THE MEMOIRS OF FORTUNÉ MOLLOT

Born November 4, 1845
Died April 25, 1924

PREFACE

The original memoirs were transcribed in a type written form by Yves Marquié because they were difficult to read. They were also transcribed by a friend of Cecile Mestan.

At different times, the original memoirs were translated into English by Arlan Gates, and by Judy Code.

A committee, consisting of Victor and Lucille Mollot, Marcel and Louise Mollot, and Blanche Mollot, reviewed all the documents and verified information to produce the edition you are now reading.

Credit to Alice Mollot for having preserved the memoirs and later to Vic Mollot for having made them available. Credit also to Louise Mollot for having prepared this document and included photographs.

Enjoy!

APRIL 2002

To my dear children— (Written July 18, 1912)

Gabrielle, Ernest, Marcel, Marie Louise, Thérèse -

It is to you all that I dedicate these impressions and recollections of my life experience. But it is for you in particular, Marcel, who will alone carry on the traditions and the name of this family, that they have been written.

I believe that these memoirs will help you all to know me better. Perhaps they will also save you from a few of the regrets that I have experienced because I did not know the many details of the lives of my own parents and grandparents. While these details may seem trivial at the time, quite often they are remembered later on in a completely different perspective. With this information, we come to know our loved ones better, and so we are able to love them more.

In the end, they form the traditions of a family that are often so interesting to reflect upon. Among them are the memories of joy and prosperity, but also those of pain and sadness. Every generation has its share of them all.

Ever since my legs deprived me of an active life and confined me to a bed, I have many long hours of solitude. While they displease me, they do afford me time to think. My solitude allows me to journey back in time and to rethink the road I have travelled — to review, sometimes in a very different way, my life story and to relive the happy times of the past. But there are many things in my past that I would like to erase or change, if only it were possible to start all over again!

It is, then, all these memories, both pleasant and painful, that I will attempt to convey to you.

But beforehand, I must tell you that in spite of it everything, I thank the God for giving me such a life as I have had. As much as it has been troubled by disappointments and worries (most of which are my own fault — so much is this true that one has no enemy worse than oneself!), it has also been blessed with many pleasures. Besides, although there are many good things in life that I have never experienced, none of them would have made me want to exchange my life for any of yours! You must always look under the surface. And above, you must only see the good and the beautiful, in order that you may strive to reach them.

I thank God from the bottom of my heart for the many good things that He has granted me. I thank Him especially for allowing me to be touched by the brilliance of the Catholic faith, which has led me to accept with resignation all my experiences and all my pain. These memoirs will serve, perhaps, as some payment toward the debt I owe to God.

I hope with all my soul that the light of God's fortune never ceases to shine upon you, that all of you without exception are blessed by it, and that one day it brings us all together on the divine shores of Heaven.

F. Mollot

THE EXPERIENCES OF MY LIFE:
IMPRESSIONS AND REMEMBRANCES

Situated on the bank of the Lhuîtrelle, a small river in the district of Aube, in the former province of Champagne, the village of Trouan le Grand, with its beautiful thirteenth-century church, is the cradle of my father's family.

My grandfather, Pierre Mollot, left the village several years before the beginning of the French Revolution, to come to Châlons-sur-Marne. He married in 1787 and founded a small business specializing in clothing, fabric and accessories. My grandmother, Marie Françoise Freminet, had herself been born in Châlons. They had two children: my aunt Françoise, who later became my aunt Collet, and my father, who was born February 15, 1791. His sister was two years older than he.

It was amid the revolutionary tumult, the ensuing wars, and the great imperial régime that followed that my father spent his infancy and his adolescence.

After the death of my grandfather on August 5, 1810, and having retired from military service because of his sight, my father came to Paris and went to work for a silk trading house, where he remained for several years. Some time later, his boss sent him to Lyon, which became the hub of his business, and eventually his permanent place of residence.

At that time, commerce took place in a very different manner than it does today. Railroads did not yet exist. Shipping relied on horses or boats, which were not very swift and often quite troublesome. Transactions took place in large markets or at trade fairs, like the Boquaire, in the south, which had a European flair. These events occurred at a fixed time in each

region of France. Buyers from the commercial houses in the big manufacturing cities attended them regularly, taking back the merchandise that they wished to offer to their customers. My father was one of these buyers for many years, first working for others, and then with his own business. Later, tired of travelling, he founded his company and dedicated it to manufacturing silk, the industry which had given Lyon a reputation around the world.

It was around this time that my father first met my mother. In the fortunate position that he found himself in at the time, he ought, by society's standards, to have been looking for someone from a higher rank, socially speaking. But he listened to his heart instead. My mother was the daughter of small farmers who worked for the Dauphin, which is to say that they were simple peasants. My father's own grandparents from Trouan had held the same social status. Although neither my father nor my mother was very young, they formed a perfect couple that I would still judge as the most inseparable that I have ever encountered. My father was extremely sharp, and very hot-tempered—at least toward me (it is true that I was a heedless, mischievous and noisy child). But otherwise, in the house, I never heard a word, nor saw a single gesture to suggest a dispute or a quarrel. In every case, if there was ever one, my parents always had enough dignity and good sense not to make me a witness to it. For a long time I reckoned that what I saw at home and around me was normal. This delusion made me somewhat miserable later on, when I realized that it was not like this everywhere.

My mother was originally from the small hamlet of Viallière, in the district of Chabon. She was born December 31, 1806. My grandfather, Joseph Annequin and my grandmother,

Marie Malens, his wife, had six children—two sons and four daughters: Joseph, Louis, Pauline, Thérèse (my mother), Rose, and Henriette.

As for me, I was born November 4, 1845. At the time, my father and mother lived in an apartment on the third floor of a house at 4 Sathonay Place in the first district of Lyon. My mother could not feed me herself; it was one of her sisters, my aunt Chaboud (Rose), who took charge of that. She had just given birth to my cousin Pauline. Auguste Chaboud, whom I looked up to like a father, was her eldest son. He was 11 years older than I. I stayed with my aunt for close to two years at her residence in Blandin. But naturally I have little recollection of this period. It was only after we moved to our little house on Béguin Street—which my father bought so that he could be closer to one of his good friends, Mr. Chadebec, whose wife was my godmother—that I became aware of myself, and where my first memories begin.

The property, which now belongs to my sister, was enlarged and beautified by my brother-in-law, Mr. Algoud. At the time, it consisted of two buildings separated by a courtyard, which were joined on the first floor by a sort of terrace forming a passageway from one building to the other. Below this terrace was a large carriage gate which served as the main entrance to the property. Next, separated from the two buildings and from the courtyard by a low wall with two columns and an iron gate in the middle, was a fabulous garden terminating in a beautiful, shadowed enclosure formed by 16 chestnut trees, which were superb even in my infancy. Viewed from the entryway, the garden appeared much larger than it really was. In the courtyard, leaning against the smallest house, there was a large synchronized pump from the reign of Louis

XV. When my father opened it, its reservoirs and miniature lagoons loomed like a large, fantastic animal, and it was only with a certain apprehension that I approached it.

My most ancient memory comes from the period during which the largest of the two buildings, which later became our house, was under repair. We were temporarily living in the smallest. I might have been two-and-a-half years old. I can remember my surprise when, sitting in a small pink robe beside the entryway, I experienced thunder and hail for the first time.

Then there was my first snowfall. I remember snuggling up on my mother's knee in the stagecoach that took us from Lyon to Dauphiné. It was a winter's night, and the ground was covered with snow. Through the windows of the stagecoach, I could see the horses trotting in front of us, illuminated on one side by the moon and on the other by the lantern on the stagecoach. Their every move caused a fantastic dance of shadows on the road ahead. This image has remained profoundly engraved in my memory, just like that of the big dog which I met on the same voyage, and teased with a stick.

I also recall being in my grandmother's tiny house in Viallière with my aunt Pauline and her daughter, who was my age. We used to play along the brook which descended from the valley of Viallière, and crossed the pretty, picturesque hamlet that was shaded throughout by large walnut trees. I can still see the sloping paths, which were full of pebbles that often made me fall when they rolled under my tiny feet. I can also remember how my aunt, my cousin, and I walked all the way to Chabon to meet my father as he arrived on the stagecoach. All these memories are so far away now, but how pleasant they remain!

Our property on Béguin Street was heaven on earth for a boy of my age. I enjoyed a sense of freedom (relative freedom for a small child, of course), and an intense joy of life, exempt of all cares until I was six years of age. Our garden, which looked immense to someone of my size, featured the beautiful shadowed chestnut tree enclosure which I spoke about. It also had a ladder that allowed me to climb the wall which separated our garden from that of my godmother, Mrs. Chadebec, giving me all the more room to take my excursions. In winter or on rainy days, what pleased me most was my make-believe stagecoach. My large baby chair served as the conductor's seat, five or six chairs became seats, and the seat backs in front, joined with string, were fashioned as my horses. This helped to pass the time. And since I was alone, I had no one to argue with.

My godmother, her daughter, Mrs. Auray, and her sister, who lived also with her, were to me the most charming women in the world. I often went to see them since I had only to climb over the wall in the garden. I was always so well received, stroked and given candies or toys, especially on New Year's day.

How enchanting this day was for a young boy! As soon as I awoke on this morning, I would say my little prayer and then my mother would hold me in her arms and take me down to our kitchen, where there would be a table full of toys. My father and my mother took much delight from my happiness. Later in the day, my cousin Auguste and the employees of my father's store would come to dine, and bring me a new gift. I never wanted these happy times to end.

But with my sixth birthday, the worries and responsibilities inherent in human nature—and each generation has its own—were about to begin for me. I had to go to school and learn to read and write. My sister, who was 13 years older than I, had just finished her studies at the Ursuline convent, located on Fourvière hill where my father sometimes took me, had now returned home.

