

**BEL AMI**  
or  
**THE HISTORY OF A SCOUNDREL**  
a novel  
by  
**Guy de Maupassant**



## CHAPTER I

### POVERTY

After changing his five-franc piece Georges Duroy left the restaurant. He twisted his mustache in military style and cast a rapid, sweeping glance upon the diners, among whom were three saleswomen, an untidy music-teacher of uncertain age, and two women with their husbands.



When he reached the sidewalk, he paused to consider what route he should take. It was the twenty-eighth of June and he had only three francs in his pocket to last him the remainder of the month. That meant two dinners and no lunches, or two lunches and no dinners, according to choice. As he pondered upon this unpleasant state of affairs, he sauntered down Rue Notre Dame de Lorette, preserving his military air and carriage, and rudely jostled the people upon the streets

in order to clear a path for himself. He appeared to be hostile to the passers-by, and even to the houses, the entire city.

Tall, well-built, fair, with blue eyes, a curled mustache, hair naturally wavy and parted in the middle, he recalled the hero of the popular romances.

It was one of those sultry, Parisian evenings when not a breath of air is stirring; the sewers exhaled poisonous gases and the restaurants the disagreeable odors of cooking and of kindred smells. Porters in their shirt-sleeves, astride their chairs, smoked their pipes at the carriage gates, and pedestrians strolled leisurely along, hats in hand.

When Georges Duroy reached the boulevard he halted again, undecided as to which road to choose. Finally he turned toward the Madeleine and followed the tide of people.

The large, well-patronized cafes tempted Duroy, but were he to drink only two glasses of beer in an evening, farewell to the meager supper the following night! Yet he said to himself: "I will take a glass at the Americain. By Jove, I am thirsty."



He glanced at men seated at the tables, men who could afford to slake their thirst, and he scowled at them. "Rascals!" he muttered. If he could have caught one of them at a corner in the dark he would have choked him without a scruple! He recalled the two years spent in Africa, and the manner in which he had extorted money from the Arabs. A smile hovered about his lips at the recollection of an escapade which had cost three men their lives, a foray which had given his

two comrades and himself seventy fowls, two sheep, money, and something to laugh about for six months. The culprits were never found; indeed, they were not sought for, the Arab being looked upon as the soldier's prey.

But in Paris it was different; there one could not commit such deeds with impunity. He regretted that he had not remained where he was; but he had hoped to improve his condition-and for that reason he was in Paris!

He passed the Vaudeville and stopped at the Cafe Americain, debating as to whether he should take that "glass." Before deciding, he glanced at a clock; it was a quarter past nine. He knew that when the beer was placed in front of him, he would drink it; and then what would he do at eleven o'clock? So he walked on, intending to go as far as the Madeleine and return.

When he reached the Place de l'Opera, a tall, young man passed him, whose face he fancied was familiar. He followed him, repeating: "Where the deuce have I seen that fellow?"

For a time he racked his brain in vain; then suddenly he saw the same man, but not so corpulent and more youthful, attired in the uniform of a Hussar. He exclaimed: "Wait, Forestier!" and hastening up to him, laid his hand upon the man's shoulder. The latter turned, looked at him, and said: "What do you want, sir?"

Duroy began to laugh: "Don't you remember me?"

"No."

"Not remember Georges Duroy of the Sixth Hussars."

Forestier extended both hands.

"Ah, my dear fellow, how are you?"

"Very well. And how are you?"

"Oh, I am not very well. I cough six months out of the twelve as a result of bronchitis contracted at Bougival, about the time of my return to Paris four years ago."

"But you look well."

Forestier, taking his former comrade's arm, told him of his malady, of the consultations, the opinions and the advice of the doctors and of the difficulty of following their advice in his position. They ordered him to spend the winter in the south, but how could he? He was married and was a journalist in a responsible editorial position.

"I manage the political department on 'La Vie Francaise'; I report the doings of the Senate for 'Le Salut,' and from time to time I write for 'La Planete.' That is what I am doing."

Duroy, in surprise, glanced at him. He was very much changed. Formerly Forestier had been thin, giddy, noisy, and always in good spirits. But three years of life in Paris had made another man of him; now he

was stout and serious, and his hair was gray on his temples although he could not number more than twenty-seven years.

Forestier asked: "Where are you going?"

Duroy replied: "Nowhere in particular."

"Very well, will you accompany me to the 'Vie Francaise' where I have some proofs to correct; and afterward take a drink with me?"

"Yes, gladly."

They walked along arm-in-arm with that familiarity which exists between schoolmates and brother-officers.

"What are you doing in Paris?" asked Forestier, Duroy shrugged his shoulders.

"Dying of hunger, simply. When my time was up, I came hither to make my fortune, or rather to live in Paris-and for six months I have been employed in a railroad office at fifteen hundred francs a year."

Forestier murmured: "That is not very much."

"But what can I do?" answered Duroy. "I am alone, I know no one, I have no recommendations. The spirit is not lacking, but the means are."

His companion looked at him from head to foot like a practical man who is examining a subject; then he said, in a tone of conviction: "You see, my dear fellow, all depends on assurance, here. A shrewd, observing man can sometimes become a minister. You must obtrude yourself and yet not ask anything. But how is it

you have not found anything better than a clerkship at the station?"

Duroy replied: "I hunted everywhere and found nothing else. But I know where I can get three thousand francs at least-as riding-master at the Pellerin school."

