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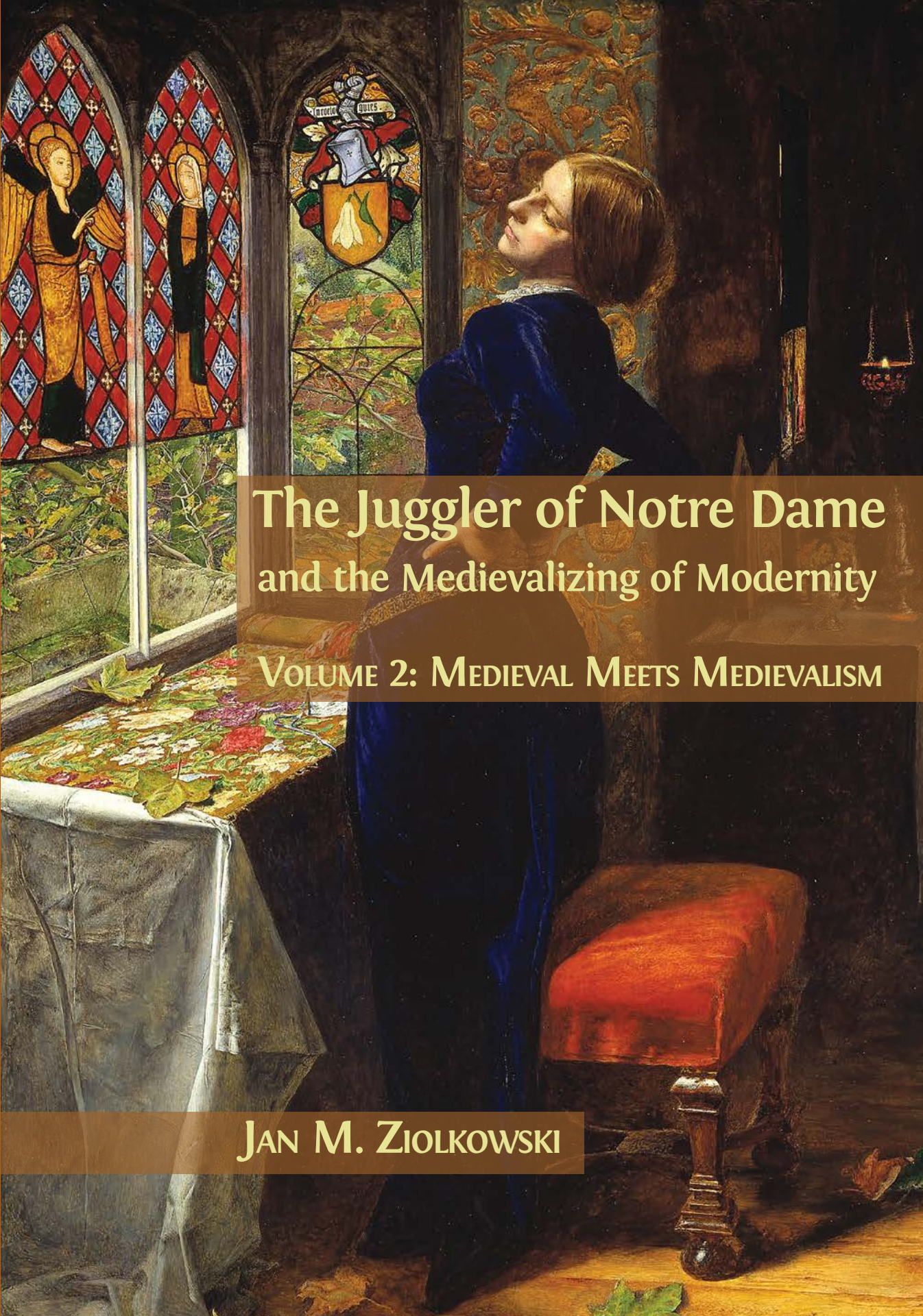
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# The Juggler of Notre Dame and the Medievalizing of Modernity

VOLUME 2: MEDIEVAL MEETS MEDIEVALISM

JAN M. ZIOLKOWSKI

# THE JUGGLER OF NOTRE DAME

## VOLUME 2



# The Juggler of Notre Dame and the Medievalizing of Modernity

Vol. 2: Medieval Meets Medievalism

*Jan M. Ziolkowski*



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To Elizabeth Emery

I like the *Joan of Arc* best of all my books; and it *is* the best; I know it perfectly well. And besides, it furnished me seven times the pleasure afforded me by any of the others: twelve years of preparation, and two years of writing. The others needed no preparation and got none.

—Mark Twain



# Note to the Reader

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This volume is the second of a half dozen. Together, the six form *The Juggler of Notre Dame and the Medievalizing of Modernity*. The book as a whole probes one medieval story, its reception in culture from the Franco-Prussian War until today, and the placement of that reception within medieval revivalism as a larger cultural phenomenon. The study has been designed to proceed largely in chronological order, but the progression across the centuries and decades is relieved by thematic chapters that deal with topics not restricted to any single time period.

This second installment, called “Medieval Meets Medievalism,” examines the reemergence of the medieval narrative after its edition in 1873, its translation into English, and its recasting as a short story by Anatole France. The third in the series, entitled “The American Middle Ages,” explores the reasons why the American not-so-public intellectual Henry Adams was drawn to the story and more largely why many of his compatriots in the Gilded Age found relief and relevance in the literature and architecture of the Middle Ages. Later volumes trace the story of the story down to the present day.

The chapters are followed by endnotes. Rather than being numbered, these notes are keyed to the words and phrases in the text that are presented in a different color. After the endnotes come the bibliography and illustration credits. In each volume-by-volume index, the names of most people have lifespans, regnal dates, or at least death dates.

One comment on the title of the story is in order. In proper French, Notre-Dame has a hyphen when the phrase refers to a building, institution, or place. Notre Dame, without the mark, refers to the woman, the mother of Jesus. In my own prose, the title is given in the form *Le jongleur de Notre Dame*, but the last two words will be found hyphenated in quotations and bibliographic citations if the original is so punctuated.

All translations are my own, unless otherwise specified.



# I. Tumbling Back into France, by Way of Philology

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Edit indeed; Thank God they do. If it had not been for scholars working themselves blind copying and collating manuscripts, how many poems would be unavailable... and how many others full of lines that made no sense?... only the scholar with his unselfish courage to read the unreadable will retrieve the rare prize.

—W. H. Auden

## A Medieval Poem Comforts a Modern Nation

The poetry of the Middle Ages definitely offers genuine pleasures even to the most sensitive and cultured souls, provided that they do not refuse out of bias to accept them.

—Gaston Paris

There is a saying that “books have their destiny.” The Latin of this hallowed aphorism has been chopped in half and wrenched from its original context, which was in a grammar book from the second century of the common era. The full verse reads: “[In proportion to the understanding of the reader](#)” and so forth. Let us do our utmost to make sense of what happened to *Our Lady’s Tumbler* after the Renaissance and Reformation beat down the jongleur and left him in the crypt for dead for approximately four centuries. Yet he and his tale declined to stay deceased. Medieval stories have leached into modern and postmodern Western culture at multifarious moments and in manifold manners. Innumerable ones have led nearly unruptured lives, even if

they have passed in and out of vogue from one century to another. Romances from the Middle Ages have mutated into early modern chapbooks, those pamphlets have in turn been rearranged into ballads from the late medieval period to the nineteenth century, and all these materials and more have been readapted in novels since the nineteenth century. Some of these narratives have welled to the surface again since then, even down to the present day, in children's books, fantasy films, and video games. Others have not benefited from such unoccluded trajectories, but instead attracted the glare of renewed attention first during the romantic era.

*Our Lady's Tumbler* stands out as an exception to the usual timeline of the reception in modern culture for major works of literature from medieval France. The last date at which the French piece is confirmed to have been consulted is in the [waning years of the fifteenth century](#). Thereafter the story trickles into oblivion. German terms are sometimes used to characterize the destinies of cultural artifacts after their initial production. One is *Nachleben*, literally "afterlife." The seeming death after life of our poem would run through 1872. After being printed in 1873, the text begins its *Weiterleben*. This would be its "living on" or "life after death." Dozens upon dozens of medieval literary compositions were studied during the 1870s and 1880s, but most of them were already familiar. Our tale possesses the unusual distinction of having been rediscovered and repopularized for the first time since the end of the medieval period. The original text re-arose at the exact juncture when French art and culture achieved as broad and rapid an international reach in European and world culture as they had ever exercised. This timing makes *Our Lady's Tumbler* special, even unique.

What enabled the rehabilitation of a narrative that for so many centuries had slipped out of public view and had even become unfit for general consumption? These two decades of the late nineteenth century were extraordinarily spirited in the reception of the Middle Ages. The Gothic revivals of the nineteenth century—and the plural must be underscored—formed a large component in various historicist turns. In these eruptions of historicism, artists and designers pulled out all the stops to re-create the styles of different periods. The movements expressed historically-based imagination and anxiety. Literature, painting, and architecture all witnessed revitalizations that were grounded in past periods. The disconcertingly rapid tornado of social, political, and economic changes in conjunction with industrialism caused people to seek stability and solace in thoughts of "good old times" of earlier eras. Medieval days were held to be as nice as it got.

The historicizing revivals, perhaps particularly the Gothic ones, owed much to both romanticism and nationalism. Almost randomly, medievalism requires romanticism—and vice versa. It has even been posited, for rhetorical effect, that "[Romanticism is Medievalism](#) and Medievalism is Romanticism." A matching two-part corollary would be: romantic is Gothic, and Gothic romantic. To toggle to the matter of national identities, the Middle Ages were prenatal but were taken as the baseline



for national identities forged within nationalisms that created nation-states. The centuries between antiquity and the Renaissance became the preferred destination for the itineraries into the past that historical revivals predicated. No matter how wildly inaccurate and fantastic we may find nineteenth-century understandings of the time, and regardless of how improbable we may deem the choice of antecedent to be, the Middle Ages presented themselves as the favored phase of history against which to measure, judge, understand, and shape modernity. If chronological divisions can suffer debacles in public relations, [the medieval period had reached all-time lows](#) in both the Renaissance and Enlightenment, but it roared back to life in the nineteenth century with heart-stopping vigor. Both Romanesque and Gothic had revivals more pervasive than those of the Renaissance, mannerism, baroque, rococo, or even orientalism. Medieval became the new normal.

Since the romantic era, narratives from this earlier age had enjoyed recurrent vogues among both the public and scholars. For all that, in the final quarter of the nineteenth century they underwent a new development. [The Middle Ages became big business](#). Authentic objects from the epoch were sought out by collectors, and were replicated or imitated in mass-produced items that were sold to a far broader market—thanks to steps forward in science and commerce, items modeled on the artistic and material culture of the Middle Ages could be manufactured in [precedent-setting quantities](#). At this point in the nineteenth century, medieval was midcentury modern. On a boutique scale, the destiny of *Our Lady's Tumbler* encapsulates the gusto of France during this period for appropriating medieval things and reworking them as cultural commodities. At the same time, it functions as a mnemonic to remind us that the commodification of the Middle Ages was rooted in formal study. The academic realms of medieval history, art history, and literature were being instituted in the same decades. Professional medievalists strove to put their fields of study on a scientific footing, and the very disciplines that they established remain to this day the bedrock of scholarship.

## The Simple Middle Ages

Simplicity is a most complex form.

—Duke Ellington

More than a mere fondness for the products of technology and trade would have made the French receptive to a newly rediscovered story of gilt-edged literary quality in a medieval reflex of their language. Their openness to the narrative would have been all the greater for its being about a simple man who fought his way to redemption through unalloyed faith. Simultaneously, the tale proved to be attractive as an antidote to the hurry-scurry and hustle-bustle of a world being rapidly industrialized. In crises,

when the globe seems embrittled and friable from its own complexity and perplexity, simplicity and oversimplification hold inestimable appeal. Simplicity, it has been said, is the [ultimate sophistication](#).

The story of *Our Lady's Tumbler* was characterized by its first redactor as being “[noteworthy at once for its simplicity](#) and its frank naïveté” in its portrayal of “childlike innocence.” Later in the century, it epitomized the “[triumph of simplicity](#).” Anatole France, an early adapter of the account among belletrists, saw the medieval sphere in which the jongleur existed as peopled by “simple men who believe in God and take assurance from the intercession of Our Lady.” These folk qualified as simple by virtue of their faith in the capacity of the Virgin, angels, and saints [to descend from heaven to earth](#) from one moment to the next. Early in the succeeding century, one of the first translators of the poem into English opined that her readers needed to [put themselves into the shoes](#) of their less devil-may-care medieval predecessors; while at the close of the twentieth century, the tale was still being retailed under the heading “[Monastic Simplicity](#).”

The specific historical circumstances of the 1870s, when our tale was first edited, would have propelled the citizens of France to seek out symbols of cultural rebirth and to look to a simpler, better, more innocent, and more glorious past. In contradistinction to the industrial civilization, the Middle Ages could be regarded as exemplifying a coherent and cohesive social order with an organic unity and shared values. It deserved credit for having its own syntax, just as much as did the orderly and harmonious disposition of classical architecture. As a romantic legacy, the medieval era carried the luster of both exalted courtliness and monastic otherworldliness. The attractiveness of taking refuge in such a holistic cloud-cuckoo-land only grew as the estrangements caused by industrialization were exacerbated. As industry and technology swelled, nostalgia for the lost horizon of the Middle Ages, both real and imagined, bulged in equal measure.

The vehicle for transportation to the Middle Ages was in the first instance textual. Literature and documents laid out a conduit to bygone languages and forsaken ways of life. Resurrect the appropriate texts from olden times, and all will be right again. Philologists, linking arms with historians, took upon themselves [the tasks of discovery](#), recovery, reconstruction, and study, especially of architecture and poetry. Their discipline went hand in glove with medieval studies: the Middle Ages and philology came close to being synonymous.

After the death of Gaston Paris in 1903, his bosom friend and fellow philologist Paul Meyer surveyed their joint accomplishment just over three decades earlier, when in 1872 they had founded a society for a series in which to publish medieval French texts. In [his initial address as president](#) of the association five years later, Paris recognized that their intention was nothing less than “to make come back to life the

simple language, the heroic dreams, the joyous laughter, and the old customs of our fathers." Such a project, corroborated by relatively new scientific methods, ratified what had been said already for at least a quarter century before them. Like the public in aggregate, scholars maintained that the medieval past, as evidenced for instance in *The Song of Roland*, was marked by naïveté, simplicity, and childish ingenuousness.

Inhabitants of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Europe and America often reacted and sometimes overreacted to modernity with disquiet and even disgust. The Middle Ages, at least at their early end, came chronologically far closer than did antiquity to the *belle époque*, the "beautiful era" in France that corresponded to the Gilded Age in America. That circumstance could have made the period in the middle more approachable, but counterintuitively, the earlier stretch was felt to be more radically distinct than the ancient world from industrialized, urbanized, and nationalized modernity.

The period of the Middle Ages was seen as being different but (or because of being) simple. In the Enlightenment, the ostensible youthfulness of medieval Europe had been flawed and blameworthy in the eyes of some. The Enlighteners' [optimistic belief in progress](#) entailed an assumption that their epoch had outgrown at least segments of the past. Childishness could be a correlative of narrowmindedness, superstition, and religious prejudice. In one [anthropomorphized perspective](#) on the passage of time, the phase that preceded early modernity was the impish toddler, a [childlike age](#) of simple, pure, and even naïve faith. People who lived then were deemed to have been like [young innocents](#) in comparison with their modern equivalents. The tumbler or jongleur participated fully in this aura of simplicity. He brought traces of courtly elegance within the context of otherworldliness, or at least unworldliness. He was viewed nostalgically as simple and naïve, unstudied and natural, a pure and trusting soul. The first quality, simplicity, helps to explain why the jongleur has been associated now and again by modern authors—especially from Anatole France onward—with "blessed are the simple." This is one of the eight [beatitudes](#) from the Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of St. Matthew. On the strength of this quotation, [one version of the story](#) even wrapped up with the Latin exclamation "Sancta simplicitas" ("saintly simplicity!").

The performer would be regarded, especially from romanticism on, as a natural man. In effect, he was a kind of [wild man](#) transplanted from the woods into a cloister. It has even been speculated that a later adaptation of the tale made the person of the entertainer deliberately, and with exquisite anachronism, into a glorification of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's [noble savage](#). Other related traits have encompassed his humility, childlikeness, and asceticism. In late nineteenth-century eyes, one of his most important characteristics was his primitivism.

## The Primitive and the Gothic

American taste was introduced to mediaeval art by [the cult of Italian primitives](#).

— Charles Rufus Morey

Despite all the disadvantages of being untutored, uncultured, and uncouth, the performer in the medieval poem not only redeemed himself, but even surpassed the more sophisticated brethren who surrounded him. By relinquishing worldly goods and renouncing materialism, he demonstrated the probity of a person exempt from commercialism; by performing solo in solitary splendor, he manifested utter unconcern about cultivating an audience or receiving a conventional gratuity. He put beyond any doubt that he sought no recognition, certainly not from within the world of men. He demonstrated his capacity for a faith unspoiled by intellectualism, a single-mindedness not watered down by self-consciousness. Through such qualities he displayed the ability to contact the divine through his senses.

Courtesy of all these characteristics, the entertainer would have been regarded as a so-called [primitive](#) on a par with inhabitants of undeveloped regions in the then-contemporary world. As such, he exemplified supposedly authentic naturalism and simplicity. These two qualities, contrasted with such antitheses as corruption and artificiality, have been repeatedly ascribed, down to the present day, to [the people, art, and overall culture of the Middle Ages](#). In this capacity, he bears comparison with medieval illuminators, who were envisaged often as monks and friars. These primitives from one half millennium earlier were taken by late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century avant-garde artists as their forebears and inspiration. During the symbolist movement, such artisans were enshrined on canvas by painters as well as on the pages of novels and short stories by writers. Popular attention to the primitives crested in art exhibitions held in 1904, which concurred with the moment of glory that the *Jongleur of Notre Dame* enjoyed in the opera world of Paris. Not immaterially, one ripple of the art exhibition was a [publication of miracles of the Virgin](#).

Gothic architecture and art had long been associated disrespectfully, even vituperatively, with primitivism in inopportune senses. In their origins, these sorts of styles had nothing to do with the Germanic folk recognized as the Goths. Similarly, no person of the so-called Gothic age ever used the descriptor in self-reference or in referring to anyone else contemporary. The architecture now known as Gothic was then French, Christian, and modern. [Like Romanesque](#), Gothic had to be invented as a term and articulated as a concept by much later times. The author of *Notre-Dame de Paris*, Victor Hugo, towering in more than one sense, commented upon the [inappropriateness of the word "Gothic."](#) All the same, the adjective adhering to the tribe was initially associated with barbarism and barbarousness. Not to put too fine a point on it, it was a pejorative. "Gothic" was only a short step removed from

the inelegance, vulgarity, and destructiveness associated with the name of another Germanic tribe, the Vandals. The focus of attention in France on this other sort of delinquency also owed to the coattails of Hugo (see Fig. 1.1), for altogether fittingly, the first edition of the essay entitled “[On Vandalism in France](#)” took the form of an open letter to the novelist. The irony emerged that rather than being the product of actual Vandals in late antiquity or the early Middle Ages, Gothic architecture was the casualty of modern brutes—professionals who could be called vandals only with a lowercase v.

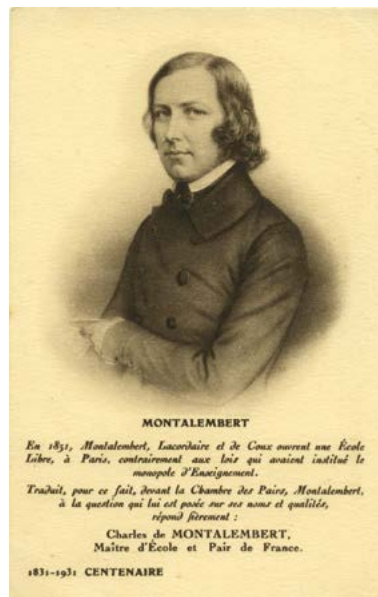


Fig. 1.1 Postcard depicting Charles de Montalembert, author of *Du vandalisme et du catholicisme dans l'art* (Paris: Lévy et Neurdein Réunis, 1931).

The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries witnessed a disassembling of the medieval past, above all in France. Sometimes the dismantling resulted from mere passive neglect, but at other times it was due to two stages of active wantonness. The first stage was purposeful destruction, as when monasteries were auctioned or leased to become quarries for the repurposing of their stones—the demolition of Cluny offers a particularly appalling example, but it was far from alone. The second came about through half-baked reconstruction, either on the grand scale of urban renewal or on the more modest one of redevelopments of individual buildings. In various cases, architects were given a free hand to raze medieval neighborhoods and streets to clear the way for straight and unobstructed modern boulevards. In the process, they tore down many holdovers of premodern architecture and art. Paris itself lost much of its Middle Ages, while Toulouse was reconfigured in a brutally rational urbanization that earned the city the nickname “[Capital of Vandalism.](#)”

The English of this time also looked with disdain at architecture in this fashion, but did not hem and haw about relying upon it in the construction of actual buildings. For instance, in his contribution to the multi-author *Essays on Gothic Architecture*, published in 1800, John Milner blew hot and cold. He reached inconsistent verdicts on the general of Gothic and the specific of lanceted arches. The arches he viewed laudatorily; on the manner as a whole, his take was derogatory. Such eighteenth-century associations of the Middle Ages, helped by Gothic fiction among other things, as being uncivilized, irrational, and primitive were still inchoate. But by 1831, when Victor Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris* was published, romanticism had brought the public to a much fuller-throated appreciation of Gothic. Whatever Hugo's views on civilization, rationality, and primitivism, he was intent on saving the architecture itself from vandalism. He embarked upon a path to reshape the perspectives that led many of his countrymen to find the style unattractive. His novel sang a long and loving ode to the flying buttresses, pointed arches, and stained glass of the cathedral of Paris. In Gothic from romanticism on, architecture and artistic ornament inspired by the Middle Ages were closely related to literature cast from the same mold. The French writer crystallized, or engraved in stone, this relationship.

## The Oriental and the Gothic

Because the concept of Gothic has been associated with barbarians and barbarity since the word was first devised, it may seem an incompatibility for the adjective to have been attached to any writing system whatsoever. Yet among many other things, the term "Gothic script" has come to denote a modern print alphabet. The same one also goes by the name of black letter or Morris Gothic, after the craftsman and designer William Morris (see Fig. 1.2). Its nearest relative today appears in the Engravers Old English typeface employed in the banners of newspapers such as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, and *The Los Angeles Times*. (Such fonts have been undisplaced, despite their proximity to the Nazi-tainted black letter that was for many decades part and parcel of German national identity.) At the same time, the epithet designates the wholly different standard set of letters that was devised in late antiquity for the language of the actual ethnic group called the Goths. The bewildering elasticity in the usage of Gothic script holds true on a far grander scale for the whole spectrum of applications to which the descriptor is routinely put nowadays. Since the outset, when the epithet was applied to describe many aspects of what we alternately call medieval, Gothic has been a misnomer. The style, especially architectural, that prevailed from the late twelfth century has nothing whatsoever to do with the Germanic band of late antiquity.

The label is even more inapt as applied to subsequent culture, where it has come to comprehend various shades of meaning. Such well-entrenched misapplication starts with architecture and novels from the eighteenth century and leads to clothing

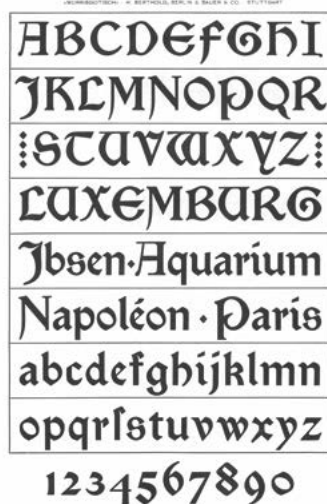


Fig. 1.2 “Morrisgotisch” font. Based on Troy typeface by William Morris, 1891–92.  
Berlin: H. Berthold, 1903.

and other dimensions of personal presentation in modern-day Goth culture. A word that means too many things may end up being all too hard to wield to any good effect, yet Gothic has not yet reached such a dire pass. For all the complications and confusions, we would go too far to decommission the term altogether. Apropos of the Middle Ages, Gothic pertains most convincingly to architecture and art during a stretch from the twelfth through the fifteenth centuries. During this period, among many other things, great cathedrals and churches were built in this style, belief in miracles was intense, and the cult of the Virgin Mary pulsed strong, along with relics and representations of her. *Our Lady’s Tumbler* belongs very much to this Gothic age. Even when customized drastically to suit the demands of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the story was allowed or even desired to retain and encapsulate important and positive features of the distant medieval time in which it was recognized to have originated. The tale was Gothic, and it was further Gothicized as understandings changed of what this characteristic entailed.

The medieval was exotic. Exoticism and alterity may have both seductive and repulsive capacities, since they are edgy or even over the edge. If orientalism supplied for consideration geographically extraneous cultures that could be differentiated from present-day Europe, medievalism furnished chronologically alien ones. Medieval revivalism fell into the realm of what could be called “time exoticism” or “temporal orientalism.” Both [orientalism](#) and [the Middle Ages](#) were felt to be authentic, traditional, and folkish, at a juncture when those qualities were being relinquished in the West with the onward march of modernity. The two categories, [oriental](#) and [medieval](#), remain yoked together even today, but now likened to each other almost exclusively to negative effect. But that is now. Let us return to then—and to the very

beginning of then. The parallel functions that orientalism and medievalism served caused the two phenomena to be linked already in [books brought out in London in the 1750s](#). Orientalism manifested itself particularly in chinoiserie, the imitation of Chinese or Chinese-like motifs and techniques. *Ornamental Architecture in the Gothic, Chinese and Modern Taste* from 1758 contains many plates meant to needle viewers into recognizing similarities between supposedly medieval and supposedly Chinese ornaments of architecture. The nexus between the two styles became familiar reasonably soon across the Atlantic from England in the New World. Already in 1767, the *Virginia Gazette* ran an [advertisement](#) in which a Williamsburg cabinetmaker offered to prospective customers to produce “all sorts of Chinese and Gothic paling for gardens and summer houses.” For a long time, any turn to Asian cultures was related to a turn to nature. As the paragon of what is alien to Western culture, Asia was taken to be all-natural. The same held true for the Middle Ages, in their opposition to classical antiquity, the Renaissance, and neoclassicism.

Such fusion between Gothic and what was still then designated the Orient persisted, and analogies continued to be drawn long afterward. With the opening of Japan in 1853, that culture too became an ingredient in the cocktail. For instance, a design from circa 1869 for the interior of an Irish castle hybridizes Gothic and Japanese in what may seem an eerie anticipation of later styles such as the so-called [Aesthetic and art nouveau](#). Similarly, in the early 1880s a [cataloger](#) of William H. Vanderbilt’s house and collection interpreted the placement of a Gothic casket in a so-called Japanese room as unremarkable. In 1908, a reviewer in the *New York Times* held up John Pierpont Morgan’s twelfth-century wooden “seat of wisdom” Virgin and Child from the Auvergne (see Fig. 1.3) as “[a wonderful piece](#), almost Chinese in its rigid architectural forms and the regular curves of the drapery.” Presumably the writer had in mind a statue from China, such as a Buddha (see Fig. 1.4). A French postcard, labeled without evasiveness “Middle Ages,” bears an illustration by the French graphic artist, Ernest-Louis Lessieux (see Fig. 1.5). Primarily a watercolorist, he produced from 1900 to 1902 many different postcards in themed sets. Stylistically, most of his cards from this phase bear the hallmarks of art nouveau, with occasional orientalist features. In this instance, the posture, grooming, and attire of the young beauty are reminiscent of women depicted in Japanese [hanging silk scrolls](#) (see Fig. 1.6). In Victorian England, thanks to the medievalisms and even the medievomania of the architect [Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin](#) and the art critic [John Ruskin](#), earlier associations of Gothic with primitivism and the exotic did not disappear altogether. Yet in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, the orientalism of the style was transmuted at least sometimes into more religious and even sacramental iterations. Pugin not only witnessed but even participated in the intimacy between literature and architecture, which from the beginning has colored many Gothic movements. Already in 1831 he designed stage scenery for an [opera production](#) that drew upon Sir Walter Scott’s novel *Kenilworth*.





Fig. 1.3 Unknown artist, *Virgin and Child in Majesty*, ca. 1175–1200. Wood sculpture made in Auvergne, France, 79.5 × 31.7 × 29.2 cm. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art. Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1911.



Fig. 1.4 Unknown artist, *Standing Buddha in Abhayavara Mudra, Udayana Type*, 1368–1644. Bronze sculpture, 78 × 29.2 × 26 cm. Cambridge, MA, Harvard Art Museums, Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Bequest of Grenville L. Winthrop. Imaging Department © President and Fellows of Harvard College. All rights reserved.

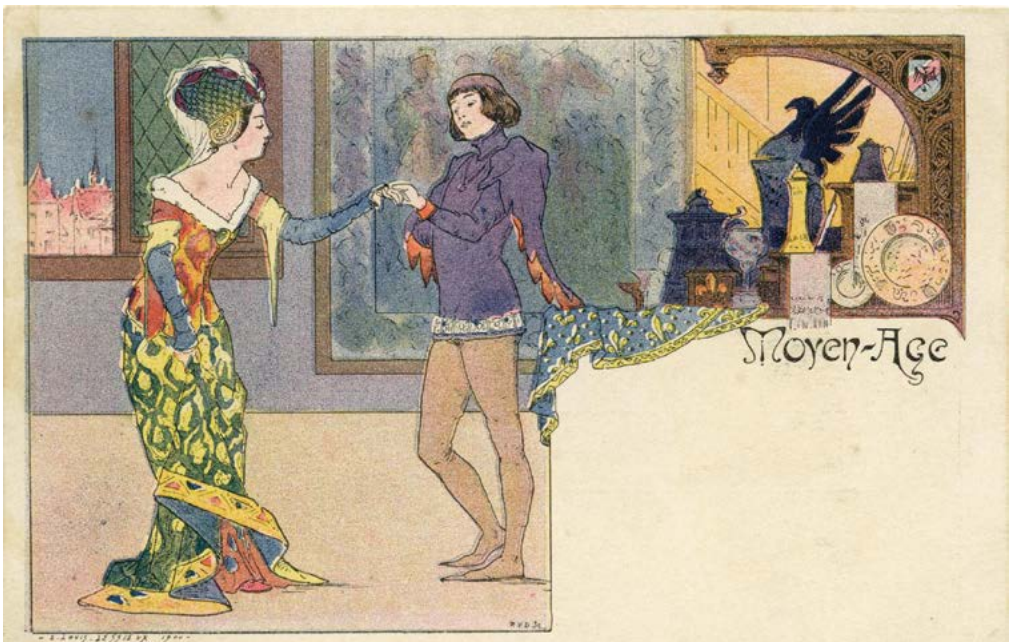


Fig. 1.5 Postcard depicting a fanciful vision of medieval life (Ernest Louis Lessieux, 1900).



Fig. 1.6 James Abbott McNeill Whistler, *Caprice in Purple and Gold: The Golden Screen*, 1864. Oil on panel, 50.1 × 68.5 cm. Washington, D.C., Freer Gallery of Art. Gift of Charles Lang Freer. Image from Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:James\\_McNeill\\_Whistler\\_-\\_Caprice\\_in\\_Purple\\_and\\_Gold-The\\_Golden\\_Screen\\_-\\_Google\\_Art\\_Project.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:James_McNeill_Whistler_-_Caprice_in_Purple_and_Gold-The_Golden_Screen_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg)

## The Sacramental Middle Ages

Theatrical across media, Pugin was at once an architectural and a religious revivalist. His career, tragically foreshortened but still astoundingly fecund, winged upward from 1835 until his death in 1852. In less than two decades, he laid the groundwork for subsequent revivals through the buildings—domestic, ecclesiastic, and civic—that he designed. He solidified this basis even more through the foundational books that he published. Amplifying the effects of his work seen in constructions and exhibitions, [his publications](#) wafted his campaign for Gothic beyond the farthest reaches of the British Empire to the United States.

Owing to the emphases inherent in Catholicism across most of its history, Pugin's volumes include no scant attention to the Virgin. In his *An Apology for the Revival of Christian Architecture*, the spire-intensive congestion of two dozen churches engulfs no

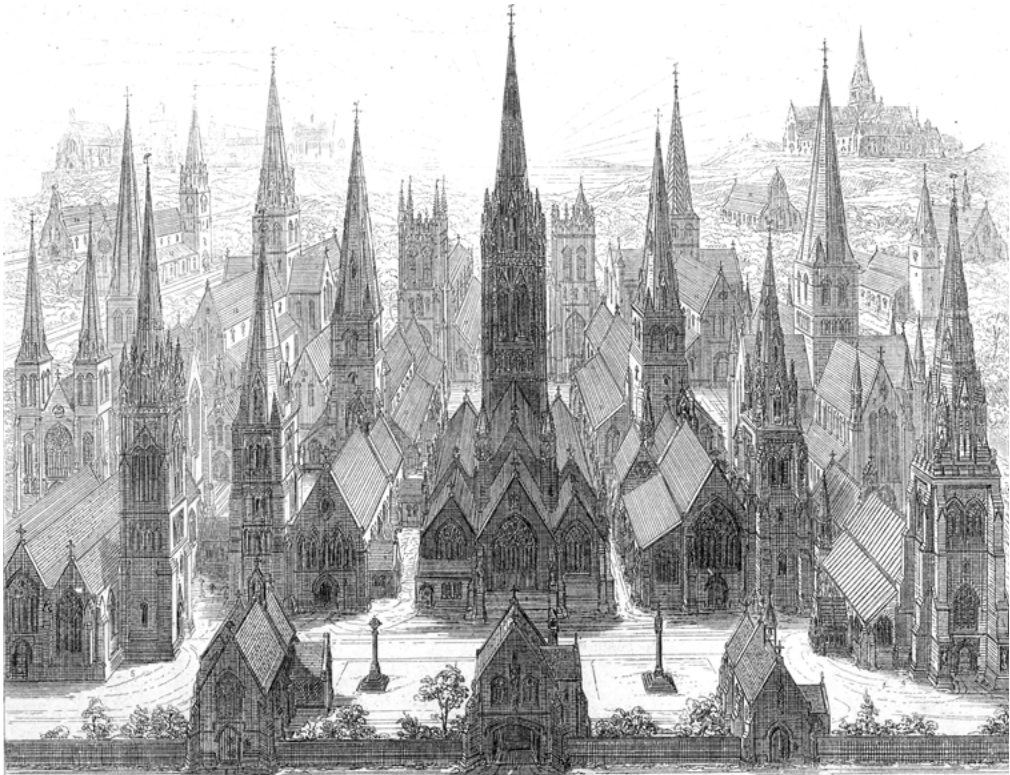


Fig. 1.7 “The Present Revival of Christian Architecture.” Illustration by Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin, 1893. Published in Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin, *An Apology for the Revival of Christian Architecture in England* (Edinburgh: J. Grant, 1895), frontispiece. Image from Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pugin\\_-\\_The\\_present\\_revival\\_of\\_Christian\\_architecture.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pugin_-_The_present_revival_of_Christian_architecture.jpg)

fewer than seven Saint Marys (see Fig 1.7). The compatibility of Gothic architecture, and the Goth architect, with the moral and even the sacred or sacramental is foregrounded in the frontispiece to his *The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture* from 1841. The illustration depicts a medieval draftsman wielding a compass at a desk. He toils in a thoroughly **medieval room**, with an angel surmounting a manuscript-laden lectern, a cross, reliquary, images of a saint and bishop, and a private altar with a triptych (see Fig. 1.8). In his Catholic faith, the indefatigable architect had all the fervor of a convert, and his religion led him to the Middle Ages. He brooked no dissent: the only response to Pugin was a suitably Gothic, “point taken.” For him, the style was an expression, even the highest one, of Christianity. It afforded a means to save a society that he judged had slumped into **degeneracy**. To all intents and purposes, medievalism offered a way to recoup spiritual losses inflicted by modern life.



Fig. 1.8 Frontispiece of Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin, *The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture* (London: John Weale, 1841).

Later Gothic revivalists, especially in the English-speaking world, often construed the style as a reflex not of Christian religion, but rather of a distinctive spirituality and values. [Mistrust has abided](#) of Pugin's Catholicism and of his undissimulated attempt to insinuate it into his design and ornament, just as his efforts to wed religious dogmatism and historicism in reviving the manner have been replicated. In contrast to the lingering preoccupation with the possible religious and spiritual proppings of the medieval architecture in the Anglophone world, [in the French language](#) Gothic has been applied more strictly and narrowly to specific types of architecture and structure.

In all these contexts, primitivism could slough off its negativity and become instead an overpowering positive. The medieval in its religious primitivism became an antidote to pagan classicism. An affirmative valence to the medieval as primitive can be culled from Artaud de Montor's 1843 book on [Primitive Painters: A Collection of Paintings Brought Back from Italy](#) (see Fig. 1.9). Through such religious primitivism, Gothic developed a capacity in France to appeal to factions that might otherwise be toxically opposed to one another. Republicans had good reason to eschew the neoclassicism of Napoleon I's imperial style, while monarchists had motivation to resort to the highest point of Christian unity in the Middle Ages. Everyone had cause to seek solace in a period that had begun with Germanic invasions, and ended with the hard-fought expulsion of foreign occupiers in the Hundred Years' War. In the last

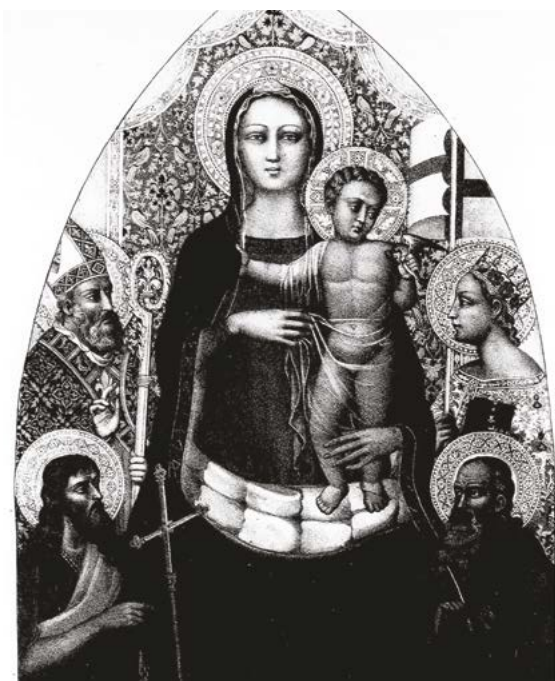


Fig. 1.9 Guido of Siena, *Virgin and Child*, thirteenth century. Tempera on wood. Reproduced by Imprimerie Bertauts in Jean-Alexis-François Artaud de Montor, *Peintres primitifs, collection de tableaux rapportée d'Italie* (Paris: Challamel, 1843), plate 7. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France. Image courtesy of Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris. All rights reserved.



Fig. 1.10 Jan Verkade at the time of his ordination. Photograph, 1912. Photographer unknown. Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum. Image from Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jan\\_Verkade\\_1912.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jan_Verkade_1912.jpg)

quarter of the nineteenth century and continuing long into the twentieth, through collective self-persuasion the medieval era came to signify the time when the French nation took shape, when Gallic society contributed equally to the making of the cathedrals, and when writers and audiences were **childlike, humble, naïve, primitive, and simple**.

The jongleur arrived at just the right moment to benefit from the full spectrum of all these associations. Along with many other reflexes of literature, art, and architecture, he helped to ensure that medievalism would not be always or even mostly a crosscurrent **in conflict with modernism**. What was perceived as its medieval flavor presented another possible model.

In 1891, when Paul Gauguin slipped off to French Polynesia in the South Seas to escape the artificiality and conventionality of European civilization, his fellow postimpressionist painter Jan Verkade entered a Benedictine abbey to become **Father Willibrord** (see Fig. 1.10). At this time, a traditional Catholic monastery was not very distant from its medieval forefather. It stood a pace away from modernity, a transition

back in time as decisive as the geographical lurch that Gauguin undertook. The two artists’ moves, to Tahiti and to monasticism, cannot be treated as identical, but they were both rooted in a desire for mysticism that went hand in hand with an admiration for the pulchritude of primitivism. The medieval primitive artists, like those of aboriginal peoples and exotic (often synonymous with oriental) cultures, occupied their own places on a full palette of primary and primitivist colors.

Today in many large museums of Western art, a Madonna of the Middle Ages is roped off with other art from the same period of European culture, in a gallery that leads in an orderly progression to others displaying subsequent stages of art from the same region. Such chronological ghettoization would not have seemed self-evident in all past eras. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, collectors might have been more tempted to juxtapose the same Virgin with a Buddha, an Aztec piece, or some other object from another purportedly exotic or primitive culture.

In the interim, attitudes have shifted regarding the desirability of qualities that have been often seen as characteristic of premodern or nonmodern human beings. Intriguing transformations across time can be graphed in the relative frequency in English writing of words such as *humble and humility, devout, faithful, modesty, and simplicity* (see Fig. 1.11). What should we conclude? Very rarely have terms even loosely related to any of these snowballed by orders of magnitude in usage. The exception that proves the rule is the self-reflexive *self-doubt* (see Fig. 1.12). Consider by way of contrast the sharp uptick in the commonness of *selfie*, the most simply self-absorbed word and practice of all. The jongleur epitomizes the opposite: selflessness, not selfishness. No wonder that he is for the time being out of vogue.

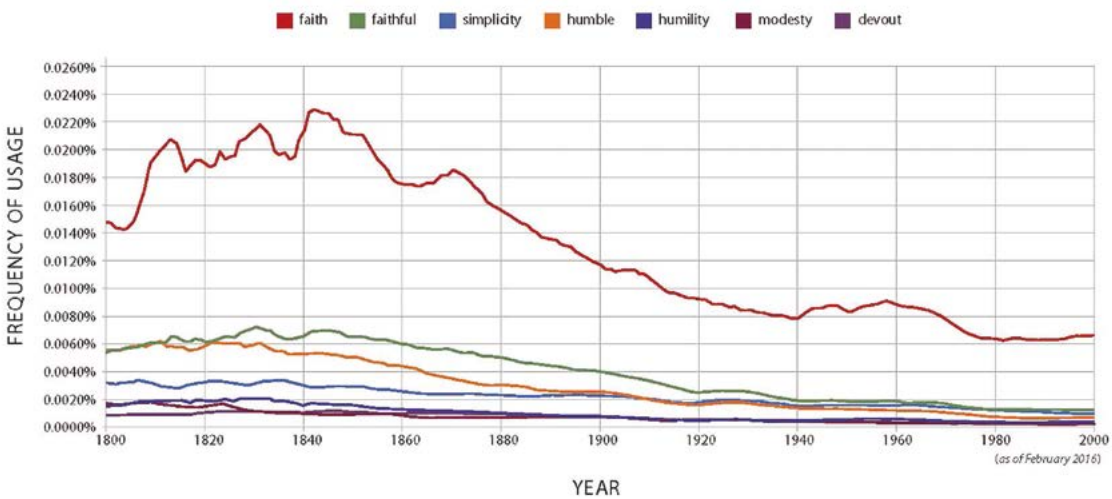


Fig. 1.11 Google Books Ngram data for a cluster of words associated with the supposed character of premodern Europe, showing a gradual but steady decline in frequency over the last two centuries. Vector art by Melissa Tandysh, 2014. Image courtesy of Melissa Tandysh. All rights reserved.

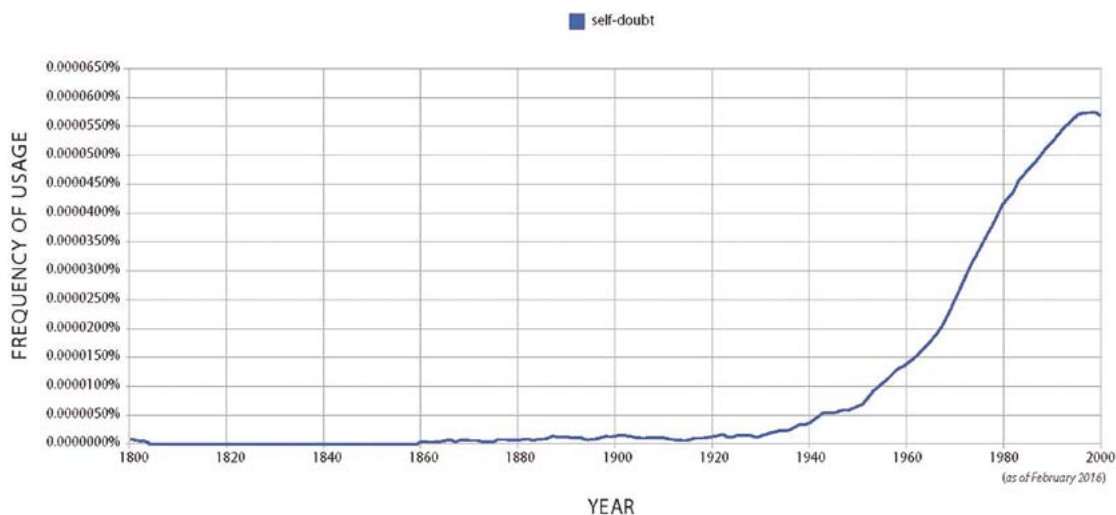


Fig. 1.12 Google Books Ngram data for “self-doubt,” showing a marked rise in frequency beginning in 1920. Vector art by Melissa Tandysh, 2014. Image courtesy of Melissa Tandysh. All rights reserved.

## The Franco-Prussian War

The Franco-Prussian War lasted only from July 19, 1870, to May 10, 1871. Less than a year in duration, it was still a watershed moment in European history. The American man of letters and historian, Henry Adams, who by coincidence was in Paris in July of 1870 for the theater, found the early days of the conflict fittingly operatic. Under the leadership of the government, the public engaged in outpourings of chauvinism with self-assurance that proved to be **totally divorced from reality**. The debacle that befell the French was the more excruciating for being a complete bombshell. The entire nation was discomfited. After being prepped for swift victory, France was instead clobbered: they were outmanned and outgunned by the Prussians and their various German allies. Still worse, the immediate effects of the rout only started the woes to follow.

The stretch can be called simply *l'année terrible* (the terrible year), which was the phrase assigned by Victor Hugo to a series of poems he published in 1872. In this poetry, the French writer took in stride tragedies both national and personal. In the first category could be subsumed the Franco-Prussian War and the Paris Commune, the short-lived revolutionary government; in the second would fall the loss of his son from tuberculosis. To focus on the war, both sides had been spoiling for the fight. Over the first six months of the hostilities, the German armies trampled both the French and their pride in battles fought across northern France. Under the direction of the Prussian statesman Otto von Bismarck, the invaders first captured the emperor, Napoleon III, at the Battle of Sedan on September 1, 1870, and then besieged Paris



Fig. 1.13 Wilhelm Camphausen, *Otto von Bismarck geleitet Kaiser Napoleon III am Morgen nach der Schlacht von Sedan (1870) zu König Wilhelm I, 1877*. Oil on canvas, 53 × 88 cm. Berlin, Deutsches Historisches Museum. Image from Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1877\\_Camphausen\\_Otto\\_von\\_Bismarck\\_geleitet\\_Kaiser\\_Napoleon\\_III\\_anagoria.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1877_Camphausen_Otto_von_Bismarck_geleitet_Kaiser_Napoleon_III_anagoria.JPG)



Fig. 1.14 Anton Werner, *Die Proklamierung des deutschen Kaiserreiches*, 1885. Oil on canvas, 250 × 250 cm. Friedrichsruh, Germany, Bismarck-Museum. Image from Wikimedia Commons, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wernerprokla.jpg>



successfully (see Fig. 1.13). In the process, the vanquishers handed the defenders their first military loss since Napoleon I—and it was calamitous. In the aftermath, they extorted from across the Rhine the long-contested buffer provinces of Alsace and Lorraine. Appropriating them into their own empire, they redrew the borders for decades to come. For four months they occupied the capital, and left only after demanding and receiving war indemnities of five billion gold francs. For Germany, the Franco-Prussian War culminated in its own formal unification, when its minor states were integrated into an overarching nation and empire, as a unified Reich. This event took place, with no small swaggering and muscle-flexing, on January 18, 1871, in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles in France (see Fig. 1.14). Among Prussians, desire for national unity had been redoubled by the ignominy of the Napoleonic occupation decades earlier in the century. Now the longing saw redemption, in the form of military triumph and territorial gain. Beyond Alsace-Lorraine, the creation of a nation-state enabled the military to join forces with business in vigorous pursuit of imperialism that girdled the globe.

The jingoism that aspired to geographic and economic expansion traveled in tandem with its doppelgänger in cultural ambition. In turn, this nationalism of the arts and humanities rested upon conceptions of culture that located the origins of national identity in the Middle Ages. Nations have been called [imagined communities](#). If they acquired that status in the late nineteenth century, the imagination that created them relied heavily on the medieval period to do so. Under such circumstances, hitting upon showpieces from remote centuries and publishing them could carry prestige far beyond what philology could ever wheedle from the public or government in our days. Back then, [producing a first edition](#) could be tantamount on an intellectual and an artistic level to staking out a new imperial conquest or wresting an old one from a rival empire. Editing French belonged to a scholarly competition that paralleled actual combat.

In no small part owing to the travails that their lands and peoples had suffered during the occupation by Napoleon I, the Germans turned to their earliest texts as morale-boosters. We speak of making peace with the past, but they sought to reconcile with the present through the past. In 1819, they founded the imposingly entitled *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*. This series of “Historic Monuments of Germany” was designed to assemble historical records. The spirit in which they shouldered this editorial mission is manifest in its Latin motto: [“Sanctus amor patriae dat animum”](#) (“sacred love of the fatherland gives heart”). At the same time, they undertook efforts to make a national epic of the *Nibelungenlied* and other poetry. Working from the same impulse, the Brothers Grimm sought out the narratives and lore for what has become known in English as *Grimms’ Fairy Tales*. Now the French took a page from the same book, or a parchment leaf from the same manuscript, by seeking affirmation from their medieval literature. In 1882, Ernest Renan delivered a keen-witted lecture, [“What is a Nation?”](#) In the essay as printed, the French historian emphasized the role

of history in constituting a nation. He saw the historical craft as a *sine qua non* in determining not only what is remembered but also what is forgotten. He defined nationhood as a soul and as a spiritual principle. It was erected in equal measure on collective memories of the past and a common will in the present. For grounding a communal soul in bygone days, historians banked upon colleagues in Old French philology to trace a shared language and to establish a joint literature.

In 1888, a [Greek linguistic reformer](#), residing in the capital city of France, stated crisply, almost like a law of physics, a recipe for the creation of a nation-state: “A nation, to become a nation, wishes for two things: to enlarge its frontiers and to create its own literature.” Nationalization and nationalism were two-pronged. The pair required on the one hand a government and a military, and on the other literary and historical studies. In the early phase of European nation-building, much literary scholarship was directed toward finding, constituting, and interpreting texts that would help to define the distinctive origins and nature of the nation. Such literary research became known technically as philology, and whenever possible, such philological inquiries sought to locate the beginnings of national literature in the Middle Ages. Thus, revivals of medieval literature belong to the process by which nations are constituted or even invented.

The German devotion to medieval cultures, and particularly to the cultures that constituted its own Middle Ages, crested among other things in the completion of the Gothic cathedral in Cologne. The great church had [remained half finished](#) after the medieval building campaign that ran from 1248 to 1473. In 1814, the German author and journalist Joseph Görres promulgated a rousing appeal for the eventual accomplishment of the undertaking. In so doing, he took to a journalistic level a basis that had been established by Friedrich Schlegel, whose *Fundamentals of Gothic Architecture* from 1804–1805 rested heavily on [analysis of the edifice](#). In the following two decades, the German art collector and art historian Sulpice Boisserée circulated engravings of the structure as it would look if brought to fruition according to medieval drawings with its towers completed (see Fig. 1.15). Notables such as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe put their shoulders into the [ensuing fund drive](#). The retrofitting of the Cologne cathedral by adding towers became, not merely metaphorically, the paramount German steeplechase.

A public competition was conducted in 1873 to select a design for a neo-Gothic renovation of the choir and sanctuary with an ambulatory, but such grandiose aspirations were never to be fulfilled. Nonetheless, by 1880, Görres’s basic goal became realized substantially, if not finally and fully, owing to synergy among at least three constituencies. One comprised [architects](#). They hewed to the original scheme, which was modeled closely on Amiens—the cathedral that John Ruskin later took as a “bible” of Gothic architecture and art. But the spires of the Cologne cathedral are altogether German. A second agent among the promoters of completion was the

Catholic Church, which in 1821 reestablished the [archbishop's diocese](#) there. The key player, however, was the Prussian state, which despite being officially Protestant threw its weight behind the project.

Thanks to the cooperation of these three groups, within a few years of the Franco-Prussian War the Germans had the Roman Catholic cathedral of Cologne as an emblem of their new national identity (see Figs. 1.16 and 1.17). The finishing touches were celebrated in 1880 in a Festival for the Construction of the Cathedral. As a matter of national pride, the German emperor, Kaiser Wilhelm I, was in attendance. The achievement was recognized to be momentous for the country both at home and abroad. A history of Germany for an English juvenile audience, which in its first edition of 1847 had run to the Battle of Leipzig in 1813, was updated in its fifth edition of 1882 to include this historic turning point: [the new title](#) indicated that the revised book ended with “the completion of the Cologne Cathedral in the year 1880.”



Fig. 1.15 Cologne Cathedral. Engraving by Christian Friedrich Traugott Duttenhoffer, 1819. Published in Sulpice Boisserée, *Ansichten, Risse und einzelne Teile des Domes von Köln* (Stuttgart: Boisserée und Cotta, 1823–1831), table 4. Image from Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Christian\\_Friedrich\\_Traugott\\_Duttenhofer,\\_Der\\_L%C3%A4ngenaufri%C3%9F.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Christian_Friedrich_Traugott_Duttenhofer,_Der_L%C3%A4ngenaufri%C3%9F.jpg)



Fig. 1.16 Postcard depicting Cologne Cathedral (early twentieth century).



Fig. 1.17 Postcard depicting Cologne Cathedral (Leipzig: Dr. Trenkler Co., early twentieth century).

The war's end left France, in diametric contrast to Prussia, vanquished, impoverished, and shamed. The military had been demoralized and defanged. The populace was fiercely torn on many topics. The so-called revanchists, who harbored unchecked nationalism, took their name from the French for "revenge." As the etymology presupposes, they burned to reconquer lost territory and stature. But no one could settle an old score until the government had been pieced back together. Napoleon III's surrender and capitulation to the Prussians after the Battle of Sedan ended irrevocably the intermittent rule of France by members of the House of Bonaparte that had begun under Napoleon I, and after the imperial regime collapsed, society fell into shambles.

The chaos of infighting careened to its lowest point during and directly after the two months of the so-called Paris Commune of 1871. In this episode, Parisian workers and the National Guard stationed in the city revolted against the army that the government of the newly declared Republic dispatched from its seat in Versailles. Mob rule ensued. The French forces that had not long ago fought the Germans and lost were now deployed in a second blockade to overcome, override, and crush this insurgent government in the capital, which they did savagely. The battle culminated in the so-called **bloody week**. During this small-scale civil war, perhaps 20,000 to 25,000 people lost their lives. Many working-class neighborhoods and slums endured serious damage, while afterward everyone suffered famine. The maelstrom did not lack Marian byproducts. The parish church of Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois, in the heart of Paris, had been the previous site of civic disturbances (see Fig. 1.18). On this occasion, one troublemaking militiaman there, egged on by a mob of good-for-nothings,

punched open the mouth of a revered statue of the Madonna and Child, thrust a pipe into the new orifice, tore off the infant Jesus, jammed it onto the tip of his bayonet, and paraded it around. In the Middle Ages, Mary would have counterpunched by [striking down the blasphemer](#).

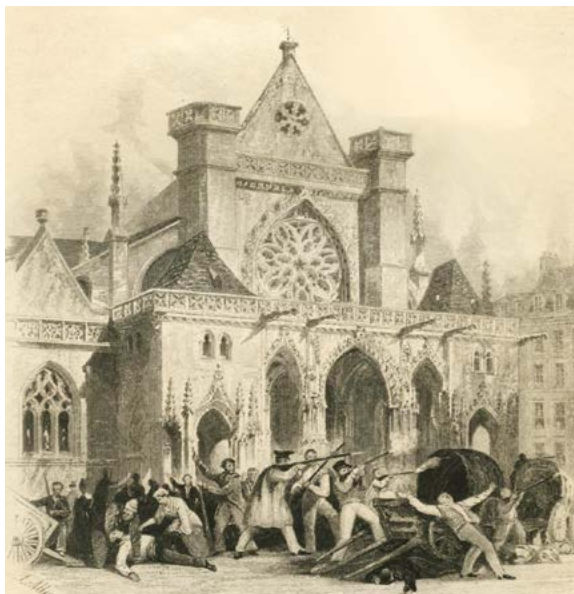


Fig. 1.18 St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in front of the Church of Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois, Paris. Engraving by Thomas Allom, 1859.

More broadly, wedges were driven within the people of France. Divides opened between city and country, between believers and nonbelievers, and, most of all, between those dewy-eyed for the Ancien Régime or “Old Rule,” as the prerevolutionary political and social system is known, and those convinced that they were perpetuating the French Revolution and Enlightenment. The self-inflicted mess only intensified the soul-searching that the Franco-Prussian War itself had initiated. The Third Republic was established in 1875 and lasted sixty-five years, until the German invasion, occupation, and the institution of the Vichy government in 1940.

## The Virtue of Old French

An aphorism holds that history is written by the victors. In the wake of the Franco-Prussian War, the opposite held true. The routed set themselves to the task of laying the groundwork for composing literary history. During the opening decades of the Third Republic, the investigation of medieval French culture became a kind of civic virtue: it was foundational in the national rebranding that France imposed upon itself. Study of the Middle Ages became a pastime of patriots. By transference, neglect of

it looked like the lot of [recreants](#). Many fields of academic inquiry have heroic early phases. They are constituted in a paroxysm of energy, confidence, and innovation. This period witnessed just such an effusion of high-brow derring-do. While it would be a misrepresentation to suggest that no [spadework](#) had been conducted previously, the numbers of professors, teachers, students, and pupils surged dramatically. That rise was matched by the proportional hike in quality of scholarship, as well as in positions and institutions to support its furtherance. Between 1870 and 1900, the specialization of Old French established itself as an autonomous and legitimate intellectual pursuit [within the universities of France](#). French philology became prestigious, even chic.

The exaltation of medieval language and literature stands out in the often nationalistic and even implicitly xenophobic reception of the epic poem *The Song of Roland* and in the rallying around the story of [Joan of Arc](#). The fight-to-the-death account of the epic's title character lent itself ideally to the nationalist needs of France at the time. Probably composed in versions between the mid-eleventh and early twelfth centuries, the poem recounts a story of tragic heroics. It is based on a military campaign that played out in 778. The decisive event transpired during the reign of Charlemagne. The key place was Roncevaux, a pass in the Pyrenees, a mountain range between France and Spain. In the legend, the combatants are the Frankish army and the Muslims in Spain. The Islamic side waylays the hindmost of Charlemagne's men, who are led valiantly by his nephew Roland in a suicidal last-gasp defense. The Franks do make good their loss, but not before the tragic hero has been slain.

[The medieval poem relates](#) a demoralizing thrashing that led the way to a stunning turnabout and triumph—much as the debacle of the Franco-Prussian War would set the stage for the hollow victory of World War I. As noted, nationalism cannot exist without a narrative: here, patriotism and philology were partnered, in what could be called French national philology. In this case the tale had to be constructed on the basis of a remote past by applying both historiography and philology. In December of the ghastly year 1870, Gaston Paris himself composed and delivered at the Collège de France a lecture entitled "[The Song of Roland and French Nationality](#)."

The French philologist Léon Gautier (see Fig. 1.19) performed a patriotic and not merely a philological service in producing new editions of the medieval poem in the aftermath of the trouncing. In 1872, he brought out two volumes that lavished upon the epic an extensive introduction headed "History of a National Poem," text and translation on facing pages, notes and variants, glossary, and index. In 1892, looking back at this turn to the Middle Ages, he reported reflectively of the *chanson de geste*:

[It took the war of 1870](#) to grant us understanding and love of it. Sedan made us understand Roncevaux.... [T]he enemy had not yet left our lands when we were already turning in tears toward these two luminous figures, Roland and Joan of Arc, asking of them simultaneously solace and hope.



Fig. 1.19 Léon Gautier. Photograph, before 1897. Photographer unknown. Paris, Archives nationales. Image courtesy of the Archives nationales, Paris. All rights reserved.

Gautier was flanked by others, not the least Gaston Paris, in putting his knowledge of medieval French language and literature at the behest of the nation. Revanchists took to heart the poem of Roland, which showed how an initial catastrophic failure of the military could be overcome in an ultimate victory. It gave them an origin story that conveyed guidance and pride. The oldest manuscript of *The Song of Roland* had been discovered at Oxford and edited in 1837. Thereafter the epic became a source of inspiration for a veritable rainbow of cultural products, such as the play *The Daughter of Roland*. The theatrical work enjoyed a **major triumph** when produced in January 1875. The star-studded cast spotlighted the equally glorious and notorious actor Sarah Bernhardt (see Fig. 1.20). From that inflection point on, the piece became entrenched in broader culture, even in school productions, through the end of World War I.

The direct influence of *The Song of Roland* can be seen when in 1880 it was made a set text prescribed for the examination administered to candidates who sought to qualify as secondary-school instructors. Then, in 1885, medieval literature was **introduced into the scholastic curriculum** for students as well. As a consequence, the epic was presented in a blizzard of scholarly and popular editions. Working alone, Léon Gautier disgorged a gush of such scholarship that began not insignificantly in 1872. The spate coincided with his involvement in task forces to **promote medieval literature** for patriotic reasons within national education. Speaking to the divine support for French

revanchism, in the face of battlefield losses, is the frontispiece of his inaugural edition, and the title page points to the art and labor by which redemption might be attained (see Figs. 1.21 and 1.22). How does this nationalistic literary activity relate to *Our Lady's Tumbler*? Granted, the medieval verse could not be retailed as a [French Iliad](#) as *The Song of Roland* was. For decades, the latter proved to be irreplaceable in mustering young men to be soldiers. Within a stirring heroic narrative about crusading, it celebrated qualities of spirit that were felt to be inherently and inspirationally Gallic. The tale of the jongleur differed deep down, having nothing to do with Crusades, warfare, or valorous masculinity. Its central figure is not an emperor's nephew like Roland nor a female saint like Joan of Arc. Does that make the tumbler anti-heroic, pre-heroic, para-heroic, or something else altogether? Can a character so humble stand at the center of a hero cult? In any case, the Picard-French poem floated by itself and possessed its own distinct potential to serve as a cultural rallying point. Set alongside *The Song of Roland* and Joan of Arc, it may have had only a small role to perform—but it played it well.

With the language and literature of the French Middle Ages so very much at center stage, the rediscovery of a text regarded as a hidden jewel of poetry from medieval France would have seemed almost providential. Although no one sought to equate the poem of the jongleur with any work of ancient Greek literature, the Greek poet Sappho's devotion to the goddess Aphrodite offers a few niggling and nugatory parallels to the jongleur in his dedication to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Yet Sappho's gender, sexuality, and society render her ineligible as a prospect for side-by-side comparison. The notion of characterizing *Our Lady's Tumbler* as the medieval equivalent of a Homeric hymn is tantalizing, but uncalled for. The whole point was that no authorization from antiquity was required: instead, people wanted ratification from the Middle Ages.

## Gaston Paris and the Dance of Philology

[This book makes us love Gaston Paris](#): it makes us love the Middle Ages too.

*Our Lady's Tumbler* was discovered and distributed through international scholarly cooperation. In the distribution process, the prime mover was Gaston Paris (see Fig. 1.23). Leader of the pack among professors of French in the capital, he was no mere scholar's scholar but a public intellectual. He played his role not by crafting disquisitions of his own about the text or interpretations of the tale, but solely by [condensing an article](#) by a German researcher into three lines. Nonetheless, he made a twofold mark. First, he furnished a vehicle for the original publication of the text; second, he popularized it by remarks in books of broad reach in both France and abroad.





Fig. 1.20 Illustration of Henri de Bornier's *La fille de Roland*. From left to right, the portraits at top depict Jean Mounet-Sully, Henri de Bornier, and Sarah Bernhardt. Illustration by H. Meyer, 1875. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France. Image courtesy of Bibliothèque nationale de France. All rights reserved.



Fig. 1.21 Charlemagne surveys the dead at Roncevaux. Engraving by Émile Berthiault, 1872. Published in Léon Gautier, ed., *La chanson de Roland* (Tours: Alfred Mame et Fils, 1872), frontispiece.

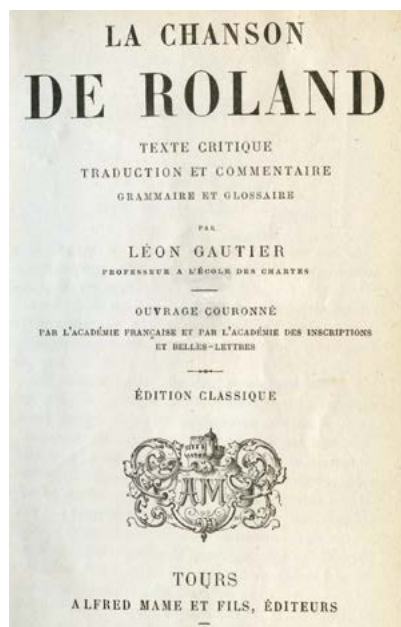


Fig. 1.22 Title page of Léon Gautier, ed., *La chanson de Roland* (Tours: Alfred Mame et Fils, 1872).



Fig. 1.23 Gaston Paris, age 61.  
Photograph by Léopold Reutlinger,  
1900.

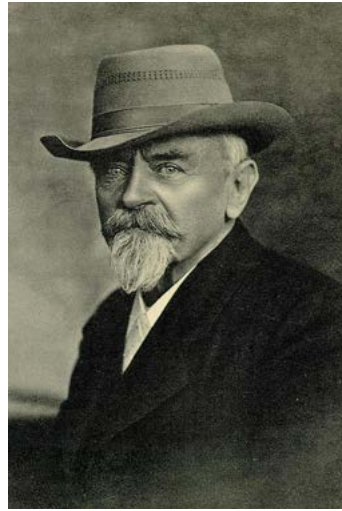


Fig. 1.24 Wendelin (Wilhelm) Förster. Photograph,  
date and photographer unknown. Image courtesy  
of Universitätsbibliothek Graz. All rights reserved.

Who was Gaston Paris? At a moment when Lady Philology reigned arm in arm with Lady History, he acquired just recognition in his nation as the philologist above all philologists in Romance philology. As such, his special field of interest was medieval French. He cultivated his specialization at the precise time when the elite shaping culture sought to fashion and reinforce national identity on the grounds of the languages and literatures of France in the Middle Ages. For all that, the story of this scholar's engagement with the story must not be caricatured simplistically as a crude and rough-spoken tale of cultural jingoism: it was anything but that. The nineteenth century was indeed one of nationalities and of nationalism, but the juggler belonged more to his class or profession than to his nation—except when political crises reached their boiling points. His status as a popular performer upstaged all realistic hope of packaging him explicitly as a proto-Frenchman.

In the argot of textual scholarship, the first edition of a text to be brought into print is known technically by a Latin phrase that means just that. The *editio princeps* of the medieval French *Our Lady's Tumbler* was published by [Wendelin \(or Wilhelm\) Foerster](#) (see Fig. 1.24). This German-speaking philologist is today recognized mostly for editing the romances of Chrétien de Troyes and for [two text series](#) he founded. His strong concentration on editorial production was probably the main stimulus that drove him to his toils on the original French of *Our Lady's Tumbler*. Secondly, his Catholicism could have predisposed him further to the contents of the poem. Foerster had access to only a single witness to the text. Although subsequently four additional manuscripts would be brought to light, he had the happy lot to base his editorial efforts on the superior one upon which he happened first. His base manuscript could be placed early in a single-branched stemma or family tree, and it transmitted a text

that scarcely differed from the only other codex preferable to it. The upshot is that other editions have been printed and have brought advances of various sorts, but thanks to the piece of luck that this first editor chanced to find the best manuscript, the text has stayed substantially as he constituted it.

The edition appeared in *Romania*. The title of that august journal signifies, more or less, “the Romance languages.” It remains still today one of the premier publications for the analysis of French language and literature of the Middle Ages. The periodical had been cofounded in the capital city in 1872, only a year before the publication of the edition—and that means only a year following the debacle of the war. The joint inaugurators, who also shared the editorship, were the foremost grandees of Romance philology at the time among French nationals, [Paul Meyer](#) and Gaston Paris. The germ for the periodical’s foundation existed already before the war, but [the nature of the project](#) was unquestionably conditioned by the checkmate of France at the end of the combat. In the prospectus for the new publication, the brace of scholars avowed that their aim was concurrently scholarly and patriotic. By their own lights, the scientific study of the Middle Ages could [redress the rupture](#) of the French nation from its past, which from their standpoint had contributed to the recent military and political disasters. They set out deliberately to heal the break with the medieval period that had begun in the sixteenth century and become total in the eighteenth. On a learned plane, they sought to work for the intellectual and moral reform of their country. The two efforts went hand in hand.

The journal bore the epigraph “[To recall the sayings](#), deeds, and customs of ancestors.” Yet red-blooded patriotism did not trump cooperation in research that transected the boundaries of nation-states. In the final line of Foerster’s introduction to our text, he registers [appreciation of Gaston Paris](#) “to whose expertise [he] had recourse on many occasions.” By the same token, the Frenchman’s commitment to the culture of his motherland did not render his literary history and other writings less palatable to scholars of other languages and literatures, or to those who might be styled comparatists. In fact, the opposite held true. For example, W. P. Ker (see Fig. 1.25), a great Scottish critic of medieval literature, took two papers by Paris, both composed during the Franco-Prussian war, to prove how the French philologist “believed strongly in his own country, and hardly less strongly in the community of learning over all the world. [He] knew to the full the claims of patriotism and of learning, and [tampered with neither when they were accidentally opposed.](#)”

Gaston Paris and Paul Meyer formed a heavyweight team within the academy. They occupied unrivaled positions—the first even more than the second—inside the intellectual life of their country in general and within medieval studies in particular. Within the clubby world of medieval French philology in France, they made up a two-man coalition of absolute authority and influence. In the politics of ancient Rome, it would have been called a [duumvirate](#). Among the special fortes of the pair, one lay in creating new institutions for teaching and scholarship, another in reorganizing

old ones. In both initiatives, they brought French higher learning into alignment with the model of philology already established in [German universities of the day](#). In part, they accomplished their objective by setting up a [seminar](#) in the true etymological sense of the original Latin word. That is, they produced a seed plot that could flower within the academic culture dependent upon them.

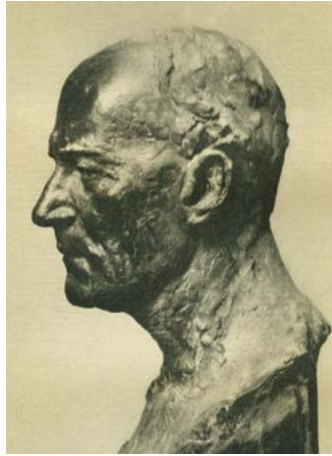


Fig. 1.25 Bust of W. P. Ker. Sculpture, date, and artist unknown. Photograph published in Charles Whibley, ed., *Collected Essays of W. P. Ker*, vol. 1 (London: Macmillan, 1925), frontispiece.

The grandiloquent name given to the sheaf of skills required for access to the languages of the Middle Ages was philology. The rigmarole applied by philologists to arrive at reliable editions of medieval texts was the exacting and even fastidious scrutiny of manuscripts that is called recension. It was associated in its prevailing form with an [editorial procedure](#) that has long been associated with the German Karl Lachmann, a Prussian classical philologist and Germanist (see Fig. 1.26). The Lachmannian method certifies that manuscripts are related when they chime with each other in their wording. The specific prognostic is when they depart from the correct text in the same ways. By implication, [common errors](#) mean that they share common origins. Gaston Paris may not have liked the Prussian Germanist as a person, and he may not have deigned to cite him, but he subscribed to the methodology [named after him](#). In 1866, he reviewed an edition by a German of a [medieval German text](#), and in his assessment, he set forth the superiority of Lachmann's modus operandi. In fact, he promoted the common-error approach to editing so convincingly as to guarantee that it would hold sway among textual scholars in his nation for more than a generation to come. In the study of vernacular languages, philology was a tool applied in the search for (or manufacture of) national origins. Likewise, Lachmann's attention to supposed mistakes became an instrument for the reconstitution of lost originals. It was standard operating procedure for the scholarly cleaning crews that sought to make sense of texts transmitted in medieval manuscripts.

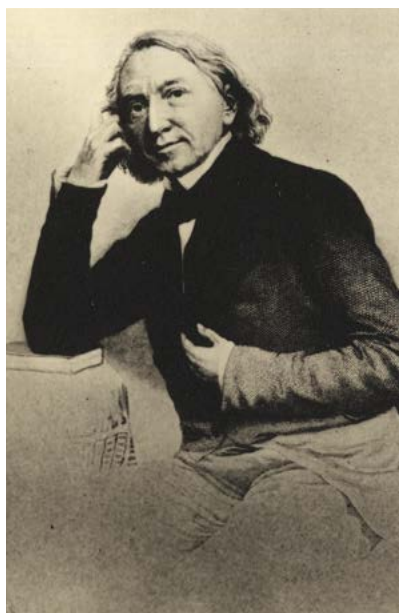


Fig. 1.26 Karl Lachmann. Steel engraving by A. Teichel, from photograph by H. Biow, ca. 1850. Image courtesy of Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. All rights reserved.

The dynamic duo of Paris and Meyer shared a philosophy of discovery and knowing that is typical of their period. This combined heuristics and epistemology goes by the name of positivism. The theory maintained that positive knowledge rests on positive fact. All beliefs should be testable. In philology, this epistemic system strives to brace arguments and interpretations with cross-checkable data, such as historical facts or linguistic evidence. Meyer had been trained in Paris at the [École Nationale des Chartes](#), a French state institution (see Fig. 1.27). Founded ultimately in 1821, it is devoted to the education of archivists and librarians. As such, it purveys instruction in such fields as paleography, diplomatics, and, more broadly, archival studies. He joined the manuscript department of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in 1863. This National Library of France, likewise in the capital city, developed out of the [Royal Library](#) of the French kings. Gaston Paris was the son of Paulin Paris, himself a specialist in medieval French literature (see Fig. 1.28). Paulin moved eventually from employment in the Royal Library to a chair created for him at the Collège de France. [He held this post until his retirement](#) in 1872, when his son replaced him. In time, the younger Paris became a considerably more [widely known personage](#) than either his father or his chief workmate.

In the Paris family dynasty, the scion's most obvious legacy may be the phrase *amour courtois*, translated into English as "courtly love." Unattested in any medieval language, the phrase was coined by Gaston Paris and first employed in writing in 1883. The venue was none other than [the pages of Romania](#). The expression refers to an alleged code of love between women and men. This protocol is argued to form

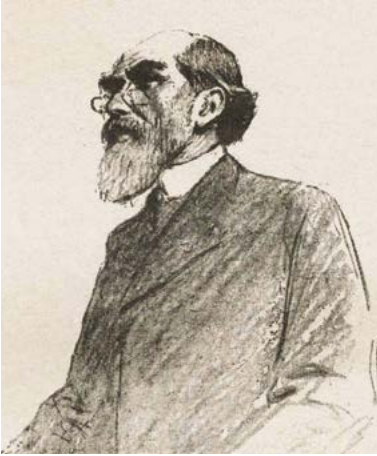


Fig. 1.27 Paul Meyer. Engraving by Louis Rémy Sabattier, 1898. Published in George Bonnamour, *Le procès Zola: Impressions d'audience* (Paris: A. Pierret, 1898), 123.



Fig. 1.28 Paulin Paris. Engraving by AT, 1899, after photograph by Jean Nicolas Truchelut. Reims, Bibliothèque municipale de Reims. Image from Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Paulin\\_paris\\_1881\\_BMR\\_41\\_318.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Paulin_paris_1881_BMR_41_318.jpg)



Fig. 1.29 Master of the Taking of Tarento, *The Triumph of Venus*, 1360. Tempera on wood, 51 cm. diameter. Paris, Musée du Louvre. Image from Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Master\\_Taking\\_of\\_Tarento\\_-\\_Triumph\\_of\\_Venus\\_\(Louvre\).jpeg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Master_Taking_of_Tarento_-_Triumph_of_Venus_(Louvre).jpeg)

the backdrop to the lyric poetry of troubadours as well as to the Arthurian romances that followed. The specific type of sentiment often centered upon the idealization of a married noblewoman. Although the object of attraction was usually inaccessible, the adulation could lead sometimes to adultery. Just as often (and not necessarily excluding any less hallowed inclinations), such adoration has spiritual dimensions. In psychological terms, it embraces such raw and powerful emotions as desire, joy, and anguish. The etiquette associated with such adulation is chivalry, while the social order is feudalism. The lover renders homage to his lady and renders to her the service of love [as a vassal does to his lord](#) (see Fig. 1.29). In many ways, *Our Lady's Tumbler* puts on show the opposite of courtly love. Etymologically, chivalry rides on the back of steeds: the noun derives from a Late Latin word for a horseman, itself from a Latin word for a horse. Though at the beginning of our medieval tale the protagonist owns a mount, he relinquishes it. Even before doing so, he is not a knight. The politesse on display in the poem is not knightly, and its social setting reflects monasticism rather than the feudalism of the secular world. In fact, the gymnast lacks all the negative undertones that are embedded in the feudal system. One of these medieval equestrians could exercise power either rightly or wrongly. To take two adjectives that derive from the same roots for equestrian, he could behave either chivalrously or cavalierly. The jongleur has none of either extreme. Instead, he forges his own chivalry and courtliness. At the same time, he endures all the seething emotions of a gallant lover in pursuit of his unreachable lady. It could even be said that the jongleur embodies passion, in the sense of both suffering and exaltation. He agonizes for the one he adores. In return, he receives compassion. The acrobat's loved one stands on an actual pedestal. His attentions to her can be truly called idolization, and yet he displays none of the [fixation with her beauty](#) that is ubiquitous in chivalric literature. Finally, he serves her with all the unswerving loyalty that a romance hero manifests for the love of his life.