Each day she would drive me to the residence of a charming old lady, Mrs. Georges, whose husband fabricated caps. She ran a small school for children on Guillotière Street, five minutes from our house. It was there that I began to learn my letters. But I was already experiencing more pleasure in doodling on my paper than in doing anything else. The lovely colours attracted me. Below my school there was a wonderful stationer's boutique filled with colours, pens and pencils, and more. I never passed by without stopping and fondly admiring everything in the boutique. When I finally had some of these coveted items in my possession, it was a real event for me. Oh, did I scribble many drawings. But as you might expect, my drawings were not quite masterpieces.

In 1852, a number of very important events opened totally new horizons in my mind. For the first time, I joined my father and sister on a visit to Paris and Châlons -sur-Marne, where we spent several weeks next door to my aunt Collet, who had been alone since her husband had died two years earlier. Her husband was my godfather, but I had unfortunately never known him. From what I am told, he was a charming man, and my father liked him very much.

It was a great trip, especially for me. The train from Paris to Lyon was under construction. At the time it only went as far as Châlons-sur-Sâone, so in order to take the train to Paris one had to ride a steam ship on the Sâone to get from Lyon to Châlons. I cannot define the pleasure and the new sensation that I experienced in travelling this way. It seemed as though we were going to the edge of the world. I was filled with pride. In Paris, however, the pleasure that I experienced was somewhat reduced by fatigue. I often found our excursions quite long for my small limbs. Our visit to the park and château of Versailles, in particular, struck the imagination of a seven year old in a rather unfortunate way—so much so that for a long time I trembled at seeing it. It was not until much later that I decided to return there. Only then, as a grown man, could I begin to appreciate the marvel of the Great King.

I also remember my desperation on the day that I got lost in the streets of Paris, and broke out in tears before a crowd of people asking me my name. I could only answer that my name was Fortuné and that I was from Lyon. Then, all of a sudden, my father's smiling face appeared. Imagine my joy! He had simply been playing a joke, I learned later on, because I had a habit of stopping in front of every store that we passed and would then have to catch up with him. But I could not help my fascination with everything I saw, especially when it came to toys!

I also have many memories, as vivid as if they had happened yesterday, of the pleasant and amusing times that I had at Châlons with my aunt. I found her a little too serious, maybe even a spoilsport. But it is likewise true that I was scatterbrained and noisy, and somewhat of a pain to her. It did not help that she had no children of her own.

Not far from my aunt lived an old friend of my uncle Collet, a retired captain like himself. They had served together under Napoléon I. This nice old Captain—Normalle was his name—became a very close companion of mine. He had preserved a young and playful personality and we had great times together. Quite often, we would take long walks around the old parts of the city, through lovely paths shaded by magnificent old trees, through the public gardens, along the length of the Marne canal or even along the Marne itself. He lived with his two daughters, of whom I also hold fond memories, in a pretty house with a garden overlooking a canal that traversed the city and that was a meeting place for ducks, who would often frolic there with their gay quack, quacks. One of our favourite pastimes was "fishing" for ducks. At the end of a long thread, I would attach a morsel of bread and throw it as far as possible into the canal. As soon as the ducks noticed it they would all scurry toward it. When one of them was about to grasp and swallow it, I would reel in the thread. Then, the poor duck was obliged to come closer to me or to surrender this morsel of bread. My companion and I would almost die of laughter! This great old fellow, whom I visited with renewed pleasure each time that I passed through Châlons, died in 1867 at the age of 86. Until the end, he retained his happy demeanour and his affection for me.

My father had many other relatives at Châlons that I had the opportunity to know. First, his aunt, Mrs. Fréminet, her son and two daughters, Mrs. Perurdel and Mrs. Boullaire, who were both married with children. My cousin Freminet was the founder of a House of Champagne, of which his sons head today. Some other relatives whom I liked very much were the Adnet-Collot family. Mr. Adnet was employed at the Marne prefecture and was a devoted friend of my aunt Collet. His father in law, Mr. Collot, was one of the Dauphins of France, which is to say that he

was born the same day as poor old Louis XVII. I never knew an old person more alert or more happy or more playful. The moments that we spent with him were always filled with jokes and laughter. He died at 96 years, after having celebrated his diamond anniversary with his wife, who was two years younger than he and who was later buried near him in their tomb.

It was on my return from these first travels that, in September 1852, my sister married Mr. J. B. Algoud. He had been our neighbour for a long time, along with his mother and father, Mr. Hippolyte Algoud. My new big brother in law was not a stranger to me. When I was still small, Mrs. Algoud had often brought me to her house, and her son took pleasure in playing with me when he could.

Shortly after the marriage, it was time for me to register in a boarding school. I was soon going to be seven years old. The thought of it did not bother me; it was a novelty. My parents decided to place me with l'Abbé Bland at Mulatière, which was situated at the entrance to Lyon near the confluence of the Rhône and the Saône. At the small adjoining boarding school for children, there were elementary classes and the classics up to the fifth year.

The location of the boarding school on the hills of Mulatière was magnificent. The terrace where we had our recreation overlooked the city of Lyon, dominated by the slopes of Fourvière, with their statue of the Virgin Mary. One could also see the convents of Croix Rousse, St. Claire, and Chartreux. Then, in the foreground, there were the confluence of the Rhône and its bridges, and the Dauphiné plain, bordered in the distance by the peaks of the

Chartreuse and Savoie mountains, and by the Alps and Mount Blanc. On a clear day this panorama was most beautiful.

My introduction to this new lifestyle began in October 1852. I was not overly troubled by it. I met some other children there who were eager to play with me. I needed nothing more to console me for my separation from my parents. From the terrace, I could even see the Guillotière quarter where we had lived for some time. Just being able to see it satisfied me, for the moment at least. Later, when I had to study, I felt some regret. If visiting the house had been up to me, I am sure that I would not have hesitated. It did not take long, however, for me to accept my new surroundings, thanks in large part to l'Abbé Bland. Known to all of us in Lyon as "Mother Bland", he took great care of his students and tried to entertain us as much as possible. Holidays were quite numerous over the course of the year.

My fondest memory is of our much-anticipated vacation to Charbonnière, which took place in July. On the morning of the day chosen by l'Abbé Bland—which he had kept a secret until the very last moment—a series of firecracker pops awoke us very early. Immediately, the dormitories were filled with cries of joy. No one had to have his ear pulled to get up that day, even though the hour was quite a bit earlier than the ordinary.

We quickly preened ourselves, and then rode the coach to the woods of Charbonnière, a charming village near Lyon where there was thermal establishment quite frequented by the people of Lyon during the summer. We spent the entire day there. We ate lunch in the open air, under the huge trees which surrounded the "Bois de l'Étoile" restaurant. The afternoon was filled with games and excursions in the greenery to search for flowers, plants or insects to

collect. This day of partial freedom was exquisite and we all found it too short, although it was a long day. We did not come back until late at night.

What can I add to my story of the six years that I spent with l'Abbé Bland, beyond the fact that, in spite of everything, they seemed long and endless. At my age, they were like spending years in the country in a regiment. They counted for double. When one is small, what haunts you the most is to be grown up, to be 20 years old. That point seems so far away that you believe you will never reach it. Once you have, however, how much everything changes!

I hardly knew how to read when I entered the boarding school. It was my nature to be fanciful and carefree; I liked to play and to run. Applying myself to study pleased me very little. During class time, I thought more about my games than my lessons or my homework. That is why this entire six year period was taken up with my elementary classes and my eighth and seventh classics. I only ever won prizes in gymnastics, writing, and geography, the latter of which I liked mainly because of the maps that we had to do. It was during this period that my talent for drawing and colouring began to make itself clear. One of my classmates, a little older than myself, happened to own a small box of oil colours and I saw him make small paintings that I found very beautiful. It gave me the desire to do the same. His name was Léon Caron. When I met him again later in life, he had become a talented artist.

The anticipation of my holidays also held a large place in my mind, and I looked forward to them with much pleasure. They gave me so much freedom, whether I was in Lyon, Blandin or

Châlons. At Lyon, my father would often take me to his store. I always saw something that pleased me. Just travelling along the road was pretty and interesting. I remember that I liked to pass by a road running to the Guillotière bridge. In the bend formed by another small, narrow road—named Asperges—which led to the first, I could see a chapel containing a statue of the Virgin Mary. The place was illuminated with a light in front, and was maintained by a nice old woman to whom my father often gave a penny or two, if I prodded him.

I would also go with my mother on her errands. We would often take long drives in the horse and carriage. Occasionally, my father drove me to the day nursery, where there was a small theatre for children whose plays always opened with the nativity scene. Other times, he took me to the Guignol theatre. All this was so exciting that I never wanted to return to school. At my parents' house, I could run at will in the garden, which was especially fun when my cousin Auguste was there.

Auguste came along to help ease the change when my parents took me away from the nourrice; still young, I already liked him very much, and did not want him to leave. He stayed with us from that time on, like another child in the house. Full of enthusiasm and happiness, he injected an extraordinary zest for life everywhere he went. Many times during the course of my mother's long and cruel illness, his uplifting character raised her spirits. I loved spending my days with him, especially on Sunday when he had more free time. I never left him. He was a true big brother. I liked him very much and he returned my sentiment. Our two personalities acted as one. He could always think of something to make me laugh. I even learned an anecdote about my father from him; he had been a witness to it, and I found it very amusing.

My parents still lived at Sathonay, and it was when I first came back from my aunt who was my nourrice. One summer's day, we were eating lunch, which took place at 2 p.m. It was very hot, and the windows in the dining room were open. Suddenly, a small ray of sunlight, which shone on the front of the house at this time of day, hit my parents in the face. This annoyance was all the more irritating to my parents since they had been sitting in the shade. It turned out to be some people out in front who were amusing themselves with a small piece of glass, which reflected the sunlight.

