthless and unprincipled way of turning all relationships to his own advantage. He had used his mother to drain the family of all its resources and then assured himself of a working capital and a place in the haute société by tricking a wealthy woman into marrying him. Certainly using

women to make a fortune is an old ploy. As early as 1709, in Turcaret by Lesage, a chevalier reveals that he is courting the Baronne solely because of her fortune. The examples in the comédie humaine are numerous. Rastignac, a lazy young man was the lover of Delphine de Nucingen, wife of the wealthy banker, and the twenty years that he spent as her gigolo earned him Delphine's daughter, the sole heir to the Nucingen fortune, and the titles of minister, count, and member of the House of Lords. Maxime de Trailles, a base and intrepid adventurer, also lived off women--the mother of Esther, then the sister of Delphine Nucingen, Madame de Restaud. Equally without scruples was Du Tillet who used the savings of his first mistress, Madame Roguin, to start a bank.

Despite Paul Astier's many predecessors Daudet views his actions as exemplary of the money-fever he considered to be even more prevalent in the younger generation of the Third Republic than it had been during the corrupt period of the Second Empire. He was convinced that this new generation was rotten to the core and emphasized this idea by further developing the character of Paul Astier in a play, La lutte pour la vie, which was first given in 1889. The action takes place three years after Paul's marriage to the Duchesse Padovani. During this time he has successfully used the fortune and social position of his wife to become a deputy in the Corps Législatif. As the play begins, Paul wants to become minister by divorcing the duchess whose fortune he has spent and marrying a wealthy Jewess, Esther de Sélény. He is on the

verge of success when he is dramatically killed by the father of a girl whose death he has caused.

As in the novel, the interest of the play is Paul Astier's ruthless climb toward the top. Daudet explains this in the preface:

Non, j'ai seulement voulu mettre à la scène quelques spécimens de cette race nouvelle de petits féroces à qui la formule darwinienne de la "lutte pour la vie" sert de prétexte et d'excuse en toutes sortes de vilenies et d'infamies.⁴²

Daudet somewhat softens the severity of his judgment against Darwin however. He does not blame Darwin's theory of evolution for itself but concludes that this theory awakens the brutal instincts of man.

Ce n'est pas le grand Darwin que je mets en cause, mais les hypocrites bandits qui ... d'une constatation de savant, veulent faire un article de code et l'appliquer systématiquement ...⁴³

Despite this assertion to the contrary, the play does suggest a partial misconception of the theory's tendency and working. "The theory of natural selection applies to the struggle for survival of nonrational and non-moral organisms in an uncontrolled environment in which the struggle is by necessity and not by principle."⁴⁴ It is a statement of a tendency that had been observed, not a cause of this tendency. Daudet seems to think that the theory was in some way the cause of this tendency which he saw and vehemently condemned in man.

Je vous dit qu'appliquées, ces théories de Darwin sont scélérates parce qu'elles vont chercher la brute au fond de l'homme et réveillent ce qui reste à quatre pattes dans le quadrupède redressé.⁴⁵

Daudet's previous novels had repeatedly shown the

ruthlessness and brutality of man in his efforts to reach and then maintain a position of power. This was particularly evident in his portrayal of the converging worlds of politics, industry and finance during the Second Empire and the Third Republic. Here money played an occult role as it was the hidden power behind persons of influence. It enabled Hemerlingue to force the invalidation of Jansoulet's election and assured Madame Autheman that she would never be questioned by authorities. Thus, anyone desirous of power needed to increase his fortune as he attained wider spheres of influence.

This was done in the most unscrupulous ways. Speculators like Paganetti solicited money from small investors among the bourgeoisie and any unsuspecting rich like le Nabab. Politicians traded favors as Numa Roumestan did so frequently, or blatantly accepted offers of money as Marc Javel and his colleagues did. Others, like Hemerlingue or Jansoulet, left France in their youth, made their fortunes outside the country, then returned to enjoy the fruits of their labors as Grandet's nephew had done after his father's bankruptcy and suicide, half a century before.

Paul Astier followed naturally in this tradition, determined to make a fortune and using equally unscrupulous means to obtain it. As has been pointed out, there was nothing extraordinary about using women to advance oneself. It does not, therefore, seem necessary to attribute these actions to the influence of Darwin's theory of evolution. Daudet, however, is harsher in his judgment of Paul than he had been of

his previous characters. He maintained that this man was representative of a new and different generation. "Ce type-là n'esixtait pas chez nous avant la guerre."⁴⁶ He accused this group that was maturing of lowering its morality and standards:

Paul Astier est d'une génération, d'un "bateau" où, sans croire absolument aux vieilles institutions, on a encore un vague instinct de la loi, du gendarme. Je me trompe peut-être, mais il me semble que cette équipe des hommes de trente à quarante, peu déterminée pour le mal comme pour le bien, race d'Hamlets tourmentés et questionneurs, n'est pas encore arrivée au nihil absolu et agissant du bateau qui vient derrière, délesté de tout respect et de toute morale.⁴⁷

The pessimistic outlook of L'Immortel is later tempered by Daudet's natural optimism as La Lutte pour la vie portrays the eventual failure of a young "struggle-for-lifefur" like Paul. Despite the shrewd maneuvering of the cold and calculating fortune hunter he made one fatal mistake, and it caused his ultimate failure. Ironically, the scoundrel who was using women as stepping stones to the top was also destroyed by a woman. While trying to obtain a divorce from the duchess in order to marry a wealthier woman and wishing to keep this projected second marriage a secret, he tried to fool his wife by having an affair with the daughter of one of his employees, Lydie Vaillant. The girl, however, was deeply in love with Astier, and when she realized that he wanted to get rid of her, she committed suicide. Her bereaved father divined the reason and shoots Paul. As the hero says in Stendhal's Lucien Leuwen, one must be constantly on guard, like a man fighting a duel.

While this denouement is convincing within the context of the play, Daudet's explanation of Paul's failure which one finds in the preface does require further comment. The author states "Rien de grand sans bonté, sans pitié, sans solidarité humaine" and illustrates this axiom by Paul's failure and Hemerlingue's bankruptcy mentioned in passing in the play; but this certainly had not been true in the earlier novels where the wicked often triumphed. The examples are numerous: men like Paganetti never had to reimburse those who invested in their fraudulent companies; Madame Autheman was never punished; and Marc Javel was a successful politician. Then, abruptly, La Lutte pour la vie appears to signify a change in Daudet's attitude by suggesting that men's actions are ultimately regulated by a higher justice or "la justice immanente des choses." The implication is that a man's fortune or position can buy only temporal power. Eventually each man must make restitution. Thus, while money may often appear to be the pivot upon which society turned, there was a higher rule of justice which regulated life.

This change of opinion with regard to the role of money in society appears to have been due to a number of events in Daudet's personal as well as literary life. He seems to have recognized the bitter venom he had released in L'Immortel and was deeply concerned about the criticism that the book had received and the personal motives that were attributed to him. This was not at all the reaction that he wanted to stimulate nor the impression that he wanted to give. Thus, he did not

wish to repeat this type of book and recorded several paragraphs to this effect in his notebooks.

Je voudrais que mon prochain livre ne fût pas trop cruel. J'ai eu la dernière fois le sentiment que j'étais allé trop loin. Pauvres humains! Il ne faut pas tout leur dire, leur donner mon expérience, ma fin de vie douloureuse et savante. Traiter l'humanité en malade, dosages, ménagements; faisons aimer le médecin au lieu de jouer au brutal et dur charcutier.

Et ce prochain livre qui serait tendre et bon, indulgent, j'aurais un grand mérite à l'écrire, car je souffre beaucoup. Fierté de ne pas imposer aux autres la mauvaise humeur et les injustices sombres de ma souffrance.⁴⁸

As Murray Sachs noted, "Daudet began to see his role as novelist not as the exposé of human evil, but as the consoler and healer."⁴⁹ La Lutte pour la vie was representative of this new outlook on the world since it depicted the defeat of the fortune hunter Paul Astier by a force other than that of a more powerful fortune.

The possibility of imminent justice which was suggested in just this one work hardly minimizes the caustic commentary on the financial, industrial, and political worlds which emerges from the novels when they are considered together. Daudet rightfully recognized the enormous power that financiers enjoyed during the latter part of the nineteenth century. One might summarize his attitude by a corollary to that old adage "power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Daudet's position seems to be that wealth corrupts and immense wealth corrupts more extensively. The powerful financier backed by large amounts of capital could and did exert his influence in all areas of endeavor, often with no regard for

the morality or legality of his actions. Men like Hemerlingue were able to sway the vote of the Corps Législatif and decide an election. There were no controls for this situation as immunity from legal authority increased in direct proportion to one's fortune. Thus, Madame Autheman was shielded by her banking family while the Reverend Aussadon was pursued by the law.

The expansion of industry which was transforming France during the Second Empire and the Third Republic provided a vast terrain for investments and speculation. The possibility of quick and large profits attracted not only cautious businessmen interested in sound investments but also the "wheeler dealers," the fly-by-night types who were not hindered in any way by scruples. As the money-fever spread down the hierarchy to the middle and lower-middle classes an enterprising man like Paganetti found it increasingly easy to entice the unsuspecting into making investments that were their loss and his gain.

With the disappearance of the landed aristocracy as a strong force a new controlling group based on wealth was filling the void. In a very real sense, money was now the measure of a man. How this money was "earned"--selling fraudulent stocks, corrupt business enterprises, or the exploitation of an undeveloped area or country--this was immaterial in a materialist value system. Thus, Jansoulet could drain the resources of Tunisia for years until he had acquired in somewhat dubious fashion a very real fortune and then return to

France and claim his right to fame and position.

'Le Nabab' wanted to enter politics as the culmination of a successful career as an entrepreneur. Others used politics as a vantage point from which they could launch their careers by manipulating men, controlling government projects, and generally turning state affairs to their interest. Recognizing the power and respect that naturally accrued to a wealthy man, those in politics from the lesser deputies to the important leaders tended to place personal concerns above the government by selling votes, accepting bribes, or directing grandiose schemes for their benefit.

Human nature being easily tempted by the prospect of money and the power and position that usually accompanies wealth, it is not surprising that an examination of politics, industry, and finance should reveal incidents of theft, blackmail, bribery, and fraud. According to Daudet's assessment of this particular period in history, these practices were common, even blatantly evident, as a money-fever with all its evil ramifications raged in the entire country, in every sphere, at every level of society. Paul Astier was representative of the new generation, born into a corrupt world, nurtured on the precept that the strong survive by crushing the weaker competition, and reared to consider money the supreme value and goal of man. Having learned these lessons well he devotes his life to making money, expediency permitting him to be as ruthless and unscrupulous as necessary. In this he is the inevitable product and the natural symbol of a rotten society. The fact

that Astier was eventually destroyed does not mitigate Daudet's conviction that such persons were dominating the new generation.

NOTES

CHAPTER IV

¹Guy Chapman, The Third Republic of France, The First Phase 1871-1894 (New York, 1962), p. 117.

²Ibid., p. 118.

³Joseph L. Borgerhoff, Nineteenth century French Plays, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1931), p. 337.

⁴Oeuvres Complètes, t. 7, p. 23.

⁵Ibid., p. 27.

⁶Ibid., pp. 23-24.

⁷Ibid., p. 32.

⁸Ibid., p. 30.

⁹Ibid., p. 31.

¹⁰Felicien Marceau, Balzac et son monde (Paris, 1955), p. 447.

¹¹Oeuvres Complètes, t. 9, p. 199.

¹²Sachs, pp. 128-29.

¹³Oeuvres Complètes, t. 9, p. 54.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 72.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 136.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 72.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 39.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 144-45.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 149.

- ²⁰Ibid., p. 159.
- ²¹Lorley Ada Ashleman, La Société française d'après l'oeuvre d'Alphonse Daudet (Paris, 1910), p. 57.
- ²²Oeuvres Complètes, t. 9, p. 164.
- ²³Ibid., p. 180.
- ²⁴Jacques Poujol, "L'Évangéliste d'Alphonse Daudet," PMLA, LVI (1951), p. 341.
- ²⁵Ibid., p. 338.
- ²⁶Louis Sonolet, La vie parisienne sous le Second Empire (Paris, 1929), p. 193.
- ²⁷Oeuvres Complètes, t. 16, p. 303.
- ²⁸Sachs, p. 165.
- ²⁹Oeuvres Complètes, t. 16, p. 206.
- ³⁰Ibid., p. 203.
- ³¹Ibid., pp. 206-207.
- ³²Ibid., p. 208.
- ³³Oeuvres Complètes, t. 11, p. 210.
- ³⁴Ibid., t. 20, p. 342.
- ³⁵Ibid., p. 337.
- ³⁶Oeuvres Complètes, t. 11, p. 10.
- ³⁷Boyd G. Carter, "Alphonse Daudet: In Memoriam," French Review, XIV, p. 21.
- ³⁸Oeuvres Complètes, t. 11, p. 65.
- ³⁹Ibid., p. 6.
- ⁴⁰Ibid.
- ⁴¹Ibid., p. 69.
- ⁴²Ibid., t. 20, p. 323.
- ⁴³Ibid., p. 93.

⁴⁴Carter, p. 98.

⁴⁵Oeuvres Complètes, t. 20, p. 323.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Sachs, pp. 151-52.

⁴⁹Ibid.