Despite the high impact of *amour courtois*, Gaston Paris's enviable reputation rests on far more than his verbalization of this single concept alone. For example, one monument of his scholarship is Marian, namely, the eight-volume edition of [Miracles of Our Lady, by Characters](#). The whole original comprises forty miracle plays in verse that are preserved in a two-volume manuscript. The cycle of dramatic pieces was an innovation in its time. As a totality, the suite of texts constitutes a major starting point for fourteenth-century theater, and it was [staged every winter](#) by the goldsmiths' guild in Paris. Most notably, Gaston Paris remains well known for [a foundational article](#) in *Romania*, in which he unknotted the conceptual evolution from the Latin adjective for "Roman." This investigation was basal in differentiating between the Romanness associated with classical Latin, and the separate identities ascribed to the languages and cultures of the Romance countries. From his outlook, the nature of *Romania* meant the aggregate of Romance-speaking nations. This status was attained not through shared race but rather through [communal participation](#) in a history and culture. This conception of identity abides to this day as a defining trait of Frenchness.

Paul Meyer acknowledged of his own accord that his admired colleague bested him in their common *métier*. At an event where partygoers were dancing, he remarked: “Do you know why Gaston Paris is a greater philologist than me? **It is because he knows how to dance.**” In thus characterizing his fellow Romanist, he probably unwittingly brought to mind an image of the tumbler from the medieval French poem. Likewise, he may not have recalled that Paris published **a couple of sharp-witted pages** in 1892 on the terminology for dance in the Romance languages, tracing the history of the art from Greek and Roman antiquity down through the Middle Ages. Nor would Meyer have necessarily recollected that in 1899 his friend had brought out a study of **accursed dancers**, such as the ring-dancers of Kölbigk. Yet even if the observation was simply a *bon mot* motivated by Paris’s actual dancing, it had an unmistakable metaphoric dimension. It captured the intellectual agility that the contemporaries of the great philologist perceived in him.

On the one hand, Paris ranked among the most visible French exponents of philology, which he endeavored to elevate as a science predicated upon practical methods. On the other, he promoted the poetry of the Middle Ages as a fountainhead that could refresh European culture in general and French culture particularly. In his view, medieval literature could put the people back in touch with the era in which their distinctive, collective, ethnic sensibilities first took shape. Effectively, he aspired to construct a glorious past of which his countrymen could be proud. Paradoxically, or inconsistently, this philomedieval side to him is vaguely reminiscent of the romanticism he **rejected strenuously**. He strove for scientific truth, but to the greater glory of his nation. This drive, at once romantic and postromantic, gave him common ground with his father. A further paradox arose from the assumption that medieval French differed so much from its modern reflex as to be difficult to translate, if not almost untranslatable. This presumption put philologists in a quasi-hieratic role of mediating, almost like Catholic priests of their day, between texts in an unapproachable medieval language and a public of lay people. The objective was to open access to a foundational past.

As Paris put it in his inaugural lecture at the College of France in 1881, **“What we seek above all is history.”** In this outflow of thought, the philologist expounded a manifesto for the value and relevance of the literature of the Middle Ages for Frenchmen in his own day—in the decades after the calamity of the Franco-Prussian War. To his way of thinking, literary texts surpass historical documents as entryways into “the moral condition, ideas, and feelings of our forebears.” During the medieval period **“for the first time and not for the last,** France had in the view of neighboring nations a role (acknowledged everywhere) of innovation and of intellectual, literary, and social direction.” In Paris’s view, medieval French poems, despite having originated centuries ago, retained their vitality. The national spirit and identity they epitomized continued to exist within his fellow citizens. Not irrelevantly, the national significance of the combat seared itself so intensely into people’s consciousness that



in the circle in which Gaston Paris orbited, it was known initially as the [War of France](#). The country may have lost in the encounter between armies, but it could still gloat about the originality and sovereignty of its medieval texts. From this point of view, the literature of Germany in the Middle Ages was deeply indebted and in a sense [handmaid](#) to that of France.

If being conversant with medieval manuscripts and literature constitutes a type of affluence or eloquence, then Paris was born with great inherited wealth. Thanks to his father's position as a librarian, he spent his childhood in an apartment the family occupied within the precincts of the National Library. As a boy, he received fine schooling in the capital. But his stunning ascendance over the last four decades of the nineteenth century was connected much less to his early formation in France than to a decision in 1856 to [travel to Germany](#) and to study there. After returning to his homeland, Paris embarked upon [four years of further study](#), from 1858 to 1862, at the *École des Chartes*. Thus, like Meyer, he was a *chartiste*, as the graduates of this school have been known. Subsequently he spent another three years at the Sorbonne, from 1862 to 1865, after which he assumed a directorship at the same university in the newly founded *École pratique des hautes études*. For four academic years from 1867 to 1871, he substituted for his father at the *Collège de France*, an illustrious research and teaching entity that had been established in the sixteenth century.

In the last third of the nineteenth century, Paris took the lead among his compatriots in instituting Romance philology in France. He nosed ahead of his peers by applying historico-comparative methods on the German model. In recognition of his attainments and promise, he was [named to succeed his father](#) at the *Collège de France* on a full-time basis in 1872: he was all of thirty-three years old. He would occupy the chair for French language and literature of the Middle Ages until his death. In the same year as his promotion, the *École pratique des hautes études* published in one of its series the critical edition of a major medieval French poem of the mid-eleventh century that he had overseen. The text of this *Life of Saint Alexis* was, of course, constituted by the Lachmannian approach.

Franco-Prussian tensions notwithstanding, Paris admired the cream of German scholarship and maintained cordial relations with such top-quality German philologists as Karl Bartsch, who had attainments ambidextrously as [both a Germanist and a Romanist](#). Although the French scholar incurred some accusations of Germanism or Germanophilia, they were not well founded. From his sideswiping of Lachmann, he could as well have been taxed (although no more rightly) with Prussophobia. Overall, his approach to Lachmannism as an editorial strategy was punctiliously [independent-minded](#). In sum, Paris was anything but Lachmann's lackey. Many [remarks in his writings](#) show how deeply and lovingly loyal he was to the language, culture, and history of his own nation: he was as good as his word. His patriotism is most notably in evidence in the address he delivered to the *Collège de France* on December 8, 1870. The occasion fell toward the disastrous end of the [Siege of Paris](#).

Although the direction of philology that Paris represented put a heavy accent upon the concept of the nation and national identity, as evidenced early in national epics and as examined in branches of philology constituted along the lines of [national languages](#), he advocated for a strict separation between patriotism and scholarship, on the grounds that the two had nothing to do with each other. To call a spade a spade, scholars who out of pride in their countries failed to exercise critical judgment would succumb to partiality or to bias. He yearned to be an internationalist in scholarship, committed to promoting the accomplishments of medieval France through engagement with the worldwide scholarly community. This aspiration did not stymie him from delivering, in the heat of all-out war, a flag-waving series of lectures in which *The Song of Roland* served as the principal text: “[Sweet France!](#) The Germans have envied us this phrase, and have sought vainly to discover the equivalent in their national poetry.”

In the grand project of philology during these decades, the accentuation of nationhood and national identity hung in a delicate balance with an avowal of scientific investigation in the humanities as a quest for dispassionate knowledge and truth. Although statements to both effects are forthcoming in Paris’s own writings, the most distilled enunciation of them is by the historian [Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges](#) (see Fig. 1.30):

[Everyone shapes for himself](#) an imagined Middle Ages.... Understanding the Middle Ages—the exact, scientific, and sincere understanding of them without bias—is, for our society, a concern of the highest order. It is the best way to put an end to the insane regrets of some, to the empty utopias of others, to the hatred of all. To reestablish calm in the present it is not un-useful to begin by destroying prejudices and errors about the past. History imperfectly observed divides us: it is by better understanding history that the work of reconciliation must begin.

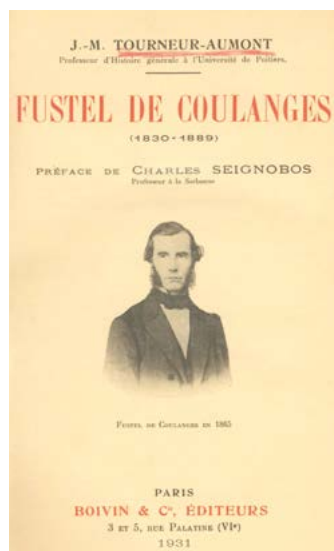


Fig. 1.30 Front cover of J.-M. Tourneur-Aumont, *Fustel de Coulanges, 1830–1889* (Paris: Boivin, 1931).

Hear, hear. Even more pithily, this same Frenchman wrote, “Patriotism is a virtue; history is a science; it is essential not to confuse them.” His longer observation came out in the monthly *Revue des deux mondes*, whose objective was to facilitate exchanges between the Old and the New Worlds, specifically France and the United States. Eventually it became a clearinghouse for dialogue and debate between nations and cultures even more broadly. As such, it furnished an entirely appropriate venue for an investigation of [what the Middle Ages meant](#) in the self-definitions of France, the French, and Frenchness.

Although this is not to suggest that Gaston Paris intended his wording as a deliberate allusion to the periodical, he did make evocative use of the title phrase decades later when he wrote of “the coexistence, in medieval society, of two worlds, the Latin world and the vernacular world, [the clerical world and the lay world.](#)” In this case, the two spheres at issue for him differed greatly from either the Old and New or France and Germany. In the title of the journal, the phraseology had a peculiar circularity or tautology. The past was reorganized matter-of-factly, in ways that were meant to be unemotional and unbiased. For all that, the reordering was undertaken by scholars who had presuppositions, shaped by recent political events, about the nature of the prejudices and errors they needed to banish. In sweeping away hoary misconstructions, they could not be entirely open-minded. Rather, they introduced some new and different misconceptions about the Middle Ages. But in the meantime, they wielded extraordinary intellectual and cultural influence.

In 1871 Fustel de Coulanges was a lecturer in the *École normale supérieure* of Paris, a publicly funded but elite institution of higher education; in 1878 he would ascend as the first incumbent of a chair in medieval history that was created for him at the Sorbonne. This specific position developed in response to the outcome of the Franco-Prussian War. In his key work, this historian elaborated a complex postulate about the nature and consequences of the invasions that led to the breakup of the Western Roman Empire. His theory held that the Germanic barbarians penetrated slowly into Gaul and accepted much of its imperial administration. The political institutions that took shape afterward reflected Roman laws more than Germanic lifeways. Effectively, the empire ended less in a Germanizing conquest of Rome than in the Romanization of the Germanic peoples.

As for Gaston Paris, he was what has been called in English a *mandarin*. The term itself speaks to the comparisons that were being drawn between, on the one hand, what was then the orient and, on the other, alien facets of Europe. The attribute is a Q.E.D. for orientalism. In this case, the word denotes a bureaucrat scholar in imperial China—and by analogy a European intellectual in whom was concentrated extraordinary power within (and without) his profession. During this period, the top professors commanded a lofty esteem that would be hard for their peers today to imagine. Paris was well situated not only among scholars but also among [belletrists of his day](#). Among other things, he held in his home weekly gatherings that many notables attended. No inconsistency lurked in his breadth of association, nor in his

ambition to write for both the most meticulous highbrow publications and the most accessible lowbrow press. Among his various goals, two would be laudable in any age—to ensure that the field of Romance philology would be accredited to the loftiest standard within academics, and to have the products of medieval French literature recognized publicly as worthy objects of study. He judged that this worthiness owed partly to their inherent aesthetic qualities, partly to their utility to the grander project of establishing French national identity. *The Middle Ages with which he concerned himself* were, put mildly, multiple. Considering the excellence of his writing and the nature of his intellectual associations, it should surprise no one that in each of *the last three years of his life*, Paris was nominated, although to no avail, for the Nobel Prize in Literature.

## Gaston Paris and *Our Lady's Tumbler*

*It is an old story* which has come down from the Middle Ages. Gaston Paris was the first to give it to the modern world as “Le Tombeur de Notre Dame.”

Gaston Paris would surely have discussed medieval French poetry in the salons of high culture on some occasions. Although the juxtaposition may have been merely aleatory, he wrote the article that immediately preceded Foerster’s *Romania* edition of *Our Lady's Tumbler*. In contrast, chance played no part when Paris, at that point a renowned French scholar, incorporated a glowing characterization of the poem into the history of medieval French literature that he first published in 1888 and that rapidly garnered him acclaim from all sides.

The popular success and many strengths of Paris’s *La Littérature française au Moyen Âge* (French literature in the Middle Ages) were lauded by none other than Meyer. A little praiseful puffery in an *obituary* may not be especially noteworthy: speak no ill of the dead. More remarkably, the fiction writer Anatole France singled out the literary history for a long panegyric in the *popular press*. This column by the future Nobel laureate marked a happy alignment of stars in the cultural firmament. Think of it: a world-renowned book by the most illustrious man of medieval French literary studies was appraised by a true *cultural power broker*—the most influential reviewer and one of the most important fiction authors of the day. In addition, the review and the act of creative writing that emerged from it gave the lie to *Gaston Paris’s own reserve* about the potential of medieval literature for inspiring modernity artistically. Such interchanges between the worlds of learning and of letters took place more readily after the Franco-Prussian war than before, as societal developments encouraged the coherence of *intellectuals as a distinct group*.

One extended episode that created solidarity in the intelligentsia was the so-called Dreyfus affair, which raged for a dozen years until its resolution in 1906. In November

1894 Alfred Dreyfus, a captain in the French army, was convicted of treason. His Jewishness was a major factor in the baseless charges and trumped-up evidence that drove both this conviction and a later one. This political scandal scarred most of the 1890s and early years of the 1900s. The long miscarriage of justice concretized the emergence of a pro-republican intellectual class that supported the accused. The so-called Dreyfusards became increasingly anticlerical. Whereas many of Dreyfus's persecutors were clergymen, those who waged the campaign for the captain's rehabilitation often stood in opposition, tacit or otherwise, to the Catholic Church. Their ranks included not only most famously the French writer Émile Zola (*j'accuse!*), but also Anatole France. [Paris too was one of them](#), and took a tough-minded stand against the iniquity of the sentence to Devil's Island that was meted out wrongfully to Dreyfus. Shortly before the Dreyfus brouhaha flared up, *Our Lady's Tumbler* made its way into belles lettres.

France's review of Gaston Paris's history of French literature in the Middle Ages was allegedly based upon his perusal of the whole volume in a single gulp. If we take the fiction writer at his word, he read the book to the sound of birdsong while lolling on the grass under an oak. Having limned the *locus amoenus* or ideal landscape in which he claimed to have completed his own labors as a reviewer, France then painted with fine brushstrokes an evocative canvas of the medieval period that the literary history allowed him to enter or create. These centuries drew him gladly "into [the spirit of our ancestors](#), in their staunch and simple faith, into their art that is sometimes coarse, sometimes subtle, almost always symmetrical and regular like the treeless gardens of old miniatures."

As the man of letters understood the medieval times of Gaston Paris, "simple men who believe in God and have assurance in the intercession of Our Lady bestir themselves." Simplicity, like humility, was held in high esteem among medieval Christians, especially monks such as the [Cistercians](#). This made sense, since the simple were next of kin to the innocents. At the same time, as noted, a breath of condescension can be quickly discerned when *simple* takes its place alongside *naïve* and *ingenuous*. According to France, comprehending the earlier era requires savoring "[the naïveté of their imagination](#)" — the most ingenuous of miracles in medieval culture and literature is that of *Our Lady's Tumbler*. Another word to watch for in the same semantic field is [sincerity](#). Is our medieval French text as [simple, naïve, sincere](#), natural, ingenuous, pure, and capturing the spirit of childhood as it was implied to be by both Paris and France? The protagonist is not suffused with joy for much of the story. In fact, he succumbs more than once to deep despair and even depression; the manuscript miniature shows him as literally downcast. In the end, the story is optimistic. After all, it culminates in the salvation of its chief character. Maybe in a modern context, and this circumstance could reflect more sadly on us than on the Middle Ages, hope rests on such a rocky foundation that it may be regarded as synonymous with simplicity, naïveté, or ingenuousness.

Paris professed to cherish the conviction that popularization should come **only after conscientious scholarly study**. Even so, his own aside about *Our Lady's Tumbler* was as short on rigor as it was long in impact afterward on French culture. For all their subsequent resonance, his comments have never been parsed closely. The absence of probing appraisal may reflect how the poem falls outside the main types of literature with which he has been associated. *Our Lady's Tumbler* has nothing to do with *chanson de geste*, romance, or other long narrative forms. From the mixed blessing of floating outside such major genres, the piece about the performer has accumulated both advantages and disadvantages. It has not been locked in place as epic, romance, and even fabliau have been, but instead has enjoyed broad latitude.

With his résumé of *Our Lady's Tumbler*, the great philologist capped a chapter on medieval French narrative literature, in which he embarked upon an overview of miracles of the Virgin as a segue to his next chapter on hagiographic legends (narratives about saints):

**The story** (perhaps the masterpiece of the genre, thanks to its delightful and childlike simplicity) of *Our Lady's Tumbler*, of the poor jongleur who, having become a monk, and not knowing how to serve the Virgin like his fellow monks, performed before her, in secret, leaps that had earned him the greatest success; some witnesses who, surprised at his absences, had hidden themselves in the chapel saw, after his exercises, the mother of God herself come to dab the sweat-drenched forehead of her tumbler.

The perspective that medieval people were like children can be traced back to the **Enlightenment**. It was commonly subscribed to particularly in the late nineteenth century, when the pejorative equation of childlike and childish, which had been taken frequently for granted in earlier centuries, was usually **no longer drawn**. In an oft-reprinted history of French literature, the French man of letters Désiré Nisard characterized the poets of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries as having a "**childlike imagination**" (see Fig. 1.31). In the late 1800s, pilgrims were drawn to **Lourdes** in part out of a sense that the peasants who had experienced visions of Mary there resembled their medieval forebears in the simplicity and naïveté of their faith. The same holds true for the men of letters. The closer they come to the fin de siècle, the more wistfully they clutch at the assumption that the Middle Ages were more childlike and innocent times than their own.

Gaston Paris betrayed tenderness for the supposedly simple devotion of the jongleur and for the miraculous token of affection it elicits from Mary. For all its warm-heartedness, his fondness must not be misread for faith. Despite any expectations we may foster to the contrary, the philologist was an atheist at the latest since the age of twenty. Nor should his gentleness toward the idea of medieval monks cause us to overlook the **fierce anticlericalism** he evidenced repeatedly elsewhere in reacting to the realities of his own modern times. Indeed, the triumph of the meek tumbler over the monastic hierarchy to which he subjects himself could have appealed to the philologist, who watched with acuity for **dichotomies between lay and clerical** in medieval literature.



Fig. 1.31 Désiré Nisard. Portrait, ca. 1850. Artist unknown.

In an inaugural lecture he delivered before the Collège de France, Paris called the Middle Ages “an essentially poetic era” in which “everything is spontaneous, impulsive, unforeseen.” He continued in the same rich vein by generalizing about the [differences in basic human characteristics](#) between the medieval period, with its naïvete and natural vitality, and his own. In categorizing the France of olden days, he differentiated between clerical and popular literature. By the first he referred to books in which clerics addressed themselves in the vernacular to lay audiences; by the second he meant poetry that welled up unmediated from the life experiences and feelings of ordinary people. It was the popular that fired his imagination and interest, and in keeping with this fascination, he propelled the legitimization of [folklore studies](#) in France.

All in all, Paris sentimentalized and misrepresented *Our Lady's Tumbler*, primarily by qualifying it as childlike and simple. This characterization of the text jibed with his overarching perception that the Middle Ages were a [preadult stage](#) in the evolution of human history and spirit. Casting a bright light on the pathos in the story, he also labeled its protagonist as “[poor](#).” By design, everything in his version tugs at the heartstrings of readers. These moves on his part were consonant with his [overall perspectives](#) on the literature of the medieval period. Paris did not advocate a return to bygone centuries: they were gone irrecoverably. Yet he wished to assist in [maintaining memory of them](#). From his standpoint, national and therefore personal identity was impossible without a firm and retentive grasp on the past. The anonymity of *Our Lady's Tumbler* enabled him to fit the tale within his interpretative framework. Its lack of an author facilitated his subscribing to an ultimately romantic conception of how the medieval poem had come into being. It was not a text that an individual

composed; instead, it was a song that emerged from an entire people to give utterance to their common nature and values.

Nationalism did not exist in the Middle Ages. If the jongleur had a regional affiliation beyond his professional one, it may well have been as a Picard. Nonetheless, the late nineteenth century endeavored to make of him a Frenchman of the sort they knew from their own day. The effort was doomed. The tumbler's medievalness, Christianity, and performerly essence, despite many efforts that were eventually made to Gallicize him, outclassed any geographic associations that modern authors sought to impress upon him retroactively.

## German Philologists

Small print, big words, no sales.  
—Janet Walker, in Alfred Hitchcock,  
“The Rope” (1948)

As the chronology of the years in which the journals were founded suggests, the 1870s and 1880s saw golden days in Romance philology. The combat in the hard power of warfare and military yielded to the competition in its soft equivalents of [knowledge and culture](#). In Germany, Romance philology occupied a height of distinction no less estimable than the one it held in France. Yet the importance attached by the French and the Germans to cultural achievement should not mislead us into making overoptimistic assumptions about the direct impact of advanced research. Correct or not, Gaston Paris's cursory generalizations about the poem netted *Our Lady's Tumbler* far more attention than did all the editorial minutiae that preceded or followed it. Foerster's edition was accessible only in the print of *Romania*, as were all the subsequent [notes on textual improvements](#) and other [showcases of Romance philology](#). Philological refinements to the text of the poem were achieved by investigators from throughout the European scholarly community. The roll call included the Austrian Wendelin (or Wilhelm) Foerster, the Germans Gustav Gröber and [Hermann Wächter](#), the Frenchman Gaston Paris, and the Finn [Arthur Långfors](#). In the social order of the time, all these Romance philologists may have commanded from the public at large respect verging on awe. For all that, such esteem does not mean that their publications were widely read. On the contrary, their periodicals remained the province of specialists.

The story of the tumbler was summarized for cultivated German-speaking listeners and readers already in 1875, when the Swiss-born Romance philologist Adolf Tobler propounded a lecture on “the life of the minstrels” at the “[Song Academy](#)” in Berlin (see Fig. 1.32). As was commonly the case at this time in learned treatments of medieval vernacular texts, Tobler did not generate a word-for-word translation. He offered instead a dense recapitulation of the poem. He basked in having sociable



ties with the great Gaston Paris, who contributed a [preface](#) to his book on French versification. Like his colleague in France, Tobler made apparent in the opening of his *précis* his ironic, even patronizing, presuppositions about the [ingenuousness and impressionability](#) of medieval faith—and poetry.



Fig. 1.32 Eduard Gärtner, *Berlin Sing-Akademie*, 1843. Oil on canvas. Image from Wikimedia Commons <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gaertner2.jpg>

Fast-forward nearly four decades. In 1914 the prolific Severin Rüttgers (see Fig. 1.33) published the [first German prose version](#) of the entire *Our Lady's Tumbler*. In doing so, he invoked the remark about the nature of the poem that Paris had made in a parenthesis. Childlike simplicity could have still tickled the fancy of potential readers on the eve of World War I. Disadvantageously, this author sought in his translation to replicate the medieval qualities in the language and style of the medieval French original. To this end, he resorted to old-fashioned German with occasionally convoluted rhetorical flourishes that enabled him to [skate over obscure passages](#) in the original. Where Paris had danced, Rüttgers danced around.

Already in 1886 a [nearly complete German verse version](#) was printed in a collection with a title meaning, more or less, *Jongleur's Book*. The author was a professor at Munich (see Fig. 1.34). A Protestant, this Wilhelm Hertz specialized in the literature and lore of the Middle Ages. As a poet, he made a specialty of translating and reworking Old French and Middle High German poetry. His [adaptation of \*Our Lady's Tumbler\*](#), widely admired for its fusion of poetic art and scholarly craft, was reprinted even in the mid-twentieth century.



Fig. 1.33 Severin Rüttgers. Photograph, date and photographer unknown. Published in *Neue Bahnen: Zeitschrift der Reichsfachschaft IV im NSLB Leipzig* 48 (1937).



Fig. 1.34 Frontispiece of Wilhelm Hertz, trans., *Spielmanns Buch: Novellen in Versen, aus dem zwölften und dreizehnten Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Gebrüder Kröner, 1886).



Fig. 1.35 Heinrich Morf. Photograph, date, and photographer unknown. Published in Heinrich Morf, *Aus Dichtung und Sprache der Romanen: Vorträge und Skizzen* (Berlin: Vereinigung Wissenschaftlicher Verleger, 1922), frontispiece.

Most noteworthy is the way in which Hertz's German of the poem was received in 1900, when the second edition was published. In that year, the Swiss Romance philologist Heinrich Morf (see Fig. 1.35) celebrated the anthology by delivering a public disquisition on "Stories of Jongleurs." By way of accompaniment, modern minstrels performed four of the stories contained in the anthology of translations, including *Our Lady's Tumbler*. In the lecture, Morf commences with an [editorializing exordium](#), setting up a stark contradistinction between his own day and the medieval past. His predilection for the Middle Ages rests upon nostalgia for its allegedly pure and piety-propelled spirit. He contrasts the religion-directed and heroic chivalry of yore with the profit- or greed-driven and capitalist colonialism of his own day. Morf's hostility to the overheated economy and rapacious empire-building of his times can be compared with the like reactions of his close contemporary Henry Adams in the United States. The American hurled similar abuse at gold bugs and imperialist adventurers among his countrymen in the fin de siècle of the nineteenth century and early years of the twentieth century.

Shortly after Gaston Paris died, Ezra Pound began to achieve impact through fresh translations and adaptations of troubadour lyric. The nineteenth-century French philologist knew nothing of what would happen in American poetry after his death. In retrospect, his [guarded comments](#) about the limited promise of Old Occitan literature for inspiring and enriching its modern counterpart look like very poor and grudging prophecy. He was not predisposed to believe that medieval literature could contribute much to modernity through adaptations in literature, music, or art. If he meant his reservations and circumspection about the literature of the Middle Ages to apply even to *Our Lady's Tumbler*, he was soon to be proven even further off the mark.

In a final irony, the acknowledgment by Anatole France of his indebtedness to Gaston Paris caused a muddle later. It led even to the sad misapprehension that Paris himself had been the first to edit or present to the modern world *Our Lady's Tumbler*. This was another misascription, akin to the one that made Gautier de Coinci wrongly the author of the original poem. Paris deserves credit not for editing *Our Lady's Tumbler*, nor for even translating it, but for contributing to the philological enterprise of inventorying and salvaging by publishing the first edition in a scholarly journal he oversaw. Even more, he initiated the broad diffusion of the story by promoting it to a larger public. His case demonstrates handily that the history of scholarship belongs without equivocation within medievalism. By the same token, the constant reinterpretation intrinsic within medievalism can enhance medieval studies.

In the year of Gaston Paris's death in 1903, his short history of *Mediæval French Literature* appeared in English. In it, he singled out *The Tombeur of Notre Dame* as a pious tale worthy of mention because of its "altogether mediæval character." At the same time, he furnished a slightly [different capsule summary](#) of it from his previous one. With his mention of the Virgin and Our Lady in this short recap as our prompt, we would do well to turn from the tumbler to Mary herself or, most pertinently in a

French context, to Notre Dame. She occupied a uniquely privileged position in the days of Gaston Paris and of those who learned from him and elsewhere of *Our Lady's Tumbler*. Through apparitions, she was present in France as she had not been since the Middle Ages. Thanks to the interplay of literature and architecture that has been a consistent calling card of Gothic revivals for centuries, her buildings held as much importance, especially in the city of Paris, as they had done since the medieval period. We should talk next about Notre Dame.

## 2. Notre Dame: The Virgin in Nineteenth-Century France

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### The Age of Mary

Religion constitutes a further factor that would have thrust *Our Lady's Tumbler* into the limelight, despite the story's intrinsic bashfulness. Not only the initial publication and promotion of the tale by Gaston Paris, but in fact all the early paraphrases, its incarnation as a short story, and the subsequent composition of the opera based on it took place from 1870 to 1914. During this spell of not quite fifty years, France underwent what has been defined as "the [crisis of Church and State](#)." Catholicism's role within the nation was reexamined and renegotiated, with extremism from both ends of the political spectrum.

Tensions over the role of Catholicism and the clergy within French society had begun to crackle nearly a century earlier with the Revolution of 1789. In time, the frictions dissipated or at least were forced to disappear. Controversially, a collective commitment was made to construct a social order that would scrupulously compartmentalize religion and government. The government took a long step toward this resolution in 1905, by imposing an official divorce upon Church and State. Before then, the two main opposing camps in politics within France were Republicans and monarchists. A major symbol of Republicanism is the female figure of Marianne, who personifies [free choice and reason](#). The best-known representation of this national symbol is undoubtedly the bare-breasted belle of Eugène Delacroix's painting from 1830, *Liberty Leading the People*, a canvas that celebrates the Second French Revolution of July 28, 1830 (see Fig. 2.1). Church and State in the nineteenth century France were locked in a prolonged contention for the hearts and minds of the people between the reasonable Marianne and the miraculous Virgin Mary. Onomastically, Mary occupied center stage: in a bit of gender-bending that continues here and there even to this day, devout Catholics in France and elsewhere would intercalate the vernacular form of Mary as an appendage to other personal names for both women and men. Among the

well-known “classic” cultural figures affected by this “Boy Named Sue” syndrome was Erich Maria Remarque, the German author of *All Quiet on the Western Front*. More relevant to our topic, the full name of the novelist who gave us *Notre-Dame de Paris* was Victor Marie Hugo. Should we parse such names as being in their modest way matronyms?



Fig. 2.1 Eugène Delacroix, *La Liberté guidant le peuple*, 1830. Oil on canvas, 260 × 325 cm. Paris, Musée du Louvre. Image from Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Eug%C3%A8ne\\_Delacroix\\_-\\_Le\\_28\\_Juillet.\\_La\\_Libert%C3%A9\\_guidant\\_le\\_peuple.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Eug%C3%A8ne_Delacroix_-_Le_28_Juillet._La_Libert%C3%A9_guidant_le_peuple.jpg)

Calendrically, the counterpoint between Mary and Marianne plays out in the summertime counterbalance between two major holidays. First is Bastille Day on July 14, which could be styled Marianne’s day, and then follows the Assumption on August 15, Mary’s holiday. When one of the two women was then *in the ascendant*, the other may well have been inevitably on the defensive, and in decline. Joan of Arc may have risen in popularity as a middle way of give-and-take between the two extremes. Amalgamating features of both the other female figures, she embodied religion by being a saint and nation by being a patriot. To seal the deal, she was, like both the others, a virgin maid.

The crisis of Church and State, roughly one-half century long, had its formal onset with the Franco-Prussian War. The tale of *Our Lady’s Tumbler* experienced in its reception throughout this period at least one great redeeming quality: it could be perused with equal plausibility as being either pro or con in regard to organized

religion. Committed Catholics could take note that the tumbler is drawn to leave the world and to enter a monastery, while secularists could point out that once there he cannot integrate within the institution. Furthermore, unlike all the choir monks, he achieves special recognition from Mary almost despite his egregious unsuitability. By themselves, lack of Latin and liturgy might suffice to make the entertainer a questionable poster child for the Church. His other chief disqualification would be his seeming indifference to complying with established ecclesiastical customs and hierarchy. Both really and metaphorically, as the tumbler performs his dancing devotions, he looks as unclad as a man of the cloth can be.

After the national indignity of the Franco-Prussian War, many French were not yet ready to adopt a detached or even lightly ironic standpoint on the roots of Catholicism. On the contrary, the chastening catastrophe of the defeat had consequences in the realm of faith by redirecting the devout toward Mary. For many centuries, Catholics have called upon the Virgin in myriad capacities. The underlying assumption behind these petitions is that God cannot say no to the Mother of God, but this conviction can assume a thousand different forms. Thus, many specific manifestations of the Virgin are associated in complex and crisscrossing ways with the spiritual states of the individuals or communities who turn to her, the spiritual results they wish to attain, and aspects of Christ's and her own lives. A multiplicity of Our Ladies has existed, enough to populate a large club; to name only a few, we find Our Lady of Atonement, Good Remedy, Good Success, Grace, Hope, Mercy, Peace, and Sorrows. At the grass roots, the tendency to pray to Mary has run particularly strong for many centuries, even in preference to Jesus or the Father. The proclivity arises out of a sense that when help is most needed, she can best provide it. She has the capacity to intercede with Jesus, for the very human reason that a loving and respectful son will never say no to his mother.

The relationship of the Virgin, the Church, and the cathedral is intimate and even inextricable. In her guise as mediator, the Mother of God represents the Church. Like her, the clergy too is supposed to mediate between individual Christians and God. The mediation of both Mary and Catholicism takes place in the physical church, the foremost exemplum of which has become the cathedral. Here we have another reason why so many cathedrals in France are named in honor of Notre Dame, not just the most famous one in the heart of Paris.

Much like the late Middle Ages from the twelfth century on, the expanse from 1850 to 1950 has been cast as "the age of Mary." During these ten decades, the cult of the Blessed Virgin [experienced a comeback](#) and exercised a renewed appeal that unified both learned clergymen well-schooled in the fine points of theology and illiterate devotees of popular religion. Within Catholicism, the Marian age is bounded at either extremity by a controversial dogma about the Mother of Christ. The Immaculate Conception became doctrine in 1854, the Assumption of the Virgin in 1950. The first

belief holds that Mary was born without original sin, the second that rather than dying, she was swept up directly into heaven. The institution of these creeds had real-life consequences. For instance, after 1854 every parish blessed a statue of the Virgin with the special title of the Immaculate Conception. When carvings already existed, they were crowned in formal coronation ceremonies.

In Catholic France, the Golden Age of Marianism lasted even longer than in the rest of Europe. The date for its beginning must be pushed back by nearly twenty-five years to 1830, since the Marian apparitions for which the nation became known started then in Paris. The Parisian vision gave way to others in La Salette in 1846, Lourdes in 1858, and Pontmain in 1871. The revival of devotion to Mary embodied a counterweight to a set of changes that swept not only France but also Europe as a whole: industrialization, secularization, nationalization, and atheism.

The modern French movement of mass pilgrimages marks its beginning at the latest in 1872. From the establishment of the Third Republic, record-shattering numbers of the faithful undertook communal journeys by train to sites associated with the Mother of God. By 1900, more than one-half million people made the voyage each year to the miraculous spring at Lourdes. The Virgin Mary had revealed herself and the fountainhead only in the uncontroversially modern year of 1858, but the phenomenon of devotion that ensued was viewed as a resumption of medieval Marianism. As such, from 1875 onward the visits of the devout were cast explicitly as peregrinations. The atmosphere among the pilgrims to the town in southwestern France was couched in the same terms that were applied time and again specifically to the protagonist of *Our Lady's Tumbler* and generally to medieval art, literature, and culture. Adjectives such as primitive, simple, and naïve stand out.

The piety of the wayfarers afforded a means of achieving two objectives. One was to do penance for the sins that had resulted in the rout by Prussian forces. The other was to attain relief through the intercession of Mary with her son. Marianism gave a safety valve for the expression of guilt and even complicity in the collective sins that had prepared the ground for the retribution of the nation. Through worship, the people could make amends that with the blessing of the Virgin would lead to restitution of French success. More broadly, devotion to the Mother of God accompanied misgivings about modernity, and even a turn toward a primitivism associated with the countryside as well as with the Middle Ages.

In the medieval period, the regions that today form the unity of France were stippled with the steeples of cathedrals and churches dedicated in honor of Mary. This is to say nothing of all the Cistercian foundations devoted to her as well (see Fig. 2.2). In sum, France was, and remains, the country of cathedrals par excellence. Her great churches of this sort represent close to three quarters of all such buildings constructed during the Gothic era. As a rule, cathedrals may be made of stone, but for all that they are far from monolithic. Their variety beggars belief. Yet in one regard they are nearly





uniform. As said above, the vast majority of these edifices, not only the cathedral of Paris, were built in the name of the Mother of God, and accordingly, they are called Notre-Dame. As a result, Gothic cathedrals—especially the French Gothic ones—are equated by an almost automatic and unconscious process with the worship of Mary: in the reception of the jongleur or juggler, pointed arch, spire, and Virgin commingle in so intimate an equation that the relationship among them needs no explanation (see Fig. 2.3). In the nineteenth century, the age of Mary was felt nowhere more strongly and triumphantly than in France. The country had traditionally laid claim to being called “the eldest daughter of the Church,” and prided itself long before and afterward on enjoying special favor from the Mother of God. Now its confidence was proven well founded in sightings of the Virgin, the boosted visibility of Notre-Dame cathedral in Paris, and in other images as well. Even after the separation of Church and State, Marianism did very well in the land of Marianne.



Fig. 2.3 Card commemorating the reopening of Onze-Lieve-Vrouw Kathedraal in Antwerp on April 2, 1993 (Antwerp: Gemeentebestuur Antwerpen, 1993).

## The Fleur-de-Lis

The true lily has long been associated with Mary. A subbranch of ethnobotany as applied to Christianity (particularly in the Middle Ages) is the language and history of Christian symbolism called iconography. In this form of symbolic expression, the lily has often accompanied representations of the Annunciation. As its name “flower of lily” suggests in French, the fleur-de-lis represents the bloom in stylized form. It began life as a religious symbol of purity, and like the blossom itself, the emblem was connected with the Mother of God. In the twelfth century, statues of the Virgin were clothed in mantles embellished with lilies.

Among the hues that have frequently been used for Mary’s clothing or other items in her vicinity, one of the most important is blue, the color of heaven, among other things. In Western art, many Madonnas wear a blue garment, especially when they depict the Mother of God with the Christ Child in arms or nearby. This shade may have become traditional for the Virgin in the West under Byzantine influence. In French heraldry, the same bluish tint has served for the skylike background against which golden fleurs-de-lis are set in the coat of arms that was used for centuries by the French monarchy. Even long after the demise of the royal house, the device retains power. To this day, three golden fleurs-de-lis on an escutcheon of blue, surmounted by a gold crown that itself is topped by further fleurs-de-lis, remain a symbol of France. Talk about gilding the lily, and about good as gold!



Fig. 2.4 A fourteenth-century pilgrim’s badge, depicting the Virgin holding Christ and a fleur-de-lis. Illustration, ca. 1862–1866. Artist unknown. Published in Arthur Forgeais, *Collection de plombs historiés trouvés dans la Seine* (Paris: Chez l’auteur et chez Aubry, 1862–1866), 33.



Fig. 2.5 A pilgrim’s badge depicting the Black Madonna and child. Fourteenth century (1st quarter).

To decipher the story of the fleur-de-lis, we must train our code-breaking gaze upon the Middle Ages. In the medieval period, the symbolism was employed first by the Church. The blazons and tokens of churches dedicated to the Mother of God incorporated the fleur-de-lis motif (see Fig. 2.4). For instance, consider the emblem that the Benedictine priory of Rocamadour used in its seal, which was adopted for pilgrims' badges (see Fig. 2.5).

The design depicts the Black Virgin of this pilgrimage site, who is crowned, backed by a nimbus, and holding a scepter topped by a fleur-de-lis, with the babe on her left knee. The keepsakes resemble plaques at Our Lady of Le Puy-en-Velay to commemorate the Virgin and Child, which likewise feature the crown and scepter with this floral grace note. The fleur-de-lis as a device of royalty befitted Mary in her role as queen of heaven. Similarly, gold goes well with the meaning of Marian majesty. An engraving produced in 1523 (see Fig. 2.6) shows the Mother of God, crowned with a golden fleur-de-lis above the center of her forehead, clad in blue, and holding the Child. Below her sits a blazon of three fleurs-de-lis itself surmounted by a crown, against a field of additional fleurs-de-lis. (The illustration could not be more fleur-de-licious—or should we say fleur-de-lightful?)

From the symbolic language of medieval Christian art, the flower and perhaps also the blueness of the Virgin were appropriated by the Capetian kings of France (r. 978–1328) to embody the spiritual claims of their dynasty. It was to invoke her holiness and to establish their authorization through it that French kings began to employ the fleur-de-lis heraldically. In addition, they connected their special cultivation of Mary with courtliness. Further, they brought out parallels between the ministry of the Mother of God and their own status as rulers anointed by Christ. Like her, they had the capacity to dispense mercy and to heal. The Marian lily of the Virgin and the royal one of the Capetians were thus closely related.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many forces in France connived to make the stylized lily a rallying point, sometimes for religion, often for royalism, but beyond all else for the quintessence of Frenchness. After Gaston Paris and Anatole France had plied their pens, Jules Massenet took up his baton to project the story of the juggler into the 1900s. In doing so, he knew well how to toe a line between conservative Catholics and devout secularists. The artist of the art nouveau poster for Massenet's opera *Le jongleur de Notre Dame* portrayed the Madonna in a red garment with golden fleurs-de-lis. In a canvas from 1928, a quarter century later, the English painter Glyn Warren Philpot portrayed the juggler kneeling upon a rug patterned with fleurs-de-lis.

The symbol has remained soldered to our tale. How could it be otherwise? The story originated in France, is most often set there, and has at its center a miracle performed by the Virgin Mary in response to veneration shown to a Madonna in a great church dedicated in her honor. Yet the French connection does not mean that the fleur-de-lis has not proven to be attractive in other countries, both within Europe and especially in a large one across the Atlantic. From the United States, the adaptation of the "old French legend" by Barbara Cooney in 1961 has the text block enclosed in

blue end leaves with fleurs-de-lis in white (see Fig. 2.7). So too a later German verse translation of the medieval tale from 1999 by Tatiana von Metternich is covered in a pattern of gold fleurs-de-lis against a blue background (see Fig. 2.8). From 1974, we find the “North Central Christmas Book ‘Our Lady’s Juggler’ ... based on a medieval legend as retold by a Catholic priest of the diocese of St. Cloud” (see Fig. 2.9). The story is set in the made-up French town of Peigne, no doubt a distorted abridgment of Anatole France’s Compiègne. The cloth cover bears fleurs-de-lis, embellished with extra shoots, which alternate with other stylized blooms (see Fig. 2.10). Three years later, in 1977, appears the palm-sized *The Juggler of Our Lady: An Old Tale Retold*, bound in Christmas green and sporting the customary golden stylized flowers (see Fig. 2.11). These books from the 1960s and later were far from the earliest use of the fleur-de-lis by illustrators of *Our Lady’s Tumbler* and the variegated clan of imitations ultimately inspired by it. For example, the first text page of Edwin Markham’s 1907 poem, “The Juggler of Touraine,” is topped by a black-and-white figure. It depicts a single candle, surrounded by the tackle preferred by this sort of performer. The taper burns before a Gothic niche where a nimbate Madonna and Child bivouac. The image in turn stands against a backcloth that is imprinted with the characteristic floral motif. Even the lily in the publisher’s device designed by Bertram Goodhue for Copeland & Day in the last decade of the nineteenth century likely has Marian implications. Its Latin motto, boxed within the customary scrollwork, means “as a lily among thorns.” Although taken from Song of Solomon 2:2 in the Hebrew Bible, the verse was traditionally interpreted by Christian exegetes as referring to the Virgin. The expression is immediately understandable. Yet when pushed, it deconstructs itself. Roses, like lilies, have been a popular religious symbol of Mary, and roses, not lilies, grow on thorny stalks.



Fig. 2.6 Virgin and Child associated with fleur-de-lis iconography. Engraving, 1523. Artist unknown. Published in Mathurin des Roys, *Histoire de Notre-Dame du Puy-en-Velay* (Le Puy-en-Velay, France, 1523).



Fig. 2.7 Decorative endleaf from Barbara Cooney, *The Little Juggler* (New York: Hasting House Publishers, 1961). © Barbara Cooney Porter Royalty Trust. All rights reserved.



Fig. 2.8 Front cover of Tatiana von Metternich, *Der Gaukler der Jungfrau Maria* (Wiesbaden, Germany: Modul, 1999).



Fig. 2.9 Vincent Arthur Yzermans (left) in St. Peter's Square in Rome, during Vatican II. Photograph, 1963. Photographer unknown.



Fig. 2.10 Front cover pattern for Vincent Arthur Yzermans, *Our Lady's Juggler* (St. Paul, MN: North Central Publishing Company, 1974).



Fig. 2.11 Cover pattern for Walter Kahoe, *The Juggler of Our Lady: An Old Tale Retold*, illus. Gus Uhlmann (Moylan, PA: The Rose Valley Press, 1977).

## The Apparitions of the Virgin

Against what might have been our commonsensical expectations, we have been sidetracked and taken by the fleur-de-lis to the United States of America in the twentieth century. Instead, we should have sought out a global navigation system for wayfinding within France. Within a few years after the end of World War II, and decades after the Franco-Prussian War, the religious sought again to raise the spirits of their fellow Frenchmen by bringing home the French connection with the Mother of God—or the Marian connection with France. In emphasizing the Marianism of their country, they looked back to the favoritism that the Virgin had shown to their nation repeatedly during the nineteenth century.

A [card printed by the Benedictines of Bayeux](#) (see Fig. 2.12), stamping Catholic France as the special realm of Mary, features her image superimposed upon a cartographic representation that depicts most of the country. The diagram itself is squashed between Latin captions for “*Regnum Galliae*” at the top and “*Regnum Mariae*” at the bottom. Quoted in French upon the map itself is a Gospel verse, “*Whence comes this happiness to me, that the mother of my God should come to me?*”

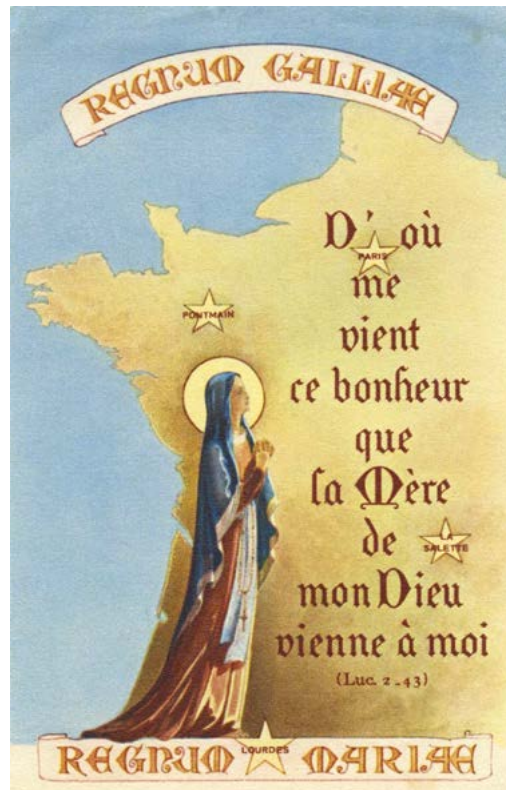


Fig. 2.12 “*Regnum Galliae—Regnum Mariae.*” Commemorative card, date unknown. Bénédictines, Bayeux, France.

Four stars pinpoint the localities where apparitions of the Virgin that met with acceptance from the Vatican took place in France. One marks the chapel of the convent of the Sisters of Charity, situated on the left bank of Paris, where Mary appeared in 1830 to Sister Catherine Labouré, later a saint. A second commemorates a showing in *La Salette*, in the French Alps, in 1846. The full secret of this showing was published only in 1870. The third star rests on the spot of the vision of *Lourdes* in 1858. Finally, a fourth signals *Pontmain*, where Mary showed herself in 1871.

Out of hundreds upon hundreds of sightings that have been documented worldwide, these from the nineteenth century in France are four of only seven that have won approbation from the local bishops after investigation by diocesan commissions. The others, all subsequent, took place at Fátima (with its famous and mysterious messages) in Portugal in 1917, at Beauraing in Belgium in 1932 and 1933, and in Banneux in Belgium in 1933. Each of these episodes involved visionaries who were children and peasants. All will recur in this book. The French event in 1871 and the two Belgian episodes in 1932 and 1933 relate loosely but significantly to the reception of the medieval tale about the tumbler.

The apparitions in France helped to lay the foundation for a powerful emphasis on the veneration of the Virgin within the whole Catholic Church. With the cult of Mary Immaculate displaying *exceptional vigor in nineteenth-century France*, the popularity of the first sighting, which resulted in the so-called Miraculous Medal of Catherine Labouré, contributed in at least a roundabout way to the communiqué of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception by Pope Pius IX. The dates when the nineteenth-century events either took place or were made public all fell within his papacy. More broadly, the promulgation of the doctrine gave rise to similar experiences in other countries throughout the world.

Marian visions came thick and fast in France both during and immediately after the war in 1871, 1872, and 1873. Believers sought solace for their fear, humiliation, grief, and anxiety. They yearned for reassurance. Beyond consolation, they sought *insight into the future*. We should not forget too that sightings of the Mother of God played a major role in the long process of canonization that rendered many visionaries into saints. Sainthood is an exceedingly rare distinction for even the most pious individuals, and in nineteenth-century France, undergoing an apparition of the Virgin was a *promising first step* on track toward becoming a holy woman. Put bluntly, Mary made saints.

This later pattern stands apart from the tale of *Our Lady's Tumbler* as it comes down to us from the Middle Ages. In the medieval French poem, the beneficiary of the miracle remains rigorously and resolutely anonymous, is not even necessarily aware of the corporeal comfort that is extended to him, dies partly of his devotion rather than receives healing from it, and is portrayed as being not a holy man to be sainted but a sinner to be redeemed. In fact, the salvation of his soul requires all of



Mary's largesse. She must engage in a do-or-die, toe-to-toe (or is it toe-to-hoof?) duel with the devil. Furthermore, we are not given to believe or hope that others would benefit from miracles to be performed on behalf of the tumbler. He is no saint—but he is exemplary.

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From September of 1872, pilgrims thronged to La Salette and Lourdes, as well as other destinations. These devout travelers were allied with the forces in French society committed to deliverance rather than enlightenment. Often the phenomena that motivated them centered upon messages spoken or otherwise enunciated by Mary. At the first location in 1846, the communication took place in patois spoken to shepherd children, while at the second, in 1858, it was conveyed to an illiterate fourteen-year-old daughter of impecunious millers.

Yet the foremost example would be the three-hour manifestation to peasant youths that occurred on January 17, 1871, in Pontmain. The vision happened in the last-ditch stages of the Franco-Prussian War. The advancing German army rumbled so near to the village that the teeth-rattling boom of cannons in the distance came within earshot. Two brothers, aged twelve and ten, were immersed in odd jobs in the family barn with their father. When a female neighbor dropped by, the elder sibling took a break to check on the weather (see Fig. 2.13). While studying the sky, he noticed a portent. Suspended in the heavens was an image of a lady in a long robe. Her raiment was indigo blue and studded with golden stars, like the ceiling of some churches. To complete the effect, she wore a black veil under a gold crown. Although this showing of the Virgin was invisible to the two adults who were present, the younger boy also witnessed it. A succession of other villagers came to the scene but the Mother of God could be seen only by the youths. Simultaneously, the image went through a gauntlet of last-minute changes—and nearly doubled its original size. A total of five young people detected the lady, whereas grownups could not see her. Eventually, written messages took shape, letter by letter, in a white space in the sky beneath Mary's feet (see Fig. 2.14 and 2.15). After the apparition, the German front line halted just short of a nearby town. Eleven days later, the army accepted the armistice without ever invading Pontmain. The cessation of the invasion was taken as a miracle. The lesson drawn, as it had been for centuries, was that prayers to Mary can bring peace. Afterward, the visionaries were subjected to a sort of sculptural lineup. In this process, the local church authorities flashed them mugshots of Madonnas and asked them to identify those that most and least closely resembled the woman they had perceived in their celestial visions. Some of the photographs, together with the notes of the interviewers, survive in the ecclesiastical dossier. In the aftermath, Pontmain became a major regional pilgrimage site. Soon a sanctuary was constructed, which eventually got the stamp of approval for elevation to a basilica.



Fig. 2.13 Postcard depicting the visionary children of Pontmain (Pontmain, France: Pilorge, after 1871).



Fig. 2.14 Illustration of the vision at Pontmain (Bruges, Paris, Lille: Société de Saint-Augustin, after 1871).



Fig. 2.15 Postcard depicting the vision at Pontmain, painting by Pierre Machard in grange, first half of twentieth century.

Such phantasms follow their own epidemiology. Clusters take shape at specific times in response to the stresses of war and its aftermath, political crisis, economic slowdown and collapse, outbreaks of disease, or combinations of the preceding. In the protracted rainy day that ensued immediately upon the Franco-Prussian War, [other appearances of the Virgin](#) reportedly took place in France. These events were regarded by contemporaries as being related to each other. A special category is formed by Mariophanies in Alsace in the 1870s. The border zone, which was annexed by the new German empire after the French had been trounced, experienced a [surge of visions](#) that tapered off after a clampdown in March 1873. The only Marian apparition in France that gained any sort of traction with the ecclesiastical authorities after Pontmain happened in Pellevoisin. There a [woman in her early thirties](#) was miraculously healed after seeing the Virgin in the bedroom of her house fifteen times over nearly three months (see Fig. 2.16 and 2.17). [Sightings of Mary have been mapped](#) to show their geography. A diagram could be made to correlate the apparitions by both time and place with notable incidences of literature about such Marian miracles and Mariophanies. In turn, the coincidence of sightings and related literature could help to explain spikes in the reception of the tumbler story. Many uncontrived and often lackluster reworkings of the tale date from the early 1950s, when [appearances of the Virgin abounded](#) (or rebounded) in Europe.

The Mariolatry had inevitable consequences for reading and writing—and accordingly for profits, since at the time publication was big business. For example, Henri Lasserre was among the first to report effervescently on the apparitions and miracles of the Virgin in Lourdes (see Fig. 2.18). In 1862, this French Catholic went so far as to ascribe to the water there a cure for blindness. Following many subsequent pilgrimages there, the same journalist and writer wrote voluminously, although not to universal delight or acceptance, on Notre Dame of Lourdes. He focused especially on her showings and healings. His books made the fortunes of the publishing house that the bookseller Victor Palmé had founded in 1858. The editions totaled [millions of copies](#) (see Fig. 2.19). As a cultural phenomenon, Lourdes seized the imaginations of intellectuals for decades to come. Visionaries, doubly disadvantaged in socioeconomic class and gender for being peasants and girls, set the great Church in motion. Their little Lourdes community enlarged explosively and reported miracle after miracle that occurred as pilgrims flooded in. In one sense, the trek there was a thoroughly modern phenomenon. It resulted from all the resources of nineteenth-century marketing, and it relied on a consummately unmedieval mode of transportation. In the decade leading up to 1880, more than 500,000 pilgrims wended their way to the town [by rail](#). Yet despite the slick promotion and chugging trains, the pilgrimage had aspects that were felt by contemporaries to be [redolent of the Middle Ages](#).

Parallels can be easily discerned between the foundational miracles of Lourdes and the story of the tumbler: he came from a lowly stratum, was regarded as childlike by his nineteenth-century readers and reworkers, was held at arm's length by the



Fig. 2.16 Postcard depicting the “house of apparitions” in Pellevoisin (1910).

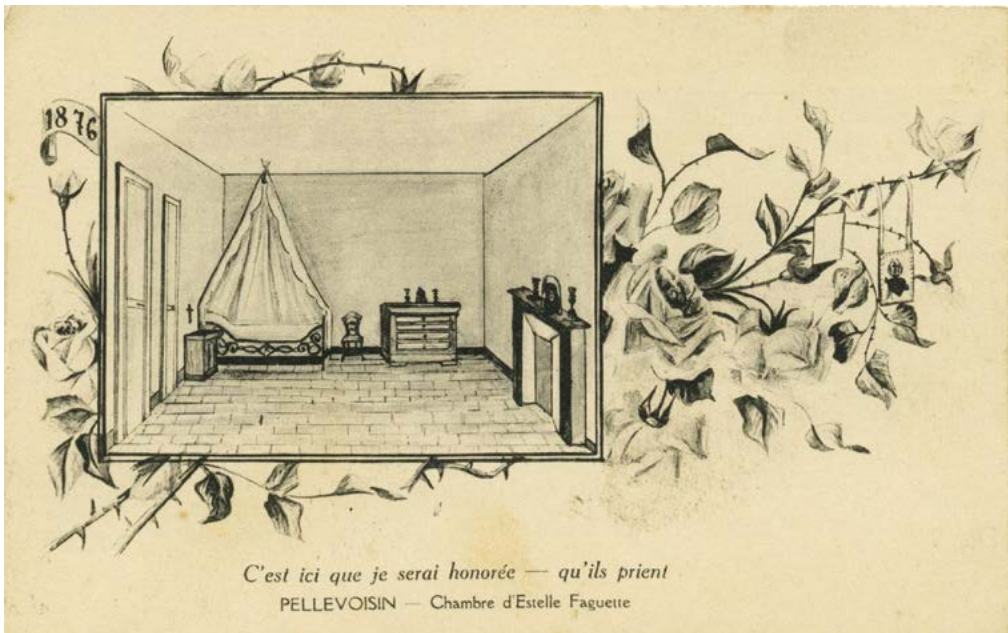


Fig. 2.17 “This is where I will be honored—they may pray.” Postcard depicting the bedroom of Estelle Faguet, who experienced her Marian visions and miraculous healing in 1876 (Paris: D. A. Longuet, late nineteenth century).

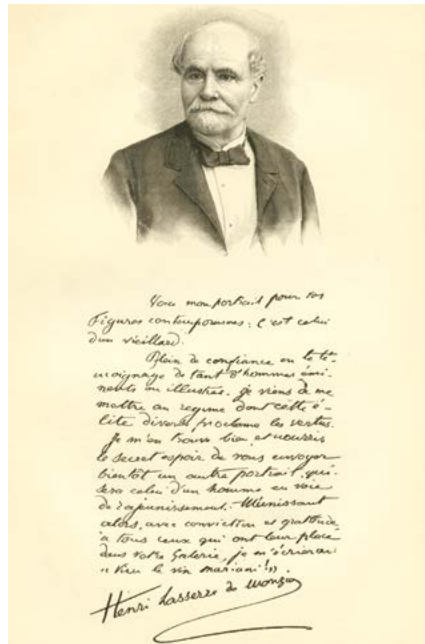


Fig. 2.18 Henri Lasserre. Engraving on wood by Henri Brauer, 1899. Published in *Figures contemporaines, tirées de l'album Mariani*, vol. 4 (Paris: Henri Floury, 1899).

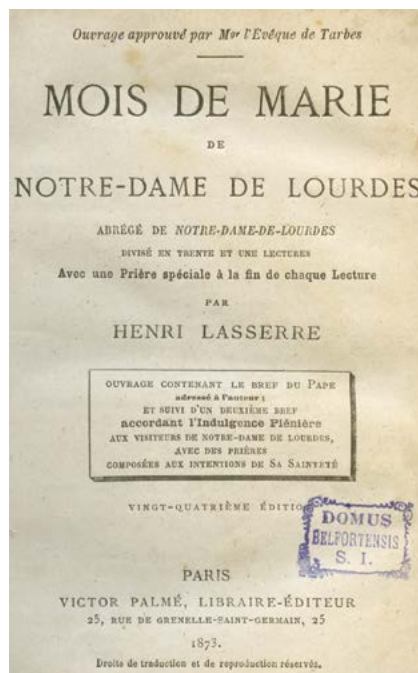


Fig. 2.19 Title page of Henri Lasserre, *Mois de Marie de Notre-Dame de Lourdes, abrégé de Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes* (Paris: Victor Palmé, 1873).

ecclesiastical hierarchy in which he operated, and benefited from an intervention by Mary. Although today his name lies in oblivion, who knows what hopes may have been nurtured in the thirteenth century for further miracles to take place or for pilgrims to arrive and share in the favor he enjoyed from the Virgin?

Interestingly, apparitions comparable to those in Lourdes were experienced in Germany at roughly the same time. The foremost German case was visions of Mary claimed by three eight-year-old girls from [Marpingen](#) in July of 1876. Despite recursive efforts on their behalf over three quarters of a century, the visionaries in the Saarland failed to nail down the support of the Church. At the same moment, they ran afoul of the so-called *Kulturkampf*, the “culture struggle,” which refers to the set of policies promoted between 1871 and 1878 by Prime Minister Otto von Bismarck of Prussia to rein in the power of the Roman Catholic Church and to [enhance secularism](#). In sum, Marpingen had no high-level ecclesiastical backing and faced active opposition inside Prussia. Nonetheless, the town seemed likely at times to become a German Lourdes. Yet kudos was not to be the case.

Within France, the anticlerical writer Émile Zola scouted Lourdes in 1891, and the phenomenon of pilgrimage there. His evidence-based observations made him bent on probing the dependence of human beings upon manifestations of the miraculous. He recognized the unstoppable importance of faith in both the miracles themselves and pilgrimage to the place where they occurred. Furthermore, he seemed in his way astir at the mass candlelit processions that took place in the municipality. For all that, he was not moved to place any credence in the wonders himself.

A few years after his visit, Zola brought out *Lourdes* (1894). In this novel on the town of Bernadette Soubirous, the writer delves into the motivations behind the belief of the sickly in miracles. In his skepticism, he envisaged reliance upon supernatural intervention as forming the opposite pole to science. To him, apparitions resulted from hysteria rather than God. Thus, the novelist formulated his own equivalent to the relationship between the Virgin and the dynamo that Henry Adams constructed a decade later. The strongest refutation to the French author from the faithful came not in writing, but in the human traffic there on the fiftieth anniversary of the apparitions. In 1908, one and a half million believers voted with their feet by [making the journey to the shrine](#). If pilgrimage had been an electoral process, this one would have been a landslide.

A dozen years after Zola, the novelist Joris-Karl Huysmans also traveled to the site. After visiting in 1903, he harnessed naturalism to describe its supernaturalism, and in 1906 he published *Les foules de Lourdes* (The crowds of Lourdes). The [medievalizing man of letters](#) emerged from his firsthand immersion with a keen but unastonished appreciation for the degree to which appearances of Mary influenced his time: “Lourdes is, in the history of France, [neither an exception nor a novelty](#); the Mother of Christ has always considered this country as her fief.” According to him, only the eighteenth century witnessed a rupture in the personal presence of Mary in France.

Such seeming devoutness on the writer's part failed to quell the distrust that he had earned through his earlier fiction. In 1910, Huysmans's book endured a counterblast for its impiety, when Raymond Vroncourt, regretful at living in the "licentious night of our depraved times," sought to defend Catholicism from "pseudo-pious [cacography](#)" (see Fig. 2.20). Huysmans was out to praise the Virgin and the visionary of Lourdes, not to blame them, but in Marianism passions often run strong.

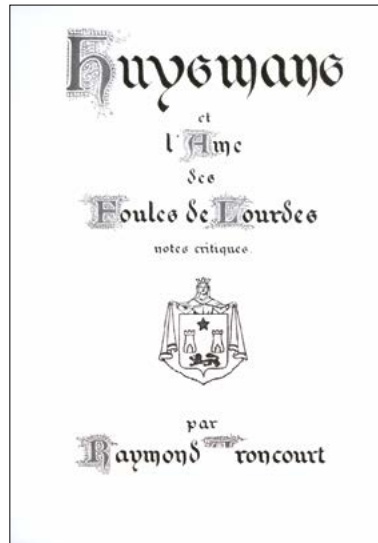


Fig. 2.20 Front cover of Raymond Vroncourt, *Huysmans et l'âme des foules de Lourdes: Notes de critique suivies d'un répertoire de l'oeuvre catholique de Huysmans* (Tours: E. Menard et Cie, 1910).

## The Reactionary Revolution

In the late nineteenth century the status of [the hegemonic religion](#) in French society fell into dispute and sometimes even into disrepute. Culture then and there was riven between those who favored and those who rejected the intervention of the Catholic Church in the state. The staunchest exponents of the religion were commonly anti-Republican monarchists, while the most stouthearted advocates of Republicanism just as frequently tended toward intolerant anti-Catholicism or at least anticlericalism. Each extreme in the debate seized the Middle Ages as its own. The tumbler could be put forward as a spokesperson for both extremes in the polemics.

On the anti-Republican and Catholic side, the Third Republic witnessed what has been called a "[reactionary revolution](#)." The insurgence comprehended a Catholic revival in literature. A late expression of this [religious renewal](#) is a [verse play](#) labeled by its author on the title page explicitly as a [mystery](#). It builds upon the Marianism of the movement, but at the same time rests in part upon medieval ground.

The piece was written by Paul Claudel. This devout Catholic was also the author of a much-admired [praise poem to the Virgin](#). His ties to the Mother of God had been tight since Christmas Day, 1886, at the latest, when the French symbolist poet and playwright underwent a conversion while listening to a choir sing Vespers. Although not immediately through the intervention of the Virgin, the experience in fact took place in the Parisian cathedral of Notre-Dame—on Mary’s home turf, as it were.

Claudel sketched out the gist of the drama [in 1892](#), but [reworked it repeatedly](#) over decades until the end of his life. He set the play geographically in Champagne, and chronologically in a fifteenth century that he intended to [evoke the Middle Ages](#). His stage directions in 1912 call for medievaesque garb. In an interview less than a decade later, the writer avowed that he had taken the piece [even further into the Middle Ages](#).

The work delves into the rivalry between two daughters who are diametrically opposed in character. One is committed to Christian values, the other to the world. The drama elaborates themes of sacrifice and saintliness. To give particulars, it tells how the elder of the sisters, Violaine, contracts leprosy, leaves behind her betrothed, and retires to a hermitage. Her former fiancé, a cathedral builder, is turned against her by her younger sister, Mara, whom he marries. When their daughter is born sightless, or dies soon after birth, the mother calls upon her saintly sibling to reenter the world and either heal the infant or restore her to life.

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*Our Lady’s Tumbler* squared well with the insurrection of the “reactionary revolution.” Amid the polemics, intrinsic features of the narrative would have enabled explication of it to be leveraged for those with either pro- or anticlerical convictions. Of course, however provident the medieval poet may have been, he could never have foreseen the fin de siècle, any more than the Reformation. Yet the malleability of his story is one essence of its consummate artistry. The tale is [multivalent](#). That is, it has an openness or porosity to multiple interpretations. Whatever we choose to call the quality, it stood the narrative in good stead with both extremes in French society.

For those who longed to take flight from the modern world, *Our Lady’s Tumbler* held out the escapism of a protagonist who turned his back on worldly profit and withdrew to a monastery. Confirming the value of such a retreat, it proclaimed the power of pure and uncomplicated belief to reward its possessor with transcendence. It even concluded with the ascension to heaven of its hallowed hero. At the same time, the character in question has led most of his life in the world and possesses none of the punditry in liturgy or Latin that full-fledged or fully tonsured monasticism requires. Rather, he is a layman from a given stretch within the Middle Ages. Often now styled the long twelfth century, this time had come to be regarded by the nineteenth century as a special period in which the populace was extricated from the dominance of monks. Among those liberated, the tumbler could have been viewed as a lay artist who had devised his own, unique means of retaining the freedom of the commune, but within the confines of the cloister. He was a medieval primitive, natural and naturalistic, down to his near nakedness.



To look at the two sides of the narrative from another perspective, the events happen in a church. Even so, the lodestone is ultimately less the white-robed monks in the choir than a gymnast stripped to his lowest layer of clothing in a crypt, not necessarily the holiest of precincts. Could the tale, like many Marian miracle tales, subtly interrogate or even [challenge authoritative hierarchies](#)? Whether the story is taken as favoring the top-down ecclesiastical system, being neutral to it, or subverting it, the events take place within a church. If at the turn of the century France immersed itself nearly obsessively in things medieval, it pitched itself into none with more fervor than into the Gothic cathedral. This passion for the Middle Ages knew no boundaries between Catholic and anticlerical. The great church was too much a keystone in French culture to become the preserve of the religious; secularists also claimed the buildings as theirs. To a godly degree, at the end of the nineteenth century the nation made this sort of edifice the cynosure of its cultural aspirations and anxieties.

The Gothic revival was tied up with churches and [even more intimately with cathedrals](#) in this style. The French writer [François-René de Chateaubriand](#) (see Fig. 2.21) summed up beautifully the outlook of a medievalizing romantic, in the aftermath of the French Revolution:

[You could not enter a Gothic church](#) without feeling a kind of awe and a vague sentiment of the Divinity. You were all at once carried back to those times when a fraternity of cenobites, after having meditated in the woods of their monasteries, met to prostrate themselves before the altar and to chant the praises of the Lord, amid the tranquility and the silence of the night.

But let us take heed. He does not even use the word cathedral in this passage. Our thoughts turn to the Gothic steeples and spires because of undeclared assumptions that warrant being made overt.



Fig. 2.21 Anne-Louis Girodet de Roussy-Trioson, *François-René, vicomte de Chateaubriand*, 1811. Oil on canvas, 130 × 96 cm. Versailles, Château de Versailles.

## Cathedralomania

Many people may well think of a cathedral as being any large or great church, particularly in the Gothic manner. Thus, they could envisage as a structure in this style the abbey church indicated in *Our Lady's Tumbler*. Yet neither the noun *cathedral* nor *church* figures in the medieval French text. From a nonscholarly vantage point, readers from the nineteenth century and later were reasonable in following their instincts by reading a cathedral-like structure into the story. The tale was set in the Middle Ages, and the setting of the principal action was a place of worship. In the eyes of many, the archetypal medieval churches were Gothic cathedrals.

Houses of God may be subsumed under two main categories. On the one hand, we find [parish churches](#), and on the other, the so-called greater churches, which encompass cathedrals, monastic churches, and collegiate churches. Buildings in this second category, as the name would presuppose, tend to be larger in size and more complicated in structure. Thus, the common conflation of large monastic church and cathedrals makes sense. Then again, from a scholarly perspective, the term *cathedral* has a precise meaning, excluding many places of worship that have been called by this name. In this technical sense, a cathedral does not have to be towering or stupendous, while conversely, a church that looms loftily overhead is not automatically a cathedral. In fact, many parish churches outstrip many cathedrals in height. Furthermore, a cathedral does not have to be Gothic in architecture. It can be in Romanesque, classical, or any other mode. In other words, on its exterior or interior, it does not have to contain monuments and architecture that typify the Christian Middle Ages.

The sole prerequisite of a cathedral is that it be the officially designated episcopal church of a diocese. That is to say, the structure must contain the chair of a bishop. This item of furniture, located behind the main altar, is known from a Greek word that was transliterated as the Latin *cathedra*. Only in the sixteenth century did the adjective for the church where this furnishing was placed become a substantive. At the same time, the place in which the throne stood came to be called a see, from the Latin word for seat. In this sense, the noun signifies the locus of authority—the bully pulpit—that pertains to a bishop or archbishop. Simultaneously, a cathedral church became a cathedral, plain and simple. Thus, [the cathedral as we know it](#) was born. From the episcopal seat derives the expression *ex cathedra* to describe a pronouncement made by the pope of the Catholic Church. When the Roman pontiff delivers an announcement in his capacity as the [bishop of Rome](#), he has the full weight of his seat behind (or under) him.

Especially in a Gallic context, the Gothic cathedral held sway throughout the nineteenth century. To a striking degree, structures in this style were felt to [define France](#). The Enlightenment trailed off with questionable results, to judge by the French Revolution. The movement claimed to break with the past, specifically the religiously bound one, but then the Reign of Terror caused people to look for renewal, not just within themselves but also without. Among other things, they peered backward in time and also upward to the spires of cathedrals—and to the faith that the spires were felt to embody. In the typical French Gothic cathedral, viewers discerned a

building so soaring as to evoke awe and humility. Each such edifice was a creative feat accomplished by people who lacked modern resources of technology and wealth, but who possessed a communal dedication to the divine and sacred.

Victor Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris* rates as the most popular French fiction of the nineteenth century. The novel meets the required standard as truly monumental in more than one sense. If Gothic cathedrals may be regarded as books in stone, this grand one turns the tables by being such a great church in prose. The author set the action of his story in 1482, almost exactly three and a half centuries earlier than the publication date in 1831. Its appearance inaugurated rather than exhausted the Middle Ages and cathedrals as [topics for creative re-creation](#). Gothic revivalism was far from over. In fact, the novel about the cathedral and the spinally deformed creature who made it his habitual resort was printed in the same year in which across the English Channel, the young architect Augustus Pugin designed a stage setting based on Sir Walter Scott's *Kenilworth*.

The cathedralism of the original book cannot be suppressed or excised (see Fig. 2.22). All the same, its central emphasis has shifted in mass culture since the twentieth century. The change owes largely to the titling in English as *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Whereas in the French the protagonist is the cathedral itself, in the Anglophone world the contorted bell-ringer has become larger than life, and sometimes even larger than the church.

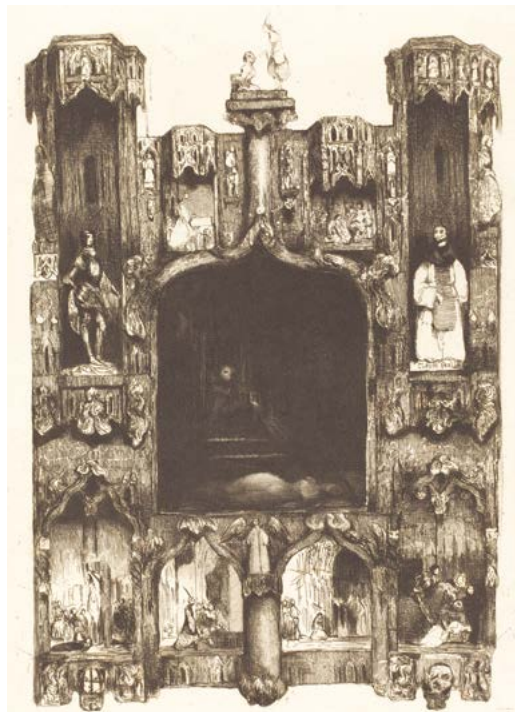


Fig. 2.22 Notre-Dame de Paris, with major characters and scenes from the novel. Etching by Célestin Nanteuil, 1833. Published in Victor Hugo, *Notre-Dame de Paris* (Paris: Eugène Renduel, 1833), frontispiece. Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art, Rosenwald Collection.

It bears remembering that Victor Hugo composed his masterwork *Notre-Dame de Paris* more than four decades before the rediscovery of *Our Lady's Tumbler*. By 1873, the grotesquely twisted Quasimodo and the seductive gypsy *Esmeralda* were already persons of note in mass culture. Not so the jongleur in the medieval story, who performed in the crypt of a church outside Paris that is definitely not a cathedral and that is not even called outright a Notre-Dame. The tumbler would not become familiar until the early 1870s. Even then, he would not yet be recognizable, despite his namelessness, as a household name. Instead, he would be a known quantity only among scholars. All the same, the two stories called out for each other, and may to this day still *need each other*. The light and dark qualities of the architectural style may be as inextricable as protons and electrons. Gothic has hope of surviving through its lightness and optimism at least as much as through its darkness and dystopianism.

This French novel capped a rehabilitation of medieval culture in France that had begun decades earlier. The reassessment of the period did not rest on blind admiration for it, at least in the case of the writer. In fact, differentiating between Gothic architecture and what has been called the Gothic age, he once opined, "*I like the cathedral and not the Middle Ages.*" Whatever Hugo's second thoughts about the medieval era in total, his bestseller prompted among his countrymen a new custodial and fiduciary sense toward the architectural and artistic remains of the period. He not only wrote about Gothic but also drew it in pen and ink, appreciating its infinite variety (see Fig. 2.23). His views on the style were complex from the beginning, and evolved to become only more so. Yet *as his perspective developed*, adulation of the architecture was an unabating constant.

Hugo knew his way around the archaeology and architecture of the Middle Ages. For a decade he served as a member of the *Committee on Monuments and Arts*. In his sprawling (and therefore cathedral-like?) novel, the immense edifice formed a *Gothic centerpiece* that stood, at once brightly soaring and somberly brooding, upon a Romanesque base and crypt. The high-flying architecture helps to explain the aptness of a simile devised in 1864 by the French literary critic Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve, who described the great book as being "*like a beacon lit on high towers.*" In Hugo's hands, the cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris, the leading lady in the novel, became an animate being capable that can seize the spotlight from all the human beings in the story. The cathedral is justly the title character. It holds center stage, even beyond the freakish Quasimodo to whom the "hunchback" in the title of most English translations and adaptations refers. Here, the leading character and the building coalesce, as in a painting from 1922, which depicts the head of the monstrous creature protruding from a quatrefoil, like a gargoyle that has sprouted from a four-leaf clover (see Fig. 2.24). In high culture surrounding the original, the great church retains its salience. In mass entertainment, the misshapen creature takes over, although he is Gothicized in the process, to become a living grotesque. The role of the cathedral in Hugo's fiction, if a pun may be allowed, could be called overarching. Thanks to his book, Notre-Dame

in Paris has come to define what a cathedral is imagined to be, even by many who have never seen such a building in living stone.