Forestier stopped him: "Don't do it, for you can earn ten thousand francs. You will ruin your prospects at once. In your office at least no one knows you; you can leave it if you wish to at any time. But when you are once a riding-master all will be over. You might as well be a butler in a house to which all Paris comes to dine. When you have given riding lessons to men of the world or to their sons, they will no longer consider you their equal."

He paused, reflected several seconds and then asked:

"Are you a bachelor?"

"Yes, though I have been smitten several times."

"That makes no difference. If Cicero and Tiberius were mentioned would you know who they were?"

"Yes."

"Good, no one knows any more except about a score of fools. It is not difficult to pass for being learned. The secret is not to betray your ignorance. Just maneuver, avoid the quicksands and obstacles, and the rest can be found in a dictionary."

He spoke like one who understood human nature, and he smiled as the crowd passed them by. Suddenly

he began to cough and stopped to allow the paroxysm to spend itself; then he said in a discouraged tone:

"Isn't it tiresome not to be able to get rid of this bronchitis? And here is midsummer! This winter I shall go to Mentone. Health before everything."

They reached the Boulevard Poissoniere; behind a large glass door an open paper was affixed; three people were reading it. Above the door was printed the legend, "La Vie Francaise."

Forestier pushed open the door and said: "Come in." Duroy entered; they ascended the stairs, passed through an antechamber in which two clerks greeted their comrade, and then entered a kind of waiting-room.

"Sit down," said Forestier, "I shall be back in five minutes," and he disappeared.

Duroy remained where he was; from time to time men passed him by, entering by one door and going out by another before he had time to glance at them.

Now they were young men, very young, with a busy air, holding sheets of paper in their hands; now compositors, their shirts spotted with ink-carefully carrying what were evidently fresh proofs. Occasionally a gentleman entered, fashionably dressed, some reporter bringing news.

Forestier reappeared arm-in-arm with a tall, thin man of thirty or forty, dressed in a black coat, with a white cravat, a dark complexion, and an insolent, self-satisfied air. Forestier said to him: "Adieu, my dear

sir," and the other pressed his hand with: "Au revoir, my friend." Then he descended the stairs whistling, his cane under his arm.

Duroy asked his name.

"That is Jacques Rival, the celebrated writer and duelist. He came to correct his proofs. Garin, Montel and he are the best witty and realistic writers we have in Paris. He earns thirty thousand francs a year for two articles a week."

As they went downstairs, they met a stout, little man with long hair, who was ascending the stairs whistling. Forestier bowed low.

"Norbert de Varenne," said he, "the poet, the author of 'Les Soleils Morts,'-a very expensive man. Every poem he gives us costs three hundred francs and the longest has not two hundred lines. But let us go into the Napolitain, I am getting thirsty."

When they were seated at a table, Forestier ordered two glasses of beer. He emptied his at a single draught, while Duroy sipped his beer slowly as if it were something rare and precious. Suddenly his companion asked, "Why don't you try journalism?"

Duroy looked at him in surprise and said: "Because I have never written anything."

"Bah, we all have to make a beginning. I could employ you myself by sending you to obtain information. At first you would only get two hundred and fifty francs a month but your cab fare would be

paid. Shall I speak to the manager?"

"If you will."

"Well, then come and dine with me to-morrow; I will only ask five or six to meet you; the manager, M. Walter, his wife, with Jacques Rival, and Norbert de Varenne whom you have just seen, and also a friend of Mme. Forestier, Will you come?"

Duroy hesitated, blushing and perplexed. Finally he, murmured: "I have no suitable clothes."

Forestier was amazed. "You have no dress suit? Egad, that is indispensable. In Paris, it is better to have no bed than no clothes." Then, fumbling in his vest-pocket, he drew from it two louis, placed them before his companion, and said kindly: "You can repay me when it is convenient. Buy yourself what you need and pay an installment on it. And come and dine with us at half past seven, at 17 Rue Fontaine."

In confusion Duroy picked up the money and stammered: "You are very kind-I am much obliged-be sure I shall not forget."

Forestier interrupted him: "That's all right, take another glass of beer. Waiter, two more glasses!" When he had paid the score, the journalist asked: "Would you like a stroll for an hour?"

"Certainly."

They turned toward the Madeleine. "What shall we do?" asked Forestier. "They say that in Paris an idler can always find amusement, but it is not true. A

turn in the Bois is only enjoyable if you have a lady with you, and that is a rare occurrence. The cafe concerts may divert my tailor and his wife, but they do not interest me. So what can we do? Nothing! There ought to be a summer garden here, open at night, where a man could listen to good music while drinking beneath the trees. It would be a pleasant lounging place. You could walk in alleys bright with electric light and seat yourself where you pleased to hear the music. It would be charming. Where would you like to go?"



Duroy did not know what to reply; finally he said: "I have never been to the Folies Bergeres. I should like to go there."

His companion exclaimed: "The Folies Bergeres! Very well!"

They turned and walked toward the Faubourg Montmartre. The brilliantly illuminated building loomed up before them. Forestier entered, Duroy stopped him. "We forgot to pass through the gate."

The other replied in a consequential tone: "I never pay," and approached the box-office.

"Have you a good box?"

"Certainly, M. Forestier."

He took the ticket handed him, pushed open the door, and they were within the hall. A cloud of tobacco smoke almost hid the stage and the opposite side of the theater. In the spacious foyer which led to the circular promenade, brilliantly dressed women mingled with black-coated men.

Forestier forced his way rapidly through the throng and accosted an usher.