For several moments, my father said nothing. But, as the game continued, he finally lost his patience and said: "These people have nothing better to do, so I will give them something." He stood on a chair, with his back turned toward the culprits, but well within their sight. They continued what they were doing. Then, right before their eyes, my father rapidly bent over, lowered his trousers, and showed them a superb image of the moon—the sight of which made the ill-timed ray of sunlight disappear instantly, along with the improvised astronomers who from then on appeared to have had enough, as we laughed heartily inside.

For two years, there was also a renter at the house, Paulin Carre whom my father had hired for his business. A cousin of my mother, he was 18 or 20 at the time. He had lots of spirit but he was too much of a gossip. We were never very close; even later on, we remained quite distant. But at this time, Auguste and he were rivals over who played the most practical jokes. I have always remembered one of them. One Sunday, after dinner, they both helped our maid, who was a little fat and quite unattractive, to lift the tablecloth. They each took an end, and

folding the tablecloth in half, they trapped the poor girl in the middle and took off at full speed to the garden, which made her run much faster than she would have wanted. It was a hilarious spectacle: the anger of Alexandrine, the laughter of the two devils. She wanted to punch them, as they dodged her and spun her around.

The holidays that I spent at Blandin were also very agreeable for me. My father had bought the pretty Mollinière farm. There, I never had walls to limit my exploration. I could roam freely through the valleys and the hills, certain that I would only meet friendly faces and welcoming people, caring very little whether they were well-dressed or well-housed. The social ladder had never concerned me very much. In my friendships I had always looked more for courtesy, geniality, politeness, and a soft heart and I encountered these traits more often at the bottom of the ladder than at the top.

During my vacation in 1855, while going to see my aunt Collet with my father and mother, we visited the first important world exhibition of the nineteenth century. I was ten years old then and I was just beginning to appreciate beauty, and certainly the pieces on display lacked none of it. At my aunt's, I had already noticed the beautiful tapestries from Beauvais with their forests and birds, in very pleasant colours, which graced the walls of our bedroom. I really regretted later that I had not kept them when the house was sold.

It was around that time that something unique began to come over me. Above the terrace, where we took our recess, and separated by a path, there was a boarding school for girls. Like us, they would often go to visit the offices of the parish. We would see each other every

Sunday. Among them, there was one who captured my attention in a very special way, and when my glances met hers, warmth flowed to my heart and I grew pale. I felt a strange sensation throughout my body. I could not define what it was. It was pleasure and pain at the same time. This young girl was older than I, however—she had to have been 15 or 16. One day, during our vacation, I encountered her by chance on our street, with her parents. When I saw her I was like a jellyfish; I wanted to stick my head in the sand! I no longer knew what to do. I must have turned all different colours. She certainly must have noticed my trouble, because I saw her smile in passing. Later, I experienced almost the same feelings in front of a friend's sister. But this time, it was with less apparent trouble and even more confidence on my part, since I was trying to attract her attention with the awkward gestures that children perform when they want to be noticed. It was the first awakening of a young Casanova.

The year 1858 was marked by a pleasant turning point in my existence. It was my first communion. What a beautiful and happy day the May 16 was! But it was not until later that I could truly appreciate all its charm and happiness. Although only a child, I have always kept a fond memory of it, for it was truly a happy day. Since that time I have certainly had my share of memorable communions, but none have left me with a pleasure as delicate as the first.

How much I thank God for his grace in giving me good Christian parents that were kind enough to send me to such good Catholic institutions. All the instruction that I received enlightened me greatly, for present and, above all, for the future.

That year I took my vacation at Châlons -sur-Marne. It was there that I saw a comet for the first time; it was the most beautiful that I have ever encountered. It took up an enormous space in the sky. Every evening throughout September, we would go outside the city on the road to Reims, where we could see it in all its magnificence.

When school returned, I did not go back to l'Abbé Bland. Instead, my father sent me to the small Minimes seminary, where I completed my classes in the 6th, 5th, and 4th classics. But I did not meet with much success there either. I could not enjoy myself at that place. It had an atmosphere that did not sit well with me. It was there, however, that I first learned to draw. In my last year I had taken a course with an excellent teacher from the school of fine arts in Lyon—Mr. Bonirotte, an artist of great talent who inspired me to achieve.

During my stay at Minimes, misfortune began to take over at home. My poor mother started to feel the first pangs of a terrible illness. All the care that she took of herself would not delay her passing. She underwent surgery for breast cancer, which gave her hope and relief for a year or two. But then the illness returned with a vengeance, stronger and more painful than before, and made my mother a veritable martyr in the final year of her life.

In June of 1860, I received a distinction of which I was very proud. I had been an uncle for the first time at age seven-and-a-half, and for the second time at age ten. Now I was to going to be both an uncle and a godfather. All this seemed completely extraordinary at the time. At age 14, it was quite an honour to be an uncle to three young children: Louis, Marie, and Fortuné, my godson.

By this time, I was becoming somewhat more serious about my studies. I began to see that the rut I found myself in would not lead to anything good. I asked my father to transfer institutions so that I could study the sciences, which at the time were offered beginning at the third level. My father did not hesitate to do so, and in October 1861, I became a boarder at the school Lycée de Lyon. I committed myself seriously to my work, and actually found it pleasurable since this type of study interested me so much. At the end of the year, my parents finally had the satisfaction of seeing me receive eight nominations for awards. My drawing, on the other hand, was not going so well. We had a clumsy old cluck of a professor who could not motivate me like Mr. Bonirotte. I regretted this very much, especially later on.

I had got off to a good start, but the death of my mother on December 4, 1862, took my mind completely away from my studies. Although I remained unsure of my future plans, I had nonetheless been thinking of attending either the Polytechnic school at St. Cyr, or the Central School. But after my mother's untimely death, my father was all alone, and I could not think of continuing with my precious plans. Having lost the spirit that I had in my first year of study, I boarded once again at the Lycée de Lyon. I now had only one desire: to finish my studies as quickly as possible without looking to go any farther than my high school diploma, which I was granted in November 1863. I was 18 years old.

I now faced the difficult question of what to do next. I would really have liked to attend the school of fine arts. But my father, like most of the generation of 1830, held a firm prejudice against artists, and he would not hear of it. He had made his fortune in business, and this is what he had in mind for me. But I did not suit that type of occupation at all, and I knew that I could

never be the business-man that my father had been. Nevertheless, I resigned myself to please him, and with the help of my brother-in-law, Mr. Algoud, I started as a junior employee at a large wholesale novelty house managed by one of his cousins: Magnun Faure & Company, located at 40 L'Imperatrice Street. There was never a dull moment in the place. Since I was young, however, I enjoyed the activity. Fortunately, I had nothing to do with the purchasing. My role was limited to preparing the sold goods, placing the shelves in order and getting the packages ready for shipment.

It was here that I made the acquaintance of Aristide Armand, who became one of my good friends in my youth. We used to spend much of our free time together, frequenting the theatre, the casino, or the Eldorado. We were also crazy about dancing. The L'Alcazar , in the winter, and La Closerie des Lilas in summer, were our dance halls of choice. The L'Alcazar was an immense and magnificent patchwork rotunda, admirably decorated on the inside with two long paths around the edge, the nicest of which was augmented with caves, fountains, tiny cascades, and charming cushion chairs. There were also some coffee and restaurant tables, which had a wonderful view of the dance floor, where one could have refreshments and chat. I have never seen a room to which this one could be compared anywhere, in any city, not even in Paris. Today, a beautiful church has replaced it. With time, the glories of the world transform themselves. Temples of paganism are succeeded by sanctuaries. As for the men who generally went to the hall, they were the same people that one sees everywhere in those sorts of establishments: students, government clerks, young businessmen—in a word, youth looking to have fun. Occasionally one might find middle-aged men there, or even old men chasing good fortune. But as far as women were concerned, it was not here that you would find princesses of virtue.

At this time, money was not always abundant. The 25 francs that we made each month did not go very far. But we amused ourselves all the same, more in those days, perhaps, than later, when our wallets were fatter. On big occasions, I sometimes asked my father for money. But I did not always get what I wanted. I recognize today that it was a blessing, for it is easy to get carried away. Prudence is not the dominant virtue of youth. Sooner or later, however, we pay for our mistakes. I learned this myself when, after interminable dancing, and all covered with sweat, I caught a chill and finally succumbed to a fever that cut short my choreographic ambitions. It took more than a year for me to return to my feet from my state of extreme weakness. It was only after a season in the waters of Royat, a pretty thermal spring located at the base of Mount Puy-de-Dôme, that I was able to recover my strength.

My illness forced me to quit work at the Magnun Company. When I was better, I really had no desire to go back there. Instead, I wanted to get involved in the silk industry—the largest commercial enterprise in Lyon—although it was necessary that I complete at least a short apprenticeship. My brother-in-law gave me a job in his company and became my mentor. After a short period of time, I was able to produce a piece of taffeta, 80 metres in length, and not badly done, from which I made a profit of 100 francs.

That was in the spring of 1864. In June, my father's first cousin came to visit us for the first time. We had visited him the year before in Champagne. Bardon, as he was called, displayed the strength and vigour of a young man, although he was 60 years old at the time. It was because of him that I had the opportunity to take several wonderful trips. He had gone to

Paris for the exposition, and was received by my aunt each year at Châlons-sur-Marne. But outside of these, and apart from his own village, Lhuître, he knew no other part of France. Accordingly, he was very eager to see new parts of the country, and he had accumulated a small fortune to permit him this indulgence.

That is why he enthusiastically accepted my father's invitation to visit us at Lyon. He had an ardent desire to see the mountains that Champagne lacked, and I was selected to be his personal guide. I could not refuse such a task when it was so well suited to my love of travel and adventure. It was the Midi that attracted us first. To see the sea was almost like a dream. What a lovely impression it made on us at Marseille, especially at Notre Dame de la Garde! I was filled with wonder. We even took a boat ride to the Château d'If, the old fortress illustrated in the famous novel by Alexandre Dumas, *Le Comte de Montecristo*. On our return, the mistral (a strong, cold, dry, winter wind) began to blow and the water grew choppy. We were relieved when we finally set our feet on solid ground, for we had already begun to feel seasick from riding in such a small vessel.