Fig. 2.23 A Gothic cathedral. Drawing by Victor Hugo, 1838. Reproduced on a commemorative postcard (1902).



Fig. 2.24 Louis Béroud, *Notre-Dame de Paris*, by Victor Hugo, 1922. Painting, reproduced on postcard (early twentieth century).

As portrayed in Hugo's novel, the great Parisian church embodies more than any other single structure the commonplace—questionable as most such truisms are—that in the Middle Ages the cathedral was the “bible for the poor” or “poor man's bible.” According to the French author, “up until Gutenberg, architecture was the chief, the [universal form of writing](#). The Middle Ages wrote the final page in the book of granite, which has been begun in the Orient and carried on by ancient Greece and Rome.” Such professions captured the idea that these immense stone edifices were designed to accommodate systematically within their niches, on the backs of their misericords or mercy seats (props to support people during long prayers), in their altarpieces, and even in their gargoyles and chimeras the constitutional ingredients of the scriptures and indeed of Christianity as a whole.

Hugo and his oeuvre became identified inextricably with the success of this bestseller. It has been alleged that this identification began with his own egocentrism—his discerning in the outlines of the front towers of Notre-Dame [the initial H in his family name](#). At least one extremely well-known French illustrator saw the novelist as being virtually embedded in the cathedral: Célestin Nanteuil presented the writer and his works as occupying the bays and alcoves of a Gothic façade, looking very much like the artist's representation of Notre-Dame itself (see Fig. 2.25). Nanteuil himself was regarded as encapsulating romanticism—and more precisely as epitomizing romantic medievalism. He was “so perfect a medievalizer” that he was even apotheosized into literature: he became the protagonist of [a short story by Théophile Gautier](#), about just such a medievalizing character. None too subtly, the illustrator's romantic devotion to the medieval period in his artistry is solemnized in Gautier's title: “Élias Wildmanstadius or the Middle Ages Man.” According to Gautier, France at that time was chock-a-block with young men of many varieties. Of the many types, “the mediaeval is the most numerous, and the individuals of which it is composed are most interesting to examine.” As the storywriter goes on to delineate, the protagonist fabricates a Middle Ages around him. First, he rents the oldest house in town, complete with Gothic windows and stained glass; then, he furnishes it with medieval tapestries and furniture; and finally, he crams its every crevice with items of material culture he collected, such as manuscripts and artworks. To move to his own person, Élias makes a practice of mansplaining in medieval French, transcribing manuscripts, illuminating miniatures, painting portraits of saints, and dressing up in clothes of the era, even sometimes in full-metal armor. He ventures out of his domicile exclusively to visit the Gothic cathedral adjacent to his rental home. As Gautier puts it, he is “the Gothic genius of a Gothic town.”

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Would it be embroidering the truth to maintain that Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris* saved Gothic art and architecture? The book has been aptly labeled “[a document in the propaganda](#) for the preservation of ancient monuments.” This novel incited French cathedralomania. On an intellectual plane, the obsession reached its culmination but

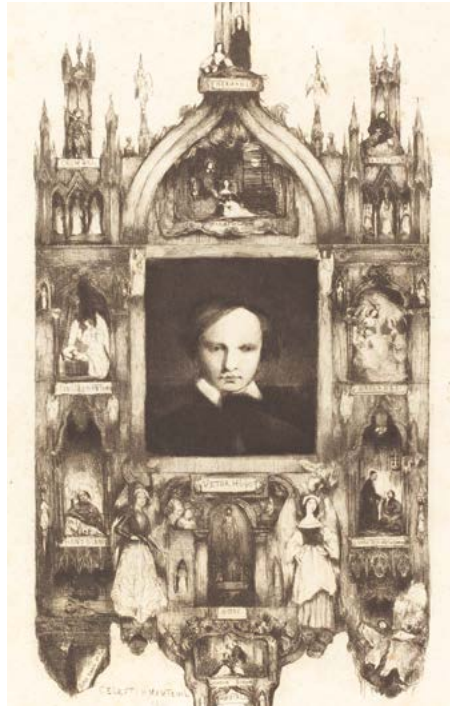


Fig. 2.25 Victor Hugo. Etching by Célestin Nanteuil, 1833. Published in Victor Hugo, *Notre-Dame de Paris* (Paris: Eugène Renduel, 1833). Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art, Rosenwald Collection.

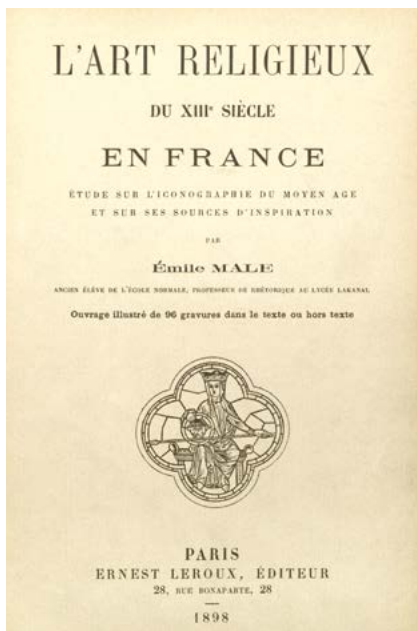


Fig. 2.26 Title page of Émile Mâle, *L'art religieux du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle en France: Étude sur l'iconographie du Moyen Âge et sur ses sources d'inspiration* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1898).



Fig. 2.27 Émile Mâle. Drawing by Henri de Nolhac, 1931.

not its conclusion in a volume of scholarship first published nearly three quarters of a century later, in 1898, a tome by the French historian of medieval art, [Émile Mâle](#) (see Figs. 2.26 and 2.27). In its own bookish way, this art-historical study achieves monumentality as massive and perdurable as that of the edifices it seeks to elucidate. To mix metaphors, dwarves on the shoulders of giants may nip at the heels of scholars such as him, but we are far from having displaced him for once and for all. It is premature to speak of being posticonographic, when neilliterate might be the more applicable and pertinent adjective.

His *L'art religieux du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle en France* was the first encyclopedic scrutiny of medieval French sculptural art, and it constitutes a [cathedral of learning](#). This sort of analogy was in keeping with the medievalism and especially the engrossment in the great churches of the times. By comparison, Marcel Proust's seven-volume [Remembrance of Things Past](#) may also be regarded as a Gothic house of God on a similar scale. In its cathedralism, Mâle's book has provided a role model for those who have viewed scholarship as a cumulative process and who have hoped to help erect or complete comparably vast edifices of knowledge, understanding, and wisdom through research and publications. The art historian's paper cathedral—not origami but printed words, not so much pop-up as plop-down—projects an air of monumentality and order. Not inconsequentially, it tends to leave out or play down messiness and marginality. Thus, it largely omits the tumbler, along with the subset of society to which he pertains, who forsakes the main interior of the cathedral for the crypt.

This French art historian of the nineteenth century brought the art of Gothic cathedrals into [alignment](#) with the exegetical texts of the Latin Middle Ages. His investigations enabled the buildings and their artworks to be parsed by the code set down in the medieval interpretations. Nothing presupposes that Mâle should be immunized or exempted from revisitation and, if necessary, revisionism. For all his pains, the unity of the conceptual cathedral that he erected in his scholarship may stand in need of searching reexamination. Make no mistake: in his politics, he represented a nationalist strain by now very familiar from the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian war. He wrote his [iconographic summa](#) as a national history of Gothic sculpture. He put the accent upon thirteenth-century France as the height of religious doctrine and art, and as the joint product of ecclesiastic and monarchic rule. The wholeness he sought in his scholarship mirrored the spiritual wholeness he discerned in the cultural refinements of the Middle Ages, especially the cathedrals. Mâle's many reams of words might seem to presume that the Gothic cathedral was at its cultural apex, whereas in fact, change was already afoot. Yet if the status of cathedrals was shifting, it would be a misinterpretation to infer that these buildings were receding at all from the consciousness of the French. Rather, the image of the greater churches became complicated in ways that served only to keep Notre-Dame in Paris and her sisters elsewhere before the public, and probably even to augment their visibility.



Particularly in the capital city, the cathedral of Notre-Dame was not, and has never been, dislodged as an emblem of the city's and the nation's spirit. Yet the beauty of such a church, as of any other perceived and desired object, lies in the eye of the beholder. Thus, these buildings can morph across time. Change occurs in response to extraneous conditions, such as light from day to day and season to season. At the same time, viewers also change. From 1892 to 1894, the French impressionist artist [Claude Monet](#) painted thirty views of the façade of the cathedral of Rouen, to capture the different appearance of the westwork at different times of day, in different weather, and in different seasons (see Fig. 2.28). In 1908, his countryman, the sculptor Rodin, fashioned his allegorical *La Cathédrale*, and in 1913, the French composer Claude Debussy composed his tenth prelude, entitled *The Sunken Cathedral*.



Fig. 2.28 Claude Monet, *La cathédrale de Rouen. Le portail et la tour Saint-Romain, plein soleil; harmonie bleue et or*, 1893. Oil on canvas, 107 × 73.5 cm. Paris, Musée d'Orsay.



Fig. 2.29 James Ensor, *Cathedral*, 1886. Etching, hand-colored with watercolor, 24.77 × 20 cm. Milwaukee, WI, Milwaukee Art Museum. Image courtesy of the Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, WI. © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / Belgium, SABAM. All rights reserved.

This is not to breathe a word of societal developments that took place in reaction to industrialization and the augmentation of the nation-states. Such processes revolutionized perceptions. Simultaneously, they induced artists to juxtapose the stolid strength of the medieval past with the upheaval of the present (see Fig. 2.29). In 1886, the Belgian artist James Ensor made an etching, out of the ordinary like much of his work, which presents three elements. The grandest is the soaring cathedral. As viewers scan down the paper, they come to realize that the cathedral is a full-blooded character that stands out from the crowd. Below it, two throngs of people stand out, first the neatly serried ranks of advancing soldiers and then a ragtag rabble. Do we see a popular rebellion being quashed by the military of a tyrannical state, a festivity that joins the two parties, elements of both, or something else altogether?

As an entirety, the cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris was built between 1163 and 1250. Today its west façade, begun around 1200, constitutes one of the two chief icons in architecture that symbolize the metropolis before the world. The other is the Eiffel Tower, to which we will return shortly. This pair of structures embodies the capital of France above all other such symbols, with the word *above* also to be taken literally. For the moment let us allow our mind's eye to remain fixed upon the face of the great Parisian church. Who does not recognize the two massive towers, the rose window that occupies the center, and the three densely sculpted portals that rise from ground level?

A zest for Gothic architecture pervaded French culture of the period. This taste was anything but a passive passion. On the contrary, like many another impetuous emotion, it altered its object. In this case, the secular French state's strong love for its Gothic heritage justified renovations of cathedrals that in fact remade them. Thanks in no small part to Hugo's incitement, a thorough touch-up of Notre-Dame in Paris was undertaken. The work was conducted over two decades under the supervision of Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (see Fig. 2.30) and his partner Jean-Baptiste Lassus. We see the church today, unwittingly, through eyes conditioned in equal measure by our familiarity, often indirectly at best, with the verbal fiction of Hugo and the lapidary reality of Viollet-le-Duc. Notre-Dame epitomizes the cathedral. For obvious reason, these edifices may appear to be set in stone—but they are not.

The architect was assigned the commission in 1844, shortly after turning thirty and more than a dozen years after the publication of Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris*. Viollet-le-Duc arrived at his image of the Gothic cathedral through study of medieval monuments. In his self-instruction, he paid searching attention to [iconography](#) as well as to the urban contexts of these buildings (see Fig. 2.31). But in his guise as a harmless or at least neutral drudge, he was fully cognizant that he was perpetrating an anachronism. In defining "restoration" in his dictionary of architecture, he began with the well-known statement: "The word and the activity are modern." His reconditioning went far beyond what would be sanctioned today. In the equally famous second sentence of his definition, he wrote: "[To restore a building](#) is not to maintain, repair, or redo it,

but to reestablish it in a finished state that may never have existed at a given time.” In keeping with his credo, he subjected the seemingly unyielding and unelastic blockwork of Notre-Dame to radical plastic surgery, and in so doing, he introduced as many new puckers as he smoothed over old ones. Thus, he replaced aged flying buttresses in the nave with unproven constructions, and added a third tower with a steeple. This spire was endowed with sculptures at the base that were **not attested in any engravings** of the original.



Fig. 2.30 Eugène Viollet-le-Duc.  
Photograph by Félix Nadar, ca. 1878.

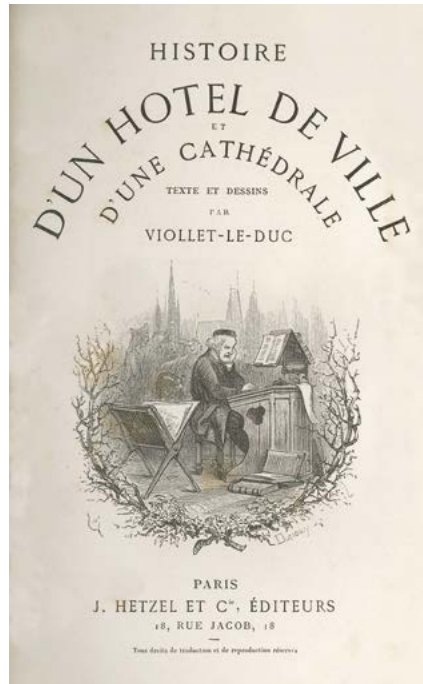


Fig. 2.31 Title page of Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, *Histoire d'un hôtel de ville et d'une cathédrale* (Paris: J. Hetzel, 1878).

The structural modifications imposed by Viollet-le-Duc altered the appearance of the cathedral to its very bones. So too did the alterations of the statuary. Much was supplanted, such as the lineup of sculpted Kings of Judea above the front portals. Altogether modern gargoyles, grotesques, and chimeras were inserted. Thus, famous carvings that many tourists and even natives of the French capital may assume to be authentically medieval, and that visitors to Paris today take as emblematic of the cathedral, do not embody the Middle Ages at all. For example, the balustrade figures that are wrongly but universally called gargoyles were fabrications, even falsehoods, of the mid-nineteenth century. The stonework was actually **carved and installed** between 1843 and 1864.

The nineteenth-century monsters of Notre-Dame confirm one side of an equation that the history of medievalism forces us to confront. The lesson to be learned? A lot of what may be considered medieval in Europe is actually from the nineteenth century. As we will see in due course, there is a countervailing rule of thumb for the New World. Much of what may be regarded as definingly modern in America owes greatly to the Middle Ages. The narcissism of the present may lead us to seek out what is modern-seeming in the past, if we even bother to look backward at all. In the process, we may neglect both what is actually medieval and what is instead medieval-seeming. In looking at the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, distinguishing the true medieval from the pseudomedieval can be arduous—but the challenge is rewarding.

In 1871, Hugo returned to Paris after having been off-site in exile for twenty years, not having a hunch (unlike his fictional creation) about the extent of the changes in the cathedral of the capital. Yet he did not have long for contemplating the splendor, reinstated or invented, of Viollet-le-Duc's handiwork. All too soon he would be distracted by the catastrophe of the insurgency in the city against the national government in 1871 that followed the French defeat in the Franco-Prussian War. Four decades earlier he had associated the Gothic architecture of Notre-Dame with revolution and the start of democracy. By the end of the jumble he now witnessed, did he still?

In 1862, an art critic wrote a cuttingly [melancholic review](#) of the restoration of Notre-Dame. The reviewer regarded the overhaul of the building as effacement of the past and of its politics—of history, including by implication medieval history. The cathedral as we see it was reconditioned panoramically through renovation. What is more, the area was subjected to urban renewal: the landscape too was remade. By the 1870s, full-scale revolts arose against the Frenchman's brand of reinstalling—really, remaking—the truly medieval Gothic. It was not until 1874, however, that Viollet-le-Duc, the most controversial but also the foremost architect and [exponent of the French Gothic revival](#), resigned from his post as diocesan architect of Paris.

In [England](#), an approach that was much more in line with what would be considered preservation today won favor, and [George Gilbert Scott](#) suffered as the equivalent scapegoat for redevelopments that were condemned as being beyond the pale by preservationists. The architect is known best today for the stupendous Midland Grand Hotel at Saint Pancras railway station in London (see Fig. 2.32). The postmedieval changes that have been rung upon authentically medieval Gothic in Europe must never be forgotten, since the toll has been heavy. First came neglect, never truly benign, in the wake of the Reformation. Then struck armed conflicts, accelerating over the centuries with ever more maleficent artillery. All along, renovation and adaptation were ineluctable and had consequence. After all, the buildings were not museums but still-living forums of activity. Even the most massive stones may warp, buckle, or shift beneath their own weight with time, while any structure, no matter how solidly made, is permeable by water and menaced unremittingly by fire. Further,

architecture mutates as forms of worship, other cultural practices, and aesthetics evolve. As a result, a walk-through around any major cathedral requires **information and imagination** to enable the viewing not only of what is perceptible right now, but also of what once stood. Such a once-over demands the very particular imagination of an art and architectural historian, or even of an archaeologist.



Fig. 2.32 Postcard depicting the Midland Grand Hotel at Saint Pancras, London (early twentieth century).

At the far extreme from the preservationists, those foes of the Gothic revival, who questioned resorting in any guise to this phase of the past, took a stand. For them, too, Viollet-le-Duc had a ready return. Already in 1846, he controverted criticism of the revival, positing in **an article** that **the style had evolved** to be uniquely responsive to the character and environment of his compatriots. His piece demonstrates that in the nineteenth century, Gothic architecture was berthed solidly in the consciousness of French intellectuals.

To appreciate the extent to which architectural and archaeological conservation and preservation, art history, and belles lettres shared in the same larger culture, we need only consider the career of Prosper Mérimée. He served a stint as inspector-general of historical monuments, which entailed heavy involvement with those of the Middle

Ages. Beyond mere inspection, he advocated vocally for interventions to ensure the upkeep of medieval art and architecture in France. In the turn to the Middle Ages after the revolution of 1830, he assigned Viollet-le-Duc the first contract (in 1840) for reinstating a medieval building at risk, the abbey church of Sainte Marie Madeleine at Vézelay (see Fig. 2.33). At the same time, Viollet-le-Duc's commitment to Gothic did not preclude his participating in new directions and challenges that typified his own times, as, for instance, assisting in radically non-Gothic projects. For example, he contributed to the initial designwork for the internal structure of the Statue of Liberty. Its exterior was sculpted by one of his former students. Furthermore, being a scholar of Gothic architecture in no way ruled out achieving advances as an architectural theorist of modernism. In the best Enlightenment fashion (but long after that period), the architect also constructed a cathedral-length monument of words and images in his ten-volume *Dictionnaire raisonné* (in full, Comprehensive and annotated dictionary of French architecture from the eleventh to the sixteenth century) and his published interviews on architecture. In both works he expounded on the rationality of Gothic architecture. He also advocated for a type of restoration that would create medieval buildings as he and his contemporaries imagined them to be, not necessarily as anyone could demonstrate that they had ever been in any earlier reality.

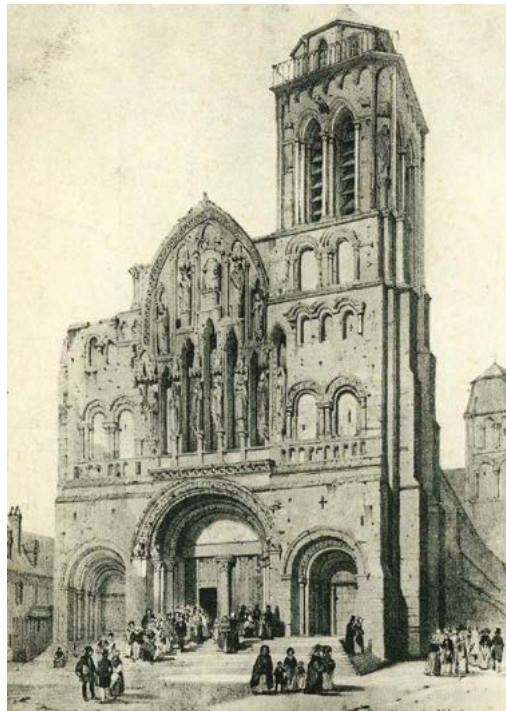


Fig. 2.33 Postcard depicting l'Abbaye Sainte-Marie-Madeleine in Vézelay, France (Sens, France: Collection J.D., late nineteenth century).

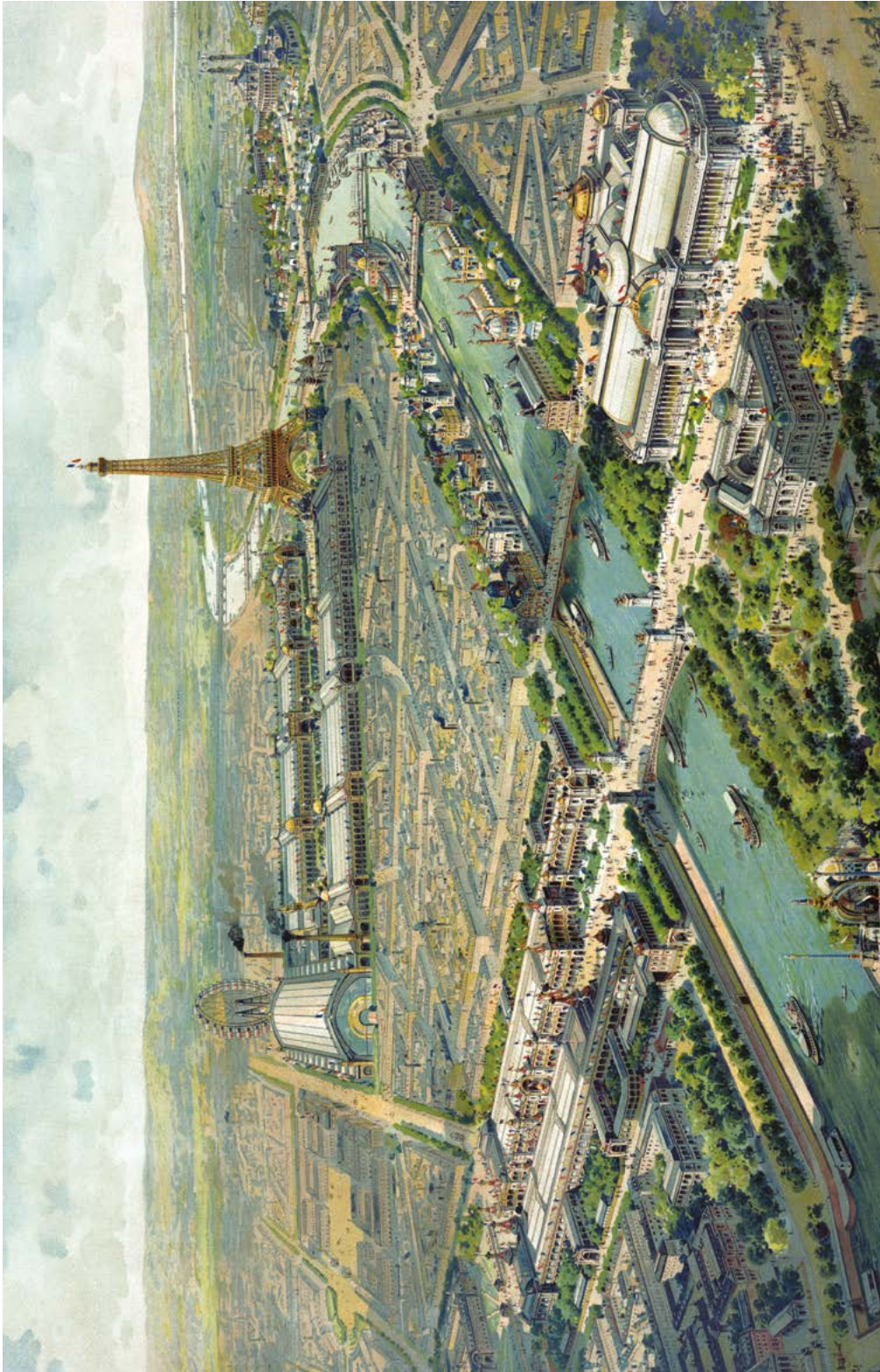


Fig. 2.34 Lucien Baylac, *Vue panoramique de l'exposition universelle de 1900*, 1900. Lithograph, 72 × 93 cm. Washington, D.C., Library of Congress.



## Notre-Dame Cathedral and Eiffel Tower

It is noon on a summer day; I am driving at full speed along the quays of the Left Bank toward the Eiffel Tower, under the ineffable blue sky of Paris. My eye fixes for a second a white point in the sky; the new tower of Chaillot. I slow down, I look, I plunge suddenly into the depths of time: Yes, *the cathedrals were white*, completely white, dazzling and young—and not black, dirty, old. The whole period was fresh and young.

—Le Corbusier

The cathedral of Notre-Dame gained rather than lost salience with the erection of its equal and opposite, the Eiffel Tower. The structure was built of puddling iron, seven thousand metric tons of it. By far the tallest uninhabited construction in the world for decades to follow, it was raised on geometrical trusses to reign on high over a great fair, the 1889 *Universal Exposition*, which coincided with the centenary of the storming of the Bastille on July 14, 1789, and celebrated it lavishly. The great trellis of metal strips served as the entrance arch to the exhibition, and it remained in 1900 (see Fig. 2.34). Imposingly tall, the tower was awe-inspiringly but gracefully engineered.

If iron can make anything concrete, this steeple concretized the modern, industrial, and technological. It appeared to have nothing in common with cathedrals, which until its construction had been the tallest buildings. Because of its difference, it was sometimes felt to be the soul-destroying product of a decadent culture. In 1888, while the monument was still under construction, *François Coppée composed a poem* on its second level. “On” is meant in two senses here: in physical location, as the poet was midway up the lattice as it would stand a year later, and in the topic of his lyric, as he was concerned with the tower. In his poem, he apostrophized the artisans of the Middle Ages. From living in times of “genial innocence,” those supposedly simple men had been heated by a “naïve” faith that sustained them as they worked for decades on a single dimly lit arch.

Both structures reveal brazenly the materials of which they are made. Notre-Dame cathedral does so in its stones, the Eiffel Tower in its iron. Yet with that feature of self-revelation, any resemblance between the two ends. The jutting spire of the ferrous fretwork demonstrated French preeminence in the industrial technology that encapsulated the present-day vigor and promising future of the Third Republic. In contrast, Notre-Dame and other Gothic cathedrals were thought to enshrine, in centuries-old stone and glass, the spirit and history that underlay the nation of France at the close of the nineteenth century.

The two impulses within French culture were not always necessarily deemed to be at loggerheads. As we have seen, besides engaging in restoration of Gothic buildings throughout the nation, Viollet-le-Duc was charged with designing the interior structure of the Statue of Liberty. The pair of roles did not conflict. The magnetism of Gothic was to him the sheer logic of its unsurpassed structural system. When

such rationality appeared to be no longer forthcoming in the foremost exemplars of architecture in the style, it had to be reinstilled. When the architect witnessed triumphs of engineering and architecture by his countrymen, he saw them as bringing to fruition a rationalism of the national psyche that he believed had taken form in the Middle Ages. This character formation had been underway long before receiving its definitive expression in the [Enlightenment encyclopedism](#) of which he was himself an exponent.

In the icy reality of one sort of metrics, the Eiffel Tower exceeded Notre-Dame vastly in height. [An engraving](#) that was published in 1889 demonstrates that the very peak of the cathedral reached only to the top of the first level of the Tower. Yet by another standard of measurement, Notre-Dame takes the lead and emerges as the clear winner. The [zero-mile marker](#) of all French national highways, and the official center of the city of Paris, is noted by a circular plaque set in the ground on the square before the main entrance of the cathedral (see Fig. 2.35). This indicator, first placed in its present location in 1924, makes Notre-Dame the very heart, or navel, of France.



Fig. 2.35 The marker of “Point Zero” at the foot of Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris. Photograph by Michael Reeve, 2004. Image from Wikimedia Commons, © Quadell (2004), CC BY-SA 3.0, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Notre\\_dame-kilometer-zero.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Notre_dame-kilometer-zero.jpg)

When viewed symbolically, the Gothic church fared very well indeed. For instance, [in one text](#) the two buildings are presented as evenly matched sparring partners in an imaginary debate between them. To go further, the cathedral of Notre-Dame, when personified, could be held up as the apotheosis of femininity, even sexualized. Huysmans’s long novel *La Cathédrale* from 1898, about Notre-Dame of Chartres, is concerned mainly with the meditations of the central character Durtal as he analyzes from all angles both the building and the Virgin Mary herself. The great church was a site, but it was also humanized as a character alongside Roland and Charlemagne, Joan of Arc, and the jongleur. Durtal envisages the cathedral of Chartres as a [blue-eyed blonde](#). While drawing his comparison, he simultaneously contemplates his suitability for the monastic life. At the end he departs to consider the Benedictine monastery of Solesmes.

A print from 1889 by Oswald Heidbrinck brings home marvelously the contrast between the tower and the cathedral, very much to the advantage of the second—and echoing the [schism between Republicans and conservatives](#) (see Fig. 2.36). The center of the composition is occupied squarely by the west façade of Notre-Dame cathedral. The westwork is veiled by the diaphanously negligee-like garment of the Virgin. In turn, Mary is fastened to the space between its two towers much like a woman to a bustle—or like the human half of a mermaid to her fishy half. Flanked by the spread of two great seraphic wings and surmounted by the latticework of a star-shaped halo, the Mother of God looks far down her nose at the Eiffel Tower, below which an elderly, bald-pated architect labors, squatting on a scaffold, hunching over blueprints, and squinting through his eyeglasses as he holds a compass in one hand and grips the diagram in another. The draftsman is transfixed by a tack through his curving neck. We can picture somewhere in the vicinity on the drafting table a protractor, measuring stick, scales, triangles, T-squares, and other such tools of the trade. The idea of identifying the cathedral as a female was nothing new. Hugo depicted the monument as an old woman with a once-beautiful demeanor in [a chapter of his book](#). Her robes had been defaced and deformed by the wear of time and by the negligence of people, especially artists.

Over the more than a century that has intervened, the Eiffel Tower and the cathedral have continued to be coupled in popular culture (see Fig. 2.37). The link must have suggested itself early. Already in 1888, an American journalist framed the building of the Gothic cathedral of Saint John the Divine in New York as an [expression of Protestantism](#) in the new world to emulate “Eiffel’s Tower of Iron on the Champs de Mars.” The two Parisian structures were now and again rivals, at other times teammates. The poet Guillaume Apollinaire composed a [cycle of poems](#) during the early stages of World War I. He presented the pieces paired in three [calligrams](#) with an infantryman’s or artilleryman’s boot to the left, Notre-Dame in the middle representing the antebellum past, and the Eiffel Tower to the right as a tongue that was being and would be [forever stuck out at the Germans](#) (see Fig. 2.38). The cathedral is awarded centrality, but at the same time it is made diminutive. Has the presence of war, embodied in the boot, made the past suffer the involution that old age induces? Alternatively, does the diminution of the Church, Christianity, the Middle Ages, or all three owe equally to modernity itself, as incorporated in the Eiffel Tower? In twinning the Eiffel Tower and Notre-Dame, the contrast between the two has been desacralized by the suppression of the Virgin. At least in postcards, Notre-Dame now prevails over the Tower through its [gargoyles](#). A favorite for many decades has been the juxtaposition between the sculpture known as [The Devil](#) and the iron tower to the right of its gaze (see Figs. 2.39 and 2.40). For all these reasons, a tale of a former wandering entertainer who crept through the chapels and crypts of a medieval abbey church would have found ready listeners and readers. It would have complemented in many ways Hugo’s novel, with its hunchback who made the gargoyles and exterior of Notre-Dame his hangout. Although a bell-ringer is by no means identical with a professional entertainer, the two resemble each other loosely.



Fig. 2.36 "Pauvre savant!" Print by Oswald Heidbrinck, 1889.

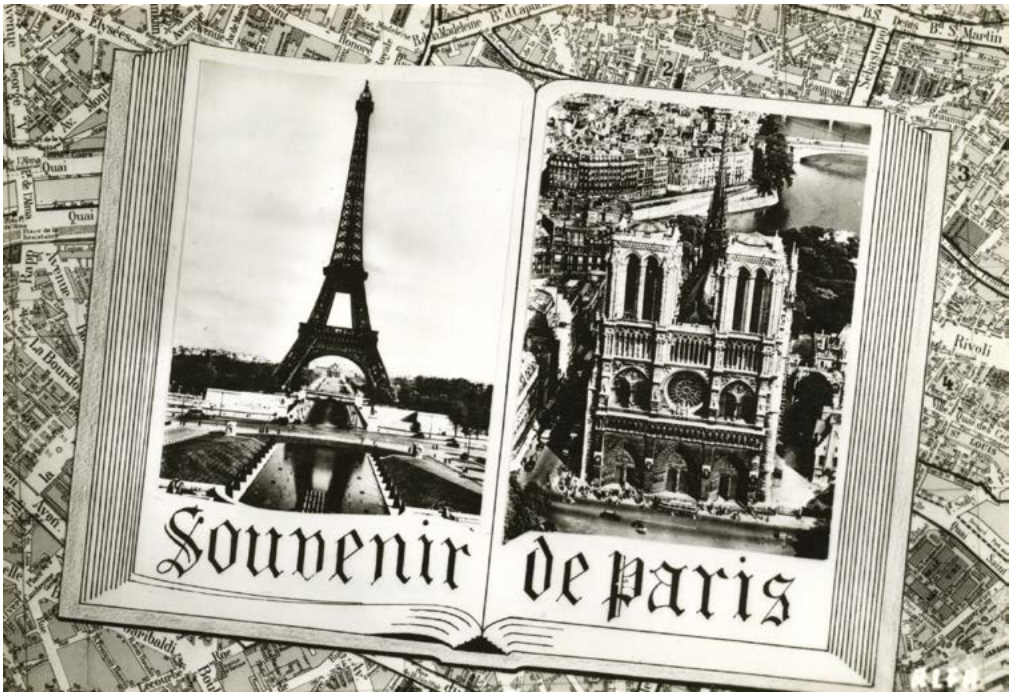


Fig. 2.37 Postcard depicting the Eiffel Tower and Notre-Dame Cathedral as the truest expressions of a “souvenir de Paris” (Paris: Alfa, date unknown).

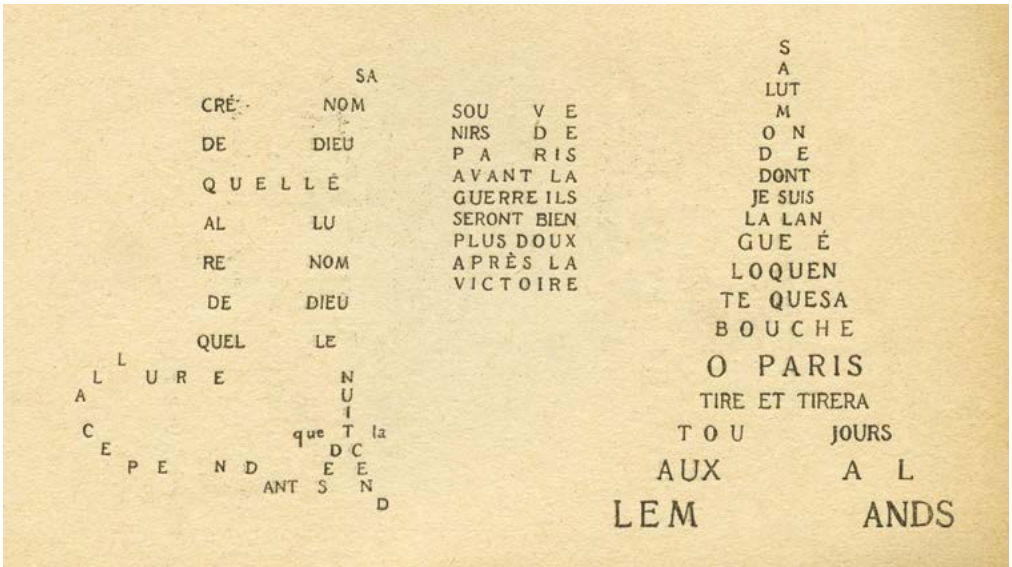


Fig. 2.38 War-inspired calligrams from “2e canonnier conducteur.” Published in Guillaume Apollinaire, *Calligrammes: Poèmes de la paix et de la guerre 1913–1916* (Paris: Gallimard, 1925), 78.



Fig. 2.39 Postcard depicting a Notre-Dame gargoyle and the Eiffel Tower (Paris: Chantal, date unknown).



Fig. 2.40 Postcard depicting a Notre-Dame gargoyle and the Eiffel Tower (Paris: Chantal, date unknown).

The likeness between Quasimodo and the nameless juggler is intensified by the tambourine-striking or castanet-clicking of Esmeralda (see Fig. 2.41). The female lead with whom the malformed man is associated is a dancer so beautiful that the sordid and hypocritical fictional archdeacon of Notre-Dame claims, “God would have preferred her to the Virgin, and would have chosen to be born of her if she had existed when he became a man.” The blasphemy of Claude Frolo’s contrary-to-fact conditional thought is extended implicitly through what readers know about the most maculate conception of the gypsy woman: she is the daughter of a prostitute. Like the tumbler, the beauty performs mostly before hidden male voyeurs. She is the original exotic dancer. Both the humpback and the gypsy have become substitutable by metonymy for the cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris, its distinguishing architectural components, and even, by extension, Hugo as the author of the book named after the church.

The hunchback of Notre-Dame has his equal and opposite in the juggler. *Our Lady’s Tumbler* and *The Juggler of Notre Dame* form a natural pendant to *Notre-Dame de Paris*. The two works of literature are locked in a strangely symbiotic relationship, in which [ecclesiastical architecture](#) plays a leading role. In both, human protagonists are outcasts. One, of course, is the hobgoblin-like bell ringer, Quasimodo, and the other the tumbler or juggler. Each of the two is judged unfairly and maltreated, but each elicits mercy from the leading woman of the story. The juggler and the hunchback are rejects from conventional society, hobbled in their ability to navigate regular communication, and solitaries who haunt the peripheries of church architecture,

passionately devoted to out-of-reach women whom they put on a pedestal. They were doomed to be conflated. Finally, the most famous literary and musical reworks of the medieval tale are both entitled *The Jongleur of Notre Dame*. That *Notre Dame*, although not in Paris, has become conflated willy-nilly with the Parisian cathedral and the great novel.

The appeal of *Our Lady's Tumbler* would have been all the more winning if those who read or heard it accepted the inviolable commutative property that renders Mary and the cathedral equivalent. When the anniversary of the cathedral of Paris is celebrated, the building can be conveyed metonymically by a representation of the Virgin in stained glass or statuary. This substitution happened in philately, in a postage stamp issued to mark the eight hundredth anniversary of Notre-Dame of Paris (after all, Our Lady in French is *Notre Dame*). Cathedrals were mostly dedicated to the Mother of God, as were all the churches of the Cistercians, such as that at Clairvaux in which the tumbler purportedly tumbled before her likeness. To go further, we can be certain that all the edifices erected in honor of the Virgin contained images of her, with Notre-Dame in Paris being no exception (see Fig. 2.42). A newly discovered medieval text



Fig. 2.41 Esmeralda. Engraving by Paul Merwart, 1885. Published in *L'univers illustré* 28.1604 (December 19, 1885): 805.



Fig. 2.42 Postcard depicting a statue of the Virgin and Child in Notre-Dame Cathedral (Paris, early twentieth century).

could have earned a privileged place owing to the intellectual and academic values of the period. As European nations molded themselves in the nineteenth century, they resorted to two disciplines within the humanities. One was history, the other was philology—the realm of study that enabled the constitution and interpretation of texts. In the late nineteenth century, the twin studies of history and philology intersected most prestigiously in texts from the Middle Ages. Consequently, an Old French poem that had only just turned up could galvanize in both the public and the scholarly community excitement that nearly defies our capacity today to appreciate. French society was undergoing fast-paced turnover and transition even before the Franco-Prussian war. The world of learning was not insulated from these changes. On the contrary, its institutions were realigned or newly created in the years preceding and succeeding the conflict, its publications were revamped and revitalized through new periodicals and series, and its scholarship and teaching were informed by novel methods, aims, and conceptions.

Romance philology is a branch of learning that explores the languages and literatures as well as the folklore and cultures of Romance-speaking peoples. It can be misbranded as suffocatingly positivist, a mere matter of editing and etymology. In fact, this panoply of know-how in any of its many expressions is far richer and much more complicated than such a reductionist view could lead one to believe. At its fullest and most flexible, it enables us not just to interpret texts and make sense of them, but even to have them at all. As a result, the discipline commanded a loftier prestige in the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries than it would hold at any later time.

After being founded in Germany, Romance philology was transplanted to France and cultivated there. In its adopted Gallic home, it was sometimes infused with a cooperative and borderless spirit that transcended any whiff of nationalism. In other instances, it was pursued with a rivalry that reflected heart-pounding political and military tensions between France and Germany. In both countries, the study summoned forth an amplitude of engagement from the public and its leadership that has shrunk in later periods. In days when the preservation and promotion of such assets as medieval texts were the coin of the cultural realm, philologists often held privileged positions in society. Sometimes they fulfilled a role as what might today be termed, particularly in an American context, “[public intellectuals](#).” At other times they were mandarins.

The modern recovery of the original medieval French *Our Lady's Tumbler* is to be set against this historical and cultural backdrop. The potentiality of enrolling a new *pièce de résistance* among the ranks of medieval French literature would have been welcome. At the time, the Middle Ages was not universally adored as an epoch in France. Yet in many quarters, it may have elicited a yen for a simple innocence and supposedly primitive charm that were judged to have been lost. Industrialization and other



processes had altered the world radically in then-modern times. In the view of some, the transformation had depleted life. To them, the bygone days fomented nostalgia. As has been mentioned, the poem had a supporting role to play in the regeneration of nation and culture that many people longed to experience in the dispiriting aftermath of the Franco-Prussian war. It tells a beautiful miracle of a man redeemed through the bona fides with which he offered his craft. The wonder must have aroused many individuals who desperately craved redemption. Not the least among those inspired were writers and artists.



### 3. Franglais Juggling

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After 1870 or so, medievalism has no single story. Gradually leaving behind its historical/textual moorings, it diffused into general culture in various combinations, sometimes as a minor component, whether vital or merely decorative.

The ever-changing fortunes of the Middle Ages during the nineteenth century took a new turn in 1870. Their return to favour at this time forms a curious interlude, quite distinct, of course, from the Symbolist return to favour which immediately followed it, and deserving some mention, despite the fact that it bore no fruit in literature other than the most mediocre and ephemeral.

#### The Anglicizing of the Tumbler

Understandably, since both the history and the philology of individual European languages developed inside the context of nineteenth-century nationalism, attempts were made to infix *Our Lady's Tumbler* within the framework of French national identity. Yet the jongleur drew back and balked at being trammelled by boundaries of nation-states. As a matter of fact, when reactivated, he became even more free ranging than he had been in the reality of the medieval period. The story of the performer was ideally equipped to appeal to what is touted in the American context as the Gilded Age (the equivalent in French is *la belle époque*). Both stretch roughly fifty years, from the late nineteenth to or into the early twentieth century. Although in very different ways, the zeitgeist of both periods comprehended openness to medieval cultures and medievalizing tastes, within the context of prewar high life. Afterward, things changed. The worst of the twentieth century began effectively in 1914, with the commencement of World War I.

The narrative in the French poem marshals many important elements associated with the Middle Ages. The hero is shown as a distinctively medieval type of

entertainer. As such, he belongs initially to a class of craftsmen who at times were mustered into guilds. Most of the action in the tale takes place within a monastery. In its architectural setting, the story focuses upon a church. Although not a cathedral, the edifice is sufficiently cavernous for a person inside to slip away unobserved to the crypt. Every one of the principal characters, most particularly the protagonist, has undertaken a monomaniacal commitment to attend to a single fair lady. They do so even though their service is not strictly chivalric, since the maiden in question is Mary. All these figures and features—jongleur, monks, large church, adulation of a woman, and the Virgin—certify the text as having the right stuff for application in a Gothic revival.

After the publication of the medieval verse for the first time in 1873 in a learned periodical, the story attracted notice initially among a restricted readership of academicians throughout Western Europe and North America. Over the next few decades, it proliferated among the public a little at a time in translations and paraphrases. Consequently, the narrative was very present in the ferment of the decades on either side of 1900, that great climacteric in the culture of the times. Owing to the intense historical self-consciousness of the nineteenth century, the year 1900 meant more than had 1800, 1700, or any previous round number of the double-aught sort. Technologically, the tale came into its own at precisely the right instant to enjoy creation and re-creation on paper and parchment in medievaesque styles. Reproductive processes such as lithography, chromolithography, and photography disseminated medieval art far more widely among nonspecialists than had hitherto been imaginable. Thanks to the broad circulation, printers, calligraphers, and designers had at their disposal models for inspiration that had earlier been limited or altogether lacking. France saw a distinctively book-centered bohemianism arise in its upper bourgeoisie. These bibliophilic bohemians bought beautiful books, including books about books and about book collectors. The French vogue rolled across the Atlantic to lap the American shores first in Boston, at the time an inter-elite haven for both aspiring bohemians and bookmakers.

Eventually the medieval narrative of *Our Lady's Tumbler* was transformed radically in an adaptation into modern French prose. This new version achieved great popularity. By no stretch of the imagination can the recasting be deemed a translation. In France, this late nineteenth-century form rendered the medieval one effectively extinct, except among scholars. Among English speakers, the success of the new composition did not dislocate the original as put into modern language. The two versions, medieval and modern, coexisted to mutual advantage, or at least not to each other's disadvantage. Long after the French short story appeared, craft publishers brought into print multiple English translations of the poem from the Middle Ages. Individuals even copied out such translations in pseudomedieval manuscripts. In keeping with the very etymology of the word, these handmade copies were anything but what we call cribs or trots, word-for-word renderings intended for use by students in language classes.

With the nineteenth-century industrialization at full throttle, consumers were treated to the boons and banes of large-scale standardization. Consequently, they proved to be wistful for handicrafts and handmade objects. Since such items lay beyond the means of many, would-be purchasers developed a keen taste for factory-made surrogates that would be reminiscent somehow of the preindustrial era. More than any other period, the Middle Ages epitomized romanticized days of yore. To manufacture mass-produced but medievaesque products was to rebel, albeit only in a token way, against the relatively unestablished despotism of the factory.

In the nineteenth century, [French formed the main source](#) for translation into English—of medieval literature, of the most recent high literature of realism, naturalism, and decadence, and of popular literature, from children’s literature through serialized melodramas. Thus, 1872 saw the publication in English of both the narrative poems or lays of Marie de France and *Ballads and Lyrics of Old France* by the prolific Scots author Andrew Lang, known still for his works on folklore and mythology. The cover of the latter book flaunts discreetly, if that action may ever be anything but indiscreet, a lily to signify the Frenchness of the collection. The fleur-de-lis and its floral original were the primal French connection (see Fig. 3.1). Similarly, both the *Song of Roland* and [Aucassin et Nicolette](#) (see Fig. 3.2), in translation, came into print in 1880. Not irrelevantly, all the texts just mentioned still receive attention even today for their avowed [folkloric features](#).

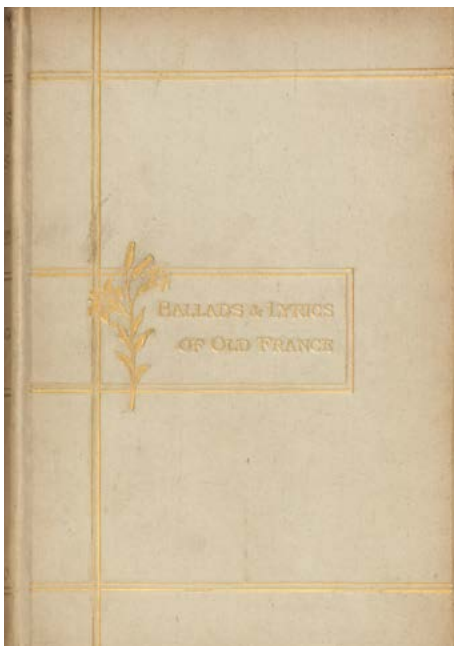


Fig. 3.1 Front cover of Andrew Lang, trans., *Ballads & Lyrics of Old France, with Other Poems* (London: Longmans, Green, 1872).

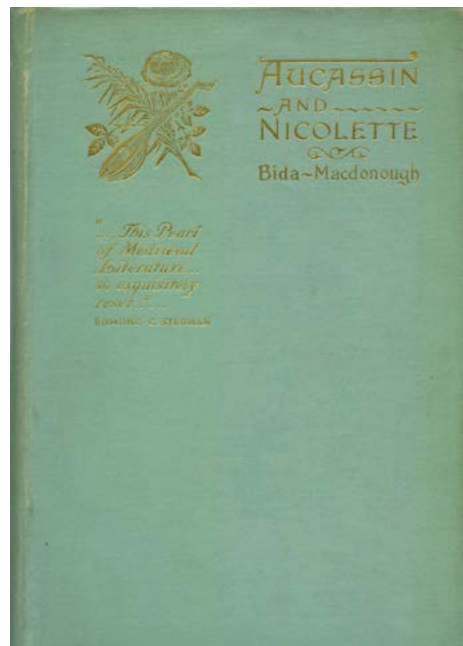


Fig. 3.2 Front cover of Alexandre Bida, *Aucassin and Nicolette, The Lovers of Provence: A MS Song-Story of the Twelfth Century*, trans. A. Rodney Macdonough (New York: Fords, Howard & Hulbert, 1880).

The book containing the translation of *Aucassin and Nicolette* is noteworthy for the [extent of its artwork](#). One of the illustrations depicts the Saracen heroine, [Nicolette](#). She has changed her skin color black, dressed in different clothing, and effectively disguised herself as a minstrel. In this get-up, she traveled to [Christian France](#) and rejoined her beloved, Aucassin (see Fig. 3.3). The story made good provender for medievalizers, as they peered out at their contemporary worlds through spectacles with stained-glass lenses. It also furnished the right stuff for orientalizers who viewed the Middle East and beyond as distorted in the funhouse mirror of their preconceptions and misconceptions.



Fig. 3.3 “Nicole the Minstrel at Beaucaire.” Engraving after design by Alexandre Bida, 1880. Published in *Aucassin and Nicolette, The Lovers of Provence: A MS Song-Story of the Twelfth Century*, trans. A. Rodney Macdonough (New York: Fords, Howard & Hulbert, 1880), facing p. ix.

The folklore that was imagined to be embedded in such tales accounted for part of their attraction at a juncture when the [purported primitivism](#) of the Middle Ages could have been a plus. At the same time, *Our Lady’s Tumbler’s* draw was nearly opposite to the appeal of folklore and popular culture—after all, it was set in a monastery, not among the common folk. The cloister, and the cloistered life, occupied a privileged space within Victorian medievalism. Its celebration runs onward from Thomas Carlyle to William Morris and the 1858 [Defence of Guenevere](#). In general, the late nineteenth-century Anglophone world constituted an especially receptive environment for medieval texts

in translation. France could pride itself upon Hugo and the architect Viollet-le-Duc. Across the Channel, English speakers had the [reworking of Arthurian material](#) by the poet laureate Alfred, Lord Tennyson, the advocacy in “[The Nature of Gothic](#)” by the art critic John Ruskin, and the whole Gothic revival in art, architecture, literature, and everything else. The roots of all this medievalizing sank deep into English culture, even before Morris and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood that was founded in 1848. The members of the P.R.B., as it has become known, professed to spurn the manner of artists who succeeded Raphael. In so doing, they echoed a preference expressed already by Gautier’s 1832 short story title character, [Élias Wildmanstadius](#): “Raphael was almost too recent for him.”

Within the medievalism of the English and those aligned culturally with them, Tennyson wielded an extraordinarily powerful hold. Lovely testimony of the sway exercised by the Tennysonian medievaesque is found in a painting entitled [Mariana](#) (see Fig. 3.4). In his conception of this work, the artist was indebted ultimately to the woman of the same name of Shakespeare’s *Measure for Measure* (1604), but even more to [a British poet’s “Mariana”](#) from 1830. One of the P.R.B., the English painter Millais, follows the poet laureate of Great Britain by retaining implications of isolation and frustration, but with a vibrancy that forgoes any trace of desolation. The scene relates strongly to *Our Lady’s Tumbler* by being [tied to the Virgin](#) as closely as are the names Mary and Mariana.

In the painting’s composition, circumstances would suggest that Mariana’s thoughts dwell unbroken upon a pane of stained glass. Her own gaze seems to be locked with that of an angel depicted in the colored rectangle. The heavenly messenger could be a stand-in (or fly-in) for her own lover, whose arrival she awaits in vain. [Not in her line of vision](#) is the vitreous sheet next to the spirit that shows the Virgin herself. In the darkness behind Mariana and to her right stands a sideboard with a petite triptych—what appears to be a crucifix, a hanging votive candle, and a second installment of colored glass, barely visible. The artwork could be [another portrayal of the Annunciation](#); because of the medium, this in vitro fertilization would make Jesus the closest medieval equivalent to a test tube baby. Mariana, a damsel trapped claustrophobically in place, forms a strangely apt equal and opposite to the knight-errant who is missing from the picture. Her chapel-like boudoir is as quiet as a church, even down to the church mouse on the floor. The autumnal leaves, signaling mortality, lie still and unrustling.

The English versions that were translated directly from the medieval French poem of *Our Lady’s Tumbler*, rather than from Anatole France’s recasting, were almost invariably beautified with medievaesque touches. The most common of these flourishes would be ornamented initials, such as on the opening page of the translation brought out by the Bostonian publishing house, Copeland & Day (see Fig. 3.5). Some of these printings were done on a kind of paper that was designed to resemble, at least after a



Fig. 3.4 John Everett Millais, *Mariana*, 1851. Oil on mahogany, 59.7 × 49.5 cm. London, Tate Britain.  
Image from Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:John\\_Everett\\_Millais\\_-\\_Mariana\\_-\\_Google\\_Art\\_Project.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:John_Everett_Millais_-_Mariana_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg)



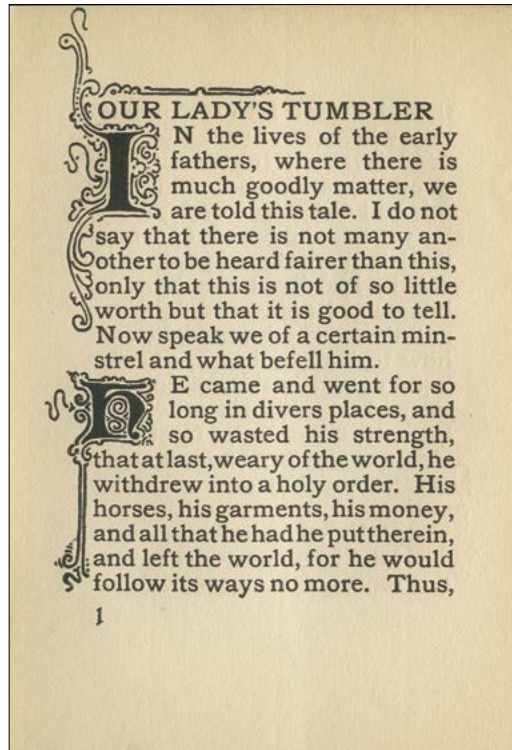


Fig. 3.5 Isabel Butler, trans., *Our Lady's Tumbler: A Tale of Medieval France, Translated into English from the Old French* (Boston: Copeland & Day, 1898), 1.

fashion, genuine parchment. A few were printed or even handwritten calligraphically in medieval-like scripts. This assiduity about faux medieval craft, with features meant to appear redolent of the Middle Ages, [owed much to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood](#). It had other roots as well, since many [turns toward the Middle Ages](#) had taken place over the preceding decades.

For more than a century since the rediscovery and translation of *Our Lady's Tumbler*, medievalizing flourishes have remained extremely common, if not an absolute constant, in books containing versions of the poem. This trend has continued especially in the productions of personal or vanity presses with low print runs, but also in sizable commercial runs. One playwright referred tellingly to love for the Middle Ages in terms of “glowing old folios of black letter with gilt and florid initials.” In a small touch that is evident in his own [private-press printing](#), the first letter of the introduction and all the stage instructions are printed in crimson ink, to call to mind the rubrics of medieval manuscripts. The redness reminds us of a time when red ink was not associated with unpaid debts but hallowed words—when publication was a red-letter day.

## Thomas Bird Mosher and Reverend Wicksteed

In literature alone is to be found and  
cherished the personal might which brings  
together vanished past and living present.

— Thomas Bird Mosher

The most prestigious flag-bearer of *Our Lady's Tumbler* in the United States may have been the gentleman and scholar Henry Adams, in the very early twentieth century. Yet the nonpareil man of letters was not the only or even the most effective disseminator of the tale among Americans. The real heyday of the story was underway well before he set pen to paper. It had arrived, thanks to the enterprise of creative writers, artists, and publishers who sailed in the wake of scholars and sciolists. They navigated through the intermediaries not merely of paper and ink but of other media as well.

The early translations of the medieval tale warrant our attention, since they filled a lacuna. Gaston Paris and Henry Adams stirred enthusiasm for *Our Lady's Tumbler* among their contemporaries, but neither put the medieval French text into his own language. The Frenchman gave the briefest of paraphrases; the American, despite quoting generous swatches in English of his own making, professed **strong scruples** about the toll that translation into a modern language would exact upon the loveliness of the poem. He seemed to subscribe to the Italian dictum “traduttore, traditore”: “translator, traitor.”

In the New World, many early printings of an English translation poured forth from the press of Thomas Bird Mosher of Portland, Maine. A prolific printer and untiring literary scholar, this entrepreneur first brought out *Our Lady's Tumbler* in 1899. The story caught on like wildfire in the United States. The success of the initial printing is apparent from the **repeated separate reprintings** of the tale that this New Englander subsequently made (see Figs. 3.6 and 3.7). **One private run** of the book came from Mosher Press in 1917 (see Fig. 3.8). It speaks volumes, so to say, that a printing on this order would be produced, presumably to serve as **Christmas gifts** for distribution to clients, friends, and family.

Mosher was a self-made and self-taught man, with no formal education beyond **grammar school**. After spending his early life aboard ships as the son of a sailor, and after false starts in other business ventures, he took up publishing in 1891, aged thirty-nine. His forte was private-press printing. In his craft, he paid white-glove attention to graphic design, typography, and paper, in which he achieved down-the-line quality without bowing to high expense (see Fig. 3.9). Although an operator with an initiative of a consummately American type, Mosher too was conditioned heavily by the Pre-Raphaelites and other, related British groups, such as the Arts and Crafts Movement associated with William Morris. As chance would have it, both the Englishman and he **issued their first books** in 1891. Many of these collaborations entailed a turn to the Middle Ages that played out in literature as well as in art.

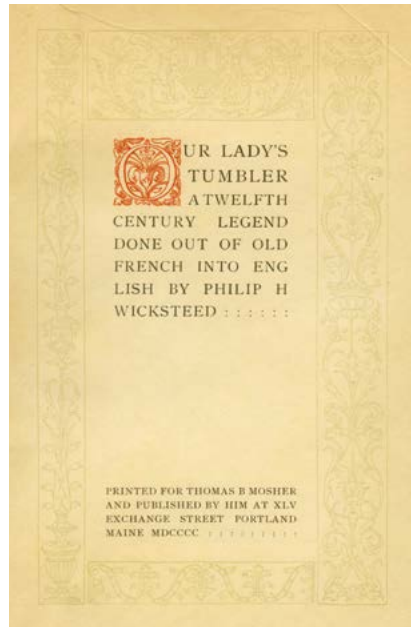


Fig. 3.6 Front cover of Philip H. Wicksteed, trans., *Our Lady's Tumbler: A Twelfth Century Legend* (Portland, ME: Thomas B. Mosher, 1900).

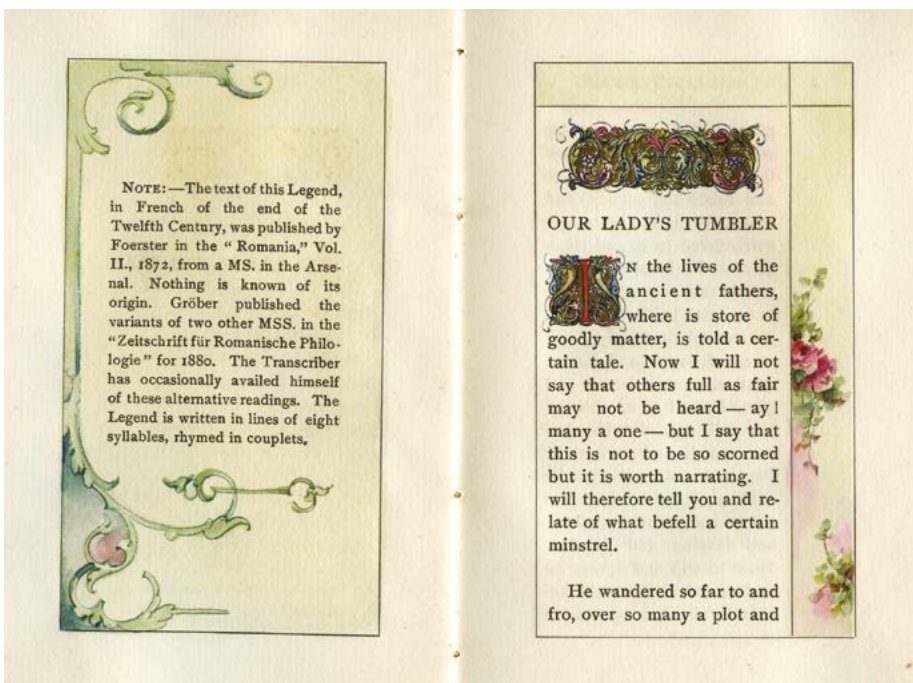


Fig. 3.7 Philip H. Wicksteed, trans., *Our Lady's Tumbler: A Twelfth Century Legend* (Portland, ME: Thomas B. Mosher, 1906), 1–2.

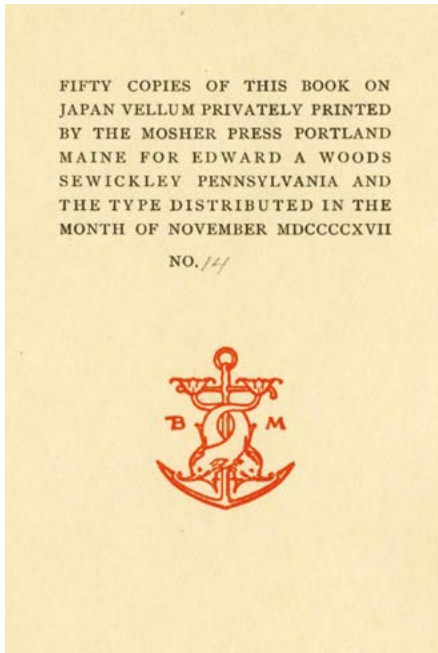


Fig. 3.8 Colophon for Philip H. Wicksteed, trans., *Our Lady's Tumbler: A Twelfth Century Legend* (Portland, ME: The Mosher Press, 1917).

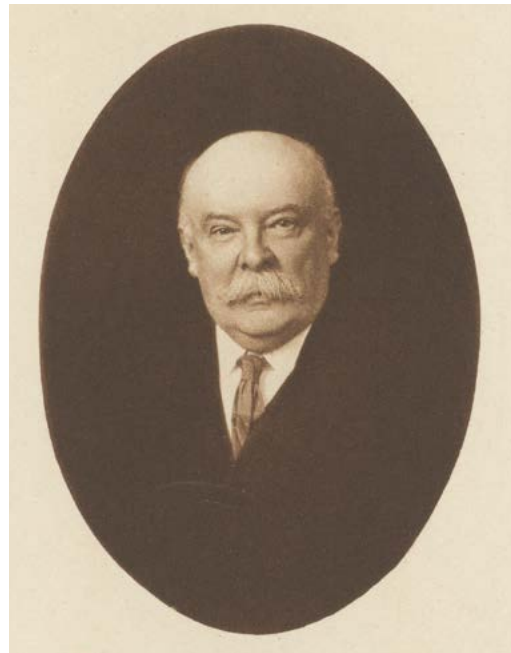


Fig. 3.9 Thomas Bird Mosher. Portrait, before 1915. Photographer unknown. Published in *The Bibelot, a Reprint of Poetry and Prose for Book Lovers*, comp. Milton James Ferguson (Portland, ME: Thomas B. Mosher, 1915), frontispiece.

In some circles, Mosher may have a lingering reputation today mostly for his questionable ethics in poaching books published originally in England and in republishing them without the knowledge or consent of their authors, agents, or publishers. By present-day legal standards of copyright, his conduct may often have been indefensible. Yet to his credit, he was a prizefighter for the publication industry in the United States. He championed bookmaking that delivered affordability without sacrificing quality in either form or content. His influence lay less in any specific achievement in design than in the extraordinary range and volume that he made available. His real feat was to furnish books at a reasonable price to a large cross section of American readers. At the same time, he brought out a total of 730 titles and editions. This immense production over more than three decades included many limited runs on [Japan vellum](#).

The publisher was unflagging in tracking down little-known texts. His repertory included [many short books](#) in English or English translation, especially but not exclusively set in the Middle Ages, that focused on miracles, saintliness, and simple piety. One of these titles is *The Children's Crusade* by Marcel Schwob, [penned in 1896](#). This friend of Gaston Paris (among many others) developed a love for the Middle Ages when still a young man, notably for the poet François Villon. Worth noting also is John Addington Symonds's *Wine, Women, and Song*. Finally, we should recall

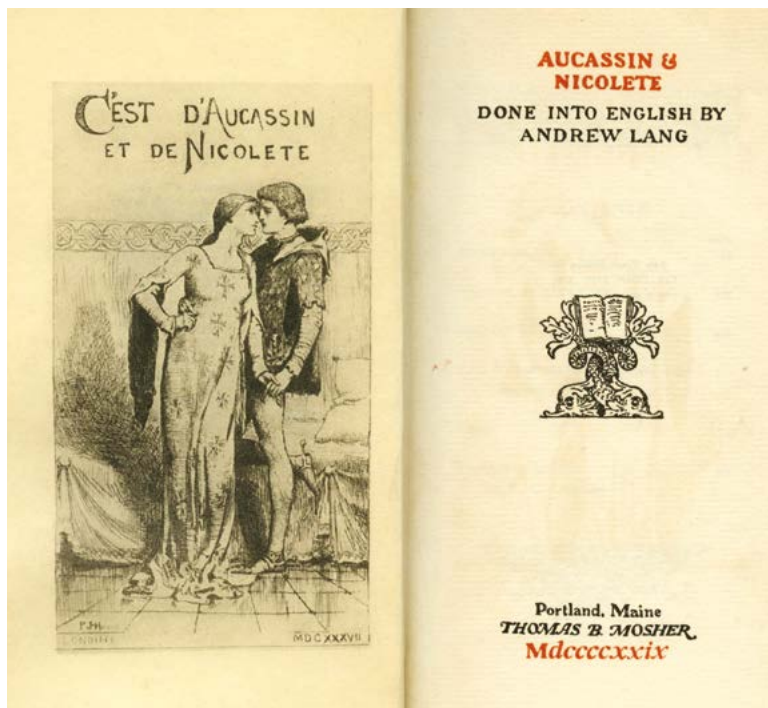


Fig. 3.10 Frontispiece and title page of Andrew Lang, trans., *Aucassin & Nicolette*, 10th ed. (Portland, ME: Thomas B. Mosher, 1929).

Andrew Lang's *Aucassin and Nicolette*, brought out by Mosher in 1895 (see Fig. 3.10). That publication occasioned in the following year the first legal charge of [copyright piracy](#) against him. The litigation did not have a chilling effect on the Maine publisher, who continued to reprint without restraint but also without lawful contracts (see Fig. 3.10). In [some printings](#) of *Our Lady's Tumbler*, Mosher contributed a preface that cobbled together facts and prose lifted with blithe abandon from other authors and publishers. He also retained a note by Philip Henry Wicksteed, whose 1894 translation of the English he coopted, without due acknowledgment. Wicksteed was an English Unitarian minister who wrote and translated prolifically (see Fig. 3.11). The medieval portion of his efforts as a [scholar and translator](#) extended to Dante and Thomas Aquinas. His translation of *Our Lady's Tumbler*, presented consistently as a "transcription," relied on Foerster's edition, with occasional use of alternative readings that had been advanced by the German Romance philologist, Gustav Gröber. The religious appeal of the tale to Wicksteed and his audience can be seen in the cover design to one of the two 1894 printings, since it depicts a seated Virgin and Child within a floral lozenge. [Wicksteed's English translation](#) stayed in print for thirty-five years or more. The sway of the version by this man of the cloth can be detected all the way to the twentieth-century poet W. H. Auden, who consulted it when he tried his hand at an adaptation of the medieval French poem as a ballad.



Fig. 3.11 Philip Henry Wicksteed. Photograph by Messrs. Bassano, ca. 1898.

The gusto that a century ago was evinced for Wicksteed's style cannot easily be shared today. A Latin dictum that "[in matters of taste there must be no debate](#)" and its English equivalent, "there's no accounting for taste," apply. But the piety of the tale made it a rapid success, at least among readers with a bent toward religiosity. Take, for example, William Ewart Gladstone, the late nineteenth-century prime minister of Britain (see Fig. 3.12). In the concluding year of his fourth and final stint in office, he found pause to peruse the little volume and to list its title among "books read" [in his diary](#) (see Fig. 3.12). To recross the Atlantic, whereas many writers take a page from another's book, the Mainer took it to the extreme of reprinting Wicksteed's entire book (see Fig. 3.13). An equal opportunist in his pilferage, the Maine-based master of copyright infringement amplified the title text with two passages from Gautier de Coinci that he [plundered from the translation of the tale](#) by Alice Kemp-Welch.

In 1915, the English storyteller Marie L. Shedlock grappled with the imponderability of whether those who relate stories should repeat them verbatim or retell them in their own words. In her consideration of the issue, [she cited \*Our Lady's Tumbler\*](#) as a case in which tellers would be well advised to retain characteristic passages. In endeavoring to prove her point, Shedlock [quoted two examples](#) from Wicksteed's archaic English. The first reads: "What am I doing? For there is none here so caitiff but who vies with all the rest in serving God after his trade." She followed it with a speech by the tumbler to the Virgin that is chockablock with superannuated vocabulary. Even one



Fig. 3.12 Postcard depicting Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone (Dundee, Scotland: J. Valentine, late nineteenth century).

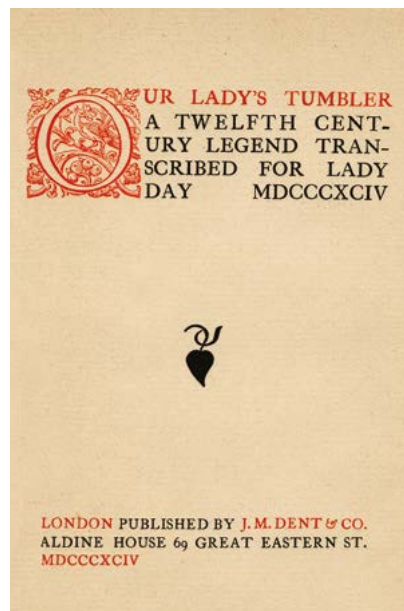


Fig. 3.13 Front cover of Philip H. Wicksteed, trans., *Our Lady's Tumbler: A Twelfth Century Legend Transcribed for Lady Day* (London: J. M. Dent, 1894).

hundred years ago, the diction at the heart of this second sample would have sounded more than merely obsolete: “And this I dare avouch and boast, that for me it is no play-work.” Still, the quaintness of words such as “caitiff” and “avouch” would not necessarily have detracted from an overall positive effect. In fact, such lexical “golden oldies” may have atmospheric value.

The archaism of Wicksteed’s language is designed to transport us back to the Middle Ages. It might have had even more of that effect on adults who had been reared on large doses of Walter Scott’s novels. When this translation of *Our Lady’s Tumbler* appeared initially, it was hailed for “the charm with which this curious and interesting legend is invested by the [simple diction](#) of the narrative itself.” Even so, the strained effort at old-fashionedness might have come across as inscrutable, alienating or at least unappealing to many children in the audience that Shedlock envisaged decades later. An uncharitable reader today might judge the word choices comically unsuitable for young listeners and fault her for having a tin ear. But this is now and that was then. In her lifetime and long afterward, she exercised a vast influence on [other storytellers](#). Some of those who followed her were influential in their turn and [made their own contributions](#) to the reception of our story and its progeny, such as, for instance, the American Ruth Sawyer.

Although not as the publisher, Mosher played a role in the retranslation of *Our Lady’s Tumbler* from Wicksteed’s English into [Esperanto](#). Shortly before it rolled off a press in a western suburb of Boston, Massachusetts, the translator in question addressed a [letter of thanks](#) to the entrepreneur in Maine for granting permission to include his foreword in the volume. This tatter of correspondence has an unintended irony to it, considering Mosher’s infamy for his own repeated infractions of others’ copyrights. The title of this version could be translated back into English most literally as [The Acrobat of Our Lady: Legend of the 1100s](#).

The Esperantist who translated the English into the universal tongue was Edward Saxton Payson of Massachusetts. Designated sometimes with the honorific of Colonel, this colorful personage held [a variety of jobs](#) in his early career. He sang opera as a rich-voiced baritone for numerous years, long before the composition and performance of Massenet’s drama set to music. Afterward he retained a strong operatic interest, all but guaranteeing that he would have known *Le jongleur de Notre Dame*. In 1910, in his late sixties, this man of many aptitudes and ambitions developed a [passion for Esperanto](#), into which he [translated abundantly](#). In addition, he composed in it original works of his own, including [a novel](#) that he published at the ripe age of eighty-seven. He was a youthful septuagenarian when he brought out his retranslation. The chain of custody for this contribution to our story tells a story itself. Payson’s version in Esperanto, printed in the municipality of Newton, was based upon Mosher’s pirating in Maine of Wicksteed’s translation printed in London. Behind all these versions lay the medieval French poem.



## Isabel Butler and Her Publisher

As far away as America I found disciples of  
the great Gaston Paris.

—Yvette Guilbert

I want to see the intellectual side of Paris,  
and to meet some of the savants and men  
of letters whom you know. *What a shame  
Gaston Paris is not living!*

—Willa Cather

Other publishers in the Anglophone world were also alive to the commercial viability of translations made from the medieval French poem, which accorded with the mounting fascination with the Middle Ages. In America, an English version by **Isabel Butler** enjoyed notable esteem (see Fig. 3.14). This lifelong resident of Boston suffered from serious and painful physical disabilities. Despite her unenviable circumstances, she managed to pursue her education in two stints **between 1891 and 1907** as a special student at Radcliffe College, where she focused on English and the Romance



Fig. 3.14 Isabel Butler. Portrait, gelatin silver process, early twentieth century. Artist unknown.

languages. She was one of several female translators in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries whose works formed major bridgeheads for the medieval poem in the English-speaking world. Her [prose translation](#) of *Our Lady's Tumbler* was printed in 1898 by a short-lived and eclectic Bostonian publisher, while Butler was still taking undergraduate courses. Thanks to its strong sales and positive reception, her career as an occasional translator of medieval French texts rocketed. In the next decade, she had encores with *The Song of Roland* (see Fig. 3.15) and *Tales from the Old French* (see Fig. 3.16). In general, female writers of the Victorian era seem to have been [far less active](#) than their male counterparts in bringing out medievaesque fiction. Were they denied opportunities to acquire the necessary exposure and skills? Did they avoid the work for fear of being branded as bluestockings? Even more than now, cultural power then was held tight within old boys' clubs; one of them even enters the picture where Butler is concerned. But the old and not-so-old girls were not repressed entirely. Whatever the reasons, in the Edwardian period women made up the lost ground. The American Butler had her English of our story published shortly before Queen Victoria's reign ended, on January 22, 1901, and within a decade, two other women, one in Britain and the other in the United States, followed suit with a translation and a poetic re-creation. The circumstance that one of them was also active in the Boston area was not entirely serendipitous. The city in the Bay State was a hotbed of medievalism.

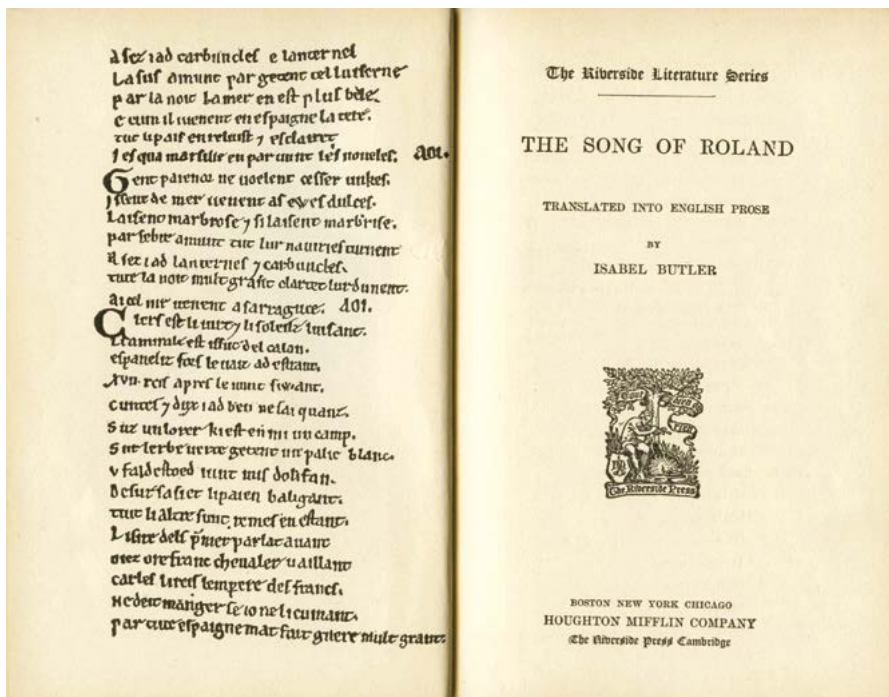


Fig. 3.15 Title page of Isabel Butler, trans., *The Song of Roland*, Riverside Literature Series (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1904).