"Box 17?"

"This way, sir."

The friends were shown into a tiny box, hung and carpeted in red, with four chairs upholstered in the same color. They seated themselves. To their right and left were similar boxes. On the stage three men were performing on trapezes. But Duroy paid no heed to them, his eyes finding more to interest them in the grand promenade. Forestier remarked upon the motley appearance of the throng, but Duroy did not listen to him. A woman, leaning her arms upon the edge of her loge, was staring at him. She was a tall, voluptuous brunette, her face whitened with enamel, her black eyes penciled, and her lips painted. With a movement of her head, she summoned a friend who was passing, a blonde with auburn hair, likewise inclined to

embonpoint, and said to her in a whisper intended to be heard; "There is a nice fellow!"

Forestier heard it, and said to Duroy with a smile: "You are lucky, my dear boy. My congratulations!"

The ci-devant soldier blushed and mechanically fingered the two pieces of gold in his pocket.

The curtain fell-the orchestra played a valse-and Duroy said:

"Shall we walk around the gallery?"

"If you like."

Soon they were carried along in the current of promenaders. Duroy drank in with delight the air, vitiated as it was by tobacco and cheap perfume, but Forestier perspired, panted, and coughed.

"Let us go into the garden," he said. Turning to the left, they entered a kind of covered garden in which two large fountains were playing. Under the yews, men and women sat at tables drinking.

"Another glass of beer?" asked Forestier.

"Gladly."

They took their seats and watched the promenaders. Occasionally a woman would stop and ask with a coarse smile: "What have you to offer, sir?"

Forestier's invariable answer was: "A glass of water from the fountain." And the woman would mutter, "Go along," and walk away.

At last the brunette reappeared, arm-in-arm with the blonde. They made a handsome couple. The former

smiled on perceiving Duroy, and taking a chair she calmly seated herself in front of him, and said in a clear voice: "Waiter, two glasses."

In astonishment, Forestier exclaimed: "You are not at all bashful!"

She replied: "Your friend has bewitched me; he is such a fine fellow. I believe he has turned my head."

Duroy said nothing.

The waiter brought the beer, which the women swallowed rapidly; then they rose, and the brunette, nodding her head and tapping Duroy's arm with her fan, said to him: "Thank you, my dear! However, you are not very talkative."

As they disappeared, Forestier laughed and said: "Tell, me, old man, did you know that you had a charm for the weaker sex? You must be careful."

Without replying, Duroy smiled. His friend asked: "Shall you remain any longer? I am going; I have had enough."

Georges murmured: "Yes, I will stay a little longer: it is not late."

Forestier arose: "Very well, then, good-bye until to-morrow. Do not forget: 17 Rue Fontaine at seven thirty."

"I shall not forget. Thank you."

The friends shook hands and the journalist left Duroy to his own devices.

Forestier once out of sight, Duroy felt free, and

again he joyously touched the gold pieces in his pocket; then rising, he mingled with the crowd.

He soon discovered the blonde and the brunette. He went toward them, but when near them dared not address them.

The brunette called out to him: "Have you found your tongue?"

He stammered: "Zounds!" too bashful to say another word. A pause ensued, during which the brunette took his arm and together they left the hall.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **MADAME FORESTIER**

"Where does M. Forestier live?"

"Third floor on the left," said the porter pleasantly, on learning Duroy's destination.

Georges ascended the staircase. He was somewhat embarrassed and ill-at-ease. He had on a new suit but he was uncomfortable. He felt that it was defective; his boots were not glossy, he had bought his shirt that same evening at the Louvre for four francs fifty, his trousers were too wide and betrayed their cheapness in their fit, or rather, misfit, and his coat was too tight.

Slowly he ascended the stairs, his heart beating, his mind anxious. Suddenly before him stood a well-dressed gentleman staring at him. The person

resembled Duroy so close that the latter retreated, then stopped, and saw that it was his own image reflected in a pier-glass! Not having anything but a small mirror at home, he had not been able to see himself entirely, and had exaggerated the imperfections of his toilette. When he saw his reflection in the glass, he did not even recognize himself; he took himself for some one else, for a man-of-the-world, and was really satisfied with his general appearance. Smiling to himself, Duroy extended his hand and expressed his astonishment, pleasure, and approbation. A door opened on the staircase, He was afraid of being surprised and began to ascend more rapidly, fearing that he might have been seen posing there by some of his friend's invited guests.

On reaching the second floor, he saw another mirror, and once more slackened his pace to look at himself. He likewise paused before the third glass, twirled his mustache, took off his hat to arrange his hair, and murmured half aloud, a habit of his: "Hall mirrors are most convenient."

Then he rang the bell. The door opened almost immediately, and before him stood a servant in a black coat, with a grave, shaven face, so perfect in his appearance that Duroy again became confused as he compared the cut of their garments.

The lackey asked:

"Whom shall I announce, Monsieur?" He raised a portiere and pronounced the name.

Duroy lost his self-possession upon being ushered into a world as yet strange to him. However, he advanced. A young, fair woman received him alone in a large, well-lighted room. He paused, disconcerted. Who was that smiling lady? He remembered that Forestier was married, and the thought that the handsome blonde was his friend's wife rendered him awkward and ill-at-ease. He stammered out:

"Madame, I am—"

She held out her hand. "I know, Monsieur-Charles told me of your meeting last night, and I am very glad that he asked you to dine with us to-day."