Toulon and its splendid harbour attracted us next. We were delighted with our visit to the arsenal at the Seyne shipyards, especially when we saw the Montebello, one of the most beautiful vessels of the French Marine in 1864. Eight days after our return to Lyon, we left for Grenoble, and saw the great Chartreuse, as well as a part of Savoy, and Aix and Chambéry. We even passed by Lake Aigueblette and the town of Novalaize, where my mother's youngest sister, my aunt Henriette, lived. She and her husband, my uncle Montfulcon, owned a small hotel in this pretty village. We stayed there for several days, in the first place because I liked my uncle

and my aunt very much, but also because Novalaize was full of delightful excursions. My uncle was churchwarden of the Novalaize church. He had at his disposal four bells which made the most lovely chime. An artist, he could also play the violin with perfect harmony. It was a great pleasure for me to go to see my aunt and uncle, for I was certain to be welcomed with open arms.

The next year, 1865, I at last reached that much-awaited turning point in my life, my twentieth birthday. But that meant a burdensome question: would I be lucky enough to avoid military service? At that time, the army only enlisted a certain number of men, but those who were chosen had enormous demands placed upon them. It is true that you could purchase a replacement if you took a bad number. But you had to be rich to do that. I had the good fortune to choose number 504, which was high enough to exempt me from military conscription. The mobile guard had not yet been organized; it did not see active duty until the war of 1870.

Cousin Bardon came back to see us in May of 1866, and I once again became his travelling companion. This time we took a *real* trip, to Switzerland and northern Italy. It was one of the most beautiful that I have ever experienced. The train took us first to Geneva. From there, we visited the lakeshore by boat. Then it was on to Lausanne, Berne, Interlake, and Jungfrau. We saw Lucerne, the lake of the four cantons, Altorf and St. Gothard. Next we went into Italy and saw Lac Majeur and the Borromées Islands. We even visited Milan, where everyone was ecstatic about the war against Austria (it was eight days before the battle of Custoza). Then we saw Turin, and the passage from St. Bernard and its convent where we arrived exhausted after three hours of walking in the snow and where we spent the night. Next we went down to Martigny, and crossed the pass to Chamonix, in order to see Mont Blanc. After

three weeks of travel, we returned to Geneva and eventually to Lyon. It was sometimes quite tiring, but one could not have been happier than when we were on that voyage.

Although there was a great difference in age between us, Bardon and I got along perfectly. The time we spent together on all these excursions has made an imprint in my mind as lasting as the most fond memories that I have.

Following my apprenticeship, I was hired at Chez M. and Mme. Sisley and Colleuil, makers of silk and new apparel. I stayed there until March 19, 1868, at which point I suffered a fall from a horse, and the next morning discovered that I could no longer move my legs. I was stricken as a paraplegic. Two days before my fall, which occurred on a Sunday, we had held a small gathering of friends, at which time one of our young neighbours, Miss Hortense Hugenaise, and I performed *Les Noces de Jeannette*. In the scene of rage where Jean throws everything around while pulling a drawer from the dresser, I fell backwards and felt my first pain. Two days after, when I fell from the horse, I was rendered immobile.

After three weeks of vigorous water therapy, I was able to move around a bit and take a few steps with the help of a crutch. From this moment onward, however, I had to renounce any intentions of going into business, something which I was not altogether upset about doing. If something good came of my injury, it was that I could finally realize my dream of painting. Even though I was essentially teaching myself, it did not take me long to achieve satisfactory results, since I had the inborn talent. Later, when I could paint more easily, I spent several months in the studio of Mr. Louis Guy, a renowned artist in Lyon. Then I delved completely into

it and regularly followed the art galleries in Lyon. This occupation pleased me greatly, and at the same time allowed me plenty of time to recover. It took two or three years of treatment to arrive at a really appreciable improvement. Each year, during two seasons, I took water treatments either at Plombière, the Amélie baths, Luchon, or Biarritz. In the interval, I continued my hydrotherapy, especially the cold showers. Eventually, strength returned to my limbs and I could walk quite well, although my right foot had a noticeable limp. But it was impossible to run, even just a bit, or to dance. I felt as though I was being punished, or had sinned.

I spent the summers of 1868 and 1869 in the Vosges and the Pyrenees. Since my suffering was no longer acute, I could enjoy myself and profit from all the amusements that the thermal stations offered to bathers. It was all the more easy to relax because my father, at this time, did not think of the money. I had more than enough to pay for the costs of my treatment and most of my diversions.

In September 1869 my aunt Collet died. I was at Biarritz. Just after my treatment in the sea baths, I had spent some time near her. I had told her of my activities, and it was when she was reading one my letters that the poor woman suffered a stroke. A telegram from my cousin Freminet informed me of this occurrence and I left immediately for Châlons, where my father and my brother-in-law came to join me to say their last farewells. I truly regretted my aunt's death, for, in her last years especially, she had been so nice and so affectionate toward me. I was no longer the small child of times past, and I would do so many things for her each time I would visit.

After my treatments, often on the way back from Plombière, I would take the route through Metz, Nancy and Châlons, where I would stop. Then I would go back to Lyon, taking a side trip to Paris, which was still a new pleasure for me. It was during one of my treatments at Plombière that I became reacquainted with one of my old friends whom I had not seen since we were both students at the boarding school run by l'Abbé Bland. He was recently married and his wife was very likeable. We quickly became very close. They lived not far from Lyon, at Monplaisir, and for a period of time I was their neighbour. But poor Morel! He had his share of tribulations and setbacks. Although very active and a good businessman, he had trouble succeeding in any of his endeavours. The poor man was hard of hearing, a problem for which there was no real cure.

We arrive at 1870, a year of ruin, misery, and blood. It started off happy and prosperous enough, but ended in catastrophe. Only those who lived these hours of sorrow, who experienced disaster after disaster, can possibly understand the contrast between the beginning and the end. All the optimism which predominated at first collapsed under the shock of tragic defeats in which France herself fell, leaving ruin and dissolution. Yet I cannot say too much in praise of the courage, heroism, and noble actions that were manifested, however vainly, by our soldiers as they fought a battle that had been looming for many years, but that our leaders in France had failed to foresee. The result was all the more unfortunate because as France weakened, all of Europe came that much closer to being little more than a vast entrenched camp. Armed from head to toe, drowned in the preparatives of war, Europe lay in wait for the general slaughter, the great glory of the motto of Bismarck and the Germans, "Power means right". It was a return to barbarism.

I had just ended treatment at the Amélie baths and was in Luchon, in the Pyrenees, at the moment the war broke out. In a few days, the hotels emptied, and the tiny town that was once so happy and so animated was now deserted. Nothing, however, could have foretold of the terrible events that were about to happen. Quite the opposite! Everywhere, people were confident. We were persuaded that the war would be short. Since I still had a treatment to do at the baths, I went to Biarritz, where I only found one group, and it was composed principally of strangers! I only stayed there a few days, since the news became worse. In haste, I returned to Lyon—more accurately, I was called back by the military authorities who were recruiting for the mobile guard. In spite of my infirmity, which did not permit me to face military duty, I was obliged to present myself. I had to come before the counsel of revision at the Camp of Sathonay, where I was placed aside. I was saddened to see all my comrades and acquaintances leave. Some went to Paris, some to Belfort. My regiment was sent to the place which had the best chance of holding out until the end of the war and defending the honour of France.

While the events of this ruinous war took their course, I stayed with my father, my sister, her husband and their children, who had lived with us on Béguin Street since my mother's death. Our emotions swayed anxiously from hope to discouragement as we followed the events. Then came the final blow, the betrayal of France. With the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, Alsace-Lorraine was abandoned, and our nation had five billion francs to pay. It was crushing. To compound the misfortune, no sooner was the Treaty signed than civil war broke out in Paris. It was the work of the Paris Commune—the council established in 1871 that opposed peace with Prussia. The Commune advocated rebelling against the French government, which only resulted

in the ruin of that part of France which the Prussians had left alone. We could only respond with horror and fear when we learned that the Commune's troops, no longer able to prevent the entry of the French army into Paris, had massacred the hostages they had taken and destroyed the most beautiful monuments in the capital.

In Lyon, the anarchists made some similar attempts to encourage disorder. Although they were quickly suppressed, there were some canons fired and several times we heard shots whistle above our heads in the garden.

The consequences of these terrible events were very serious. My father, who already suffered from heart trouble, became increasingly upset. His heart attacks became more frequent and more painful. Hoping that the open air of the country would improve his condition, I took him to Blandin, where he had been planning to go for the summer anyway. He intended to watch over the new vine plantation that he had set up the preceding year and which the war had stymied. Unfortunately his illness was only aggravated and he had to take to his bed around the end of May, just at the moment that the Paris Commune collapsed in fire and blood. The bit of strength that had been left in him was now gone, and in spite of the care of our friend Dr. Chadebec and of Dr. Groz de Virieu, he died on June 11, 1871, after six days of profound agony. His suffering deeply affected my sister and me, for nothing is more horrible than to be powerless to relieve the pain of a loved one. My father had instructed us to bury him alongside his wife, at the cemetery of Guillotière. We conformed to his last wishes and after a big and celebrated service in the church of Blandin, his coffin was brought to Lyon for the burial. Those were very sad days for me.

After my father's death and the liquidation of his estate—which my sister, my brother-in-law, and I conducted without a hint of difficulty—I was elated at the 25,000 francs which became my monthly stipend. My father, who, like me, was uncommunicative, had said nothing to suggest it, and I knew that he had taken a significant loss when he retired from the silk business. But I also knew that there had always been enough for me. I was never overly ambitious in life. I saw money simply as a means of living comfortably. I never considered it the one and only goal to attain in life. I always tried to make the best of my circumstances. Happy as I was to accept good things, I also willingly dealt with my share of misfortunes. I tended to be an accepting and conciliatory person, not much of a fighter. Much as it annoyed me, I was also quite timid. But I cringed at the thought of losing my personal freedoms. I was an artist much more than a businessman or accountant. Debating commercial concerns was a nightmare for me; even discussing them was torture. But above all I liked independence, liberty, enlightenment, and nice things. I was just as content to possess them in a homey little cottage arranged and decorated in my own style than in an expensive château.