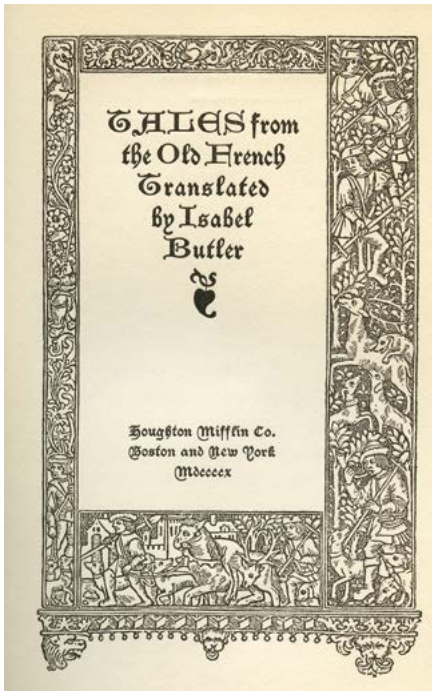


Fig. 3.16 Title page of Isabel Butler, trans., *Tales from the Old French* (Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1910).

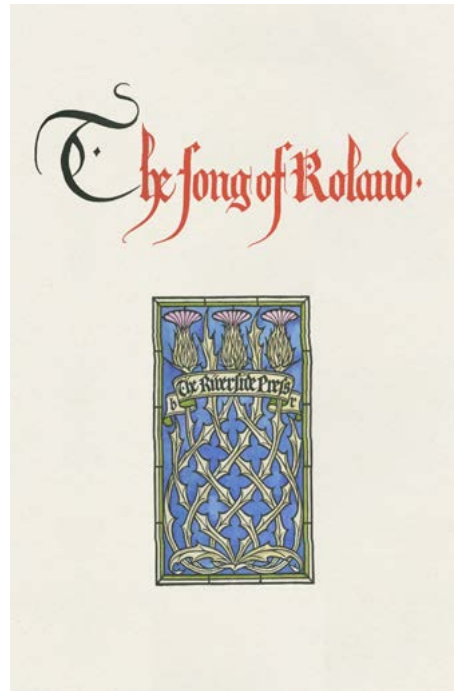


Fig. 3.17 Title page of Isabel Butler, trans., *The Song of Roland* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1906).

Butler's introduction to *The Song of Roland* includes four invocations of the authority of "Monsieur Gaston Paris." The stellar stature of the Romance philologist in the United States at the time may be gauged from the praiseful treatment of him in [learned journals](#). This translation of the medieval epic achieved such success that a limited edition of [elephant folio](#) size was produced in 1906 on hand presses (see Fig. 3.17). This tall edition is bound in antique vellum, with a pattern of fleurs-de-lis styled after artwork in the crypt at Chartres. The typography chosen for the archaizing English of Butler's *Roland* is impressively beautiful, with [lead type](#) that simulates a late medieval [French gothic script](#). The headpiece vignette and five roundels are modeled on the Charlemagne window in the cathedral of Chartres. Accordingly, they are designed to resemble stained glass, with blue, red, green, and yellow coloring added by hand. The first illustration to the text is enclosed within a Gothic arch (see Fig. 3.18). Midway into his presidency, Theodore Roosevelt became engrossed in *The Song of Roland*. He [corresponded with the French ambassador](#) at the time in Washington, who loaned him a book on the poem and engaged with him about fine points of its composition and manuscript history. The President hardly concealed his interest, and [a family friend sent him a book](#) on the epic that she had procured for him in London. It stands to reason that George H. Mifflin should have proudly presented him a copy

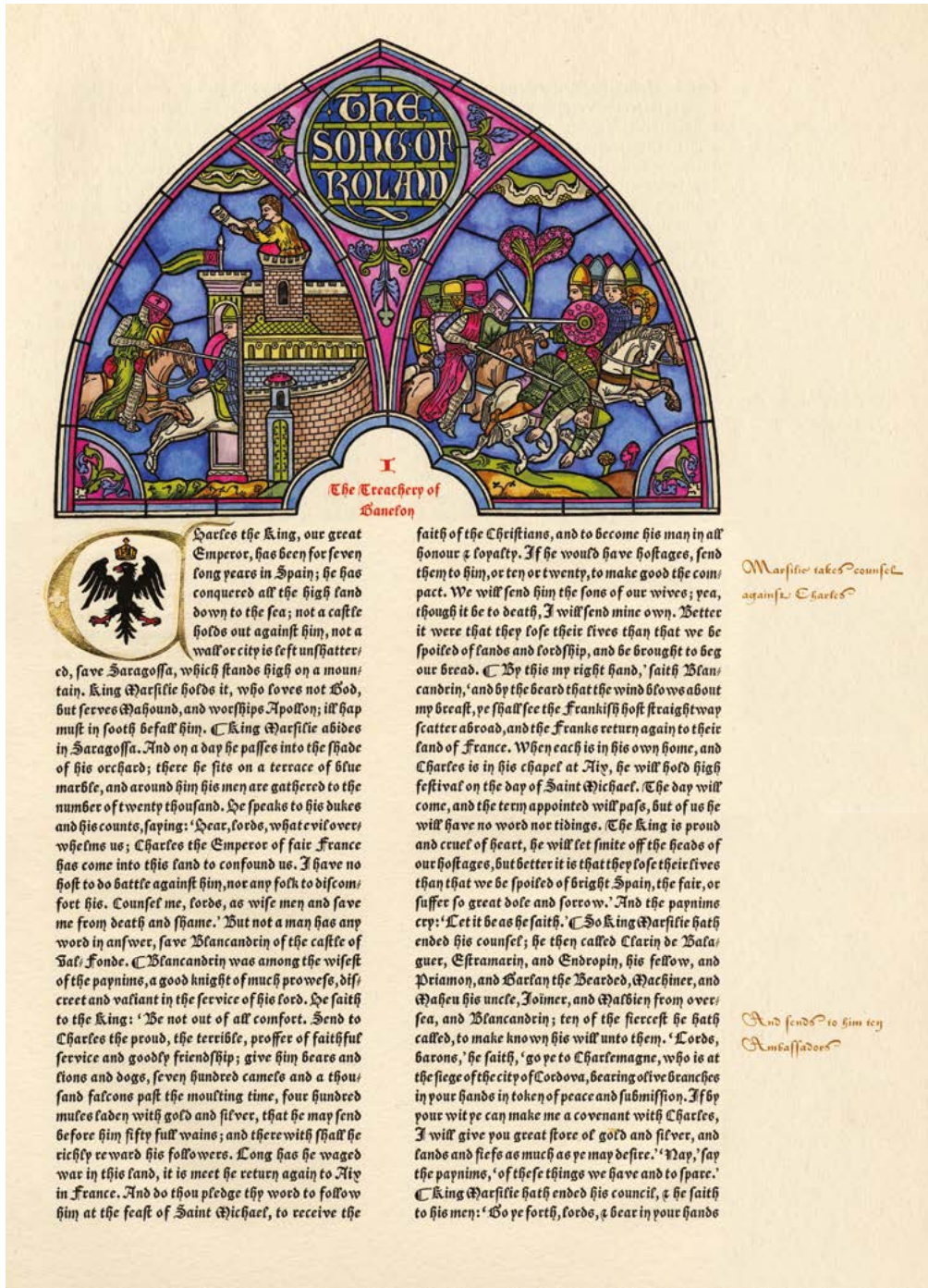


Fig. 3.18 Isabel Butler, trans., *The Song of Roland* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1906), 1.

of the translation. The two men had special cause to bond over Butler, since as undergraduates both of them had belonged to the same secret all-male club. The US leader, speaking softly and carrying a big book, left off saber-rattling long enough to pen an appreciative note to the publisher. With his customary verve and vehemence, the commander-in-chief wrote in thanks for the elephant that was now in his room: “I am proud as an American that such a bit of work should be done in America.” Later, he arranged to meet the designer, Bruce Rogers, on a visit to the publishing firm in Boston. In subsequent correspondence, the rough reader wrote further to compare this product of medieval Americana across both space, with printing done in modern Germany, and time, with Renaissance Florence.

*Tales from the Old French* by the same adapter included, under the title *The Knight of the Little Cask*, the English of the Old French poem *The Knight of the Barrel*. The volume comprises three sections, the first of lais, the second of fabliaux, and the third of pious and didactic tales. *The Knight of the Barrel* is subsumed in the final section. Both the epilogue and the translator’s note invoke Gaston Paris saliently. An early review spoke highly of the English for hewing close to the originals, but called “far from pleasant” the repeated use of antiquated expressions. But in *Our Lady’s Tumbler: A Tale of Mediaeval France*, Butler had muzzled herself and mostly held back from indulging in the fustian of faux-medieval vocabulary. Her self-control fitted with the nature of the original poem as she perceived it. The façade of the text from the Middle Ages manifested a “spirit of naïve faith and devotion” that should not prevent the reader from recognizing how greatly “it differs from the majority of similar tales by its subtler moral thinking, and a more lifelike presentment of its story.”

Butler’s translation of *Our Lady’s Tumbler* was first printed exactly twenty-five years later than the editio princeps by Foerster of 1873. Near the end of her “Translator’s Note,” she observed that the poem “has, somewhat oddly, never been reprinted; so that the story that a specialist like Monsieur Gaston Paris and a literary wanderer like Monsieur Anatole France unite in praising is still only to be found in the back number of a learned magazine.” The last two words were her way of signaling the scholarly French journal *Romania*. Her unuttered goal was to stake out a middle ground between researchers and belletrists, and to pitch her diminutive book at educated general readers who inhabited the space there. She chose the right city, publisher, and time for her effort.

The first edition of Butler’s English translation came about thanks to Copeland & Day. This Bostonian publishing house of the 1890s took some inspiration from the celebrated Kelmscott Press. This small private press expressed the longing of the English artist and writer William Morris, “medievalist and revolutionary,” for a pre-industrial past that grew more out of reach with each passing day. Kelmscott often aspired to be faithful to the Middle Ages (see Fig. 3.19) or at least evocative of them in generous margins, archaizing typefaces, copious decorations, handmade linen paper,

old-fashioned black ink, and handsewn binding. At the same time, it took advantage of all that the latest industrial technology had to offer. Copeland & Day also had [ties to other English writers](#) and artists associated with Arts and Crafts, as well as to Boston's own manifestations of the same impulse. Even less in Massachusetts than in Britain would we be warranted to speak of a grassroots movement. In a letter to the professor of art history at Harvard, Charles Eliot Norton, Morris's friend Edward Burne-Jones refurbished a conceit drawn from Ruskin and made it into a simile by likening a well-made book to a "[pocket cathedral](#)." Since the volume under consideration was the [outsized edition](#) of Chaucer that was printed on William Morris's Kelmscott Press in 1896, a collector's item like no other, we are left to wonder how garments in those days could have been so baggy as to accommodate such a tome. By way of contrast, the Copeland & Day edition of *Our Lady's Tumbler* is far less a cathedral than a parish church, albeit still a sight for sore eyes. Consistent with an emphasis on craftsmanship and aesthetic appeal, the press chose a [handy format](#) that followed their edition of *Aucassin et Nicolette*. Since the text is not long, books that contain only it have all been slimline, but this one is most [petite in other ways](#) too.



Fig. 3.19 Medievalizing colophon for the Kelmscott Press (1891). Image from Wikimedia Commons, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:KelmscottPressColophone.jpg>

## Reverend Cormack, Alice Kemp-Welch, and Eugene Mason

The [first versification of the poem in English](#) was produced in 1897 for circulation as a Christmas greeting to a small circle of friends of an attorney in Birmingham, England. Although it was then printed privately with various works by the same amateur poet, this version gained little traction with the public. A decade later, [another one in verse](#), composed by the Scottish-born Catholic, Reverend George Comack, drew broader notice. Among its selling points was that it was published by trade presses in both Britain and the United States. In addition, [it came out as a book unto itself](#). Finally, it bore what became its customary English title: *Our Lady's Tumbler*. In English, both the first prose translation and the first poetic one that won any currency happened to

be the contributions of clergymen. The clerical connection offers early confirmation, probably superfluous, that the medieval narrative's origin as a religious exemplum did not escape remark or resonance. The story has an almost intrinsic potential to be redemptive reading. In addition, it was in keeping with the [controversy over the place of Mary](#) within Christianity that unfolded in Victorian Britain, and that echoed across the Atlantic. As a Catholic revival took hold in Britain, a sweeping avalanche of immigrants from this faith recast the religious landscape of the United States.

After centuries in which for religious reasons any special devotion to the Mother of God had been out of the question for the British, the Catholic revival advanced hand in hand with a Marian revival. The twinned renewals brought radical changes. The reworking of the atmosphere can be sensed most readily in four apparitions of Mary that came to Anglicans at a monastery of sorts in [Wales in 1880](#) (see Fig. 3.20). The preacher who had charge of the abbey was a funny figure called [Father Ignatius](#). The zany padre was intent on reinstating monasticism in England, but in accord with a pastiche of customs and practices that he improvised. In his quirkiness Ignatius has been described as "[not indeed the last end](#), but a term of the Gothic revival, of the Oxford Movement, or Romanticism, of Evangelicalism, of neo-Mediaevalism, or revivalism in a general sense taking on a new and particular sense." On three occasions, four boys of the makeshift monastery saw a woman, encircled in light, glide across a meadow. On the Octave of the Nativity of the Virgin, Father Ignatius assembled the community to invoke the Virgin by singing the "Hail, Mary" in Latin. Thereupon they discerned circles upon circles of lights, with the Mother of God fleetingly in the middle, robed in flowing drapery. Reputedly, [miraculous cures ensued](#). To commemorate the experience, pilgrims gathered [annually](#) for years afterward.



Fig. 3.20 Llanthony Monastery, Church, and Convent. Photograph, 1880. Photographer unknown.

Reverend Cormack did not belong to the acolytes of Father Ignatius, but he shared an attachment to the Virgin Mary. In the foreword to his translation of *Our Lady's Tumbler*, he includes a paragraph drily **dismissive** of his predecessors. Crisply informative about his own objectives, he declares his aspiration to create “a versified translation that, while keeping close to the text, should gain warmth by reproducing it in its original octosyllabic metre with rhymed couplets.” Ultimately, he aims to present to English-speaking readers “the legend... **attired... in its own costume.**”

The paragraph in the preface that succeeds the one just discussed gives in its very mannered way fair warning of the preciousness that lies ahead. The writer claims to have been “so wrought upon in reading the poem” that he resolved “though nearing his grand climacteric, to try for the first time a metrical tumble in honour of Her whose thrall he glories to consider himself, and in whose service alone he would risk such an **unwonted gyration.**” The syntax and diction of Cormack’s verse that follows, as a glance at **any few couplets** will demonstrate, are distant from those of most poetry and of much English of any form today. The pastor’s major misstep in converting the medieval French was once routine in translations of medieval texts. With others, he inclines strongly toward archaizing words, on an assumption that a poem from the Middle Ages will **ring truer** when put into timeworn vocabulary. Such verbiage holds bracingly true to quotidian medieval English as mediated through the inch-thick distorting lens of Sir Walter Scott’s prose in his early nineteenth-century historical novels, but it would not have been common in nineteenth-century colloquial.

Cormack was followed by an independent scholar of medieval culture, a translator named Mrs. Alice Kemp-Welch (see Fig. 3.21). In her career she produced several volumes from **Old French prose and verse**. Her careful prose translation *Of the Tumbler of Our Lady* was first published in 1908. It was later reprinted and eventually



Fig. 3.21 Alice Kemp-Welch. Albumen cabinet card by Giuseppe and Luigi Vianelli, 1877. London, National Portrait Gallery. Image courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, London. All rights reserved.



anthologized. Her style is generally clear, although not altogether without traces of the same deliberate out-of-datedness that marred Cormack's English. The conclusion to the story gives an aftertaste, with **constructions** more reminiscent of English Bibles from the early seventeenth century than of the parlance used by everyday people in the early twentieth century. Two "unto's" and one "endeth" are the most visible tokens of a now-familiar antiquarianism that cankered many translations of premodern texts in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The collection makes apparent Kemp-Welch's familiarity with an impressive **range of stories** relevant to *Our Lady's Tumbler*.

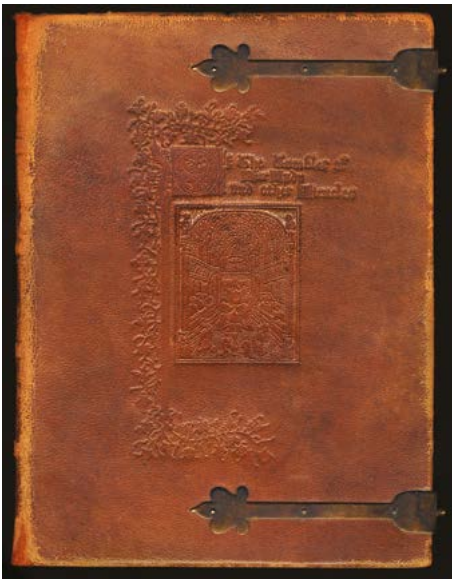


Fig. 3.22 Leather front cover of Alice Kemp-Welch, trans., *Of the Tumbler of Our Lady and Other Miracles* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1908).

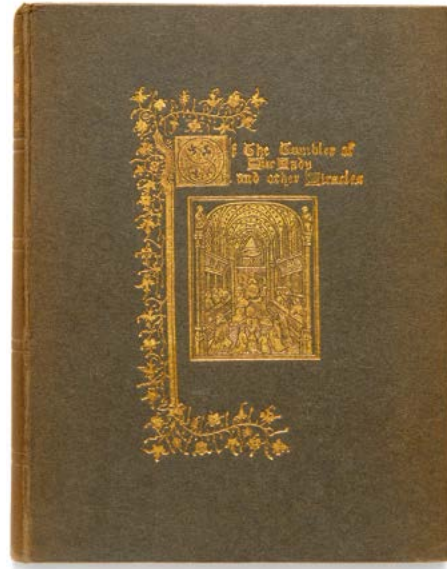


Fig. 3.23 Cloth front cover of Alice Kemp-Welch, trans., *Of the Tumbler of Our Lady and Other Miracles* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1908).

In production, the little volume is crafted adorably. A reviewer contemporary with the translator **applauded it**, along with two of her other translations, all of them in a series called the New Medieval Library, for both their production and content. In the case of *Our Lady's Tumbler*, a reader who handles a copy notices in a heartbeat the attempt to conjure up the Middle Ages. The full leather cover, with brass book clasps at the top and bottom, has a stamped title, with an elaborate initial O and an illumination (see Fig. 3.22). Although almost all copies available today in libraries or private hands have lost the shoddy metal fittings, the effect of the rare specimens that retain them is enchantingly close to that of a heavily worn medieval manuscript, as was originally intended. The touches of showy elegance are meant to call to mind the jewel-encrusted boards that kept original manuscripts safe. **Medieval-like lettering** serves for the title, and an illuminated initial, depicting what may be a wedding being

enacted in a Gothic choir, is simulated (see Fig. 3.23). To close the first decade of the twentieth century came a fourth English prose version, by Eugene Mason (see Fig. 3.24). Already a published poet, the translator went on to put *other medieval texts* into English. A couple of his translations held the field for *eight decades* to come. Although *not consistently better* than Kemp-Welch's translation, his *Our Lady's Tumbler* has outdone it and other earlier English versions in its influence. Whatever the reasons, his translation earned enduring success. Beyond being *reprinted* time and again, it was also often anthologized in storybooks for popular audiences as well as in textbooks and sourcebooks for college students.

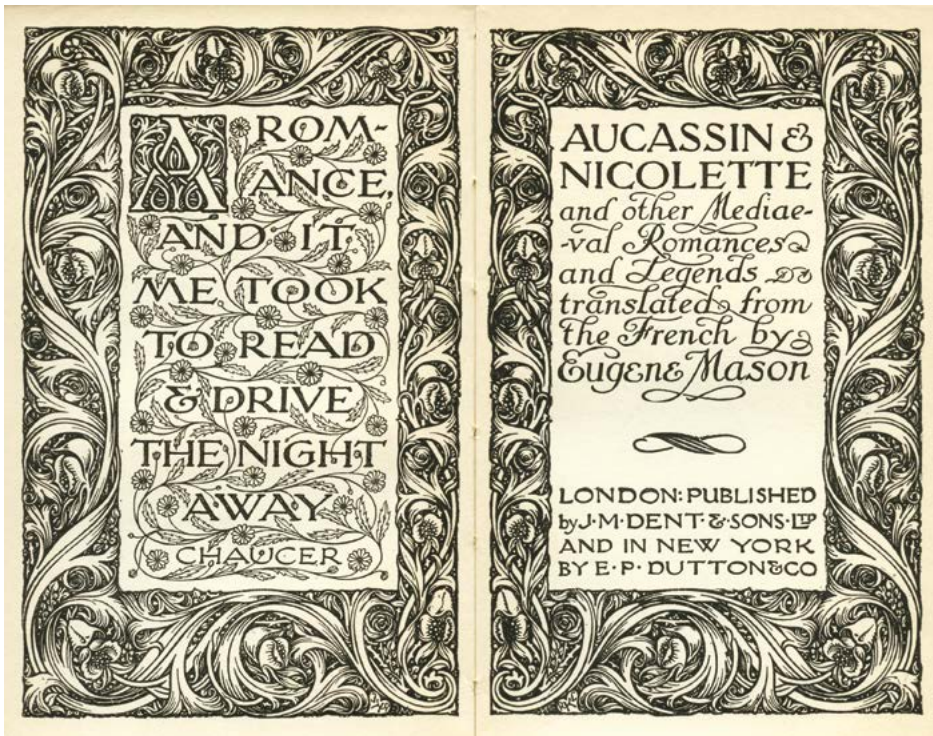


Fig. 3.24 Frontispiece and title page of Eugene Mason, ed., *Aucassin & Nicolette and other Mediaeval Romances and Legends* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1910).

Mason's version elicited a favorable reaction already from D. H. Lawrence (see Fig. 3.25) shortly after its publication. In his hurried shorthand, he scrawled with gusto to his dearest colleague, "Mac" McLeod, from *the school where both taught*. He told this chum that he would pass on to him his copy of the Everyman edition, if he had not read it. He concludes, "*It is rich*, it is a nonesuch. I read it to my mother in bed two months ago." Lawrence keeps to himself any thoughts about the English style of the story as he read it. Presumably he would have been drawn by the content, since the narrative wafts the reader far from the industrialized modernity that the British writer

deplored. He **bubbled over about medieval architecture**, both Norman and Gothic, and he seems to have responded well to a work of literature that made a worthy match for the architectural style.

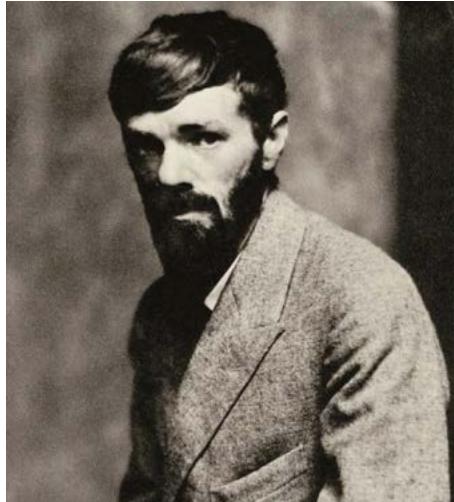


Fig. 3.25 D. H. Lawrence. Photograph by Nickolas Muray, 1920.  
Reproduced on postcard (early twentieth century)

## Katharine Lee Bates and Gothic Wellesley

By the middle of the first decade in the twentieth century, our story had taken the English-speaking world by storm. Even in West Africa, a **missionary** gushed in an effusive letter: “I have just been reading ‘My Lady’s Tumbler,’ and I think it is so lovely. The passion of the man in his poor short-winded speeches!” In the preceding year **Katharine Lee Bates** (see Figs. 3.26 and 3.27) had come out with “Our Lady’s Tumbler,” not a word-for-word translation but a verse adaptation that proclaimed a debt to the medieval text in its title. This poem manifested early the praiseworthy ambition that its author displayed later for communicating to a larger public. At the time of publication, this American poet and professor had been a faculty member in English at Wellesley College for verging on two decades: her appointment began in 1886. Many of her writings, both scholarly and creative, give glimpses of her outlook on the teaching of English. They furnish a picture of a pedagogue and person who is thoughtfully plainspoken, carefully passionate, and unshowily independent-minded. Perhaps above all, they put on display her charisma as a **colleague and mentor**. Anything but big-headed, she struggled to hone her skills as a scholar while not losing her fervor as a poet in the process. At one point, she summed up her circumstances revealingly: “**My heart isn’t quite pressed flat** in a Middle English dictionary.”



Fig. 3.26 Katharine Lee Bates. Photograph, ca. 1900. Photographer unknown. Wellesley, MA, Archives of Wellesley College. Image courtesy of Wellesley College. All rights reserved.

Today Bates is remembered best as neither a poet nor a literary critic, but rather as the accidental lyricist of “America the Beautiful.” She **composed** the verses in the summer of 1893, when the United States was in the swell of patriotism from the Chicago Columbian Exposition, and printed them first two years later as a poem under the title “America.” Fifteen years later, the piece was retitled when **combined with music** that like her lyrics had been devised for a different song. The fusion was published in 1910—and the rest is (cultural) **history**. Only the breakaway success of the anthem that year propelled Bates to collect other verse and print it in **one collection**. If the patriotism of her one widely known creation can now be packaged as medievalism without any eyebrows being raised (see Fig. 3.28), credit is owed to the heady coincidence of Gothic revivals and the Gilded Age—the Gilded and Un-Guilt-Ridden Gothic of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Those simultaneities belong among the major reasons why despite the incongruity, the Middle Ages and the real or imagined good old days of the United States may be presented as going hand in hand.

The juggler’s story may have attracted creators and audiences in the United States for a reason contrary to intuition: it furnished the stuff from which to fashion an archetypically American account, not of rags to riches, but of rich raiment to redemption. Albeit supposedly medieval, the tale tells of a man who pursues his grail (or Virgin) by leaving the world behind, and who overcomes obstacles and holdouts in a workplace for which he would have seemed ill suited by birth. In the end, he succeeds beyond his wildest dreams. If not a self-made man, he is a self-monasticized one who becomes a Mary-saved soul. If only Horatio Alger’s inclinations had run in a

marginally different direction, he too might have dabbled in writing a version of *Our Lady's Tumbler*: rags-to-riches might have been riches-to-robos.

As it was, the lay brother had an especially easy time being made an all-American because the buildings and grounds of universities and colleges in the United States were being resculpted into simulacra of medieval monasteries. Wellesley's campus is now justly celebrated for its collegiate Gothic style. In it the focal point is the 182-foot Galen Stone Tower (see Fig. 2.39). The architecture and landscape owe largely to the stalwartly medievaesque vision of Ralph Adams Cram, [America's answer to Augustus Welby Pugin](#). As great a Gothicism as the United States has seen, he played a key role in confecting the typically American flavor of revival architecture known as collegiate Gothic. He made as deft use of the pointed word as of the pointed arch, and left no stone unturned in his quest to have buildings raised in his beloved style.



Fig. 3.27 Katharine Lee Bates. Photograph, early twentieth century. Photographer unknown. Wellesley, MA, Archives of Wellesley College. Image courtesy of Wellesley College. All rights reserved.



Fig. 3.28 First hymn stanza to Katharine Lee Bates's "America the Beautiful." Calligraphy and illumination by J. R. Rosen Studio, Boston, MA, 1956–1963. Date of printing unknown.

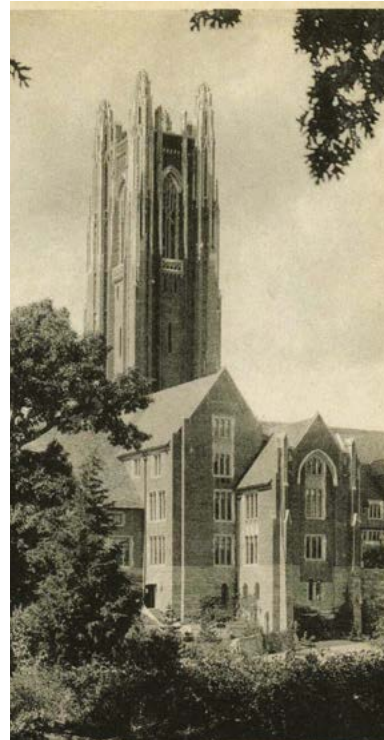


Fig. 3.29 Postcard depicting Green Hall and Galen Stone Tower, Wellesley College, Boston, MA (New York: Albertype Co., early twentieth century).

The architect's construction work would not begin for more than a decade after Bates published "Our Lady's Tumbler." Even so, the wheels that would turn toward the Gothic revival had been set into torpid motion. At the latest already in the academic year of 1899–1900, Wellesley was trundling ahead; its college magazine looked admiringly at the Gothic uniformity taking hold at Yale and Princeton, expressing an editorial desire for the women's college and other like institutions "in this new country of ours" to embrace the same "worthy architectural standard... in the beauty of their own buildings." The reason? "It is not hard to imagine how great must have been the part played by the external beauty of the English universities in shaping the tastes and aesthetic sensibility of the men who have studied there." The editorialist aspired, without using such strong words, to transcend the scattershot eclecticism in styles of architecture that had dominated in American campuses until that point, in favor of a oneness achieved through a single-minded adoption of Gothic.

Bates was very familiar with original Gothic buildings. She had a [dreamy-eyed response](#) to the first cathedral she saw, the High Kirk of Glasgow (see Fig. 3.30). She was not the only American around the turn of the century to react romantically



Fig. 3.30 Postcard depicting Glasgow Cathedral and Necropolis (Dundee: J. Valentine, 1893).



Fig. 3.31 Postcard depicting Llandaff Cathedral, Cardiff, Wales (ca. 1905).

to cathedrals, and to wax rhapsodic about them as embodying in their brawny architecture the faith of the race that had engendered her—a faith she craved to foster within herself. Like Henry Adams, Bates steadied her romance and longing for religion with the ballast of [architectural books](#) that she digested. To her, each one of these cathedral buildings that she visited was a “great centuried [Prayer in Stone](#).” The poet and professor [visited episcopal seats](#) aplenty, dissatisfied with a mere stopping over

in Durham, York, Lincoln, Ely, and Cambridge, but making a separate circuit of others later on her own. Her favorite was a great church at Llandaff in Wales (see Fig. 3.31), which she admired for an inclusiveness that makes it seem very American. It boasted a congregation drawn from [all social classes](#). Her adulatory praise of the communal commitment and values embodied in the Welsh cathedral reads, unintentionally but not inappositely, almost as a manifesto for American collegiate Gothic.

The gulf between “America the Beautiful” and “Our Lady’s Tumbler” is not as unbridgeable as it might seem. Bates’s writing in her early career encompasses a rich gamut. At one extreme appears poetry that reeks of a deeply sentimental, even syrupy attachment to college. As evidence of her buoyant affection for the institution to which she devoted her life, we need merely consider the titles of her poems “[The College Beautiful](#)” and “College Song.” Perhaps predictably, Bates’s love ran especially strong for [her own institution](#).

Wellesley and six other historically women’s liberal arts colleges in the northeast of the United States make up the so-called [Seven Sisters](#). This collegiate constellation dedicated a hearty ration of their buildings to Gothic revival architecture. Beyond simply keeping with the tastes of the times, these women’s colleges had a desire to keep pace stylistically with their all-male peer institutions. Among the earliest adaptors of the new architectural strain was Bryn Mawr College. The institution had opened in 1885, when the lumbering Taylor Hall and [other early granite buildings](#) were completed in Victorian Gothic (see Fig. 3.32). Coincidentally, but still noteworthy, 1885 happened also to be the year in which Tennyson completed *Idylls of the King*. Fortunately, this clumsy style of Gothic was not to prevail for long at Bryn Mawr. In 1886, the [new president](#) of the college, a steadfast feminist, entered into a tremendously fruitful partnership with two architects that put a generally collegiate Gothic imprint upon the campus (see Fig. 3.33). [The other members of the collegiate sorority](#) could not always rival the architectural attainments of Bryn Mawr and Wellesley, but they did the best they could. For instance, Smith College erected in 1882 the Hillyer Art Gallery, in the manner of a Gothic castle—or citadel (see Fig. 3.34). It also added the elephantine complex of [College Hall](#) (see Fig. 3.35). The whole formed part of what was effectively an entire Victorian Gothic village (see Fig. 3.36). Another example, but in the collegiate rather than Victorian flavor, was created at Mount Holyoke College in the 1930s, where architects constructed two partial quadrangles by adding a long wing to an existing building. To cap the transformation, they supplied a “square castellated tower with four turrets,” [Williston Memorial Library](#) (see Fig. 3.37). Although unable to bear the weight of book stacks but iconic nonetheless (or all the more), the edifice towers over the campus as an expression of commitment to scholarship. The spire is an ivory tower that accords all too well with the modern conception of colleges as filled with absentminded dreamers (and professors) with their scatterbrained heads in the clouds. Decades earlier, Mount Holyoke had constructed the [Mary Lyon Hall](#), with a cruciform chapel that has a large window flanked by two turrets (see Fig. 3.38).



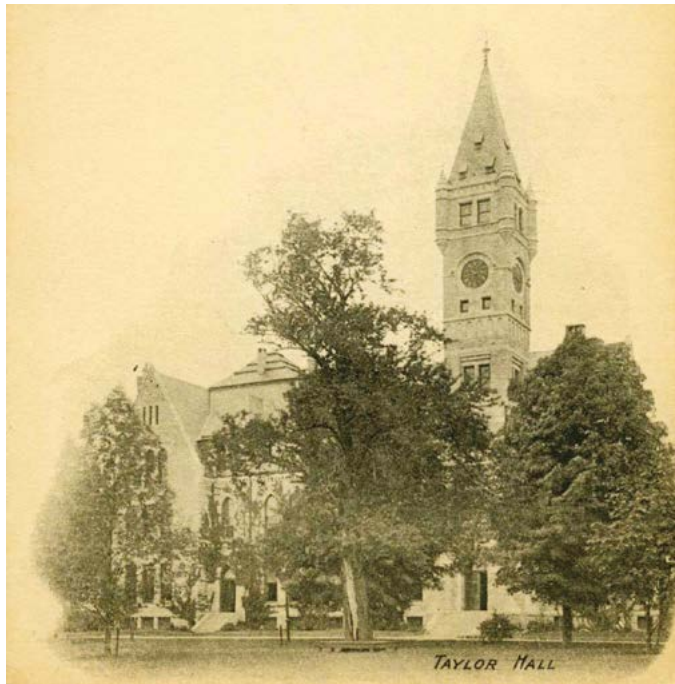


Fig. 3.32 Postcard depicting Taylor Hall, Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, PA (early twentieth century).



Fig. 3.33 Walter Cope (right) and John Stewardson (left). Photograph, date, and photographer unknown. Philadelphia, PA, University of Pennsylvania, The Architectural Archives.

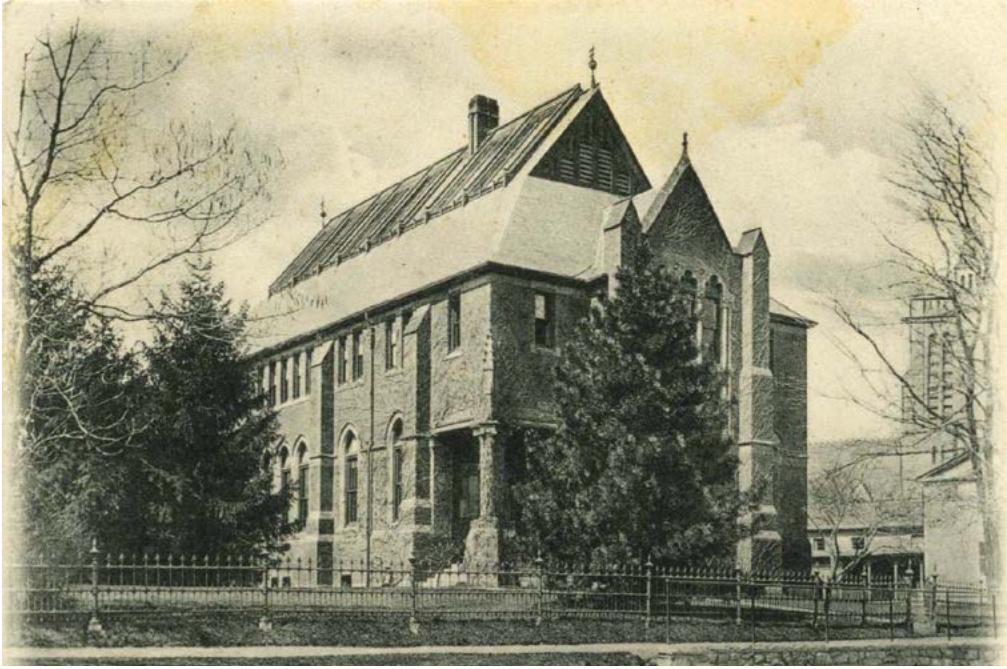


Fig. 3.34 Postcard depicting Hillyer Art Gallery, Smith College, Northampton, MA (New York: American News Company, ca. 1911).



Fig. 3.35 Postcard depicting College Hall, Smith College, Northampton, MA (Scott Photograph, ca. 1905).

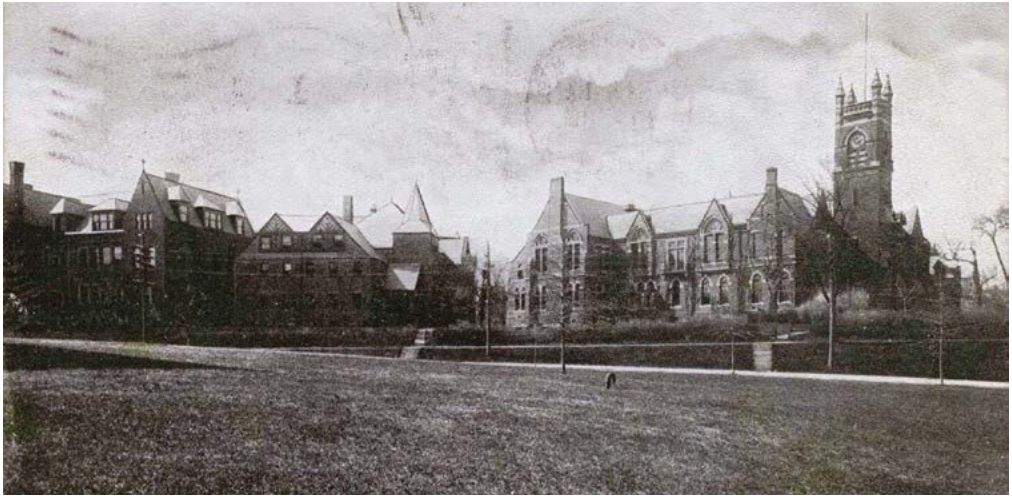


Fig. 3.36 Postcard depicting Assembly Hall and other Smith College buildings, Northampton, MA (New York: Souvenir Post Card Co., ca. 1906).

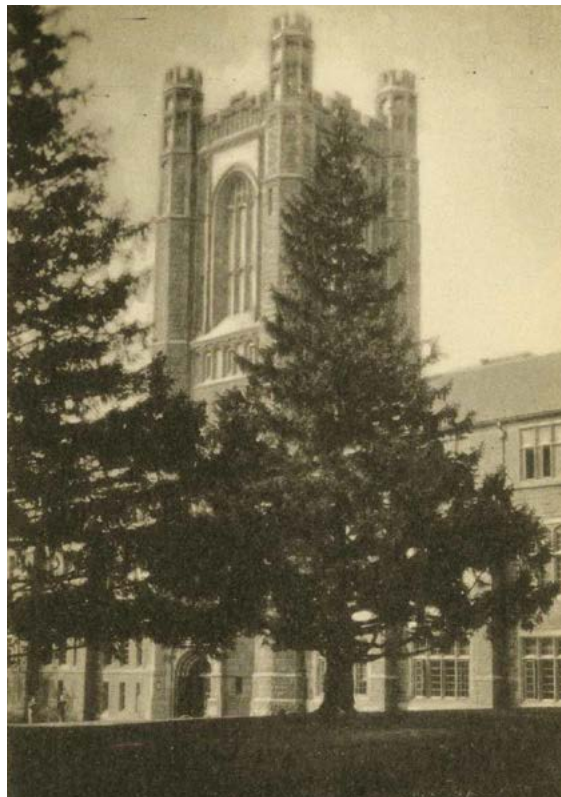


Fig. 3.37 Postcard depicting Williston Memorial Library, Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA (Waban, MA: Maynard Workshop, early twentieth century).

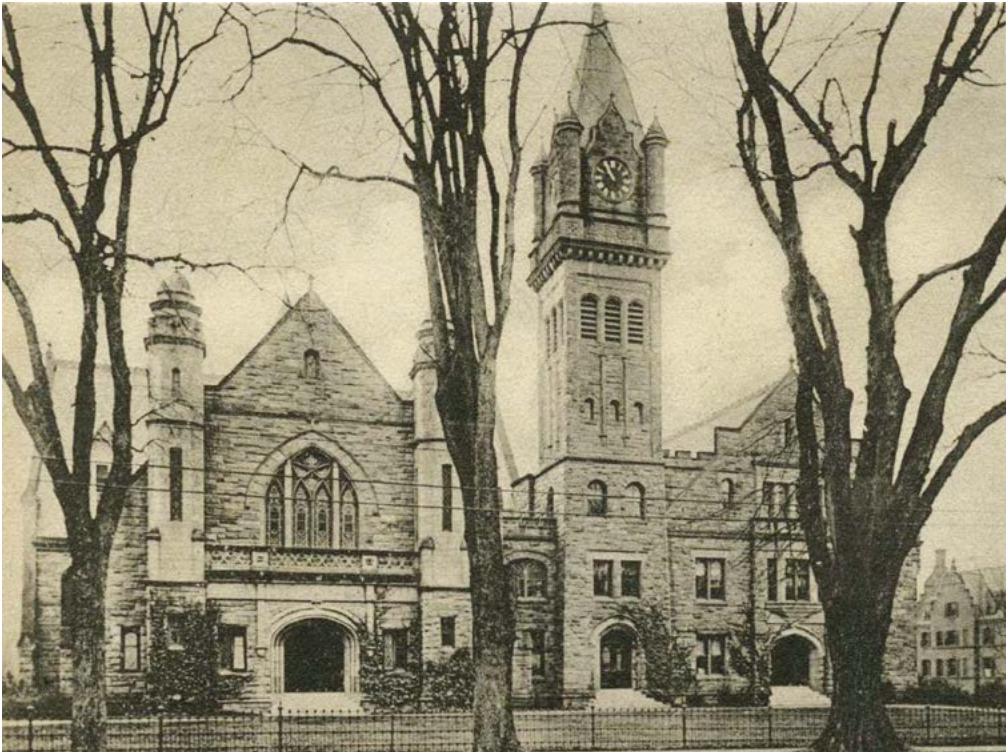


Fig. 3.38 Postcard depicting Mary Lyon Chapel, Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA (ca. 1910).

Like a monastery or convent, Wellesley College was an all-female institution. It differed from others, such as Bryn Mawr or Radcliffe, in also having a professoriate composed entirely of women. It was well provisioned to produce the intellectual and literary ladies at whom many (and especially males) in the Victorian world curled their lips, calling them by the denigratory “bluestockings.” Men were meant to hold a monopoly on the life of the mind. Females who trespassed would almost inevitably be called dowdy or frowsy in one way or another.

Opened in 1875, the college in the western suburbs of Boston did not provide the independent means of which Virginia Woolf wrote in the essay *A Room of One's Own*, whose point was that aspiring female novelists required financial and spatial *autonomy*, but it did offer its students and faculty the space that she specified. Furthermore, it accomplished all of this within a framework that would have given special resonance to a medieval poem about a socially marginal outsider who entered the regimentation of an all-male cloister.

The parallel between the circumstances of Bates and the juggler would have been all the stronger if the original name granted to the women's college in 1870 had stuck: *Wellesley Female Seminary*. Even without the explicit tie to religion that the word *seminary* would have codified, the institution grew out of deeply religious roots. Here too Bates would have had cause to identify with the entertainer. When lobbied to leave

a post at a secondary school to join the college faculty, she voiced anxieties about the “peculiar strain attaching to that life.” More explicitly, she took issue eventually with early requirements that faculty appointments be made solely for women affiliated with specific Christian denominations.

The philanthropist who founded the college delivered to the students there a famous homily, entitled “The Spirit of Wellesley.” He exhorted the young women to draw inspiration during their four-year sojourn from one tag in a medieval text, *Incipit Vita Nova* or “Here begins the new life” in Dante. These words from the Italian poet became adapted as the motto on an open book, which is the central object in the college insignia. Decades later, a full coat of arms was designed, with the approval of the famous collegiate Gothic architect Ralph Adams Cram (see Fig. 3.39). The accent that the founder of Wellesley put upon sacred love flows along with the strong current in the late nineteenth century of what could be termed sacramental medievalism.

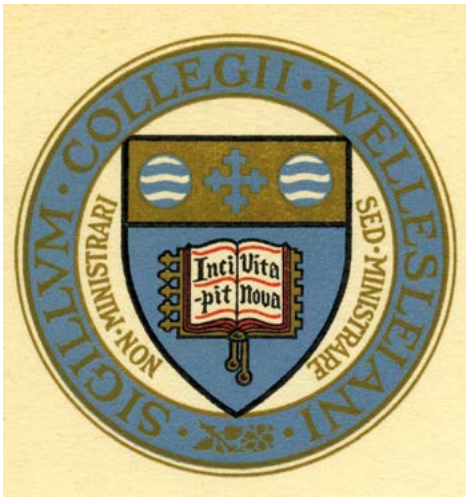


Fig. 3.39 Postcard depicting the Wellesley College Seal (Boston: Thomas Todd Company, date unknown).



Fig. 3.40 Vida Dutton Scudder. Photograph, ca. 1890. Photographer unknown.

Bates was not the only medievalist at Wellesley College. Most notably, there was the prolific [Vida Dutton Scudder](#) (see Fig. 3.40). During her Oxford years, she had heard the last lectures the art critic and social reformer John Ruskin gave. From her time there, the American educator professed to have “woke[n] up to the realities of modern civilization, and decided that [she] did not like them.” Consequently, she developed “a passionate sense which has never faded, that the middle ages rather than the nineteenth century were my natural home.” With a shared devotion to both literature and the Middle Ages, Scudder and Bates became [close colleagues](#). Numerous instructors at Wellesley College paired off in companionate relationships and would

live together. Such alliances between so-called spinster females were so common that the relations even became known at the College as “Wellesley marriages”: more generally these living arrangements were called Boston marriages. Whatever the terminology, Scudder had such a bond with a colleague named Florence Converse.

Most scholars in recent decades have taken as a given that the long-term association of Bates with her fellow Wellesley professor, the historian and economist [Katharine Coman](#), was fundamentally lesbian, but closeted. Although absolute certainty lies beyond [our meddlesome reach](#), the two women expressed themselves about their affections for each other in language of supercharged passion and romance. They were in their late twenties when they met in 1887. Eventually they shared a life and home for twenty-five years. After Coman [died of breast cancer](#) in 1922, Bates published in intensely loving memory of her dead friend *Yellow Clover: A Book of Remembrance*.

The other extreme, but not antipode, in the spectrum of Bates’s early writings would be her scholarship, which begins with the largely medieval focus in 1893 of *The English Religious Drama*. In this book, among other things, the English professor defends medieval miracle plays against the brickbats that the poet and critic James Russell Lowell had leveled against them. Her choice of “Our Lady’s Tumbler” as the theme for a poem accords, then, with a [general predisposition](#) on her part to literature about miracles from the Middle Ages. This proclivity may have been grounded in the voracious reading of her early childhood. As [a seven-year-old](#), she had already read five novels by Sir Walter Scott. Her inclination to connect the Middle Ages with the exuberantly fantastic books that appeal (and are fed) to many children showed decades later, when in 1921 she produced an anthology entitled *Once Upon a Time: A Book of Old-Time Fairy Tales*. The cover flaunts a medieval knight en route to an equally medieval castle. Whatever the explanation, she managed in “Our Lady’s Tumbler” to bring into alignment two sometimes divergent dimensions of her identity: professor and poet.

The opening two stanzas of Bates’s six-sestet “Our Lady’s Tumbler” give a soupçon of the lightly archaizing language that the English professor evidently felt to be a built-in component of experiencing medieval literature:

On a leaf that waits but a breath to crumble  
 Is written this legend of fair Clairvaux,  
 How once at the abbey gates stood humble  
 A carle more supple than beechen bow,  
 And they cloistered him, though to dance and tumble  
 Was all the lore he had wit to know.

He had never a vesper hymn nor matin,  
 Pater-noster nor credo learned;  
 Ill had the wood-birds taught him Latin,  
 But to every wayside cross he turned,  
 And Our Lady of Val wore cloth of satin  
 Because of the gold his gambols earned.

Her version is characterized, perhaps patronizingly, as “**charming**” in a note to a later reprint of Mason’s translation. With this, Bates secured a niche already among those who adapted and modernized medieval texts of significance. Only a few years later, in 1909, she published *The Story of Chaucer’s Canterbury Pilgrims*, an **illustrated retelling** for boys and girls. One early image in it is an engraving, made after a photograph, of the Norman crypt in Canterbury cathedral (see Fig. 3.41), to accompany her retelling of the “General Prologue.” Since the shrine of Saint Thomas is not in the crypt, the relevance of the illustration is a trifle nonplusing—unless she had at the back of her mind the juggler of the French poem as she made her selection.

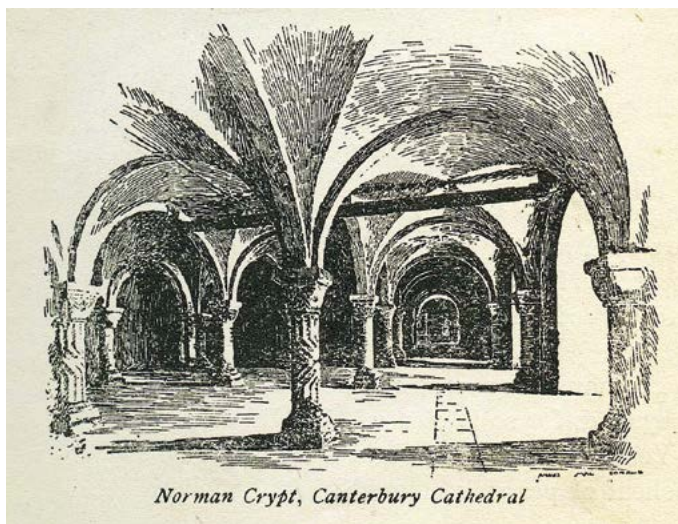


Fig. 3.41 Norman crypt, Canterbury Cathedral. Illustration by Angus MacDonall, 1909. Published in Katharine Lee Bates, *The Story of Chaucer’s Canterbury Pilgrims, Retold for Children* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1909), 19.

The professor and poet could have had many reasons for being drawn to the medieval tumbler. One is that he provided an image well suited to her own **panting for faith**. Her desire to dissolve her body and consciousness could have predisposed her to a man who contorted his. Likewise, her perspective of being in the darkness while offering service and prayers to God, and her self-deprecation and sense of failure, bear more than a passing resemblance to the humility of the tumbler. Like many other translators and adaptors we have encountered, Bates assumed a schema in which civilizations come to life in a childlike or primitive state of innocence and purity before maturing and aging to what was then the present day. Henry Adams states the case more than once in *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres* with his habitual eloquence. To cap the second paragraph of the first chapter in his book, he observes sententiously: “The man who **wanders into the twelfth century** is lost, unless he can grow prematurely young.” Later, in hashing out the disparity between the effectiveness of the colors

and the deficiencies of the designs in medieval stained glass, he qualifies the designs as “childish.” At the same time, he commends “primitive man” for having “a natural colour-sense, instinctive like the scent of a dog.” Society in its youth—which is to say, in the Middle Ages—favored color over design. Once Adams is ready to leave Chartres two chapters later in his book, he is primed to declare of the art: “It was very childlike, very foolish, very beautiful, and very true.” Paradoxically, he means all the epithets as compliments—and not backhanded ones. All of them apply equally to the cathedral and to the tumbler.

## Nostalgia for the Middle Ages

Many cultures suffer nostalgia, if that is the mot juste, for olden times. The English word to denote this type of chronic pain syndrome is a Greek import. By etymology, the noun *nostalgia* signifies an aching for home, an unendurable impulse to return. It belongs within a family that embraces a world of pain, from neuralgia through a host of other more abstruse words. Though it may have started out being considered an illness, it soon enough became an aesthetic. Like melancholy, it moved from medicalization to art and emotion. The reflex tends to go wrong immediately in politics. Politicians of the present can give nostalgia a bad name more quickly than even bottom-tier artists or cheap mass consumerism.

The pining to regain lost authenticity may be for a past that has not been directly experienced by the sufferer. Such wistfulness is homesickness for a time when the person so afflicted was never alive. It is an exercise, often collective, in false memory. Does the term nostalgia convey accurately a sentimental longing for what one has never lived through? Is “Those were the days” the same as “Those were the ages”? A craving for times with which our own lives are not chronologically coextensive may deserve a name separate from nostalgia. Neologisms and new phrases worth pondering include *archaeonostalgia*, *prevital nostalgia*, *nostalgia avant la vie*, and *prenatal nostalgia*. Nonce-words which veer away from the familiar noun would be *yore-yearning* or *retro-lust*. Making matters even more multilevel temporally, nostalgia may look back yearningly not just to a remote period but also to an earlier period that was nostalgic about that distant time. If we soften at the thought of the medievalism in the nineteenth or twentieth century, we are nostalgists for nostalgia.

Whatever designation we choose, such bellyaching can be hurtful and at times dangerous. Many authors of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries who became the mouthpieces of nationalism, colonialism, and imperialism give evidence of a soft spot for the Middle Ages. Their surrounding cultures encouraged them to seek out in the pasts of their home countries the values and characteristics that were felt to define the modern-day nations they promoted. Appropriation of the bygone in this same vein gave nostalgia a bad name. It reached its darkest point in the Nazi era, but played at least a bit role in imperialism as well. More recently, white supremacists



in the United States have sought to serve their dark purposes by seizing upon the Middle Ages as they have shallowly misunderstood them.

In the worst cases, nostalgia can ring a change upon the famous pronouncement that Samuel Johnson is supposed to have made about patriotism: it can be the last refuge of a scoundrel. Yet in other instances, the pain can serve a beneficial homeopathic purpose for the treatment of individual despair. This yearningness can be therapeutic; we could even view it as chronotherapy. The longing to go back is summed up in a golden era, which gives way in turn to silver before descending into conspicuously baser metals.

Nostalgia is not necessarily the opposite of Pollyannism. A nostalgist need not be, by intrinsic nature, the enemy of either history or progress, let alone of optimism. In fact, a convincing [counterargument](#) has been framed and documented that longing for a fictive “once upon a time” may fuel or recharge rather than deplete hope. Wistfulness about bygone times may induce greater positiveness about the future by enhancing the self-esteem of the nostalgist. The all-important pivot lies in where we allow romantic images of the past to lead us. If we make of the passion a source of energy that turbocharges cooler investigations, then no harm is done. If we allow false assumptions and passions to propel us toward rash actions premised on partisanship, then little good and perhaps even great damage will result.

Is such a yearning possible for times so long ago to which no one alive has had firsthand exposure? For better or worse, we still have only one word to describe both the longing for what we have known but lost or mislaid, and for what we cannot have known and can only imagine. In both cases nostalgia can lead to vapidness, including the banality of evil, and it can be capitalized upon to political ends. What cannot be warped to serve pernicious purposes? Despite such traps, nostalgia is [not always to be condemned](#) or even contemned.

A distinction has been drawn between [reflective and restorative nostalgia](#). The first pauses over the bittersweetness and poignancy of what lingers on only in memory, especially past pleasure alloyed with pain. In contrast, the second aims to shape the present and future with the goal of reliving oversimplified bygone glories. We cannot roll back the clock to simpler times. Whatever our powers of recollection, we have no rewind that grants direct access to the past: we cannot replay what has gone by. What can we do? We can urge sharing in knowledge of life and culture from times before where the minute hand rests today. Between reflection and restoration lies a measureless gamut of other nostalgias. Where the medieval period is concerned, the ones that lead to nationalism, fundamentalism, and war have had generally poor outcomes, to put it mildly. For all that, many other Middle Ages should not be faulted automatically for the failings of those others. True, the past is, famously and even tritely, a [foreign country](#). Even so, it requires no visa, beyond the desire and effort to learn. True, the bygone is automatically the other. Yet at times the present can be even more alien, even more alienating, than the long ago.

The nostalgia seen in literature played out in constructions not just of words on paper, but more visibly and concretely of bricks and stones stacked on soil. Thanks to architecture, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had a truly extraordinary outlook upon the Middle Ages. Leading lights of the practice endeavored through their art to fashion an idealized modern world from the medieval universe as they conceived of it. In this redesign, the starchitects of the day sought to shape the spaces in which the populations of large institutions not merely worshiped but also lived and worked. The world was changing briskly, with no clear certainty that the fast-moving evolution was not in fact devolution or even devaluation. Against this instability, the Middle Ages—or an imaginary one, much like the collegiate Gothic sort that would soon rise up in profusion throughout the Wellesley campus—furnished checks and balances. It may still do so. In the imaginations of artists in the Gilded Age and belle époque, the tumbler tumbled and the jongleur juggled in a Gothic setting. Whether it was medieval or revival Gothic, whether a European cathedral or an American college chapel, became undeterminable and irrelevant. All these categories merged, as they were designed to do.

## 4. Anatole France

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### The Local Historian Félix Brun

Braced for a surprise? Eyebrows ready to be arched? For [more than one hundred years](#), until 1981, *Our Lady's Tumbler* was not fully and literally translated even once into modern French. Although such a protracted drought may seem amazing, extenuating circumstances exist. In the first place, editions of the primary source were not readily available outside academic settings; and secondly, the verse would not have been easily readable for French speakers who had not received special training in parsing forms of their language from the Middle Ages. Still, editions of the medieval poem could be found in institutions of higher learning, and there were individuals who could have been capable translators.

The lack of a modern French translation was not peculiar to this one text. The same situation held generally true in all languages. European scholars in the late nineteenth century tended not to translate works of medieval literature into their modern languages in their totality, and the French refrained as well, at least as much as their peers. Rather than following texts to the letter, they summarized and rephrased. Sometimes they interspersed extracts from the original. Once again, we must probe the why and the wherefore.

This reticence about translation may appear to cut against the grain. After all, elite high schools, or *lycées*, which had responsibility for the cultural formation of the young who in time would constitute the ruling class in France, mandated that students concentrate upon exacting translation and memorization of texts written in the highly inflected dead languages of Latin and Greek. They imparted training that could have facilitated similar analysis of older written forms of spoken modern-day French. What then accounts for the general black hole of translations? Why was *Our Lady's Tumbler* not put into contemporary language until the late twentieth century? In most European countries and in America, translating from any language, medieval or modern, has commanded little scholarly esteem. Even to this day, [the practice of translation](#) retains an unsteady status in the pecking order that determines academic advancement for professors of language and literature. Until the late 1900s, editing

occupied a much more elevated rung on the ladder of prestige—indeed, throughout the nineteenth century and for much of the twentieth, more effort went into editing than into translating original French texts from the Middle Ages—and since then, interpretation has soared above both translation and edition in its public visibility and in the reward that it brings its practitioners. The relatively low prestige of translating in comparison with other scholarly practices explains in part why medieval French idled untranslated.

Beyond the lowly status of translation, it was widely held that medieval forms of French were [ultimately untranslatable](#). This verdict could have owed partly to the linguistic distance between the rumbustious dialects of yore and the standardized and centralized language of modernity. The study of modern philology was largely constituted according to the cultural organizing principles of modern nation-states. In France, every effort was made to package the dialectal fecundity of medieval French as if it furnished the loam from which the Paris-centered national language later germinated. According to this determinism, the linguistic evolution of the modern tongue as we now know it was destined already in the Middle Ages. In the end, the foremost factor in the foot-dragging may have been aesthetic and stylistic. The decision not to translate literally or even closely could have been dictated by what was regarded as the unbridgeable chasm between medieval prose and verse and their modern analogs. Primitivism and exoticism made the Middle Ages a point of repair from the tussle of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Those same supposedly medieval qualities may have been felt to render impossible an undeviating transposition from the earlier into the later culture.

The earliest attempt at putting an abridged form of the medieval poem into a modern European language was a French version of the story by an archivist named Félix Brun. In 1883, his piece was splashed across three columns on a large single page of an [illustrated French weekly](#) in May, the month of Mary. In an introductory paragraph, this early adaptor explained how it had been edited a decade earlier by Wendelin (or Wilhelm) Foerster. As Brun reported, the journal *Romania* sometimes contained beautiful tidbits. For all that, he recognized that the periodical had pitiful reach. Despite being well known and esteemed among the learned, it was too specialized to entice a large audience.

The Frenchifier did not dwell on the fact that the editor of the only text then available was an Austrian and not a countryman of his. For that matter, nothing in print hints that either Brun or any other would-be translators into French before or after him were deterred by the heavily Germanic cast to the scholarship on *Our Lady's Tumbler*. Most significantly, until the twenty-first century it was German speakers who published the only scholarly editions. To be sure, nationalism now and again gave a fillip, upward or downward, to the reception of *Our Lady's Tumbler*. But for the most part, scholars kept close to their chests the views on international politics that may have informed their engagement with the story. As we have seen, the jongleur made the French proud, but he was no Roland.

The impetus behind Brun's work was what in today's lingo we would call outreach or engagement. He sought to expand awareness of the narrative by presenting it in contemporary language, with a minimum of pedantic appurtenances, in a newspaper with national reach. To attract more attention to the tale, he opted not to render it literally. As he categorized it generically, the poem that offered the prototype of the story was a *fabliau*. By his lights, it employed "a naïve language." With this epithet, he implied a gulf, as much spiritual as stylistic, between medieval and modern French. Since the abyss between the two languages was impassable, he chose not to translate but to abbreviate the text.

Among other firsts that Brun's publication achieved, it marked the first-time use of the title "Le jongleur de Notre Dame" for the original of *Our Lady's Tumbler*. The gnomic choice of words unintentionally sowed the seeds for the later misapprehension that the jongleur was affiliated with the Paris cathedral. An unspoken equation has been drawn among a plurality of *Notres Dames*—Our Lady, as a byword for the Virgin Mary, as well as a cathedral or church dedicated in her honor, which applies effectively to most houses of worship in France. Finally, it can stand specifically for the cathedral of Paris. A reviewer of the 1904 Paris premiere of Jules Massenet's opera "Le jongleur de Notre Dame" already felt obliged to preclude any mix-up between Notre Dame as the Virgin Mary and Notre-Dame as the cathedral of Paris. Exactly one century later, a French paperback intended for the classroom had to supply a similar gloss even for a domestic readership of schoolchildren. Brun meant the pair of words in the former sense, to indicate the Mother of God. He may have had some thought of Mary as a medieval *dame*. We can be very certain that he did not have on his mind the latter meaning, which could have pointed to the capital city and any of its churches.

The translation circulated in the newspaper turned out to be only the initial one in a three-part iterative process through which the same Félix Brun transited in grappling with the poem. In 1887, he printed a fuller but still incomplete French prose version. This time, the product was a paper-thin book of fourteen pages under the title *Le jongleur de Notre Dame*. The author distributed it in a limited run of fifty copies. He issued various other small softcover books, most of which resemble what has become today the nearly extinct medium of the offprint. They can also be compared with the pamphlet format that has been adopted sometimes for the written versions of formal lectures. The topics of his publications in such booklets encompass medieval French literature, local history, and French history, especially relating to medieval culture. Also in 1887, the same wide-ranging medievalizer devoted a fifteen-page disquisition to the story known now as *The Knight of the Barrel*, one of the tales with which *Our Lady's Tumbler* is more than casually associated.

In 1890, Brun reprinted his lovely adaptation of the poem in modern French in the exceedingly rare *The Jongleur of Notre Dame: Seven Legends for as Many Friends* (see Fig. 4.1). Here the tale of the medieval entertainer is the lead, and title, piece in a bundle of seven separate studies. The author left the paraphrase substantially unchanged from how it had appeared within his earlier study of the medieval poem. In both cases, the

opening verb has the ring in French of “Once upon a time” in English. Brun was thus the very first to put his finger upon, or at least to enunciate, the intrinsically fairy-tale-like qualities of the story.

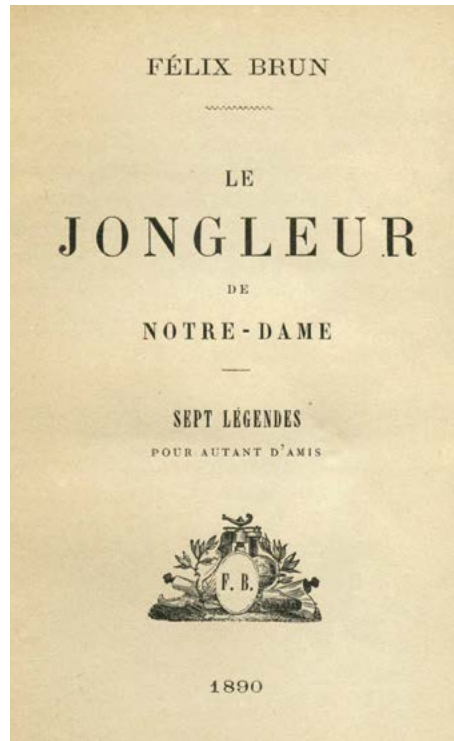


Fig. 4.1 Title page of Félix Brun, *Le jongleur de Notre Dame: Sept légendes pour autant d'amis* (Meulan, France: A. Masson, 1890).

Inside this later and longer volume of 1890, the tale bears a dedication to Auguste Riche. The dedicatee is addressed by the title *abbé*, as was customary then for Catholic clergy of low rank in France: “Father” would be the corresponding English. The story for this priest of Saint-Sulpice is followed by none other than a retelling of *The Knight of the Barrel*, dedicated to Brun’s sister. The remaining five items form an impressive, and charming, potpourri of medieval legends retold. All of them are inscribed to *specific friends of the author*. The resultant softcover, with the appreciation of *Our Lady’s Tumbler* and six other tales, had a print run twice as large, a walloping one hundred copies, as the 1887 study and abridgment. What happened to these fivescore paperbacks? Although they may have been appreciated by Brun’s intimates, they dropped into immediate and unmitigated oblivion *among researchers*.

Throughout his life, the translator or adaptor retained close associations with the modest town of *Bucy-le-Long*, where he had spent his childhood and where other members of his family, such as a married sister, continued to live. Even if he liked

to strike a pose as an innocent in comparison with the city slickers of Paris, he and his cronies in his home region were anything but parochial provincials, country bumpkins, or hapless hicks. By the same token, the little outpost scarcely rates as the hinterlands or a backwater. As far as his résumé goes, Brun was employed in Paris to oversee the archives in the Ministry of War, where he earned continual compliments for the indefatigable and learned thoroughness of his own researches. He also reaped praise for the kind generosity he bestowed upon others without shortchanging. When queried, he appears to have [begrudged no one](#) his assistance. Yet his heart was not in the grand capital. Rather, he paid lifelong allegiance to Bucy-le-Long. In that place too, even a century after his death, ripples of affection can be felt through those who remain distantly and indirectly bound to him, through memories passed down through the generations. What comes through consistently in his afterlife, in both Paris and his place of birth, is his depth as a human being, in amiability, erudition, and wisdom.

Brun evidenced the patriotism for France that typified his countrymen in his day. Not too long after the cataclysm of the Franco-Prussian War, he completed in 1876 a study of *The Song of Roland*. At that very time, the medieval French epic became lodged forevermore in the curriculum for high school students. All the same, Brun's loyalty to his nation did not eclipse his fond localism. Both [national and regional pride](#) can be readily intuited in his delving into documents about Soissons and its people at the time of Joan of Arc. Among many other things, locales surrounding his hometown would have demarcated his first and earliest field of vision for his conception of medieval architecture. He would have encountered what remained of monasteries such as [Notre-Dame in Soissons](#) (see Fig. 4.2), the Gothic church at Bucy-le-Long (see Fig. 4.3), and crypts. These buildings contributed to his childhood sense of the early Middle Ages. It was upon Bucy-le-Long that Brun lavished his most strenuous and sustained efforts. In 1900, he came out with *Bucy-le-Long: Notes to Serve for a History, 1634–1815*. He followed it in 1909 with [Notes on the Simons of Bucy and the Old Château of Bucy-Le-Long](#). For his eruditely antiquarian investigations, the town returned the favor. It named a street after him, rue Félix Brun, and affixed a plaque to the house where he lived much of his life.

The small settlement of Bucy-Le Long sits squarely in Picardy, five miles northeast of Soissons. The location holds relevance to Brun's undertaking of studies on *Our Lady's Tumbler*. The poem's dialect, as mentioned, hints that it originated in this very pocket of France. Even more to the point, the municipality is located near two places that figure prominently in the life of Gautier de Coinci: Soissons, where the poet was a monk and later abbot, and Vic-sur-Aisne, ten miles to the west, where he served as prior before returning to the abbacy of Soissons. Brun, who was well versed in Gautier's miracle poetry, professes shock that he was not the [author of Our Lady's Tumbler](#). He takes solace at least that the monk wrote of the miracle involving the minstrel Peter of Sieglar at Rocamadour, since the two tales have a tight-knit relationship.

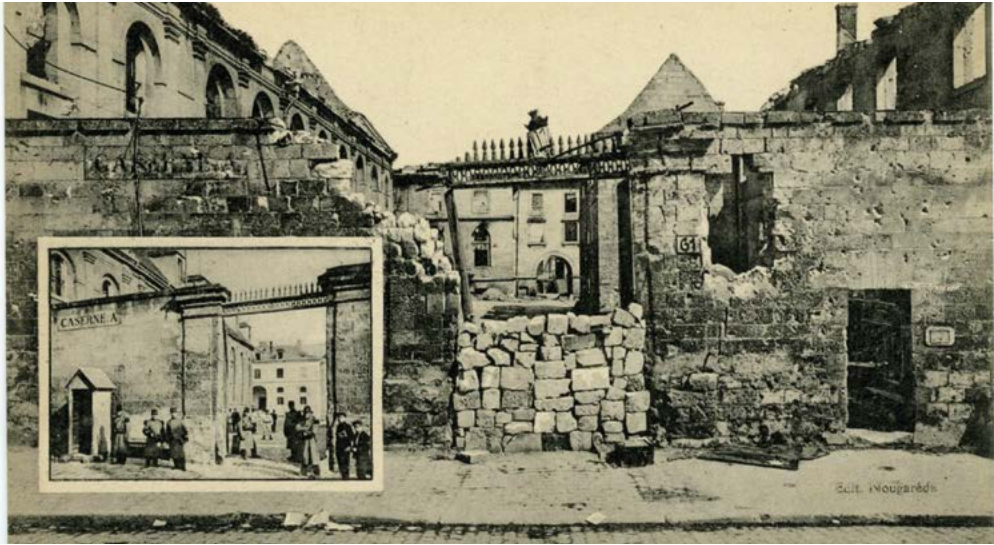


Fig. 4.2 Postcard depicting barracks, ruined in World War I, on site of Notre-Dame de Soissons Abbey (Soissons: Nougarede, early twentieth century).

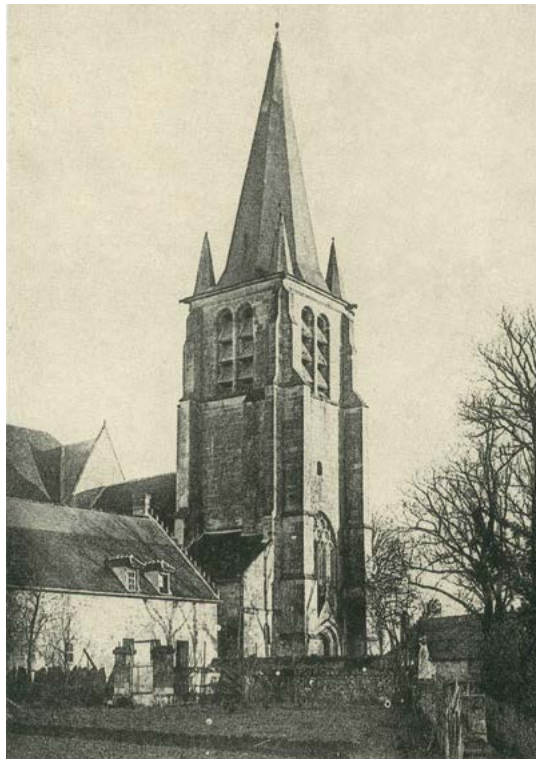


Fig. 4.3 Postcard depicting the church tower of Bucy-le-Long (Vailly-sur-Aisne, France: A. Berthe, early twentieth century).



Both men were Picards, even if separated by more than seven centuries. Provincial and local pride explains in part Brun's study of Gautier de Coinci (which was also printed in only one hundred copies). Without sideswiping, the late nineteenth-century scholar emphasizes what he calls the "uniformity" of his compatriot's life, spent mainly as a Benedictine brother in Soissons and its purlieus. He extols the poet's achievement as an author of Marian miracles and as a born storyteller. At the same time, he defends the medieval versifier against centuries of criticism he regards as unjust. He discerns in the monk a virtue lost in the degenerate complexity of his own late nineteenth-century existence.

In Brun's reductive but convincing schema, all of Gautier's narratives have two principal characters. One is the Virgin Mary; the other, a penurious man, prey to some physical or spiritual wretchedness. The archivist's summation tells much about his romantic allegiance to his native region, as well as his preconceptions, shared by most of his coevals, about medieval people. Correlating Gautier's literary style with the topography and natural features of Picardy, he evokes "horizons with harmonious and supple lines, rather than sparse or grandiose, soil pleasant to look upon and lending itself to easy living, yet uneven enough to furnish a walker with the surprise of a lonely hollow, a craggy rock, a picturesque hideaway." Narrowing the aperture by degrees, he takes vicarious pleasure in imagining "the naïve prior... in his little monastery of Vic, on the lovely banks of *Lady Aisne*, as old locals of Soissons put it, right in the heart of 'the sweet land of sweet France,' as Gautier himself says somewhere, in his fondness upping the ante of a happy formula that was already a century old at the time." The two most significant trigger words in the passage are *picturesque* and *naïve*. The tag for which Brun provides no citation, "sweet land of sweet France," harks back to *The Song of Roland*. As the closing clauses show, his regionalism in no way stood between him and Frenchness, which he viewed as having been long entrenched already by Gautier's lifetime. Although a regionalist, Brun did not succumb to insularity.

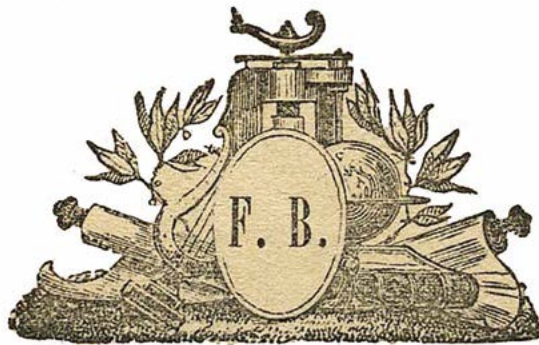


Fig. 4.4 The decorated initials of Félix Brun, depicted on the title page of Félix Brun, *Le jongleur de Notre Dame: Sept légendes pour autant d'amis* (Meulan, France: A. Masson, 1890).

Both the book on Gautier and the one on *Le jongleur de Notre Dame* bear the author's own device. His initials occupy a place of honor in an oval at the center, where a lamp of learning is poised atop a printing press. Laurel leaves and scrolls on either side flank a globe, lyre, and manuscript to signify general culture (see Fig. 4.4). The diminutive print runs and homely atmosphere should not blind us to the evidence of remarkable scholarship in Brun's various publications. Despite his position as a professional archivist, his oeuvre also strikes a stance of self-consciously modest and dependable amateurism, antiquarianism, or both. The two paragraphs that he prefixed to his 1890 volume could not be more revealing of his position vis-à-vis the degree-bearing, certified professionals who installed themselves ever more as fixtures of scholarly life:

None of the tales that follows really belongs to me. Every reader a little versed in the literature of the Middle Ages will be able to say easily from where I have drawn them. But he will see also that I have not been everywhere an extremely meticulous translator. It has happened to me sometimes to reconstitute these naïve stories without having before my eyes the texts, Latin or Romance, which had provided them to me at the outset. Has my recollection always served me faithfully? I have reason to doubt. Have I not forgotten something here, added something there? It could be.

Here then is a little book that the *École des Chartes* would not recommend at all, I imagine: Oh, don't believe that I take pleasure in that! I am the very first to agree, the most respectfully in the world, that this *École* has not been established for the fostering of such fantasies. It forms medievalists: [I am only a medievalizer](#).