Duroy blushed to the roots of his hair, not knowing how to reply; he felt that he was being inspected from his head to his feet. He half thought of excusing himself, of inventing an explanation of the carelessness of his toilette, but he did not know how to touch upon that delicate subject.

He seated himself upon a chair she pointed out to him, and as he sank into its luxurious depths, it seemed to him that he was entering a new and charming life, that he would make his mark in the world, that he was saved. He glanced at Mme. Forestier. She wore a gown of pale blue cashmere which clung gracefully to her supple form and rounded outlines; her arms and throat rose in, lily-white purity from the mass of lace which ornamented the corsage and short sleeves. Her hair was

dressed high and curled on the nape of her neck.

Duroy grew more at his ease under her glance, which recalled to him, he knew not why, that of the girl he had met the preceding evening at the Folies-Bergeres. Mme. Forestier had gray eyes, a small nose, full lips, and a rather heavy chin, an irregular, attractive face, full of gentleness and yet of malice.

After a short silence, she asked: "Have you been in Paris a long time?"

Gradually regaining his self-possession, he replied: "a few months, Madame. I am in the railroad employ, but my friend Forestier has encouraged me to hope that, thanks to him, I can enter into journalism."

She smiled kindly and murmured in a low voice: "I know."

The bell rang again and the servant announced: "Mme. de Marelle." She was a dainty brunette, attired in a simple, dark robe; a red rose in her black tresses seemed to accentuate her special character, and a young girl, or rather a child, for such she was, followed her.

Mme. Forestier said: "Good evening, Clotilde."

"Good evening, Madeleine."

They embraced each other, then the child offered her forehead with the assurance of an adult, saying:

"Good evening, cousin."

Mme. Forestier kissed her, and then made the introductions:

"M. Georges Duroy, an old friend of Charles.

Mme. de Marelle, my friend, a relative in fact." She added: "Here, you know, we do not stand on ceremony."

Duroy bowed. The door opened again and a short man entered, upon his arm a tall, handsome woman, taller than he and much younger, with distinguished manners and a dignified carriage. It was M. Walter, deputy, financier, a moneyed man, and a man of business, manager of "La Vie Francaise," with his wife, nee Basile Ravalade, daughter of the banker of that name.

Then came Jacques Rival, very elegant, followed by Norbert de Varenne. The latter advanced with the grace of the old school and taking Mme. Forestier's hand kissed it; his long hair falling upon his hostess's bare arm as he did so.

Forestier now entered, apologizing for being late; he had been detained.

The servant announced dinner, and they entered the dining-room. Duroy was placed between Mme. de Marelle and her daughter. He was again rendered uncomfortable for fear of committing some error in the conventional management of his fork, his spoon, or his glasses, of which he had four. Nothing was said during the soup; then Norbert de Varenne asked a general question: "Have you read the Gauthier case? How droll it was!"

Then followed a discussion of the subject in

which the ladies joined. Then a duel was mentioned and Jacques Rival led the conversation; that was his province. Duroy did not venture a remark, but occasionally glanced at his neighbor. A diamond upon a slight, golden thread depended from her ear; from time to time she uttered a remark which evoked a smile upon his lips. Duroy sought vainly for some compliment to pay her; he busied himself with her daughter, filled her glass, waited upon her, and the child, more dignified than her mother, thanked him gravely saying, "You are very kind, Monsieur," while she listened to the conversation with a reflective air. The dinner was excellent and everyone was delighted with it.

The conversation returned to the colonization of Algeria. M. Walter uttered several jocose remarks; Forestier alluded to the article he had prepared for the morrow; Jacques Rival declared himself in favor of a military government with grants of land to all the officers after thirty years of colonial service.

"In that way," said he, "you can establish a strong colony, familiar with and liking the country, knowing its language and able to cope with all those local yet grave questions which invariably confront newcomers."

Norbert de Varenne interrupted: "Yes, they would know everything, except agriculture. They would speak Arabic, but they would not know how to transplant beet-root, and how to sow wheat. They would be strong

in fencing, but weak in the art of farming. On the contrary, the new country should be opened to everyone. Intelligent men would make positions for themselves; the others would succumb. It is a natural law."

A pause ensued. Everyone smiled. Georges Duroy, startled at the sound of his own voice, as if he had never heard it, said:

"What is needed the most down there is good soil. Really fertile land costs as much as it does in France and is bought by wealthy Parisians. The real colonists, the poor, are generally cast out into the desert, where nothing grows for lack of water."

All eyes turned upon him. He colored. M. Walter asked: "Do you know Algeria, sir?"

He replied: "Yes, sir, I was there twenty-eight months." Leaving the subject of colonization, Norbert de Varenne questioned him as to some of the Algerian customs. Georges spoke with animation; excited by the wine and the desire to please, he related anecdotes of the regiment, of Arabian life, and of the war.



Mme. Walter murmured to him in her soft tones: "You could write a series of charming articles."

Forestier took advantage of the situation to say to M. Walter: "My dear sir, I spoke to you a short while since of M. Georges Duroy and asked you to permit me to include him on the staff of political reporters. Since Marambot has left us, I have had no one to take urgent and confidential reports, and the paper is suffering by it."

M. Walter put on his spectacles in order to examine Duroy. Then he said: "I am convinced that M. Duroy is original, and if he will call upon me tomorrow at three o'clock, we will arrange matters." After a pause, turning to the young man, he said: "You may write us a short sketch on Algeria, M. Duroy. Simply relate your experiences; I am sure they will interest our readers. But you must do it quickly."