CHAPTER V

ARTISTS, COURTESANS, AND EXILED ROYALTY

When Daudet referred to bohemia or la bohème, he was talking about a certain group of writers and artists who had come to Paris from the provinces aspiring to careers previously reserved for the Parisian bourgeoisie and the aristocracy. In effect, those who wished to begin a career in the arts and had no means of support had to go the way of la bohème. In other words, to give a provocative definition: "La Bohème, c'est le stage de la vie artistique: c'est la préface de l'Académie, de l'Hôtel-Dieu ou de la Morgue."¹

Daudet wrote frequently about bohemia, and these pages of his novels are among the most vivid and vibrant with life, the characters psychologically well developed and convincing. No doubt this was at least partially due to the fact that the author was utilizing his past experiences living as one of the bohemians as material for his novels. In any case he knew this life as the lonely, hungry, miserable existence that it was. Making every effort to give an accurate or realistic portrayal, Daudet does not minimize the role that money played in the lives of the bohemians, but reveals many of them to be discouraged by poverty and resentful of those who enjoyed an affluent life. While only a few had real talent most of them

hungered for fame, fortune, and personal happiness. In his wisdom Daudet shows how the deprivation and the suffering influenced the goals and affected the work of both the real and the would-be artists.

Daudet was not the first to write about this group. Before him Balzac had described la bohème in Un grand homme de province à Paris (1839) and Un Prince de la Bohème (1840). Later, the preface to Murger's well known book on the subject, Scènes de la Vie de Bohème (1851), included a useful document that discussed this group in terms of four distinct categories and revealed the economic and social status of the bohemians.

Two of the categories are composed of those persons who have no real artistic vocation. Those in one group were nourished by the romantic tradition of Gilbert, Malfilatre, Chatterton, and Moreau. They consider martyrdom the final proof of true artistic talent and actually hope for the hospital bed of Gilbert, which, one might add, they often find. In the other group are the amateurs, the fils à papa who leave the provinces attracted by the freedom and adventures of the disorganized life of bohemia. Most of these young men return home when their funds run out and their credit is no longer good.

According to Murger, those persons who have some talent actually form two more distinct groups. The first and largest category is called la Bohème ignorée and is composed of those young persons who are devoted to the cult of art and have promising talent but lack common sense. They cannot

manage or will not condescend to sell their work or bring it before the public. Thus, they live in stoical misery, confident that recognition will seek them out and too proud to try to earn a few francs in the meantime:

car si vous leur faites observer tranquillement que nous sommes aux XIX^e siècle, que la pièce de cent sous est Impératrice de l'humanité, et que les bottes ne tombent pas toutes vernies du ciel, ils vous tournent le dos et vous appellent bourgeois.²

Secondly, there is la vraie Bohème or those who have talent and some chance to rise above their misery and self-doubt and be recognized. When this happens and "leurs noms sont sur l'affiche," they begin receiving moderate prices for their work. With a small salary coming in and the slow ascent begun, these artists usually follow the path trod by Daudet himself. They marry, raise a family, and move away from the haphazard life of la bohème in favor of a more secure and respectable manner of living. Both these talented persons and those with only foolish pretensions appear in Daudet's novels. On the one hand, there are a number of characters like the poet, D'Argenton, in Jack who have many ridiculous pretensions but no talent. On the other hand, there are also truly gifted artists who are shown in different stages of their demanding careers.

Their experiences within la bohème do not in any way resemble the charming but false picture of a gay carefree life depicted in Murger's novel and described in the preface:

La vie de Bohème, c'est aussi quelques farces savoureuses, l'art de taper le bourgeois et de

s'en gausser, et de vagues aspirations artistiques, jamais sérieusement mises en oeuvre. Elles sont le prétexte à une vie joyeuse et désordonnée, Elles alimentent même les plaisanteries d'un petit groupe dont le jeu prolongé semble le seul souci.³

Murger, like Daudet, knew that this was a misleading picture since he was personally acquainted with the famine and cold of "la vie de Bohème" that killed many of his friends and caused his premature death when he was only thirty-eight.

Shortly after Murger's romanticized version of this life, the Aventures de Mademoiselle Mariette (1853) by Champfleury appeared with a more accurate description of the misery, the degradation, and the vulgarity of this existence. A young would-be poet Gerard sets up housekeeping with une petite noceuse of the neighborhood called Mariette. Martino has described the realistic picture given by Champfleury which in no way resembles the poeticized accounts of Murger:

Dans ces intérieurs sales et encombrés, tout travail est impossible; le poète et le peintre vont s'installer où ils peuvent, dehors, au café. D'ailleurs le besoin d'argent est perpétuel, il oblige à des démarches qui ne ressemblent en rien à cette amusante chasse à la pièce de cent sous que le héros de Murger semble parfois entreprendre par divertissement.⁴

It is interesting to note that Martino has mentioned the necessity of money which the artist could not ignore. Daudet had personally known the problems of supporting oneself during the days of his earliest artistic endeavors, and he mentions this struggle when he refers to la bohème in his novels. He also corroborates this picture of privation and debauchery and demonstrates how the poor living conditions and limited opportunities affected a few struggling artists--molded

their character, directed their actions, and influenced their art.

It is the condition of the artist to be constantly exposed to certain temptations which he must avoid or overcome in order to maintain his creative freedom. These forces threatening to turn the artist from his work come from within the individual as well as from the outside world. By his relationship with society and his attitude toward himself and the world, an artist can discredit his talent, reduce the scope of his genius, and diminish the value of his works. These temptations which menace the creative mind and deter its work are: the need for love and personal happiness, the temptation to seek glory, and the desire to use art to make a fortune. All three are actually connected with money as the first requires it and the last two are both motivated by the "golden calf." Each of these temptations is illustrated by one or two of Daudet's characters who could not cope with the difficult route required of the creative person and wandered astray of their original goal.

In effect, society is generally hostile to the artist, and the world of the Second Empire, which measured merit in terms of tangible returns, viewed the artist with disdain, and ignored the efforts necessary to this vocation. Marc Eigeldinger describes the artist's life in an indifferent world in this manner:

L'artiste est contraint de vivre dans l'isolement et de lutter par ses propres moyens contre la médiocrité

du monde et le mépris jaloux de la société. S'il ne veut pas se laisser réduire par les forces sociales, il doit résister en usant de toutes les ressources de sa volonté. Le partage de l'artiste qui tient à préserver sa vérité, c'est la lutte morale et les souffrances qu'elle implique.⁵

This is a subject that personally concerned Daudet since he had prostituted his art for journalism in order to support himself during the early years of his career. He had early expressed his ambiguous feelings toward journalism in the short sketch already discussed, "Le Roman du Chaperon-Rouge" and again in an adaptation of the fable by La Fontaine, "Le Chien et le Loup." When he became a successful novelist, he was sometimes criticized because he was careful to have his books published at prices within the budget of the masses of readers in order to assure himself of a vast audience and a large profit. Thus, it was natural for him to continue to explore the conflict between creative freedom and personal security which haunts certain artists. Should he submit his art to the demands of personal happiness, glory, and fortune or remain detached from these worldly goals and be totally dedicated to art?

Those truly talented and dedicated artists that appear in Daudet's novels are a young sculptress, Félicia Ruys, a young writer, André Maranne, and an older artist, Védrine, who has a wife and children. Their experiences form an enlightening commentary on the position of the true artist in a money-oriented society and indicate how the desires for happiness, glory, or fortune could affect even the talented and

dedicated artists. Félicia does not seek fame; nevertheless, she wants a sizeable fortune at her disposal to satisfy her extravagant nature and her penchant for luxury items. Védrine, on the other hand, has yielded to his desire for personal happiness, and this could encroach upon his art. The novice, André, is faced by all three temptations as he begins his career.

Félicia Ruys (Le Nabab) is a sculptress who adamantly refuses to submit her art to the exigences of supporting herself and prefers, instead, to regulate her personal life so as to obtain financial security. The illegitimate daughter of a sculptor, she was brought up in the midst of the bohemian atmosphere of her father's studio. The young girl's keen interest in sculpture and devotion to art made her oblivious to the unorthodox life led by the sculptor, his friends, and various models until her happy and carefree youth ended abruptly when her father died, leaving only fifty francs and little else. "Pas d'autre héritage, du moins en numéraire; seulement un mobilier d'art et de curiosité plus somptueux, quelques tableaux de prix et des créances égarées couvrant à peine des dettes innombrables."⁶ Félicia would have been left destitute and alone in a sophisticated world if her father's sister, former ballerina Constance Crennitz, did not come forward and offer to use her own small income, "quinze mille francs de rente," to run an apartment and the studio while Félicia continued her work.

Few artists are reputedly good managers, and this

proved to be the case for the new household. The generosity of the former ballerina could not compensate for her ignorance or for the capricious nature of Félicia, and their finances were always in extreme disorder. Periods of extravagance had to be followed by stringent economy when the servants were sent away, and the women lived alone in a state of privation. In fact, the meager pension of Constance was not sufficient, and Félicia did not earn very much as an artist. The pieces that she created were widely acclaimed, and many persons wanted her to do something for them. Yet, to be true to her art and avoid the pitfalls of mediocrity she had to work long and carefully on each piece. This restricted the number of finished works and therefore also kept her income very low. Although the sculptress' resources were limited because of her artistic integrity, she did not live like the struggling artist that she was. Her profession had permitted her to cross the class lines and frequent wealthy bourgeois and aristocratic homes. This no doubt whetted her appetite for elegant living with its well stocked wine cellars, gala parties, and extravagant amusements. In order to live this way the young sculptress was spending more than she was earning, and if this dilemma wasn't resolved soon, she and her aunt would be in the street.

La vie qu'elle menait la poussait à une impasse. Elle avait des goûts de luxe, de dépense, des habitudes de désordre que rien ne pouvait vaincre et qui la conduiraient fatalement à la misère, elle et cette bonne Crennitz, qui se laissait ruiner sans rien dire. Dans trois ans, quatre ans au plus,

tout serait fini. Et alors les expédients, les dettes, la loque et les savates des petits ménages d'artistes. Ou bien l'amant, l'entreteneur, c'est-à-dire la servitude et l'infamie.⁷

Unwilling to compromise her art in order to cater to the buying public, Félicia could only use her personal life to assure herself of financial security. Rejecting the ignoble solution of so many young, pretty girls who were desperate for money, she saw only one other way for a woman artist like herself to defend herself from poverty and the nefarious influences of the bohemian life she led.

Non, ce qu'il me faut, ce que je veux, c'est un mari qui me défende des autres et de moi-même, qui me garde d'un tas de choses noires dont j'ai peur quand je m'ennuie, des gouffres où je sens que je puis m'abîmer, quelqu'un qui m'aime pendant que je travaille, et relève de faction ma pauvre vieille fée à bout de forces...⁸

Realizing that the circumstances of her birth greatly restricted her choice of husband, she desperately wanted to marry another person of dubious origins, 'le Nabab', who has already been discussed.

Celui-là me convient et j'ai pensé à lui dès que je l'ai vu. Il est laid, mais il a l'air bon; puis il est follement riche et la fortune, à ce degré-là, ce doit être amusant...⁹

Félicia had long hoped for this marriage, convinced as she was that it was her only opportunity to escape the poor house or worse. It was a bitter disappointment for her to learn that 'le Nabab' was already married, and his wife was in excellent health. This brought home the ugly truth that the illegitimate daughter of an artist had no chance of finding a

man both willing to marry her and able to afford her way of life.

Thwarted in her attempt to find a wealthy man, Félicia considered stifling her extravagant nature and marrying the honest and respectable young accountant, Paul de Géry, already mentioned in the third chapter. This project was short-lived because she soon realized that Paul preferred the love and security offered by Aline Joyeuse, daughter of a banking clerk to the excitement and passion promised by the well-known sculptress. For Félicia, this rejection destroyed her last hope for a normal life and her last illusion about her place in society, and she concluded that marriage was an impossible dream for someone like herself.

After the double blow of the loss of "le Nabab" and then of Paul de Géry a great resentment over her fate welled up in the lonely and ambitious woman. She analyzed her situation with lucidity and coldly decided that there was only one way for the illegitimate daughter of a bohemian artist to get ahead. "Tu es fille de catin, ma chère; il faut que tu sois catin si tu veux être quelquechose..."¹⁰ The Duc de Mora, wealthy and influential President of the Corps Législatif had been enamored of her for a long time. Now he triumphed as the previously unattainable Félicia attempted to satisfy her humiliating need for money and compensate for her irregular situation by becoming the mistress of this important person.

After Mora's sudden death Felicia was filled with disgust by her own actions and by the hypocrisy that char-

acterized most of the persons she knew. In an effort to escape this atmosphere and also forget her own cowardly acts she accepted a commission in Tunisia and fled Paris for this foreign land. In her usual straightforward manner she explained her actions:

Oui, dans cette mascarade mondaine, ce tas de faussetés, de grimaces, de conventions laches et malpropres qui m'ont écoeurée au point que je me sauve, que je m'exile pour ne plus les voir, que je leur préférerais le bagne, l'égout, le trottoir comme une fille...¹¹

Félicia had rightly understood that this society did not value art, and thus it was not a lucrative profession. In order to make money as an artist she would have to demean her art in order to sell more of it. Since she was too dedicated to the ideal of art, she tried, instead, to use her personal life to find the wealth that was necessary to maintain the standard of living that she enjoyed. Had she belonged to some impoverished but aristocratic family it might have been otherwise, as there were many title hungry bourgeois who could afford to buy their way into aristocracy. But an artist, although feted and lauded, offered nothing to the avaricious bourgeois who was becoming increasingly conscious of social class nor to the impoverished aristocracy. Talent, it seems, could not compensate for the lack of fortune. The young woman was entertained, praised, and adored, but never married. It was the realization of her human condition which precluded the respectable acquisition of fortune that hastened the inevitable result so definitely avoided at first: Félicia became a

courtesan.

The extravagant nature which made Félicia seek out a rich match is only partially responsible for her eventual degradation. Throughout Le Nabab Daudet is sympathetic toward the true artist and makes it clear that the materialist society pushed persons like Félicia into compromising situations by refusing to accept them into its ranks. In addition to corrupting moral character, this rejection threatened to destroy great talent. At first the sculptress worked with the assurance of genius, the delicacy of a woman, and the freshness of youth. As her father grew older she gradually took over his work, and the continuation of art was once more assured in this small corner of Paris as it passed from one generation to the next. When the more mature Félicia began fighting for an advantageous place in the social hierarchy, the lies and hypocrisy which she discovered filled her with such disgust that it killed her enthusiasm for life and for her work. Daudet not only praises the talent of Félicia but also shows her to be a perceptive woman who was not fooled by the elegant appearance of a society which was rotten at the core. In such passages as the one cited above where Félicia violently criticizes society Daudet is actually expressing his own condemnation of the period.