In the handwritten inscription in a copy of his separate booklet on *The Tale of the Barrel*, the author sounds the same note: "A very humble homage from a [medievalizer](#)."

The preamble to the bigger book [from 1890](#) localizes its author in Bucy-le-Long. Brun writes for the home crowd. He is anything but a Gallic hillbilly or redneck, but it may have suited his purposes to parochialize (or pseudoparochialize) himself by emphasizing his village origins and attachments. With the commune lying at a remove of just under one hundred kilometers from the capital, he may have played down his far-reaching erudition—and correspondingly played up his hobby as a local history buff.

Should we call people who produce disquisitions such as Brun's scholars, amateurs, or a hybrid of the two? Does it reveal shortcomings in our own perspective that we feel obliged even to consider imposing closed-minded distinctions between the two groups? But let us pause to examine history and to take stock. If we fuss over drawing lines between university-certified expertise and amateur dilettantism, our condition owes to shifts that were well underway in the late nineteenth century. In contrasting himself as a medievalizer with the school-trained as medievalists, our archivist plants himself on one side of a divide that was at once generational and regional. By choice he was provincial, at a time when [provincialism was losing ground](#) rapidly to centralization and nationalization. By the same token, he opted to assume the role of a supposedly inexpert medievalizer when professionalized medievalism was taking

hold. He stood for the opposite of what Gaston Paris and Paul Meyer did. His self-published disquisitions were aimed at his own local coterie, whereas the two younger men in the capital engaged internationally.

The French *moyenâgeux* is here rendered into English as “medievalizer.” The word came into use in the 1860s to signify a lover of the Middle Ages or a person who sought to evoke medieval forms or customs. Meaning literally “Middle Ages-ish,” the substantive denoted an amateur, trifler, reenactor, and it carried shadings of *tsk tsk*, *even contempt*. The medievalizer of this kind was a sentimentalizer, even a sugarcoater, with the paramount objective of bringing the Middle Ages into the present day. In contrast, the polysemantic noun *médiéviste* brought implications of formal study, just as “medievalist” does to this day. *In its primary sense*, the term denotes first specialists in medieval culture and history, and only after that devotees or connoisseurs of medieval culture and arts. The medievalist was a dry-eyed positivist who undertook to professionalize and specialize. In the process, the *médiéviste* implanted barricades between the past and the present that stand to this day.

Those who defined themselves as *moyenâgeux* would likely have seemed amateurishly romantic, superficial, and dilettantish to the other group. The vice versa is that the *médiévistes* could have struck their opposites as being persnickety hair-splitters. In English, a very similar distinction has become enshrined. On the one side gambols medievalism: often caught up in medieval or pseudomedieval material culture (including manuscripts), subjective, autodidact, and answering the individual’s needs and desires. On the other glowers *medieval studies*, as professional, vested within the academy, positivist, and research-based. The two approaches to the Middle Ages must be differentiated, but both would probably be far better served if the rift that sundered them in the second half of the nineteenth century could be bridged. In terms of generation, Brun lived through decades in which the study of the Middle Ages became more and more professionalized and institutionalized, sometimes even overrefined. At the same time, medieval studies came to be centralized and concentrated ever more in the capital of France. In the leading city of Paris, frequent commerce took place between the creators of high culture and scholars of the French Academy and its sister institutions. We will see such exchanges among the upper strata in the cases of both the writer Anatole France and the composer Jules Massenet.

At a lower orbit than the elite salons of the big city, Brun’s cliquy coterie encouraged its members to pursue scholarly research; sadly, these investigations remained sequestered from broader view. Even today, the scope and impact of his own work are an uphill struggle to reconstruct, since so few copies of them exist even in major libraries.

The author dedicated his first little book on the jongleur to both an individual and a group—the single dedicatee was Father *Auguste Riche*, who wrote extensively on theology, doctrine, and cultural history, while the circle comprised fellow members of a scholarly and cultural society named in honor of the French physicist, Léon Foucault.

In a handwritten dedication on one copy of the 1890 book, Brun penned “[affectionate remembrance](#) of the Foucault lecture.” The disquisition was named after the scientist who devised the [pendulum](#) also named after him. The archivist owned explicitly that his *Chanson de Roland* study resulted from a speech that he had made in the series. [Such collegial circles](#) eased the transition to a mature industrial class society from the *ancien régime*, the “old order” that preceded the French Revolution. From another perspective, local learned clubs of this sort clawed their way back in the wake of the Franco-Prussian War: they expressed a healthy reaction against a stultifying present by [reappropriating the past](#).

The dedication of Brun’s booklet indicates how awareness of the poem was communicable and spreading. In his lifetime, interest in medieval literature and in studying it belonged not just to the top-tier universities, academies, and institutes, but also to amateurs or dilettantes, in the most positive sense. Yet the place of *Our Lady’s Tumbler* in fin-de-siècle French culture did not hinge on editions in small numbers that emanated from provincial study groups, no matter how distinguished. On the contrary, the medieval French poem acquired a central place in the Gothic revival of the 1890s thanks to interactions between two of the elite in the capital. First came pronouncements by Gaston Paris and other members of the scholarly set from which Brun had [distanced himself](#) consciously. The secondhand exposure to the poem that the scholars granted led directly to the creative writings of the major cultural influencers.

In both milieus, the prevalence of Gothic architecture played a role. In the opening sentence of his introduction, Brun compares the achievements of medieval writers who honored the Virgin Mary with those of architects and sculptors who erected “poems of stone.” At the foot of the first page he pointed out how [mystery plays](#) were enacted in the proximity of the cathedrals. In this connection we would do well to let our gaze linger a moment upon the 1883 weekly in which his first translation of the poem saw the light of day (see Fig. 4.5). The cover features an engraving of a spring scene with the carcass of a Gothic church or abbey. The vignette highlights birds, flowers, and a foot traveler. The scene could be entirely fanciful; then again, the artist could be responding to the opening of *Our Lady’s Tumbler*, when the jongleur wearies of the world and enters a monastery. To Brun, the Middle Ages are inherently naïve and overly trusting. He even goes so far as to claim that the younger versions of ourselves from that time were not always cute and cuddly. On the contrary, “our medieval ancestors [behaved sometimes](#) like spoiled children, even like frightful children.” As already noted, this conception of people from the earlier era as gobemouches, childlike and callow, coddled and cosseted, in mostly endearing but sometimes alienating ways, was [shared by many others](#) in the late nineteenth century.

The now-proverbial theory of “[six degrees of separation](#)” maintains that any one individual is six steps or fewer from any other in the world. Person A will be connected by a friend of a friend of a friend of a friend of a friend with person B. Another truism holds that during the belle époque everyone knew everyone. This second assertion presumes as its focus Europe and North America. If it proves to be



Fig. 4.5 Spring among Gothic ruins. Illustration by Mme. Martinet, 1883. Published on the front cover of *La France illustrée* 10.443 (May 26, 1883).

true, it does so partly because the population of the globe was then smaller, but also partly because the elite blackballed so many people. It can almost seem that a single degree of separation ensured that the high-octane pacesetters [all knew each other](#). All of this said, Brun's oddity was that he was a highly cultured and erudite man who published voluminously, yet his many publications had little to no impact on the Parisian mainstream. In the preface to a book on his childhood in Bucy-le-Long, he confesses a [levelheaded understanding](#) that he writes mainly for a close circle of boon companions. At the same moment, he is an archivist with every fiber of his being. More than the typical person, he can read between the lines the repercussions that a document can have on the future. In this spirit, he admits candidly to setting down his words for future generations. He envisages a day in fifty years when only three or four of his sixty copies will exist, saved from destruction by having been forgotten. In this imagined time, a townsman-to-come in his little municipality will stumble upon his slim volume, and will take interest in the long-lost past, especially if this person believes in a chain of affinities that links souls across time. The passage estheticizes reading with a leisurely wistfulness that is almost Proustian. What would a scholar of the 1800s think, upon learning that in the early twenty-first century an American medievalist found and doted upon his oeuvre, or that you who cradle this book in your hands or peruse it as images on a screen now meet his mind and heart, all thanks to the miraculous tenacity of ink pressed upon paper?

Brun's limited impact holds valid, bafflingly so, even in the case of the tale of the juggleur. If the archivist qualifies in any meaningful sense as a dilettante, then long live amateurism. We could do today with less of a gulf between professionals and sciolists. Whatever we label him, he had the connections and the ambition to promulgate the first version of his paraphrase in an established national magazine. Yet no evidence of any sort signals that Brun's effort ever caught the eye of a single person outside his coterie in Picardy. For that matter, nothing indicates that even one of his fellow Foucaultians was affected by his scholarship on the medieval French poem. Then again, the circulation of *La France illustrée* would have all but guaranteed that the 1883 version would be read widely. Some of the highest echelon who encountered it there in the popular press would have known about the medieval poem already through lectures and publications of Gaston Paris, but others would have talked about the story: its basics have always been easy to remember (and misremember). At the very least, Brun's translations would have aided the promulgation of the story before a larger world than just those who heard or perused the renowned philologist.

The title that has stuck to the story in French is the one Brun used. Anatole France could have happened on his own to formulate in 1890 the same wording, *Le jongleur de Notre Dame*. Then again, the eventual Nobel Prize winner could have covered his tracks, by avoiding conceding that he had come across and borrowed from one or another of his predecessor's translations. There is not much point in making any wager, but I would bet that the short story writer had no contact whatsoever, direct or indirect, with Brun's work. Less debatably, Anatole France owed a major debt to

a French poet of his day that he chose not to credit. It has taken one hundred and twenty-five years for his indebtedness to come to light—but now read the story.

## The Poetaster Raymond de Borrelli

The viscount Raymond de Borrelli (see Fig. 4.6), a repeatedly and heavily [decorated war hero](#), frequented a cultural niveau loftier than Brun's partly provincial plateau. On the literary front, by the twilight of his career he had thrice won the [prize for poetry](#) from the [French Academy](#). In the second go-round, he recited the winning piece publicly in 1891, and brought it [into print](#) shortly afterward. The poem was entitled *Le jongleur*, which in this case could be translated best as "The Juggler." In it, the poet reframes our story.



Fig. 4.6 Raymond de Borrelli. Engraving, before 1890. Artist unknown. Published in Raymond de Borrelli, *Arma* (Paris: A. Lemerre, 1890), frontispiece.

Borrelli presumably sought to build on the triumph of what had been handed down his most broadly and durably successful longer piece. Two years earlier he had published for the theater *Alain Chartier: Un acte en vers heroïques* (One act in heroic verse). For the front matter he had wangled favorable remarks from none other than Alexandre Dumas *filis*, who dominated French theater in the second half of the nineteenth century. The viscount's play deals with an apocryphal legend that dates at the latest to the early sixteenth century but was set in the early fifteenth. The story goes that Margaret of Scotland, dauphine of France, chanced upon Alain Chartier as he took forty winks. As he drowsed, she puckered her lips and planted upon his a kiss "because they have said such beautiful things" (see Fig. 4.7). The gesture had a special poignancy, because this man of letters was reputedly the ugliest of his time. The episode, almost "beauty and the beast," enjoyed [renown](#) in turn-of-the-century France and England.



Fig. 4.7 Edmund Leighton, *Alain Chartier*, 1903. Oil on canvas, 162.5 × 114 cm. Private collection. Image from Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Leighton-Alain\\_Chartier-1903.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Leighton-Alain_Chartier-1903.jpg)



The theatrical piece about the jongleur or juggler comprises thirty-four of the five-line stanzas known in French as *cinquains*. The choice of meter and rhyme befitted the medieval subject matter, since this verse form was known to have originated in the Middle Ages. The Parnassians, a movement in nineteenth-century French poetry, laid a heavy emphasis upon technical perfection in versification. Formally, Borrelli betrays *signs of their influence*. Small wonder that *Le jongleur* was printed by the same French publisher who first promoted many poets who belonged to the group.

The poem begins with an epigraph that alludes to an anecdote about the illustrious French poet Jean de La Fontaine, who, after having been handed a Bible by his countryman, the tragic playwright Jean Racine, became captivated by the prayer of the Jews in the *book of Baruch*. Entranced by the beauty of the passage, La Fontaine afterward quizzed everyone he met, “*Have you read Baruch?* He was quite a fine genius.” One thrust of the anecdote is to convey that to the seventeenth-century poet, the Holy Scriptures stood on a par with any secular writings in their qualities as literature. The allusion makes it fraught with significance that Borrelli then asks, “*Have you ever read Jacobus de Voragine?*” This formidably named author was a thirteenth-century Dominican friar. By citing him, Borrelli claims to have extracted the story he relates from Jacobus’s most famous writing, *Legenda aurea*. Though the piece could be entitled with more scholarly punctilio as *Readings on the Saints*, the conventional name of *Golden Legend* has become far too deeply seated to be dislodged. As its title suggests, the work is a legendary, or collection of saints’ legends. In the late Middle Ages, this beloved and prodigiously successful text captured the hearts and minds of lay, especially urban, audiences. In any case, the citation of Jacobus reflects deliberate indirection on the part of the late nineteenth-century French poet. Since the story he then tells is not contained in the hagiographic collection, identifying *Golden Legend* as the source is a golden herring.

Misinformed or mendacious acknowledgements about the literary debts of *Our Lady’s Tumbler* and its progeny are a common motif when the tale is later reworked. We should be grateful: *what’s a clue* but a mistake by another name? Credit has often been accorded erroneously to *Gautier de Coinci*. This misunderstanding stemmed from an inattentive reading of Gaston Paris. In treating miracles in his literary history, the great philologist first mentions the vast *Miracles of Our Lady* of Gautier de Coinci, and then touches upon other collections and isolated tales about the Virgin. In the second grouping, Paris singles out *Our Lady’s Tumbler*. Even if Gautier de Coinci had nothing to do with the narrative under the microscope here, he merits special praise for his many contributions to the genre of Marian miracles. All the citations of him to this point have unanimously awarded him laurels for distinction among poets who wrote within this genre. His “authorial persona,” as captured in five manuscript illuminations that offer “author’s portraits” of him, has been rightly described as merging the “*minstrel’s mantle and monk’s hood*.”

Borrelli's version of the story treats the original *Our Lady's Tumbler* with unfettered latitude. His jongleur is a poor acrobat who converts after a fever causes him to be hospitalized. While unwell, the entertainer prays to the Virgin and vows to burn a taper in her honor. The motif is not a shocker, since lighting candles as votive offerings to the Mother of God has been a common practice for far longer than one millennium. The monks enter the narrative only when busybodies among them spy on the jongleur. The newcomer asks to be left alone in the chapel for at least an hour to execute his devotions to Mary. Fearing that he may filch their gold and silver, the brothers keep a close eye on him. He strips off hospital garb—the anticipation from 150 years ago of a Virgin-blue scrub suit or a virginal-white open-backed johnny?—to reveal the faded finery of a tumbler. His performance includes acrobatics, such as walking on his hands, balancing on his head, and doing various other strenuous tumbles. The nineteenth-century poet likens the unusual postures to [monsters and fallen angels](#) portrayed in medieval statuary.

The key moment occurs when the medieval performer juggles with copper balls after having littered the steps of the altar with roses. The orbs, it will be seen, are a specific motif also found at both the beginning and end of Anatole France's version of the story. Borrelli writes:

[Mixing in a box a mass of things](#), the jongleur then uttered a sacramental word; and this word was capable of everything, even metamorphosis. For when he opened the box, it was full of nothing but roses, with which he went to strew the steps of the altar.

To conclude, he took some copper balls, and one saw the spheres, in a perfect and charming circle, in which the astonished eye got lost in following them, going by and going by again, tirelessly, by way of his scarcely moving hands;

And the weightless globes, each dotted by a spark in this quick and alternating rush, gave him a splendor much like the one above, strung out in an [the Virgin's] undying crown of nine golden stars encircling a different forehead.

At the end Mary strokes the sweat from the juggler's temples with the fringes of her veils.

Gothic revivals interlocked tightly with orientalizing phases in which Westerners took interest in Chinese and Japanese cultures. Intriguingly in this connection, a couple of years after *Le jongleur*, the veteran versifier published another verse narrative, this one entitled *Kashivade: A Japanese Tale in Verse*. As has been seen previously and will be seen again, the exotic otherness of a markedly different time, such as the Middle Ages, sometimes appealed to the same tastes that were drawn to conspicuously different places, such as the so-called Far East. Both the Middle Ages and the orient constituted cultural alternatives to, or targets for, the capitalism, colonization, and imperialism that held sway in France as in Great Britain, Germany, and other European nations. For all the other failings of the elect in those days, they at least sidestepped the double standard often encountered today. They were no more or less open to foreign places than to foreign times.

Borrelli was evidently held in some regard by at least some giants of the French Academy. He was touted even in the United States, not backhandedly, as “[one of the cleverest](#) of French society poets.” The love poetry for which he once commanded modest renown has long gone unread, but he retains to this day a faint following in other quarters, especially among troopers, for patriotic and imperialist verse about [military service and battles](#). In other circles, the battle-hardened poetaster verged on being a hate-figure. Probably even more for literary clumsiness and magniloquent bumptiousness than for crass jingoism, his poetry was dismissed with trenchant disdain by the writers from this period whose names and works have stood the test of time much better than his. The magnitude of the animus expressed against him suggests that shortcomings of his personality took an even greater toll than did the turgid tone of his poetry. A would-be pooh-bah, he seems to have been distinguished by egotistical bravado and braggartry, thin-skinned prickliness, and, most damning of all, dreary monotonousness. As we mull over the letter that he seems to have scribbled in high dudgeon to Anatole France, and as we meditate upon the carefully coiffed and attired portrait that serves as frontispiece to one of his books, we must wonder if he was vain, insecure, plodding, or all three at once.

Then again, he may have been doomed unfairly to be unliked and treated abrasively because of prejudgments against him. His background was not consonant with that of many authors in his time. Specifically, he may have been out of place socially. A battle-tested veteran, he soldiered hard and heroically for seventeen years in the cavalry in Europe, Africa, and Asia. In selecting the themes for his versifying, he was a panegyricist of patriotism and a hawk who focused often on war. He had his admirers: one of his well-wishers regarded him as being like a [knight errant or paladin poet](#) of the Middle Ages. In contrast, few of the rising stars in literature of the time looked upon him as charitably. To them, he was not a white knight of high culture but a nightmare of poetastry.

Whatever the motivation, Marcel Proust referred wryly more than once to Borrelli’s versifying. The [first allusion](#) crops up in an 1896 collection of the French novelist’s poems and novellas, his first book. Later came *Swann’s Way*, the foundational volume of his *Remembrance of Things Past*, brought out between 1913 and 1927. In it, he makes the verse of the military man the preferred reading of a character who utterly [lacks literary sensibility](#). In so doing, he damns the poetry as mundane, lightweight, and generally [devoid of literary worth](#). However much Proust’s criticism may drip with sarcasm, his acidity comes across as gently understated when set beside the asperity and scoffing of the French symbolist writer Remy de Gourmont, who [could not contain himself](#) when Borrelli secured the poetry prize of the French Academy for the third time. When the scorn is tallied, only a very hard-hearted person would not feel at least feeble tremors of compassion for the older poet. He was aligned with the forces that would soon commit immeasurable injustice in the Dreyfus case. Against him, the dissentient faction marshaled younger men not only more skilled in the craft

of words but also and more importantly more in tune with the changing tenor of the times. His intense amour propre and braggadocio seemed designed to provoke slights of exactly the kind that would have galled him the most. Sometimes the results must have festered.

In a Parisian trial from 1905, a true crime made [banner headlines](#) on both sides of the Atlantic, for its salmagundi of tragicomedy and literary misappropriation. A twenty-year-old man had succeeded in the preliminary stage of a supposed murder-suicide pact with his fiancée, but had made a botch of the next act—taking his own life. In the courtroom melodrama, the underhanded scoundrel won over the jurors by a one-two combination of skulduggery. His counsel first poured forth crocodile tears, with handkerchief in hand, and then he recited touching verse composed by his client. Case closed—or not? After his acquittal, it was discovered that the poem was not the defendant’s own work. On the contrary, it had been published by Vicomte de Borrelli some three years earlier in *Le Gaulois*. In writing to the newspaper, the retired soldier and active poet shrugged off the episode with good grace. Even so, he could still not resist ending with the [self-congratulation](#) that rankled the younger generation.

In an earlier episode that revolved around two modernizations of *Our Lady’s Tumbler*, the former military man could not cope with what he regarded as plagiarism by a member of the very academy that awarded a prize to one of his poems. In this case, the unacknowledged arrogation of his idea was too much for a man of Borrelli’s pride. He could not abide not being thanked and not receiving credit when the theft was committed by a member of the very elite that insulted him constantly.

The human imagination can be infinite. Borrelli’s may have been piddling and flawed, but even so, he made important contributions that helped rinse the silt that had accumulated on the tale of the jongleur since the Middle Ages. The story was soon fit for its trajectory from the fin de siècle into the twentieth century. Though his third-rate poem does not deserve to be resuscitated, the poet himself should receive his due of credit for having fixated upon the story, made its hero into a juggler, and put copper balls into his hands. These elements all had an impact upon Anatole France, whether consciously or not. “The Juggler” does not measure up to what the writer of prose fiction made by hybridizing it with Gaston Paris’s recapitulation, but the effort sufficed to propel France to that experiment. The versifier was right: the more famous writer committed a wrong him by taking the same story, which he knew in greater detail via Borrelli than via Gaston Paris. By advertising his debt to the great scholar of language and literature while stifling acknowledgment that he bore even the slightest obligation to anyone else, France did what would most grate upon the insecurities of the poet.

Among those who were affected by Borrelli’s poem, at least one lesser light was moved to compose a large original [watercolor](#) that was bound in with the 1892 printing (see Fig. 4.8). The artwork depicts the performer after he has collapsed. He is tonsured and fully clad in brown monastic garb, with his leggings showing. A patch on one knee visually brings home his humbleness. The wraithlike Madonna or Virgin

is covered from tip to toe and even beyond in a diaphanous veil. Above it she wears a crown that is capped by (but of course) four fleurs-de-lis. She is pressed up against his inert body and apparently soothing him with a kiss on the cheek. Above, three angels glide, seemingly carrying roses, one of which is falling groundward. Also visible are two pairs of chubby cherubs, presumably dimple-cheeked. To the right the brown-cowled abbot and monk stand transfixed, their eyes agog. Behind them, two stained-glass windows glow darkly.



Fig. 4.8 Mary kissing the jongleur. Watercolor by Maurice Vloberg, original art tipped into Raymond de Borrelli, *Le jongleur* (Paris: A. Lemerre, 1892), after title page.

The handling of the episode gives evidence that the watercolorist was under the sway of symbolism. This French vogue of dream-like mysticism had its inception in literature and spread then to painting. It sought not to describe or portray scenes realistically and naturalistically, but aimed to elicit from them an emotional essence, prevailing idea, and spiritual and symbolic meaning. This effort by a small-time artist has stayed unknown, shut off inside a book in private hands rather than displayed on the wall of a public museum. Nonetheless, it should not be regarded in even the most subsidiary way as a failure. The watercolor was well thought-out to accord with the values and ambitions of the movement that inspired the artist. It offered escape from reality into a colorful dreamworld with carefully chosen and almost abstract forms. Offsetting the isolation and anguish typical of symbolist movement, the composition conveys an ultimate optimism. Yes, the juggler dies, but immediately afterward he earns angelic deliverance to heaven.

## The Hungarian Dezsö Malonyay

Maybe no word-for-word translation from the medieval vernacular into nineteenth-century French was made because the medieval and modern forms of the language were felt—wrongly—to be sufficiently homogeneous to allow access without special training. Or perhaps, conversely, people believed that modernization would destroy the unaffected charm of the original. Then again, it may have been the luck of the draw that no one with the requisite education stepped forward to the task. In any case, few publishers after 1890 would have seen the desirability of printing a close modernization of the medieval French. By then the poetic protoform had been at least temporarily eclipsed by a punchy prose adaptation made by one of the most prominent writers then flourishing.

Before the close of the nineteenth century, Dezsö Malonyay (also spelled Malonyai) wrote a short story in Hungarian that supposedly derived from the medieval one (see Fig. 4.9). A prolific author, this writer from Hungary cultivated varied interests in art history, French and Hungarian literary history, and folk art. In composing his adaptation, he was also influenced by Anatole France's "Le jongleur de Notre Dame." The form of the story Malonyay wrote in his native language [appeared first in Budapest](#), in a daily newspaper in the days leading up to Christmas of 1897. The title may be put into English as "The Fool" or "The Simpleton." At the time, the Hungarian author resided in Paris. His circumstances greased the wheels for the publication of a French translation almost concurrently with the Hungarian. In the Christmas 1897 edition of *Le Figaro*, Adrien Remacle presented the story under the title "[Le fou](#)" (The fool, or madman). This Malonyay tale, at least as recast by the French symbolist writer and journal editor, fuses aspects of the medieval French poem with elements of Hugo's *Notre-Dame* and of Eastern European traditions of the [holy fool](#).

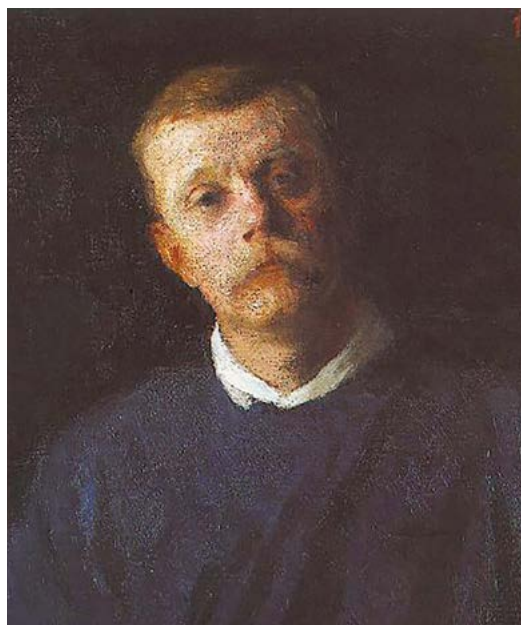


Fig. 4.9 Ferenczy Károly, *Portrait of Dezső Malonyai*, 1904. Oil on canvas, 104.5 × 80 cm. Budapest, Magyar Nemzeti Galéria. Image from Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Malonyai\\_Dezs%C5%91.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Malonyai_Dezs%C5%91.jpg)

Today it may be impossible to peel apart which features, if any, of this version stand independent of the medieval French or of the adaptations of it that were produced in French in the 1880s and early 1890s. The minute Anatole France's version came into print, the market became effectively saturated: in the retail space for books in France, not a millimeter remained for competing literary versions. Who would have dared to contend against a Nobel laureate by taking up a theme he had made his own in a short story, the genre in which he had proven himself unsurpassable? Remacle's recasting of Malonyay tells of a young jester who earns his living through what would now be termed physical comedy. The performer falls head over heels in love with a young Bohemian woman, about whom he becomes very jealous. Eventually an overlord becomes attracted to her and takes her overseas. The forlorn fool pours himself into his performances and becomes rich, but remains inconsolable. One day, drawn by the clanging of bells, he enters a church, donates all his wealth to the sacristan monk, and goes before the altar to the Virgin, where he performs an extraordinary acrobatic routine. The Madonna smiles and dismounts from her pedestal toward the body of the joker, who has blacked out and banged his skull against the altar steps. This motif of head-clunking reappears spontaneously (and coincidentally?) later, as will be seen, in an unscripted script allegedly improvised by the comic actor and filmmaker Charlie Chaplin.

In 1898, the story of the jester was dramatized and performed in [theaters in Hungary](#), with accompanying music. In this quasi-operatic form, the names of the characters, starting with Bimbo and Bimbilla, are [hilarious](#). In the Hungarian version of Malonyay's story, the young woman is a vagabond witch. She could be a gipsy. In any case, she is not identified as Bohemian. The man who takes her from the clown is not called a lord, but instead is a sketchily drawn, rather sphinxlike character. This well-knit mystery man is probably rich, as he offers much money for the girl's dancing performance, and is impressively strong, as he hits a sailor, who ventures to accost the young woman, with a mighty blow. He travels on a boat that he owns, on which they are going to leave. Nothing else is forthcoming about him. In the Hungarian story, the jester is not presented as being rich. The characters in this form of the Malonyay story remain nameless.

The sum of Brun's limited-edition prose, Borrelli's flowery and flawed poetry, and the French iteration of Malonyay's Hungarian story amounts to surprisingly slim pickings for the reception and influence of *Our Lady's Tumbler*. These versions were mere warm-ups for what came next. To a large extent, the responsibility for the complete lack of verbatim translations and the relative dearth of modernizations of the poem from the Middle Ages can be laid at the feet of a single modern French author. In fact, this same writer, whose heyday fell in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century France, holds personal accountability for the fact that the medieval form of the story [faded largely out of view](#).

The time has come now to turn to this man, but not in the spirit of playing the blame game and assigning fault for his role in the long dry spell in subsequent translations. On the contrary, his short version accomplished even more good in ensuring common knowledge of the story in the late nineteenth century than had done the convivial eloquence of Gaston Paris in his scholarship. Anatole France, here we come.

## Anatole France and Gaston Paris

[It is rare](#) that [Anatole France] studies directly literary works of the Middle Ages.

Most likely, Anatole France would have been wholly unaware of the modern French prose version of *Our Lady's Tumbler* by Félix Brun. True, the archivist's recapitulation was already in print in a few forms, but all of them had very limited circulation except for the newspaper in which it had appeared more than a half dozen years earlier. However ignorant of Brun's versions he may have been, France could hardly have failed to know that Raymond de Borrelli had already embarked upon a free versification of the medieval tale. Indeed, through attending a recitation at the French Academy, the fiction writer would have become acquainted with elements of the Vicomte's



adaptation. Among other similarities, the presence in both their stories of copper balls juggled by the jongleur is otherwise a startlingly unlikely coincidence. Great minds may think alike, but the viscount did not have one. In sum, the circumstantial evidence seems strong that France was influenced at least in some small way by the poem. The future Nobel laureate had heard or read the version by Borrelli that won the poetry prize of the French Academy, had plucked elements, and, claiming prosaic license, made them his own without so much as a nod toward the older epigone.

Anatole France's little chef d'oeuvre was [first printed in 1890](#). The day after, he received a communication from a fellow writer who was aggrieved at having had his thunder stolen. This correspondent may well have accused France outright, with some cause, of having plagiarized his idea for literary use of the story from the Middle Ages. The accusatory letter is no longer extant, but we have France's face-saving reply. Who was the unidentified complainant? Who might this otherwise incognito *littérateur* be, who had prepared an adaptation, not yet issued in print, that hewed closer than France's to the medieval French? Why would this other author have reason to suspect that his version had somehow become known to Anatole France? The stress on the unpublished nature of the translation would rule out Félix Brun ipso facto. By the time France wrote his story, the archivist from Bucy-le-Long had brought out his years before in a major weekly and twice in limited issues. Given the improbability that a third reworking of the medieval French was produced, escaped all mention by contemporaries, and perished without becoming unknown to us, the compellingly logical inference would be that the addressee of France's letter had to have been the Vicomte, Raymond de Borrelli.

Upon receipt of the communication, France jotted down a letter to the accuser and correspondent whom he left unnamed. The document bears being quoted and translated in full:

11 May 1890. Sir, I would regret immeasurably a circumstance that does me praise, if your work could suffer from it. But it is obvious that my work is not of a sort to do injury to yours. The idea came to me, in reading the book of Gaston Paris on poetry in the Middle Ages, to tell in my manner the story of the "jongleur de Notre Dame." I even say a word about it in an essay on [The Literary Life](#) that has been included in the second series. Being committed this year to furnish Monsieur [Arthur Meyer](#) one tale per month, the idea came to me naturally to take up again for the month of May this miracle of the Virgin. I should wish quite keenly, Monsieur, that Monsieur Arthur Meyer would publish your work, which could not have a likeness to mine. As you have surmised, I do not know the text of the original poem and I have created my tale solely on the basis of the six lines of analysis that Monsieur [Gaston Paris](#) has provided.

Was France above reproach? Or were these seven sentences an exercise in misdirection, an attempt to disorient the accuser—Borrelli—by focusing upon two truths to the exclusion of another? Unbidden, France owned up to not knowing the medieval poem at all from the horse's mouth. Rather, he claims to have relied exclusively on

the potted history given by Gaston Paris in an 1888 guide to French literature in the Middle Ages.

From the very dedication, the story by Anatole France as it first appeared in the newspaper differs from the later printing of it in book form. The presentation in the French daily begins not with a blunt “To Gaston Paris” but instead with a full-fledged [scholarly reference](#) that cites chapter and verse in the volume that the writer had reviewed a few years earlier. No evidence exists that France ever saw the heavy-duty philological edition that had appeared nearly two decades earlier. Could his effort in print at scholarly punctilio have been prompted by a slight anxiety or even guilty conscience on his part that his originality in the source of his story was liable to be called into question? Do we have here a case of a preemptive strike to ward off charges of literary lifting—“The lady doth protest too much, methinks”? Unlike France’s man-to-man bluntness in his letter to his unnamed correspondent, the original dedication leaves plenty of wiggle room for readers to assume that the writer had based his adaptation without mediation upon the medieval French text. Even so, the annotation did not suffice to conciliate the duped indicter, who would have been fully justified in finding it disingenuous. He had good reason to find France guilty as charged.

At the same time, much of what becomes art in any medium is common domain. In the end, what matters most is what beauty and value artists add to the material they take from the past or present, from their experiences of art and life. If it was Borrelli, whatever his achievements on blood-soaked battlefields, he could not compare with Anatole France when contending on ink-drenched paper. In the pitched Darwinian scrum for long-term literary survival, the Vicomte was nothing but cannon fodder. If the last sentence degraded into mixed metaphors, let us dedicate them to the would-be poet himself.

Gaston Paris’s sentimentalization of the French verse tale from the early thirteenth century could not help but inform France’s own brief reimagining of it, since the story writer may never have set eyes upon the text of the medieval original in the scholarly journal *Romania*. We can see France en route to his short story already in his characterization of the medieval poem as he understood it secondhand from reviewing Paris’s book:

Finally, here is a still more naïve miracle, that of *Our Lady’s Tumbler*. There was a poor jongleur who, after having performed physical feats in public places to earn his living, dreamt of eternity and had himself accepted into a monastery. There he saw monks, good clerics that they were, honor the Virgin by learned prayers. But he was not a cleric and did not know how to ape them. Finally, he had the notion to shut himself in the chapel and to perform, alone, in secret, before the Blessed Virgin, the somersaults that had won him the most applause in the days when he was a jongleur. Some monks, disturbed at his lengthy absences, set themselves to spying on him and caught him in his pious exercises. They saw the Mother of God herself, after each somersault, approach to [dab the forehead of her tumbler](#).

Every single sentence of France's run-through departs from the medieval French original.

The divergences begin even with the epithet *poor* to describe the jongleur. In the medieval poem, the tumbler may not have been a high roller in more than an athletic sense, but nonetheless he prospered before entering the cloister. Gaston Paris may have meant the [French adjective](#) to mean something like "unfortunate" or "wretched," a state that would not necessarily have had to arise from impoverishment. Instead, the adjective may have connoted pathetic qualities. Whatever the philologist's intentions were, Anatole France took the jongleur to be *poor* in a lack of worldly possessions. He made him into a hard-luck case. Early in the short story, the destitute and down-on-his-luck entertainer uncoils an old carpet—nothing magic here—on which he performs. Despite being talented, this performer has difficulty scratching out an existence.

Somewhat gracelessly, France superimposed upon the well-spun medieval tale the nineteenth-century image of the struggling artist, unappreciated by society, who comes away empty-handed or nearly so from most of his performances. Later, as a lay brother, seemingly isolated among choir monks, the minstrel found himself even more in the situation of a dirt-poor bohemian. In this guise, he was a character with whom later writers, musicians, and other artists could identify. In both cases, the jongleur became odd man out within the collectivity to which he belonged. He qualified as damaged goods. In this strain of retellings, the entertainer resembled a type of artist that would become a popular image in the nineteenth century: a tubercular poet or painter wasting away in a sunless, airless, leaky, and unheated garret. Entering the cloister brought him salvation, since it constituted the sole means available to him for obtaining regular sustenance and a proper roof over his head.

In Paris's résumé of the story, the jongleur forsakes his life as a professional because he has wearied of the world, not explicitly because he is intent upon eternity. Whereas the monks surrounding him honor God, he displays a special devotion to the Virgin. An interesting side note is that although the title designates him as the Jongleur of Notre Dame, he addresses Mary personally and possessively as "Madame" and "madame la Vierge"—not Our Lady but [My Lady or Milady](#). In conversing with others or with himself, he refers to her as the Holy Virgin or as the holy Mother of God. Enough of semantics! As in the medieval forms of the tale, the juggler achieves effect not through words but through deeds. He entombs himself not in the chapel, but in the crypt. Only one of the brethren is perturbed by his disappearances. Mary does not pat his forehead, but instead fans him. Whereas the medieval poem ends after the death of the main character, in France's story the juggler remains still alive and kicking (or juggling) at the conclusion. Life goes on.



Fig. 4.10 “Le mois de Marie au village.” Charcoal illustration by Léon Augustin Lhermitte, etching by Clément Bellenger, 1885. Published in *Le Monde illustré*, “Supplément” (May 1885): 348–49.



Fig. 4.11 Jacques Daret, *Visitation*, detail from *Altarpiece of the Virgin*, 1434–1435. Oil on panel. Berlin, Gemäldegalerie. Image from Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:DARET\\_Jacques\\_Visitation.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:DARET_Jacques_Visitation.jpg)

## Mayday, Mayday

First Gaston Paris introduced modifications when he recapitulated the poem. Then France both multiplied and magnified the changes when he wrote his rave review of the scholar's book. Yet the greatest alterations were to arrive in the next stage. In May of 1890, the fiction writer published for the first time his full-blown reconception of the medieval poem. This inaugural appearance came on the cover page of *Le Gaulois*. The three-part short story bore the title "The Jongleur of Notre Dame: [Story for the Month of May](#)."

The decision to release the narrative in this month was calculated. May has been dedicated to Mary since the thirteenth century, but especially since the nineteenth century. In the Catholic Church, the month of May became in effect [the month of Mary](#). Gerard Manley Hopkins, a Catholic convert and priest, numbers among the most important English poets of the Victorian era. In 1878, he wrote a poem entitled "May Magnificat." The lyric opens: "May is Mary's Month, and I / Muse at that and wonder why." The Mayday-Maryday phenomenon was not restricted to England. In France, village priests would make the special nature of the month an occasion for instructing their congregations in both the guiding principles and fine points of Marian doctrine. Often they would do their preaching in May before the image of Mary upon which every parish church prided itself (see Fig. 4.10). In devotional practice, this span of time entailed the duty to contemplate the mysteries of the rosary. In many parishes, these weeks involved processions in honor of the Mother of God. The month culminates in a Marian feast day: May 31 marks the date of the [Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary](#) (see Fig. 4.11). When Anatole France reprinted the tale in 1892, he foregrounded its connection with the month of Mary. This time it appeared under the title "Story for the Month of May: The Jongleur of Notre Dame." The tendency to associate the narrative with this specific slice of the calendar faded rapidly after the early 1890s, but it did not evanesce altogether. A German expressionist playwright assumed in a verse prologue that his 1921 version of the tale would be performed in a church or with a stage setting to evoke one. This Franz Johannes Weinrich interpreted the booming of the organ as motivated by the month of May, when the Mother of God steps forth from the house of heaven. Even a half century later the American storyteller [Ruth Sawyer](#) still interjects the connection of Mary and May into the early lines of her influential 1942 recasting. A decade on, a German-language journal, devoted to the cultivation of Carmelite life, printed [an issue devoted largely to the Virgin](#) in this month of 1952. A concluding section comprised [three Marian legends](#), with "About the Dancer of Our Dear Lady" at the top. In 1966, the [nun](#) who composed *The Little Juggler*, billed as "the miracle play with music," set the main events on "Our Lady's feast." But by then the nexus of the story with May was a rare and isolated aberration, the exception that proves the rule. By the mid-sixties the association of *Our Lady's Tumbler* and its clan with this month, never robust, had fallen into oblivion.

## *The Little Box of Mother-of-Pearl*

France's *étui* [little box] keeps souvenirs, memories, safely contained, to be consulted only in moments of nostalgia for irrationality. The changing colors of the *nacre* [mother of pearl] may signal the variety of the case's contents, while implying that the meanings of the stories change according to one's perspective, just as the colors of the box would change with movement.

The conjunction of France's own narrative with May fell by the wayside not much later. Its author reprinted the short story in 1892, when he was forty-eight years of age. He made no mention of the month when he entitled the tale without further ado as "Le jongleur de Notre Dame," and folded it into a French fiction collection called *L'étui du nacre* (The little box of mother-of-pearl). This volume of short stories was the fourth of ten that the author brought out over a thirty-year period. The three decades under discussion, between 1879 and 1909, coincided closely with the belle époque. By the end of the stretch, his reputation as a brilliant prose stylist was at its acme. A caricature in a 1909 issue of *Vanity Fair* depicts him capped in what must be a zucchetto, with fully conscious incongruity, looking for all the world like a cardinal in violation of clerical grooming codes (see Fig. 4.12). The great man is captured in the British magazine as he strikes a hieratic prose, with a late medieval or Renaissance knight emblazoned like an upscale graffito on the wall behind him. Underneath, a legend proclaims him, with anything but wait-and-see minimization, "The Greatest Living Frenchman." *The Little Box of Mother-of-Pearl* demonstrated its author's powers in a genre that in his language was highly regarded as *conte*. The term held such sway in nineteenth-century British and American culture that it became nativized in English. In this literary form, the writer assumed the mantle from his countryman, Guy de Maupassant. As France indicated in *essays on the short stories* of Maupassant and of Marcel Schwob (an intimate of the Champion publishing family), he believed that this class of literature was designed to be light. In his view, its levity would position it better to survive the passage from one era to another. He held further that the spirit of the French as a people lent itself to clarity and conciseness, qualities that should then characterize their tales.

The book of seventeen jewel-like short stories falls into two heterogeneous parts. The second contains eight narratives, all texts France originally composed considerably earlier, in the mid-1880s. The first set is more important to us, since it contains "Le jongleur de Notre Dame." It comprises nine narratives, of which the most famous is the opening one, entitled "The Procurator of Judaea." It portrays Pontius Pilate, well known from the New Testament accounts of the trial and crucifixion of Jesus. Here, the Roman prefect is an incorrigible and irredeemable old anti-Semite. The four that follow the portrayal of the Roman prefect immediately precede the one about the juggler, which comes sixth in this group. Each of them narrates or at least relates to the travails of saints. All four of these *saints' legends* appertain to the Christianization of the pagan Roman world in late antiquity.

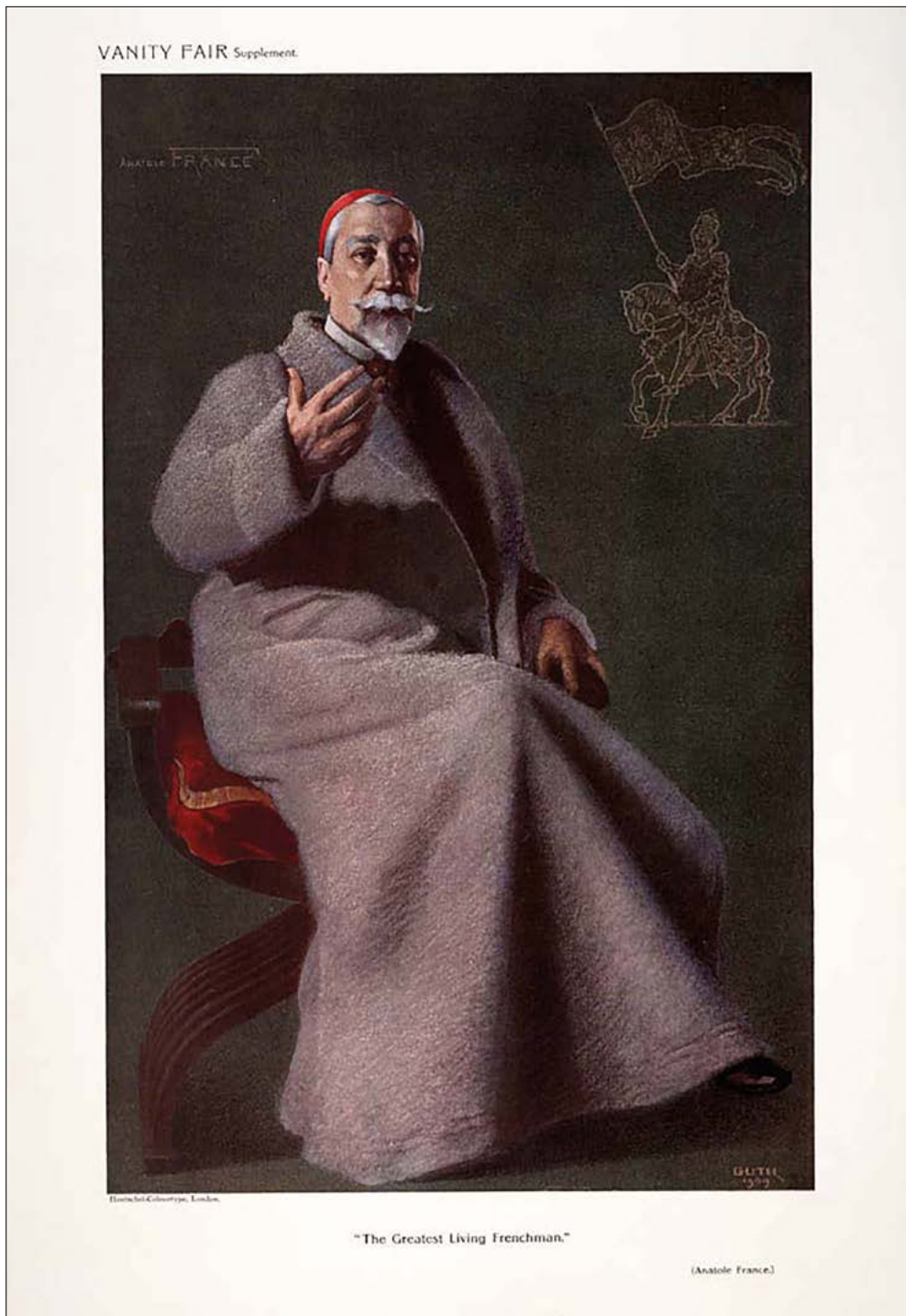


Fig. 4.12 Anatole France—"The Greatest Living Frenchman." Illustration by Jean-Baptiste Guth, 1909. Published on the front cover of *Vanity Fair Supplement* (August 11, 1909). Image from Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Anatole\\_France,\\_Vanity\\_Fair,\\_1909-08-11.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Anatole_France,_Vanity_Fair,_1909-08-11.jpg)

Four of the nine items in the first grouping were also published in periodicals as either Easter or Christmas fare. The association with such holidays would make difficult the contention that the narratives would have been perceived as unblushingly antireligious at the time. All the same, it does not mean that they could not have been anticlerical. After all, the two characteristics are far from identical. Just as a person can support the military without seeing eye to eye with the leadership that declares or conducts a given war, so too a writer can skewer the clergy without necessarily brutalizing the religion they serve.

“Amycus and Célestin,” which directly follows “The Procurator of Judaea,” recounts the conversion of a faun named Amycus by a solitary hermit, Célestin (see Fig. 4.13). Eventually, the two end up decorating the hermit’s chapel. Célestin baptizes Amycus. After both die, a larger church is built that becomes a pilgrimage site. However improbably, the two are canonized. The third story in the first part of the collection is “The Legend of Saints Oliverie and Liberette.” Set in the fourth century, it tells of two maiden sisters who are led miraculously to convert by a Scottish nobleman named Bertauld, who has become a missionary in the Ardennes. After the tale of the two virgins comes “*Saint Euphrosina*,” in which a learned female saint takes flight to a convent from her father and spouse-to-be. Later she reveals herself to them, with the consequence that both become monks. Immediately preceding “*Le jongleur de Notre Dame*” comes “*Scholastica*,” which takes place in fourth-century Auvergne and deals with a devout young woman who convinces her husband to leave their marriage unconsummated. In commemoration, their two tombs are joined miraculously by a climbing rosebush. In consideration of these four tales, the first section of the book could be called, without overstretching the truth, either *Lives of the Fathers* for the fin de siècle or saints’ legends for the belle époque.



Fig. 4.13 Amycus and Célestin. Woodcut by Timothy Cole after design by Bryson Burroughs, 1916. Published in Anatole France, *Amycus et Célestin* (New York: Printed at the Museum Press, 1916), 1.



The four saints' legends just discussed are extraordinarily varied. All center upon piety, but each handles the general theme very differently. They set the stage for two tales that are not saints' lives but resemble hagiography. One is the deceptively simple-seeming "Le jongleur de Notre Dame." The other is "Gestas," the main character of which fuses the simplicity with the unashamedness of a child. This story caps [the first set of stories](#) in *The Little Box of Mother-of-Pearl*.

France's freedom in dealing with *Our Lady's Tumbler* may have sprung partly from his stance as self-instructed artist in opposition to degree-bearing philologists. Although a tepid student, or rather one with so-so grades, he was from his earliest years impassioned about books. After school he supported himself first by helping out in the family bookstore. And what better place could there have been to acquire grounding in culture, especially since his book-mongering father had all the hunger for learning that can arise from being cultured through self-teaching? Thus, the early developmental stage of the son's life was steeped in book-based self-education, alongside conventional formal schooling. Eventually, financial independence came in the wake of modest success from his poetry. The recognition took the form of being appointed in 1869 first a publisher's factotum and cataloguer, and later assistant librarian for the French Senate in 1876. Thanks to these heterogeneous experiences, it can be maintained with confidence that Anatole France had read bookishness cover to cover, had bought and sold it, and knew where it was shelved. Last but not least, he also knew bookbuyers, -browsers, and -readers.

## The *Golden Legend* and the Irony of Philology

Whether one admits a particular work—say, one of the legends in Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda aurea*—to the short story genre is open to discussion, but the deciding factor is usually not the presence or absence of a saint or supernatural events, but rather the artistry in the creation of a reality whose existence depends primarily upon the text in question. It must, in short, be [an artistic fiction](#).

The cult of the saints constituted the most popular, accessible, and important channel of religious activity for the laity in the Middle Ages. Miracles allowed the worship even of the most ancient saints to win current relevance through their encroachment upon the present. These holy women and men from the heroic days of Christ's life and the early Church provided models of *imitatio Christi*. Latter-day Christians could aspire to emulate these exemplars as they sought to revitalize the apostolic life in their own here and now. Understood loosely, such "imitation of Christ" would be a strain of mimetic art. Seen in such a light, the jongleur could be interpreted as miming the

suffering of Christ. Simultaneously, the entertainer's performance gives outlet to joy, as it has been experienced whenever creation enjoys salvation thanks to the Passion.

Among holy personages, Mary rated as the most important. At the same time, she falls among the furthest removed chronologically. Most other saints were born long after her: they followed Jesus Christ, rather than gave birth to him. For such reasons, the Mother of God occupied the center in the inner circle of ancient saints. Owing to the abundance of her miracles, she made herself nearly ubiquitous in the contemporary life of medieval people. Across the ages, Christian martyrs have sometimes been called athletes of God. Within this metaphoric field of physical fitness, Mary functioned all in one as a recruiter, trainer, and coach—but without having endured martyrdom.

Just as Thomas Aquinas's *summa* serves as a compendium of the main theological doctrines of the Catholic Church as they were constituted in the Middle Ages, so the *Golden Legend*, by the friar Jacobus de Voragine, assembles and distills the pivotal narratives in the cult of the saints. Organized by the liturgical divisions of the year in the Christian calendar, the legendary schematizes the saints in accordance with the feast days on which they are celebrated. Among the most beloved texts after the two testaments, the *Golden Legend* is extant in some one thousand Latin manuscripts. In fact, the collection approaches being a form of Holy Scripture unto itself. In the fifteenth century [more editions of it were printed](#) than of the Bible itself. By concatenating stories of major saints, it offers narratives about the Christian pantheon of saints that supplement and complement the New Testament.

A medieval equivalent to Bulfinch's mythology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the *Golden Legend* envelops and incorporates much of what is best and most characteristic about the cult of the Virgin. It took form in what could be considered the golden age of Marian miracles and legends, extending from the twelfth through the fourteenth centuries. It presents such materials in unembellished and plain-speaking (or plain-writing) prose. This is not to say that its narrative is artless. On the contrary, the stories stack up to form a veritable *Christian Arabian Nights*. If the worship of Mary may be said to have an aesthetic and stylistic expression, then we could make an analogy to *arabesque* by referring to miracles of the Virgin as Marianesque.

In the late Middle Ages, the *Golden Legend* was translated into many vernacular languages. Within the trans-European project of vernacularizing this text, the medieval [translations of it into French](#) came particularly thick and fast. They attracted [especial attention](#) in the fin de siècle. Much ground had to be recovered, because the [last French-language edition](#) after the Renaissance had been printed in 1557. The collection cascaded into oblivion for roughly the same period in which *Our Lady's Tumbler* went forgotten—and probably for similar reasons. The definitive statement of the contempt into which the *Golden Legend* became submerged is a denunciation of

it published in 1531 by Juan Luis Vives (see Fig. 4.14), a Spanish humanist connected with Erasmus and Thomas More:

How unworthy of the saints, and of all Christians, is that history of the saints called the *Golden Legend*! I cannot imagine why they call it *golden*, when it was written by a man with a mouth of iron and a heart of lead. What could be more abominable than this book?



Fig. 4.14 Unknown artist, *Luis Vives*, seventeenth century. Oil on canvas, 88 × 72 cm.  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Johannes\\_Ludovicus\\_Vives.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Johannes_Ludovicus_Vives.jpg)

The dust was shaken from the legendary's moth-eaten mantle of success after the first modern printing appeared in Paris in 1843. By the prime of Anatole France's career, the text was known far and wide. A story from it, in various retellings, belongs to the essential backdrop of the magic lantern scene at the beginning of *Proust's Remembrance of Things Past*. Even today, the *Golden Legend* still retains high standing in France, at least as an expression. In most other traditions, it has become hermetic, if not altogether forgotten or never known at all. Now in the twenty-first century, secularization has obliterated most but not all the saints' legends and related exempla that the collection purveys, but such was not at all the case in the decade that followed France's novel, when the legends of the saints enjoyed the highest esteem from an *ecumenical congregation of authors*.

In English-language literature nowadays, the appearance of even a passing reference to the *Golden Legend* in a work of fiction may seem peculiar and *recherché*. The presence of saints and miracles in the medieval bestseller no longer guarantees importance as it once did. In the determination of *what qualifies as a short story*, the weight now rests on aesthetic and artistic quality rather than on religious factors. Accordingly, the study of saints' lives surfaces only *once in a blue moon* as a driving concern of modern fiction in English. Today in the Anglophone world, this field

of hagiography verges on belonging to the arcana that are uncharted waters to a broader public.

As noted above, the poet Borrelli prefaced his narrative about the jongleur with a deferential nod toward Jacobus's accumulation of saints' lives. Among novelists, [Émile Zola](#) put the collection in the foreground of his 1888 novel *Le rêve* (The dream). This book tends more toward the fairy tale than toward the naturalism with which the novelist is ordinarily associated. In fact, we might do well in this context to speak of supernaturalism. In Zola's fiction the protagonist is an orphaned girl, as is likewise the case in Anatole France's *The Crime of Sylvester Bonnard*. Tellingly, the writer gives her a name that can be translated literally into English as "[Angelic Mary](#)." The child stumbles upon a 1549 French translation of the *Golden Legend*, and finds herself hypnotized by the images, the embellished letters, and, above all, the [lives of the saints](#).

Another Frenchman who adverted to the sprawling hagiographic compilation was [Joris-Karl Huysmans](#). A naturalist turned decadent, this novelist in the end got religion and became the equivalent of a born-again Catholic, if that incompatibility is allowable. When notified by the Belgian French author Maurice Maeterlinck that Huysmans had turned monk, the Irish writer Oscar Wilde remarked: "It must be delightful to see God through stained glass windows. [I may even go into a monastery myself](#)." In Huysmans's novel *A rebours* from 1884, the protagonist, the dissolute and dissipated Des Esseintes, stockpiles a stash of medieval objects so as to stage spaces like a medieval monastic cell and chapel. One year later, in *En route* (so titled also in English), the second of his novels about the autobiographical character Durtal, the French man of letters asked,

How is it possible today to convey the sorrowful elixir and the white aroma of the very old translations of Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend*? How to bundle in one innocent bouquet the melancholy flowers that the monks cultivated in the enclosure of the cloisters, when hagiography was the sister of the barbarous and charming art of the illuminators and the glaziers, of the passionate and [chaste painting of the primitives](#)?

The synesthesia of Huysmans's sentences here helps to explain all at once the literary inclinations toward the *Golden Legend*, predilections for medieval primitives in painting, and even late nineteenth-century likings in liqueurs—but let us stick with literature for the time being. The late nineteenth-century tsunami of appetite for the *Golden Legend* among the French set in motion sporadic ripples across the Atlantic. For instance, Wallace Stevens may well have taken the title for [one of his poems](#) indirectly from the legendary. The precise source, if one even ever existed, remains as yet undetermined. The American poet may have drawn the wording from the caption to a woodcut, from a fifteenth-century translation, that illustrated the martyrdom of Saint Ursula and her eleven thousand followers at the hands of the Huns.

Fiction writers' esteem for the legendary was equaled or outmatched by that of [art historians](#), with [Émile Mâle](#) providing a sterling (or even golden) example. The

French scholar presents the *Golden Legend* as transmitting all the information that members of his profession could need for interpreting the statuary and stained glass of thirteenth-century Gothic. At the same time, he indicates that by the phrase *Golden Legend* he may well mean, as copyists and others in the Middle Ages also meant, any compendium of saints' lives, not necessarily the specific text by Jacobus. The clichéd French title of *Légende dorée* lives on, a [generic designation](#) for any gathering of tales involving saints or saintly personages, rather than a name limited in use to a specific medieval work. The diffusion of the phrase may not have been hurt by the pervasive tendency in the late nineteenth century to view the Middle Ages as a [golden age](#).

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The second part of Anatole France's novel *The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard* revolves around the title character's rescue of a young woman from misery by outfitting her with a dowry. Here we arrive at the crime to which the title of the book refers. In keeping with the bibliophilic preoccupations of the whole fiction, the misdemeanor that incriminates the old-timer is itself the French equivalent of donnish. To generate funds for the girl, he vows to liquidate his whole library. Even so, the booklover holds back guiltily when the moment arrives for surrendering a few particularly treasured items. Above all, he proves disinclined to part with his prized manuscript of the vernacular *Golden Legend*, which he went to great lengths to acquire in the first part of the book (see Fig. 4.15). Bonnard, and perhaps also the whole class of scholars he represents, becomes a laughingstock, prey to affable derision or at the very least irony from his creator. Take, for example, when the graybeard describes how the girl came to consult him about a matter of clothing relating to her trousseau. An occupational hazard of Bonnard's craft is that he has a superior grip on the language of olden times than on the actualities of his own day. He airs his bafflement at "the present-day vocabulary of fashion and lingerie." If only he had been confronted with [similar lexical items from the Middle Ages](#), he says, then he would have known how to proceed. The bibliophile and philologist parodied in the story was not Gaston Paris. [France flagged Paris](#) as his well-placed source when he first published "Le jongleur de Notre Dame," dedicated it to him when he reprinted it in *The Little Box of Mother-of-Pearl*, and expressed repeated admiration for him. Yet the novel is no mere *roman à clef*. *The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard* is not a composition in which people from real life are transposed into alleged fiction with no more than changed names. On the contrary, it fuses elements of various supposedly real people and times with the imaginings of its author to create its characters. It is good fiction.

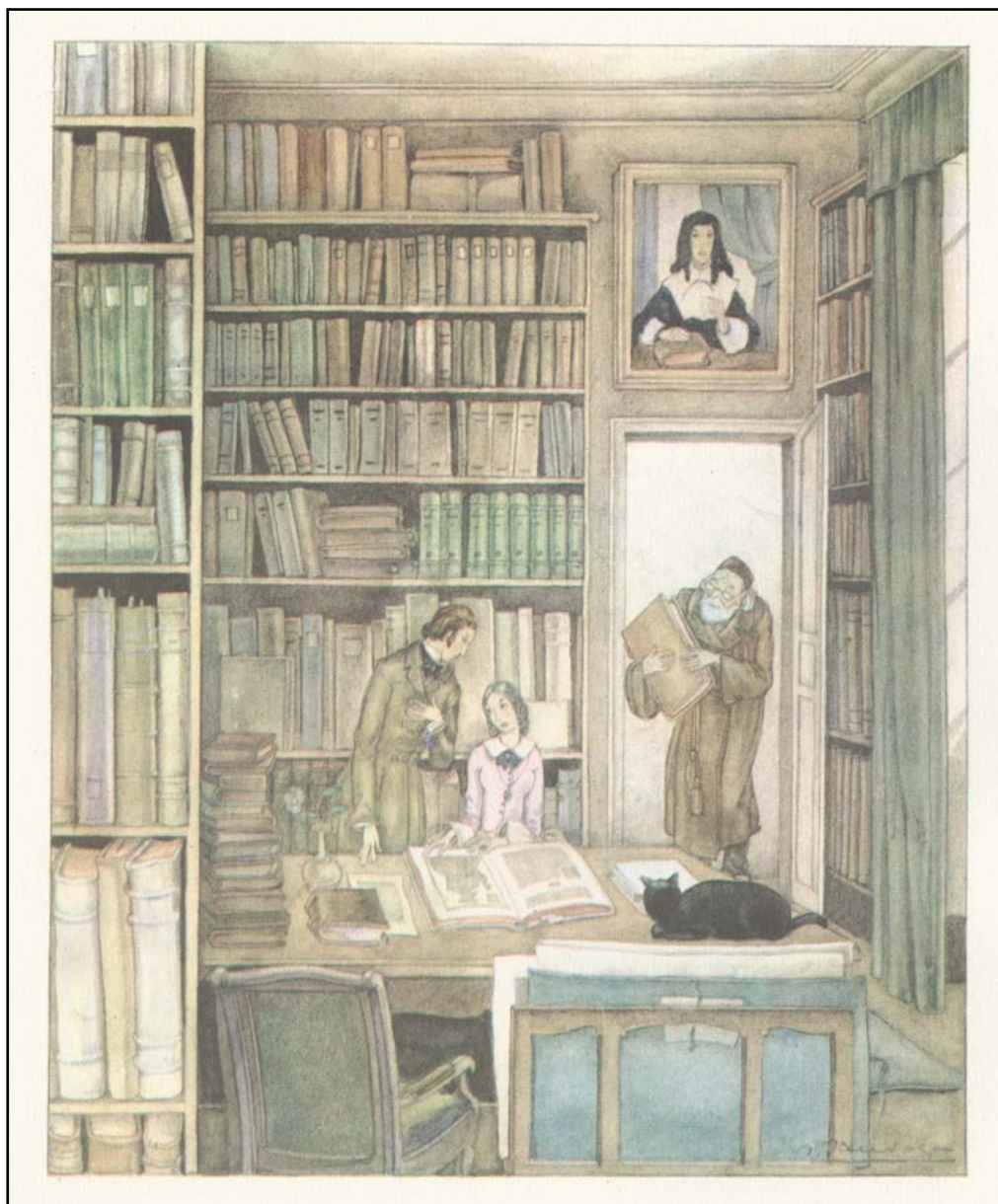


Fig. 4.15 Frontispiece of Anatole France, *The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard*, trans. Lafcadio Hearn, illus. Sylvain Sauvage (New York: The Limited Editions Club, 1937).

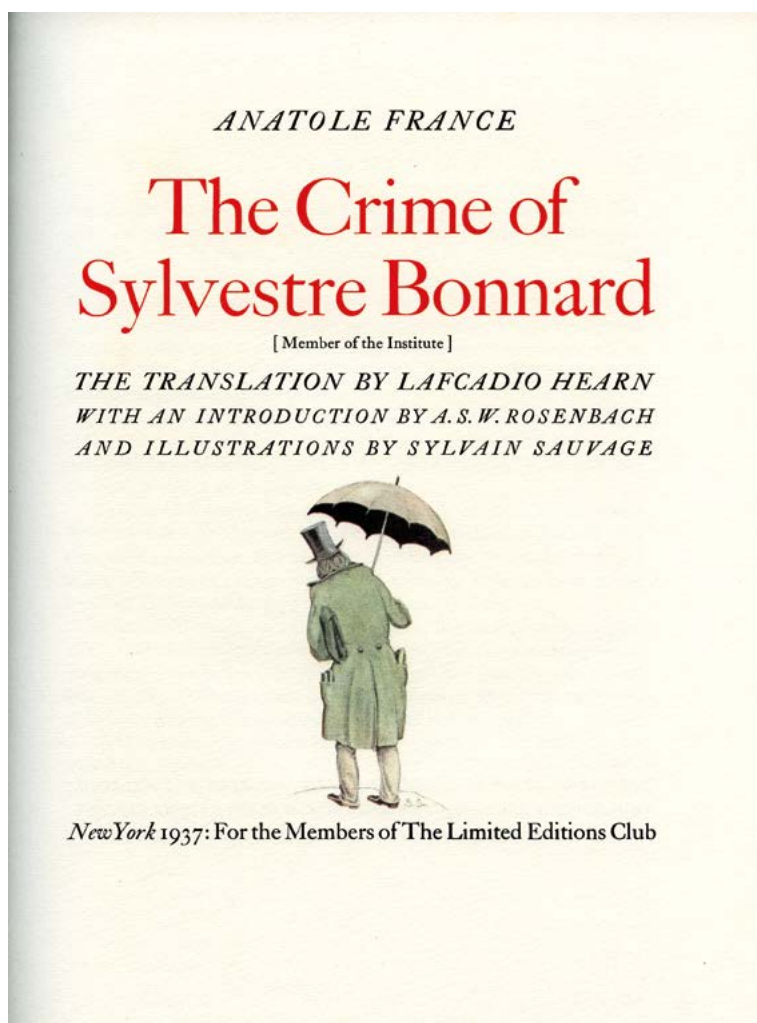


Fig. 4.16 Title page of Anatole France, *The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard*, trans. Lafcadio Hearn, illus. Sylvain Sauvage (New York: The Limited Editions Club, 1937).

Bonnard inhabits a [gray zone](#) between medievalism and early-stage medieval studies. Most of the time he is redolent of the era in which Gaston Paris's father, Paulin, lived. Occasionally he calls to mind the son's own times. Thus, the book collector and scholar is an elderly man who refers to the editors of *Romania* as young. Furthermore, his outlook as a medievalist resembles markedly what Paris  *fils* had in mind when he labeled the study of medieval literature in his father's age-set, the run-up to his, a "[pedantic form of romanticism](#)." In fact, Bonnard even cites Paris *père* as a learned colleague. At the same time the doddering precisianarian is said to have adhered to a new methodology. The innovative philology would appear to be the Lachmannian or common-error approach that the younger Paris espoused for editing medieval texts.

Also of relevance, Bonnard has a protracted conversation with Gélis, a young member of the *École des Chartes*. In it he espouses views that coincide loosely with the general emphasis on empirical evidence enunciated by Gaston Paris, who, we should not fail to notice, graduated from the *École* as an archivist and palaeographer. Later, as an established academic, he served as a member of the council there. Furthermore, he and those affiliated with him professed a [manner of positivism](#) not too far from what Bonnard advocated.

Through both social and intellectual contact, Anatole France had [close friends](#) from his twenties who had been Chartists. He and Gaston Paris may not have been intimates, but they moved along parallel tracks within the highly centripetal elitism of French high culture. The parallelism even extended to the coincidence of being both elected on [the same afternoon](#) in 1896 to places among the so-called immortals of the [French Academy](#). Later, as an established academic, he served as a member of the council there. The fiction writer may not have known the marrow of philology. Certainly, he lacked an in-depth acquaintance with the Lachmannian method of textual editing. Even so, he would doubtless have realized that Paris himself participated in the cutting-edge philology of editing and that the editorial tenets of the famed scholar departed from those of preceding generations.

To turn from theory to the specifics of practice, France would have known about the monumental eight-volume *Miracles of Our Lady, by Characters* that Paris edited in collaboration over a seventeen-year period. These anonymous plays are preserved in a single [two-volume manuscript](#) in the National Library of France that contains notable miniatures and songs. This text constitutes the only substantial corpus of fourteenth-century French drama in existence. The sources of these miracles comprehend precisely the sorts of [medieval hagiography](#) with which Anatole France would have been familiar, at least by title. He was acquainted with the *Miracles of Our Lady* of Gautier de Coinci, the *Golden Legend*, and the *Lives of the Fathers*. Nothing specific supports the inference that France's much older dotard was meant to call to mind Gaston Paris, although Bonnard claims to have edited Gautier's *Miracles* according to new principles, which would indeed allude to Paris. Yet Abbé [Alexandre-Eusèbe Poquet](#), not Paris, had already edited Gautier's great poem in 1857.

The theatrical miracles in the vast collection coedited by Paris were later recognized to lend themselves to performance. Most notably, a sampling of them was reenacted by a [female troupe](#) that toured in Europe and North America in the five years immediately following World War I. Beyond their attraction as materials for stage revivals, they have proven to be gold mines. The phraseology is deliberate and deserved, in view of the insight that they allow into real life at the time of their composition and enactment. Even now, they shed considerable light on the dynamics of life in the city of Paris at the time of their composition and performance. They may be particularly illuminating as relates to the confraternity of goldsmiths that sponsored them.



One site for interaction between Anatole France and professional medievalists would have been the store of the bookdealer and publisher Honoré Champion. For **sixteen years** the outfit occupied **space** where France's own father, François Noël Thibault, had **once** owned a bookshop, which he called *Aux Armes de France* or "At the Arms of France," a name obviously with resonance in the pseudonym taken later by his son. On the same street, Sylvestre Bonnard is supposed to have had his residence in the novel that made France's name. By the oddest of coincidences, the Champion retail outlet moved **next** into the same location where Thibault had shifted his own operations **after leaving the first site**. The premises are depicted with the proprietor and publisher, Honoré Champion, seated at a table (see Fig. 4.17). His **son and successor** in the family-run business gazes upon a book that his father inspects. Behind them looms a glass-windowed bookcase, with a folio of a medieval manuscript that has an illuminated majuscule facing outward as almost the **centerpiece of the composition**.

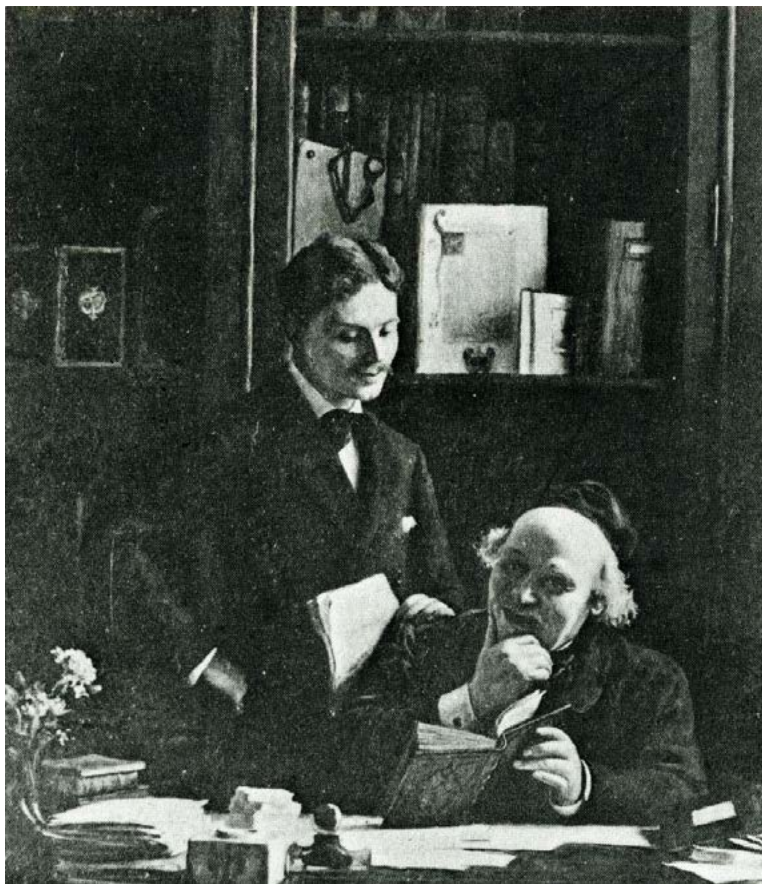


Fig. 4.17 Honoré and Edouard Champion. Portrait by Louis-Edouard Fournier, 1909.

Champion's establishment, like that of Thibault, had chairs. As at the French Academy, regulars had preferred seating. This notion should not take us by surprise. In this time, book retailers fulfilled many roles that we might allot today to libraries, literary salons, and learned societies. This proprietor politicked on behalf of Anatole France when he was a candidate for election to the French Academy, and he also had [personal dealings with Gaston Paris](#). Later, after Champion shifted location, the writer France still frequented it enough to give an erudite nickname to the office where the proprietor would retire for privacy. He called it after the Greek word for the [back chamber](#) of a sanctuary, since in symbolic terms the bookshop had become a temple of learning.

Of course, France's handling of the story was molded by far more factors than merely his reaction to philology and philologists. He lived in a century of history. In addition, he had grown up with a father who collected the books of bygone times. The past on the agenda pertained mostly to the French Revolution rather than the Middle Ages, but through this paternal bibliophilia, France came naturally by a love of long-ago ages and their material cultures. He liked to empathize with days of yore and to feel them [reborn within himself](#). In a sense, then, it was not complete claptrap that he should later be billed, in his capacity of author of "Le jongleur de Notre Dame," as "[a storyteller about the life of days gone by](#)."

At the same time, France's creative writings set in the medieval period, even broadly defined, were mostly confined to a few items in two of his short story collections, *The Little Box of Mother-of-Pearl* and *The Tales of Jacques Tournebroche*. The history of Joan of Arc belongs in a separate category. Owing to his father, France may have been more caught up in writing about people thinking about the past than in writing about the past. To be concrete, he paid more attention to Sylvestre Bonnard than to the medieval period itself. His interest lay in the scholar or amateur of the medieval and early modern periods as a fantasist of limited imagination who seeks with only partial success to maroon himself in a past of his own making. Attempting to strand themselves in this very way were the man Célestin Nanteuil in real life, and the character Élias Wildmanstadius in creative writing. In catering to the medievalism of his day, Anatole France put on display in his short story a Middle Ages ripe for revivalism and nostalgia. In his unconcern over what could be styled simplistically as historical accuracy, the fiction writer stood a world apart from Félix Brun. The unprovincial provincial struck a pose of being a mere medievalizer, but he let his inner archivist come to light in his most historical writings.

## 5. Le Jongleur de Notre Dame

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### Bricabracomania

[Everything behind 1900](#) is already bric-a-brac.

—Henry Adams

The phrase “a nation of shopkeepers,” referring narrowly to England or more broadly to the United Kingdom, has been imputed often to Napoleon. Whatever the ascription, the expression presumes not only sales but also purchases. Economics lays out for us that a country of vendors cannot exist for long without one of consumers. In fact, the escalation in production and consumption in the nineteenth century was not limited to large portions of the British Isles, but extended as well to much of Europe and the New World. Individuals, companies, and nations bought and sold, wholesale and retail, as never before. Part of what they purchased and peddled was the Middle Ages, at least in pseudo form. The world exploded with new objects for manufacture, sale, and consumption. The glut of stuff was sometimes discomfiting. One means of coping with it was to make the things medieval or at least medieval-seeming. By so doing, the material goods were tamed of their alarming novelty and unchained in some measure from the manacles of materialism. The same items could serve double duty. Betokening both modernity and its antithesis, they reified leading-edge newness as well as reassuring old-fashionedness.

Living in an age in which diletantism was not a term of opprobrium, Anatole France became an enthusiastic collector and connoisseur of authentic medieval and pseudomedieval objects. Collecting may not be the right word: photographs can give an impression of disorder. Perhaps one man’s collection is another man’s clutter. Whatever name we attach to his habit of higgledy-piggledy accumulating, France was far from alone. Even an author as distinct from him as Émile Zola can also be considered what has become known technically as a [bricabracomaniac](#). [France’s amassing](#) encompassed such paraphernalia as furniture. The most obvious piece of Gothica was a throne “covered with a maze of heraldic devices.” He sat imposingly

upon it while working at his equally Gothic table (see Fig. 5.1). The second half of the nineteenth century witnessed, particularly in France and England, a widespread passion for small objets d'art from olden times. As social and material connections with the medieval period were rapidly effaced from daily life, people grabbed what they could as keepsakes of the past or at least of what purported to be from it. Bric-a-brac constituted talismans by which to invoke and evoke bygone times. If what preceded was dead, then such possessions enabled necromancy or even resurrection. The appetites of the acquirers must have been whetted further by patriotism. These collectors' treasures from the Middle Ages reflected what was felt to be a foundational and felicitous stage in the confection of Frenchness, *les "good old days."*



Fig. 5.1 Anatole France in his study. Photograph, late nineteenth century. Photographer unknown. Washington, D.C., Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

Because France as a nation-state was thought to rest on a medieval foundation, originals from the Middle Ages as well as replicas of them from the nineteenth century helped to identify and transmit national culture and spirit. This conviction was corroborated by the state in museums, expositions, and other displays that were accessible to the public. Already in 1879, the architect Eugène Viollet-le-Duc proposed that reproductions of French architecture and sculpture be assembled and displayed in the Trocadéro. That Parisian palace had been left vacant and disused

after the [Universal Exposition](#) of 1878, a kind of World's Fair. As a result, the [Museum of Comparative Sculpture](#) opened its doors in 1882. Its plaster casts enabled many members of the public to view and study medieval art and architecture in ways that hitherto had not been possible, either by juxtaposing objects that were geographically distant from each other or by putting at eye level what would normally be situated too high for close inspection (see Figs. 5.2 and 5.3). Among less happy consequences, such displays may have rendered people more receptive to the dismantling of medieval monuments than would otherwise have been the case—but this is hypothetical. The Middle Ages of France were further publicized through replicas and reenactments in subsequent global expositions in Paris in 1889 and 1900. Once a passion for decorating homes in medievaesque styles had been inflamed in a large slice of the population, mass production came to the rescue. Since not everyone could afford genuine artifacts from the Middle Ages, medieval-looking curios were produced that could be collected for display on mantelpieces or in [special cabinets](#). Thanks to public display, sale of unlicensed copies, etc., real or supposititious vestiges of the French medieval past occupied a central position in the Third Republic. They typified the conservative cultural counterblast against the humiliations of the Franco-Prussian War, having at their center publications—new research and belles lettres, in books that were fabricated by employing all the gizmos and gadgets of the latest technology.