Mme. Walter added with her customary, serious grace: "You will have a charming title: 'Souvenirs of a Soldier in Africa.' Will he not, M. Norbert?"

The old poet, who had attained renown late in life, disliked and mistrusted newcomers. He replied dryly: "Yes, excellent, provided that it is written in the right key, for there lies the great difficulty."

Mme. Forestier cast upon Duroy a protecting and smiling glance which seemed to say: "You shall succeed." The servant filled the glasses with wine, and Forestier proposed the toast: "To the long prosperity of 'La Vie Francaise.'" Duroy felt superhuman strength within him, infinite hope, and invincible resolution. He was at his ease now among these people; his eyes rested upon their faces with renewed assurance, and for the first time he ventured to address his neighbor:

"You have the most beautiful earrings I have ever seen."

She turned toward him with a smile: "It is a fancy of mine to wear diamonds like this, simply on a

thread."

He murmured in reply, trembling at his audacity: "It is charming-but the ear increases the beauty of the ornament."

She thanked him with a glance. As he turned his head, he met Mme. Forestier's eyes, in which he fancied he saw a mingled expression of gaiety, malice, and encouragement. All the men were talking at the same time; their discussion was animated.

When the party left the dining-room, Duroy offered his arm to the little girl. She thanked him gravely and stood upon tiptoe in order to lay her hand upon his arm. Upon entering the drawing-room, the young man carefully surveyed it. It was not a large room; but there were no bright colors, and one felt at ease; it was restful. The walls were draped with violet hangings covered with tiny embroidered flowers of yellow silk. The portieres were of a grayish blue and the chairs were of all shapes, of all sizes; scattered about the room were couches and large and small easy-chairs, all covered with Louis XVI. brocade, or Utrecht velvet, a cream colored ground with garnet flowers.

"Do you take coffee, M. Duroy?" Mme. Forestier offered him a cup, with the smile that was always upon her lips.

"Yes, Madame, thank you." He took the cup, and as he did so, the young woman whispered to him: "Pay

Mme. Walter some attention." Then she vanished before he could reply.

First he drank his coffee, which he feared he should let fall upon the carpet; then he sought a pretext for approaching the manager's wife and commencing a conversation. Suddenly he perceived that she held an empty cup in her hand, and as she was not near a table, she did not know where to put it. He rushed toward her:

"Allow me, Madame."

"Thank you, sir."

He took away the cup and returned: "If you, but knew, Madame, what pleasant moments 'La Vie Francaise' afforded me, when I was in the desert! It is indeed the only paper one cares to read outside of France; it contains everything."

She smiled with amiable indifference as she replied: "M. Walter had a great deal of trouble in producing the kind of journal which was required."

They talked of Paris, the suburbs, the Seine, the delights of summer, of everything they could think of. Finally M. Norbert de Varenne advanced, a glass of liqueur in his hand, and Duroy discreetly withdrew. Mme. de Marelle, who was chatting with her hostess, called him: "So, sir," she said bluntly, "you are going to try journalism?" That question led to a renewal of the interrupted conversation with Mme. Walter. In her turn Mme. de Marelle related anecdotes, and becoming familiar, laid her hand upon Duroy's arm. He felt that

he would like to devote himself to her, to protect her-and the slowness with which he replied to her questions indicated his preoccupation. Suddenly, without any cause, Mme. de Marelle called: "Laurine!" and the girl came to her. "Sit down here, my child, you will be cold near the window."

Duroy was seized with an eager desire to embrace the child, as if part of that embrace would revert to the mother. He asked in a gallant, yet paternal tone: "Will you permit me to kiss you, Mademoiselle?" The child raised her eyes with an air of surprise. Mme. de Marelle said with a smile: "Reply."

"I will allow you to-day, Monsieur, but not all the time."

Seating himself, Duroy took Laurine upon his knee, and kissed her lips and her fine wavy hair. Her mother was surprised: "Well, that is strange! Ordinarily she only allows ladies to caress her. You are irresistible, Monsieur!"

Duroy colored, but did not reply.

When Mme. Forestier joined them, a cry of astonishment escaped her: "Well, Laurine has become sociable; what a miracle!"

The young man rose to take his leave, fearing he might spoil his conquest by some awkward word. He bowed to the ladies, clasped and gently pressed their hands, and then shook hands with the men. He observed that Jacques Rival's was dry and warm and

responded cordially to his pressure; Norbert de Varenne's was moist and cold and slipped through his fingers; Walter's was cold and soft, without life, expressionless; Forestier's fat and warm.

His friend whispered to him: "To-morrow at three o'clock; do not forget."

"Never fear!"

When he reached the staircase, he felt like running down, his joy was so great; he went down two steps at a time, but suddenly on the second floor, in the large mirror, he saw a gentleman hurrying on, and he slackened his pace, as much ashamed as if he had been surprised in a crime.

He surveyed himself some time with a complacent smile; then taking leave of his image, he bowed low, ceremoniously, as if saluting some grand personage.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **FIRST ATTEMPTS**

When Georges Duroy reached the street, he hesitated as to what he should do. He felt inclined to stroll along, dreaming of the future and inhaling the soft night air; but the thought of the series of articles ordered by M. Walter occurred to him, and he decided to return home at once and begin work. He walked rapidly along until he came to Rue Boursault. The

tenement in which he lived was occupied by twenty families-families of workingmen-and as he mounted the staircase he experienced a sensation of disgust and a desire to live as wealthy men do. Duroy's room was on the fifth floor. He entered it, opened his window, and looked out: the view was anything but prepossessing.