While Félicia discovered that the position of a young woman among the bohemians of art was extremely tenuous, it was only natural that a man be better able to cope with this life. He could find employment as a clerk or a journalist or

some similar job to support himself while trying to achieve recognition in his artistic field. Any relaxation of his morals or compromising acquaintances during this period would be considered due to youthful frivolity and excused.

André Maranne, who aspired to a career as a writer, was one of the many young men who congregated in Paris hoping for success. In terms of his youth, inexperience, and goals he resembles another aspiring artist already mentioned, Daniel Eysette of Le Petit Chose. In contrast to Daniel, who failed miserably in his attempt, André manages to rise above the hardship, reject the false paths of fame and fortune, and succeed by dint of perseverance and determination. In this he represents the true artist and resembles Arthez in Illusions Perdues who was completely devoted to his career and the idealistic leader of the Cénacle.

Whereas Daniel is able to depend on his brother for support so he could devote all his time to writing, family discord forces André to leave his home and find employment. He rents a tiny apartment on the outskirts of Paris where he tried to support himself honestly as a photographer while he worked on his first play. This necessity to support himself helped develop a sense of responsibility and an awareness of the demands of a household. Unlike Félicia he was not avid for luxury, managed his affairs wisely, and was content to live within his meager income.

At the same time, dedication to his profession gives André the moral fortitude to resist the enticements of the

bohemian existence. There is no Irma Borel in his life as there was in Daniel's to disrupt his work or incur large debts for him to pay. Instead, the young writer loves Elise Joyeuse, one of the charming daughters of the bank employee whom we studied in a previous chapter. André does not consider this association with a family of the petite bourgeoisie to be in any way demeaning or destructive to his art. He hopes his marriage to Elise will be the successful combining of his precarious career with the warmth and security of a home and in no way considers it to be the defeat of his dreams and aspirations as Daniel's marriage to Camille Pierrotte was his renouncement of a literary career.

Daudet does not suggest as did Balzac that the artist lacks sufficient resources of energy to be simultaneously troubled by passion for a woman and the creative effort. In effect, the artistic vocation as is seen in Daudet's characters is not the all-consuming concentration of vital forces as it is with the chemist Balthazar Claës or the painter Théodore de Sommervieux where the artist has neither strength nor time to devote to a family. In Daudet's conception of the artist, family life interferes on a much more mundane level. If the spouse is more interested in the common reality of everyday life than in the aspirations of her artist-husband, she can destroy his art by nagging him about the meat bill or bullying him into creating work that buys a new hat.

Thus, the type of woman who enters an artist's or a writer's life determines to a certain extent the quality and

magnitude of his artistic achievement. Daudet had already developed this idea in a number of short stories published in Les Femmes d'Artistes. As was discussed in the second chapter, these stories show that the creative process is hindered and that the atmosphere of the home is usually troubled by different value scales when the artist marries. The artist is concerned foremost with the merit of his work while his wife considers the remuneration that she would like the art to bring. This conflict of interests and the resulting discord often forced the creative person to isolate himself from his wife, often with severe emotional strain, or to sacrifice his art in order to increase his income despite the guilt and disappointment that accompanied such a capitulation.

The Goncourt brothers had already shown how the wrong woman becomes the cause of a man's ruin as an artist or a writer: in 1860 in Charles Demailly the hero is driven to his death by a stupid and selfish wife after losing his intellectual capacities; and in 1866 in Manette Salomon the former model of the hero degrades him and ruins his talent. It is true to say that the Goncourt brothers systematically distrusted women and love and were of the opinion that all women were the natural enemies of all artists and writers. Although this was often the nefarious role of the woman in the life of the creative person, Daudet gives no indication that André's marriage will eventually cause the dissipation of his creative force and undermine his art. Daudet, himself, had successfully combined family and art, and he suggests that this will be

possible for André, too.

The author does, however, insist upon the fact that the artist must not be discouraged by the long years of hardship which often plague him. Daniel Eysette gave up, not because he recognized the mediocrity of his poem but because he became discouraged by the depressing poverty in which he lived and the relatively large debts that he had unwisely incurred. On the other hand, André Maranne is able to rise above misery and the financial worries of the poor and to continue working. This strength of character in the face of adversity, coupled with some talent, makes André one of the few who actually succeeded by merit rather than because of influential friends. His play, Révolte, is accepted and produced by a Parisian theater.

Although the actual content of this play is never revealed, the title and certain remarks inserted by Daudet indicate that the work is at least indirectly an attack on the superficial society of the Second Empire. As a serious drama in verse it contrasts with the lavish but artificial decor of the theater, expressing higher values in the midst of a materialistic audience.

Puis des ménages interlopes, des filles étalant le
prix de la honte, des diamants en cercles de feu
rivés autour des bras et du cou comme des colliers
de chien, se bourrant de bonbons qu'elles avalaient
brutalement, bestialement, parce qu'elles savent que
l'animalité de la femme plaît à ceux qui la paient.¹²

Certainly the title does not refer to le Nabab, once a révolté who rebelled against his poverty, fought to become

rich, and nearly climbed to the top because he was as dishonest as all in Paris. He plunged blindly into the grasping, ruthless world, "ce brigand de Tout Paris qui va partout, emportant d'assaut des places enviées, quand une faveur, une fonction quelconque ne les lui donne pas," and merely tried to overbid everyone else.¹³ It is interesting to note, however, that Jansoulet, now a broken man, was at this premier performance. His presence created an antithetic effect between his false route and that of the real révoltés like André who rebel against a money-oriented world and the ever-present drive to make more money.

This portrait of André which figures in Le Nabab is an indication of how young persons should advance toward success. It reveals Daudet's conviction that hardship could help form strong character and determination, which would in turn enable a person to rise above his mediocre situation. In addition, the appearance of this dedicated writer on the Parisian scene serves to emphasize the greed and avarice which were prevalent. The fiancée, Elise, and her sisters, so fresh and natural, resemble "un bouquet trempé de rosée dans un étalage de fleurs fausses" and are in sharp contrast to the courtesans blatantly displaying their price in the diamonds they wore. Thus, the materialistic aspects of the society which are so evident in the passages cited above are made more evident because they are compared with the dreams and aspirations of a young couple, Elise and André, who still express the idealism of youth.

While André represents the young artist on the

threshold of recognition, Védrine, who appears in L'Immortel, is the mature artist intent on his work and dedicated to his profession. He seeks neither glory nor fortune despite the fact that he has good family relations that could easily obtain him awards and possibly even entrance into the Académie Française. Instead, he works for his own satisfaction: "Pour moi, pour ma joie personnelle, le besoin de créer, de m'exprimer."¹⁴ In this he is representative of a rare breed, the true artist. "C'est le véritable artiste, inquiet, curieux d'une forme nouvelle, et, dans ses intervalles de travail, cherchant avec d'autres matières, d'autres éléments, à contenter son goût d'inédit."¹⁵

It is interesting to note that when Védrine appears in L'Immortel he no longer congregates with the aspiring bohemians in dingy rooms and noisy cafés that were an accepted part of la bohème. This way of life had been rejected when the artist seriously began his creative endeavors and accepted the responsibilities of a wife and family. As Daudet himself had learned, this way of life tended to dissipate talent rather than inspire genius.

It is significant that both Félicia Ruys and Védrine were innovators in the field of art. Daudet specifically tells us that Félicia concentrated on the "realism" of her creations.

Elle avait ces audaces des commençants, ces pré-science de l'avenir réservées aux talents jeunes, et, contre les traditions romantiques de Sébastien Ruys, une tendance de réalisme moderne, un besoin de planter ce vieux drapeau glorieux sur quelque monument nouveau.¹⁶

Thus, Daudet was permitting himself several words in defense of realism, a trend in art which, born with Courbet in 1848, was gaining in importance during the latter part of the nineteenth century.

The artist Védrine's relationship with Paul Astier, an enterprising architect already discussed in the fourth chapter illustrates how Védrine was too absorbed by his work to be concerned about the income he earned or his savings for the future. The less talented but crafty Astier cultivated their discussions about art in order to glean new ideas for his architectural designs without arousing Védrine's suspicions. The perceptive artist was well aware of this ploy but didn't mind when Astier "borrowed" his ideas and used them to increase his own prestige and fees. Védrine was burdened by more ideas than he could possibly execute, and so he considered Astier's actions as "help" and not exploitation.

Et puis, voilà, j'ai trop d'idées; elles me gênent, me dévorent ... C'est me rendre service de m'alléger de quelques-unes... Mon cerveau ressemble à l'une de ces gares de bifurcation où des locomotives chauffent sur tous les rails, dans toutes les directions...¹⁷

Astier could charge exorbitant prices for his practical development of the artist's ideas; all Védrine wanted was an income sufficient to take care of his family and permit him to work. That fact that he received little remuneration or recognition was of no worry to him.

Of these three artists, André is only beginning his career, and Félicia was destroyed by her need to possess the luxuries that money could buy. Only Védrine has achieved

artistic success, emotional stability, and creative freedom within a commercial society. With this in mind the similarities between him and Daudet, himself, are striking. When enumerated briefly they are: an understanding wife, children whom he adores, disdain for the Académie Française, an interest in a number of different genres or media, and the tendency to innovate. Daudet, however, enjoyed a greater financial security than his Védérine since he was a widely read novelist by the time that he wrote L'Immortel.

In addition to these representatives of la vraie Bohème many amateurs of art appear in the novels and should be discussed here. As Félicien Marceau wrote in his study, Balzac et son monde, "Il m'est impossible de parler du pur écrivain sans le comparer aux impurs..."¹⁸ Daudet had certainly been acquainted with these persons completely lacking in talent who as Murger writes "tournent brusquement le dos à un avenir honorable pour aller courir les aventures de l'existence de hasard."¹⁹ At times he wondered if he were one of these misguided persons and seems to have created the character Daniel Eysette in Le Petit Chose in order to exorcise these fears.

As has been mentioned here and in chapter two, Daniel Eysette had pretensions to the literary world and worked for some time on a long poem. His experiences with la bohème corroborate Champfleury's account of the quarrelsome liaisons, unproductive hours in the cafés, and perpetual quest for money and show how the lack of enough income to live on discouraged

many young persons, talented or not, in their pursuit of an artistic career. Soon after he arrived in Paris, Daniel became the lover of a courtesan who was momentarily dabbling in the theater. They tried to support themselves as comedians while sharing a dingy apartment.

Triste logis et bien fait pour un pareil hôte! ... Ils l'avaient choisi parce que c'était près de leur théâtre; et puis comme dans toutes les maisons neuves, ils ne payaient pas cher. Pour quarante francs--un prix d'essuyeurs de plâtre,--ils avaient deux chambres au second étage, avec un lisière de balcon sur le boulevard, le plus bel appartement de l'hôtel...²⁰

These miserable lodgings would have discouraged all but the most dedicated of artists.

Pouah! l'horrible maison! je la vois maintenant, je la vois avec ses mille fenêtres, sa rampe verte et poisseuse, ses plombs béants, ses portes numérotées, ses long corridors blancs qui sentaient la peinture fraîche ... toute neuve, et déjà salie...²¹

The clever painting of bohemian lodgings that Champfleury had already given in his first book, Chien-Caillou, reveals the same depressing atmosphere. The author makes it clear that while some artists might mislead their readers by glossing over the sordid aspects of bohemia, the following description is what they would write "s'ils avaient l'amour de la réalité:"

Une petite chambre au septième ou au huitième, triste et sale. Pas de papier, mais des murs jaunis, album mural qui porte les traces de tous les locataires ...

Souvent il fait faim dans les mansardes; on y chante peu, on y boit moins encore. Peut-être pourrait-on trouver à boire des larmes...²²

Daniel would have heartily concurred with Champfleury's

conclusion that this was a terrible existence. In addition to the dirty lodgings, the shabby clothes, the hideous food of cheap restaurants, and the vulgar audiences of the theater all contributed to the young boy's lassitude and disgust. As was almost invariably the case, the illusion of love and romance quickly disappeared, killed by familiarity and the ugly surroundings. The couple quarreled constantly and bitterly but remained together out of habit. They socialized in the cafés with other young hopefuls and in an attempt to assure themselves of a future success they applauded one another. These persons, or Ratés as Daudet referred to them, formed a society and class which achieved nothing and flourished on mutual admiration. Eventually the miserable living conditions forced Daniel and many like him to leave la bohème and take a job in the bourgeois world of business. Since Daniel had no vocation for writing, this was the wisest choice for him anyway. On the other hand, many talented writers who like Daniel lacked the stamina to persevere despite the great obstacles were also dissuaded from following their artistic vocation.

Ironically, many members of la bohème who had no great talent did become successful and reasonably well paid entertainers in the theater, vaudeville, or cafés-concerts which flourished during the Second Empire. As Allemand has noted in La vie quotidienne sous le Second Empire, the growth of these establishments was encouraged by the demands of a pleasure-seeking population:

Le temps du second Empire, dont on a déjà marqué, comme l'un de ses traits caractéristiques, la recherche éperdue du plaisir, vit naître, entre autres plaisirs nouveaux, celui du café-concert. Il y avait eu déjà, sans doute, quelques cafés-concerts, mais sans éclat et sans gloire. Sous le second Empire, il s'en ouvrit de nombreux et dans tous les quartiers de Paris.²³

The indulgent clientele did not demand artistic perfection, and women with a pleasant voice or a handsome leg were often loudly acclaimed. Zola's account of the famous Nana's debut in the theater shows that her triumph was in spite of her gaucheries as an actress. Likewise, when Sidonie Risler began entertaining in a café-concert, her success as a singer was due to her lovely shoulders and a coquettish manner.