Now imagine how it felt to have so much money at my disposal, when I had only ever held enough in my hands to cover my day-to-day expenses! Now I had a fortune in excess of 500,000 francs! Alas, I must say that at first I lost the sense of reality. My plans were much grander than I could ever hope to afford, even with such a large inheritance. This was the case for the construction that we undertook at Blandin. Ever since we purchased our farm, my mother dreamed of having a pretty house upon it. Her long illness and then her death prevented my father from building it. He contented himself temporarily by converting one of the farm

buildings into a makeshift house. Since my very early infancy, I have always liked this pretty country very much. Upon my mother's death, her dream became mine, and for a long time I entertained the hope of realizing it some day.

When this day finally came, I did not want to waste any more time. I knew that the atmosphere of the big cities did not suit me anyway. But, as I have said, I tended to dream too big. I was encouraged along the way by my architect, and also by my love of nice things. Then I overestimated the profits of the vineyard that my father had begun and that sometime in the future I was hoping to expand, in order to make this property into something grand at the same time as comfortable and agreeable to live in.

The spending continued in Lyon where, while waiting to complete the construction of Blandin, I made the mistake of renting a small villa just outside the gates, at Monplaisir, for quite a large sum. It was partly on the advice of my brother-in-law, and partly for the pleasure of having a horse and carriage, that I ended up there. I should have been content with the small apartment on Barre Street that I had rented and very carefully furnished, unbeknownst to my father, after the death of my aunt Collet, who had left me an inheritance of 42,000 francs. My father, myself, and our old maid, Alexandrine, were quite cramped in the small house on Béguin Street; my sister occupied the larger room since my mother's death, my father and I had to share a bedroom. Frustrated with my lack of independence, I took my aunt's gift and rented this little apartment, which became my studio. I should have kept it while awaiting my move to Blandin. Financially, I would have been much better off than with the villa at Monplaisir, with luxuries

that I would otherwise have reserved for Blandin. The tempting villa drew me in deeper than I could reasonably go.

As I occupied myself with choosing furniture, tapestries, and paints, and in view of my future at Blandin and the purchase of horses and a carriage, I did not forget that my limbs were still not strong enough for me to forego my treatments. In the paper that I received at the time, "Le Salut Public de Lyon", I had often noticed advertisements regarding thermal baths, a treatment which seemed to suit my condition. I was still unfamiliar with the Drôme Valley where it was situated. On the favourable advice of Dr. Chadebec, I resolved to go there for a treatment. At the end of July 1871, I headed for the Martouret. It was the first of many times that I would go there, for it was there that I was destined to meet my wife.

My first impressions were not the most favourable. I was used to some of the finest establishments in France, and while, for the most part, the place was comfortable, modern and quite attractive, the older buildings were unattractive and quite uncomfortable. The trip itself had not been easy for me, especially from Valence, where I had left the train. In those days, in order to get from Valence to Die there was only an old battered stagecoach which transported travellers, mail and merchandise all at the same time. The train was by then only in the planning stages. The trip took seven or eight hours. Dust and the heat of summer made it quite tiring. Nonetheless, the route was interesting, especially between Crest and Die, where it became very picturesque.

Having arrived in this old roman city, with its narrow, sombre, questionable roads, one of the first people I saw was Louis—a kind and honest boy, he worked for Dr. Benoit doing everything from odd jobs, to bathing, to room waiting, to driving the coach, which at that moment was filled with various packages and provisions. When he approached me, his pudgy face grinning with a dumb yet cunning smile, and asked if I really wanted to walk the two kilometres uphill that separated us from where Martouret is perched, I became irritated. It was quite another matter when I arrived, panting and sweating, only to find a horrible, ugly, poorly furnished bedroom in which I had to spend two hours sponging, drying and changing myself in order to appear at dinner with my host, who had brought together the doctor, his family and his boarders. I had to ask myself how I ended up at this place!

At that moment I felt a strong urge to pack up and take the road back to Lyon. I did not dare. Ultimately I concluded that since I was already there, it was preferable to wait a while and hopefully to stumble upon some ordinary pretext to leave.

The next day, however, I was able to move to a better bedroom than the one which I had originally been given. Very quickly, I met a number of people who were quite likeable and understanding. After spending several days there, I actually started to like it, so well, in fact, that after my three weeks of treatment had finished I found myself quite eager to come back for the month of September, following a brief return to Lyon to see at what stage were the repairs to my villa at Montplaisir. . Despite my initial impressions, I had been enchanted by Martouret, and when the end of September came I left it almost with regret. Although somewhat down-to-earth, the lifestyle was quite pleasing to me. I certainly had to learn to overlook other people's faults,

which are a lot more pronounced when everyone lives so close together. I was often surprised by certain prejudices held by the inhabitants of small towns, whom I found a little too gossipy and whose ideas were sometimes quite narrow.

There was also a certain amount of pretentiousness on the part of the doctor's family, who, with the arrogance of nobles, regularly exaggerated the importance of their name, which in reality was plebeian. Some obscure ancestral alliance sufficed to inflate their vanity, which sometimes brought smiles to others who were present. But it was a small fault, and who does not have them? I was able to take pleasure from the situation if only because Mrs. Benoit's gaiety and spirit animated it and made things very enjoyable. I even made the acquaintance of the doctor's eldest son, Gabriel, who was a medical student in Paris and was in Martouret on vacation with his family. He had a younger brother of 13 or 14 years who was studying at the Lycée de Lyon. His two sisters, aged 16 and 19 years, often had a mocking way about them that I found quite amusing. The eldest was responsible for placing flowers on the dining room and living room tables. I took much pleasure in seeing her in her small light dresses, not having shed the boarding school style, coming and going, light as a bird, gathering flowers and tastefully grouping them together in baskets and vases in the living room and dining room. The younger, more gleeful and elegant, was very funny. She was like a small wild horse. I sometimes chatted with her and she amused me.

On returning to Lyon at the end of September, I was consumed immediately with the details of my settling in. I left the little house on Béguin Street, which my sister owned anyway, without much regret. I wasted no time in finding a place for me and our old maid to live. I

thought that perhaps it was time, since the house was ready, to welcome a young wife, who would no doubt be quite happy in this pretty place, all decorated, all ready and waiting for no more than her presence to animate and brighten it.

As the winter of 1871-1872 went by, I remained preoccupied with marriage and also with the plans for the construction in Blandin that Mr. Bourbon, my architect, had submitted to me. I wanted to have work begin in spring. This same winter, Mrs. Benoit, with whom I had corresponded regularly, brought her eldest daughter to Lyon for singing lessons. She had a very pretty voice and sang with passion. I saw them several times during their stay in Lyon. I even had the pleasure of having them for dinner in my home at Monplaisir.

The young girl pleased me. Without being very pretty, she was nice and little, and although very delicate and a little thin, I was persuaded that in a couple of years she would be very appealing. I thought at the time that perhaps I would do well to ask her hand in marriage. According to what I had seen and heard said in Martouret, I knew that the doctor did not have a large fortune, and that in any case this would be divided in four. That mattered little to me. Pleasing the woman who pleased me would be enough. I figured that I had enough money for the both of us. It was with this in mind that I awaited the opening of the bath season in Martouret, determined to take a long vacation there and to decide whether or not I wished to marry this woman.

I took the first step toward this end at the beginning of June 1872. I addressed myself first to my friend Gabriel, whom I asked to transmit the message to his parents and sister. To my great joy, she enthusiastically agreed. Some time after, my brother-in-law arrived to carry out

the formalities. From that day onward I entered in a more intimate fashion in the life of the one I loved.

What a beautiful summer 1872 was! It was full of joy, hopes, plans, and fantastic illusions about the future. I had my horses and my carriage brought from Lyon, which permitted us to take long rides in the country, so rich with its picturesque sights and its warm colours. These three months together were filled with joy and happiness: preparation for the marriage set for October 5 after the closure of establishment, and the purchase of our wedding gifts, which I wanted to be as beautiful as possible. In this, my sister was of great assistance, for she has always had very good taste and still has, and I needed it in the choice of feminine toiletries.

The day for signing the contract arrived. For me, this was like getting married in the town hall, a simple legal procedure. The religious part of the marriage, on the other hand, held the only real importance in my eyes. It was the consecration before God of a legitimate union of man and woman freely consenting to one another. Such a union contains enough affection and love for the two to live and act as one forever. The contract was only necessary by civil law. On my brother-in-law's advice, I used the same form that he had used in marrying my sister, that of a communal estate comprising only property acquired after marriage. The doctor gave 30 thousand francs as a dowry to his daughter and two hundred thousand francs to me.

The marriage ceremony at the town hall had at least one comic moment. In order to get from Martouret to Die in a coach, one had to cross a stream. Recent rains had made the stream into a torrent. Mrs. Benoit, who was very fearful in a carriage anyway, was doubly frightened to

see her horses stop in the middle of the stream in order to work up the momentum to finish the passage. In desperation, she stepped down from the coach, in the middle of the water, and crossed the remaining distance on foot, but not without getting quite wet! She had to change clothes at the town hall in the room right beside that in which the formalities of our civil marriage were taking place. Her remarks provoked intense laughter, but it was all to the great dismay of Mr. Goubert, the mayor of Die, who could no longer give the lovely speech that he had prepared for the circumstance.

The next day, Tuesday October 5, 1872, was the great day of the church ceremony. Nonetheless, I was pleased to see the end of it—these sorts of parades, where one plays the principal role, attracts all the attention, and is the subject of all the conversations (even though most are more or less kind), are sheer drudgery. I longed for all this ceremony to end so that I could return to ordinary life. I came to covet the proverb: To be happy, live a private life.