He turned away, thinking: "This won't do. I must go to work." So he placed his light upon the table and began to write. He dipped his pen into the ink and wrote at the head of his paper in a bold hand: "Souvenirs of a Soldier in Africa." Then he cast about for the first phrase. He rested his head upon his hand and stared at the blank sheet before him. What should he say? Suddenly he thought: "I must begin with my departure," and he wrote: "In 1874, about the fifteenth of May, when exhausted France was recruiting after the catastrophe of the terrible years-" Here he stopped short, not knowing how to introduce his subject. After a few minutes' reflection, he decided to lay aside that page until the following day, and to write a description of Algiers. He began: "Algiers is a very clean city-" but he could not continue. After an effort he added: "It is inhabited partly by Arabs." Then he threw his pen upon the table and arose. He glanced around his miserable room; mentally he rebelled against his poverty and resolved to leave the next day.

Suddenly the desire to work came on him, and he tried to begin the article again; he had vague ideas of

what he wanted to say, but he could not express his thoughts in words. Convinced of his inability he arose once more, his blood coursing rapidly through his veins. He turned to the window just as the train was coming out of the tunnel, and his thoughts reverted to his parents. He saw their tiny home on the heights overlooking Rouen and the valley of the Seine. His father and mother kept an inn, La Belle-Vue, at which the citizens of the faubourgs took their lunches on Sundays. They had wished to make a "gentleman" of their son and had sent him to college. His studies completed, he had entered the army with the intention of becoming an officer, a colonel, or a general. But becoming disgusted with military life, he determined to try his fortune in Paris. When his time of service had expired, he went thither, with what results we have seen. He awoke from his reflections as the locomotive whistled shrilly, closed his window, and began to disrobe, muttering: "Bah, I shall be able to work better to-morrow morning. My brain is not clear to-night. I have drunk a little too much. I can't work well under such circumstances." He extinguished his light and fell asleep.

He awoke early, and, rising, opened his window to inhale the fresh air. In a few moments he seated himself at his table, dipped his pen in the ink, rested his head upon his hand and thought-but in vain! However, he was not discouraged, but in thought reassured

himself: "Bah, I am not accustomed to it! It is a profession that must be learned like all professions. Some one must help me the first time. I'll go to Forestier. He'll start my article for me in ten minutes."

When he reached the street, Duroy decided that it was rather early to present himself at his friend's house, so he strolled along under the trees on one of the boulevards for a time. On arriving at Forestier's door, he found his friend going out.

"You here-at this hour! Can I do anything for you?"

Duroy stammered in confusion: "I—I-cannot write that article on Algeria that M. Walter wants. It is not very surprising, seeing that I have never written anything. It requires practice. I could write very rapidly, I am sure, if I could make a beginning. I have the ideas but I cannot express them." He paused and hesitated.

Forestier smiled maliciously: "I understand that."

Duroy continued: "Yes, anyone is liable to have that trouble at the beginning; and, well-I have come to ask you to help me. In ten minutes you can set me right. You can give me a lesson in style; without you I can do nothing."

The other smiled gaily. He patted his companion's arm and said to him: "Go to my wife; she will help you better than I can. I have trained her for that work. I have not time this morning or I would do it willingly."

But Duroy hesitated: "At this hour I cannot inquire for her."

"Oh, yes, you can; she has risen. You will find her in my study."

"I will go, but I shall tell her you sent me!"

Forestier walked away, and Duroy slowly ascended the stairs, wondering what he should say and what kind of a reception he would receive.

The servant who opened the door said: "Monsieur has gone out."

Duroy replied: "Ask Mme. Forestier if she will see me, and tell her that M. Forestier, whom I met on the street, sent me."

The lackey soon returned and ushered Duroy into Madame's presence. She was seated at a table and extended her hand to him.

"So soon?" said she. It was not a reproach, but a simple question.

He stammered: "I did not want to come up, Madame, but your husband, whom I met below, insisted-I dare scarcely tell you my errand-I worked late last night and early this morning, to write the article on Algeria which M. Walter wants-and I did not succeed-I destroyed all my attempts-I am not accustomed to the work-and I came to ask Forestier to assist me-his once."

She interrupted with a laugh: "And he sent you to me?"

"Yes, Madame. He said you could help me better

than he-but-I dared not-I did not like to."

She rose.

"It will be delightful to work together that way. I am charmed with your idea. Wait, take my chair, for they know my handwriting on the paper-we will write a successful article."

She took a cigarette from the mantelpiece and lighted it. "I cannot work without smoking," she said; "what are you going to say?"

He looked at her in astonishment. "I do not know; I came here to find that out."

She replied: "I will manage it all right. I will make the sauce but I must have the dish." She questioned him in detail and finally said:

"Now, we will begin. First of all we will suppose that you are addressing a friend, which will allow us scope for remarks of all kinds. Begin this way: 'My dear Henry, you wish to know something about Algeria; you shall.'"

Then followed a brilliantly worded description of Algeria and of the port of Algiers, an excursion to the province of Oran, a visit to Saida, and an adventure with a pretty Spanish maid employed in a factory.

When the article was concluded, he could find no words of thanks; he was happy to be near her, grateful for and delighted with their growing intimacy. It seemed to him that everything about him was a part of her, even to the books upon the shelves. The chairs, the

furniture, the air—all were permeated with that delightful fragrance peculiar to her.