Anatole France's compendium of short stories forms a literary monument to the consumerist hobbyhorse of physical bric-a-brac. The former vogue word *bricolage* has become a standby in the jargon of cultural studies. An import from the French for

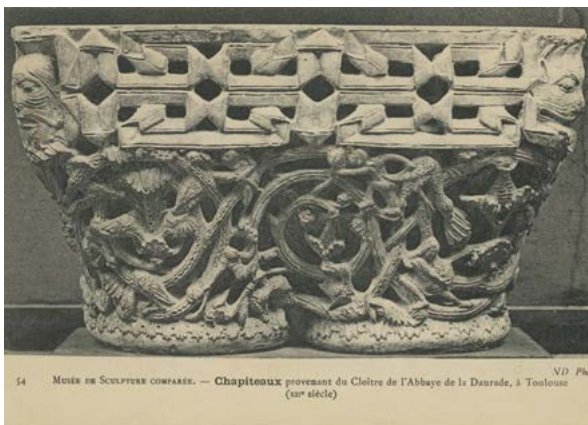


Fig. 5.2 Postcard of a (plaster cast) twelfth-century capital from l'Abbaye de la Daurade, Toulouse, housed in the Musée des Augustins, Toulouse (early twentieth century).



Fig. 5.3 Postcard of a (plaster cast) sixteenth-century choir stall from the Cathédrale d'Amiens (late nineteenth century).

“do-it-yourself,” it denotes either the act of construction from sundry objects or the work so constructed. Although bric-a-brac and bricolage begin with a seemingly identical four-letter element, the two terms have little in common etymologically beyond the inconsequentiality that both have French origins. Even so, thinking of them together is conducive to understanding Anatole France’s short-story collection. He scrounged oddments from different times and traditions, and transposed and transformed them into ones of his own. His zeal for collecting knickknacks of jewelry and objets d’art from other decorative arts helps to explain the title he gave to the assemblage into which he fitted his version of *Our Lady’s Tumbler* in 1892: [The Little Box of Mother-of-Pearl](#). A jewel case inlaid with this material would be well suited to hold narrative gems. Known technically in English as nacre, mother-of-pearl is produced by mollusks, such as oysters and abalone, as a layer of their inner shells. In addition, it constitutes the outer coating of pearls. Visually, it possesses the quality of iridescence. When seen or irradiated from different angles, it appears to change color. In a way, a box with inlay of such stuff displays on a small scale the complex grandeur of a much larger cathedral. The coloration corresponds to stained glass or at least to the ornamental glass, particularly in paperweights, known as millefiori. The contents within are like the chapels and furnishings of such a great church. The author’s trinkets of narrative were souvenirs of bygone eras—or tokens to enable time travel back to them.

A terminology developed to describe the must-have things that were produced, bought and sold, collected, and displayed. Although the word bric-a-brac may be presumed to have originated earlier, the [first citation in English](#) comes from 1840. Across the Channel, Honoré de Balzac employs the term in a [novel](#) about a pathological collector that was published in 1847. The French writer tags it explicitly as being recent in usage. Within a few decades, a neologism was coined for the obsession with collecting such items: bricabracomania, which the idiosyncratic bibliophile [Edmond de Goncourt](#) used to describe the zeal of his contemporaries for objects from the past, or made to look as if they were. He regarded this condition as a disease or mental illness that arose from the solitude and alienation caused by industrialization. The luckless individual afflicted by the mania was often rendered a pauper by his addiction, as was the collector portrayed by Balzac. In fact, an individual with this obsessive-compulsive trait anticipated in many ways what would be known today informally as a hoarder or even as a bag lady. Perhaps even more to the point, nineteenth-century people addicted to the acquisition of medievaesque decorative objects were precursors of twenty-first century individuals unable to cut the umbilical or fiber-optic cord and break free from online auctions, telemarketing, or other such media. Bric-a-brac was the precursor of collectibles.

The turn toward such items was discussed with extraordinary insight in an [1883 dictionary](#):

BRIC-À-BRAC: In its generic usage, this term serves to designate all manner of old objects, such as sideboards, armor, bronzes, paintings, and so forth. The particular fondness of the public for these sorts of objects has given rise to a new industry, [the manufacture of the new old](#), carried out more or less skillfully. Often a very well-trained eye is needed to distinguish a genuine antique curio from a fake. On the whole, the word bric-à-brac is used as a disdainful term; people apply it in everyday speech to objects of little value.

A related term was defined in the French architect's lexicon as follows:

**BIBELOT:** This term, which originally functioned only to indicate tools, utensils, and very varied objects of little value, is used nowadays by amateurs and antiquarians to indicate chiefly objets d'art and curiosities.

So much for largely forgotten "b" words of the nineteenth century.

Even such sizable structures as Mont-Saint-Michel were envisaged in the late nineteenth century as being an "enormous bibelot" and a "[giant granite jewel](#)." Notre-Dame of Chartres was likewise described as a "[colossal bibelot](#)." The custom of drawing analogies of this sort was established already by 1832 or 1833, when Théophile Gautier lauded Gothic art "which makes giant miniatures, cathedrals wrought like gems and steeples two hundred feet high as [finished as the setting of a ring](#)." Such comparisons were even more apt when applied not to ramped-up architecture but to volumes of a modest format. *Our Lady's Tumbler* lent itself to book production on this humble scale. In a sense, the original *The Little Box of Mother-of-Pearl* is Anatole France's own bibelotization of literature. The assembly of tales gathers up precious and charming little knickknacks of narrative between cloth covers to put them in the possession of their readers. In effect, it acts for short stories much as étagères and glass-lidded display tables to protect the mass-produced trinkets and curios that end users in the late nineteenth century bought, or that were sold, in ever greater quantities. Before too long, the collection boxed within the nacreous case would be broken apart. The individual stories would be packaged in pseudomedieval form as limited-subscription items for sale to connoisseurs and collectors. But that is a tale to which I return later.

That many of the stories concern themselves with faraway times makes them resemble both actual medieval and pseudomedieval bric-a-brac, so much in vogue in Victorian Britain and France during the late nineteenth century. [Pieces of this sort](#) have been associated with a changing social role and commodification of art. The focus evolved from an aesthetic experience of an art object to the consumerist [possession of a material commodity](#).

For a revealing coincidence of outlook around the turn of the century, immediate recompense comes from remembering the journal in which an English translation of the tumbler story was first printed in the United States. Published by the Mosher

Press from 1895 on, the journal or book series was called *The Bibelot*. The name was coopted from the French word for a trinket that we have seen already. As early as 1903, a bibliographer designated the whole class of short-lived and little magazines or modern-day chapbooks as “ephemeral bibelots.” His title phrase has stuck, thanks to repeated reuse in scholarship on such journals. Despite being equally fortuitous, it remains indicative that the first editor of the medieval French *Our Lady’s Tumbler* resorted to a related image by calling it “a true poetic jewel.” Along the same lines, a literary historian who dealt in passing with the poem in 1896 called it “the pearl of these [pious] tales.” In one sense such likenesses are insipid and antiseptic, but in another they befit the medieval text. It stands out like a prized heirloom on a tray full of workaday gewgaws and costume jewelry at a flea market or bazaar or in an antique shop. True pearliness belongs integrally to the atmosphere conjured up by *The Little Box of Mother-of-Pearl*.

Anatole France’s fascination with things of the Middle Ages extended to literature. In fact, his own writings encompass a wealth of medieval materials and themes. It was natural, or at least fathomable, for him to bound forward to the Middle Ages in his own literary activity. For several years, he had been gripped by the pivot from paganism to Christianity in late antiquity and the early medieval period. In 1889 he brought into print a short story entitled “Balthasar,” which tells of one of the Magi who visited the infant Jesus soon after his birth. In 1890 he came out with *Thaïs*. The novel recounts, with many fictive twists and turns, the conversion of a courtesan in early Christian Alexandria. The title character belongs to the rare women among the desert fathers. Or should we say desert saints, since the word *mothers* does not make an apt placeholder? Whatever name we choose to categorize her, Thaïs becomes what is designated a *harlot saint*. She repents of her life as a prostitute, and retreats to the Egyptian sands. Finally, in 1892 he published *The Little Box of Mother-of-Pearl*. In it he included stories of saints in late antiquity that he devised in the months leading up to the composition of the juggler.

In “Le jongleur de Notre Dame,” France makes several displays of his knowledge about medieval literature and culture. In fact, he showcases at least one in each section of his tripartite story. The first appears when he likens the juggler in his winter emaciation to “the grasshopper of which Marie de France speaks.” The insect, with its traits of springing about athletically and producing high-pitched sound, makes a good likeness for the entertainer. As for Marie, the mention of her name adds a cultured touch to the medieval atmosphere of the story. She was the earliest woman poet to write in the French language, probably in England in the final quarter of the twelfth century. As an author, she was not hopelessly obscure to the educated public. Her works, especially her twelve *lais* and roughly one hundred fables, had been common knowledge since 1820.

Beyond Marie de France, the fable discussed here has been known widely by the fact of its being the first one in the opening book of the famous collection by



Jean de La Fontaine. Like his medieval predecessor, the seventeenth-century fabulist had at his disposal forms of the ocean-like reservoir that is often called plainly, albeit misleadingly, Aesop's fables. The creature in question here is one of the two that are contrasted in "[The Ant and the Grasshopper](#)." In this fable, the thoughtless chirping insect has whiled away the warm summer months in singing. In contrast, the industrious ant has slogged to store provisions for the winter's frigidity. When the cold season descends, the ant snubs the other bug's frostbitten plea for food.

Beyond literature, France's equation between the jongleur and a grasshopper may have been inspired at least in part by an artwork by [Jean-Georges Vibert](#) which he could have seen in [exhibitions](#) from 1875 on. In addition to being a writer and an actor, Vibert was a painter, especially a genre painter. Both his 1875 watercolor and his oil-on-canvas painting of *The Grasshopper and the Ant* took as their starting point [the fable by the same name](#) (see Fig. 5.4). The composition transposes the pair of insects in two ways. First, the artist presents both as male characters, even though in French the nouns denoting the two creatures are feminine in grammatical gender. Additionally, he humanizes them into a medieval minstrel and monk, respectively. This transposition enables him to make the fable a vehicle for the anticlerical satire that imbues many of his compositions. The painting becomes a study in contrast between the squalor of the laity and the affluence of the clergy. As in the closing of the conventional fable, the action takes place against the backdrop of wintertime. [Vibert portrays the musician](#) as haggard, slouched under the weight of a long-necked lute on his back, and poorly clothed in forest green, all the way to the worn plume in his cap. The color carries a special charge, since it is what the jongleur in Anatole France's story wears. In the painting, the entertainer, all goose pimples, shivers, nipped by the unforgiving cold. In contrast, the monastic brother with whom he journeys is depicted as flabby, warmly dressed in brown, and carrying a satchel stuffed with food, including an entire large fowl.



Fig. 5.4 Jehan Georges Vibert, *The Ant and the Grasshopper*, 1875. Oil on canvas, 61.6 × 85.1 cm, Omaha, NE, Joslyn Art Museum. Gift of Francis T. B. Martin. Image courtesy of the Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, NE. All rights reserved.

Jules Massenet's opera based on the tale of *Le jongleur de Notre Dame* had its opening night in 1902. Coincidentally, the same composer created not even a decade later the two-act ballet *Cigale* (see Fig. 5.5). The exclusion of the ant from the title is par for the course in this rendition. In fact, the diligent insect is not even named explicitly, but instead is called merely "the Poor Little One." Henri Cain, who created the scenario, commiserates entirely with the springy bug, who is played as a young woman and an entertainer whose kindness to the ant is repaid only by merciless discourtesy. At the close of the ballet, the title character is left to perish in the snow.



Fig. 5.5 Advertisement for Jules Massenet's *Cigale*. Poster (color lithograph) by Maurice Leloir, 1904.

To return to the short story, Anatole France displays a neat flourish of learning when a monk whom the footsore juggler encounters on the road asks him why he is clothed entirely in green: “Is it perhaps to take the part of a jester in some mystery play?” This specific may be an emphatic nod to Vibert’s artwork. Eventually, the brother ends up inviting the entertainer to enter the monastery. The good monk reasons that God sent him to save the performer, just as he had guided Mary of Egypt. This allusion calls attention to a so-called harlot saint of early Christianity, perhaps from the fifth century. Her life is recorded, among many other places, in the *Golden Legend* by Jacobus de Voragine. This holy woman prostituted herself for seventeen years, after which her curiosity goaded her to undertake a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. There (nota bene!) an icon of the Virgin instructed her to cross the river Jordan. In the Transjordan, she eked out a livelihood as a hermit. To feed herself, she subsisted on dates and berries after the three loaves she had with her were exhausted. Once her clothing fell to pieces, she survived in Lady Godiva style, clad only in her luxuriant tresses. She died a peaceful death after being discovered by a pious monk. This long-locked Mary, often conflated with Magdalene, was a darling of medieval artists, maybe nowhere more than in France, where she appears continually in cathedral art (see Fig. 5.6). In “Le jongleur de Notre Dame,” Anatole France depicts a cultured existence of arts and humanities within the monastery that produced manuscripts. In nineteenth-century life, some of these medieval handicrafts would be studied by the real-life philologists and historians with whom the author engaged in the cultural societies to which he belonged. To judge by the story’s laundry list of professionals, the talent pool within the abbey is broad. The prior devised books of theology, which were copied by his scribe, Brother Maurice. Brother Marbod carved stone images unceasingly. In another art, Brother Alexander was a miniaturist. The illustrator represented the Queen of Heaven surrounded by doves and virgins. The catalogue of skills has not ended. As will be the case later in the libretto of Massenet’s opera, Anatole France portrays a competition among the monks—a claustral talent show. The abbey even housed, alongside a Latin hymnist, “a Picard who put the miracles of Notre Dame into the vernacular language and in rhymed verse.”



Fig. 5.6 St. Mary of Egypt. Statue, copy of fifteenth-century original. Paris, Porch of Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois. Image from Wikimedia Commons, © Marie-Lan Nguyen (2008), CC BY-SA 3.0, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:St\\_Mary\\_of\\_Egypt\\_Saint-Germain\\_1%27Auxerrois.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:St_Mary_of_Egypt_Saint-Germain_1%27Auxerrois.jpg)

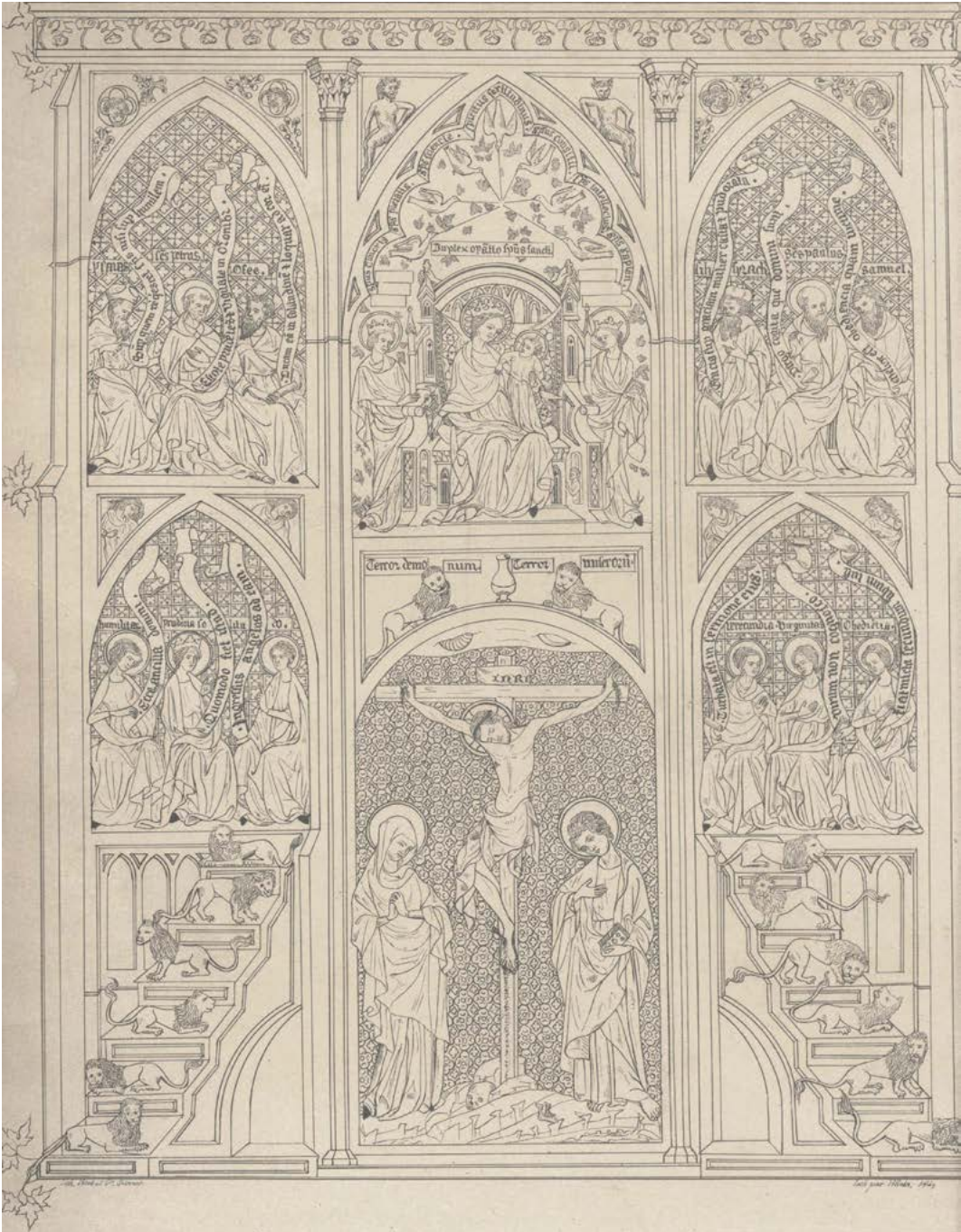


Fig. 5.7 Scenes of Christ, the Virgin, and saints. Lithography by François Le Villain, 1849, after an original manuscript illumination, 1857. Artist unknown. Published in Gautier de Coinci, *Les miracles de la Sainte Vierge*, ed. and trans. Alexandre Poquet (Paris: Parmantier, 1857), frontispiece.

In a touch of subtle self-referentiality, this observation undoubtedly adverts to our poet from Picardy, Gautier de Coinci. As has been seen, *Our Lady's Tumbler* itself too has been hypothesized to be the work of a writer from this same region. However implausible this surmise may be, Anatole France [could have known about it](#). Shortly before [summarizing \*Our Lady's Tumbler\*](#), Gaston Paris gives prominence to Gautier's *Miracles of Our Lady*. Furthermore, France himself demonstrates knowledge of the Picard poet's medieval miracle-collection, since he identifies it as a text that Sylvestre Bonnard edited by new editorial principles.

France's final erudite gesture toward actual medieval texts is to have the tumbler overhear one of his fellows tell a tale of an uneducated man who could recite nothing but his *Ave Maria*, the "[Hail, Mary](#)." As it so happens, this proves to be an authentic medieval exemplum within a modernized one. In one form of the illustrative story, after the illiterate dies, five roses emerge from his mouth in token of the five letters that spell the name Maria. In other versions, a lily springs up at the grave site of the devout man. At the exhumation of his corpse, the flower turns out to be rooted in his gullet. In every telling of the story, recitation of the "[Hail, Mary](#)" results in what is effectively a demonstration of the Annunciation. In the miracle, the angelic greeting is tied to an immediate intervention of heaven on earth.

Anatole France took this miracle too from Gautier de Coinci, appropriating it indirectly from [what Gaston Paris related](#) about the *Miracles* in his literary history rather than directly from the scholarly edition of the medieval French that was then available. The philologist could have reeled off any number of related stories, few of which could have been within the ken of the story writer. One particularly relevant episode is the miracle of a merchant and a highwayman that figures in Paris's eight-volume edition of *Miracles of Our Lady, by Characters*. In it, a humble tradesman passes his time in making garlands for Our Lady. Pressed by an uncle to pursue a more gold-plated path, he sets out on a business trip. He makes a commitment to say the Psalter daily to honor the Virgin. On the day of his departure, he has no time to honor his pledge. Accordingly, while on the move he kneels down to pray, neglecting to notice a brigand spying upon him. Mary comes down from heaven and deposits a crown of roses upon the forehead of her dutiful servant as he prays. Upon seeing this miracle, the thief repents before the would-be mugging. The two of them go to a hermit, who joins them in undertaking a pilgrimage.

Paris was a scholar; France, a man of letters. That said, there is no denying that the story writer carried out his own reconnaissance with more than modest erudition (see Fig. 5.7). For example, from the 1857 edition of Gautier's *Miracles* by the abbot Poquet, France gleaned minutiae about the illustration facing the title page. The reproduction came from the so-called [Soissons manuscript](#). The storywriter made [this frontispiece](#) his point of departure when in the tale of the jongleur he described the miniature that Brother Alexander painted. France was no naif.

## Saints and Miracles

[Anatole France] [rivals his sources](#) in credulous ingenuousness—at least in appearance.

With good reason, it has been pointed out that “[of all the medieval literature that France consulted](#) and used, the most important part for him was perhaps the lives of saints and tales that tell of miracles, especially those of Notre Dame.” Anatole France was capable of waxing nostalgic about miracles. As he suggests, their disappearance signaled both a personal and a societal loss of innocence. He [remembered his own childhood](#), when his pious mother would read to him tales of martyrs and other holy men from the lives of saints. Later, he reminisced that even before he knew his letters, he realized how much he wanted (or thought he wanted) to achieve fame through religious sanctity [as opposed to military derring-do](#). In imitation of ascetics, the future writer as a boy rationed his consumption of food and drink. Like [Saint Nicholas of Bari](#), he doled out his pocket change to the penurious. Emulating Saint [Simeon the Stylite](#) atop a column (see Fig. 5.8), he would roost on a pump handle. (Such a vantage point would have given him later a solid basis for appreciating the juggleur, for although in an offbeat manner, the medieval entertainer plays the role of his own tormentor in a self-inflicted martyrdom.) Such masochism is the same comportment as that of holy men who hungered in the wilderness, entrusted themselves in small and rudderless boats to the perils of bumpy seas, or undertook any of the countless other acts of self-imposed deprivation or endangerment for which saints became truly legendary.



Fig. 5.8 St. Simeon the Stylite. Lithograph reproducing an original engraving, late nineteenth century.



Fig. 5.9 Postcard depicting the Collège Stanislas de Paris (early twentieth century).

The circumstance that Anatole France attended a grammar school called [Saint Mary's](#) may have no real import. Nor should we make much of the circumstance that in his youth he had a crush on a young woman and was left crestfallen when she entered a nunnery named Notre Dame de Sion, which means Our Lady of Zion. Yet his [later school experiences](#) should not be brushed over. In due course, France attended the Collège Stanislas of Paris, a large private Catholic school. At that time, it was administered by Marianists. In other words, the school belonged to the priests of the Society of Mary. Although the architecture of the building is not Gothic, the rose window constitutes a reminder in stained glass of the devotion that the order showed to the Virgin, from whom they took their name (see Fig. 5.9). Although Anatole France may have been discouraged by his father from persisting in his playacting of would-be asceticism, he was not destined to escape hagiography. While enrolled at the Collège Stanislas, the writer-to-be was inspired by an instructor, by the name of [Lalanne](#) (see Fig. 5.10). For performance by the students in the institution's annual celebration, Abbé Lalanne produced [dramas on medieval topics](#). His [instincts were not out of step](#) with the times. As a schoolboy of fifteen in 1859, [France penned a composition](#) on Saint Radegund. In so doing, [he was inspired dually](#) by his teacher Lalanne and by the extraordinarily successful stories of the Merovingians by Augustin Thierry, a historian steeped in Sir Walter Scott. [Thierry's historicization and nationalization of France's past](#) beguiled an entire generation of French schoolboys. Félix Brun wrote [a couple of lovely pages](#) about the influence the same book had on him, when he was growing up in Bucy-le-Long. As for Radegund (see Fig. 5.11), she was a sixth-century Frankish princess who founded a nunnery in Poitiers and was canonized in the ninth century. She attained national celebrity after the Franco-Prussian War, when pilgrims

bound for Lourdes by train instituted a custom of invoking her during the stopover in Poitiers. In 1860, Anatole France buckled down to write a “[Legend of the Recluse](#).” In 1867, he composed “The Legend of Saint Thaïs.” Considerably later, in 1889, he reworked the theme of this poem in his novel about the same performer-turned-holy-woman. France’s hagiography was both bookwormish and scholastic. Whiling away time in his father’s bookstore and browsing in other antiquarian shops [on the left bank](#) of the Seine, he came by the first quality naturally.



Fig. 5.10 Abbé Lalanne. Illustration by Lainé et Havard, 1867. Reproduced in Pierre Humbertclaude, *L'Abbé J.-P.-A. Lalanne* (Paris: Bloud & Gay, 1932), frontispiece.



Fig. 5.11 Clothar and Radegund. Engraving, ca. 1860. Artist unknown.



Whatever France's boyhood aspirations had been, as an adult he developed sneering or at least condescending presuppositions about the irrationality of miracles. This outlook was part and parcel of his allergy to religion, since he never shed for long the irony that was closely allied with his [skepticism](#). His freethinking and freewheeling attitude toward miracles is best summed up by a pleasantry he reportedly made on visiting the cathedral of Notre-Dame in Lourdes in August of 1890. Upon spotting heaps of crutches and many other ex-voto offerings that purportedly gave evidence of miraculous cures effected by the Virgin, he supposedly remarked with a devilish smile, "Well, [I don't see any wooden legs.](#)" No injured pilgrim experienced the spontaneous regeneration of a missing limb that would have rendered a prosthesis unnecessary.

Anatole France rode a sea change as a writer and as a thinker when he composed "*Le jongleur de Notre Dame*." After losing his mother in 1886 and his father in 1890, he appears to have gained freedom and resolve in giving voice to his strongest beliefs—and mounting doubts. The changes within him owe in good measure to a turbulent extramarital alliance that he began in 1888 with Madame Arman de Caillavet, née Léontine Lippmann (see Fig. 5.12). This long attachment contributed to no small extent to his separation from his wife in 1892 as well as to his divorce in 1893. The intellectual and cultural effects of France's involvement with this mistress cannot be demarcated simplistically, perhaps especially where her Jewishness comes into play.



Fig. 5.12 Arman de Caillavet. Photograph by Sauvanaud et Aubin, early twentieth century. Reproduced in Jeanne Maurice Pouquet, *Le salon de Madame Arman de Caillavet* (Paris: Hachette, 1926).

The folderol in France's personal life is utterly invisible within the tale of the jongleur itself, as is the heavy-handed sardonicism that the writer often put on display when dealing with Catholicism in other writings. His childhood faith had given him his grounding in the Middle Ages and particularly in the saint's lives that had surrounded

him since his earliest years. In this story, he repudiated that Christian upbringing gently, even wistfully. Yet let us not misapprehend: he [rejected the religion](#) in which he had been raised. His godlessness is resolutely sacrilegious. It contrasts strongly with the esteem that many Roman Catholics attached to “Our Lady of Lourdes” after the middle of the nineteenth century. Between February 11 and July 16, 1858, Bernadette Soubirous and others experienced Marian apparitions there. The fourteen-year-old peasant girl, canonized as a saint in 1933, claimed to have witnessed eighteen visions. In them, a woman asked that a chapel be constructed in the [grotto](#) where the apparitions occurred (see Fig. 5.13). It was generally assumed that the woman in the visions was Mary, even though Soubirous never claimed so herself. This figure identified herself only once as Immaculate Conception. She came in the guise of a small, young lady who wore a white veil and blue girdle, had a yellow rose on each foot, was accompanied by dazzling light, and emerged from a dark alcove. Much of this description matches the appurtenances of any [typical Madonna](#) in a village church in the region: white veil, blue clothing, and roses. The typicality of such images in no way lessened their prestige to the parishioners who revered them, as we can infer from the frequency with which the statues were purportedly found or returned miraculously—and stolen, in [rivalries between communities](#).

The French nation did not experience in the 1890s the delirium of major, Church-approved, Marian apparitions such as had taken place earlier in the century. Think back upon the apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Rue du Bac in Paris in 1830, at La Salette in 1846, at Lourdes in 1858, and at Pontmain in 1871. After the troubled 1870s, manifestations were far less common, and unofficial cults diminished in number. At the same time, such phenomena did not come altogether to a standstill. For example, appearances that began with a vision of Mary took place at Tilly-sur-Seulles in [Calvados from 1896 to 1899](#) (see Fig. 5.14). The events there and the most celebrated of the seers, Marie Martel, failed to garner ecclesiastical approval. Even so, they drew expectant crowds. Like other such episodes, they kept alive popular awareness and hope that the Blessed Virgin Mary might show herself at any time to even the humblest of her devotees. The star among those associated with Marianism in the late 1890s was Thérèse of Lisieux. The saint was born in 1873, just as *Our Lady's Tumbler* began to have an impact upon scholars, and died in 1897. [Thérèse's overall spiritual doctrine](#) emphasized intense devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. She called herself “the Little Flower of the Blessed Virgin,” and Mary “the heavenly Gardener.” After entering the Carmelites, she took as her profession the nativity of Mary. Upon being granted permission to write her biography, she sought guidance first from the Mother of God by praying before a statue of the Blessed Virgin.

Whatever the state of religiosity in the countryside, the city of Paris was embracing secularism, or at the very least was ever less informed about Christian doctrine and



Fig. 5.13 Front cover of Simon Carrère, *Histoire de Notre Dame de Lourdes* (Limoges, France: Eugène Ardant, 1914).



Fig. 5.14 Postcard depicting the site of Marian apparitions at Tilly-sur-Seulles (late nineteenth century).

less involved in its practices. The downswing of Catholic faith in the capital resulted partly from a simple lack of personnel. Although the population in the diocese of Paris surged in the second half of the nineteenth century, new churches were not founded and the number of priests was nudged up only at a snail's pace. Even rural France seems to have been dechristianized, secularized, or both in the face of upgraded communication, improved transportation, and increased career opportunities. All these processes may have intensified a rejection that grew from long-simmering resentment of the tithe and [deep-seated distrust](#) of hidebound Church politics. Anticlericalism and Catholicism were both well established. As has been pointed out, they were [not always mutually exclusive](#).

In his review of Gaston Paris's literary history, France commented: "[The spire of the cathedrals](#) signifies the indeterminate boundary between heaven and earth." There is no need to construct a case on mere anecdotes, since his massive [Life of Joan of Arc](#) (1908) is devoted largely to debunking legends and explaining away purported miracles. Instead of the saint romanticized in the mass culture of his day (see Fig. 5.15), France presented Joan in a positivist light as a creature of her times. In his telling, she was a mere girl. She was self-delusional in her craving for sanctity (although in time sainthood did come) and a failure as a military strategist.

Anatole France's project was destined, even designed, to affront the French state, its schooling system, and the Catholic Church. In the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War, these three institutions had chosen to elevate Joan to nearly divine status and to



Fig. 5.15 Postcard depicting Joan of Arc before Compiègne—"For God, for France" (ca. 1908).

emphasize her **heroism**. It was hardly an accident that a thirteen-minute film of Joan of Arc made in 1900 was among the major productions around the turn of the century by the filmmaker Georges Méliès. Joan played and sold well.

The tale of the jongleur differed from France's two volumes on Joan of Arc. In the first, France avoided criticizing the medieval author and his audience for their supposed credulity. In writing "*Le jongleur de Notre Dame*," France took to heart the injunction with which he concluded his review of Paris's literary history—that his readers should be charitable, and specifically, they should **not remonstrate with their ancestors** in the Middle Ages for ignorance, feeble-mindedness, incuriosity, or superstitious fear. Medieval people were no more to be blamed than children. For this reason, the story has been judged, by both readers who were contemporaries of France's and by critics at work today, to be **exceptional** in his oeuvre from this

period. Unlike most of his other writings, it does not advance even implicit criticism of the Christian religion. In telling the story France decided wisely to refrain from didacticism of any sort. Instead, he left his readers untethered so that they could construe the narrative as they judged appropriate. The devout could find it religious; libertines, ironic. This approach helps to explain the brusqueness with which the tale grinds to a halt. Where we might expect to find an unfiltered moral, none is to be found beyond a staccato benediction, amen, and kiss upon the ground that take place within the narrative itself.

France's care in portraying religion within the story perpetuates, probably more by hazard than by design, qualities of the authentic medieval poem. *Our Lady's Tumbler* unfolds perspectives on the religious hierarchy in the Middle Ages that could be read in equal measures as ferocious nonflattery and fulsome flummery. The fiction writer had good reason to tread cautiously with his country harshly polarized over most issues relating religion at that time. On the one side, anticlerical moderates lined up, backing an unalienable [divide between Church and State](#). They aligned with science and technology, and were thought to carry forward the Enlightenment. On the other, reactionaries stood, supporting Catholicism and royalism. They were roiled by revelations of supernatural intervention, as in apparitions of the Virgin, and rallied around Joan of Arc.

The story of the jongleur could meet the needs of both camps—of both extremes within French society. The triumph of the jongleur in extremis over his defamatory fellow monks could be seen to resemble the liberation of peasants from ignorant and malign country priests, to vindicate the [restiveness](#) of the laity against the ecclesiastics. Or the narrative could have seemed at worst paraclerical and at best validating the apparitions reactionaries craved in their own days, and upholding the view that miracles can and do happen, even to the humblest members of society. A fair designation for the story is to vary the term *conte pieuse* by calling it instead a *conte d'apparence pieuse*, a tale of [pious appearance](#). Appearances can be deceiving.

## Fantasy and Humility

To the casual eye, one of Anatole France's most startling achievements in reworking the tale of *Our Lady's Tumbler* may have been to cast it as a fantasy. This quality affords readers an escape from the modern world that resembles what is purveyed by fairy tales and other strains of the fantastic. By no strange accident, France's "Le jongleur de Notre Dame" was cited by the American science-fiction writer Robert Anson Heinlein as his [favorite short story](#). The forum was a collection anthologized by Heinlein's friend Spider Robinson, in which stories were presented in pairs. In each coupling, the second was selected by a then-contemporary author. The first was a piece of fiction by that same person that Robinson chose as a good match for it. In this instance, Robinson fixed on Heinlein's "The Man Who Traveled in Elephants," while the story's author picked Anatole France's "Our Lady's Juggler."

Heinlein was the prolific doyen of science fiction in the United States, best known for his 1961 novel entitled *Stranger in a Strange Land*, which remains a cult classic. He was not drawn to Anatole France's story for religious reasons. In fact, he was an agnostic, not a Christian of any sort. All the same, it makes sense that the tale exercised an irresistible pull upon him. Its miraculous and even uncanny contents border on some brands of sci-fi. Monks stealing down to crypts, unnatural apparitions by extraterrestrial revenants—this is the stuff of the Gothic that has as its descendents horror movies, ghost stories, vampires, and more. The [medievalisms of fantasy and science fiction](#) have intersected for decades. The American writer happened to be ahead of the curve in identifying as an inspiration for his own writing France's story set in the Middle Ages.

At the same time, Heinlein's choice furnishes evidence of the frequency with which the beautiful pages by the French author have been anthologized in an unreckoned multitude of ["best short story" collections](#). Riding in these vehicles, the story has become a cultural stowaway to all sorts of places where it might not have otherwise traveled. If the medieval narrative was at all Delphic in its handling of certain life-and-death issues, the ambiguity grows only more acute in "Le jongleur de Notre Dame." Indeed, readers familiar with France's penchant for irony may have doubts as to what is to be construed seriously and what not. The possibility of latent ambiguity and irony increases the malleability of a fiction that, appropriately for an anecdote about a physical performer, could be twisted in many different directions. A small masterpiece, it lends itself to infinite interpretation and reinterpretation. Accordingly, our surprise is muted at finding the tale incorporated in [one story collection](#) to exemplify courage, in another love, in a third humor, and in a fourth madness.

The narrative of the jongleur has not been enshrined in an anthology of humility. No such ragbag seems to exist. What modest soul would dare to compile it? Yet the humbleness of the performer has elicited comment for nearly a century. In 1896, the French literary scholar Louis Petit de Julleville extolled it in his history of medieval French literature as ["written to abase pride and to exalt humility."](#) In an autograph letter dated May 10, 1909, Max Beerbohm invoked Anatole France's juggler in this same connection (see Fig. 5.16). The English caricaturist and essayist wrote to the [editor](#) of an American magazine to voice pleasure that the man liked his caricatures. He expressed contentment too that reviews would appear in both the same magazine and a [British weekly](#) that focused on current affairs in politics and culture. His delight was accentuated by his surprise at receiving commendation without warning: "I feel rather as Anatole France's juggler must have felt when, to him juggling at the altar, the Virgin Mary descended and with her mantle [wiped the sweat from his brow....](#)"

A year later, the English novelist [William John Locke](#) (see Fig. 5.17) insets an allusion to the story into a novel even more offhandedly. A character named Lola Brandt hears a surprised remark about her masterful management of a combative cat. In response, she tells of her pleasure at having been noticed for doing something other than lolling about and smoking cigarettes. She concludes, "It's all I can do. But



Fig. 5.16 Max Beerbohm. Photograph by Russell & Sons, before 1901. Published in *The Critic* 39 (November 1901). Image from Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Max\\_Beerbohm\\_1901\\_retouched.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Max_Beerbohm_1901_retouched.jpg)



Fig. 5.17 William John Locke. Photograph, before 1912. Published in Frederic Taber Cooper, *Some English Story Tellers: A Book of the Younger Novelists* (New York: Henry Holt, 1912).

it's something." The narrator observes, "She said it with the humility of the Jongleur de Notre Dame in Anatole France's story." All the evidence confirms how strongly France's humble juggler resonated with the public in the English-speaking world. Unheeding of legalism about copyright and permissions, translators around the United States leapt into action to put the tale into English versions that were **printed repeatedly in newspapers**.

### Why Compiègne?

In his short story about the juggler of Notre Dame, Anatole France made many uninhibited **deviations** from the medieval tale. Because Gaston Paris's summarization fell into the "short but sweet" category, the fiction writer was burdened by precious few hard-and-fast details. Take the issue of the location of the action. Since the philologist says nary a word about the setting, the short-story writer was not obliged even to consider retaining Clairvaux from the original poem. Instead, he leaves the site of the abbey undefined. France does specify the hometown of the underprivileged jongleur, whom he calls Barnaby (Barnabé in French): the locale is Compiègne, some fifty miles northeast of Paris.





Fig. 5.18 Jean-Jacques Caffieri, *Virgin and Child*, eighteenth century. Sculpture, l'Église Saint-Antoine, Compiègne, France. Image from Wikimedia Commons, © Pline (2012), CC BY-SA 3.0, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vierge\\_%C3%A0\\_l'enfant\\_de\\_Jean-Jacques\\_Caffieri\\_Eglise\\_Saint-Antoine\\_a\\_Compiègne\\_DSC\\_0276.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vierge_%C3%A0_l'enfant_de_Jean-Jacques_Caffieri_Eglise_Saint-Antoine_a_Compiègne_DSC_0276.JPG)

Though the choice is unlikely to have been a casual one, what motivated Anatole France? The municipality is located in Picardy. Soissons and Beauvais are likewise Picard. In chatting with a monk before entering monastic life, Barnaby singles out the endpoints of the zone in which he was famed. According to him, the region boasts more than six hundred cities and villages. Beyond being in this area, [the city of Compiègne](#) has a few medieval churches, but none dedicated to the Virgin, and no medieval monastery. It possesses its share of Madonnas (see Fig. 5.18), as any settlement of serious size in the country would have had by France's time. Yet none of the images is so famous as to warrant connecting the juggler with it. Probably the foremost event of the Middle Ages that implicated Compiègne and that would have been in the minds of French who encountered France's story is that the patron saint of their nation, Joan of Arc, was caught there beneath the city walls in May 1430 (see Fig. 5.19). Shortly afterward, she was burnt at the stake as a heretic.

Anatole France's biography of the virgin-warrior, whose name became a [rallying cry](#) for French identity and nationalism, was published in 1908, the year before she was beatified by the Roman Catholic Church, as a preliminary step toward sainthood. In 1909, postcards enable us to see reenactors at work in Compiègne (see Figs. 5.20 and 5.21). Sanctification reached completion when she was finally canonized Saint Joan in 1920. The capture of Joan belonged among the top twelve or so episodes in a life that was filmed and reenacted increasingly. Thus, the short-story author had the male protagonist of his brief miracle tale achieve redemption in the very place where the female emblem of French patriotism met the beginning of her downfall. Another reason for choosing this specific town was calendrical. The month of Joan's capture matched the month of Mary, and the month in which the story was first published: May. In addition to shifting



Fig. 5.19 Postcard depicting Joan of Arc's capture at Compiègne (ca. 1908).



Fig. 5.20 Postcard depicting public celebrations of Joan of Arc in 1909 (Compiègne, France: Decelle, 1909).

the story geographically, France gave it a sniff of chronological fixity by positing that it took place in [the time of King Louis](#). The medieval Carolingian, Capetian, and Valois dynasties numbered among them a total of at least a dozen monarchs called by this name, and Anatole France does not pinpoint which one, if any, he intends. Yet it would compound the sanctity of the miracle related to have it take place within the reign of King Louis IX of France, who was after all Saint Louis.



Fig. 5.21 Postcard depicting reenactors of Joan of Arc's capture (Compiègne, France: Lejeune, 1930).

## Why Barnaby?

The anonymous poet of the medieval French *Our Lady's Tumbler* left the protagonist unidentified, and the nameless author of the Latin prose exemplum in the *Table of Exempla* likewise kept him unnamed. In contrast, Anatole France specified his humble hero by [calling him Barnabé](#).

Where did Anatole France unearth the moniker for his monk? Barnabé derives from Barnabas, the Greek form of an Aramaic original. All of them correspond to the English Barnaby and Barney. The name has the cachet of antiquity. Barnabas is a surname or sobriquet that was given to a Jewish disciple of Jesus who is mentioned repeatedly in the Bible, especially in the [Acts of the Apostles](#). An additional resource are the apocrypha ascribed to Barnabas. The most peculiar is the [Gospel of Barnabas](#), which never wormed its way into the Bible. A book by this title is listed in the so-called [Gelasian Decree](#), itself spurious. In any event, no such scripture survives from antiquity or indeed is attested other than this one mention. What does exist is a text named after Barnabas that came to light in the sixteenth century in Spanish and Italian versions and that has lived on since then. Probably fortuitously, this very late and apocryphal account contains a scene in which Judas, who is mistaken for Jesus, is ["attired as a juggler."](#) In Christian art, Barnabas appears sometimes near the Virgin, but almost always only as one among

several other saints. For instance, he is often depicted in stained glass in panels near to a seated Virgin with Child, and from time to time he crops up among the people present at the Adoration (see Fig. 5.22). By an interesting coincidence, a Greek collection of anecdotes and sayings from the late sixth century incorporates a tale of a cave dweller



Fig. 5.22 John La Farge, *St. Barnabas and the Virgin* (Reverend Barnabas Bates Memorial Window), 1880–1881. Leaded opalescent glass, glass jewels, and fired glass paint. Newport, RI, Channing Memorial Church.

in Jordan named Barnabas. This anchorite had to leave his lair to seek medical care. When another recluse took his place, Barnabas discovered an agent of God. This angel revealed that he had been given oversight of the altar in the grotto from the instant when the solitary consecrated it. Whether this angelic being had been present there, and visible to the hermit, is not spelled out. Yet none of these issues has great relevance, since the odds are laughably long that Anatole France could have heard anything of this Barnabas. To move to more certain territory, France's choice of designation for his protagonist has had an unforeseeable but concrete byproduct. The American film actor Tony Curtis, who starred in a made-for-television spin-off from the short story, may have seemed off the mark when he referred twice to "Saint Barnaby, the [patron saint of variety acts](#)." The apostle is associated with [Cyprus and harvesters](#), not with the theater. Nonetheless, it could be said accurately that in the wake of France's story Barnaby became a commonplace stage name.

Clowns in the United States have been called Bozo for decades (see Fig. 5.23), especially once a book and record entitled *Bozo at the Circus* were released in 1946, and even more since a small-screen series about a clown by this name caught fire in the 1950s. By a similar process, Barnaby has been nearly as often [applied to jugglers](#) ever since Anatole France. The difference is that Bozo has made the further evolution of becoming a common noun for a clown or a clownish person. Barnaby remains, at least for the time being, merely a name. It could yet become a byword. Let us work on it.



Fig. 5.23 Front cover of J. Lewis, *Bozo the Clown: King of the Ring*, illus. Al White (Racine, WI: Whitman, Western Publishing Company, 1960).

## Jongleur as Juggler

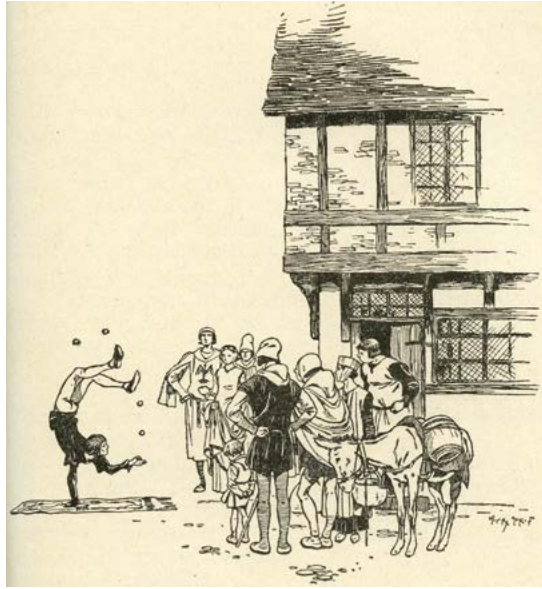


Fig. 5.24 The juggler performs before a crowd. Illustration by Henri Morin, 1928. Published in Anatole France, *Abeille / Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame / Les Pains Noir*, ed. R. I. Graeme Ritchie (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1928), 125.

Two subtle but significant divergences from the standard title of the medieval French poem stand out in that of the short story. First, every word in Anatole France's version is naturalized into modern French. For instance, the letter *s* is dropped from the now *démodé* *Nostre Dame*, the name not only of Our Lady herself but equally of the medieval cathedrals that were raised to commemorate her. In the nineteenth century, the great Gothic churches were the objects of a [public fascination](#) that bordered on mania (a *Notre-Dame-entia*). Courtesy of Victor Hugo, the *Notre-Dame to end all Notre-Dames* has become, of course, the cathedral of Paris (see Fig. 5.25). The even more important reorientation in “*Le jongleur de Notre Dame*” is that instead of being a tumbler, the principal is now in general a *jongleur* but [particularly a juggler](#). This adjustment makes sense for a few reasons. Both *jongleur* and *juggler* derive from the Latin *ioculator*, as do [related terms](#) in many other Western European languages. In English, *juggler* denotes first and foremost a performer who specializes in balancing, tossing, and catching, usually in breakneck seriality, balls and other objects. The distinct word *jongleur*, a learned borrowing from French, refers to an itinerant minstrel. French does not have two separate nouns. The single substantive *jongleur* has a semantic range that overarches both the English *juggler* and *jongleur*.

The gamut of significations attached to the French *jongleur* clarifies why in later revamped forms of the narrative the lead character has [also been cast as a jester](#), which is a deliberately mediaevalesque feature, and as a clown, which is an unwittingly

modernizing one. In illustrations, the jongleur will be found now and then in the particolored costume known as motley (see Fig. 5.26). Often his head is covered by the jester's cap, the coxcomb, which typically has red trim and hornlike points, often belled. In his hand, he carries a fool's-head-on-a-staff. He wears such particolored attire sometimes even when he is not described or shown as jesting or fooling, but as juggling or tumbling. In other cases, he is depicted with a combination of clothing associated both with jesters, such as a jacket that ends at the waist in points with jingling bells, green and yellow checked tights, and red shoes curled at the toes; and with clowns, such as a conical hat, tasseled at the point, and a big, frilled collar (see Fig. 5.27). The associations with clowns have in turn permitted the story to become linked with circuses.

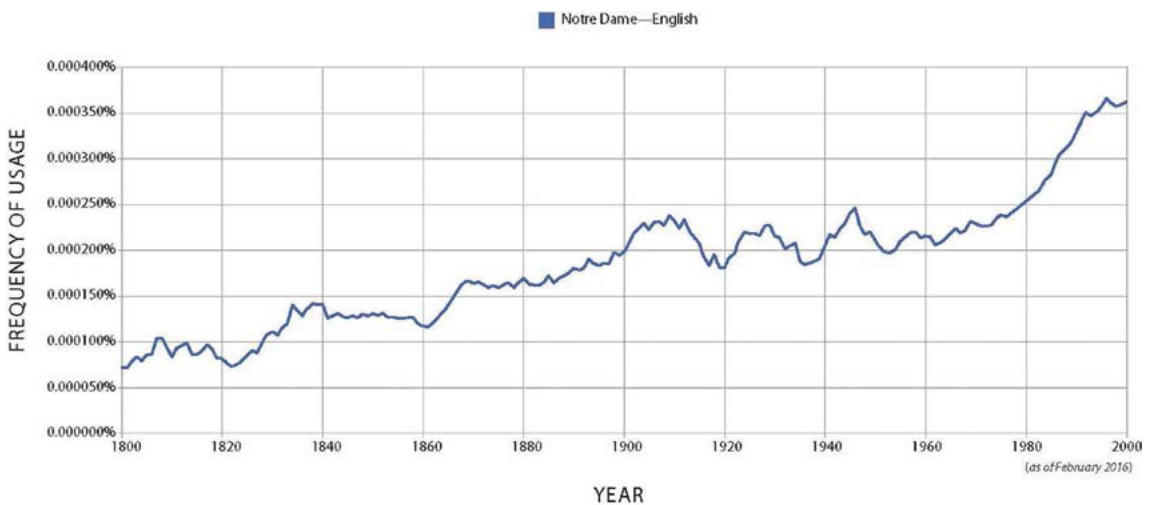


Fig. 5.25 Google Ngram data for “Notre Dame,” which shows a steady rise over the last two centuries. Vector Art by Melissa Tandysh, 2014. Image courtesy of Melissa Tandysh. All rights reserved.



Fig. 5.26 Postcard depicting “court fools” (L. Vandamme, 1905).



Fig. 5.27 American Christmas card depicting juggler dressed as clown (Deer Crest / Grant, ca. 1950s).



Indisputably, [Anatole France contributed](#) to these evolutions of the tumbler by converting him into a jongleur. He naturally changed the occupation of the man in the medieval French text to accord with the predominant meaning of jongleur in contemporary nineteenth-century language. Gaston Paris had identified the protagonist as belonging to this profession, no doubt wanting at least partly to bypass the suspicious cultural baggage that *tombeur* brought with it in French. In effect, France left the gist of the tale unmodified. So far as he would have known from the résumé offered by Paris, the main character was a jongleur and not a tumbler. Even the medieval manuscripts of the poem fluctuate in designating the leading character in their titles. They call him by the French words for [tumbler, jongleur, and minstrel](#).

France was not likely to be acquainted with any fine details of the medieval original beyond what Paris recounted, and his choice to make his protagonist a jongleur of the juggling sort might well have been driven by a desire to innovate. If he had made his hero a jongleur of tumbling type, he would have repeated a theme he had already explored, at least peripherally. In his 1869 poem "[The Dance of the Dead](#)," the writer had described what is known as both the *danse macabre* and the dance of death. As depicted commonly in art, a personification of Death delivers in person a memento mori to individuals from different social stations and summons them to the afterlife. He leads them in a conga line of what could be called necropolitan picturesque. In it, the skeletons (all fully out of the closet) have lost their flesh but retain the material trappings of their former positions and professions. The first tercet in the text refers to artistic representations of this procession: "In the centuries of faith, above all in the last ones, / the great dance of death was frequently painted / on the vellum of missals as on the walls of charnel houses." In effect, the storywriter had already covered or at least touched upon the topic of dancing.

The decision to make the jongleur specifically a juggler also reflected at least two additional circumstances. One is that at that very time juggling became especially closely identified with the Middle Ages. Between then and now, the [association of juggling with medieval](#) has been pandemic. Into the early twentieth century, [nuances of the jongleur's earlier versatility](#), as a juggler of the sort found in circuses and as a medieval minstrel-like figure, lingered. Even as juggling became a separate specialization, it has continued to be [bound up in popular thought with the Middle Ages](#). What conclusion ought to be drawn? The juggler has become as distinctively medieval as the horseriding hero or the motte and bailey. Like the jester, he represents the mirthful in sharp contradistinction to the martial. We cling to the idea, or the pie in the sky, that the medieval juggler embodies nonchalance and clownishness. Yet even while doing so, we harness the word *juggle* to accord with the workaholicism of our own present-day existence. The verb is employed metaphorically most often to describe handling multiple duties or tasks. We call the pressure to balance different demands

a juggling act. In effect, we have wrung the play out of juggling by repurposing it to denote labor.

Another reason for making the jongleur a juggler, probably not unrelated to the preceding, is the vogue that juggling enjoyed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Juggling had been practiced for thousands of years, but [only in this later span of time](#) did it evolve into a specialized art in Europe and North America. By this stage, the craft may be divided into [five distinct subgroups](#). One was kraftjugglers, who manipulated especially heavy objects such as cannonballs and weights. Another was salon jugglers, who put aloft such items as walking sticks, gloves, and men's hats. A third performed on moving horses, as equestrian jugglers; a fourth comprised antipodists, who juggled with their feet; and a final group was made up of jugglers who tossed objects back and forth or around in pairs or larger teams. Given how rapidly juggling became entrenched in the popular culture of the late nineteenth century, Anatole France was probably not atypical in having at least a rough sense of what was feasible within an entertainer's routine. Such performances, and his portrayal of them, combined to fix this skill in the imagination of the cultured public.

In modern English, *jongleur* as a noun survives almost exclusively to describe the jack-of-all-trades in medieval entertainment, although with special distinction in singing to his own instrumental accompaniment (see Fig. 5.28). This situation contrasts with *troubadour*, which in addition to functioning similarly as a historical term can be employed as an elegant word for a present-day lyricist (see Fig. 5.29). In the same language, the associations of juggling remain as ambivalent as they were in the Middle Ages, though the causes and expressions differ. The wizardry of keeping multiple objects aloft depends upon eye-hand coordination and physical dexterity. Etymologically, the Latin adjective *dexter* refers to the skillfulness associated with right-handedness. The right is associated with virtue, as virtue is in turn with virtuosity. In contrast, the left is bound up with vice as well as with clumsiness. The principal Latin modifier is *sinister*, while the equivalent French is *gauche*. As it turns out, dexterous handling can raise suspicion as often as admiration. Talented handling can swiftly acquire an unfavorable shading: the verbal noun, of Old English origin, has a close Latinate equivalent in *manipulation*, from the word that means a handful.

The juggler's sleight-of-hand can inspire mistrust, by fooling the eyes of the viewer. Figuratively, "juggling the books" carries exclusively negative connotations. Our culture has long been conflicted about the conjuring tricks and illusions of circus performers and others. The Latin noun to designate such individuals is *praestigiator*. Exploits accomplished by a professional of this type are *praestigia*. By way of French, these juggler's subterfuges have given us the positive associations of the word *prestige* as well as the more equivocal but intimately related ones of [prestidigitation](#).

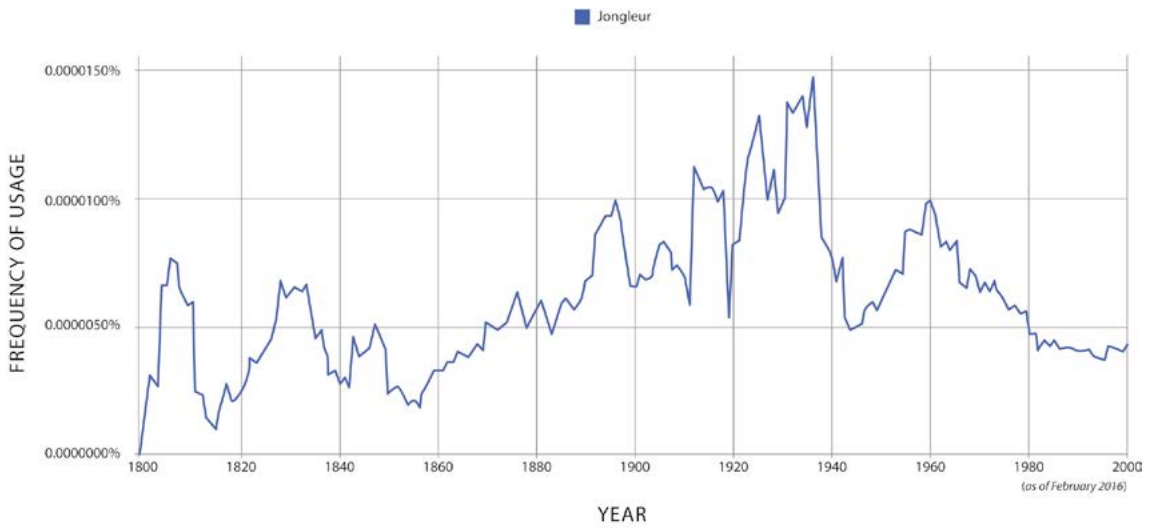


Fig. 5.28 Google Ngram data for “jongleur,” which shows a peak just before 1940. Vector Art by Melissa Tandysh, 2014. Image courtesy of Melissa Tandysh. All rights reserved.

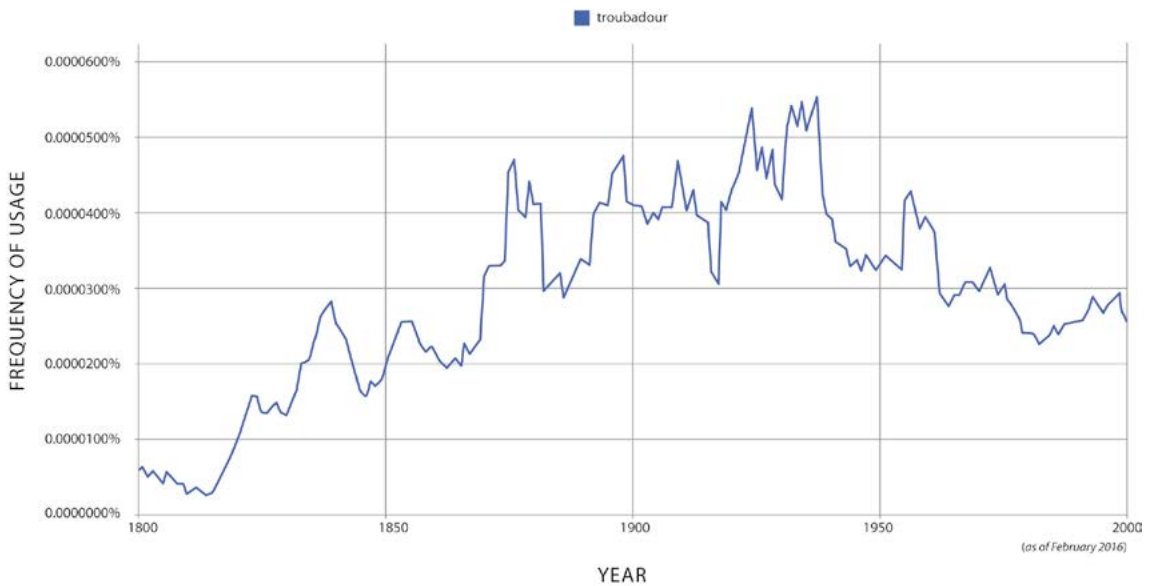


Fig. 5.29 Google Ngram data for “troubadour,” which shows a peak in the 1930s and a fitful decline until the present. Vector Art by Melissa Tandysh, 2014. Image courtesy of Melissa Tandysh. All rights reserved.

## Anatole France as Juggler

In 1924, a professor drew an analogy to the juggler, in which he emphasized that in both juggling and language instruction, **not too many demands** should be made of an individual at one time. The likeness he established could be applied aptly to writing. In nineteenth-century French literature and culture, many people valued highly and even almost fetishized a simple style as an expression of national character. To go further, they even viewed simpleness as a national value. This esteem for the simple held true in philosophy and ethics as well as in rhetoric and writing. It prevailed despite an occasional strong opposing tide. Especially in the 1880s, the symbolists and others contested simplicity by advocating ambiguity and even opacity.

In the clash of styles, aesthetics, and values, Anatole France aligned himself closely with simplicity. This is not to suggest that he felt any fewer illusions than did the symbolists about the mounting distance between modernity as they experienced it, and supposedly simpler, preindustrial pasts. The better yesteryears included perhaps most emblematically the Middle Ages, about which people may have harbored both nostalgia and irony. A contemporary literary critic stated the case insightfully in analyzing the predilection of Anatole France for simplicity and naïveté. In his analysis, the taste for simplicity gives evidence of learning, spirit, artistry, and philosophy. Together, these qualities lead ultimately to the realization “that there is **no more profound philosophy** than that of ignorant souls, as there is no more exquisite art than that of naïve souls.” **The simplicity France attempted to achieve** in his own writing would have predisposed him to the multiple simplicities of the medieval tale, insofar as he was acquainted with it.

Wittingly or not, Anatole France retained the capacity of the medieval story to be construed in at least two very different ways in its portrayal of lay and ecclesiastic. (See Fig. 4.12) After the turn of the century he took ever more pronounced anticlerical stands in his writings. In the end his works were put on the *Index of Prohibited Books* by the Catholic Church in 1922, the year after he won the Nobel Prize in Literature. Nonetheless, “Le jongleur de Notre Dame” can easily be and has been misread as **unadulterated nostalgia**. A well-turned phrase that has been applied to this and other narratives by France is “**tales that appear to be pious.**”

Irony is not only a well-honed stylistic reflex on the part of Anatole France, but also an expression of psychological and philosophical conviction. In his mentality, “**Irony and Pity are two great counselors**: one, smiling, makes life lovable for us; the other, weeping, makes life sacred for us.” He aims to cultivate a gentle and good-natured irony, free from unkindness as well as from mockery of love or beauty. In effect, irony and pity are the tragedy-and-comedy masks that guided his art.

The existence of irony in “Le jongleur de Notre Dame” could be debated. If present, the rhetoric is nuanced. In turn, the subtlety in the tale of the jongleur could have had practical motivations. When France’s novel *Thaïs* was **serialized**, it supposedly caused some readers to **rescind their journal subscriptions**. Lewdness was inevitable

when a comely courtesan was the title character. Yet the devout would have taken less slight at the profession of Thäis than at the portrayal of Paphnutius. The ascetic hermit is shown as having fallen under the spell of her beauty, and as a result, he has lost certainty about his own faith—and about hers. France wrote, and we have no reason to disbelieve his assertion, that he “love[d] the solemn asceticism of the great Christian centuries.” Sometimes, though, his affection took him in directions that aroused the ire of practicing Christians, especially Catholics.

In publishing the separate stories that cohered to become a boxy collection of stories, France proceeded prudently in displaying his anticlericalism. No doubt he desired to avoid once again occasioning offense, all the more so since some of the tales were designed with particular religious holidays in mind. The first narrative in the book, “*The Procurator of Judea*,” was published on Christmas of 1891. The second, “*Amycus and Célestin*,” appeared on Easter of 1890 (see Fig. 4.13). It climaxes by having the pair sing together the Easter Alleluia—the hermit, a Christian, exalting in the resurrection of Christ, and the faun, a pagan Epicurean, rejoicing in the return of the sun (see Fig. 5.30). The fourth, “*Saint Euphrosina*,” came out on Easter of 1891.

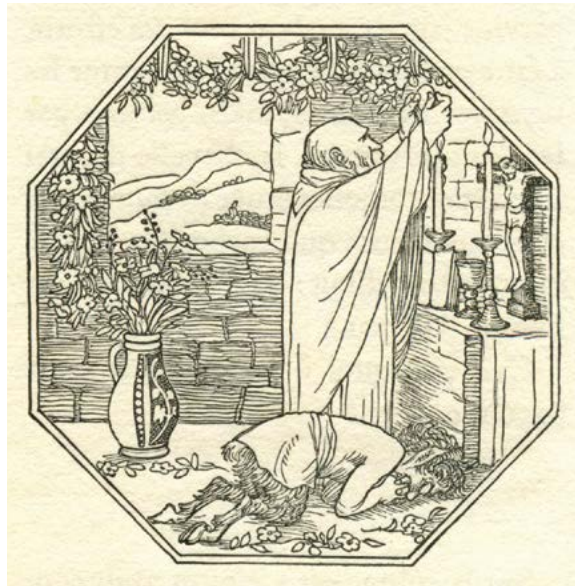


Fig. 5.30 The offering at the altar. Woodcut by Timothy Cole after design by Bryson Burroughs, 1916. Published in Anatole France, *Amycus et Célestin* (New York: Printed at the Museum Press, 1916), 9.

As Gustave Flaubert had done in his exceedingly influential *Three Tales*, France manifests an engrossment in pure and simple faith that is hitched with an attraction to medieval hagiography. His preoccupation with sincere belief is perhaps often, but not necessarily always, condescending toward it. In the Middle Ages, simplicity was frequently regarded as **unfractured and perfect**, whereas naïveté was likelier, even assured, to be flawed and imperfect.

Like Brun before him, France viewed medieval people as gullible, whether as cause or effect of their unassuming and **unrefined faith**. In his novel from 1899, *The Amethyst Ring*, the central character reacts with delight to the representation of Domsday as carved by medieval sculptors: “**This naïve idea of the universe**, which workers dead more than five hundred years had expressed, moved him. He found it genial in its absurdity.” In the tale of the juggler, France refrains from intercalating any observation along the lines of that last sentence. Consequently, the protagonist of his tale would be understood for decades to come as “the embodiment of **artless, whole-souled faith**.”



Fig. 5.31 Monks create art to honor the Virgin. Illustration by Pierre Watrin, 1946. Published in Anatole France, *Le jongleur de Notre Dame* (Paris: Éditions de l'Amitié-G. T. Ragegot, 1946), 11.

As noted earlier, the nineteenth century evinced a steadily stronger [yearning for the simple](#). This hunger for simplicity, tinged with irony, was not restricted to Flaubert's "A Simple Heart," one of the three short stories in *Three Tales*. Rather, many artists and authors projected these feelings with intensity upon the Middle Ages. Small wonder that Anatole France had the flash of genius to fashion the definitive depiction of simplicity in the guise not merely of a medieval tale but even of a medieval legend, since legend was one of the archetypal "[simple forms](#)," as identified less than three decades later by literary and cultural theory.

Within the fictional confines of "Le jongleur de Notre Dame," the title character is not alone in his devotion to the Virgin (see Fig. 5.31). Brother Alexander paints fine miniatures that represent "The Queen of Heaven" encircled by doves and virgins. Brother Marbod (see Fig. 5.32) hews images of stone with such heartiness that his eyebrows and hair became whitened with motes of dust, his eyes watery and protuberant. Nonetheless, the lady sovereign of Paradise keeps him youthful. In other tales, France mentions [more miracles of the Virgin](#). At the meta-miraculous level where miracles are dissected and discussed, he describes in *The Amethyst Ring* how the character Bergeret peruses a study on the Virgin by the fictitious Abbé Guitrel, which catalogues Marian miracles performed in the equally fanciful chapel of Notre-Dame-des-Belles-Feuilles from the sixth century down to the then-present.



Fig. 5.32 A monk carves the Virgin's statue. Illustration by Pierre Watrin, 1946. Published in Anatole France, *Le jongleur de Notre Dame* (Paris: Éditions de l'Amitié-G. T. Ragegot, 1946), 15.

France subjects the phenomenon of piety to searching scrutiny. Beyond it may lurk a sprinkling of another sentiment that had special moment in the late nineteenth century: patriotism. Even more readily than *Our Lady's Tumbler* itself, his short story could be construed within the context of then-contemporary French culture as an expression of characteristically Gallic righteousness in the face of seemingly insurmountable brick walls. In reviewing Gaston Paris's book of literary history, France had asked: "By what charms can the vast library of the Middle Ages, long forgotten beneath dust and discovered but yesterday, attract us and please us still?" The writer's main response to his own question had been to quote, without missing a beat, a formulation that Paris had propounded. In the view of the philologist, during the Middle Ages his country had served as cultural bellwether among abutting regions. The interface between devotion to the Virgin (see Fig. 5.31) and patriotism to a nation may seem initially implausible to us, but it was not problematic in late nineteenth-century France. It may crop up not merely explicitly here but also implicitly in the way Mary is brought into the scheme of things in France's *Life of Joan of Arc*.

Yet the wild success of Anatole France's "Le jongleur de Notre Dame" owes to more than religious and political circumstances in a single country. Rather, the tale struck a responsive chord throughout Europe and North America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It gave expression to what seemed archetypally French, especially in the genre of the *conte dévot*. The sweeping cultural influence of Anatole France's story, and the celerity of its diffusion across languages and literatures, come to the fore unceremoniously in 1900 in *The Cardinal's Snuff-Box* by the American novelist Henry Harland (see Fig. 5.33). In one scene, the character Beatrice curls up with a copy of Anatole France's book to give herself the air of culture. Fascinatingly, a stylized representation may be detected at the foot of the page beneath this text (see Fig. 5.34). The image depicts an aquamanile, a medieval water jug in the shape of an animal. The reason for this kind of object is not far to see: a reference in the novel to a literary bibelot puts the illustrator in mind of an actual one. The big picture is that only eight years after the publication of Anatole France's short-story collection in 1892, "Le jongleur de Notre Dame" formed a basic element in the common refinement that was thought to be shared by culturally literate, or literarily cultured, Americans, English, Italians, and, of course, French—and this is only a partial listing of the nationalities touched by the tale.

A most illuminating testimony of the degree to which Anatole France had permeated French culture can be found in a few lines penned by Marcel Proust in the second half of May 1913. The addressee is Madame Marie Scheikévitch (see Fig. 5.35), who at the time hosted a celebrated *salon* in Paris. A well-known verse played upon pairs of words for flowers and colors that are cognate in French: "Oh, the lilac! The blue bluebottle! The rose!" The novelist uttered a witticism upon this verse. To commemorate the repartee, the attractive Russian divorcée dispatched to him an armful of lilacs. In return, he crafted an undated letter prefaced with a double allusion to Anatole France. First, Proust claimed to be happier upon getting the nosegay of





Fig. 5.33 Henry Harland. Photograph, before 1903. Photographer unknown. Image from Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Henry\\_Harland.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Henry_Harland.jpg)

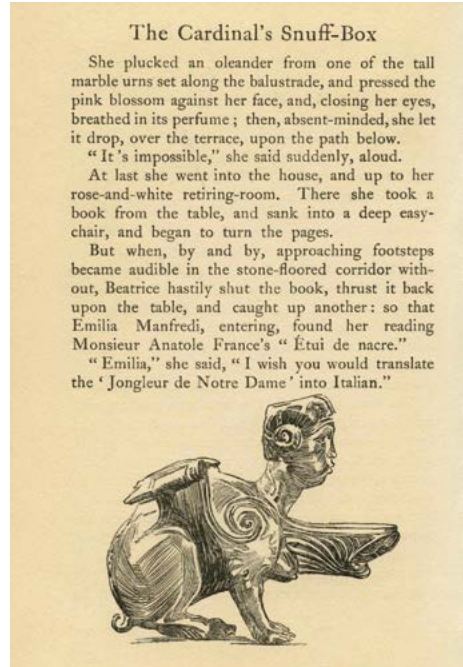


Fig. 5.34 An aquamanile. Illustration, 1900. Artist unknown. Published in Henry Harland, *The Cardinal's Snuff-Box* (London: John Lane, 1900), 186.



Fig. 5.35 Marie Scheikévitch. Photograph, date, and photographer unknown. New Haven, CT, Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. Image courtesy of Yale University, New Haven, CT. All rights reserved.

lilacs than Sylvestre Bonnard had been upon receiving the *Golden Legend*. Then he struck a pose by imitating, with what he maintained was naïveté, the Jongleur of Notre Dame: “I will pluck from the proofs of my book, which no one except you has seen, some ‘invisible and enduring’ lilacs.” Proust had every reason to be attracted to the jongleur, since he had steeped himself in a medievalism that encompassed John Ruskin, Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, and Emile Mâle. He turned above all to Ruskin for insight into medieval architecture, and his 1904 French translation of the 1884 *The Bible of Amiens* has achieved the uncommon coup of surpassing the original English in the health of its survival, to judge by frequency of reprinting.

The exhaustive history of Anatole France’s penetration into other languages and literatures throughout the world has yet to be written. The fate of his story about the juggler would make for more than just a footnote within it. The original French of the tale was reprinted in editions across the globe for both scholastic use and pleasure reading. Some of these publications with clutches of France’s short stories would have been illustrated. In addition, the narrative was sometimes printed on its own (and illustrated) as a separate book (see Fig. 5.36). The story has had an impact, both direct and indirect, far and wide. In all its many guises, the tale of the juggler has demonstrated astounding malleability in the reworkings of later rewriters, retellers, and reenactors. This pattern holds no less for the French short story than for any of the others. A fascinating case in point is the supposed summary of France’s narrative in an anonymous note that was published in 1954 in a journal called *Mater Dei*, Latin for Mother of God:

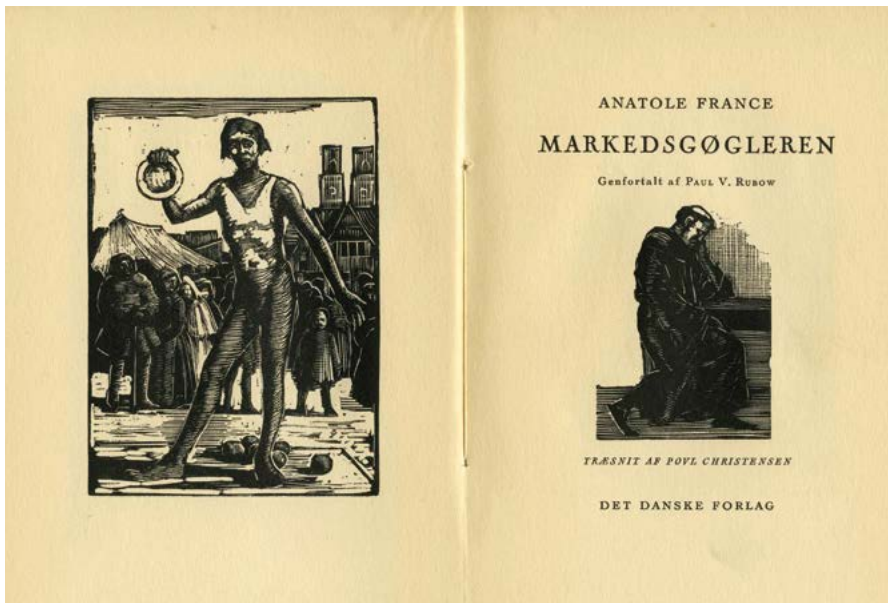


Fig. 5.36 Frontispiece and title page of Anatole France, *Markedsgøglere*, ed. Paul V. Rubow, trans. and illus. Povel Christensen (Copenhagen: Det Danske Forlag, 1947).

A poor juggler and Trappist, having converted to God and become a monk, could not succeed in learning by heart even the “Hail, Mary,” and for this reason was about to be sent away from the monastery. Thoroughly heartbroken by the matter, he would go down every night, while everyone was sleeping, into the great monastic church, would stretch up very high a rope from the capital of a column to the altar in the chapel of the Madonna, and before the statue of her would perform the routines that when he was in the world, used to frighten the crowds the most. He knew how to do only this, and he made a gift of it to the Madonna. His superiors, who for some time had been concerned, spied on him, and one night finally became aware of what he was doing. They knew well that the poor fellow had an innocent soul, but they had to believe that he was crazy or addle-headed. Consequently they were preparing to drag him out of the church, when they saw that the Madonna was coming down the steps of the altar, and was going to blot, with a corner of her dark blue cloak, the sweat that was dripping from the brow of her juggler.

This thumbnail sketch, for all its brevity, lays heavy emphasis upon specifics that appear nowhere in Anatole France. The performances of the juggler are presented as being votive, motivated by his impending expulsion from the cloister. His feats appear to center upon funambulism: he performs a high-wire act. The Madonna wipes away his sweat very pointedly with an edge of her outer garment.