In chapter three the avaricious and vengeful nature of Sidonie was discussed. It was also shown that she remained so much a member of the working class in her manner that she was never accepted into the society of the wives of the wealthy industrialists in Paris. It is only when she is banished from her home because of her treachery and infidelity that this discontented woman is plunged into la bohème. There she finally found her rightful place and satisfied her appetite for pleasure.

c'est la vie de bohème qu'il lui fallait. Sa beauté y avait gagné je ne sais quelle expression insouciant qui la caractérisait, en faisait bien le type de la femme échappée, livrée à tous les hazards et descendant d'étape en étape jusqu'au plus profond de l'enfer parisien, sans que rien au monde soit assez fort pour la ramener à l'air pur et à la lumière.²⁴

Sidonie did not regret sacrificing her security as Madame Risler for the freedom of the bohemian existence. Unlike Harpagon, who took pleasure in the fact that he possessed a

cache of gold, this ambitious girl had only wanted the satisfaction of association with wealthy bourgeois: to have both "Fromont jeune et Risler aîné" at her disposal was a claim against society for the goods and services that she wanted to enjoy. She did not stop to consider that as a quasi-artist she was most certainly destined to become one of the many grisettes in the bohemian quarters who frequented the would-be artists under the pretext of Art and found their room and board with them. Like Mariette in Aventures de Mademoiselle Mariette Sidonie would go from poet to musician to architect until she was too unattractive to interest them. Then she would have trouble finding the humblest of employments to support herself.

While all Sidonie could do was to entertain in establishments catering to the petite bourgeoisie and even ordinary workers, other so-called artists at every social level succeeded more by shrewdness than by skill or vocation. Paul Astier, an architect already mentioned, is one such clever rather than talented person who was able to use other persons to forward his own career. First, he pillaged many of his ideas from the truly talented like Védrine. Then, as was discussed in detail in the fourth chapter, he depended upon his family to furnish the necessary funds to buy a hôtel and place of business in Paris and upon wealthy women to further his career. These funds enabled him to avoid the sordid life of bohemia and the appearance of a successful and established career helped to entice potential clients and gain their confidence. Another

help in increasing his business was the prominence of the Astier-Réhu, members of the Académie Française for three generations. This aid from his family gave the enterprising architect a distinct advantage over the talented but poor men of his profession.

Not all of the untalented had these family connections and funds at their disposal to create an illusion of promising talent. La bohème was filled with would-be artists who had no paying clients and were forced to work as clerks, secretaries or teachers in order to pay their café bills. In Jack Daudet describes a group of these persons who supported themselves as teachers at the Gymnase Monroval, a school with little to recommend it. Most of its teachers were taken from la bohème: Labassindre, professor of singing who punctuated all his sentences with "Beuh! Beuh!" in an effort to clear his throat; Hirsch, professor of mathematics and natural sciences who smelled of alkali; and D'Argenton, poet and professor of literature, a handsome man with a pale face and dreamy expression. These three were forced to teach at the Gymnase in order to support themselves as they had had no success in what they considered their intellectual or artistic calling. Since they considered their work in the classrooms to be degrading, they showed no interest in their students, no desire to treat them with understanding. Instead, they ranted and raved to give vent to their own ill-humour and self-dissatisfaction or retired to a café to praise each other.

Of the three, D'Argenton plays an important role in

Jack and is discussed in some detail. He had had an unhappy childhood in an aristocratic family which had been destitute for three generations. "Entouré d'inquiétudes et de larmes, de ces soucis d'argent qui fanent si vite les enfants, il n'avait jamais joué ni souri."²⁵ Not only did these financial crises make him moody and resentful, they would also have deprived him of an education if he hadn't received a scholarship to a school in Paris. As so often is the case, the poverty of youth had a deep and lasting effect on the poet.

Ces enfances si tristes font des maturités amères. Il faut des bonheurs de vie, des prospérités sans nombre pour effacer l'impression de ces premières années; et l'on voit des hommes riches, heureux, puissants, haut placés, qui semblent ne jamais jouir de la fortune, tellement leur bouche a gardé le tour envieux des anciennes déceptions, et leur allure la timidité honteuse que procure aux corps jeunes et tout neufs le vieil habit ridicule et rapiécé taillé dans les vêtements paternels.²⁶

Thus, D'Argenton grew up bitter and resentful, determined to exact from society some measure of fame and fortune. He worked with dedication on his poetry but his only visible accomplishment when he was twenty-seven was a volume of humanitarian poems that he had published at his own expense. This undertaking had forced the aspiring poet to live on bread and water for six months in order to finance the publication. The fact that his book received no notice whatsoever increased his exasperation but not his purse. Therefore, to support himself he had to work as a teacher at the Gymnase Monroval, a school which catered to the children of wealthy foreigners who were sent to Paris to finish their education.

In order to increase the profits the unscrupulous headmaster took advantage of the distance which separated the trusting parents from the school and provided only mediocre instruction and inadequate room and board.

D'Argenton was convinced that his miserable existence and the precious time lost teaching prevented him from writing. Yet when Jack's mother, Ida de Barancy, became his mistress, her income enabled the writer to have all the advantages he had always lacked: leisure, solitude, a magnificent study, a home in the country, and an adorable mistress. Alas! an older and more bitter Daniel Eysette, he had no talent, and so he still wrote nothing.

Like all the Ratés of la bohème the poet soothed his ego by playing the role of a successful man of letters. He invited his friends from the cafés and the Gymnase to visit him in the country. Together they spent the day drinking, smoking, and discussing: "C'était la brasserie au milieu de bois." D'Argenton exuded confidence and considered himself an authority in his field. His conversations were interspersed with "Moi je ... Moi je ..." as he never hesitated to express strongly his opinions. Occasionally the conversation turned to a journal that D'Argenton wanted to start. This project would never have been realized, however, without an unexpected windfall. A former lover of Ida de Barancy gave her dix mille francs, a sort of dowry to help her son's future. Seizing upon this opportunity, D'Argenton "managed" Jack's money by starting a journal entitled La Revue des Races Futures. The

poet had no qualms about taking Jack's money and would have been surprised if someone had called it stealing. In complete confidence of his own worth and of that of his projected journal he extravagantly claimed it to be a business proposition equal to having shares in the prosperous Revue des Deux-Mondes. The lack of recognition and the years of hardship had developed the cold, domineering nature of this man and had taught him to manipulate others. He easily persuaded the impressionable Ida that his journal was one of the best investments possible for Jack's money: "... cela vaut encore mieux que la rente ou les chemins de fers." In six months D'Argenton and his journal were without funds or income, and Jack's money had been wasted before he even saw it.

Thus, one realizes that human nature is remarkably similar regardless of class or profession. The artist had to adapt to the dog-eat-dog world or was in great danger of being trod upon. Yet, in this interminable struggle to come out on top certain conventions were respected: to grab the purse of a little old lady as she walked down the street was thievery and punishable by a prison sentence, but to entice this same little old lady to place her life savings in fraudulent investments was business. Thus, Paganetti (Le Nabab) acquired a large working capital with impunity by cleverly soliciting subscriptions for non-existent projects, and D'Argenton bullied his mistress into giving him her young son's heritage to invest without any fear of the authorities.

The journal that was started was a godsend to every

other Raté in Paris since it wasn't often that one of their own was able to start a publication. The Revue des Races futures became "le rendez-vous des Ratés de Paris et de la province, de tous ces tristes qui circulent dans la vie avec des manuscrits trop gros pour leurs redingotes étriquées."²⁷ Although D'Argenton began numerous essays, articles, and stories, he never finished any of them. Again, experience showed that the embittered poet's inability to write had no correlation to his purse. He simply had no talent.

Like D'Argenton, many young men from the provinces tried their hand at journalism. Opportunity and subject matter were somewhat limited due to restrictions on the political press from the time of the coup of Napoleon III until the liberal reforms of 1865. The Emperor did not bother to encourage the publication of articles supporting his reign, and he saw to it that any political opposition was restricted to discreet comments or veiled allusions. These conditions encouraged the growth of a new type of journalism which was socially oriented, facile, witty, and designed to amuse.

Cette légèreté du journalisme dit parisien se double malheureusement d'un goût du scandale. Les insinuations sur la vie privée des gens sont la recette la plus sûre pour obtenir les gros tirages.²⁸

Journalism of this slanderous nature was written by persons like Moëssard in Le Nabab.

C'était un petit journaliste, blondin et poupin, assez joli garçon, mais dont la figure présentait cette fanure particulière aux garçons de restaurants de nuit, aux comédiens et aux filles, faite de grimaces de convention et du reflet blafard du gaz.

Il passait pour être l'amant gagé d'une reine exilée et très légère. Cela se chuchotait autour de lui, et lui faisait dans son monde une place enviée et méprisable.²⁹

A conniving and ruthless man who used his profession to increase his prestige and purse, he resembles a description by Clogenson of this new type of journalist.

Le journaliste à la mode est un Monsieur qui dîne dans les restaurants du boulevard avec les cocottes les plus élégantes de Paris, est accueilli, choyé, craint partout. Un de ses mots fait et défait les réputations en un jour.³⁰

If large newspapers brought prosperity to their owners, they rarely fed the reporters. Only the clever and ambitious journalists were able to capitalize on the unique opportunities of journalism. First, it was an excellent vantage point from which a writer might observe and perhaps gain entrance to the haute société of Paris. In addition, other opportunities for young writers were scarce and few could afford to by-pass any offer of employment. Once in the profession the astute reporter realized that important editors like Villermessant, for whom both Zola and Daudet worked, were willing to pay well for those sensational articles that sold their papers. How could a poor writer without a job resist the temptation to profit from this offer? Many were enticed by the lucrative possibilities of this profession and misused their writing skill in its service.

In 1860 in Charles Demailly the Goncourt brothers had already commented on the fact that the poverty of the bohemians and their desperate need to find employment made them easy prey

for the journals.

... la bohême apportait les exigences de sa vie dans la poursuite de ses ambitions; ses appétits tenaient ses croyances à la gorge. Condamnée à la misère par la baisse du salaire littéraire, la bohême appartenait fatalement au petit journal et le petit journal devait trouver en elle des hommes tout faits, une armée toute prête, une de ces terribles armées nues, mal nourries, sans souliers, qui se battent pour la soupe.³¹

They prostituted their art to cater to the taste of editors and satisfy themselves with the material good life that few conscientious writers were able to enjoy. Thus, they chose not to oppose society but to give in to her base demands and be admitted as one of her numbers. Pushed by moral weakness and a taste for the expensive things of life they quit the artistic world in an effort to reconcile the world of money and that of art. This was, however, an impossible task since the passion for wealth cannot harmonize with the creative effort. Certainly there have been rich artists, and Daudet himself lived the latter part of his life in reasonable affluence, but this goal always remained subservient to his artistic vocation.

Moëssard, like Balzac's Rubempré before him, was one of these opportunists who chose the ambiguous route and wrote without conviction. Like many others he profited from the brief rise to fame of le Nabab, and his despicable actions show to what depths he would sink and what crimes he would commit for money. He began by writing articles for a Parisian paper, the Messenger, in which he flattered the ego of Jansoulet or le Nabab and appeared to advance the newcomer's chances

for la croix d'honneur and a deputyship. After each article was published, the enterprising journalist did not hesitate to "se faire payer l'article du Messenger."³²

Jansoulet's undoing was partially due to the fact that he did not know the rules--written and otherwise--of the treacherous game that he was playing. Thus, he underestimated the far reaching power of the press and the extent of Moëssard's greed. Instead of continuing to "lend" money to Moëssard he abruptly halted the payments when he was elected deputy. He bluntly told the insatiable young man that he had already given him "deux cent mille francs en cinq mois! ... Nous nous en tiendrons là, s'il vous plaît. Vous avez les dents longues, j'enue homme; il faut vous les limer un peu." Moëssard's ominous response should have warned Jansoulet that he had been too hasty.

--Eh bien! nous verrons, dit le beau Moëssard, dont la badine fendit l'air avec un sifflement de vipère; et, tournant sur ses talons, il s'éloigna à grands pas, comme un homme qu'on attend quelque part pour une besogne très pressée.³³

The journalist's cruel revenge provided Paris with the necessary pretext to destroy le Nabab. An article appeared in the Messenger which slandered Jansoulet by falsely insinuating that he had been in Paris years before during which time he had maintained a house of ill repute. Although the incriminating evidence was misleading, and the article was actually completely untrue as Moëssard well knew; these trumped up charges were used as the excuse to invalidate Jansoulet's election. This illustrates how important it was that any

individual trying to satisfy himself or simply find his place in the world know the social conventions and respect them as fortune alone would not guarantee success. Already, in La Chartreuse de Parme, the Duchesse de Sanseverina had made her nephew, Fabrice, understand that what counts in life is to play the game of life according to the rules, just as if you were playing whist.

The portrait of journalism and journalists that is given in Le Nabab by Daudet was in no way exaggerated. The inordinate and often misused power of the press had already been discussed by such prominent writers as Balzac and the Goncourt brothers. In la comédie humaine a number of writers and critics like Lousteau, Finot, Blondet, Vignon, and Vernou are shown to be as ruthless and corrupt as Moëssard and certain passages loudly condemn the profession.

Quiconque a trempé dans le journalisme, ou trempe encore, est dans la nécessité cruelle de saluer les hommes qu'il méprise, de sourire à son meilleur ennemi, de pactiser avec les plus fétides bassesses ... On s'habitue à voir faire le mal, à le laisser passer; on commence par l'approuver, on finit par le commettre.³⁴

[la camaraderie du journalisme] corrode les plus belles âmes: elle rouille leur fierté, tue le principe des grandes oeuvres et consacre lâcheté de l'esprit ... Cette bonhomie apparente qui séduit les nouveaux venus et n'empêche aucune trahison; qui se permet et justifie tout, qui jette les hauts cris à une blessure et la pardonne est un des caractères distinctifs des journalistes.³⁵

In Charles Demailly a small newspaper named Scandale is able to influence social, political, and commercial activities.