She asked bluntly: "What do you think of my friend Mme. de Marelle?"

"I think her very fascinating," he said; and he would have liked to add: "But not as much so as you." He had not the courage to do so.

She continued: "If you only knew how comical, original, and intelligent she is! She is a true Bohemian. It is for that reason that her husband no longer loves her. He only sees her defects and none of her good qualities."

Duroy was surprised to hear that Mme. de Marelle was married.

"What," he asked, "is she married? What does her husband do?"

Mme. Forestier shrugged her shoulders. "Oh, he is superintendent of a railroad. He is in Paris a week out of each month. His wife calls it 'Holy Week.' or 'The week of duty.' When you get better acquainted with her, you will see how witty she is! Come here and see her some day."

As she spoke, the door opened noiselessly, and a gentleman entered unannounced. He halted on seeing a man. For a moment Mme. Forestier seemed confused; then she said in a natural voice, though her cheeks were tinged with a blush:

"Come in, my dear sir; allow me to present to you

an old comrade of Charles, M. Georges Duroy, a future journalist." Then in a different tone, she said: "Our best and dearest friend, Count de Vaudrec."

The two men bowed, gazed into one another's eyes, and then Duroy took his leave. Neither tried to detain him.

On reaching the street he felt sad and uncomfortable. Count de Vaudrec's face was constantly before him. It seemed to him that the man was displeased at finding him tete-a-tete with Mme. Forestier, though why he should be, he could not divine.

To while away the time until three o'clock, he lunched at Duval's, and then lounged along the boulevard. When the clock chimed the hour of his appointment, he climbed the stairs leading to the office of "La Vie Francaise."

Duroy asked: "Is M. Walter in?"

"M. Walter is engaged," was the reply. "Will you please take a seat?"

Duroy waited twenty minutes, then he turned to the clerk and said: "M. Walter had an appointment with me at three o'clock. At any rate, see if my friend M. Forestier is here."

He was conducted along a corridor and ushered into a large room in which four men were writing at a table. Forestier was standing before the fireplace, smoking a cigarette. After listening to Duroy's story he

said:

"Come with me; I will take you to M. Walter, or else you might remain here until seven o'clock."

They entered the manager's room. Norbert de Varenne was writing an article, seated in an easychair; Jacques Rival, stretched upon a divan, was smoking a cigar. The room had the peculiar odor familiar to all journalists. When they approached M. Walter, Forestier said: "Here is my friend Duroy."

The manager looked keenly at the young man and asked:

"Have you brought my article?"

Duroy drew the sheets of manuscript from his pocket.

"Here they are, Monsieur."

The manager seemed delighted and said with a smile: "Very good. You are a man of your word. Need I look over it, Forestier?"

But Forestier hastened to reply: "It is not necessary, M. Walter; I helped him in order to initiate him into the profession. It is very good." Then bending toward him, he whispered: "You know you promised to engage Duroy to replace Marambot. Will you allow me to retain him on the same terms?"

"Certainly."

Taking his friend's arm, the journalist drew him away, while M. Walter returned to the game of ecarte he had been engaged in when they entered. Forestier

and Duroy returned to the room in which Georges had found his friend. The latter said to his new reporter:

"You must come here every day at three o'clock, and I will tell you what places to go to. First of all, I shall give you a letter of introduction to the chief of the police, who will in turn introduce you to one of his employees. You can arrange with him for all important news, official and semiofficial. For details you can apply to Saint-Potin, who is posted; you will see him to-morrow. Above all, you must learn to make your way everywhere in spite of closed doors. You will receive two hundred francs a month, two sous a line for original matter, and two sous a line for articles you are ordered to write on different subjects."

"What shall I do to-day?" asked Duroy.

"I have no work for you to-day; you can go if you wish to."

"And our-our article?"

"Oh, do not worry about it; I will correct the proofs. Do the rest to-morrow and come here at three o'clock as you did to-day."

And after shaking hands, Duroy descended the staircase with a light heart.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **DUROY LEARNS SOMETHING**

Georges Duroy did not sleep well, so anxious was

he to see his article in print. He rose at daybreak, and was on the street long before the newsboys. When he secured a paper and saw his name at the end of a column in large letters, he became very much excited. He felt inclined to enact the part of a newsboy and cry out to the hurrying throng: "Buy this! it contains an article by me!" He strolled along to a cafe and seated himself in order to read the article through; that done he decided to go to the railroad office, draw his salary, and hand in his resignation.

With great pomposity he informed the chief clerk that he was on the staff of "La Vie Francaise," and by that means was avenged for many petty insults which had been offered him. He then had some cards written with his new calling beneath his name, made several purchases, and repaired to the office of "La Vie Francaise." Forestier received him loftily as one would an inferior.

"Ah, here you are! Very well; I have several things for you to do. Just wait ten minutes till I finish this work." He continued writing.

At the other end of the table sat a short, pale man, very stout and bald. Forestier asked him, when his letter was completed, "Saint-Potin, at what time shall you interview those people?"

"At four o'clock."

"Take Duroy, who is here, with you and initiate him into the business."

"Very well."

Then turning to his friend, Forestier added: "Have you brought the other paper on Algeria? The article this morning was very successful."

Duroy stammered: "No, I thought I should have time this afternoon. I had so much to do-I could not."