The lavish dinner that followed the ceremony brought our parents and their intimate friends together. My sister, my brother-in-law and their children, Louis, Marie and Fortuné, my dear cousin, Auguste Chaboud, and Aristide Armand, my best friend, were all in attendance. On my wife's side, all her family from Martouret came to join us, including her great uncle, General d'Azémar, and his daughter, who came from their home in La Voulte, and her first cousin, Paul Bodart, who arrived from Marseille. Mrs. Massoneau, a friend of the family from Paris who had spent September with us in Martouret in order to undergo treatment, had also been invited. It was she that took charge of the all the minute details that contributed so much to the beauty of the event. The day came to a close with a traditional evening dance.

With all the celebrations finally over, my darling bride and I left Die and the Martouret the following morning. We would drive to the house which I had prepared for her, and which she would now become the head of. In a way, it was our first honeymoon. We would avoid the banality of staying in hotels, since we would have an entire home to ourselves. For my wife, the experience was just as new and exciting as any trip.

That winter, we took a second honeymoon, first to Paris, where I was happy to show her around, and then to Châlons, where I introduced her to my father's family and to some of my friends who still lived there. But these were only preludes to the real reason that I had brought her there, something which I had timed to coincide with the exposition in Vienna, Austria, in May 1873: we would explore the wonders of Italy. She had dreamed of seeing the Holy Father and Mount Vesuvius since her youth; meanwhile, Naples, Venice, Rome, and the splendours of the Florence museum attracted me.

As a result Vienna and its exposition were secondary. Although we were tired, we had very good memories of Austria and its capital, where we happened to have one of my father's old employees as a tour guide. As a young Austrian, he had come to Lyon to learn French. He was now recently married to a wife with whom we got along marvellously. It was also on this voyage that we had the opportunity to visit the caves of Alderbéry, one of the most breathtaking natural marvels in Europe.

As I introduced my darling wife to her new villa in Monplaisir, I was sure that she was happy. She left Die, which had nothing really attractive in it, and quickly found herself in an elegant, artistic and comfortable atmosphere that she most certainly could appreciate. For the several months that I had spent around her at Martouret, I had judged her to possess those qualities which were the mark of a charming woman. From what I had heard, she was considered the pearl of Martouret. I took extraordinary pleasure in sharing the many delights of her new life, as well as her transformation from a naïve, unenlightened girl into a real woman. But alongside all these beautiful and undeniable qualities, she had difficulty controlling herself. She was impressionable and could become upset over the most minor things. This often made her prone to hurting, offending, or even outraging people with her remarks.

I was both delighted and grieved with this critical, observant, and dominant mind which was characteristic of the Benoit family. I quickly saw that I could not, like I had once dreamed, make my wife the confidante of my sorrows and worries, but only of my joys. I was naturally a little introverted, not very communicative of character. I could only open up to people who expressed affection, kindness, or sympathy. From the very beginning, some of her criticisms made me very sensitive: I should not have furnished the villa before getting married, because she would have preferred a bedroom in Louis XVI's style to the Louis XIII bedroom that I had chosen, she would have preferred to live in Lyon over Monplaisir., and finally, since she did not like the country, why on earth construct a house at Blandin? I suppose that I would have been better to sacrifice my dreams of youth, my aspirations and my desires before she came in to my life.

Nonetheless, I hid my pain in the bottom of my heart and I searched for a way to conciliate. Leaving Monplaisir, moving to an apartment in the city, and no longer living in Blandin except in fair weather, were only a matter of money. With the expenses that I had already accumulated, and the new ones which I was about to add, I had to augment my income. Since the vines at Blandin were no longer a sufficient source of revenue, I turned to the stock market and engaged in some speculations on the Lyon exchange. This permitted me to retain my interest in painting.

Consequently, we moved to Lyon, to a nice apartment located at 2 Bourse Street, at the beginning of winter 1874. On December 4, 1875, our first daughter, Gabrielle, was born. If ever an object of desire was received, it was her. She was baptized the day of her birth, but we saved all the grand ceremony until after her mother had recovered. We gave a lovely party attended by parents and friends. It was certainly one of the nicest that we ever had.

At this time, my status as an artist allowed us free entry to the Grand Théâtre de Lyon, which was only a short walk away, and where we used to go, on impulse, to spent our evenings. We enjoyed ourselves greatly. The orchestra was excellent and the singers, for the most part, were first rate. In addition to the pleasure of listening to good music, there was also that of talking with the society of artists of Lyon, a charming society, full of spirit, whose conversations filled the intermission.

In winter, one of diversions at Lyon was the Salon de Peinture. Each year, I sent a canvas there. For the artists, it was an excellent place to meet, especially on Friday, which was the day

chosen by the Lyonnaise Society. While the art was interesting to see, it was much more entertaining for an observant and philosophical mind like mine, to watch the members of the crowd and hear their reflections, even more than admiring the new works. How many marriages took shape there! The society of art devotees which gathered in the salon each year provided many services to artists, among them purchasing numerous works on display at a considerable price. The paintings that they bought this way were drawn by lots by the members of the society. We took part and were fortunate enough to win two paintings which we later sold for a very good price.

In May, we went to Blandin and stayed until August, after which we were going to spend some time in Die and then return to Blandin for the grape harvest. We went back to Lyon toward the end of October. Then my investments began to flounder. Up to January 1877, I had always been quite happy with them. But from that moment on, the French government became radical. General anxiety arose everywhere. The exchange was no longer as stable as it normally was. I suffered some losses, and for the first time I began to have true worries over my finances.

I was ill-prepared to deal with them. Until my father's death, I had not needed to concern myself with money. My father kept me housed, nourished, warm, and clothed. The little money that I earned only served to indulge my various pleasures. I was not used to respecting the day-to-day value of money. It was a gaping void in my education. I wish that I would have taken responsibility for my own finances after my graduation from secondary school. It is true that I was held back by illness, but perhaps then I would not have been in such a predicament. Alas, that was the situation and it could not be changed. The month-end results became less and less

promising. Then I was caught by a drop in prices provoked by a political event and found myself owing a large sum of money. I abandoned everything and ran off like a fool to the outskirts of Paris at Bois-le-Roi, where I wanted nothing more in life than my paintbrush. My dear wife was very devoted under the circumstances. She and my brother-in-law came to find me. I took ill and was struck by an attack which for some time left me with a mild facial paralysis. But thanks to the good care that was given to me at my sister's home where I was nursed, I got better little by little.

During this time, my brother-in-law took charge of my business and liquidated it in my best interest. I remain very grateful to him for this service. But after this disaster, I could no longer entertain any thought of keeping the apartment in Lyon. Blandin became our residence, but my sister was kind enough to have us stay near her during the coldest months of winter. My father's former house had been renovated, and now had a small attached apartment which was unoccupied at the time. We could live there without putting a burden on my sister. This permitted us to spend our winters at Lyon and to follow the artistic and musical scene more closely than we could at Blandin.

Blandin had its own attractions to offer. From the beginning, we had excellent relations with the l'Abbé of Blandin and Virieu, and with the Marquis and Marquise of Virieu, whose château on the opposite side of the valley stood as a superb background to the countryside. This was the same valley that had inspired the poet Lamartine, an intimate friend of the Marquis's father, to write his famous poem, "Le Vallon". Virieu was at the heart of the canton, just four kilometres from Blandin. Apart from the l'Abbé, Mr. Perra, we also were acquainted with the

notary, Mr. Humbert, the justice of the peace, Mr. Billiez, and also Dr. Groz. Once, when leaving for a vacation, we met Mr. and Mrs. Dugeyt and their many children. And then there was Mrs. Fabre and her sister and their daughters, who were friends with Gabrielle.

Before becoming l'Abbé of Virieu, Mr. Perra had been l'Abbé at Blandin. This is where he was at the time of my father's death. It was with him that I had arranged for the establishment of a new cemetery in Blandin. The l'Abbé was to use the old one for enlarging the presbytery's garden, rather than let the village build something new on it—Blandin was already big enough! I reserved a spot in this new cemetery for myself and my family. It is a large site which, will be exclusively for my descendants in perpetuity. I fully intended to transport the remains of my mother and father, who had been buried at the Guillotière cemetery on a thirty-year concession. The concession had been renewed for 1892 by my sister, but would expire again in December 1922.

Shortly after our marriage, Mr. Perra was replaced by Mr. Aubry, a very frank and open person. But he did not stay there for very long. At the time of our financial crisis, Father Gautier succeeded him. This l'Abbé did not please me much at first, but along the way I really came to appreciate him, and he became a sincere and devoted friend for us. In the most difficult days of our existence, he recognized what ailed us and gave us his sincere best wishes and concern. At this time, Mr. Perra and Mr. Gautier were so good to us, so devoted and so consoling that they became and always remained our best friends. We owed an eternal gratitude to them, not only for the good things they were able to obtain for us through their actions, but also and especially for the good lessons that they taught us.

From the moment that I had entered the Lycée de Lyon, but especially since the end of my studies, I had become—whether by training or by my own ignorance—increasingly indifferent about religion. I was not, however, a non-believer, nor was I irreverent. Yet the conduct of the two l'Abbés and their encouraging words were like a real revelation. They helped to dissipate the fog of indifference that had overtaken me. Not that I became a saint. Unfortunately, my nature would not allow that. But I nonetheless found myself taking a new road, and today I am much happier for it. Only religion could give me strength and consolation from my pain and suffering. I could no longer pretend otherwise. More than ever before, I recognized that all my misfortunes and the worries that I experienced were positive experiences.

Eleven kilometres from Blandin, at Grand-Lemps, my brother-in-law owned a silk company which was under the management of Paul Thevenot, one of my young cousins on my father's side. He was a very gentle boy, full of kindness. He was newly married, and his wife and he became excellent friends of ours. We were received for dinner quite regularly, took many enjoyable rides through the countryside, and spent many lovely Sunday afternoons together.