Le petit journal était alors une puissance. Il était devenu une de ces façons de domination qui surgissent tout à coup par le changement des mœurs d'une nation. Il faisait des fortunes, des noms, des influences, des positions, du bruit, des hommes, --et presque des grands hommes.³⁶

Individual reporters of seemingly little consequence like Daudet's Moëssard could ruin prominent members of society. Conscious of this power, Couturat (Charles Demailly) reminds the writer, Demailly, that the power a journalist enjoys forces the wise to respect him and warns the young man that he made a foolish mistake when he resigned from his post on a newspaper staff.

On fait toujours attention avant d'empoigner un homme qui a un carré de papier dans la main ... mais un monsieur comme toi, qui est dans son coin, qui ne tient à rien, un journaliste retiré dans un fromage ... Va, c'est une fière arme, un journal. Tiens! mois, je suis très-bien avec tout le monde; eh bien, que demain je lâche ma place au Scandale ... tu verrais! Ah bien, on me tomberait fièrement dessus ...³⁷

Daudet's portrait of Moëssard shows that he concurred with the above commentaries and considered most journalists to be without convictions and guilty of using their intelligence as the prostitute did her body. Having observed these practices from within, Daudet abhorred the corruption and ruthlessness of the profession and made no effort to justify or even explain Moëssard's action by citing misery or poverty as the factor which determined his ignoble choice of profession.

It is difficult to discuss the artistic and intellectual worlds without mentioning la galanterie. In his study on Balzac Félicien Marceau elected to include Daniel d'Arthez and

a courtesan like Carabine in the same chapter and wisely pointed out that the resemblances have been suggested by others.

Je pourrais, pour ma défense, alléguer que l'amour vénal est un art comme un autre. ("Je suis une artiste," did Mme Schontz.) Ou répéter, après tant d'autres, que la littérature est prostitution. "Un homme de lettres, une fille de joie," écrit Paul Claudel.³⁸

In any case, the artists and the feminine army of grisettes, lorettes, and courtesans generally intermingled: the aspiring writer Daniel Eysette resided with a kept woman, Irma Borel; Fanny Legrand, the famous Sapho who will be discussed later, had had many associations with artists.

The poverty and unemployment which plagued the large masses as well as the passion for luxury items which filtered down through the social structure encouraged poor girls to become prostitutes. According to a census taken in January, 1870, 100,000 women in Paris alone lived by prostitution, 3,656 of whom were actually registered.³⁹ A few actually profited from the affluent, pleasure-seeking period and were able to share in the immense wealth that was ostentatiously displayed at every ball, play, or spectacle. This could be done by entering the theater, where the lucky ones became famous performers widely courted and deluged with very expensive gifts. Others worked their way up to the high-class prostitution where men squandered fortunes on them and the most elegant and wealthy elements of society entertained them.

Most poor girls became prostitutes because as women without education, vocation, or personal resources they found

the opportunities for making a living to be severely restricted. The entertainment field that was open to them was made possible and profitable because of the affluent, pleasure-seeking segment in France during the Second Empire. The numerous plays, shows, and spectacles given nightly were always demanding performers. In fact, the theater, whether dramatic or musical, was so popular during the Second Empire that there were more theaters then than in present-day Paris.⁴⁰ This provided employment for a large number of these young hopefuls and social climbers.

Ambitious girls with any hint of talent overcame initial scruples and used their feminine charms to gain entrance to the artistic milieu. This blatant commerce was slightly attenuated by their artistic pretensions. "Le commerce qu'elles font de leurs charmes se dissimule un peu sous la gaze du tutu, sous les affutiaux de la comédie."⁴¹ Alice, the nasal soprano who appears in Numa Roumestan, had no talent but was able to captivate Numa, the influential and well-off Ministre de l'Instruction, by her charming little girl manner. While playing this sweet, innocent role she made her ardent admirer understand that there would never be anything between them until she had a contract with the Opéra. She received her contract and a furnished apartment in exchange for which Numa had an adorable mistress.

The financial support and professional help given to actresses and singers by their admirers was an accepted part of the social structure. The examples of similar careers in

"la Comédie Humaine" of Balzac are numerous: the dancer Florentine (Illusions Perdues); the actress Jenny Cadine and the singer Josépha Mira who were both supported for some time by the Baron Hulot in Cousine Bette; the dancer Héloïse Brisetout (Cousine Bette, Cousin Pons); and even an acrobat, Malaga (Fausse Maîtresse). While these girls did sell their own bodies in order to advance, they used their art as a pretext for this immorality. As miserable as were their pasts, as modest as were their debuts, their art protected them at least temporarily from the deepest gutters and lowest depths with which those who were frankly prostitutes had to contend.

The world of pleasure and misery which was the Second Empire increased the opportunities and remuneration in the world's oldest profession. These filles de joie began their careers as lorettes, a status Littré has defined in the following manner:

Nom qu'on donne à certaines femmes de plaisir qui tiennent le milieu entre la grisette et la femme entretenue n'ayant pas un état comme la première et n'étant pas attachée à un homme comme la femme entretenue.⁴²

Allemand describes the precarious existence of the lorette as she experiences the vicissitudes of her profession.

La lorette, ainsi définie, mène la plus incertaine des existences. Cette existence est une succession de hauts et de bas. Pour la lorette, vraiment les jours se suivent et ne se ressemblent pas. Ils sont une sorte de jeu de l'amour et du hasard. La lorette a des journées d'opulence et des journées de dèche, et des heures d'opulence et de dèche dans une même journée.⁴³

Sometimes the lorette managed to stabilize her

existence by finding a temporarily permanent lover and arranging housekeeping with him. A woman who began her rather illustrious and certainly lengthy career in this manner is Fanny Legrand, the main character in Daudet's novel which carries her nom de guerre, Sapho. Sapho is a study of the kind of affair the French call collage and the ramifications, often cruel and degrading, of such a relationship. To write this book Daudet has stated that he had only to close his eyes and remember the past. The dedication, "Pour mes fils quand ils auront vingt ans" gives one some notion of Daudet's intent in writing Sapho. Inspired by love and paternal interest he wished to warn his sons and also all young men of this common but potentially dangerous situation. He was trying to teach them wisdom and prevent them from making his own youthful mistakes.

In Sapho a young man from a respectable family in Provence, Jean Gaussin, comes to Paris to finish his studies for the diplomatic corps. At a party among la bohème the naïve lad meets Fanny Legrand, nicknamed Sapho, and soon becomes her lover. The novel analyzes the corrosive influence of this relationship as Jean's power to act is undermined and eventually destroyed. He becomes so enslaved by his own sensuality that he finds himself unable to leave Fanny in order to continue his career and marry his young fiancée.

... car elle [Fanny] était bien tentante et d'un grand charme avec sa toute petite tête au front bas, au nez court, à la lèvre sensuelle et bonne, et la maturité souple de sa taille dans cette robe d'une correction toute parisienne, ...⁴⁴

Slowly the vice of lust and the innumerable ties which are woven by a life together formed an indestructible chain and bound him helpless to a woman he neither loved nor respected.

It is interesting to note that Sapho develops most extensively the typical relationship between man and woman as it is portrayed by Daudet, and as he probably experienced it in his long liaison with Marie Rieu during his bohemian days. It is essentially a sensual lien between a passive male and a cold, domineering female. As a slave to his passions the man--like Daniel Eysette or Jean Gaussin--sacrifices his ideals and his career while unable to free himself from this sexual bondage. In contrast, Paul Astier's cold and pragmatic attitude toward women which enables him to use them to the advantage of his quest for fortune and power is unique in Daudet's novels. It is the only time where the male is able to use the female for his own gain.

While the basis of the liaison in Sapho has little to do with the theme of money, the character of Fanny Legrand provides some insight into the reasons why the lack of money did push a certain group of girls into prostitution. Fanny was born under the counter of an inn, the daughter of a former dragoon and a serving girl. Her mother died in childbirth, and her father took her with him on the cab he drove since leaving the dragoons. The little girl grew up illegitimate, uneducated, and untrained for any job. In a very real sense, these circumstances precluded the possibility of a better way of life and forced the young girl to enter the oldest of

professions and the only one open to those of her past and training. In a curious book containing his observations on the Second Empire Taine wrote: "Boutiquière, femme du monde ou lorette, voilà les trois emplois d'une Française: elle excelle en celà et seulement en celà."⁴⁵

This background is carefully presented by Daudet in order to explain if not justify Fanny's actions. For this girl there was no choice, and so the poverty which had already brutalized her parents now forced her to earn her living selling the only commodity that she had--herself. The irregularity of her situation in relationship to society echoes that of Félicia Ruys with the important exception that Fanny did not even have the protection that art gave at least momentarily to the sculptress but made a way for herself in the world as a filles de joie. When still in her teens she frequented the artistic milieux, depending on the success of the day for her bedfellow of the night. Eventually this hazardous existence of a lorette in the bohemian quarters became more secure when a sculptor invited her to move in with him. This relationship was the first of a series of collages with various artists.

One of her more devoted lovers, an engraver without much money, was afraid she would leave him if he didn't support her better. Desperate for money he began counterfeiting it. He was discovered soon afterwards and sentenced to ten years in prison. Although his crime was the clumsy attempt of an amateur, it does show how passion can dominate a man and force him to commit crimes that previously he would never even

have thought of. This incident also illustrates the eternal truth that justice is a luxury that the poor can ill afford. One wonders how this counterfeiter was more guilty than the unscrupulous characters in Le Nabab--Hemerlingue, Paganetti, Moëssard. Yet the engraver was sent to prison because he had neither money nor social connections while the others were free to enjoy their secure positions among the affluent.

There were few reprieves for girls like Fanny, and as age made them less desirable, they sank lower and lower in poverty and degradation. On occasion, a client who was jealous of his mistress' other lovers might find it more convenient and practical to marry his companion. An example from La Cousine Bette comes to mind: Olympe Bijou, who was given to the Baron Hulot by her destitute family, leaves him for a handsome souteneur-claqueur, then is finally married by a well-off proprietor of a large store, M. Grenouville. In Sapho a poorly educated bourgeois, M. Hettéma, met his wife Olympe in a brothel and married her to have her to himself. Despite this rather inauspicious beginning, the couple didn't worry about the past and in all confidence and tranquility adapted to married life. Because of their simple tastes--a bowl of potato soup, a warm apartment--they lived comfortably on what was then the very meager sum of two hundred fifty francs per month. The former prostitute never regretted the fact that she might have made a more profitable if less respectable arrangement as the mistress of an aristocrat or a wealthy bourgeois. She had enough common sense to realize that such

arrangements occur very seldom and usually do not last.

This was a very realistic attitude since very few were fortunate or clever enough to enter the haute société by the back door, as it were. Those who did, however, were part of that demi-monde which evolved during the Second Empire. The common desire to jouir brought the different classes closer together and encouraged the ascendance of these courtesans or dames aux camélias who attended the Opéra and the Comédie Française and mingled with the regular elements of society. Taine commented: "Hier aux Italiens ... j'étais au balcon: sur sept femmes autour de moi il y avait six 'lorettes.'"⁴⁶ Society knew these women and the papers recorded their names: Marguerite Bellanger, Léonide Leblanc, Anne Deslions, Blanche d'Antigny, Cora Pearl.⁴⁷ Only a few like the famous la Païva escaped the misery completely and lived in an affluent style which surprised even the blasé Paris while most were acquainted with hard luck as well as good fortune.

Balzac had already described those few "café society" girls who succeeded in acquiring private mansions and solid wealth like Josépha, the opera singer, or in acquiring a husband because they were intelligent as well as talented. Daudet's Fanny Legrand was never une Païva but she was among the exceptional few who became well known and lived for a while in a modest but comfortable style. "Depuis, lancée dans le monde chic, elle a pris des amants au mois, à la semaine, et jamais d'artistes..."⁴⁸ Despite her reasonable success Fanny did not manage the business aspects of these affairs with any

degree of shrewdness. Unlike Valérie Marneffe (La Cousine Bette) or Albertine (Le Père Prodigue) who worked for the future as well as the present by obtaining the title to stocks and properties, Fanny thought only of the present. "Nulle mémoire de ce qui précéda, nulle crainte de ce qui peut venir."⁴⁹ She was a creature of instinct who followed the dictates of her senses rather than those of reason. Women of this nature sometimes tired of their more lucrative situations and became enamored of some poor young man. In these instances they were called camélias after the Dame aux Camélias by Dumas fils.

This was the case with Fanny when she gave up what was then a secure and comfortable living arrangement to share the life and fortune of an impecunious student, Jean Gaussin. Newly arrived from the Midi, he appealed to her in his blond, tanned youth. With him she recaptured the freshness and spontaneity of her youth and enjoyed an illusion of love. Without a second thought she dismissed her present lover, sold all she owned, and sent away her servant in order to be with Jean. In addition to the sensual attraction that Fanny felt for Jean, she saw in him the possibility of the security of a household and la vie à deux. She soon persuaded the naïve student that two could live together more happily if not more cheaply than one, and they both moved into a small apartment that Jean rented.

This cosy arrangement satisfied Fanny as much as a liaison with the wealthiest man in Paris. For many girls like Fanny who had never known a real home this aspect of a liaison

was very important. For a short while the imitation of the respectable and staid bourgeois life, a companion and a home, contented the courtesan. Then her early education in vice and corruption which had marked her forever exerted its influence as she lapsed into sloven appearance and vulgar manner.

