

**JEREMIAH IN THE QUARTIER MONTPARNASSE.
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The Taverne Dumesnil was the knock-out blow. Long had the freedom of Bohemia struggled against the stiff collars and prudery of the English, and even their attempts to establish the Oxford manner—or rather *mœurs*—on the Boulevard Montparnasse; long had it borne with the crassness of the Amurrikans, and even their story-book chivalry; but when the bourgeoisie set up such a fortress as the Taverne Dumesnil at the very key of the situation, the corner of the Place de Rennes, Art had to go.

How pitifully strange this field of Armageddon, where the old guard still stand to their arms. I was in the Café—Diderot, let us call it!—the other night, and beheld the stricken field. It was a goodly company. Four hayseed Yankees from Wayback, in the middle distance; far off, old Government clerks and shopboys—the army of Blücher, so to say: in the foreground an American billiard-sharper trying to cheat out of a five-franc piece a sober stolid Yorkshireman who was perfectly informed of his character; in the corner “Whisky Bill,” always too busy drinking to do anything else; next him the sharper’s wife, trying to keep the home together by ogling (with the worn eyes set hollow in the pasty unmodelled face) the son of a British Ambassador. Vain task! Deep-seated, retired, contemplating all with the vision of a god, sits smoking the one great colourist of his time, a little glass of crème de mênthe at his elbow. By him, silent and strong, a goodly man, one to match

“the dead men that bore us
At a song, at a kiss, at a crime.”

Next him, big and jolly, a baldheaded man with a fair, drooping mustache, whose hobby it had been to mix himself up in South American politics. Then, colourless ghosts, even in this life. Vain phantoms, how shall you live after you die? See, in all this crowd two men, and only two, who may outlive the twentieth century. But they can give none of their light and strength to redeem the invading flood that threatens to swallow them.

So much was clear; and I turned away, sick at heart; my one consolation to say: "Well, were the days of glory any better? Are we not constantly the dupes of the past?" So I went to the station, to see if I could find a train. But all the trains went to Somewhere, and I wanted to go to Nowhere. Pondering, I sauntered up the boulevard. And then, with a "rire de folle," came running at me my old friend, the blossom of the Quartier, caught me and kissed me in the midst of the broad boulevard. (Ninon, I will call her, the name is as good as another.) Now when I saw Ninon I said to myself, "The old times are come back." But there I was quite wrong. We sat on the boulevard, as old friends should, and talked. A strange discovery! She who had been the blossom of the Quartier, was now its seed, its soul.

Perfectly without the consciousness of sin, beautiful without knowing it, hating fine clothes because one cannot romp in them, there was the Child Eternal. (How I hate the Eternal Woman; it is the child that we all love!) A woman she had been at twenty-one; to-day, at twenty-six, she had grown five years younger; she had become the Avatar of the Quartier. The soul of the place had taken itself a body; I suppose it wanted to "move." Let us watch carefully where Ninon goes; she will one day leave the Quartier; and where she settles will be a nest wherein the young birds of a new Art may get their food, and fledge themselves and fly. And I shall come, a white-haired wanderer, and sit at that fireside where Ninon sits, and feel proud if I have helped her ever so little to do a world-work such as she may do.

She is yet too young to know—yet she has grown grave, strong, profound; I think she suspects!—she has set herself the hopeless task of bringing one of our modern students to the light of her own wisdom, "all will be well as long as I do what I like." (A nasty one, that, for your ethicists and your altruists and your categorical-imperative-mongers!) But he is not even an artist; she will soon abandon the unequal contest, and Montparnasse will grow as respectable as its own cemetery would be without the somber monument of Charles Baudelaire. The Ghost of Baudelaire will seek a more congenial spot. Ninon, when you go away, find room in your kerchief for the ghost of Baudelaire!

And we will raise a monument to you, that when the bourgeoisie have sown the place with their dust and ashes and un-

Attic salt, men may remember that "once upon a time, there was a fairy kingdom,"

But, like all truths, it will probably be criticized away into sun-myths and folk-lore. At least, let us thank our stars that we shall not be alive to see it.

Alister Crowley.