My anxieties and worries, however, were far from gone. Like waves in the ocean, they continued one after the other, and often compounded their force. The vines on which I had counted so much were devastated by the terrible scourge of phylloxera which had already done so much damage in the midi. One part had already been attacked. We knew we had to fight it, and spent considerable time and money trying, but the means of defense were not yet well known. As the years went by, our revenues decreased. We eventually had to put our property up

for sale. For me it was a great sacrifice made all the more painful because I knew that I could never recoup my original investment. As we waited for a buyer, I tried to get into the raisin business, which I thought would be profitable considering the devastation of the vines in the Midi. We also took in boarders during the summer. All this allowed us to keep ourselves afloat for some time. Hope sustained us always.

On August 29, 1879, our second child, Ernest, was born. We were at Martouret. It was a joy to have a little boy after a little girl. We were satisfied. But the arrival of Marcel the following year, on October 22, 1880, was a surprise on which we had not banked, at least not so soon. Nonetheless, he was well received, although this presented some problems for his mother, who was still nursing Ernest. Her milk stopped and we had to substitute nursing for the baby-bottle. Fortunately, we still had our old maid, Jeannette, who had already taken care of Gabrielle and whom we could count on when we needed her. At times, however, Jeannette displayed an abominable personality that made it difficult for us to keep her with impressionable children in the house. After she was let go, it became my responsibility to look after the children at night. Their mother really needed a rest.

If the children were occasionally troublesome, they were also wonderful to be around. It is so amusing to watch them develop, to study their different personalities, to realize not only their tiny faults, their little naughty notions, but also their qualities. There was nothing more charming than when they first discovered my knees, which they gently embraced and caressed with their little hands. They would often take the little comb from my vest pocket and run it through my beard. Then I would tease them with a pocket knife, which I would make disappear

and then reappear, to their astonishment. Each night, before going to bed, I heard them whisper, between two nice kisses, “Good night, father”. All this was beautiful, but it did not last nearly long enough. Soon school began, and that became my concern. I have to say that launching their instruction was a task that was not particularly enjoyable for me.

Considering the position that I occupied in the country since our move to Blandin, the local residents had wanted to name me a municipal councillor. Then they offered me the post of mayor. This was not too much for me to handle, and I felt that I could offer something to the country by accepting, for the government was getting worse. The war against the clergy and against religion had escalated, and the schools were threatened. And in Blandin, just as everywhere, there were a few subversives that it was necessary to keep in check so as not to let them have too much influence over the population. I made every effort to guard the community from the plague of radicalism and the free masons.

In the elections for the chamber of representatives, which took place in the second year of my nomination, I openly took the side of the Catholic candidate against the official candidate, Mr. Dubost, a former bailiff in La Tour du Pin Court House, and today Speaker of the Senate. (Encouraged by the freemasons, politics had opened him to the means of fortune). I organized a public meeting at the town hall and tried to convince my electors of my opinion on the respective values of the two opposing candidates. I was determined not to follow the government in its fight against all France’s traditions, which would surely have led us to moral and material ruin.

One of the headstrong people who was there wasted no time in giving a summary of the discussion I had had with the assistant Magistrate of La Tour du Pin. This obliged me to explain. I responded since it suited me and since I did not have to disguise what I thought of the government. My remarks, of course, resulted in my demotion. I returned home as a simple councillor. But I exercised all my influence to make sure that the next mayor was J. B. Poncet, a very brave man, landowner, and farmer, and someone whom I greatly esteemed. I knew that he would run the office well and that he would work effectively as long as he stayed in Blandin.

One of the pleasant memories of 1882 was that of our one month stay with my sister-in-law, Nini, at St. Pierre d'Albigny. That summer we had rented Blandin to the Despinay family of Lyon; it was the third summer in a row. At the beginning of the summer, we went to Martouret. Then we spent September in St. Pierre, one of the most pleasant places to see in Savoie. I brought back a number of sketches from there. My sister-in-law was only recently married to Mr. Brunier, who was the banker of St. Pierre at the time. They lived in a gorgeous mansion, newly repaired and very well situated, where they welcomed us warmly. They tried to make our stay in their town as enjoyable as possible, either by having intimate receptions or by showing us the lovely and magnificent surroundings. In particular, the old feudal château of Miolan caught my eye—very well conserved, it dominated the splendid valley of Isère below, one of the nicest that I know. Our visit to St. Pierre was the only one that we ever took there. When ruin came, it destroyed the household and split my sister-in-law's marriage.

By March 1883, little Marcel was still not weaned from his mother, and she could not hold out much longer without risking exhaustion or her health. Her mother, Mrs. Benoit, who

had been planning to spend some time in Paris, proposed that her daughter accompany her. It was a great opportunity and she accepted it. It was the best way to cut short Marcel's prolonged dependence on her. As big as he was strong, he did not suffer in the least. The diversions of the trip had a positive impact on my wife. When she came back, well-rested and refreshed, Marcel was just as happy as Ernest and Gabrielle to see his mother, and all three celebrated her return. He had forgotten the rest, and asked for nothing.

In November of the same year, I was chosen to sit on a jury in the assizes court at Grenoble. It required me to be away from Blandin for ten days, but otherwise it was not inconvenient. I had never had the occasion to observe the proceedings in such a court, and although nothing sensational happened, my jury duty was quite instructive.

This year as well, we were saddened to hear of the transfer of our dear friend, l'Abbé Gautier. He was appointed chaplain of the religious convent of Notre Dame de Bon Accueil, which also ran a magnificent boarding school for young girls. It was located at Estressin, close to Vienne, whose location on the largest hills of the Rhône with the old city of Vienne like the bottom of a painting, was very beautiful.

L'Abbé Gautier's replacement was l'Abbé Lagier. The new l'Abbé was a cold, authoritarian man who was quite unfriendly from the beginning. The jealousy which he seemed to have of his predecessor made us averse to him and even led us to difficulties, which could unfortunately only be regulated before a tribunal, where he was condemned. I brought the matter to a tribunal very reluctantly. Up to that time, many of my friends had come from the clergy, and

in any case it repulsed me horribly to bring any religious leader before a civil tribunal. Some time after things had been resolved, Mrs. Virieu made the charitable effort to improve things between the two of us. But our relations could never approach those which we had experienced with all his predecessors.

From this time on, our dealings with him, until our departure for Canada, were limited to simple social formalities and to matters concerning his ministry and the needs of the parish—the erection of a statue of the Blessed Virgin in the village, for example. It was absolutely necessary that we place this little monument so that the local powers could not do anything to it. Considering the prevailing worldview of the day, someone might well have opposed it, or, even if they authorized it for the moment, might have taken it down in the future. To avoid this scenario, I donated several square metres of terrain to the parish on the edge of the park, just in front of the church. The area was surrounded by a copse of fir trees which formed a pretty shaded corner where the statue of the Virgin stood admirably. In this way, the monument was completely in the view of the public, but no civil authorities had the right to touch it.

In 1885, our young Gabrielle was almost ten years old. We had to start thinking about her education, which was very difficult to obtain in Blandin. Our excellent friend, l'Abbé Gautier, was in an excellent position to help. He obtained some cooperation from the nuns of Notre Dame, where he served as the chaplain, and it was decided that Gabrielle would enter the convent in October. On behalf of her godchild, my sister offered me the sum of 600 francs per year for the time that Gabrielle stayed there. And her grandfather, Dr. Benoit, offered to pay for

the piano lessons that her mother had enrolled her in for the past three years. The financial end of things was under control, exactly as we would have wanted it.

When October came, our dear little daughter entered Bon Accueil. I felt like I myself was going away to boarding school again. But there was a smile on her face, and it certainly comforted us to see her leave without too much pain. Nevertheless, I found our separation a little hard to take. If I could have it my way, I would have wanted to live as close to my children as possible all my life. Why is it that life obliges us to be separated? I always wanted my family to stay together like five fingers on a hand, living, if not under the same roof, at least in the same city, loving and supporting each other, and seeing each other every day. But this kind of family becomes less and less common every day. The type of education given to children is increasingly directed toward developing the individual rather than the family. Fortunately for me, my family's separations were never very long, nor very far away, with the single exception of Ernest.

Time passed and my fight persisted against the disease plaguing our crops. The means of combating it became clearer every year, but they were no less costly. It was also necessary to reconstitute the destroyed acreage in order to conserve property value and keep the land suitable for sale, which in spite of all my disappointment I now knew was inevitable. In the spring of 1886, an offer was made that seemed serious. I consulted my sister and brother-in-law, who had always helped me in these circumstances, and whom I liked to ask for advice. They understood my pain, and thought it best that I make one last effort to save the vines in the hopes of assuring future revenue so that we might stay. They proposed to take the property for five years and

assume all the responsibilities of treating and restoring the vineyard. They even offered to buy the land if, in the end, the results were satisfying and I still wanted to sell it. I eagerly accepted this proposition. It gave me optimism for the future and great relief from my worries.

The next year, 1887, was troubled by the unfortunate death of my mother-in-law, Mrs. Benoit, who died ten days after a stroke. My poor wife was profoundly distressed for quite some time. This sad event also led to a change in our lifestyle. Before the death of Mrs. Benoit we spent several weeks of every year in Martouret. But from this moment on, my father-in-law asked his daughter to visit him for the bath season, replacing her mother in her caregiving functions and offering at the same time some small compensation for her trouble. This arrangement, in spite of some problems, was quite advantageous for us. For the three years from 1887 to 1891, we spent the entire summer in Martouret. During this time, my sister and brother-in-law remained in Blandin.

A surprise which we had not anticipated was the birth of little Dieudonnée, (Marie Louise) who, if she had not been planned, was no less well received. This great event took place February 27, 1891, which also marked the centennial year of the birth of my father.