By this time, however, Jean was incapable of breaking away, and only the financial troubles of his parents which left them unable to continue his pension forced the temporary disruption of the household. During this period Fanny revealed that tenacity which would eventually destroy the weaker Jean. As a former lover had put it: "C'est une fille, quand elle aime, elle se cramponne..."⁵⁰ At the same time, Fanny's actions showed once again her disregard for the material comforts and monetary rewards that the prostitute could demand. Since Jean was forced to give up the apartment in favor of less expensive bachelor quarters, his mistress found a position as manager of a hotel in order to support herself while remaining loyal to him. In return for the demeaning chores and insults from her employer Fanny received a pittance in wages and room and board. Yet, she put up with all this in order to see Jean on her one day off each week.

Eventually the infrequency of their rendezvous and the avaricious nature of Fanny's employer exasperated the couple and encouraged them to find some other way than separation to economize. They decided to follow the example of their acquaintances the Hettémas, who managed on only two hundred fifty francs a month (Jean made three hundred

francs) by living in the suburbs rather than in the expensive center of Paris. It was summer when they moved next door to the Hettémas in Chaville, and the long evenings in the rustic setting at least temporarily had a rejuvenating effect on their relationship.

These economies were really not responsible for the termination of this affair. Jean always remained sufficiently lucid to realize that the distance between himself, destined for a career in the diplomatic corps, and Fanny, a vulgar prostitute, precluded marriage. At the same time, he was too weak to end the relationship. After several abortive attempts to leave his mistress, he asked her to meet him in Marseille and go with him to his new post. Fanny, also aware of the abyss between them, and exhausted by the constant bickering and suspicions, was the one to end their relationship by refusing to accompany him.

It is possible to sympathize with Fanny, destined to this fate by her very birth and early molded by poverty and hardship. In addition, although corrupted by vice she is still appealing to the eye. Eventually, however, she will resemble the courtesans featured in one extraordinary scene where they are gathered together at a luncheon at the home of one of "les grandes courtesanes du Second Empire," Rosario Sanchez.

Trois "élégantes," comme se désignent entre elles les grandes cocottes, trois antiques roulures comptant parmi les gloires du second empire, aux noms aussi fameux que celui du grand poète ou d'un général à victoires, Wilkie Cob, Sombreuse, Clara Desfous.⁵¹

Here is revealed the brutal cost paid by even the fashionable prostitutes of this luxury-oriented society which had permitted and even encouraged their ascendancy and then deserted them when they were too old to continue their trade. Of these former élégantes Rosa had amassed a fortune during a long and successful career. While it was possible for shrewd courtesans to achieve this wealth, the majority ended penniless like Wilkie Cob. Once she had been famous, "... célèbre au monde, universelle, connue comme un monument, comme un boulevard ..." ⁵² Now she was crippled by debts and undesirable, even to a croupier in a gaming house. On the basis of this bitter experience she advised Fanny to think more about providing for her old age and less about love.

C'était très bien d'aimer l'amour, petite ...
c'était très bonne, l'amour, vous savez ... mais
vous devez aimer l'argent aussi ... moi maintenant,
si j'étais riche toujours, est-ce que mon
croupier il dirait je suis laide, croyez-vous? ⁵³

Despite this advice, always passed on too late, the quest for money left most of these courtesans destitute and "si fanées, fardées, retapées ..., épouvantables chevronnées de la galanterie." ⁵⁴

During the Second Empire the world of la bohème and that of la galanterie was expanded by the arrival of wealthy, pleasure-seeking visitors from all over Europe. The play, La Vie parisienne, by Meilhac, Halévy, and Offenbach shows a crowd of foreigners arriving at the train station in Paris and chanting:

Nous venons - Arrivons - De tous les pays du monde -
 Par la terre ou bien par l'onde - Italiens, - Bré-
 siliens, - Japonais, - Hollandais, - Espagnols, -
 Romagnols, - Egyptiens, - Péruviens. - La vapeur nous
 amène. - Nous allons envahir - La cité souveraine, -
 Le séjour du plaisir, - On accourt, on s'empresse -
 Pour connaître, ô Paris, - Pour connaître l'ivresse -
 De tes jours, de tes nuits. - Tous les étrangers
 ravis - S'élançant vers toi, Paris. - Nous allons
 chanter, - Nous allons crier, - Nous allons souper,
 - Nous allons aimer. - Oh, mon Dieu, nous allons
 tous - Nous amuser comme des fous.⁵⁵

These illustrious visitors came from every corner of the globe to amuse themselves and to plunge into the debauchery Paris offered. They often frequented la bohème and Clogenson describes the resulting mixture of classes and professions: "Courtisanes à la mode, journalistes en vogue, étrangers de marque s'y coudoient, s'y bousculent, dans leurs brillants équipages."⁵⁶ For these wealthy visitors money was only a means to an end, meant to be squandered on exotic diversions and lavish spectacles. Les Rois en Exil by Daudet depicts this aspect of cosmopolitanism and considers it part of "la vie de la bohème" where rank and position are ignored and the uniting factor is the waste and extravagance of those caught up in this frenzied pleasure seeking.

The novel is the moving story of the members of the royal family of Illyrie who have taken refuge in the Paris of the Third Republic since being expelled from their country by forces desiring to establish a republic. While in exile the Reine Frédérique stoically maintains a way of life befitting her station and makes every effort to reestablish the monarch in Illyrie. In contrast to the courage and determination of

the Queen, the Roi Christian is weak and cowardly. He succumbs to what remains of the gay life of the Second Empire, exhausts his revenues, and is soon ready to renounce his right to the throne in return for a large sum of money.

In the person of Christian and his unprincipled efforts to obtain funds, the book studies the degradation and corruption of royalty in exile. The initial cause appears to be the worn out nature of royalty itself which had been weakened by continual inbreeding. Christian was an example of the effete aristocrat who had no force or will left to fulfill his functions as king. Like D'Argenton the poet he was a Raté unable to live up to the demands of his profession and was sinking slowly into an abyss of mediocrity. Exile, which removed the last restrictions, served to accentuate this weakness of character.

De plus solides natures que la sienne ne savent pas résister à ce désarroi des habitudes rompues, de l'incertitude renouvelée, avec l'espoir insensé, les angoisses, l'énervement de l'attente. ... Puis l'exil, c'est la mer, mais c'est aussi le naufrage, jetant les passagers des premières, les privilégiés, pêle-mêle avec les passagers du pont et de la belle étoile. Il faut un fier prestige, un vrai tempérament de roi, pour ne pas se laisser envahir par les familiarités, les promiscuités dégradantes dont on aura plus tard à rougir et à souffrir, pour se garder roi au milieu des privations, des détresses, des souillures qui mêlent et confondent les ranges dans une misérable humanité!⁵⁷

If the Reine Frédérique had hoped that the experience of exile would help Christian mature she was wrong.

Au contraire, elle voyait grandir dans ses yeux une ivresse de fête et de vertige allumée par le séjour de Paris, son phosphore diabolique, l'incognito, les tentations et la facilité du plaisir.⁵⁸

The King did not consider the exile seriously and expected that Illyrie would tire of her Republic in several months. In the meantime he enjoyed to the fullest his visit to Paris. With his aide-de-camp, the Prince Herbert de Rosen, he explored Paris by night and savoured this new freedom permitted here. He visited the theaters, the clubs, the restaurants, and changed mistresses with great frequency. His one desire now was to faire la fête.

C'était le mot à la mode cette année-là dans les clubs. Il y en a sans doute un autre maintenant. Les mots changent; mais ce qui reste immuable et monotone, ce sont les restaurants fameux où la chose se passe, les salons d'or et de fleurs où les filles haut cotées s'invitent et se reçoivent, c'est l'énervante banalité du plaisir se dégradant jusqu'à l'orgie sans pouvoir se renouveler; ce qui ne change pas, c'est la classique bêtise de cet amas de gandins et de catins, le cliché de leur argot et de leur rire, sans qu'une fantaisie se glisse dans ce monde aussi bourgeois, aussi convenu qui l'autre, sous ses apparences de folie; c'est le désordre réglé, la fantaisie en programme sur l'ennui baillant et courbature.⁵⁹

As has been noted, money was essential to such a train of life, and Christian as a private citizen no longer possessed the necessary wealth. Because the royal family had not been able to liquidate their estates before fleeing, they were short of funds and forced to live in stringent economy. The conflict arising between the decadent king's insatiable desire to participate fully in la fête perpétuelle that was Paris and his inability to pay for this fête figures importantly in the plot. The gradual degradation of the king is marked by his progressively more desperate efforts to obtain money--that instrument needed to satisfy his thirst for

debauchery.

During the first years of exile the royal household of Illyrie was never short of funds, and the king enjoyed the use of a full purse. Without the knowledge of the royal family a loyal member of Illyrian nobility and astute businessman, the Duc de Rosen, had personally undertaken to maintain the family in the manner to which they were accustomed. He purchased a hôtel and carriages, hired a large staff, and supplied the king with all the funds that he wanted. Rosen had always been very close fisted where money was concerned; yet for two years he supported the royal family at great expense and disastrous results to his own finances. He did this despite the fact that the king had dismissed him from a government post in a futile effort to satisfy the republicans.

Rosen's dedication to the monarchy inspires one of the rare selfless actions on the part of the wealthy. In general, Daudet's novels show large fortunes as forces which corrupt and dehumanize. In Le Nabab the financier, Hemerlingue, who had been Jansoulet's close friend when they were both penniless fortune hunters, becomes the agent of his destruction years later when they are both wealthy men. The calculating and well-to-do attorney, Marc Javel, in Soutien de Famille brings bankruptcy proceedings against his former camarade, Eudeline, and indirectly causes his death. It is more generally among the lower classes that we find gestures of friendship and help as those who have only a little are willing to share it. In L'Evangéliste the Ebsens are so

touched by the dismal apartment of their new neighbors, the Lorie-Defresnes, that they give them some of their own furniture and articles of clothing. When Jean's uncle (Sapho) loses a large sum of money gambling, Dechelette, an engineer and friend of Jean's mistress, gives the uncle a similar sum. While these poorer members of society are ready to share, the most affluent refuse to give anything. The Duc de Rosen's action is almost unique, and, ironically, he is sacrificing himself for a worthless man and a lost cause.

Rosen would have completely bankrupted himself for the monarchy if the queen had not learned what was happening. She had to overhear a conversation among her domestics before she realized that the million francs she had brought from Illyrie could not possibly meet the expenses of the household. As royalty Frédérique had been protected from material concerns such as the cost of eggs or the wages paid the domestics. She had been entirely naïve in this regard and had no idea how much a franc would buy.

Confronting her benefactor, the enlightened queen bravely but perhaps foolishly demanded an immediate reduction of expenses so that the household would be operating within its annual income, and the royal family would not be dependent on charity. There followed a discussion on the merits of maintaining appearances. The Duc de Rosen, more attune to Parisian society, insisted that it was imperative that royalty in exile surround itself with its accustomed pomp and luxury. Only by so doing could it create the illusion of power and

prestige necessary to maintain the respect of the lost kingdom, Paris, and royalty itself. He rightly pointed out that one easily forgets one's pride and position when the etiquette and the ceremony made possible by great wealth are missing. Frédérique, however, was inflexible. She maintained that the honor of royalty was not based on ceremony and etiquette. "C'est impossible ... Il y a une fierté encore plus haute que celle-là ..." ⁶⁰ The economic reforms desired by the Reine Frédérique were instituted the following day.

On the basis of this novel Daudet has occasionally been accused of monarchist tendencies. The fact that Le Petit Chose had already revealed Daudet's father to be an ardent royalist encouraged a monarchist reading of Les Rois en Exil, but close examination of the story would make this doubtful. His assessment is hardly flattering; the monarchy is weak and dependent on its enormous wealth to maintain dignity and bearing. Once the wealth is gone, the façade created by distance is also shattered as is evidenced by the actions of Christian who did not share his wife's sense of honor and he quickly connived to obtain elsewhere the funds which Rosen had heretofore supplied.

Finally, "cette bohème de l'exil" invaded the royal house of Illyrie as the king tried to find funds. ⁶¹ At first, he signed notes, renewing them when they were due until he owed an enormous sum in principal and interest. When his notes were no longer accepted, he readily agreed to obtain funds by the sale of the commissions and honors awarded by the

state of Illyrie. The office of commander in the Ordre du Lion was sold for ten thousand francs; a higher office went for fifteen thousand francs. Then, without the knowledge of the queen, the crown jewels that had been in the family for six hundred years were sold and replaced by replicas of paste.

These desperate and degrading efforts to fill his pockets revealed the extent to which the moral fiber had been weakened in the king and showed that his dignity and prestige had been dependent on the fortune which had provided protection in the distance it created between king and people. Previously, the king could bring the parties to the palace where they were hidden from the public eye. Now he frequented the public places of entertainment, and as Rosen had predicted, the familiarity of la bohème contributed to his depravation.

... c'est le laisser-aller qui les gagne, lorsqu'ils sont rentrés dans le rang, les familiarités, le coudolement de la rue ... Je sais, ... je sais, ... on m'a trouvé bien des fois ridicule avec mes questions d'étiquette, mon rigorisme enfantin et suranné. Et pourtant ces formes sont plus que jamais importantes; elles aident à garder la fierté de la tenue si facilement perdue dans le malheur.⁶²

Like the Baron Hulot before him, the Roi Christian forgets family, honor and country in order to satisfy his own lust. The Royal Orders, the crown jewels, --all are bartered away to pay for nights of revelry. While Hulot's physical and moral decline are marked by the increasing vulgarity of his mistresses after Madame Marneffe leaves him, Christian's

increasing depravation is marked by each new scheme to obtain money.

Schemes and transactions of this sort were made possible by a breed of merchant that had flourished during the latter part of the Second Empire when Paris was filled with wealthy visitors eager to enjoy the city and willing to spend large sums of money. Merchants like J. Tom Lévis served as an indispensable intermediary by procuring any and all pleasures for this international clientele. Lévis could provide anything: Russian caviar, English beer, or a hôtel, furnished and staffed. Naturally his clients paid for such service, two or three times what the article cost elsewhere. In order to maintain such a business it would have been necessary that the Empire last forever. The War of 1870, the siege of Paris, and the inevitable departure of the many foreigners from France was a financial disaster for J. Tom Lévis. He still maintained his establishment and promised the same extensive variety and rapid service, but the clientele was missing. The Roi Christian appeared to be just the person that Lévis needed to regain his fortune.