The retelling demonstrates how in a matter of a few decades both the medieval narrative and Anatole France’s remaking of it came to be flanked by countless other versions in various media. The multiplication was all to the good of the tale. The success that derived from France’s short story alone might have been transitory, since his writings faded fast. Despite the Nobel Prize to come nearly two decades later, he already looked old-school in comparison with the symbolists. He lagged only further as the tempo of change in the world sped up rapidly in the early years of the twentieth century. In 1909, James Joyce compared the then-unknown Italo Svevo (without a whit of disparagement) to the universally acclaimed Anatole France. To the Irish writer, France was the point of reference for [elegance recognized across the board](#). Nowadays, how many read the French author as compared with the once obscure Italian one?

Ultimately, Anatole France was no longer needed for the prolonged posterity of the tale. By 1958, his story was still being anthologized in the United States, but a headnote about him counterbalanced almost patronizing praise with the backhanded characterization: “[He is remembered primarily as a dilettante](#) rather than as a constructive thinker.” The jovial jongleur and genial juggler could not hold their own against the not-so-heroic heroes of what was then the latest French existentialist fiction of Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus. But by this point, France had already made his contribution to the heady afterlife of the narrative about the juggler. Like a booster rocket, he had lifted the jongleur into a stratosphere where another stage could assume responsibility for propulsion. In 1902, a new development in the history of the story took place, and it ensured for the tale a trajectory that elevated it before the eyes of a far greater public.

## Edwin Markham's Working-Class Juggler

Before a decade of the twentieth century had elapsed, the American author Edwin Markham (see Fig. 5.37) produced an extremely free versification of *Le jongleur de Notre Dame*. His narrative poem, "[The Juggler of Touraine](#)," was published first in December 1907. At the time, "this Markhamic version" was touted wrongly as "the first appearance of the legend in modern verse." Less inaccurately, it was said to be based on both [Isabel Butler's translation](#) and Anatole France's story. The introduction sang Markham's praises for the creativity in recombination that he demonstrated by [devising his own version](#). In "The Juggler of Touraine," "the poet for preachers" brought the tale of the jongleur full circle. It originated as a medieval exemplum for sermonizing; now an American recovered and redeemed it as a kind of verse homily. Markham's poem teaches "[the happiness of lowliness](#)," even as it offers us a cautionary tale against condemning others for worshipping differently.



Fig. 5.37 Edwin Markham at his desk. Photograph, date, and photographer unknown. New York, Wagner College, Horrmann Library. Image courtesy of Wagner College, New York. All rights reserved.

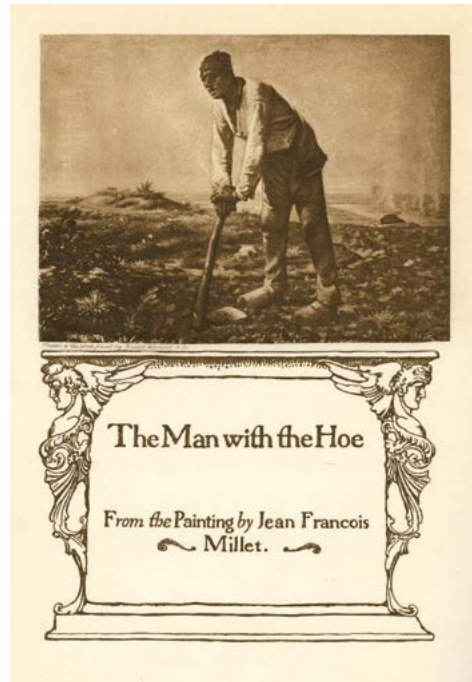


Fig. 5.38 Monochrome reproduction of Jean-François Millet's *Man with a Hoe* (1860–1862). Published in Edwin Markham, *The Man with the Hoe and Other Poems*, illus. Howard Pyle (New York: Doubleday & McClure, 1900), xiv.

While accentuating the lowliness of the juggler, Markham aligned the title character strangely with his interest in the troubles of America's poor working people. In 1892 the American poet Walt Whitman had died. He had glorified manual labor in poems such

as the free-verse “[I Hear America Singing](#),” which lists professions that revolve around physical work. Our later versifier picked up his predecessor’s mantle in focusing on similar toil. He evinced concern for hoi polloi in his signature poem (see Fig. 5.38), “[The Man with the Hoe](#).” Markham composed the poem in the last week of 1898 and read it aloud at a New Year’s Eve party before an editor of William Randolph Hearst’s *San Francisco Examiner*. From its first printing in that newspaper two weeks later, the composition struck enough right chords to be regarded extremely highly for a couple of decades afterward. Thereafter it nosedived into the oblivion where it now languishes.

“The Man with the Hoe” is undisguised in its social didacticism and consistent with the socialism of which its author had been an outright adherent since 1876. The poem also drew from the prestigious well of Gallic culture. Most evident is its debt to a painting from 1862 (see Fig. 5.39) by Jean-François Millet, a founder of the French Barbizon school, reproduced more colorfully in the frontispiece to Markham’s poetic response. The poem bore a subtitle to indicate that it had been written after seeing the world-famous painting. Although Markham had been shown a reproduction already in 1886, the experience of [seeing with his own eyes](#) the original oil painting on canvas in 1898 electrified him. This is what the best of artistic and aesthetic experiences are meant to accomplish: shock and awe of the positive kind. [Sitting before the actual object](#) for two hours and reflecting upon it moved him to compose his panegyric on the proletariat.



Fig. 5.39 Jean-François Millet, *Man with a Hoe*, 1860–1862. Oil on canvas, 81.9 × 100.3 cm. Los Angeles, Getty Center. Image courtesy of the Getty Center, Los Angeles. All rights reserved.

For Markham to have gravitated to the story of the juggler even as he had been drawn to “The Man with the Hoe” should not catch us completely off guard. He may have detected in the performer from the Middle Ages a proto-populist. The medieval French poet himself put his finger upon an abiding ambiguity in medieval monasticism. He pinpointed at least implicitly the gray areas between prayer and work, as enjoined by the Benedictine commandment, *ora et labora*. In the late nineteenth century, the issue came to the fore once again within an ambit far broader than monastic alone. In an [encyclical](#), Pope Leo XIII defined the views of the Church on the relationship between capital and labor. The papal letter applied neo-Thomism to the burning social issue of the working class (see Fig. 5.40). It paid attention to the unjust circumstances and oppression in which industrial workers toiled and lived. While affirming the right to private property and opposing the foundational premises of socialism (or communism), the screed of the supreme pontiff pronounced against unchecked capitalism, monopoly, and plutocracy, and in favor of the right to unionize.

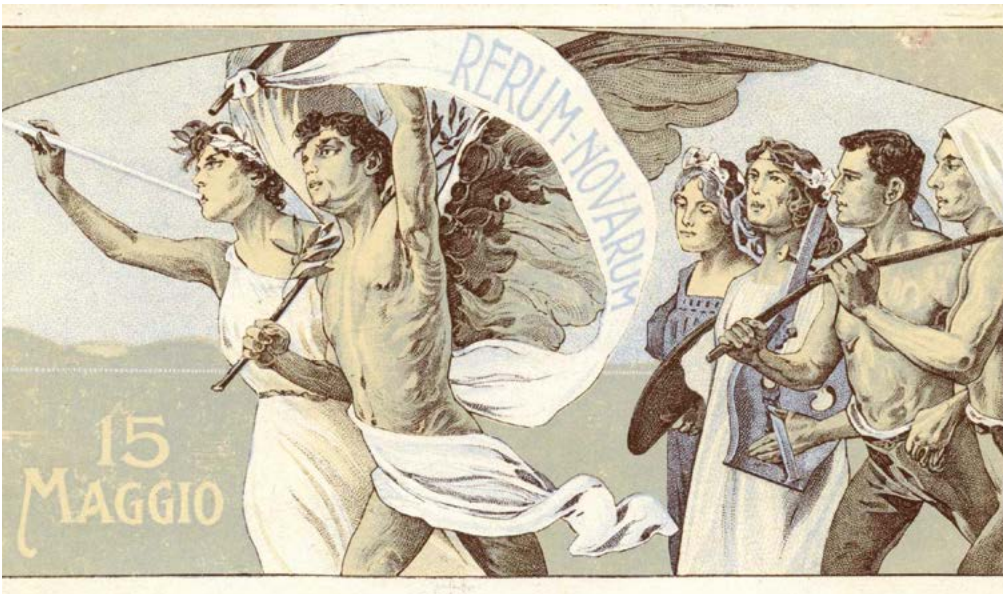


Fig. 5.40 Postcard depicting a symbolic procession of the working class, under the banner of Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum novarum* (May 15, 1891).

Anatole France wrote his short story before the encyclical was issued. Because of his anticlericalism, he would not have been swayed by the pope's prose even if individual doctrines from it had circulated before its formal release in 1891. At the same time, both France and Markham give evidence of the attraction that the medieval story could hold as a vehicle for at least oblique consideration of pressing social issues. One was poor laborers, since the juggler is often described as being poverty-stricken. Whereas the performer in the original poem had evidently made a success of his life

materially, the protagonist of the late nineteenth-century story wore himself truly ragged: he had only rags to show for all his performances. Another was the nature of work, where the story forces the question: do artistic performances qualify as work? Last but not least is the nub of *ora et labora*, the association between work and devotion. Thanks to the performance of prayer, the work works out. As John Lennon put it, “a working-class hero is something to be” —but the something looks different in the early thirteenth century from now.





# Notes

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*I like the Joan of Arc best.* A diplomatic transcription and a facsimile of the note, handwritten on November 30, 1908, are reproduced in Albert Bigelow Paine, *Mark Twain: A Biography, The Personal and Literary Life of Samuel Langhorne Clemens*, 3 vols. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1912), 2: 1034.

## Notes to Chapter 1

*Edit indeed.* “Making, Knowing and Judging,” in W. H. Auden, *The Dyer’s Hand and Other Essays* (New York: Random House, 1962), 31–60, at 43.

### A Medieval Poem Comforts a Modern Nation

*The poetry of the Middle Ages.* Gaston Paris, *La poésie du Moyen Âge: Leçons et lectures*, 1st series, 4th ed. (Paris: Hachette, 1899), viii: “La poésie du Moyen Âge offre assurément même aux esprits les plus délicats et les plus cultivés, pourvu qu’ils ne se refusent pas de parti pris à les accepter, de véritables jouissances.”

*In proportion to the understanding of the reader.* Terentianus Maurus, *De syllabis*, ed. Jan-Wilhelm Beck, *Hypomnemata*, vol. 102 (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 122 (line 1286): “Pro captu lectoris habent sua fata libelli.”

*waning years of the fifteenth century.* At that point, one quatrain in a collection of proverbs published in Paris lightly refashions four lines of the poem, while another tallies exactly with four other lines. Joseph Morawski, ed., *Les Diz et proverbes des sages (Proverbes as philosophes)*, Université de Paris: Bibliothèque de la Faculté des Lettres, 2nd series, vol. 2 (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1924), 48 (quatrains 127–127B): see Morawski, “Mélanges de littérature pieuse, III,” 457n2.

*Romanticism is Medievalism.* William Calin, “Leslie Workman: A Speech of Thanks,” in *Medievalism in the Modern World: Essays in Honour of Leslie Workman*, ed. Richard Utz and Tom Shippey, *Making the Middle Ages*, vol. 1 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1998), 451–52, at 451.

*the medieval period had reached all-time lows.* This is not to say that medievalism and awareness of medieval literature and architecture were wholly non-existent during these periods, which was not the case: see Nathan Edelman, *Attitudes of Seventeenth-Century France toward the Middle Ages* (New York: King’s Crown, 1946); Lionel Gossman, *Medievalism and the Ideologies of the*

*Enlightenment: The World and Work of LaCurne de Sainte-Palaye* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1968); Alicia C. Montoya, *Medievalist Enlightenment: From Charles Perrault to Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2013).

*The Middle Ages became big business.* For the British context in particular, see Elizabeth Fay, *Romantic Medievalism: History and the Romantic Literary Ideal* (Houndmills, UK: Palgrave, 2002); Clare A. Simmons, *Popular Medievalism in Romantic-Era Britain* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

*precedent-setting quantities.* See Elizabeth Emery and Laura Morowitz, *Consuming the Past: The Medieval Revival in fin-de-siècle France* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2003).

## The Simple Middle Ages

*ultimate sophistication.* The exact source of this aphorism has been investigated repeatedly without unanimously clear results.

*noteworthy at once for its simplicity.* Wilhelm [Wendelin] Foerster, “Del tumbleor Notre-Dame,” *Romania* 2 (1873): 315–25, at 316: “remarquable à la fois par sa simplicité et sa candide naïveté” and “l’innocence enfantine.” The article is credited at the end to Wilhelm Foerster, but his given name was elsewhere presented as Wendelin. I therefor refer to the author when cited as Wilhelm [Wendelin] Foerster.

*triumph of simplicity.* Petit de Julleville, *Histoire*, 1: 42.

*to descend from heaven to earth.* Anatole France, “M. Gaston Paris et la littérature française au Moyen Âge,” in Anatole France, *La vie littéraire*, 4 vols. (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1925), 2: 265–74, at 266–67.

*put themselves into the shoes.* Alice Kemp-Welch, *Of the Tumbler of Our Lady & Other Miracles Now Translated from the Middle French* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1908), xvii: “It is only by entering into this spirit of human intimacy that we can in anywise appreciate what such miracle-stories meant to the simple folk of the Middle Ages, with whom religion and daily life went hand in hand. Even we ourselves, as we read them, cannot fail to be touched by their tenderness and naïveté, and by a certain charm which so pervades them, that we seem for the time to be living in the same strange intellectual and moral atmosphere.”

*Monastic Simplicity.* Karen Louise Jolly, *Tradition and Diversity: Christianity in a World Context to 1500* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1997), 436: “The monastic and mendicant orders emphasize simplicity and humility as the chief virtues to be imitated in the life of a Christian.” The translation of the tale by Eugene Mason follows, 437–45.

*the tasks of discovery.* See R. Howard Bloch, “Restoration from Notre-Dame de Paris to Gaston Paris,” in *Manufacturing Middle Ages: Entangled History of Medievalism in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Patrick J. Geary and Gábor Klaniczay (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2013), 279–97.

*his initial address as president.* For the address, see Gaston Paris, “Discours,” *Bulletin de la Société des anciens textes français* 3 (1877): 53–58, at 55. The passage was singled out later in the necrology for Paris by Paul Meyer, “Notice sur Gaston Paris (1839–1903),” in *Histoire littéraire de la France: Ouvrage commencé par des religieux bénédictins de la Congrégation de Saint Maur, et continué par des membres de l’Institut* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1733–<2002>), 33: vii–xxiii, at xix; translated

and cited in Emery and Morowitz, *Consuming the Past*, 209, 276n847. My translation differs only slightly.

*The Song of Roland*. François Génin, ed., *La chanson de Roland, poème de Theroulde* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1850), i: “Le caractère essentiel de l’épopée, c’est la grandeur jointe à la naïveté; la virilité, l’énergie de l’homme fait unies à la grâce ingénue de l’enfant: c’est Homère.”

*optimistic belief in progress*. See Walter Kudrycz, *The Historical Present: Medievalism and Modernity* (London: Continuum, 2011), 21–34.

*anthropomorphized perspective*. William Robertson, *Works*, vols. 1 and 2: *The History of Scotland* (Oxford: Talboys and Wheeler, 1825), 1: 3: “Nations, as well as men, arrive at maturity by degrees, and the events, which happened during their infancy of early youth, cannot be recollected, and deserve not to be remembered.”

*childlike age*. Barbara H. Rosenwein, “Writing without Fear about Early Medieval Emotions,” *Early Medieval Europe* 10.2 (2001): 229–34, at 233; W. T. H. Jackson, “Medieval Entertainments,” *The American Scholar* 40 (1971): 348–52.

*young innocents*. Anne Scott MacLeod, “Howard Pyle’s Robin Hood: The Middle Ages for Americans,” *Children’s Literature Association Quarterly* 25.1 (2000): 44–48, at 46.

*beatitudes*. This beatitude appears at Matthew 5:8.

*one version of the story*. Dorothy Ramsey and Gerald Keenan, *Our Lady’s Tumbler: An Easter Play in Two Acts* (West Chester, PA: n.p., 1949), 12.

*wild man*. In the sense of the Latin tag, *homo silvaticus*.

*noble savage*. Malcolm J. Young, “Is Rock Cultural?,” *Music Educators Journal* 56.2 (October 1969): 8, 11–12, at 11 (on Jules Massenet’s opera).

## The Primitive and the Gothic

*the cult of Italian primitives*. Charles Rufus Morey, “Mediaeval Art and America,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 7 (1944): 1–6, at 1.

*primitive*. The English and French substantives, *primitive* and *primitif*, do not align completely.

*the people, art, and overall culture of the Middle Ages*. Emery and Morowitz, *Consuming the Past*, 37–60; Laura Morowitz, “Medievalism, Classicism, and Nationalism: The Appropriation of the French Primitifs in Turn-of-the-Century France,” in *Nationalism and French Visual Culture, 1870–1914*, ed. June Hargrove and Neil McWilliam, *Studies in the History of Art*, vol. 68/Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts: Symposium Papers, vol. 45 (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 2005), 224–41; eadem, “Primitive,” in *Medievalism: Key Critical Terms*, ed. Elizabeth Emery and Richard Utz, *Medievalism*, vol. 5 (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2014), 189–98; Rosenwein, “Writing without Fear,” 233.

*publication of miracles of the Virgin*. Louis Gillet, Jérôme Tharaud, and Jean Tharaud, *Les primitifs français: Contes de la Vierge*, “Cahier de Noël et cahier pour le jour de l’an,” *Cahiers de la quinzaine*, 6th series, cahier 7 (Paris: Cahiers de la quinzaine, 1904). In an opening nod to the traditionalism of the topic and material, the issue begins with a piece dedicated “To My

Grandmother” by François Porché. It contains pieces on both the *primitifs* and the tales on the Virgin by Charles Péguy, as well as “Nos maîtres d’autrefois: Les primitifs français” by Louis Gillet. The adaptations of tales are by the brothers Jérôme and Jean Tharaud, at pp. 131–70. This selection does not include the story of the jongleur or juggler.

*Like Romanesque.* See Jean Nayrolles, *L’invention de l’art roman à l’époque moderne (XVIIIe-XIXe siècles)* (Rennes, France: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2005); Xavier Barral i Altet, *Contre l’art roman?: Essai sur un passé réinventé* (Paris: Fayard, 2006).

*inappropriateness of the word “Gothic”.* Victor Hugo, *Notre-Dame de Paris* (Paris: Hachette, 1867), vol. 1, book 1, chap. 1: “Le mot gothique, dans le sens où on l’emploie généralement, est parfaitement impropre, mais parfaitement consacré. Nous l’acceptons donc, et nous l’adoptons, comme tout le monde, pour caractériser l’architecture de la seconde moitié du moyen âge, celle dont l’ogive est le principe, qui succède à l’architecture de la première période, dont le plein-cintre est le générateur” (“The word Gothic, in the sense in which it is generally employed, is wholly unsuitable, but wholly consecrated. Hence, we accept it and we adopt it, like all the rest of the world, to characterize the architecture of the second half of the Middle Ages, where the ogive is the principle which succeeds the architecture of the first period, of which the semi-circle is the father”).

*On Vandalism in France.* Charles de Montalembert, “Du vandalisme en France,” *Revue des deux mondes* n.s. 1 (1833): 477–524.

*Capital of Vandalism.* This reconfiguration took place under the architects August Virebent and Urban Vitry, among others. Philippe Barb, “Toulouse (Haute-Garonne, France),” in *International Dictionary of Historic Places*, ed. Trudy Ring et al., 5 vols. (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1995–1996), 2: 730–35, at 734.

*The English of this time.* Robert Arnold Aubin, “Some Augustan Gothicists,” *Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature* 17 (1935): 15–25, at 15: “Englishmen of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries looked askance at Gothic architecture but nevertheless constructed buildings in that mode.”

*John Milner.* John Milner, “On the Rise and Progress of the Pointed Arch,” in *Essays on Gothic Architecture* (London: S. Gosnell, for J. Taylor, 1800), 125–33, at 127.

*eighteenth-century associations.* For close study of the word’s development, see Alfred E. Longueil, “The Word ‘Gothic’ in Eighteenth Century Criticism,” *Modern Language Notes* 38 (1923): 453–60. On the change of Gothic’s associations from those of the eighteenth century identified here to the so-called sacramental Gothic of Pugin and Ruskin, see Clark, *Gothic Revival*.

## The Oriental and the Gothic

*Nazi-tainted black letter.* See Peter Bain and Paul Shaw, *Blackletter: Type and National Identity* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998).

*orientalism and the Middle Ages.* To date, the most expansive treatment of the relationship between medievalism and orientalism is to be found in John M. Ganim, *Medievalism and Orientalism: Three Essays on Literature, Architecture and Cultural Identity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). For the relationship between orientalism and Gothicism in romanticism, see Peter J.

Kitson, “Oriental Gothic,” in *Romantic Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*, ed. Angela Wright and Dale Townshend (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 167–84.

*oriental and medieval*. See Steve Guthrie, “Medievalism and Orientalism,” *Medieval Perspectives* 19 (2004): 91–113.

*books brought out in London in the 1750s*. Paul Decker, *Gothic Architecture Decorated: Consisting of a Large Collection of Temples, Banqueting, Summer and Green Houses and Chinese Architecture Civil and Ornamental*, both printed for the author, and sold by Henry Parker and Elirabeth [sic] Bakewell (London: H. Piers and Partner, 1759); William Halfpenny and John Halfpenny, *Chinese and Gothic Architecture, Properly Ornamented* (London, 1752; repr. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1968); Charles Over, *Ornamental Architecture in the Gothic, Chinese and Modern Taste* (London: Printed for R. Sayer, 1758).

*advertisement*. January 6, 1767; cited in Calder Loth and Julius Trousdale Sadler Jr., *The Only Proper Style: Gothic Architecture in America* (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1975), 12–13.

*Aesthetic and art nouveau*. Michael J. Lewis, *The Gothic Revival* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2002), 156. See also 163.

*cataloger*. The cataloguer was Earl Shinn, who published under the pseudonym of Edward Strahan, *Mr. Vanderbilt’s House and Collection, Described by Edward Strahan*, 10 vols. (Boston: G. Barrie, 1883–1884), 6: 65: “no more appropriate repository being found in the house than the Japanese parlor.”

*a wonderful piece*. “Gothic Art Shown at Metropolitan,” *New York Times*, July 8, 1908, 6.

*hanging silk scrolls*. Such rolls influenced in turn artists such as James Abbott McNeill Whistler. This painter was born in America and died in England, but spent much time in Paris in the late nineteenth century. His relatively early “Caprice in Purple and Gold” of 1864, not a source but an interesting parallel, bears the hallmarks of the same Japonism evident in Lessieux’s supposed Middle Ages.

*Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin*. Ronald van Kesteren, *Het verlangen naar de middeleeuwen: De verbeelding van een historische passie* (Amsterdam: Wereldbibliotheek, 2004), 249–331.

*John Ruskin*. See Arthur Dwight Culler, *The Victorian Mirror of History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), 152–84 (chap. 7, “Ruskin and Victorian Medievalism”).

*opera production*. Benjamin Ferrey, *Recollections of A. N. Welby Pugin and His Father, Augustus Pugin* (London: E. Stanford, 1861), 59–60. The production was staged at Her Majesty’s Theatre.

## The Sacramental Middle Ages

*his publications*. Available to me too late for more than quick consultation was Timothy Brittain-Catlin et al., eds., *Gothic Revival Worldwide: A. W. N. Pugin’s Global Influence*, KADOC-Artes, vol. 16 (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2016).

*medieval room*. Just below the roof beams runs a Bible verse, Daniel 5:53, “Benedictus es, Domine, in templo sancto gloriae tuae” (“You are blessed, Lord, in the holy temple of your glory”). As one would expect, the Latin of the quotation is written in Gothic script.

*degeneracy*. Corinna M. Wagner, “Standing Proof of the Degeneracy of Modern Times’: Architecture, Society, and the Medievalism of A. W. N. Pugin,” in *Beyond Arthurian Romances: The Reach of Victorian Medievalism*, ed. Lorretta M. Holloway and Jennifer A. Palmgren (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 9–37.

*Mistrust has abided*. Michael McCarthy, *The Origins of the Gothic Revival* (New Haven, CT: Paul Mellon Center for Studies in British Art, 1987), 3.

*in the French language*. On the differentiation between the English and the French usages, see Nikolaus Pevsner, *Ruskin and Viollet-le-Duc: Englishness and Frenchness in the Appreciation of Gothic Architecture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1969).

*Primitive Painters*. *Peintres primitifs: Collection de tableaux rapportée d’Italie* (Paris: Challamel, 1843). Plate 7 offers an engraving after a painting of the Madonna and Child with Saints, which is now known to have been made in Florence around 1350 by Nardo di Cione.

*childlike, humble, naïve, primitive, and simple*. On these terms in the highly influential, two-volume *Histoire illustrée de la littérature française* by Gustave Lanson (Paris: Hachette, 1923), see Elizabeth Emery, “Medievalism in the Margins: Paratexts and the Packaging of Medieval French Literature,” in *Medievalism on the Margins*, ed. Karl Fugelso, *Studies in Medievalism*, vol. 24 (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2015), 1–9, at 4–5.

*in conflict with modernism*. T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880–1920* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), 141–81.

*Father Willibrord*. Gretchen Krehling McKay, “An Eastern Medieval Revival: Byzantine Art and Nineteenth-Century French Painting,” in *Medievalism in Technology Old and New*, ed. Karl Fugelso and Carol L. Robinson, *Studies in Medievalism*, vol. 16 (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008), 46–66, at 59.

*words such as humble and humility*. David Brooks, “What Our Words Tell Us,” *New York Times*, May 21, 2013, A25.

## The Franco-Prussian War

*totally divorced from reality*. Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams: An Autobiography* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1918), chap. 19, “Chaos (1870).”

*imagined communities*. See Benedict R. O’G. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 2006).

*producing a first edition*. For succinct treatment of this issue, see Richard Utz, “Academic Medievalism and Nationalism,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Medievalism*, ed. Louise D’Arcens (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 119–34, at 127.

*Sanctus amor patriae dat animum*. The backdrop to this aphorism deserves its own minor disquisition.

*What is a Nation?*. “Qu’est-ce qu’une nation?,” Lecture delivered at the Sorbonne, March 11, 1882, publ. Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1882.

*Greek linguistic reformer.* Ioannis (Yannis) Psycharis, *To taksidi mou* (Athens, Greece: Ermis, 1971), 37. Quoted and translated by Roderick Beaton, *An Introduction to Modern Greek Literature*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 67.

*remained half finished.* On the modern phase of the construction, the most accessible account is the well-illustrated Arnold Wolff, *The Cologne Cathedral*, illus. Rainer Gaertner, trans. Margret Maranuk-Rohmeder (Cologne, Germany: Kölner Dom, 1999), 20–26.

*Fundamentals of Gothic Architecture.* The German title is *Grundzüge der gotischen Baukunst*.

*analysis of the edifice.* *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*, ed. Ernst Behler, 35 vols. (Paderborn, Germany: F. Schöningh, 1958–2002), 4: 155–204. On his attitude toward the Middle Ages, see Edith Höltenschmidt, *Die Mittelalter-Rezeption der Brüder Schlegel* (Paderborn, Germany: F. Schöningh, 2000); and (with coverage also of Görres) van Kesteren, *Het verlangen naar de middeleeuwen*, 205–47.

*ensuing fund drive.* Nikolaus Gussone, ed., *Das Kölner Dombaufest von 1842: Ernst Friedrich Zwirner und die Vollendung des Kölner Doms. Beiträge zu einer Ausstellung aus Anlass des 150. Jahrestages der feierlichen Grundsteinlegung zum Fortbau des Kölner Doms* (Ratingen-Hösel, Germany: Oberschlesisches Landesmuseum, 1992).

*architects.* Among the key players were Karl Friedrich Schinkel and his follower Ernst Friedrich Zwirner.

*archbishop's diocese.* Such a diocese is known alternately as the archiepiscopal see.

*the new title.* *A History of Germany, from the Invasion of Marius down to the Completion of Cologne Cathedral in the Year 1880*, 5th ed. (London: John Murray, 1882).

*bloody week.* *La semaine sanglante* lasted from May 21 to 28.

*striking down the blasphemer.* Frederick Brown, *For the Soul of France: Culture Wars in the Age of Dreyfus* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010), 28.

## The Virtue of Old French

*recreants.* Emery and Morowitz, *Consuming the Past*, 19–35.

*spadework.* Dorothy Doolittle, *The Relations between Literature and Mediaeval Studies in France from 1820 to 1860*, printed PhD diss. (Bryn Mawr, PA: n.p., 1933), 54–85.

*within the universities of France.* Gabriel Bergounioux, “L’introduction de l’ancien français dans l’université française (1870–1900),” *Romania* 112.1–2 (1991): 243–58.

*The Song of Roland.* In French, *La chanson de Roland*.

*Joan of Arc.* For basics, see Isabelle Durand-Le Guern, “Jeanne d’Arc,” in *La fabrique du Moyen Âge au XIXe siècle: Représentations du Moyen Âge dans la culture et la littérature françaises du XIXe siècle*, ed. Simone Bernard-Griffiths et al., *Romantisme et modernités*, vol. 94 (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2006), 492–95.

*The medieval poem relates.* For quick orientation, see Christian Amalvi, “Roland,” in Bernard-Griffiths et al., *La fabrique du Moyen Âge*, 481–85; Joseph Duggan, “Franco-German Conflict and the History of French Scholarship on the Song of Roland,” in *Hermeneutics and Medieval Culture*, ed. Patrick J. Gallacher and Helen Damico (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 97–106.

*The Song of Roland and French Nationality.* Gaston Paris, “La chanson de Roland et la nationalité française,” in idem, *La poésie du Moyen Âge*, 87–118, repr. in *Moyen Âge et Renaissance au Collège de France: Leçons inaugurales*, ed. Pierre Toubert and Michel Zink (Paris: Fayard, 2009), 105–18.

*It took the war of 1870.* Gautier, *Les épopées françaises*, 2: 725, 745: “Il a fallu la guerre de 1870 pour nous en donner l’intelligence et l’amour Sedan a fait comprendre Roncevaux.... [L’ennemi n’avait pas encore quitté notre territoire que déjà nous nous tournions en larmes vers ces deux figures lumineuses, Roland et Jeanne d’Arc, en leur demandant à la fois des consolations et des espérances.”

*The Daughter of Roland.* *La fille de Roland*, by Henri de Bornier.

*major triumph.* The triumph was all the greater since the play had been rejected by the Comédie-Française at the end of the Second Empire. Another index of changed circumstances is how much more success the play garnered in this production than had done the 1864 opera *Roland à Roncevaux* (Roland at Roncevaux) by the composer Auguste Mermet (see Fig. n.1).

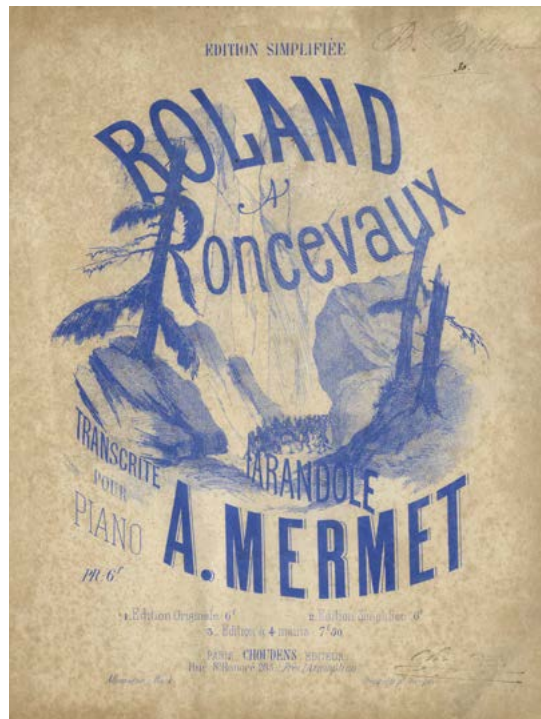


Fig. n.1 Front cover of Auguste Mermet, *Roland à Roncevaux: Farandole transcrite pour piano* (Paris: Choudens, ca. 1865).



*introduced into the scholastic curriculum.* Roger Fayolle, “La présentation du Moyen Âge dans les histoires de la littérature française (de Nisard à Lanson),” *Littérales* 6 (1990): 67–78.

*promote medieval literature.* In this paragraph I am much beholden to Christian Amalvi, *Le goût du Moyen Âge*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Boutique de l’histoire, 2002), 231–32, and to Dakyns, *Middle Ages in French Literature*, 195.

*French Iliad.* *Le Moyen Âge au miroir du XIXe siècle, 1850–1900: Actes du colloque de Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, 22–23 juin 2000*, ed. Laura Kendrick et al. (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2003), 15.

## Gaston Paris and the Dance of Philology

*This book makes us love Gaston Paris.* Jules Lemaître, *Les contemporains: Études et portraits littéraires*, 7 vols. (Paris: Lecène, Oudin, 1886–1899), 3: 235: review of Gaston Paris, *La poésie du Moyen Âge*: “Ce livre nous fait aimer M. Gaston Paris: il nous fait aimer aussi le moyen âge.”

*condensing an article.* Gaston Paris, summary of the contents of *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie* 4.1, in *Romania* 9 (1880): 479–80.

*Wendelin (or Wilhelm) Foerster.* Foerster, “*Del tumbeor Nostre-Dame*,” (1873). For a reminiscence by Wendelin Foerster about the early-career eureka moment of discovering the poem about the tumbler—*das liebliche Kleinod* “the charming jewel”—in the fall of 1872, see Wendelin Foerster, “Le saint vou de Luques,” *Romanische Forschungen* 23.1 (1907): 1–55, at 1. The family name was also occasionally spelled Føerster and Förster. The variations reflect different options at the time for representing the o-umlaut in German. By whatever name, he was born in Wildschütz near Trautenau in the Riesengebirge district of what is now the Czech Republic. In Czech, his birthplace is known as Vlčice; the nearby town, Trutnov; and the district, Krkonoše. He capped studies in Vienna (which included a study trip to Paris) by completing his Habilitation there. He began his subsequent career as an associate professor in Prague, but advanced two years later to become a full professor in Bonn, where he succeeded Friedrich Christian Diez.

*two text series.* The Altfranzösische Bibliothek (Old French Library) in 1879, and Romanische Bibliothek (Romance Library) in 1889, respectively. Even in these regards he is recognized among a restricted ambit of scholars.

*Paul Meyer.* His name in full was Marie-Paul-Hyacinthe Meyer.

*the nature of the project.* See Jacques Monfrin, “Romania,” *Romanische Forschungen* 100 (1988): 263–81; Isabel DiVanna, “The Early Days of *Romania* and the Progress of Romance Philology in France,” in *Interpreting the Middle Ages: Essays on Medievalism*, ed. Susan J. Ridyard et al., Sewanee Medieval Studies, vol. 13 (Sewanee, TN: University of the South Press, 2005), 27–42; Charles Ridoux, *Évolution des études médiévales en France de 1860 à 1914*, Nouvelle Bibliothèque du Moyen Âge, vol. 56 (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2001), 290–301.

*redress the rupture.* *Bibliothèque de l’École des Chartes* 32 (1871): 231. For other similar statements in other French historical journals launched around the same time, see Dakyns, *Middle Ages in French Literature*, 199–200.

*To recall the sayings.* Drawn from the twelfth-century Norman French poet Wace: “Pur remembrer des ancessurs / Les diz et les faiz et les murs.”

*appreciation of Gaston Paris.* Foerster, “*Del tumbeor Nostre-Dame*,” 317: “aux lumières duquel j’ai eu plusieurs fois recours.”

*tampered with neither when they were accidentally opposed.* W. P. Ker, “Gaston Paris,” in idem, *Essays on Medieval Literature* (London: Macmillan, 1905), 239–57, at 256–57.

*duumvirate.* On the two-man rule of Paris and Meyer, see Daniel Baggioni, “De Coquebert de Montbret et Raynouard au duo G. Paris-P. Meyer: Aux sources de la linguistique et dialectologie romanes françaises,” *Revue des langues romanes* 100 (1996): 135–62.

*German universities of the day.* On the origins of the philological seminar in Germany from the mid-eighteenth century to 1838, see William Clark, “On the Dialectical Origins of the Research Seminar,” *History of Science* 27.2 (1989): 111–54. In history, the influence of Leopold von Ranke was unsurpassed: see Edward Gaylord Bourne, “Ranke and the Beginning of the Seminary Method in Teaching History,” in idem, *Essays in Historical Criticism* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1901), 265–74.

*seminar.* Seminar comes from the Latin *seminarium*, itself from *semen* “seed.”

*editorial procedure.* For the definitive account, see Sebastiano Timpanaro, *The Genesis of Lachmann’s Method*, ed. and trans. Glenn W. Most (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005). For Gaston Paris’s use of the method, see Bernard Cerquiglini, *In Praise of the Variant: A Critical History of Philology*, trans. Betsy Wing (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 51–58; Jean-Claude Faucon, “La constitution d’un fonds culturel,” in Bernard-Griffiths et al., *La fabrique du Moyen Âge*, 167–81, at 176–77.

*common errors.* James Grier, “Lachmann, Bédier and the Bipartite Stemma: Towards a Responsible Application of the Common-Error Method,” *Revue d’histoire des textes* 18 (1988): 263–78.

*named after him.* Ridoux, *Évolution des études médiévales*, 397–99.

*medieval German text.* Review of the *Nibelungenlied*, ed. Karl Bartsch, in *Revue critique d’histoire et de la littérature* (September 22, 1866): 183–89. For discussion, see Yvan G. Lepage, *Guide de l’édition de textes en ancien français, Moyen Âge, outils de synthèse*, vol. 1 (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2001), 29–37. In English, the title of the journal reads *Critical Review of Literature and History*. It was founded jointly by Paul Meyer and Gaston Paris in the very year in which the review appeared.

*École Nationale des Chartes.* The name of the institution could be put into English very literally as National Charter School, but such a translation would hit wide of the mark.

*Royal Library.* In 1868 the Library occupied newly constructed buildings on the Rue de Richelieu.

*He held this post until his retirement.* B. McRae Amoss, “Nineteenth-Century Medievalism: The Polemic of Paulin Paris,” *Nineteenth-Century French Studies* 21 (1993): 292–304.

*widely known personage.* To grasp the place of Gaston Paris in his profession as well as in the larger world, see (among her many other works on the topic) Ursula Bähler, *Gaston Paris et la philologie romane*, Publications romanes et française, vol. 234 (Geneva: Droz, 2004); Michel Zink, ed., *Le Moyen Âge de Gaston Paris: La poésie à l’épreuve de la philologie* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2004). For a helpful review of both books, see Peter Dembowski, “Gaston Paris Revisited,” *Romance*

*Philology* 62 (2008): 59–74. For less reverential sidelights on Paris, see R. Howard Bloch, “‘Mieux vaut jamais que tard’: Romance, Philology, and Old French Letters,” *Representations* 36 (1991): 64–86.

*amour courtois*. Although the French term has been used more heavily and has held its own far better over time, the English derivative became established through its usage by scholars such as C. S. Lewis.

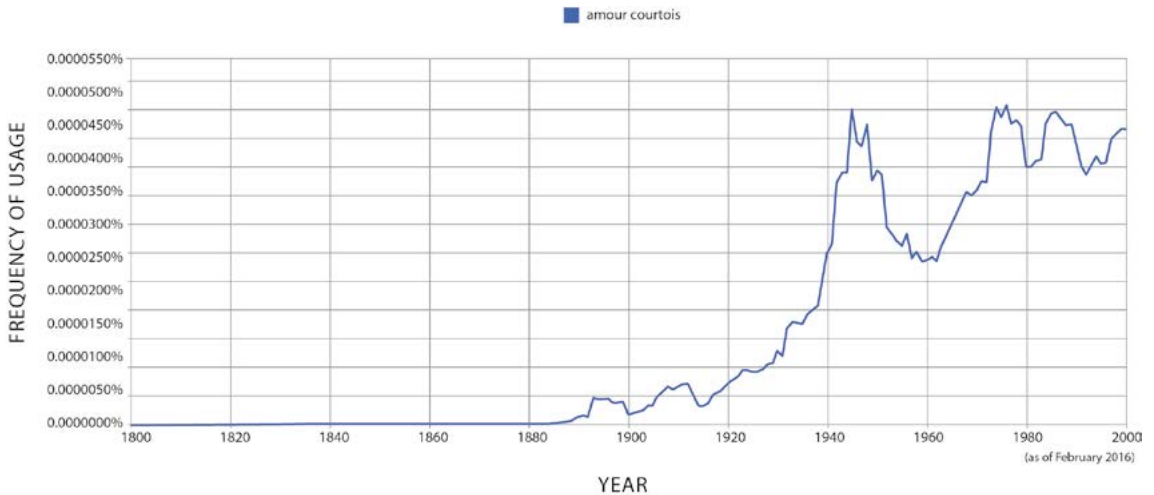


Fig. n.2 Google Ngram data for “amour courtois,” showing a pronounced rise in the early twentieth century and fairly stable interest since the 1970s. Vector Art by Melissa Tandysh, 2016. Image courtesy of Melissa Tandysh. All rights reserved.

*the pages of Romania*. See Henry Ansgar Kelly, “Gaston Paris’s Courteous and Horsely Love,” in *The Spirit of the Court: Selected Proceedings of the Fourth Congress of the International Courtly Literature Society* (Toronto 1983), ed. Glyn S. Burgess and Robert A. Taylor (Woodbridge, UK: D. S. Brewer, 1985), 217–23; idem, “The Varieties of Love in Medieval Literature According to Gaston Paris,” *Romance Philology* 40.3 (1987): 301–27; David Hult, “Gaston Paris and the Invention of Courtly Love,” in *Medievalism and the Modernist Temper*, ed. Howard Bloch and Stephen G. Nichols (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 195–224.

*as a vassal does to his lord*. Reto R. Bezzola, *Les origines et la formation de la littérature courtoise en Occident (500–1200)*, 3 vols., Bibliothèque de l’École des hautes études. Sciences historiques et philologiques, vols. 286, 313, 319–20 (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1944–1963); Denis de Rougemont, *Love in the Western World*, trans. Montgomery Belgion, 2nd ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983).

*fixation with her beauty*. Such chivalric fixation on beauty can be found even in poetry devoted to Marian miracles—for instance, by Gautier de Coinci and Rutebeuf.

*Miracles of Our Lady*. Produced in collaboration with the palaeographer (and archivist and librarian) Ulysse Robert (1845–1903): Gaston Paris and Ulysse Robert, eds., *Miracles de Notre Dame par personnages, publiés d’après le manuscrit de la Bibliothèque nationale*, 8 vols. (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1876–1893).

*staged every winter.* The miracles were performed annually from 1339 to 1382, except for gaps in 1354 and from 1358 to 1360 owing to the Jacquerie rebellions.

*a foundational article.* On the article, see Bähler, *Gaston Paris*, 439–50.

*communal participation.* Gaston Paris, “Romani, Romania, Lingua romana, Romancium,” *Romania* 1 (1872): 1–22, at 20–21. See Karlheinz Stierle, “Gaston Paris et l’unité de la Romania,” in Zink, *Le Moyen Âge de Gaston Paris*, 177–92; Simon Gaunt and Julian Weiss, “Cultural Traffic in the Medieval Romance World,” *Journal of Romance Studies* 4.3 (2004): 1–11.

*It is because he knows how to dance.* The remark, reported by Kristoffer Nyrop, the Danish Romance philologist, is quoted in Alberto Limentani, “‘Girart de Roussillon,’ Meyer e Bédier,” in idem, *Alle origini della filologia romanza*, ed. Mario Mancini, Nuovi saggi, vol. 68 (Parma, Italy: Pratiche, 1991), 97–121, at 120–21, who documents the statement by referring to Pio Rajna, “Paul Meyer,” *Il Marzocco* 22.45 (November 11, 1917). It has been cited (and translated into French) by Ursula Bähler, “Correspondence de K. Bartsch et G. Paris (1865–1885): Quatrième partie: 1872–1885,” *Romania* 121 (2003): 1–42, at 1. See also Ridoux, *Évolution des études médiévales*, 965, who gives as the source Antoine Thomas, *Bibliothèque de l’École des Chartes* 78 (1917), at 434–35: “Savez-vous pourquoi Gaston Paris est un plus grand philologue que moi? C’est parce qu’il sait danser.”

*a couple of sharp-witted pages.* Gaston Paris, review of Alfred Jeanroy, *Origines de la poésie lyrique en France au Moyen Âge*, in *Journal des savants* (1892): 407–29, at 408–409, repr. in Gaston Paris, *Mélanges de littérature française du Moyen Âge*, ed. Mario Roques (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1912), 2 (continuous pagination): 589–91. The importance of the passage was remarked upon by Aeppli, *Die wichtigsten Ausdrücke*, 1.

*accursed dancers.* Gaston Paris, “Les danseurs maudits: Légende allemande du XI<sup>e</sup> siècle,” *Journal des savants* 64 (1899): 733–47.

*rejected strenuously.* For excellent, in-depth exploration of the issues mentioned in this paragraph, consult Isabel DiVanna, *Reconstructing the Middle Ages: Gaston Paris and the Development of Nineteenth-Century Medievalism* (Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars, 2008), 12–18.

*What we seek above all is history.* Gaston Paris, “Paulin Paris et la littérature française du Moyen Âge: Leçon d’ouverture du cours de langue et littérature françaises du Moyen Âge au Collège de France, le jeudi 8 décembre 1881,” *Romania* 11 (1882): 1–21, at 5 (“Ce que nous y cherchons avant tout, c’est de l’histoire”), repr. in *Moyen Âge et Renaissance au Collège de France: Leçons inaugurales*, ed. Pierre Toubert and Michel Zink (Paris: Fayard, 2009), 119–39, at 123.

*for the first time and not for the last.* Gaston Paris, *La littérature française au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Hachette, 1888), 32.

*War of France.* See Charles de Mazade, “La guerre de France (1870–1871),” *Revue des deux mondes* (1872): 257–97.

*handmaid.* Situating Gaston Paris specifically in the climate at the end of the Franco-Prussian War is Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, “Gaston Paris en 1871,” in Zink, *Le Moyen Âge de Gaston Paris*, 69–80.

*travel to Germany.* From 1856 to 1858 he spent two years learning German and training with the Romance philologist Friedrich Diez in Bonn (in North Rhine-Westphalia) and in Göttingen (in Lower Saxony). He developed a relationship with Diez that endured until the latter's death in 1876. On his studies in Germany, see Bähler, *Gaston Paris*, 38–88; Ridoux, *Evolution des études médiévales*, 44–47.

*four years of further study.* On his studies in France, see Bähler, *Gaston Paris*, 88–120. On the École des Chartes in the development of medieval studies in France, see Ridoux, *Evolution des études médiévales*, 197–237.

*École pratique des hautes études.* This “Practical School for Advanced Studies” was founded only in 1868. The section to which he belonged comprehended the Philological and Historical Sciences.

*Collège de France.* On the Collège de France in the development of medieval studies in France, see Ridoux, *Evolution des études médiévales*, 237–45.

*named to succeed his father.* In 1876 he became a member of the Académie des Inscriptions. In 1896 he achieved the same status within the Académie française.

*Life of Saint Alexis.* *La vie de saint Alexis: Poème du XIe siècle et renouvellements des XIIIe, XIIIe et XIVe siècles*, ed. Gaston Paris and Léopold Pannier, Bibliothèque de l'École des hautes études. Sciences philologiques et historiques, vol. 7 (Paris: A. Franck, 1872).

*both a Germanist and a Romanist.* First at Rostock and then at Heidelberg. Bähler, “Correspondence de K. Bartsch et G. Paris.”

*independent-minded.* Cerquiglini, *In Praise of the Variant*, 51–58.

*remarks in his writings.* Ursula Bähler, “Die Nationalproblematik der romanischen Philologie in Frankreich: Elemente einer Systematisierung an Hand des Beispiels von Gaston Paris,” in *Marianne, Germania: Deutsch-französischer Kulturtransfer im europäischen Kontext 1789–1914 / Les transferts culturels France-Allemagne et leur contexte européen 1789–1914*, ed. Etienne François et al., *Deutsch-französische Kulturbibliothek*, vol. 10, 2 vols. (Leipzig, Germany: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 1998), 1: 275–95; Bähler, *Gaston Paris*, 434–39.

*Siege of Paris.* From September 19, 1870 until January 28, 1871.

*national languages.* Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, “‘Un souffle d’Allemagne ayant passé’: Friedrich Diez, Gaston Paris, and the Genesis of National Philologies,” *Romance Philology* 40 (1986–1987): 1–37, at 29.

*Sweet France!* Cerquiglini, *In Praise of the Variant*, 56. See also Bähler, *Gaston Paris*, 435–39; Dakyns, *Middle Ages*, 197 (for what is quoted here); Gumbrecht, “Gaston Paris en 1871,” 76.

*Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges.* For whom, see Françoise Mélonio, “Fustel de Coulanges,” in Bernard-Griffiths et al., *La fabrique du Moyen Âge*, 443–50; Alain Guerreau, “Fustel de Coulanges médiéviste,” *Revue historique* 275.2 (558) (April–June 1986): 381–406. On the place of the Middle Ages in his conception of history, see François Hartog, *Le XIXe siècle et l’histoire: Le cas Fustel de Coulanges* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1988).

*Everyone shapes for himself.* “L’organisation de la justice dans l’antiquité et les temps modernes,” *Revue des deux mondes* 41st year, 2nd period, vol. 94 (August 1, 1871): 536–56, at 537–38, trans. Elizabeth Emery, *Romancing the Cathedral: Gothic Architecture in Fin-de-Siècle French Culture* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 26; cited partially also by Dakyns, *Middle Ages*, 196.

*Patriotism is a virtue.* “Le patriotisme est une vertu; l’histoire est une science; il ne faut pas les confondre.” Quoted in Claude Nicolet, *La fabrique d’une nation: La France entre Rome et les Germains* (Paris: Perrin, 2003), 220.

*Revue des deux mondes.* The title in English would be “Review of the Two Worlds.” The magazine was launched in 1829.

*what the Middle Ages meant.* Elizabeth Emery, “The ‘Truth’ about the Middle Ages: *La Revue des deux mondes* and Late Nineteenth-Century French Medievalism,” *Prose Studies: History, Theory, Criticism* 23.2 (2000): 99–114; Ridoux, *Évolution des études médiévales*, 341–47.

*the clerical world and the lay world.* Gaston Paris, *Esquisse historique de la littérature française du Moyen Âge (depuis les origines jusqu’à la fin du XVe siècle)* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1907), 6.

*belletrists of his day.* Gerard J. Brault, “Gaston Paris (1839–1903),” in *Medieval Scholarship: Biographical Studies on the Formation of a Discipline*, ed. Helen Damico, 3 vols. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1995–2000), 2: 151–65, at 156.

*The Middle Ages with which he concerned himself.* Ursula Bähler, “Les Moyen Âges de Gaston Paris,” in *Le Moyen Âge au miroir du XIXe siècle, 1850–1900: Actes du colloque de Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, 22–23 juin 2000*, ed. Laura Kendrick et al. (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2003), 53–70.

*the last three years of his life.* From 1901 through 1903.

## Gaston Paris and *Our Lady's Tumbler*

*It is an old story.* *Le Jongleur de Notre Dame*, BBC Opera Libretto, broadcast on May 27 and 29, 1929; English version adapted from the translation by Louise Baum (London: BBC, 1929), 6. Baum’s translation had been published in 1911, when Oscar Hammerstein opened the opera in London.

*obituary.* See Paul Meyer, “Funérailles de M. Gaston Paris: Discours de M. Paul Meyer, membre de l’Institut, directeur de l’École des Chartes,” *Bulletin historique et philologique du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques* (1903): 99–103, at 100.

*popular press.* France, “M. Gaston Paris.” He published it in the Saturday column he penned for a major Parisian newspaper, *Le Temps*, the most important daily of the Third Republic, under the rubric “La vie littéraire” (Literary life). France served from 1886 to 1893 as the newspaper’s literary critic. The paper appeared from 1861 to 1942. See Pierre Albert, “La presse française de 1871 à 1940,” in *Histoire générale de la presse française*, ed. Claude Bellanger et al., 5 vols. (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1969–1976), 3: 135–622, at 352–56. For further information on Anatole France’s responses to the work of Gaston Paris, see Albert Gier, “Kenntnis und Beurteilung mittelalterlicher Literatur in Frankreich zwischen 1871 und 1914: Einige Beispiele,” in *Mittelalter-Rezeption: Zur Rezeptionsgeschichte der romanischen Literaturen des Mittelalters in der*

*Neuzeit*, ed. Reinhold R. Grimm, Begleitreihe zum Grundriss der romanischen Literaturen des Mittelalters, vol. 2 (Heidelberg, Germany: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1991), 197–225, at 204–14.

*cultural power broker*. On France's power as a critic at this time, see Albert Gier, *Der Skeptiker im Gespräch mit dem Leser: Studien zum Werk von Anatole France und zu seiner Rezeption in der französischen Presse (1879–1905)* (Tübingen, Germany: Niemeyer, 1985), 107.

*Gaston Paris's own reserve*. Bähler, *Gaston Paris*, 27–28.

*intellectuals as a distinct group*. Christophe Charle, *Naissance des "intellectuels": 1880–1900* (Paris: Minuit, 1990). On the interaction between writers and scholars in the preceding generations, see Doolittle, *Relations between Literature and Mediaeval Studies*, 98–105.

*Paris too was one of them*. Ursula Bähler, *Gaston Paris, dreyfusard: Le savant dans la cité* (Paris: CNRS Editions, 1999).

*the spirit of our ancestors*. France, "M. Gaston Paris," 265.

*Cistercians*. On the attitude of Cistercians toward humility, see France, *Separate but Equal*, xxiii, 164–66, 200–207.

*the naïveté of their imagination*. France, "M. Gaston Paris," 266, 268, 269.

*sincerity*. See Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 149–60.

*simple, naïve, sincere*. On these terms in Gaston Paris, see Bretel, "Jongleur de Notre-Dame, un miracle?," repr. in idem, *Littérature et édification au Moyen Âge: "Mult est diverse ma matyre," Essais sur le Moyen Âge*, vol. 56 (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2012), 477–96, at 478.

*only after conscientious scholarly study*. Paris, "Paulin Paris," 5, repr. in Toubert and Zink, *Moyen Âge et Renaissance*, 123: "As to whether the general public likes these works, whether they are circulated for literary enjoyment, whether they are taught in public schools—we certainly desire this, to some extent at any rate; but we expect this to be a slow process that can be brought about and accelerated only after sharp and rigorously historical criticism has prepared the ground, plowed the furrows, and weeded out the bad from the good." The translation is from Brault, "Gaston Paris (1839–1903)," 154.

*The story*. Paris, *La littérature française*, 2nd rev. ed., 208: "L'histoire (chef-d'œuvre peut-être du genre par sa délicieuse et enfantine simplicité) du *Tombeor Notre Dame*, de ce pauvre jongleur qui, devenu moine, et ne sachant comment servir la Vierge à l'instar de ses confrères, faisait devant elle, en secret, les culbutes qui lui avaient valu le plus de succès; des témoins qui, étonnés de ses retraites, s'étaient cachés dans la chapelle virent, après ses exercices, la mère de Dieu venir elle-même éponger le front trempé de sueur de son *tombeor*."

*Enlightenment*. Gossman, *Medievalism and the Ideologies of the Enlightenment*, 252.

*no longer drawn*. Most broadly, see Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 144–49.

*childlike imagination*. Désiré Nisard, *Histoire de la littérature française*, 5th ed., 4 vols. (Paris: Firmin-Didot Frères, Fils, 1874), 1: 143: "imagination enfantine." Nisard's history was reprinted in ten editions between 1844 and 1883.

*Lourdes*. Ruth Harris, *Lourdes: Body and Spirit in the Secular Age* (London: Penguin, 1999), 150.

*fierce anticlericalism*. Bähler, “Gaston Paris et la philologie romane,” in Zink, *Le Moyen Âge de Gaston Paris*, 13–40, at 15.

*dichotomies between lay and clerical*. Bähler, “Gaston Paris et la philologie romane,” 22–23, 26.

*differences in basic human characteristics*. Cited by Bähler, *Gaston Paris*, 552: “People of that time do not put reflection on the same level as we do; they do not observe, they live naïvely, like children, and in them the reflective life that civilization unfolds has not suffocated yet the free extension of natural vitality” (my translation).

*folklore studies*. Harry A. Senn, “Gaston Paris as Folklorist (1867–1895): The Rise and Decline of French Folklore Studies,” *Journal of The Folklore Institute* 12.1 (1975): 47–56.

*preadult stage*. Bähler, “Gaston Paris et la philologie romane,” 21.

*poor*. This epithet was far off the mark, if he meant it to refer to wealth or the lack thereof.

*overall perspectives*. Gaston Paris, *La poésie du Moyen Âge*, viii–x (my translation): “The poetry of the Middle Ages assuredly offers genuine enjoyments to even the most delicate and cultivated spirits, provided that they do not refuse a priori to accept them: it often strikes the imagination and touches the heart by its naïve grandeur, by its simplicity, by the intensity of feeling that penetrates it, or it pleases by the lithe grace and lively allure of the expression.... Either the French nationality will disappear (God forbid), or it will wish to reimmerse itself in its living sources and to strengthen itself by a sympathy, tender and at the same time firm, for all its manifestations upon the soil where it took shape, from the naïve songs of its childhood, already so powerful and which resounded in all of Europe, down to the most finely wrought and perfect works of its genius, in full conscience of itself.”

*maintaining memory of them*. Bähler, “Gaston Paris et la philologie romane,” 27.

## German Philologists

*knowledge and culture*. The Romance-speaking countries, above all France, had their share in this rivalry among scholars. In 1844 and 1847, Paul Meyer published the two volumes of his *Recueil d’anciens textes bas-latins, provençaux et français* (Collection of Old Vulgar Latin, Occitan, and French texts); the Société des Anciens Textes Français (Society of Old French texts) began publishing in 1872, thanks to the collaboration of Gaston Paris and Paul Meyer; and the journals *Revue des langues romanes*, *Studi di filologia romanza*, and *Le Moyen-Âge* began appearing in 1870, 1885, and 1888, respectively, along with the book series *Romanische Bibliothek* in 1888. The list could be lengthened. Daniel Madelénat, “Moyen Âge et histoire littéraire,” in Bernard-Griffiths et al., *La fabrique du Moyen Âge*, 259–84, at 277–78.

*notes on textual improvements*. Wilhelm [Wendelin] Foerster, in *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie* 4 (1880): 190; Gustav Gröber, “Del Tumber Nostre Dame,” *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie* 4 (1880): 88–97; Gaston Paris, *Romania* 9 (1880): 479; Arthur Langfors, “Der Springer unserer lieben Frau,” *Romania* 29 (1900): 159; and Wächter, “Der Springer unserer lieben Frau.” In the last case, compare with the author’s doctoral thesis: Hermann Wächter, “Der Springer unserer lieben Frau,” Inaugural-Dissertation, Bonn (Erlangen, Germany: F. Junge, 1899).



*showcases of Romance philology.* In addition to *Romania*, another of the journals in which the articles appeared was *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie* (Journal for Romance philology) (1877–). A third periodical is *Romanische Forschungen* (1883–). To translate somewhat ponderously, the German means “Romance-Language Researches.”

*Hermann Wächter.* Born in Vegesack, Bremen, Germany in 1876, studied in Leipzig, Munich, Lausanne, and Bonn, earning his doctorate at the last-mentioned institution at the age of 24. See <http://geb.uni-giessen.de/geb/volltexte/2008/6130/pdf/Koessler-Waag-Wytzes>, under the lemma “Wächter, Hermann.”

*Arthur Långfors.* Långfors (1881–1959) had studied in France with Gaston Paris and Paul Meyer, among others.

*Song Academy.* The German is Sing-Akademie. On this institution, see Theodore Ziolkowski, “Die Berliner Sing-Akademie: Eine wenig beachtete Kultur-Stätte,” *Weimarer Beiträge* 63 (2017): 284–93.

*preface.* The German original was *Vom französischen Versbau alter und neuer Zeit: Zusammenstellung der Anfangsgründe* (Leipzig, Germany: S. Hirzel, 1880). The preface by Paris preceded the French translation, which was based on the second German edition: *Le vers français, ancien et moderne*, trans. Karl Breul and Léopold Sudre (Paris: F. Vieweg, 1885), v–xvi.

*ingenuousness and impressionability.* Adolf Tobler, “Spielmannsleben im alten Frankreich,” *Im neuen Reich* 9 (1875): 327–28, repr. in idem, *Vermischte Beiträge: Der vermischten Beiträge zur französischen Grammatik*, 5th ed. (Leipzig, Germany: S. Hirzel, 1912), 229–57, at 238–39: “Eine kleine Legende, die man noch heute nicht ohne lächelnde Rührung liest...” (A little legend, which even today one does not read without smiling poignancy, so simply and sincerely does an unknown poet relate it according to a Latin book, reports about a minstrel...).

*first German prose version.* Severin Rüttgers, trans., *Unser lieben Frauen Wunder: Altfranzösische Marienlegenden* (Leipzig, Germany: Insel, 1914), 3–29, 73, where he quotes Gaston Paris’s oft-cited characterization of the poem as “chef-d’oeuvre peut-être du genre par sa délicieuse et enfantine simplicité.”

*skate over obscure passages.* As Curt Sigmar Gutkind pointed out, in Wilhelm Fraenger, *Die Masken von Rheims* (Erlenbach, Switzerland: Eugen Rentsch, 1922), 41–42.

*nearly complete German verse version.* The translation is available in Wilhelm Hertz, *Spielmannsbuch: Novellen in versen aus dem zwölften und dreizehnten jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, Germany: Gebrüder Kröner, 1886), 209–17, with notes at 353, and 3rd ed. (Stuttgart, Germany: Cotta, 1905; repr. Wiesbaden, Germany: M. Sändig, 1973), 237–42, with notes at 420–21.

*adaptation of Our Lady’s Tumbler.* Wilhelm Hertz, “Der Tänzer unsrer lieben Frau: Von einem unbekanntem französischen Dichter, um 1300,” *Atlantis* 26 (1954): 565–66. The entire translation is squeezed in a small font onto two printed sides.

*editorializing exordium.* Heinrich Morf, “Spielmannsgeschichten,” in idem, *Aus Dichtung und Sprache der Romanen: Vorträge und Skizzen* (Strasbourg, France: K. J. Trübner, 1903), 143–71, at 143: “Once upon a time.... Thus this report could begin, which deals with old-fashioned people and old-fashioned literary entertainment, with art and artists who flourished seven hundred years ago, in that distant and incredible time when people did not yet wage wars overseas on

account of gold mines and stock market prices, but instead put men and steeds over the sea for possession of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem—since the peoples of Europe went out to crusades but not to mining expeditions.”

*guarded comments.* Gaston Paris, “Frédéric Mistral: I. L’homme, II. L’œuvre,” *Revue de Paris* (1894–1895), printed in idem, *Penseurs et poètes* (Paris: C. Lévy, 1896), 128–29; William D. Paden Jr., “Pound’s Use of Troubadour Manuscripts,” *Comparative Literature* 32 (1980): 402–12; Bähler, “Gaston Paris et la philologie romane,” 27–28. Paris’s comments appear in a review of Frédéric Mistral, a French writer and lexicographer of Occitan.

*Our Lady’s Tumbler.* B.B.C. *Opera Librettos 1928–9, Le Jongleur de Notre Dame, to be Broadcast on May 27 and 29, 1929* (London: B.B.C., 1929), libretto by Maurice Lena, English version adapted from translation by M. Louise Baum, 6: “It is an old story which has come down from the Middle Ages. Gaston Paris was the first to give it to the modern world as ‘Le Tombeor de Notre Dame.’”

*different capsule summary.* Trans. Hannah Lynch (London: Aldine House, J. M. Dent & Co., 1903), 84–85: “Among the Jongleurs were so-called ‘tombeurs,’ when their talent was limited to leaps and somersaults, a kind of exercise greatly appreciated and highly perfected. One of these ‘tombeurs’ became a monk in any abbey consecrated to the Virgin, and for lack of any other science, in her honour executed secretly before her statue his best tricks; the monks who followed him to spy upon him saw with stupefaction Our Lady descend from her altar as he rested, and gently wipe away the sweat that trickled down his visage.”

## Notes to Chapter 2

### The Age of Mary

*crisis of Church and State.* John McManners, *Church and State in France, 1870–1914* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972). With specific regard to education, see Mona Ozouf, *L'École, l'Église et la République, 1871–1914*, Kiosque: Les faits, la presse, l'opinion, vol. 23 (Paris: A. Colin, 1963).

*free choice and reason.* Gérard Monnier and Évelyne Cohen, eds., *La République et ses symboles: Un territoire de signes* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2013).

*Liberty Leading the People.* “La liberté guidant le peuple.”

*in the ascendant.* Stéphane Michaud, *Muse et Madone: Visages de la femme de la révolution française aux apparitions de Lourdes* (Paris: Seuil, 1985), 20: “La sculpture mariolâtrique envahit les espaces publics, desquels elle tend à chasser la Marianne républicaine.”

*experienced a comeback.* Janet Kahl, “Recent Developments in the Academic Study of the Cult of the Virgin Mary,” *Journal of Religious History* 33 (2009): 377–88, at 378; Barbara Corrado Pope, “Immaculate and Powerful: The Marian Revival in the Nineteenth Century,” in *Immaculate and Powerful: The Female in Sacred Image and Social Reality*, ed. Clarissa W. Atkinson et al. (Boston: Beacon, 1985), 173–200.

*in Paris.* To be precise, at the Rue de Bac.

*gave way to others.* Claude Savart, “Cent ans après: Les apparitions mariales en France,” *Revue d'histoire de la spiritualité* 48 (1972): 205–20.

*mass pilgrimages.* On the packaging and retailing of pilgrimage as a medieval phenomenon within the Catholic revival, see Emery and Morowitz, *Consuming the Past*, 143–69.

*communal journeys by train.* Thomas A. Kselman, *Miracles and Prophecies in Nineteenth-Century France* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1983), 165 (with a helpful graph); McManners, *Church and State in France*, 22.

*peregrinations.* Elizabeth Emery, “Modern Medieval Pilgrimages: The Nineteenth-Century Struggle for the Soul of Lourdes,” *The Year's Work in Medievalism* 14 (1999): 149–68, at 150–51.

*atmosphere among the pilgrims.* Emery, “Modern Medieval Pilgrimages,” 157–58.

### The Fleur-de-Lis

*churches dedicated to the Mother of God.* For the preceding two sentences, see Colette Beaune, *The Birth of an Ideology: Myths and Symbols of Nation in Late-Medieval France*, trans. Susan Ross Huston, ed. Fredric L. Cheyette (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 206.

*babe on her left knee.* Spencer, *Pilgrim Souvenirs*, 234–37.

*floral grace note.* Spencer, *Pilgrim Souvenirs*, 233–34.

*queen of heaven.* See George Ferguson, *Signs & Symbols in Christian Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), 33–34.

*capacity to dispense mercy and to heal.* Beaune, *Birth of an Ideology*, 201–25, esp. at 207.

*a Catholic priest.* Vincent A. Yzermans, *Our Lady's Juggler* (Saint Paul, MN: North Central Publishing Company, 1974), end page: “Design and illustrations are by Frank Kacmarcik.” This priest, author of more than a dozen books mostly pertaining to Catholic history, served several parishes in the diocese. He became prominent in the Church when he was enlisted as a *peritus* or consultant and press adviser during the Second Vatican Council.

*other stylized blooms.* These other flowers are perhaps marigolds, another Marian bloom.

*in 1977.* The colophon spells out “Christmas, 1977.”

*referring to the Virgin.* Barbara C. Raw, “As Dew in Aprille,” *The Modern Language Review* 55 (1960): 411–14.

## The Apparitions of the Virgin

*card printed by the Benedictines of Bayeux.* The card in my possession bears a notation in longhand “14 juillet 1950” – Bastille Day.

*Whence comes this happiness.* Luke 1:43 (miscited as 2:43).

*commemorates a showing.* The sighting was seen by Maximin Giraud and Mélanie Calvat.

*La Salette.* La Salette is located in the Dauphiné, near Grenoble.

*Lourdes.* Lourdes is in the foothills of the Pyrenees.

*Pontmain.* Pontmain, in the diocese of Laval, is located in northwestern France.

*exceptional vigor in nineteenth-century France.* Michaud, *Muse et Madone*.

*insight into the future.* See Kselman, *Miracles and Prophecies*, 113–16; Harris, *Lourdes*, 15–16, 250.

*promising first step.* Michael S. Durham, *Miracles of Mary: Apparitions, Legends, and Miraculous Works of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995), 65–78.

*boom of cannons.* For the fullest dossier of information, see René Laurentin and Albert Durand, *Pontmain, histoire authentique*, 3 vols. (Paris: Apostolat des éditions, P. Lethielleux, 1970). For a recent analysis, Cheryl A. Porte, *Pontmain, Prophecy, and Protest: A Cultural-Historical Study of a Nineteenth-Century Apparition*, American University Studies: Series 7, Theology and Religion, vol. 234 (New York: Peter Lang, 2005).

*written messages.* The three most important of these communiqués were “But pray, my children,” “God will hearken to you in a little while,” and “My son allows himself to be moved.”

*a nearby town.* They stopped at Laval.

*other appearances of the Virgin.* At Fontet on April 27, 1873, a mother named Marie Bergadiou was purportedly directed to convey to the pope and to the president of France messages calling for the restoration of the French monarchy. For brief details, see Laurentin and Sbalchiero, *Dizionario*, 302. For fuller information, Adrien Péladan (*Suite à Dernier mot des prophéties. Evénements miraculeux de Fontet, de Blain et de Marpingen: Prophéties authentiques des voyantes contemporaines Berguille et Marie-Julie*, 2nd ed. (Nîmes, France: chez l'auteur, 1878), 33–65. A young woman called Marie-Julie Jahenny, born at Blain in Brittany and raised in La Fraudais, testified that she experienced apparitions (and stigmata) many times from February 22, 1873, on, for years afterward. See Laurentin and Sbalchiero, *Dizionario*, 422–23; Peladan, *Evénements miraculeux*, 66–93.

*surge of visions.* Detmar Klein, “The Virgin with the Sword: Marian Apparitions, Religion, and National Identity in Alsace in the 1870s,” *French History* 21.4 (2007): 411–30.

*woman in her early thirties.* The woman’s name was Estelle Faguette. See Laurentin and Sbalchiero, *Dizionario*, 579–80.

*Sightings of Mary have been mapped.* A very effective map with pushpins to indicate sightings through the world over the past five hundred years, along with a graph to show fluctuations in frequency, can be found under the heading “Mapping Virgin Mary Sightings” in the *National Geographic* (December 2015).

*appearances of the Virgin abounded.* David Blackburn, *Marpingen: Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (New York: Knopf, 1994), 364–65.

*millions of copies.* Between 1869 and 1894 the firm sold out of 124 editions of Lasserre’s *Our Lady of Lourdes* (in the original French, *Notre-Dame de Lourdes*). Between 1872 and 1894 it churned out fifty-two editions of *Mary’s Month of Our Lady of Lourdes* (in the original French, *Le mois de Marie de Notre-Dame de Lourdes*). Each book was divided into thirty-one readings with a special prayer at the end of each; see Robert F. Byrnes, “The French Publishing Industry and Its Crisis in the 1890’s,” *Journal of Modern History* 23 (1951): 232–42, at 233–34.

*by rail.* In the year of the first great pilgrimage, 1872, 149 special railroad trains transported 119,000 faithful to Lourdes. In the next year, the railway brought 140,000.

*redolent of the Middle Ages.* Emery, “Modern Medieval Pilgrimages,” 149–68.

*Marpingen.* Blackburn, *Marpingen*.

*enhance secularism.* Michael B. Gross, *The War against Catholicism: Liberalism and the Anti-Catholic Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004).

*Lourdes.* Zola’s *Lourdes* is the first part of a trilogy; it was followed by *Rome* (1896) and *Paris* (1898).

*making the journey to the shrine.* Harris, *Lourdes*, 10.

*Les foules de Lourdes.* See Bob Ziegler, “Literature of the Miraculous: Huysmans’s *Les Foules de Lourdes*,” *French Forum* 36 (2011): 23–35.

*medievalizing man of letters.* Van Kesteren, *Het verlangen naar de middeleeuwen*, 333–78.

*neither an exception nor a novelty.* Huysmans, *Les foules de Lourdes*, chap. 1 (my translation): “Les apparitions de la Sainte Vierge à notre époque n’ont rien qui puisse surprendre; Lourdes n’est, dans l’histoire de la France, ni une exception, ni une nouveauté; toujours la Mère du Christ a considéré ce pays comme son fief. En aucun temps, sauf au dix-huitième siècle, Elle ne l’a déshérité de l’aubaine continue de sa présence.”

*cacography.* Cacography is a rarefied word for bad handwriting or punctuation, but is used here to mean bad writing. Strictly speaking, the shortcoming for which the critic faulted Huysmans is the antonym of calligraphy.

## The Reactionary Revolution

*the hegemonic religion.* Fullest treatment is provided in Gérard Cholvy and Yves-Marie Hilaire, *Histoire religieuse de la France contemporaine*, 3 vols. (Toulouse, France: Privat, 1985–1988), vols. 1 and 2.

*reactionary revolution.* See Richard Griffiths, *The Reactionary Revolution: The Catholic Revival in French Literature, 1870–1914* (London: Constable, 1966).

*religious renewal.* In French, *renouveau catholique*.

*verse play.* *L’Annonce faite à Marie* (The tidings brought to Mary).

*mystery.* The French term is *mystère*.

*praise poem to the Virgin.* The title in French is “La Vierge à midi” (The Virgin at noon).

*in 1892.* Under the title “La jeune fille Violaine” (The girl Violaine).

*reworked it repeatedly.* He reworked the story in a second version in 1899 and 1900; refashioned it in 1911 to give it a more general sweep, whereupon it was produced (and published) for the first time in 1912; reworked the text yet again three decades later (dropping the generic designation in the versions of 1938 and 1948); and through 1955 participated actively in the staging of his creation. On the first two versions, see Jeanne Le Hir, *Une lecture de la deuxième version de La jeune fille Violaine* (Grenoble, France: Université des langues et lettres de Grenoble, 1979). For editions of the later version, see Paul Claudel, *Théâtre II* (Paris: Gallimard/Pléiade, 1965), and idem, *L’annonce faite à Marie: Version définitive pour la scène*, ed. Michel Autrand, Collection Folio-Théâtre, vol. 7 (Paris: Gallimard, 1993). For examination of Claudel’s involvement in performances of the play, see Alain Beretta, *Claudel et la mise en scène: Autour de l’Annonce faite à Marie, 1912–1955*, Annales littéraires de l’Université de Franche-Comté, vol. 674/Série Centre Jacques-Petit, vol. 89 (Besançon, France: Presses universitaires Franc-Comtoises, 2000). There were both earlier and later (1941) reworkings as well. The 1912 version was brought out in English as *The Tidings Brought to Mary: A Mystery*, trans. Louise Morgan Sill (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1916). More recently, the play formed the basis of a film released in 1991, entitled *L’Annonce faite à Marie* (known in English as “The Annunciation of Marie”), by the actor and director Alain Cuny, a friend of Claudel’s.

*evoke the Middle Ages.* Fernande Bassan, “Le cadre médiéval de *L’Annonce faite à Marie* de Claudel,” *Revue d’histoire du théâtre* 1 (1995): 33–38; François Amy de la Bretèque, *L’imaginaire*

*médiéval dans le cinéma occidental*, Nouvelle bibliothèque du Moyen Âge, vol. 70 (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2004), 916–19; Carole J. Lambert, *The Empty Cross: Medieval Hopes, Modern Futility in the Theater of Maurice Maeterlinck, Paul Claudel, August Strindberg, and George Kaiser* (New York: Garland, 1990), 147–77; Jacques Madaule, “Claudel et le Moyen Âge,” in *Dire le Moyen-Âge: Hier et aujourd’hui*, ed. Michel Perrin (Amiens, France: Université de Picardie / Paris: PUF, 1990), 167–88..

*even further into the Middle Ages*. *Comoedia*, 2 May 1921: “Je la récrivis, j’en fis une tout autre pièce, baignée de liturgie et de foi médiévale. C’était *l’Annonce faite à Marie*” (“I rewrote it, I made of it an entirely different play, steeped in liturgy and medieval faith”).

*multivalent*. This quality has sometimes been designated by literary critics as polysemy or polyvalence.

*challenge authoritative hierarchies*. Although not with reference to *Our Lady’s Tumbler*, see Flory, “Social Uses of Religious Literature.”

*even more intimately with cathedrals*. On the place of the cathedral in nineteenth-century culture in general, see Paule Petitier, “La cathédrale,” in Bernard-Griffiths et al., *La fabrique du Moyen Âge*, 553–62; in fin-de-siècle decadence, see Emery, *Romancing the Cathedral*.

*François-René de Chateaubriand*. Van Kesteren, *Het verlangen naar de middeleeuwen*, 181–204.

*You could not enter a Gothic church*. Vicomte François-René de Chateaubriand, *Génie du christianisme* (Paris, 1801), Engl. trans. Charles I. White, *The Genius of Christianity, or, The Spirit and Beauty of the Christian Religion*, 2nd rev. ed. (Baltimore, MD: John Murray, 1856), 385.

## Cathedralomania

*parish churches*. Along with so-called chapels of ease—chapels constructed to afford easier access to some parishioners than a single parish church might do.