This same year, my father-in-law, who was getting quite old, decided that he had had enough of running his practice, which had been on the decline for some years. He wanted to rent it to another doctor, but he seemed unable to get used to this new situation. It resulted in more worries than profits. We were a little annoyed by this setback. Although the profit had not been great, it had been no less real.

Another problem followed closely behind this one. The fifth year of the arrangement with my brother-in-law reached its end. Although he had spent a large sum of money, the results were less than satisfactory and he advised me that it was preferable to sell the property. This decision was the starting point of some difficulties. Certain misunderstandings led to ruffled feathers between my sister and my wife. The result was a quarrel that I have always very much regretted, for if my sister and my brother-in-law had been somewhat at fault, I was more so. I never doubted their generosity in offering to help me, even though their efforts did not meet with much success. I can't be any less grateful to them, without having to make this unhappy reflection heard very often: they could have and should have done more.

In October of this same year, 1891, Ernest and Marcel left for the Maristes Fathers at St. Chamond, who had been brought to our attention by my cousin Paul Bodart, now director of the Crédit Lyonnais at St. Etienne, which was very close to St. Chamond. Upon entering, they were expected to prepare their first communion, which took place the next year, and which for all of us was cause for celebration. Gabrielle left the Bon Accueil convent and replaced her brothers at the house, which now seemed so much less empty.

The sale of our property could not be delayed any longer, and I myself was now very interested in selling it. Our intentions to sell were discussed at every occasion with our friends.

What to do in France? Deciding to sell the property made me reflect on our future in France in general. I honestly saw no future—the state of French society seemed sombre and

little reassuring of positive prospects for our children. Laws had been created to combat everything pertaining to religion and to the teaching of it. Careers available to Catholic children were increasingly limited; those that were available were crowded and competitive. So much was wrong in France that I began to focus instinctively on foreign lands, where there might be room for all the energy of youth.

People spoke much of Algeria, but a future in that country was still too unsure to risk, and its administration was under French control. There was also some talk about Haiti. If we had consulted the clergy, we could probably have found something which suited us; but then there was the tropical climate, which might have been too much to overcome.

Finally, the l'Abbé of St. Antoine, l'Abbé Cusset, whose sister was the Superior at the convent and school in Blandin, told us that the Regular Canons of the Immaculate Conception, who were established in this parish, also had a house in Notre Dame de Lourdes, in Manitoba, Canada. This country, we were told, had a great future and we would certainly find what we were looking for. I immediately set out to learn more about Canada. The more I learned, the more enthusiastic I became. In Canada, my children would be able to grow up free and independent, so long as they were willing and energetic. We would not need much money, since the land was inexpensive there, and very simple to cultivate. Our moral and religious questions were also resolved to our liking.

As we dreamed about our future in Canada, two visitors arrived, a father and son, who seemed like serious buyers from the start. They were, but their offer did not come close to that

which we had refused five years earlier. Nonetheless, we were not in a position to refuse. The title was transferred rapidly, and the new owner, Mr. Ballofay, was to take possession on the first of August, 1892. We had two months to prepare for our immigration to Canada.

Since Canada had become our goal, I thought it might have been beneficial for me to visit Canada alone, so that I could have seen the country for myself, evaluated the information we had been given in France, and decide if it was really profitable for us to move there. In the meantime, my wife and children could have gone to Martouret to await my return. But Divine Providence had decided otherwise. My wife did not want me to go alone. Therefore "With God let us Go" So we took a chance on a land that seemed almost too good to be true.

Our departure was set for August 25,1892, from Liverpool. After giving our keys to the new owner, we spent several days at Grand-Lemps with Paul Thevenot, where we bid our goodbyes to all our relatives and friends and took the train to Paris. After two or three days of visiting the capital, we went to Antwerp, and from there to Liverpool, where we boarded the ship named "Circassion" operated by the Allan Company which took us to Quebec City.

So long old France! We were in the new, in Canada. Two days on the Canadian Pacific Railway and we would be in Winnipeg, our destination. What were my first impressions? To be sure, the trip was not the most comfortable. But the excitement that moving always brings, coupled with the novelties that one finds as one goes along, all helped to occupy our minds and to obscure the little inconveniences that we were bound to encounter. What struck me most about this place was the curious mixture of the civilized and uncivilized worlds, which I found so

different from Europe. It almost made us sad. I believe that if I had come alone, I would not have stayed for long.

At the end of several days, however, these feelings vanished. Hope for the future shone like a beam to the bottom of my heart, and illuminated our new homeland in a whole new way. Upon arriving in St. Boniface on September 10, 1892, we stayed with Mrs. Jean, who owned a hotel and who warmly accommodated us. Ernest and Marcel quickly left to study with the Jesuit fathers, whose classes had already commenced. We had letters of recommendation from Monseigneur Perraut, Bishop of Autun, and from Monseigneur Ferra, Bishop of Grenoble, for Monseigneur Taché, Bishop of St. Boniface, who had already been told of our coming by Dom Gréa, the Superior of the Regular Canons of St. Antoine, whom we had gone to see prior to leaving France, and where we had run into the young Bernier and Dubuc who had given us some information on St. Boniface and the Jesuit college.

We were eager to go and see the bishop, Monseigneur Taché. Although ill, he received us with overwhelming warmth. He placed us in contact with l'Abbé Cloutier, the archbishop's treasurer, who took us through the villages of Lorette, St. Pierre, St. Malo, etc. Then we were sent to l'Abbé Perquis, who was in charge of the new parish of Fannystelle. He introduced us to the place, whose appearance pleased us immediately. A small group of young French people from the town welcomed us amicably. L'Abbé Perquis, himself French, was very understanding from the start. We also had the opportunity to purchase a piece of land that suited us very well: it bordered the town, and also included two lots where Mr. Veronneau, the proprietor, had built his house. The church, the railroad, the post office, the general store, and the creamery were almost

at our doorstep. There was only one problem—no water! But people told us that with tanks, wells, and ponds one easily got around this difficulty.

We settled there, and I finished the deal with Mr. Veronneau, who left the country with his family. At this time, Fannystelle had only been established for three or four years and had just six houses, not counting the church, school, creamery, blacksmith's shop and a large stable formerly belonging to the Countess of Albuféra, who with the help of Mr. Bernier had founded Fannystelle. Her farm had been occupied since the spring by the Guyot family. North about 1 1/2 miles was another farm, operated by the Painchaud family. Farther east, there were two other large farms that were eventually bought by Mr. Duflos. A fifth farm was located four miles north; it belonged to the Countess. To the west of the village there was also Mr. O. Coté's farm, and three miles to the east, that of his father, Mr. P. Coté. This was all that there was in Fannystelle on our arrival. Quite a lot of it was swampland.

Used to a land of mountains, the vastness of these wild plains reminded me of the sea, and greatly impressed me. How many gorgeous sunsets I observed! I quickly came to appreciate the beauty of this land.

The house in the village where the Veronneau family had lived did not really suit us as a home. I had it transported overland and it became a farmhouse. Mr. Cinq-Mars, who had built practically everything in Fannystelle, offered to build us a house that would better suit our taste. While waiting for it to be constructed, we moved into a small house owned at the time by Mr. Cinq-Mars, and occupied today by Mr. Hebert. We moved in on October 15. We lived out of our trunks and cases that were scattered about, disguised as chairs. Only the piano, our first major

furniture purchase in Canada, stood so beautiful and brand new in this mess of crude wood. On January 23 we were finally able to move in to our new home. We had brought some things to decorate it, so that it was very pleasant to live in.

We came to Manitoba with the idea of settling ourselves on the land, but our decision was fraught with fears of isolation. From our first visit to Fannystelle, however, I knew that we would have nothing to fear on that count. Effectively, l'Abbé Perquis's parish and the small French colony to which we belonged helped very much to acclimatize us for the first two or three years. Our experience in Fannystelle made me happier than I had been in a very long time. But our happiness was interrupted in January by the news that my father-in-law, Dr. Benoit, had died on December 25, 1892. If it had happened four months earlier, it would certainly have changed our destiny. But the will of God is impenetrable and Divine Providence guides us where it wants us to go.

After our first winter—which was much less harsh than we had expected, based on what people had told us—I left for St. Jean-Baptiste to see the Frechette family. I was able to purchase a number of cattle that he later brought with him when he came to Fannystelle. In the meantime, Mr. Cinq-Mars built a large barn to put them in. But with these animals came a whole new series of problems. It was still too early, however, for me to predict that anything bad might happen.

On October 23, 1893, we were blessed by the arrival of Thérèse in our midst, as if to make us believe that our last ten years had only been a dream before the birth of Lillie.

With the winter of 1894 our first disappointments began. The wells on the farm were not sufficient to water the animals. Then a herd of twenty cattle that had been rented to two Canadians, Grasson and Dubé, who were staying on Mr. Duflos's farm, was brought to me for feeding because there was a shortage of hay. It was necessary for me to arrange with Mr. Allart (Allard?) to put them up.

Gabrielle subsequently left us to go to Winnipeg to find her career. She desperately wanted to go, but our separation was painful for me.

The star of hope that had shone so vividly at the start of my life in Manitoba was fast beginning to pale before the brutal realities. Only the first year and a part of the second found us happy and confident. All the rest, until 1902, were filled with disappointment. And yet I never abandoned my hopes for a bright future in this new land. That is why I persisted in spite of everything. I should have abandoned the animals and farming. For my predictions were right, and time well proved it. But why come back to that? What is done is done, and cannot be redone. In retrospect one can go so far and unfortunately one cannot see the future. I would prefer to throw a veil over this period and not to speak of it any more. Because since then, this beautiful star of hope which went out for me has rekindled, and I see it shine anew and brightly, above the heads of my children. I am so happy in my last days to see them succeed much better in their enterprises than I could myself.

There is only a single shadow, but it will no doubt disappear when Ernest returns to the traditions of the family to walk in unison with the others. I do not doubt that they will all have,

I hope, the intimate satisfaction of finding through their work, with God's grace, that which I have vainly searched to give them.

F. Mollot

July 18, 1912