Lévis encouraged the king to extend himself by signing notes. It was he who suggested selling the Orders of Illyrie and the crown jewels. Then he began encouraging the king to renounce his right to the throne for a price that would be paid by the republicans of Illyrie. Lévis planned to use his seductive young wife, Séphora, to convince Christian to renounce and then to obtain the money he received. This coup

misses, however, when Christian does not renounce but instead abdicates his right to the throne in favor of his son. This abdication which preserved the monarchy was not due to the recognition of past faults and a renewed respect for the monarchy. Surprised by the queen when about to sign the renouncement, Christian is too weak and cowardly to persevere and gives in to her wish that he abdicate.

Frédérique never considered giving up and found the stamina to maintain the household in Paris while conspiring to regain the rule of Illyrie. The courageous woman made every effort to bar the familiarity, the disorder, the debts--in short, "cette bohème de l'exil,"--from the royal household. Despite all economies it proved impossible to live in Paris without the financial assistance of Rosen, and the debts began accumulating. For the first time the royalty of Illyrie confronted the insolence of creditors and the dissatisfaction of unpaid domestics. A person of lesser character would have relaxed etiquette and sought relief from the isolation of rank and the poverty of exile in the parties and gala events of Paris. It was in this manner that the many deposed heads of state began associating with the Parisian pleasure seekers who frequented the artistic milieu. Unprotected by their rank and wealth, they socialized on an equal footing not only with the haut monde, but also with artists and courtesans and by doing so publicly sacrificed their dignity. In order to take part in these numerous parties it was necessary to sell all remnants of a past reign to eager buyers among the

commercial and industrial potentates who were anxious to achieve social recognition.

Les Rois en Exil reveals the inevitable decadence and capitulation of royalty. The subject, as Zola has pointed out, was vast.

Il s'agissait de montrer l'ébranlement des monarchies, de peindre la déchéance de la royauté devant le flot montant du peuple, de traiter cette haute question humaine, sociale et scientifique de la fin d'une race royale s'achevant dans la dégénérescence d'un enfant scrofuleux, au sang gâté par les débauches du père.⁶³

In treating this subject the novel necessarily shows how the ever-present financial interest becomes an important aspect of the final stages of royalty's decline. The impoverished royalty exiled in Paris generally followed one of two courses of action. A few, like the Reine Frédérique, made concerted efforts to maintain the honor and dignity of their position as rightful heads of state. Most, however, reacted as did the Roi Christian when the restraints and obligations of governing were gone and filled the void with the whirlwind night-life of Paris. To finance this chasse au bonheur these new bohemians sold the remaining vestiges of their rank and position. The omnipresent merchants encouraged this trade and found eager buyers for these products. And so the death of many legitimate monarchies, which was probably inevitable, was in the market place.

Much of the material in the pages devoted to the different aspects of bohemia was largely inspired by Daudet's own experiences. Only the royalty in exile was a subject personally

unfamiliar to him, and he did extensive research in order to present it accurately. Considering his treatment of bohemia as a whole it is evident that it is neither glorified as a romantic, carefree existence peopled by sincere, talented young people nor unequivocally condemned as a life of inexcusable debauchery and a dearth of talent. Rather, the bohemian life is both sympathetically and critically presented with the mixture of dedicated young artists and egotistical Ratés as well as the miseries, privation, and immorality that inevitably accompanied their lack of money. As such these pages are the "inside story" or the private "scoop" of an author who was both qualified to treat the subject and intent on doing so with unerring accuracy and complete honesty.

In the treatment of la bohème the question of the artist's integrity or creative freedom is persistently raised since he is continually in conflict with a highly materialistic and egotistical society unable to understand him or unwilling to make an effort to do so. Both the true and the false artist, Félicia Ruys, Paul Astier, and the journalist Moëssard find that the desire to participate in the affluence of the Second Empire and the Third Republic destroys either them or their art. Others, like the naïve Daniel Eysette, are so discouraged by the ugliness of their indigent existence that they give up and join the bourgeois establishment. Many of those who do not renounce their artistic aspirations resemble D'Argenton--so plagued by the beggarly existence and lack of success that he becomes warped, conniving, and egotis-

tical in the vicious struggle to get ahead. Apparently only the rare artist who is both talented and of a determined character can withstand both the monetary inducements offered for the prostitution of art in the service of lesser ideals and the hand to mouth existence of the striving artist. André Maranne promises to do so, and Védérine appears to have successfully resisted the allures of fame or fortune, but these two characters stand out alone among the many lesser persons who have in some way succumbed.

In the portrayal of la galanterie which flourished during the Second Empire the seamy as well as the more fashionable aspects of the profession are again discussed. Daudet frowned upon galanterie and made it amply clear in Sapho that he could not condone it. This opinion was no doubt formed because of his miserable experience with a lorette, his happy marriage, and the illness which was to cause his death and which he rightfully attributed to his nights and days in bohemia. In any case he chose to peel away the glitter and the glamor of the few fabulously wealthy courtesans which history still remembers today and show, instead, how the majority lived. The poor, the uneducated, the untrained became prostitutes because of the desperate need to support themselves somehow or the natural desire to share in the good life flaunted everywhere by the affluent upper crust. Because of the increased demand for entertainment, amusements, and even debauchery, some of these girls did manage to enter the theater or work their way up through the ranks. This

affluent period of their life was generally short and not always sweet. Faded and grotesque in their old age they were discarded by the same group that had applauded and encouraged them, thousands of Wilkie Cobs, alone and penniless.

In Les Rois en Exil Daudet again removes the façade and shows that fortune, the last bulwark of a decayed institution, conceals moral weakness and depravation. After his expulsion from Illyrie Christian's new kingdom is bohemia where he is leader of the pleasure-seeking and frenzied night life. He sells, barter, and trades every last remnant of Illyrie, its commissions, jewels, and almost its crown, in order to finance his downfall, and each sale marks the advancement of his personal degradation.

Thus, the artists, the filles de joies, and even an exiled king or two are affected by the money-fever of a materialistic society, by the luxury-oriented culture, and by the serious consequences of a lack of money on their professional and personal lives.

NOTES

CHAPTER V

¹ H. Murger, Scènes de la vie de bohème (Paris, 1964),
p. 26.

² Ibid., p. 27.

³ Ibid., p. 7.

⁴ P. Martino, Le Roman réaliste sous le Second Empire
(Paris, 1913), pp. 14-15.

⁵ Marc Eigeldinger, La Philosophie de l'art chez Balzac
(Genève, 1957), pp. 41-57.

⁶ Oeuvres Complètes, t. 7, p. 86.

⁷ Ibid., p. 92.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 201.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 357.

¹² Ibid., p. 372.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 364-65.

¹⁴ Ibid., t. 11, p. 29.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 30.

¹⁶ Ibid., t. 7, p. 84.

¹⁷ Ibid., t. 11, p. 44.

¹⁸ Marceau, p. 18.

¹⁹ Murger, p. 32.

²⁰ Oeuvres Complètes, t. 2, p. 208.

²¹ Ibid., p. 207.

- ²²Jules Fleury, Chien-Caillou (Paris, 1878), pp. 10-11.
- ²³M. Allemand, La vie quotidienne sous le Second Empire (Paris, 1948), p. 210.
- ²⁴Oeuvres Complètes, t. 5, p. 261.
- ²⁵Ibid., t. 6, p. 77.
- ²⁶Ibid.
- ²⁷Ibid., p. 310.
- ²⁸Clogenson, p. 56.
- ²⁹Oeuvres Complètes, t. 7, p. 24.
- ³⁰Clogenson, p. 53.
- ³¹Edmond and Jules de Goncourt, Charles Demailly (Paris, 1893), p. 24.
- ³²Oeuvres Complètes, t. 7, p. 31.
- ³³Ibid., p. 204.
- ³⁴Honoré de Balzac, Splendeurs et Misères des Courtisanes (Paris, 1952), p. 661.
- ³⁵Ibid., Une Fille d'Eve (Paris, 1951), p. 91.
- ³⁶Goncourt, Charles Demailly, pp. 21-22.
- ³⁷Ibid., pp. 107-108.
- ³⁸Paul Claudel, in Balzac et son Monde, Félicien Marceau, (Paris, 1955), p. 180.
- ³⁹Henri D'Almeras, La Vie Parisienne sous le Second Empire (Paris, 1933), p. 71.
- ⁴⁰Allemand, p. 221.
- ⁴¹Marceau, p. 191.
- ⁴²Allemand, p. 91.
- ⁴³Ibid.
- ⁴⁴Oeuvres Complètes, t. 10, p. 10.
- ⁴⁵Andre Bellesort, La Société française sous Napoléon III (Paris, 1932), p. 181.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 182.

⁴⁸Oeuvres Complètes, t. 10, p. 30.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 14.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 29.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 79.

⁵²Ibid., p. 84.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 79-80.

⁵⁵Bellesort, La Société française, p. 176.

⁵⁶Clogenson, p. 57.

⁵⁷Oeuvres Complètes, t. 8, p. 106.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 44.

⁵⁹Ibid., pp. 63-64.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 99.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 106.

⁶²Ibid., p. 99.

⁶³Ibid., p. 287.

CONCLUSION

In the novels of Daudet money is the means by which its possessor tries to satisfy his personal ambitions or desires. The omnipresence of the theme of money is not surprising when one considers the period during which Daudet lived, the literary currents of this time, and Daudet's own life. Money, specifically the lack of it, had both physical and psychological consequences for the author as he suffered the physical misery and the mental anguish of inadequate lodgings, shabby clothing, and second-hand books. The humiliation and discomfort of poverty was even more bitter when the necessity of supporting himself forced him to accept the position of studymaster in a school in Arles. Poverty continued to haunt the young man after his arrival in Paris and even after his marriage.

These experiences acquainted Daudet with the unhappiness caused by his own unsatisfied desires and the harshness of others toward him. He could not help becoming very conscious of the frustration and heartache brought by life and of the role that money plays in the lives and destinies of men. While his earliest works were inspired by Romantic themes and fantasies as he tried to escape from his miserable condition, the relevance and importance of material aspects of life become increasingly apparent in his writing as the maturing author accepted social responsibilities. Le Petit

Chose (1868) clearly shows that very early in his career he was aware of the possible and probable effects of an acute lack of money and consequently of the type of home and education that only money can provide. The following works such as Contes du Lundi (1873) and Femmes d'Artistes (1874) reveal the author's growing interest in the realities of life as he writes about the different classes and professions, comments on the base and noble motives of mankind, describes the ravages of poverty and the privileges of affluence, and explores how a man's human condition can make him greedy, ruthless, and dishonest or patient, thrifty, and hard-working.

The period of literary experimentation which lasted from about 1858 until 1874 culminated in the first of a series of novels in which Daudet made every possible effort to portray with complete accuracy and honesty the France of the Second Empire and the Third Republic. As has been discussed in the third chapter, money is omnipresent in his novels as the active force that it is in the eternal struggle for life. Daudet describes the efforts of each group to maintain itself in competition with the rest of the population and the struggle to acquire a larger portion of the national wealth. The poor and the petite bourgeoisie, who worked to make the upper classes wealthier, needed all of their meager wages just to procure the necessities of life--food, clothing, and shelter. The patient and uncomplaining Désirée Delobelle and her mother devoted each long, tiresome day to their tedious craft, and the worker Jack stifled his mental capacities and

ruined his body in the iron works of Indret and then in the engine room of a transatlantic vessel. After years of toiling so hard these workers had absolutely nothing to show for their efforts except bodies broken by the arduous toil or minds dulled by the monotonous existence.

Daudet had a penchant for these underprivileged persons and wrote about them with compassion and understanding. He praised the naturally resolute like Bélisaire, Roudic, Risler, or Joyeux who accepted their station and persevered in their chosen skills or professions. In his opinion they represented a very real although often forgotten aspect of France which contributed to the moral fortitude of the country. Some critics have denounced them as being too naïve or too good to be true to life, but this seems to be an unjustifiable judgment. Even during the worst historical periods, the most selfish and the most immoral, there is a large segment of the population which remains generous, modest, and patient. While recognizing the existence of this laudable element of society Daudet was very critical of lazy and selfish persons like Chèbe, Delobelle, or Nantais who tried to get ahead by taking advantage of others. This portrayal of the poor, including the thrifty and patient as well as the narrow-minded and mercenary, is a just and equitable picture which needs to be compared with the more vitriolic judgments of some of Daudet's colleagues.

While Daudet accurately described the physical and psychological hardships of less privileged classes, he also

illustrated how persons who had large sums of money could come close to satisfying all their desires. Those who were rich enjoyed respect and admiration, received honors and awards, and were elected to responsible offices. Their money could corrupt the most virtuous woman and indulge the most extravagant whims. Georges Fromont enjoys the wealth accumulated by three generations and spends the profits of his business to humor his mistress, Sidonie Risler. The millionaire wine merchant, Sauvadon, buys a façade of culture for himself and the title of princess for his niece.

Yet, wealth alone did not always guarantee acceptance into the social circles of the grande bourgeoisie, as both Sidonie and 'le Nabab' learned when they attempted to buy their way to respectability and social position. However, since rigid social hierarchy was crumbling, many persons, even with the most scandalous pasts, like the Baronne Hemerlingue, were received everywhere when they shrewdly used their wealth according to the rules of the game of life. This observance of social rules or requirements was an absolute necessity and explains why hypocrisy in all its forms was needed to succeed.