The other shrugged his shoulders. "If you are not more careful, you will spoil your future. M. Walter counted on your copy. I will tell him it will be ready to-morrow. If you think you will be paid for doing nothing, you are mistaken." After a pause, he added: "You should strike while the iron is hot."

Saint-Potin rose: "I am ready," said he.

Forestier turned around in his chair and said, to Duroy: "Listen. The Chinese general Li-Theng-Fao, stopping at the Continental, and Rajah Taposahib Ramadera Pali, stopping at Hotel Bishop, have been in Paris two days. You must interview them." Addressing Saint-Potin, he said: "Do not forget the principal points I indicated to you. Ask the general and the rajah their opinions on the dealings of England in the extreme East, their ideas of their system of colonization and government, their hopes relative to the intervention of Europe and of France in particular." To Duroy he said: "Observe what Saint-Potin says; he is an excellent reporter, and try to learn how to draw out a man in five minutes." Then he resumed his work.

The two men walked down the boulevard

together, while Saint-Potin gave Duroy a sketch of all the officials connected with the paper, sparing no one in his criticism. When he mentioned Forestier, he said: "As for him, he was fortunate in marrying his wife."

Duroy asked: "What about his wife?"

Saint-Potin rubbed his hands. "Oh, she is beloved by an old fellow named Vaudrec-he dotes upon her."

Duroy felt as if he would like to box Saint-Potin's ears. To change the subject he said: "It seems to me that it is late, and we have two noble lords to call upon!"

Saint-Potin laughed: "You are very innocent! Do you think that I am going to interview that Chinese and that Indian? As if I did not know better than they do what they should think to please the readers of 'La Vie Francaise'! I have interviewed five hundred Chinese, Prussians, Hindoos, Chilians, and Japanese. They all say the same thing. I need only copy my article on the last comer, word for word, changing the heading, names, titles, and ages: in that there must be no error, or I shall be hauled over the coals by the 'Figaro' or 'Gaulois.' But on that subject the porter of the hotels will post me in five minutes. We will smoke our cigars and stroll in that direction. Total-one hundred sous for cabfare. That is the way, my dear fellow."

When they arrived at the Madeleine, Saint-Potin said to his companion: "If you have anything to do, I do not need you."

Duroy shook hands with him and walked away.

The thought of the article he had to write that evening haunted him. Mentally he collected the material as he wended his way to the cafe at which he dined. Then he returned home and seated himself at his table to work. Before his eyes was the sheet of blank paper, but all the material he had amassed had escaped him. After trying for an hour, and after filling five pages with sentences which had no connection one with the other, he said: "I am not yet familiar with the work. I must take another lesson."

At ten o'clock the following morning he rang the bell, at his friend's house. The servant who opened the door, said: "Monsieur is busy."

Duroy had not expected to find Forestier at home. However he said: "Tell him it is M. Duroy on important business."

In the course of five minutes he was ushered into the room in which he had spent so happy a morning. In the place Mme. Forestier had occupied, her husband was seated writing, while Mme. Forestier stood by the mantelpiece and dictated to him, a cigarette between her lips.

Duroy paused upon the threshold and murmured: "I beg your pardon, I am interrupting you."

His friend growled angrily: "What do you want again? Make haste; we are busy."

Georges stammered: "It is nothing."

But Forestier persisted: "Come, we are losing

time; you did not force your way into the house for the pleasure of bidding us good morning."

Duroy, in confusion, replied: "No, it is this: I cannot complete my article, and you were-so-so kind the last time that I hoped-that I dared to come-"

Forestier interrupted with: "So you think I will do your work and that you have only to take the money. Well, that is fine!" His wife smoked on without interfering.

Duroy hesitated: "Excuse me. I believed-I-thought-" Then, in a clear voice, he said: "I beg a thousand pardons, Madame, and thank you very much for the charming article you wrote for me yesterday." Then he bowed, and said to Charles: "I will be at the office at three o'clock."

He returned home saying to himself: "Very well, I will write it alone and they shall see." Scarcely had he entered than he began to write, anger spurring him on. In an hour he had finished an article, which was a chaos of absurd matter, and took it boldly to the office. Duroy handed Forestier his manuscript. "Here is the rest of Algeria."

"Very well, I will hand it to the manager. That will do."

When Duroy and Saint-Potin, who had some political information to look up, were in the hall, the latter asked: "Have you been to the cashier's room?"

"No, why?"

"Why? To get your pay? You should always get your salary a month in advance. One cannot tell what might happen. I will introduce you to the cashier."

Duroy drew his two hundred francs together with twenty-eight francs for his article of the preceding day, which, in addition to what remained to him of his salary from the railroad office, left him three hundred and forty francs. He had never had so much, and he thought himself rich for an indefinite time. Saint-Potin took him to the offices of four or five rival papers, hoping that the news he had been commissioned to obtain had been already received by them and that he could obtain it by means of his diplomacy.

When evening came, Duroy, who had nothing more to do, turned toward the Folies-Bergeres, and walking up to the office, he said: "My name is Georges Duroy. I am on the staff of 'La Vie Francaise.' I was here the other night with M. Forestier, who promised to get me a pass. I do not know if he remembered it."

The register was consulted, but his name was not inscribed upon it. However, the cashier, a very affable man, said to him: "Come in, M. Duroy, and speak to the manager yourself; he will see that everything is all right."

He entered and almost at once came upon Rachel, the woman he had seen there before. She approached him: "Good evening, my dear; are you well?"

"Very well; how are you?"