While presenting all classes of French society in his novels and showing how each group reacted in the struggle to make a living and better oneself, Daudet praises those who respect the traditional virtues of honesty, thriftiness, and patience. Whereas one thinks of Zola as a revolutionary, Daudet was a man of order. He did not ignore class struggles and whenever he touched upon them he sympathized with the

exploited classes, but, as Clogenson has pointed out in Alphonse Daudet, peintre de la vie de son temps, he did not use his novels to champion any of the badly needed reforms:

... son oeuvre constitue un document impitoyable sur les inégalités, les injustices sociales de son époque. Il n'a pas conclu, parce que là n'était pas son rôle de romancier, et il l'a très bien compris.¹

Daudet, like most of his colleagues, understood his role as a novelist as that of an exposé of human foibles and in no way pretended to propose answers to the problems arising in modern society. His novels were intended to be an assessment of the human condition and not a catalogue of panaceas for the sociological problems of mankind.

Daudet not only remained aloof from class conflicts but also tended to emphasize the necessity of each person finding his niche in society and making the most of his life within the confines of his station. This attitude reminds one of the stoic Vigny who wrote in "La mort du loup,"

Fais énergiquement ta longue et lourde tâche
Dans la voie où le Sort a voulu t'appeler,²

Because of this notion Daudet suggests that a working girl like Sidonie, who lacked breeding, is completely out of place in her new position as Madame Risler, while at the same time he is very sympathetic toward persons like Joyeux who accept their lot and cultivate the traditional virtues mentioned above. Many of Daudet's contemporaries were not so kind when describing such clerks and small merchants, and it would be interesting to study Daudet's attitude toward the petite

bourgeoisie as opposed to that of the other realists and naturalists.

Daudet does describe the industrial, financial, and political circles during the period of development and industrialization. He was, however, less impressed by the advancements of technology than he was dismayed by the corruption, the suffering, and the moral depravation that this so-called progress entailed. He briefly touched upon the dubious enterprises of scoundrels like Paganetti and concluded that the development of capitalism was making just a few persons wealthier while corrupting the morals of the entire country. The financial world was not above reproach either when money was synonymous with power: a banker like Hemerlingue was able to control the Corps Législatif, and Madame Autheman, the wife of another banker, enjoyed immunity from all legal authorities. In political circles which were described during the Third Republic corruption is shown to be rampant as favors and even votes were bought and sold.

Thus, in every field the motivating force was money or its corollaries--power and reputation. It is typical in the novels of Daudet that the wealthy and powerful use dishonest means to exercise their will but rarely feel remorse and make no attempt at reparation. It is true that the quest for money, when it becomes an ever-progressing, haunting, maddening enterprise, as it was during the period when Daudet was writing, brings a callousness and hardness of heart which does not always allow one to remember the kind and helpful

deeds of a former friend, to fulfill family duties, or to be aware of the sufferings of others. On the other hand, the fact that there are so few incidents of disinterested generosity among the affluent persons in Daudet's novels appears to be an unfairly harsh censure of the upper classes and evidence of the author's distrust of wealth and power. The portrayal of the rich might have been more realistic if it had included more of the laudable characteristics as well as the baseness of this segment of society, as Daudet did in his more complete picture of the less privileged.

Additional insight is provided when one compares this derogatory attitude toward the rich with Balzac's obvious fascination and even respect for great wealth or power. Although diametrically opposed, both reactions follow naturally from the poverty that had plagued each author. While the constant lack of money, in addition to his debts, developed in Balzac the ambition to participate in the privileges of affluence, Daudet reacted in a different manner and became increasingly suspicious of the power structure. He tended to consider it responsible for the moral depravation of the period which appeared to be possessed by the money-fever almost to the exclusion of other values. The desire to get rich was causing traditional values to disappear as it replaced family, religion, and honor, and was bringing corruption into all domains of life. Honesty, justice, and equity lost all meaning as the power of money exercised its will, and human decency and friendship were so often less important than the

acquisition of wealth. It is interesting to note that this judgment of society reveals Daudet to be generally optimistic when portraying the lower classes but darkly pessimistic when describing the ambitions and hypocrisies of the wealthier and more powerful members of society.

In the midst of the corruption and decadence of a period obsessed by personal gain, Daudet considered the family as a force necessary to preserve the traditional values that he was championing. Therefore he viewed the struggle to get ahead as particularly destructive when it disrupted family unity and destroyed the natural bonds between members of a family. The Joyeux are enthusiastically praised by the author because they do not let financial hardship in any way spoil the warmth and affection of the home. Instead of the lack of respect for the elders, which is characteristic of the time, the Joyeux daughters keep on respecting their father even when he loses him humble position. They do not begrudge their lack of money but cooperate in order to stretch their funds: the eldest teaches her younger sisters and each one participates in the household chores.

In opposition to this mutual effort, a number of families are disrupted and perverted by the insatiable appetite for wealth of one of the members. Both the conniving Chèbe and egotistical Delobelle idly watched their daughters, who had been deprived of their youth, spend each day working. The misery of this existence drives one of the girls to suicide while her father ignores her, and the other to a

dishonest marriage and adulterous relationship while her father thinks only of the material benefits that these immoral actions will reap. The Astier-Réhu family, which was discussed in the fourth chapter, was most dramatically ruptured by the struggle for money as the ambitious son Paul uses his parents, for whom he has nothing but contempt, to advance his own projects and satisfy his own desires. The condemnation of this hungry young man's struggle for fame and fortune is particularly bitter because Paul did not hesitate to pervert the natural family relationships. Daudet's respect for the family approaches his predecessor Balzac's attitude as both men viewed this unit as exercising a restraining influence and preserving social order, a point of view which still prevails in France.

It is everywhere apparent that the glitter of the Second Empire did not prevent the perceptive Daudet from seeing the more sordid aspects of this period of jouissance. He described the degrading atmosphere of bohemia where the artists and would-be artists did not participate in the material benefits of the developing and industrializing economy but endured ugly and depressing destitution. The novels describe how this deprivation warped the lives, influenced the goals, and affected the work of the bohemians. Lonely, hungry, and miserable amateurs of art like Daniel Eysette are so demoralized by such a wretched life that they renounce their aspirations. Those truly talented and dedicated artists who persevere in their chosen fields must confront a society which

measured merit in terms of tangible returns, viewed the creative force with disdain, and considered it worthy of very little compensation. When faced with the choice of creative freedom or personal security many artists yielded to the temptations of personal happiness, glory, and fortune. They often chose Moëssard's route and prostituted their art to write the sensational and slanderous articles which paid well and guaranteed them a job.

In addition to portraying the miserable working conditions of the workers and artisans, Daudet sympathetically describes another victim of a luxury-oriented society: the fille de joie. Many working girls who found the opportunities for making a living to be severely restricted because they lacked education, vocational training, and personal resources turned in desperation to prostitution. The majority were disappointed in their effort to raise their standard of living and simply sank lower and lower into the gutter. A few escaped. Those with some talent as well as an appealing face like the soprano Alice entered the theater. Those with intelligence and a shrewd business sense rose within the ranks of la galanterie, becoming popular courtesans of the demi-monde like Rosa Sanchez and Wilkie Cob (Sapho). The luxury-oriented Second Empire had permitted and even encouraged the ascendancy of these elegant and fashionable prostitutes only to desert them and force them to return to the sordid poverty of their long lost youth when they were too old to continue their trade and had not been shrewd enough to build up a

solid fortune while they were fashionable.

Daudet sympathized with these girls who chose this profession because they were reacting to their poverty by trying what seemed to them to be the only means of escape. At the same time he condemned both the fille de joie and the courtesans as well as the society which encouraged this profession and ridiculed traditional standards of marriage and the home. He noted that the degrading liaisons which ensnared many young men often disrupted and even destroyed the family unit. The sensual bond between Jean Gaussin and his mistress (Sapho) was so strong that Gaussin renounced all plans to marry and establish a home and family.

In portraying the bohemian existence Daudet included the portrait of royalty in exile with the inevitable degradation and corruption that accompanied the loss of royal income. In those days sovereigns whose thrones were shaky had not yet learned how to send large fortunes abroad and keep them in secret accounts in Swiss banks for a rainy day. Instead, deposed monarchs fled their countries without being able to take many provisions with them. Exiled, they soon discovered the inevitable degradation and corruption that accompanied the loss of royal income.

Many of Daudet's enlightening commentaries on the role that money played in the vicious struggle for life were inspired by his personal experiences or first-hand observations. It appears that there is a definite correlation between these elements and the most convincing aspects of the

novels, and one may conclude that Daudet's most successful works and characters are those which are drawn from his own experience. Such true-to-life characters as Daniel Eysette and Sapho and the realistic descriptions of the petit bourgeoisie and the bohemians were based upon the author's first-hand knowledge or close acquaintances. Daudet had worked for and closely observed the powerful Duc de Morny and the portrait of his fictional counterpart, the Duc de Mora, is vivid and convincing. On the other hand, Daudet was not particularly familiar with big business or finance in the way that Balzac had been, and it is interesting to note that Daudet's novels give only a shadowy picture of complicated commercial or banking transactions. Compensating for his lack of precise knowledge in this area, Daudet tended to write in more general terms about the corruption of the entire scene and to study the psychological effects upon those living at this time.

This tendency gives the novels as a whole, and more specifically the theme of money, a universal and timeless appeal as it deals largely with those desires, failings, and strengths that are characteristic of all mankind and not restricted to any particular period or country. Murray Sachs had already pointed out that the Paris described in Le Nabab is seen in its eternal character as well as its particular atmosphere of the Second Empire as Daudet studies "the corrosive power to destroy, morally and physically, which is wielded by the modern city over its inhabitants."³ Thus, one should be cautious when speaking of novels such as this one in

terms of an étude de mœurs of the Second Empire or the Third Republic. While the novels certainly were based on the carefully documented observations of the author, they were also tempered by his personal opinions and prejudices, his tendency to generalize, and his interest in the universal elements common to all mankind. Coloring all his work is the conviction that "l'argent pourrit tout," and the main reproach which could be made against his novels is that he largely neglects the fact that even in the Second Empire money was sometimes a constructive force in society.

Daudet the author found it difficult to restrain himself from overtly interfering with the plot and characters of his novels. His later works are often criticized for being too obviously the vehicles of his own ideas in which his criticism of characters and condemnation of corrupt practices dominate the fictional world and to a certain extent destroy the illusion of reality. This double intention to treat the vices of mankind and to moralize about them reminds one of those plays of the Second Empire commonly referred to as the pièces à thèse in which playwrights like Augier and Dumas files intended to bring about a change of heart in their contemporaries or remedy evils by exposing them. As has been pointed out in this study, one of the themes frequently treated in these problem plays was the question of money and the influence it exerted in the lives and affairs of persons of all stations and professions. It would be interesting to expand this comparison and study both these plays and Daudet's

novels with respect to the themes treated and the point of view taken by the respective authors. This is particularly pertinent since Daudet was interested in the theater, wrote a number of dramas, and clearly shared at least a certain number of ideas and opinions with his colleagues writing didactic drama.

In general, Daudet's concept of the role of money in the lives of men as it was expressed in his novels is a blend of pessimism and optimism, of bitter denunciation and warm praise. In the group of novels written after Le Petit Chose and before 1881 he expressed some degree of optimism as all persons were not avidly participating in the race to get rich which was exemplified by the speculation and "wheeling and dealing" of many. Although he had few illusions about mankind, he did show that those persons dominated by self-interest are often counterbalanced in this world by others who stand out because of their generosity and consideration. While D'Argenton takes advantage of the young Jack, friendly workers like Bélisaire and Roudic try to help him find work and keep a roof over his head. Even within the unprincipled and degenerate world of the Second Empire the traditional morality is preserved by the Joyeux who figure importantly in Le Nabab. The balance between good and evil, between the presence of persons intent on furthering their own interests and those who still live virtuously, gives way in L'Evangéliste (1883) and the novels which followed: Sapho, L'Immortel, and Soutien de Famille. Daudet looks darkly at the world of the Third

Republic and declares it to be rotten to the core. This depressing assessment of mankind was no doubt influenced by the maturing Daudet's role as father and mentor to his sons, his efforts to become more involved with society, and a desire to expose the evils with which he came into contact. In addition, his illness was causing him almost constant and unbearable pain, and this experience also served to dampen his optimism. The severity of Daudet's condemnation is due in part to the indignation he felt over the humiliating defeat of 1870 as well as to a certain disillusionment. He had hoped that the downfall of Napoléon III would bring some change in the social and consequently in the moral order and reacted more violently because this hope too quickly proved to be illusionary. The tendency to sermonize about this situation which old age can bring out in the fairest minded men often obtrudes and deforms both characters and incidents of these later novels. This penchant also reveals the more bitter and pessimistic attitude of the author. In L'Immortel he portrays the younger generation of Paul Astier to be base and vile and shows how the desire to get ahead and make a fortune has corrupted finance, commerce, and politics. In Sapho he sees through the glitter of the courtesans to the ugly and sordid existence that is theirs. Persons of moral fortitude like Divonne (Sapho) or Védrine (L'Immortel) are largely overshadowed by this depressing tableau where the money fever dominates to the exclusion of morality. Thus, the great Parisian novels of Daudet really culminate with a rather stark

and bleak picture of humanity.

By studying the theme of money as it is developed in Daudet's novels one gains new insight into the fictional world of one of the important writers of the latter part of the nineteenth century. First, it becomes evident that these novels shed light on the activities of the Second Empire and the Third Republic. As Murray Sachs has pointed out in The Career of Alphonse Daudet, "as long as men are curious about France in the second half of the nineteenth century, Daudet and his writings are not going to be forgotten, even if the audience for his individual works were to dwindle to insignificance."⁴ In addition, one realizes that these novels present one interpretation of the interplay of forces as individuals try to adapt to society and get ahead within this structure. As such, these works are a significant contribution to the study and the understanding of mankind.

NOTES

CONCLUSION

¹Clogenson, p. 29.

²Alfred de Vigny, Oeuvres Complètes (Paris, 1950),
p. 148.

³Sachs, p. 105.

⁴Ibid., p. 182.

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