*the cathedral as we know it*. *Compact Oxford English Dictionary*, cathedral *a.* 1.a. (cathedral church) and cathedral *sb.* 1; Joëlle Prunnaud, *Figures littéraires de la cathédrale: 1880–1918* (Villeneuve d’Ascq, France: Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2008), 10.

The customary Italian designation for cathedral has long been the noun *duomo*, from the Latin for “house.” A domicile in this sense could be conceived as *domus Dei*, a house of God. Alternately, it could be *domus episcoporum*, a home belonging to bishops. Finally, it could be *domus ecclesiae*, a dwelling place of the ecclesiastical community. For the evidence in Romance languages, see Wilhelm Meyer-Lübke, *Romanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 3rd ed. (Heidelberg, Germany: Carl Winter, 1935), 246, no. 2745 (*dömus* 1). For the specifics on Italian, see Carlo Battisti, *Dizionario etimologico italiano*, 5 vols. (Florence: G. Barbéra, 1968), 2: 1402: *duòmo*. From the same Latin lode derived the German *Dom* and cognates in other neighboring Germanic languages. See Wolfgang Pfeifer and Wilhelm Braun, eds., *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Deutschen*, rev. ed. (Munich, Germany: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1995), 236. The other languages include Dutch and Frisian. In reference to cathedrals, the corresponding French *dôme* has become restricted in modern usage now mainly as a denotation for German cathedrals. See Bloch and Wartburg, *Dictionnaire étymologique*, 200–201.

*bishop of Rome.* Somewhat confusingly, the papal basilica of Saint Peter in the Vatican is not a cathedral. On the contrary, the cathedra of the pope as bishop of Rome stands in the archbasilica of Saint John Lateran. Another distinction worth noting is that although all cathedrals are Christian, not all cathedrals are Catholic. Notably, cathedrals exist within the Episcopalian Church. The only proviso is that the denomination behind the cathedral must have bishops.

*define France.* Emery and Morowitz, *Consuming the Past*, 85–110.

*topics for creative re-creation.* Pascale Auraix-Jonchière, “Le Moyen Âge dans *Notre-Dame de Paris*,” in Bernard-Griffiths et al., *La fabrique du Moyen Âge*, 813–23; Patricia Ward, *The Medievalism of Victor Hugo* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1975).

*Esmeralda.* Allison Craven, “Esmeralda of Notre-Dame: The Gypsy in Medieval View from Hugo to Disney,” in *The Disney Middle Ages: A Fairy Tale and Fantasy Past*, ed. Tison Pugh and Susan Aronstein (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 225–42.

*need each other.* The counterpoint between the two characters is touched upon in 1966 by a cultural critic railing against pop art in the vein of Andy Warhol. See John J. Enck, “Campop,” *Wisconsin Studies in Contemporary Literature* 7 (1966): 168–82, at 172: “The objects furnishing the pop artist his materials had formerly among consumers appeared no more than wrappings to be discarded—the label along with the can it identified—or discardable sheets to be used for cheap wrapping paper—the advertisements along with the comic strips. Some will argue that bestowing upon transient bits a permanence of sorts really proves an affection for commonplace life in the twentieth century, but to count le jongleur de Notre Dame patron saint of campop sounds incongruous. One might more suitably nominate the Hunchback of Notre Dame.”

*I like the cathedral.* *Les quatre vents de l'esprit* (1881), Le livre satirique, 29 (“Muse, un nommé Ségur, évêque, m’est hostile”), in Victor Hugo, *Oeuvres complètes de Victor Hugo*, vol. 24, Poésie 3 (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1985), 66–70, at 68: “J’aime la cathédrale et non le moyen-âge.”

*as his perspective developed.* Patricia A. Ward, “The Political Evolution of Victor Hugo’s Gothic Vision,” *Modern Language Quarterly* 34 (1973): 272–82.

*Committee on Monuments and Arts.* The French name is *Comité des Monuments et des Arts*. Hugo served on it from 1836 until 1848. For the broader context of his outlook on the Middle Ages, see Paul Zumthor, “Le Moyen Âge de Victor Hugo,” in Victor Hugo, *Œuvres complètes*, 18 vols. (Paris: Club français du livre, 1967–1970), 4: i–xxxii.

*a Gothic centerpiece.* Suzanne Nash, “Writing a Building: Hugo’s Notre-Dame de Paris,” *French Forum* 8.2 (1983): 122–33.

*a beacon lit on high towers.* Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve, “Entretiens sur l’architecture par M. Viollet-le-Duc” (Monday, February 15, 1864), reprinted in idem, *Nouveaux Lundis*, 13 vols. (Paris: Michel Lévy, 1865–1870), 7: 151–71, at 159 (“an event, a signal and like a beacon lit on high towers”). Cited by Bloch, “Restoration from Notre-Dame de Paris to Gaston Paris,” 281.

*universal form of writing.* Victor Hugo, *Notre-Dame of Paris*, book 5, chap. 2, trans. John Sturrock (Baltimore, MD: Penguin, 1978), 200. Quoted by Lawrence G. Duggan, “Was Art Really the ‘Book of the Illiterate’?,” *Word & Image* 5.3 (1989): 227–51, at 250–51.

*the initial H in his family name.* Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 776.



*a short story by Théophile Gautier.* “Élias Wildmanstadius ou l’homme Moyen Âge,” published in two distinct versions in 1832 and 1833: Pierre Laubriet, “Élias Wildmanstadius—Notice,” in Théophile Gautier, *Romans, contes et nouvelles*, ed. Pierre Laubriet, 2 vols., Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, vols. 488–89 (Paris: Gallimard, 2002), 2: 146–51 (text), 1271–74 (notes on publication history). For the quotation, see p. 1271. For an English translation, see Théophile Gautier, *Works*, trans. Frederick C. de Sumichrast, 12 vols. (Boston: C. T. Brainard, 1900–1903), 11: 271–81. For context, see Peter Whyte, “Autour d’Élias Wildmanstadius: Gautier et le Moyen Âge, 1830–1836,” *Bulletin de la Société Théophile Gautier* 28 (2006): 171–90.

*a document in the propaganda.* Doolittle, *Relations between Literature and Mediaeval Studies*, 25.

*Émile Mâle.* Émile Mâle, *L’art religieux du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle en France: Étude sur l’iconographie du Moyen Âge et sur ses sources d’inspiration* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1898), trans. as *Religious Art in France, the Thirteenth Century: A Study of Medieval Iconography and Its Sources*, Bollingen Series, vol. 90.2 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984). Two recent investigations into his place in the history of scholarship are *Émile Mâle, 1862–1954: La construction de l’œuvre. Rome et l’Italie*, Collection de l’Ecole française de Rome, vol. 345 (Rome: École française de Rome, 2005), and Kirk Ambrose, “Émile Mâle,” in *The Routledge Companion to Medieval Iconography*, ed. Colum Hourihane (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2017), 65–74.

*cathedral of learning.* Luc Fraisse, “D’Émile Mâle à Proust: Comment la cathédrale devient symbole de la recherche,” in *La cathédrale*, ed. Joëlle Prunghaud (Lille, France: Université Charles-de-Gaulle-Lille 3, 2001), 183–93.

In its lapidary authoritativeness, Mâle’s tome may exercise almost automatically upon antiauthoritarians the same provocation as the proverbial red flag does to a bull. Take, for example, *The Gothic Idol: Ideology and Image-Making in Medieval Art*, published in 1989.



Fig. n.3 Michael Camille. Photograph by Stuart Michaels, before 2000.

During his sadly curtailed life, its author, Michael Camille (see Fig. n. 3), embraced a role as enfant terrible among medievalist historians of art. His riposte to Mâle may be taken as either an amplifying corrective to or even an outright assault (iconoclasm!) on “The Gothic Image,” as Mâle’s book on the thirteenth century was conventionally short-titled in English for most of the twentieth century.

*Remembrance of Things Past.* See Ellen Eve Frank, *Literary Architecture: Essays toward a Tradition. Walter Pater, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Marcel Proust, Henry James* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979), 113–65; Stephanie A. Glaser, “Construire comme une église: À la recherche du temps perdu et la tradition de l’analogie architecturale,” in *Proust et les “Moyen Âge,”* ed. Sophie Duval and Miren Lacassagne (Paris: Hermann, 2015), 177–93. On the relationship between Proust and Émile Mâle, see, in the same volume, the contributions by Yasué Kato, “Elstir et Émile Mâle: Le discours sur l’église de Balbec dans le Cahier 34,” 197–218, and Patrick Henriot, “Marcel Proust: Un Moyen Âge sans moines. Avec quelques propositions sur la dette de Proust envers Émile Mâle,” 219–32.

*alignment.* In contrast, his twentieth-century successor denied vehemently that the images obeyed the texts. On the contrary, Camille maintained that the imagery took issue with the supremacy of textuality. To his way of thinking, the art extended, altered, and subverted the texts. Beyond *Gothic Idol*, see Michael Camille, “Seeing and Reading: Some Visual Implications of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy,” *Art History* 8.1 (1985): 26–49.

*iconographic summa.* Mâle, *Religious Art in France, the Thirteenth Century*, vii.

*Claude Monet.* George Heard Hamilton, *Claude Monet’s Paintings of Rouen Cathedral* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960); Joachim Pissarro, *Monet’s Cathedral: Rouen 1892–1894* (London: Pavilion, 1990).

*The Sunken Cathedral. La cathédrale engloutie.* A prelude for solo piano, the piece is inspired by a Breton legend of a cathedral submerged off the island of Ys that arises from the sea on clear mornings.

*iconography.* Solange Michon, “Viollet-le-Duc et l’iconographie médiévale: La cathédrale gothique et ‘ses poèmes sculptés ou peints,’” *Études de lettres* 3–4 (1994): 167–86.

*To restore a building.* Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, *Dictionnaire raisonné de l’architecture française du XIe au XVIe siècle*, 10 vols. (Paris: Bance et Morel, 1854–1868), 8: 14 (“restauration”): “Le mot et la chose sont modernes. Restaurer un édifice, ce n’est pas l’entretenir, le réparer ou le refaire, c’est le rétablir dans un état complet qui peut n’avoir jamais existé à un moment donné.”

*not attested in any engravings.* Kevin D. Murphy, “The Historic Building in the Modernized City: The Cathedrals of Paris and Rouen in the Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of Urban History* 37.2 (2011): 278–96, at 288–89.

*carved and installed.* The work was mostly done by Victor Joseph Pyanet.

*melancholic review.* Jules-Antoine Castagnary, “Notre-Dame restaurée,” in idem, *Les livres propos* (Paris: Librairie internationale, 1864), 137–41, discussed by Murphy, “Historic Building in the Modernized City,” 278.

*exponent of the French Gothic revival.* For quick orientation, see Solange Michon, “Viollet-le-Duc encyclopédiste du Moyen Âge, ses sources textuelles pour le *Dictionnaire du mobilier*,” in Bernard-Griffiths et al., *La fabrique du Moyen Âge*, 105–19; Luc Fraisse, “Viollet-le-Duc et le livre de pierre: Le crayon et la plume,” *Travaux de littérature* 12 (1999): 87–108.

*In England.* Charles Dellheim, *The Face of the Past: The Preservation of the Medieval Inheritance in Victorian England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 84.

*George Gilbert Scott*. Gavin Stamp, *Gothic for the Steam Age: An Illustrated Biography of George Gilbert Scott* (London: Aurum, 2015).

*information and imagination*. A good example of the necessary approach is provided by Gerald Cobb, *English Cathedrals, the Forgotten Centuries: Restoration and Change from 1530 to the Present Day* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980).

*an article*. His article was entitled “Du style gothique au XIXe siècle” (On the Gothic style in the nineteenth century).

*the style had evolved*. Georg Germann, *Gothic Revival in Europe and Britain: Sources, Influences and Ideas*, trans. Gerald Onn (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1972), 7–8: “Our conclusion is quite simply that French thirteenth-century architecture, which was fashioned from our materials and in our climate to suit our character, which is beautiful, often formally admirable, and not very costly, should be the only form of architecture studies in France; and it should be approached under three different headings: construction, art, and economy.”

*he advocated vocally*. A number of his key essays pertaining to the medieval period were published posthumously. See Prosper Mérimée, *Études sur les arts au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1875).

*former students*. The former student was Auguste Bartholdi.

*architectural theorist of modernism*. See Martin Bressani, *Architecture and the Historical Imagination: Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, 1814–1879* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2014).

*Dictionnaire raisonné*. *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XIe au XVIe siècle*, published between 1854 and 1868.

*interviews on architecture*. *Entretiens sur l'architecture*, published between 1863 and 1872.

*restoration*. Once again, the relevant prose is Viollet-le-Duc, *Dictionnaire raisonné*, 8: 14 (“restauration”).

## Notre-Dame Cathedral and Eiffel Tower

*the cathedrals were white*. Le Corbusier, *When the Cathedrals Were White: A Journey to the Country of Timid People* (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1947), xxi.

*Universal Exposition*. It was known as well as the International Exposition. These grand events were plotted out so as to be held every eleven years, with one in 1878, this other in 1889, and a third in 1900.

*François Coppée composed a poem*. François Coppée, “Sur la Tour Eiffel (deuxième plateau)” (July 22, 1888), in idem, *Les paroles sincères* (Paris: A. Lemerre, 1891) 96–97, reprinted in idem, *Oeuvres de François Coppée: Poésies*, 6 vols. (Paris: A. Lemerre, 1907), 5: 131–38.

*Enlightenment encyclopedism*. Chris Brooks, *The Gothic Revival* (London: Phaidon, 1999), 273–74.

*An engraving*. This representation of *The Eiffel Tower and the Highest Monuments on Earth* appeared in *La revue illustrée*. For a reproduction, see Brown, *For the Soul of France*, 147.

*zero-mile marker*. In the metric system, kilometer zero marker.

*in one text*. By Melchior de Vogüé: see Brown, *For the Soul of France*, 151.

*blue-eyed blonde*. In French, *une blonde aux yeux bleus*.

*A print from 1889*. Michael Camille, *The Gargoyles of Notre-Dame: Medievalism and the Monsters of Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 276, fig. 256.

*schism between Republicans and conservatives*. Brown, *For the Soul of France*, 149.

*a chapter of his book*. *Notre-Dame de Paris*, book 3, chap. 1.

*expression of Protestantism*. Elizabeth Emery, “Postcolonial Gothic: The Medievalism of America’s ‘National’ Cathedrals,” in *Medievalisms in the Postcolonial World: The Idea of “the Middle Ages” outside Europe*, ed. Kathleen Davis and Nadia Altschul (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 237–64, at 241, citing “The Bishop’s Seat,” *New York Times*, January 8, 1888.

*cycle of poems*. The cycle, entitled “2e Canonier Conducteur” (2nd gunnery driver), came into print first in the futurist magazine, published in Zurich, called *Der Mistral* 1 (March 3, 1915). The piece contains five calligrams in all, with one near the beginning and one at the end. The other three are in the middle.

As a combatant in the war, Apollinaire sustained a shrapnel wound to the temple in 1916 (see Fig. n.4). He is shown with his head wrapped in bandages in an author portrait by Pablo Picasso that was the frontispiece to the volume in which the pattern poem was first published.



Fig. n.4 Guillaume Apollinaire. Woodcut by René Jaudon, after portrait by Pablo Picasso, 1913–1916. Published in Guillaume Apollinaire, *Calligrammes: Poèmes de la paix et de la guerre 1913–1916* (Paris: Gallimard, 1925), frontispiece.

The poet, incapacitated by the lesion, died of influenza during the Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918, at the age of 38.

*calligrams*. In such texts, the letters of the words are laid out so as to create a visual image that relates to their meaning.

*forever stuck out at the Germans*. Guillaume Apollinaire, *Calligrammes: Poèmes de la paix et de la guerre, 1913–1916* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1918), 78. The three central calligrams, with the words forming a boot, Notre-Dame, and the Eiffel Tower, read as follows: “Sacré nom de Dieu quelle allure nom de Dieu quelle allure cependant que la nuit descend—souvenirs de Paris avant la guerre ils seront bien plus doux après la victoire—salut monde dont je suis la langue éloquente que sa bouche ô Paris tire et tirera toujours aux Allemands” (“Good God almighty, what a speed, God almighty, what a speed! In the meantime the night is falling. Memories of Paris before the war, they will be much sweeter after victory. Hail, world, whose eloquent tongue I am, that its mouth, oh Paris, sticks out and always will AT THE GERMANS”). For the text and translation, see Guillaume Apollinaire, *Calligrammes: Poems of Peace and War (1913–1916)*, ed. S. I. Lockerbie, trans. Anne Hyde Greet, commentary by Lockerbie and Greet (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980), 124–29 (entire poem in French and English translation), 126–27 (three key calligrams), 411–14 (commentary).

*gargoyles*. The more precise designation for the carvings that do not contain spouts for rainwater would be chimeras.

*The Devil*. *Le diable*. This gargoyle is also commonly reproduced in plaster of Paris.

*ecclesiastical architecture*. The medieval text does not pass muster as a Gothic cathedral in poetry, or as a match to Hugo’s novel in prose. That said, the poem is at least evocative of a Cistercian monastery in verse.

*public intellectuals*. Richard A. Posner, *Public Intellectuals: A Study of Decline* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

## Notes to Chapter 3

*After 1870 or so.* Michael Alexander, *Medievalism: The Middle Ages in Modern England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 193.

*ever-changing fortunes.* Dakyns, *Middle Ages in French Literature*, 195.

### The Anglicizing of the Tumbler

*French formed the main source.* Peter France, “French,” in *The Oxford History of Literary Translation in English*, vol. 4: 1790–1900, ed. idem and Kenneth Haynes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 230–45, at 230–31.

*Aucassin et Nicolette.* *The Lovers of Provence, Aucassin, and Nicolette: A MS. Song-Story of the Twelfth Century*, rendered into modern French by Alexandre Bida, trans. into English verse and prose by A. Rodney Macdonough, illus. with engravings after designs by Alexandre Bida et al. (New York: Fords, Howard & Hulbert, 1880).

*folkloric features.* See, e.g., Betsy Bowden, “Aucassin and Nicolette”; Mary Ellen Brown, “Ballad” (alas without reference to French); David Sprunger, “Marie de France”; and David Sprunger, “Song of Roland,” in *Encyclopedia of Folklore and Literature*, ed. idem and Bruce A. Rosenberg (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998), 34–36, 47–48, 409–10, 609–12 respectively.

*extent of its artwork.* Its cover is a washed-out green, against which stands out the gold for the title and authorship, a vignette, and a promotional quotation: “This Pearl of Medieval Literature... so exquisitely reset.” From the pen of Edmund Clarence Stedman.

*Nicolette.* The female lead is sometimes called Nicole instead.

*Christian France.* Her specific destination is called Beaucaire.

*purported primitivism.* An early case in point would be the acquisition in 1871 by Yale University of a major private collection of what is known as Italian primitives. On this collection of James Jackson Jarves, see Clay Dean, *A Selection of Early Italian Painting from the Yale University Art Gallery* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Art Gallery, 2001).

*Defence of Guenevere.* *The Defence of Guenevere, and Other Poems* (London: Bell and Daldy, 1858). For context, see Herbert Sussman, “The Pre-Raphaelites and the ‘Mood of the Cloister,’” *Browning Institute Studies* 8 (1980): 45–55.

*reworking of Arthurian material.* With “The Lady of Shalott” (1832), “Morte d’Arthur” (1834), and especially the “Idylls of the King” (1859–1885).

*The Nature of Gothic.* Especially his *The Stones of Venice* (1851–1853).

*Élias Wildmanstadius.* Gautier, *Works*, trans. Sumichrast, 11: 276.

*Mariana.* The oil on mahogany wood was created by John Everett Millais for exhibition at the Royal Academy in 1851.

a British poet's "Mariana". The early nineteenth-century lyrical narrative is a study in melancholy. It portrays a woman whose disconnection from society makes her downhearted to the point of being suicidal. In both the play and the poem, the titular figure is cut off from social contact, with Tennyson's version being the more unvariedly bleak.

*tied to the Virgin*. The first Pre-Raphaelite painting exhibited was in fact Marian in its subject matter: Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin* is replete with symbols that include, of course, a lily (see Fig. n.5). A year or so later, the same artist returned to Mary and the lily in *Ecce ancilla domini!* ("Behold the handmaiden of the Lord!"). This oil on canvas merges voluptuousness, Gothic, and Marianism (see Fig. n.6).



Fig. n.5 Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*, 1848–1849. Oil on canvas, 83.2 × 65.4 cm. London, Tate Britain. Image from Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Dante\\_Gabriel\\_Rossetti\\_-\\_The\\_Girlhood\\_of\\_Mary\\_Virgin.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Dante_Gabriel_Rossetti_-_The_Girlhood_of_Mary_Virgin.jpg)



Fig. n.6 Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Ecce Ancilla Domini!*, 1849–1850. Oil on canvas, 72.4 × 41.9 cm. London, Tate Britain. Image from Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Dante\\_Gabriel\\_Rossetti\\_-\\_Ecce\\_Ancilla\\_Domini!\\_-\\_Google\\_Art\\_Project.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Dante_Gabriel_Rossetti_-_Ecce_Ancilla_Domini!_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg)

*Not in her line of vision.* Beyond even the broadest peripheral vision is the smaller almond-shaped piece of glass perpendicular to the Virgin that bears a coat of arms. In the top register, a mace-bearing gauntlet has impaled upon it a scroll proclaiming in Latin “In heaven, rest”; in the middle there is a knight’s helmet; and at the bottom is a shield portraying a broken or drooping lily.

*another portrayal of the Annunciation.* Leaves lie scattered on the floor, more of them still vitally green than the bright hues of irreversible death, but nonetheless a reminder of passing time. A mouse in the sun on the boards could conjure up dingy decrepitude and scuttling noise, as in Tennyson’s poem.

*owed much to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.* Helene Roberts, “The Medieval Spirit of Pre-Raphaelitism,” in *Pre-Raphaelitism and Medievalism in the Arts*, ed. Liana De Girolami Cheney (Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen Press, 1992), 15–28; Julian Treuherz, “The Pre-Raphaelites and Medieval Illuminated Manuscripts,” in *Pre-Raphaelite Papers*, ed. Leslie Parris (London: Tate Gallery, 1984), 153–69.



*turns toward the Middle Ages.* A particularly influential case in point would be the historical novel by Charles Reade, *The Cloister and the Hearth: A Tale of the Middle Ages*, a bestseller in its day that is now all but forgotten. It was originally published with 550 drawings by William Martin Johnson (4 vols., London: Trübner, 1861). The heavy presence of vignettes that contained books (see Fig. n.7), men writing (see Figs. n.8 and n.9), and supposedly medieval artwork, even including a Madonna (see Fig. n.10), stands to reason. After all, the story centers upon the vicissitudes in the life of a young scribe and illuminator who in the denouement is revealed to be the father of the humanist, Erasmus of Rotterdam. The competing pressures of Church and family supply the dominant theme of the novel, and underpin the dualism in its title.

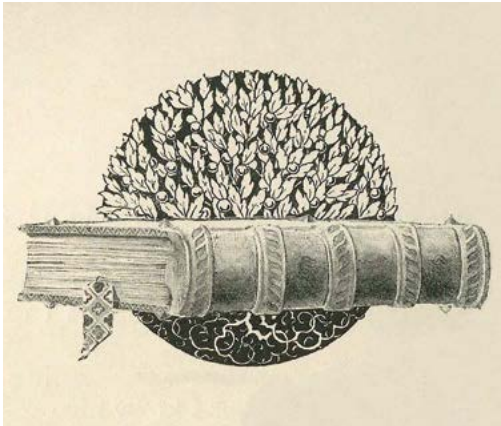


Fig. n.7 A leather-bound book. Illustration by William Martin Johnson, 1894. Published in Charles Reade, *The Cloister and the Hearth*, vol. 2 (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1894), 982.



Fig. n.8 A scribe. Illustration by William Martin Johnson, 1894. Published in Charles Reade, *The Cloister and the Hearth*, vol. 2 (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1894), 788.



Fig. n.9 A scribe at work. Illustration by William Martin Johnson, 1894. Published in Charles Reade, *The Cloister and the Hearth*, vol. 2 (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1894), 104.



Fig. n.10 The Virgin Mary. Illustration by William Martin Johnson, 1894. Published in Charles Reade, *The Cloister and the Hearth*, vol. 2 (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1894), 78.

*private-press printing*. Sheldon Christian, *Our Lady's Tumbler: A Modern Miracle Play* (Portland, ME: Anthoensen Press, 1948).

## Thomas Bird Mosher and Reverend Wicksteed

*In literature alone*. Quoted in *Maine Library Bulletin* 12 (January 1927), 63, quoted in turn in Alfred K. Chapman, "Thomas Bird Mosher," *Colby Quarterly* 4.13 (February 1958): 229–44, at 236.

*strong scruples*. See Henry Adams, *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres* (henceforth *MSMC*), chap. 13, "Les Miracles de Notre Dame," in Henry Adams, *Novels, Mont Saint Michel, The Education*, ed. Ernest Samuels and Jayne N. Samuels (New York: Library of America, 1983), 601: "One fears only to spoil it by translation, but if a translation be merely used as a glossary or a foot-note, it need not do fatal harm."

*in 1899*. Mosher published it in a monthly pamphlet of twenty-four pages. He gathered these booklets into an annual magazine, as vol. 5, no. 11 of *The Bibelot: A Reprint of Poetry and Prose for Book Lovers, Chosen in Part from Scarce Editions and Sources Not Generally Known*.

*repeated separate reprintings*. Twice in his *Miscellaneous* series in 1900 (once including four numbered copies on full pure vellum) and twice in 1904, again in his *Ideal Series of Little Masterpieces* in 1906 and in a second edition in 1911. The 1900 edition contains only thirty numbered pages, produced attractively but with no real medievalizing flourishes. After Mosher's death, another run of 975 copies was printed in 1928 by the manager of The Mosher Press, Flora MacDonald Lamb.

*One private run*. The printing of five hundred copies on Italian handmade paper, with fifty on Japan vellum, was done for the owner of a successful insurance agency and his wife—Mr. and Mrs. Edward Augustus Woods of Sewickley, Pennsylvania.

*Christmas gifts*. In 1921, Mr. Woods (previous note) commissioned a similar batch of Charles Dickens's *Cricket on the Hearth*, another story that could easily be deemed suitable for the December holiday. Still, not all of the fifteen volumes that he ordered in limited printings from Mosher Press would have been for the holidays. To take only one of several examples, he also commissioned five hundred copies of Tennyson's *In Memoriam* in 1920. See Philip R. Bishop, *Thomas Bird Mosher: Pirate Prince of Publishers* (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 1998), 535.

*grammar school*. He attended the Quincy Grammar School in Boston.

*issued their first books*. Chapman, “Thomas Bird Mosher,” 236.

*Japan vellum*. Mosher published books from 1891 to 1923. During that stretch he printed more runs on Japan (or Japanese) vellum than any other publisher. This so-called vellum is a smooth, glossy paper of a light tan or white color, thick in imitation of vellum, which is made of long fibers from the inner bark of a shrub that belongs to the same family as the mulberry. Mosher imported his Japan vellum from Japan. Only rarely did he print copies on actual vellum, made from calf or sheepskin.

*many short books*. Examples that relate especially closely to *Our Lady’s Tumbler* include *La légende de Saint Julien l’Hospitalier* (The legend of Saint Julian, Hospitaler; 1877) by Gustave Flaubert, first published by Mosher in 1905; *Sister Benvenuta and the Christ Child, an Eighteenth-Century Legend* by Vernon Lee (pseudonym of the British writer, Violet Paget), first by Mosher in 1911; *The Wayfarer* by Fiona Macleod (pseudonym of the Scottish writer, William Sharp), first by Mosher in 1906; and *O suave milagre* (The sweet miracle) by the Portuguese novelist and short-story writer, José Maria Eça de Queirós, from his posthumous *Contos* (Tales), first by Mosher in 1906. Further information on all these books as well as on Mosher himself is available in Bishop, *Thomas Bird Mosher*.

*The Children’s Crusade*. “La croisade des enfants.”

*penned in 1896*. This fictionalized chronicle of the tragic episode was published in English translation first by Mosher in 1905. On Schwob’s medievalism, see Michel Viegnes, “Marcel Schwob,” in Bernard-Griffiths et al., *La fabrique du Moyen Âge*, 903–12; Gayle Zachmann, “Fact and Fiction: Marcel Schwob’s Archeologies and Medievalism,” in *Makers of the Middle Ages: Essays in Honor of William Calin*, ed. Richard Utz and Elizabeth Emery (Kalamazoo, MI: Studies in Medievalism, Western Michigan University, 2011), 65–69. The same poem had been published in a little book by the Boston-based firm of Small, Maynard & Co. in 1898.

*copyright piracy*. Bishop, *Thomas Bird Mosher*, 22–23.

*some printings*. *Our Lady’s Tumbler: A Twelfth Century Legend Transcribed for Lady Day* (London: J. M. Dent, Aldine House, 1894). Lady Day was not a person but instead the Feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, on March 25. Dent published two forms of the book in 1894, one an unillustrated paperback and the other illustrated and bound. The illustrated version has a frontispiece and two other illustrations by H. Granville Fell, an English artist who illustrated many books, including children’s books, in a style associated with art nouveau. A third edition appeared in 1900. For an early discussion of these editions, see George Cormack, trans., *Our Lady’s Tumbler: A Legend of the Middle Age from the Twelfth-Century French, Versified* (London: Burns & Oates; New York: Benziger, 1907), 5.

*scholar and translator*. C. H. Herford, *Philip Henry Wicksteed, His Life and Work* (London: J. M. Dent, 1931). Wicksteed’s wide-ranging interests and activities even encompassed extensive work on political economy.

*Wicksteed’s English translation*. *Our Lady’s Tumbler: A Twelfth Century Legend*, trans. P. H. Wicksteed, illustrated by Roberta F. C. Waudby (London and Toronto: J. M. Dent & Sons, and New York: E. P. Dutton, 1930). It features as the very first item in *The Copeland Translations* from 1934, a then-famous anthology by Charles Townsend “Copey” Copeland, Boylston Professor

of Rhetoric and Oratory Emeritus at Harvard University, when his legendary reputation as a reciter of poetry and mentor of poets was at its apogee: Charles Townsend Copeland, *The Copeland Translations* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934). See J. Donald Adams, *Copey of Harvard: A Biography of Charles Townsend Copeland* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960).

*in matters of taste there must be no debate. De gustibus non est disputandum.*

*in his diary.* *The Gladstone Diaries with Cabinet Minutes and Prime-Ministerial Correspondence*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew, vol. 13: 1892–1896 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 407 (April 1, 1894).

*plundered from the translation of the tale.* Bishop, *Thomas Bird Mosher*, 95, 233–34, 336, 534.

*she cited Our Lady's Tumbler.* Her choice of a text that had been translated from another language was counterintuitive. As we have seen, by the time she wrote, various modern English versions existed with different wordings for every single line in the medieval poem. The original French could be said to have distinctive sections of the kind she had in mind, but not so the translations.

*quoted two examples.* *The Art of the Story-Teller* (New York: D. Appleton, 1915); 3d ed., rev. with a new bibliography by Eulalie Steinmetz (New York: Dover, 1952), 141.

*simple diction.* *The Athenæum* 3480 (Saturday, July 7, 1894): 842, quoting *Freeman's Journal*.

*other storytellers.* Marilyn Lea Miller, *Pioneers and Leaders in Library Services to Youth: A Biographical Dictionary* (Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2003), 222–23; Anne Carroll Moore, "Our Fairy Godmother: Marie L. Shedlock," *Horn Book* 10 (1934): 137–67.

*made their own contributions.* Without mention of either Shedlock or Sawyer, the 1997 *Storytelling Encyclopedia* includes "Our Lady's Tumbler" as an entry. See David Adams Leeming, ed., *Storytelling Encyclopedia: Historical, Cultural, and Multiethnic Approaches to Oral Traditions around the World* (Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press, 1997), 348–49.

*Esperanto.* Esperanto was invented in 1887 by the Polish ophthalmologist Ludwik Lazarus Zamenhof, who published under the optimistic pseudonym Dr. Esperanto (since the Romance root means "hope"). The language spread greatly as a language of peace in response to the horrors of World War I. In the early stage of Esperanto, translations of major works in world literature bulked large. These Esperanto versions of classics helped to expand the vocabulary and style of the language. The first original novel in Esperanto, the 515-page-long *La Kastelo de Prelongo* (The castle of Prélongo), was not published until 1907, by Henri Vallienne.

*letter of thanks.* The letter, dated July 23, 1919, is part of the Bishop Collection, assembled by Philip R. Bishop: <http://www.thomasbirdmosher.net/bishop/manuscripts.html>, accessed October 6, 2017.

*The Acrobat of Our Lady.* Edward S. Payson, *La Akrobato de Nia Sinjorino: Milcentjara Legendo*. The translation was printed in a booklet, with soft covers and string binding; year and location of publication as well as the printer do not appear on any copies I have inspected. The most reliable bibliographical particulars, which have been identified variously, appear to be West Newton, MA: Ernest Fairman Dow, 1919. The place and printer are confirmed by a note at the end of Payson, trans., *Blanche: La Virgulino de Lille*, unnumbered p. 34. In a minority of cases, library catalogues give the date as 1921. One library identifies the place as Portland, ME, and another as Fort Lee, NJ. On the frontispiece, it has pasted in a reproduction of a Madonna by

Cimabue. By chance, the word in the constructed language for the profession of the tumbler is *akrobato* “acrobat.” Across the decades, this term has been applied often to the protagonist even in the title of a children’s book: *The Acrobat of God*.

*a variety of jobs*. In 1882, he became a manufacturer of keyboard instruments, and in 1906, president of the Emerson Piano Company of Boston, which was famous for making what was touted as “the sweet-toned Emerson.”

*passion for Esperanto*. He began learning it in 1910, and from 1918 to 1921, he served as president of its North American association, the Esperanto-Asocio de Norda Ameriko, which had been founded in 1905 as the Amerika Esperanto-Asocio. He transitioned to being honorary president in his eighties.

*translated abundantly*. Especially adventure stories by the English writer, Sir Henry Rider Haggard, but also other works, such as Anatole France’s *Thaïs*.

*a novel*. *Juneco kaj amo* (Youth and love).

## Isabel Butler and Her Publisher

*I found disciples of the great Gaston Paris*. Cited and translated in Bettina Liebowitz Knapp and Myra Chipman, *That Was Yvette: The Biography of Yvette Guilbert, The Great Disease* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1964), 208.

*What a shame Gaston Paris is not living! The Professor’s House* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1925), 158.

*Isabel Butler*. Miss Butler lived her whole life in Jamaica Plain, studied at Radcliffe College, and kept close ties to Harvard, bequeathing what had been the family home to Harvard’s Arnold Arboretum (it still stands, but no longer belongs to the University). Although she taught English literature for a year at Wellesley College, her physical limitations restricted her; she died in the same house where she had been born. Bits and pieces on her life may be gleaned from book reviews, short obituaries, and published acknowledgments of her bequests in Harvard and Radcliffe publications, but the fullest information is forthcoming in the “Cabot Hall Book of Gifts,” a scrapbook assembled in 1937 with photographs and typed biographies to commemorate alumnae and staff after whom rooms were named when the then-new dormitory of Cabot Hall was furnished. The album is Radcliffe College Archives SC 63–1v.

*between 1891 and 1907*. 1891–1896 and 1905–1907.

*prose translation*. Isabel Butler, *Our Lady’s Tumbler: A Tale of Medieval France, Translated into English from the Old French* (Boston: Copeland & Day, 1898).

*The Song of Roland*. Isabel Butler, *The Song of Roland, Translated into English Prose*, Riverside Literature Series, vol. 157 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1904), and Isabel Butler, trans., *Tales from the Old French* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1910).

*far less active*. On Charlotte Yonge (the exception that proves the rule), see Sarah R. Wakefield, “Charlotte Yonge’s Victorian Normans in *The Little Duke*,” in *Beyond Arthurian Romances: The Reach of Victorian Medievalism*, ed. Lorretta M. Holloway and Jennifer A. Palmgren (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 53–71.

*learned journals.* H. A. Todd, “Gaston Paris: Romance Philologist and Member of the French Academy,” *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 12 (1897): 341–54.

*elephant folio.* This tall folio form on handmade paper, as printed from line blocks, was brought out in a limited edition of 220, printed by hand by the Riverside Press, chief manufacturing press within Houghton Mifflin & Co. The book, in red, blue, brown, and black, was designed by the American typographer and type designer Bruce Rogers, who placed his initials to flank the printer’s device on the title page. Despite the date of 1904 on the copyright page, the colophon page indicates 1906. For more on Rogers, see Jerry Kelly, *The First Flowering: Bruce Rogers at the Riverside Press* (Boston: David R. Godine, 2008).

*lead type.* The type is *lettre bâtarde*.

*French gothic script.* The format includes marginalia in *civilité* type, also English-language, in brown, as well as in supplemental features such as the magnificent vignettes, colored by hand. Both types were imported from France.

*corresponded with the French ambassador.* Letter from Theodore Roosevelt to J. J. Jusserand, February 8, 1904, Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division.

*a family friend sent him a book.* Letter from Elizabeth Kean to Theodore Roosevelt, December 19 (?), 1905, Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division.

*I am proud as an American.* January 1, 1907, in Ellen B. Ballou, *The Building of the House: Houghton Mifflin’s Formative Years* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970), 539; Joseph Blumenthal, *Bruce Rogers: A Life in Letters, 1870–1957* (Austin, TX: W. Thomas Taylor, 1989), 17 (quoting from Ballou).

*to compare this product.* “[C]omparing that ‘Song of Roland’ with other modern printing (notably with a very handsome edition of a great German book I have) it seemed to me far ahead, and almost like some of the very beautiful printing of books at the end of the Fifteenth Century. The other day I saw a Livy, tooled in Florence in 1476, which was so beautiful, altho so very expensive, that it really needed heroic self-denial for me not to purchase it.” The whole letter, dated January 23, 1907, is quoted in Blumenthal, *Bruce Rogers*, 18, and Ballou, *The Building of the House*, 540.

*The Knight of the Barrel.* *Le chevalier au barisel*, in *Tales from the Old French*, 173–206.

*pious and didactic tales.* In French, *contes dévots et didactiques*.

*epilogue and the translator’s note.* *Tales from the Old French*, 259, 265.

*far from pleasant.* Florence Nightingale Jones, *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 10.4 (1911): 631–33. The English of *The Song of Roland* even offers a four-page “List of Words Not in Common Use,” with such nuggets of outdated vocabulary as “beseen,” “caitiff,” “candle,” and “stour.” Obsolete language of this sort was not as jarring at a time when Sir Walter Scott continued to exercise influence on conceptions of how the Middle Ages should be described and especially of how the speech of medieval people should be expressed in modern literature. Still, a century later the criticism of Butler’s style by a contemporary of hers as archaizing (and pseudoarchaizing) has not lost any of its validity or sting.

*façade of the text.* Both quotations appear on the same unpaginated side in the “Translator’s Note” by Butler that precedes her translation of *Our Lady’s Tumbler*: it is the fifth side of the note.

*medievalist and revolutionary*. Thus Margaret R. Grennan, *William Morris: Medievalist and Revolutionary* (New York: King's Crown, 1945).

*Kelmscott often aspired to be faithful to the Middle Ages*. William S. Peterson, *The Kelmscott Press: A History of William Morris's Typographical Adventure* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

*ties to other English writers*. See Joe Walker Kraus, *Messrs. Copeland & Day, 69 Cornhill, Boston, 1893–1899* (Philadelphia, PA: George S. MacManus, 1979).

*pocket cathedral*. The passage, from a letter of December 1894, is quoted in Martin Harrison and Bill Water, *Burne-Jones* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1973), 164. On the simile and its source, see Douglas E. Schoenherr, "A Note on Burne-Jones's 'Pocket Cathedral' and Ruskin," *Journal of the William Morris Society* 15 (2004): 91–93.

*outsized edition*. The printed volume comprised a total of 564 pages and 87 woodcut illustrations by Edward Burne-Jones.

*handy format*. With dimensions of approximately 10 cm by 13.5 cm. See Kraus, *Messrs. Copeland & Day*, 40, 49.

*petite in other ways*. Printed by John Wilson and Son of Cambridge, Mass., the volume has black-and-white initials to imitate the ones in alternating red and blue that are common in medieval rubrication, and it treats specially also the initial capitals of God, Mary, and other words associated with them. The next two printings were with a more conventional press (2nd ed., Boston: Small, Maynard, 1899; 3rd ed., 1904; 4th ed., 1907). This outfit opened its doors in 1897 and filed for bankruptcy three decades later in 1927.

## Reverend Cormack, Alice Kemp-Welch, and Eugene Mason

*first versification of the poem in English*. William Showell Rogers, "The Tumbling Monk of Clairvaux (1897)," in *Christmas Greetings and Other Verses* (Birmingham, UK: Cornish Brothers, 1902), 63–76 (proem, 65–66; translation, 67–71; short extracts from the Old French, 73–74).

*another one in verse*. Since the 1897 poem was little known, the later translator was credited by contemporaries with having been the first to put the French legend into English verse. See "Cormack, Reverend George," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia and Its Makers* (New York: The Encyclopedia Press, 1917), 35. Photograph on p. 37. This same George Cormack, who served for a time at Saint Etheldreda's, Ely House, Holborn, in London, was thanked by Wentworth Huyshe for help throughout with his prose translation, *The Life of Saint Columba (Columb-Kille) A.D. 521–597: Founder of the Monastery of Iona and First Christian Missionary to the Pagan Tribes of North Britain* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1888), xi. Cormack himself translated the *Life of St. Machar*, and in 1908 he published *Egypt in Asia: A Plain Account of Pre-Biblical Syria and Palestine* (London: A. and C. Black, 1908). Most of the Reverend's writing was in apologetics.

*it came out as a book unto itself*. George Cormack, *Our Lady's Tumbler: A Legend of the Middle Age from the Twelfth-Century French, Versified* (London: Burns & Oates, and New York: Benziger, 1907).

*controversy over the place of Mary*. John Singleton, "The Virgin Mary and Religious Conflict in Victorian Britain," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 43.1 (1992): 16–34.

*Wales in 1880.* The first occurred on August 30 at Capel-y-Ffin in the Llanthony Valley, in the Black Mountains, in a field beside the monastery.

*Father Ignatius.* His real name was Joseph Leycester Lyne. For biographies, see Donald Attwater, *Father Ignatius of Llanthony, a Victorian* (London: Cassell, 1931); Arthur Calder-Marshall, *The Enthusiast: An Enquiry into the Life, Beliefs and Character of the Rev. Joseph Leycester Lyne Alias Fr. Ignatius O.S.B., Abbot of Elm Hill, Norwich, and Llanthony, Wales* (London: Faber and Faber, 1962).

*not indeed the last end.* Attwater, *Father Ignatius*, viii.

*miraculous cures ensued.* I. Ll. Davies, "The Apparitions at Llanthony," *Brycheiniog* 19 (1980–1981): 74–82; Singleton, "Virgin Mary," 31. Decades later the location remained a magnet to eccentrics: Eric Gill, an inheritor and adapter of William Morris's Arts and Crafts movement, who turned Roman Catholic in 1913, moved to Capel-y-Ffin for a time. For the most obvious and least unconventional of his personal predilections, he became known as "The Married Monk."

*annually.* On August 30.

*dismissive.* He denigrates "bald prose versions not remarkable for accuracy, or, in some instances, for sense."

*attired... in its own costume.* Cormack, *Our Lady's Tumbler*, 6.

*unwonted gyration.* Cormack, *Our Lady's Tumbler*, 6–7.

*any few couplets.* Cormack, *Our Lady's Tumbler*, 23–24. Take the following pair: "Endures the Abbot no more ruth / But gladsome is, in very sooth, / Sith God to him has plainly shown, / He claims the Minstrel for His own."

*ring truer.* The flaw of favoring vocabulary such as "ruth," "gladsome," "sooth," and "sith" is that in its own day the original was not meant to sound outmoded.

*Old French prose and verse.* With Louis Brandin, *The Chatelaine of Vergi: A Thirteenth Century French Romance* (London: D. Nutt, 1903); *The History of Fulk Fitz-Warine* (London: Alexander Moring, the De le More Press, 1904); with Laurence Binyon et al., Christine de Pisan, *The Book of the Duke of True Lovers* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1907); and *Of Six Mediaeval Women, to Which is Added a Note on Medieval Gardens* (London: Macmillan, 1913). She collaborated more than once with Louis M. Brandin, a Romance philologist at University College London.

*anthologized.* For example, see Charles Williams Jones, *Medieval Literature in Translation* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1950), 594–602; Roberta Anderson and Dominic Aidan Bellenger, eds., *Medieval Religion: A Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 2007), 177–84 (where it is presented among "sometimes surprising expressions of faith," p. 174).

*constructions.* "Thus died the minstrel. Cheerfully did he tumble, and cheerfully did he serve, for the which [sic] he merited great honour, and none was there to compare unto him. And the holy Fathers have related unto us that it thus befell this minstrel. Now let us pray God, without ceasing, that He may grant unto us so worthily to serve Him, that we may be deserving of His love. The story of the Tumbler is set forth. Here endeth The Tumbler of Our Lady."



*range of stories.* Beyond fostering the deliberate misimpression of having translated solely from a manuscript of the original, Kemp-Welch furnishes fuller annotation than any of her precursors. Enhancing the sense of responsible scholarship, she groups our tale with versions of eight other Marian miracles, including two that she translates from Gautier de Coinci. One is the miracle of the monk who recited daily five psalms to honor the five letters in Mary's Latin name, Maria. In return Mary caused five roses to grow out of his face after his death. The other is the miracle of the Virgin in which the fiddling and singing of a minstrel motivates the Virgin to cause a votive candle at Rocamadour to land upon his instrument.

*applauded it.* Anonymous, "Miscellaneous," *Burlington Magazine* 12 (1907–1908): 382: "These admirable and charming little volumes must delight the hearts of all who love the romance of the middle ages, or are interested in its faith and its code of chivalry."

*Medieval-like lettering.* The cover design is based largely in turn upon the first of two title pages, which faces a fine facsimile of the bas-de-page illumination of the juggler. This title page was designed by Blanche C. Hunter as an engraving on wood in imitation of a British Library manuscript: London, British Library, MS Additional 16997, fol. 145. Hunter made a specialty of such adaptations, which she did also for various other volumes: see Edith Rickert, trans., *Early English Romances, Done into Modern English: Romances of Love* (London: Chatto and Windus, and New York: Duffield, 1908); Christine de Pisan, *Book of the Duke*.

*Eugene Mason.* Eugene Mason, tr., *Aucassin & Nicolette and Other Mediaeval Romances and Legends Translated from the French* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons; New York: E. P. Dutton, 1910), 53–66.

*other medieval texts.* Eugene Mason, tr., *French Mediaeval Romances from the Lays of Marie de France* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, and New York: E. P. Dutton, 1911); *Arthurian Chronicles*, by Robert Wace and Layamon (also known as "Lawman") (London: J. M. Dent and Sons; New York: E. P. Dutton, 1912).

*eight decades.* For examples from across three decades of the late twentieth century, see David Herlihy, *Medieval Culture and Society* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), 292–302; Susan Groag Bell, ed., *Women, from the Greeks to the French Revolution* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1980), 133–38; Jolly, *Tradition and Diversity*, 436–45.

*not consistently better.* For the sake more of comparison than of pleasure, here is its conclusion: "Thus endeth the story of the minstrel. Fair was his tumbling, fair was his service, for thereby gained he such high honour as is above all earthly gain. So the holy Fathers narrate that in such fashion these things chanced to this minstrel. Now, therefore, let us pray to God—He Who is above all other—that He may grant us so to do such faithful service that we may win the guerdon of His love. Here endeth the Tumbler of Our Lady."

*reprinted.* The pagination sometimes varies in the reprints. For storybooks, see for children, *Golden Story Book* (London: Collins, n.d. [1930s]; repr. London: Collins Clear-type Press, n.d. [1960s]), 241–49, and for adults, Maxim Lieber, ed., *Great Stories of All Nations: One Hundred and Fifty-Eight Complete Short Stories* (New York: Tudor, 1934), 83–91. In an early literary survey, see Mabell Shippie Clarke Smith, *The Spirit of French Letters* (New York: Macmillan, 1912), 190–94 (abridged). Finally, Mason's English was acknowledged as having served as the basis for the 1948 play *Our Lady's Tumbler*, as well as for much of its introduction, by the American poet and writer from the state of Maine, Sheldon Christian.

*the school where both taught.* For four years from 1908, Lawrence served on the staff at Davidson Road School in Croydon.

*It is rich.* Letter to Arthur William McLeod, December 23, 1910, in D. H. Lawrence, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, ed. James T. Boulton, 8 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979–2000), 8: 5. Picturing the author-to-be of *Sons and Lovers* (1913) reading to his mother in bed is more than a trifle flattering. But let us refrain from untoward Lawrencian speculations. In this one instance, our suggestive frontal lobes and not his are to be reprehended.

*bubbled over about medieval architecture.* Lawrence’s liking of medieval architecture shows most obviously in *Sons and Lovers* (New York: Mitchell Kennerley, 1913), 178: “He talked to her endlessly about his love of horizontals: how they, the great levels of sky and land in Lincolnshire, meant to him the eternity of the will, just as the bowed Norman arches of the church, repeating themselves, meant the dogged leaping forward of the persistent human soul, on and on, nobody knows where; in contradiction to the perpendicular lines and to the Gothic arch, which, he said, leapt up at heaven and touched the ecstasy and lost itself in the divine. Himself, he said, was Norman, Miriam was Gothic. She bowed in consent even to that.” For an overview, see Kathleen Verduin, “Lawrence and the Middle Ages,” *D. H. Lawrence Review* 18 (1986): 169–81.

## Katharine Lee Bates and Gothic Wellesley

*missionary.* Jean Kenyon Mackenzie served as a missionary of the Presbyterian Church (USA) in West Africa from 1904 through 1913. After returning to New York City, she wrote extensively on life and missionary activity in West Africa. The first of her seven books brought together letters, some of them previously published in the church’s missionary magazine. For this one dated November 4, 1905, see *Black Sheep: Adventures in West Africa* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1916), 78–79, at 79. For biographical information, see Norman A. Horner, “Mackenzie, Jean Kenyon,” in *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, ed. Gerald H. Anderson (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 1998), 425.

*Katharine Lee Bates.* Bates first published her poem as “In Meter: Our Lady’s Tumbler,” *The Chautauquan: A Weekly Newsmagazine* 40.4 (1904): 370–71, and as “Our Lady’s Tumbler,” *National Magazine* 20 (1904): 544–46. The poem was reprinted in *Persephone and Other Poems*, by members of the English Literature Department, Wellesley College (Wellesley, MA: Helen J. Sanborn, 1905), 211–13; Katharine Lee Bates, *America the Beautiful and Other Poems* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1911), 113–15; and idem, *Selected Poems*, ed. Marion Pelton Guild (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1930), 117–19.

*colleague and mentor.* Katharine Lee Bates, “English at Wellesley College,” *English in American Universities*, ed. William Morton Payne (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1895), 141–48.

*My heart isn’t quite pressed flat.* Dorothy Whittemore Bates Burgess, *Dream and Deed: The Story of Katharine Lee Bates* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1952), 95.

*composed.* On the composition of the poem, see Burgess, *Dream and Deed*, 101–3.

*combined with music.* The music was composed by Samuel A. Ward.

*history.* The resulting song became a beloved alternative to “The Star-Spangled Banner,” which was designated the official national anthem of the United States of America in 1931.

*one collection.* Bates, *America the Beautiful*, 113–15. See Patricia Ann Palmieri, *In Adamless Eden: The Community of Women Faculty at Wellesley* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 117. Bates's "Our Lady's Tumbler" reached its largest readership as the concluding poem in a subsection "What Is the Spirit?"

*America's answer to Augustus Welby Pugin.* On the relationship between the two, see Cameron Macdonell, "Ralph Adams Cram and Bertram Goodhue," in Brittain-Catlin et al., *A. W. N. Pugin's Global Influence*, 94–106.

*It is not hard to imagine.* *The Wellesley College Magazine* 8 (1899–1900): 192–93.

*dreamy-eyed response.* Burgess, *Dream and Deed*, 58–59. The passage begins, "Our first cathedral stood under a smoky sky, itself dark, old, majestic, with a hill of tombs behind and flat burial slabs all about. We paid 'tuppence' each to our first beadle and entered the great nave, passing thence to choir and Lady Chapel and Chapter House and back to crypt. It strengthened all my heart to see the God-faith of the race arched and columned in such massive and enduring form, and I adopted the motto of one of the old, emblazoned coats of arms,—and 'J'espère.' I liked the starry lights in the upper windows, I liked the worn, sloping steps, I loved the brooding spirit of worship." The italicized French means "I hope."

*architectural books.* Burgess, *Dream and Deed*, 61.

*Prayer in Stone.* Burgess, *Dream and Deed*, 63.

*visited episcopal seats.* Burgess, *Dream and Deed*, 63, 71.

*all social classes.* Burgess, *Dream and Deed*, 72: "The beautiful thing about the whole is that this generation of people have labored, lovingly and zealously, to restore their old cathedral, and it has the democratic rather than the aristocratic look. The men who worship in it are, from Bishop to organ-blower, the men who have labored in it with head or hands or both."

*The College Beautiful.* Katharine Lee Bates, *The College Beautiful, and Other Poems, Printed for the Benefit of the Norumbega Fund* (Cambridge, MA: H. O. Houghton, 1887), 1–7, 8–9, respectively. The first stanza of the latter poem is representative: "All hail to the College Beautiful! / All hail to the Wellesley blue! / All hail to the girls who are gathering pearls / From the shells that open to few! / From the shells upcast by the ebbing Past / On the shores where, faithful and true, / An earnest band, with the groping hand, / Are seeking the jewels from under the sand, / And spreading abroad through the breadth of the land / The name of the Wellesley blue." The poet develops a metaphor that glorifies the attention of young women at college to pearls of wisdom.

The shells of mollusks such as cowries have been seen to resemble a woman's sexual organs. By extension, the pearls found within humbler bivalves have been taken time and again as symbols of female sexuality and especially of the clitoris. As a result, those with an inclination toward Freudianism of the last century or queer studies of today might venture an observation or two about the young women of an all-female college who fish for these precious objects. Of general relevance, rather than to Bates and her context, see Kathryn Simpson, "Pearl-Diving: Inscriptions of Desire and Creativity in H. D. and Woolf," *Journal of Modern Literature* 27.4 (2004): 37–58.

*her own institution.* Bates, who never earned a PhD, received both her BA in 1880 and her MA in 1891 from Wellesley.

*Seven Sisters.* The seven are Mount Holyoke, Vassar, Barnard, Smith, Radcliffe, Bryn Mawr, and Wellesley.

*other early granite buildings.* Designed by Addison Hutton.

*new president.* The president was M. Carey Thomas, while the architects were Walter Cope and John Stewardson.

*The other members of the collegiate sorority.* Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Alma Mater: Design and Experience in the Women's Colleges from Their Nineteenth-Century Beginnings to the 1930s* (New York: Knopf, distributed by Random House, 1984), 214.

*College Hall.* With the president's office, classrooms, laboratories, a meeting hall, and more.

*Williston Memorial Library.* Horowitz, *Alma Mater*, 303.

*Mary Lyon Hall.* Horowitz, *Alma Mater*, 228–30.

*A Room of One's Own.* Not published until 1929, after having been delivered the preceding year as lectures at two women's colleges in Cambridge, England.

*autonomy.* "A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction." Woolf did not make the case that women should become anchorites or nuns.

*Wellesley Female Seminary.* George H. Davenport, "Seal and Coat of Arms of Wellesley College," *Wellesley Alumnae Quarterly* 2.1 (1917): 1–3, at 1.

*peculiar strain.* Palmieri, *In Adamless Eden*, 123.

*she took issue.* Palmieri, *In Adamless Eden*, 40.

*philanthropist.* Henry Fowle Durant.

*Here begins the new life.* Davenport, "Seal and Coat of Arms," 2: "Dante wrote at the beginning of his record of that sacred love which guided him to God, 'Incipit Vita Nova' (Here beginneth the new life). Will you not write that inscription in all its noblest meaning at the beginning of your course in Wellesley College, thus making it also the beginning of the beautiful ideal life."

*Vida Dutton Scudder.* A member of the first class from Boston Girl's Latin School, a graduate of Smith College, and a recipient of an MA from Wellesley. Scudder, who was influenced by John Ruskin during studies at Oxford University, taught English literature at Wellesley from 1887 until her retirement four decades later in 1927. Her outpouring of books includes various on medieval English literature, popularizing hagiography, and John Ruskin.

*my natural home.* Vida Dutton Scudder, *On Journey* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1937), 78.

*close colleagues.* Scudder, *On Journey*, 107.

*Wellesley marriages.* Palmieri, *In Adamless Eden*, xv, 99, 137–42.

*Katharine Coman*. Judith Schwarz, “Yellow Clover: Katharine Lee Bates and Katharine Coman,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women’s Studies* 4.1 (1979): 59–67, at 63; Gerald Weissmann, “Trashing ‘America the Beautiful’: From She to Shining She,” *The FASEB Journal* 21.13 (2007): 3399–403, at 3400; Michael W. Handle, “Katharine Lee Bates,” in *LGBT: Encyclopedia of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender History in America*, ed. Marc Stein, 3 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2004), 1: 121–22. Compare Palmieri, *In Adamless Eden*, 137–42.

*our meddlesome reach*. For an even-tempered statement of what we can and cannot know about such relationships, see Lillian Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love between Women from the Renaissance to the Present* (New York: Morrow, 1981), 190.

*died of breast cancer*. Ellen Leopold, “‘My Soul Is among Lions’: Katharine Lee Bates’s Account of the Illness and Death of Katharine Coman,” *Legacy* 23.1 (2006): 60–73.

*general predisposition*. Burgess, *Dream and Deed*, 107–8.

*a seven-year-old*. Palmieri, *In Adamless Eden*, 60.

*Once Upon a Time*. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1921.

*charming*. Smith, *Spirit of French Letters*, 190–94, at 190.

*illustrated retelling*. Illustrated by the artist Angus Peter MacDonall, in a series Bates edited with the aim of acquainting “school children with literature suited to their years” by exposing them to “the greatest and most childlike spirit in English song”: Katharine Lee Bates, *The Story of Chaucer’s Canterbury Pilgrims, Retold for Children* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1909), 9–10. For discussion, see Siân Echard, *Printing the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 151–52.

*panting for faith*. Burgess, *Dream and Deed*, 64–65, quoting Bates: “I am always conscious of trying, trying, trying and trying in vain to *melt* my stubborn members, physical and mental, into the truth of my soul, but still I trust the poor, dumb, hidden self which dwells in solitude and looks to God. It abides in pitiful darkness, but its entreaty is Godward. If this is not true, then there is no truth possible to me.... You are right in feeling that with the sense of one true service rendered, one’s own poor life becomes blessed and almost glorified. Under all my own errors—and it seems as if no one ever made so many as I have managed to jumble into these thirty-one years—I have an ever-growing consciousness of the beauty—the ineffable beauty and splendor of God’s work for the world and in the world. It is bitterness itself to know that I mar and hinder that work, and the very sweetness of life whenever I seem, however so little, to help.”

*wanders into the twelfth century*. Henry Adams, *MSMC*, 343 (chap. 1, “Saint Michiel de la Mer del Peril”).

*a natural colour-sense*. Adams, *MSMC*, 468 (chap. 8, “The Twelfth Century Glass”).

*It was very childlike*. Adams, *MSMC*, 522 (chap. 10, “The Court of the Queen of Heaven,” final paragraph).

## Nostalgia for the Middle Ages

*counterargument.* Wing-Yee Cheung et al., “Back to the Future Nostalgia Increases Optimism,” *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 39.11 (2013): 1484–96; Constantine Sedikides et al., “Nostalgia Past, Present, and Future,” *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 17.5 (2008): 304–7.

*not always to be condemned.* Helen Dell, “Nostalgia and Medievalism: Conversations, Contradictions, Impasses,” *Postmedieval: A Journal of Medieval Cultural Studies* 2.2 (2011): 115–26.

*reflective and restorative nostalgia.* This distinction is drawn in Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), parts 4 and 5. But the definitive study is David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

*foreign country.* The apophthegm may be known best through Lowenthal’s *The Past is a Foreign Country*. The title is taken from the opening sentence in the 1953 novel *The Go-Between* by L. P. Hartley (1895–1972).

## Notes to Chapter 4

### The Local Historian Félix Brun

*more than one hundred years.* Pierre Kunstmann, ed. and trans., *Vierge et merveille: Les miracles de Notre-Dame narratifs au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Union générale d'éditions, 1981), 142–77.

*the practice of translation.* François Brunet, “Les traductions des anciens textes français au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle,” in Bernard-Griffiths et al., *La fabrique du Moyen Âge*, 183–89, esp. 183.

*ultimately untranslatable.* Claudio Galderisi, “‘Un truchement me faut quérir...’ : Peut-on traduire pour qui ne connaît pas le français médiéval?,” in *De l’ancien français au français moderne: Théories, pratiques et impasses de la traduction intralinguale*, ed. Claudio Galderisi and Jean-Jacques Vincensini, Bibliothèque de Transmédié, vol. 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), 7–32.

*illustrated French weekly.* *La France illustrée* 10.443, Saturday, May 26, 1883, 308.

*to preclude any mix-up.* Arthur Pougin, *Le ménestrel* (May 15, 1904), quoted by Terence Noel Needham, “‘Le jongleur est ma foi’: Massenet and Religion as Seen through the Jongleur de Notre Dame” (PhD diss., Queen’s University Belfast, 2009), 143.

*a similar gloss.* Caecilia Pieri, *Il était une fois, Contes merveilleux*, vol. 1 (Paris: Flammarion, 2004), 95: “‘Notre Dame’ is the name given to the Virgin, since in the Middle Ages ‘dame’ signifies the queen or the wife of the lord. In France, at Paris, ‘Notre Dame’ is the name of one of the most celebrated churches in the world.”

*1887.* In the same year, another early compromise between summary paraphrase in modern French and simplified edition of the original can be found in the more scholarly venue of an anthology of Old French. See Léon Clédat, *Morceaux choisis des auteurs français du Moyen Âge: Avec une introduction grammaticale, des notes littéraires et un glossaire du vieux français* (Paris: Garnier frères, 1887), 231–38. Clédat was a French Romance philologist who had studied with both Gaston Paris and Paul Meyer. He entitled the selection “Le tombeur Notre-Dame,” footnoting the title to clarify that the construction of the genitive had changed from medieval to modern French: “Le tombeur *de* Notre-Dame.” His strategy was to swat away the problematic associations of *tombeur* by glossing the word as having to do with tumbling. All the while he left unmentioned the unseemly connotations of the noun in modern French as a lady’s man. In etymology, that turn of phrase would be considered a true false friend, as a misleading cognate can be called.

*his publications.* Félix Brun, *Le Jongleur de Notre Dame* (Paris: D. Dumoulin, 1887). Other books not mentioned in the notes to follow include *Le voeu de Vivien: Fragments du cycle de Guillaume d’Orange* (Paris: Librairie des Bibliophiles, 1882), and *La vie privée des paysans au Moyen Âge et sous l’ancien régime* (Paris: Société bibliographique, 1882). The archivist also circulated as a book-length offprint his “Lettres inédites concernant le Soissonnais et les pays voisins pendant la guerre de la Fronde, 1648–1653,” which had appeared in the *Bulletin de la Société archéologique, historique et scientifique de Soissons*, 3rd series, 5 (1895): 71–275. Brun is not to be confused with his scientific namesake, whose publications are listed in Félix Brun, *Titres et travaux scientifiques* (Paris: Georges Carré et C. Naud, 1901).

*fifteen-page disquisition.* Félix Brun, *Le barillet* (Paris: D. Dumoulin, 1887). The title means simply “The Barrel.”

*Seven Legends.* In the original French, *Le jongleur de Notre Dame: Sept légendes pour autant d’amis.*

*the opening verb.* A trivial switch varies the opening verb in tense: “Il fut une fois un jongleur” and “Il était une fois un jongleur.”

*specific friends of the author.* One, dedicated to Émile Abadie, recounts an episode from the *chanson de geste* or “song of heroic deeds” entitled *Jourdain de Blaye*. The Old French poem is from the late twelfth or early thirteenth century. Another, dedicated to Gaston de Carné Carnavalet, tells a tale of Girart (Gérard) and Églantine (Aiglentine/Aiglente). This may be drawn from Gerbert de Montreuil, *Le roman de la Violette*, trans. Mireille Demaules (Paris: Stock/Moyen Âge, 1992) or the prose adaptation of it, *Histoire de Gérard de Nevers: Mise en prose du roman de la Violette de Gerbert de Montreuil*, chaps. 25–37, ed. Matthieu Marchal (Villeneuve-d’Ascq, France: Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2013), 196–241. A third, dedicated to Jules Pressoir (a teacher who lived in Acy, Aisne), recapitulates the “song” of *Amis and Amile*. This *chanson de geste*, together with its continuation *Jourdain de Blaye*, constitutes what is called the *petite geste de Blaye* or the “little Blaye cycle.” The fourth, dedicated to his young nephew Charles, is entitled by Brun *Un ménestrel chez le diable*. The conventional title in modern French for this fabliau from the first half of the thirteenth century is *Saint Pierre et le jongleur*. The final tale, dedicated to the poet and playwright Charles Grandmougin, offers a long summary of traditions relating to the *Voyage of Saint Brendan*. This story, often designated by its Latin title *Navigatio Sancti Brendani*, is widely attested throughout Europe. It was extant at the latest from the first half of the tenth century in Latin and from the beginning of the twelfth century in French (at first in Anglo-Norman).

*among researchers.* Only in the past decade has any copy appeared worldwide in WorldCat or KVK.

*Bucy-le-Long.* Félix Brun, *Bucy (Impressions d’enfance)* (Meulan, France: A. Masson, 1893).

*begrudged no one.* Looking him up in search engines leads to a trove of French periodicals and books where he is singled out for the help he gave.

*The Song of Roland.* Félix Brun, *Étude sur la Chanson de Roland* (Paris: E. Plon, 1876).

*national and regional pride.* See, for example, his book that appeared soon after World War I: *Jeanne d’Arc à Soissons: Recherche sur Soissons et le Soissonnais au temps de la Pucelle (1429–1430)* (Meulan, France: A. Réty, 1920). See also the same author’s *Notes biographiques sur Renaud de Fontaines, évêque de Soissons au temps de Jeanne d’Arc (1423–1442)* (Soissons, France: Imprimerie de G. Nougarede, 1912). In 1924 he published a monograph on an eighteenth-century Benedictine of Soissons.

*Notre-Dame in Soissons.* In the 1790s, barracks had been installed in the buildings of the former Abbey of Notre-Dame. These were ultimately damaged badly in World War I.

*Notes to Serve for a History.* *Bucy-le-Long: Notes pour servir à l’histoire, 1634–1815* (Meulan, France: A. Réty, 1900). This title is preceded by a kind of pre-title, *Un village soissonnais*. When the pre-title has been treated as the main title, it has been followed by the subtitle *Notes pour servir à l’histoire de Bucy-le-Long*.



*Notes on the Simons.* Félix Brun, *Notes sur les Simon de Bucy et le vieux château de Bucy-le-Long* (Meulan, France: A. Réty, 1909). Offprint from *Bulletin de la Société archéologique de Soissons*. Other publications relating to local history include his *Dom Muley, bénédictin de Saint-Crépin-le-Grand, de Soissons, et sa correspondance avec divers érudits (1774–1786)* (Compiègne, France: Compiègne, 1924).

*author of Our Lady's Tumbler.* Félix Brun, *Gautier de Coincy et ses Miracles de Notre Dame* (Meulan, France: A. Masson, 1888), 38–41.

*his compatriot's life.* Brun, *Gautier de Coincy*. For “uniformity,” p. 3; for criticism of Gautier, pp. 6–8; for simplicity, p. 9. On the origins of Gautier, see Louis Allen, “The Birthplace of Gautier de Coincy,” *Modern Philology* 33.3 (1936): 239–42; V. Frederic Koenig, “Further Notes on Gautier de Coincy,” *Modern Philology* 35.4 (1938): 353–58.

*degenerate complexity.* “Our faith has no longer, can have no longer, the simplicity of his.” This pronouncement bears a resemblance to Gaston Paris’s reference to the miracles of Gautier de Coincy as “the oddest and often the most unique of childlike piety in the Middle Ages.” See *La littérature française*, 206: “le monument le plus curieux et souvent le plus singulier de la piété enfantine au moyen âge.”

*sweet land of sweet France.* In the original French, *doux pays de douce France*.

*harks back to.* Félix Brun, “Guillaume de Flay dans le Soissonnais,” *Bulletin de la Société archéologique, historique et scientifique de Soissons*, 3rd series, 13 (1905–1906 [publ. 1907]): 181–90, at 190.

*I am only a medievalizer.* The French nouns are, respectively, *médiévistes* and *moyenâgeux*.

*medievalizer.* Brun, *Le barillet*, half-title page. I quote from the copy held at the University of California, Berkeley. Once again, the noun is *moyenâgeux*.

*from 1890.* He dates the preface October 1889.

*provincialism was losing ground.* For a short study that deals illuminatingly with the counterpoint between Paris-based researchers and provincial scholars, see Baggioni, “De Coquebert de Montbret et Raynouard au duo G. Paris/P. Meyer.”

*tsk tsk, even contempt.* Vivian Mercier, “Moyenageux” [sic], *Commonweal* 60.13 (July 2, 1954): 323.

*In its primary sense.* Dany Hadjadj, “‘Moyen Âge’ à l’épreuve des dictionnaires,” in Bernard-Griffiths et al., *La fabrique du Moyen Âge*, 45–56, at 47, 50 (for *moyenâgeux*) and 51–52 (for *medieval*, *médiéviste*, and *médiévisme*).

*medieval studies.* Clare A. Simmons, ed., *Medievalism and the Quest for the “Real” Middle Ages* (Oxford: Taylor and Francis, 2001), 12.

*Auguste Riche.* The good father published, with the same house that brought out Brun’s study of *The Song of Roland*, a volume entitled *Les harmonies du culte de la Très Sainte Vierge et la virginité* (The concords between the cult of the Most Holy Virgin and virginity) (3rd ed., Paris: Plon, 1875). Although Riche’s voluminous publications had an impact in his day, he is best known now for his friendship with the French mining engineer who turned sociologist, Frédéric le Play.

*affectionate remembrance*. In French, “affectueux souvenir de la Conférence Foucault.”

*pendulum*. This is the title device of the Italian medievalist and medievalizing novelist, Umberto Eco: see his *Il pendolo di Foucault* (Milan, Italy: Bompiani, 1988); in English, *Foucault's Pendulum*, trans. William Weaver (London: Secker & Warburg, 1989).

*Such collegial circles*. See Jean-Pierre Chaline, *Sociabilité et érudition: Les sociétés savantes en France, XIXe-XXe siècles*, Format, vol. 31 (Paris: Editions du CTHS, 1998); Carol E. Harrison, *The Bourgeois Citizen in Nineteenth-Century France: Gender, Sociability, and the Uses of Emulation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), without specific reference to the Foucault society.

*reappropriating the past*. Jean Jacquart, “Préface,” in Chaline, *Sociabilité et érudition*, vii–x, at vii–viii.

*distanced himself*. For reasons of space I limit coverage of the broader literary context. Many titles of French literary works written during the second half of the nineteenth century may be found in Dakyns, *Middle Ages in French Literature*.

*mystery plays*. Brun, *Le Jongleur de Notre Dame*, 7.

*behaved sometimes*. Brun, *Le Jongleur de Notre Dame*, 8.

*shared by many others*. For example, one critic has written “Marcel Schwob also regarded medieval men as children, but as children with an instinct towards wanton destruction.” See Dakyns, *Middle Ages in French Literature*, 277.

*six degrees of separation*. The theory was expounded first by the Hungarian author Frigyes Karinthy in 1929, but became widely known thanks to a 1990 play by this title by the playwright John Guare.

*all knew each other*. Likeminded souls felt no need to convoke formal gatherings, such as today most famously the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, where the rich and powerful flock together to discuss (and dictate?) the fate of the globe.

*levelheaded understanding*. Brun, *Bucy*, 5–6.

## The Poetaster Raymond de Borrelli

*decorated war hero*. He had distinguished himself for bravery first at the Battle of Solferino during the Second Italian War of Independence in the French army led by Napoleon III, then in the Franco-Prussian War, and later still in Southeast Asia during the Tonkin Campaign.

*prize for poetry*. For the years 1883 to 1885, 1889 to 1891, and 1893 to 1895.

*French Academy*. In French, l'Académie française, established in 1635.

1891. On November 19, 1891.

*into print*. It was printed partially in *Les annales politiques et littéraires: Revue populaire paraissant le dimanche* 9, 2e semestre, no. 440, November 29, 1891, 344–45, and fully in Raymond de Borrelli, *Le jongleur* (Paris: A. Lemerre, 1892). The poem was reprinted in the same author's *Rimes d'argent* (Paris: A. Lemerre, 1893).

*Alain Chartier*. Raymond de Borrelli, *Alain Chartier: Un acte en vers heroïques* (Paris: A. Lemerre, 1889).

*renown*. Consider, for instance, a painting by Edmund Blair Leighton, “Alan Chartier,” oil on canvas, 1903, 63 7/8 × 44 7/8 inches (162.5 × 114 cm), private collection, and an opera by Félicien de Baroncelli and Pierre Clavé.

*cinquains*. T. V. F. Brogan, “Quintain,” in *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, ed. Alex Preminger and T. V. F. Brogan (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 1012–13. Fuller information is available in this edition than in the later, fourth one.

*signs of their influence*. For Borrelli as a Parnassian, see Bertrand Degott, “Ballade n’est pas morte”: *Étude sur la pratique de la ballade médiévale depuis 1850*, *Annales littéraires de l’Université de Franche-Comté*, vol. 306 (Paris: Diffusion Les Belles Lettres, 1996), 216.

*book of Baruch*. This book is found not in the Hebrew Bible but in the Septuagint and Vulgate Bible.

*Have you read Baruch?*. In French, “Avez-vous lu Baruch? C’était un bien beau génie.”

*Jacobus de Voragine*. In French, “Avez-vous jamais lu Jacques de Voragine?” Jacobus has also been called James of Varazze and Jacopo da Varagine.

*Legenda aurea*. The work is known properly as *Legenda sanctorum*.

*what’s a clue*. The quote, lightly modified, comes from the “Inspector Lewis” TV series, episode “The Indelible Stain” (2012).

*Gautier de Coinci*. Gautier de Coinci is credited with the authorship by Léon Chancerel, *Frère clown; ou, Le Jongleur de Notre Dame: Monologue par Léon Chancerel d’après le miracle du ménestrel Pierre de Sygelar mis en vers français par le Révérendissime Père Gautier de Coincy de l’Ordre de Saint Benoit. Grand Prieur Clastra de l’Abbaye de St-Médard de Soissons (1177–1236)*, Répertoire du Centre d’études et de représentations (Lyon, France: Editions La Hutte, 1943); Sheldon Christian, in his play *Our Lady’s Tumbler* (1948), and Henri Marmier, in his novel-length expansion of the story *Le bateleur de Notre Dame* (1951).

*minstrel’s mantle and monk’s hood*. Kathryn Duys, “Minstrel’s Mantle and Monk’s Hood: The Authorial Persona of Gautier de Coinci in His Poetry and Illuminations,” in *Gautier de Coinci: Miracles, Music, and Manuscripts*, ed. Kathy M. Krause and Alison Stones, *Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe*, vol. 13 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2006), 37–63.

*monsters and fallen angels*. Borrelli, *Le jongleur*, 13.

*Mixing in a box a mass of things*. My translation, from Borrelli, *Le jongleur*, 11–12: “Mêlant dans un coffret une foule de choses, / Le jongleur dit ensuite un mot sacramentel: / Et ce mot pouvait tout, — jusqu’au métamorphoses! / Car le coffret, ouvert, n’était plein que de roses / Dont il alla joncher les marches de l’autel. / Pour terminer, il prit quelques boules de cuivre; / Et l’on vit, par ses mains à peine en mouvement, / Des sphères, sur un orbe idéal et charmant / Où l’œil émerveillé se perdait à les suivre, / passer et repasser, inépuisablement; / Et les globes légers, piqués d’une étincelle, / En ce jaillissement alternatif et prompt, / Lui faisaient une gloire, assez pareille à celle / Qui, là-haut, égrenée en couronne immortelle, / De neuf étoiles d’or nimbaient un autre front!”

*Kashiwade*. *Kashiwadé, conte japonais en vers* (Paris: A. Lemerre, 1893).

*one of the cleverest*. Theodore Stanton, "Literary Notes from Europe," *The Critic* 40 (1902): 562–64, at 563.

*military service and battles*. As a war poet, Borrelli rates as a third-tier Gallic equivalent of Rudyard Kipling, at least when the English author wrote in the vein of his "The White Man's Burden" (1899). In response to the American occupation of the Philippines after the Spanish-American War, Kipling delivered himself of this famous poem. In it he prefaces all seven stanzas with a thudding one-line refrain, the imperialist imperative "Take up the White Man's burden." In his versifying, Borrelli often bears a resemblance to Kipling for being longer on gung-ho fervor than on finesse. This is to say nothing of the egotism that predisposed him to fanfaronades.

A slightly less obvious comparison would be Arthur Conan Doyle. Although remembered today first and foremost for the detective Sherlock Holmes and secondarily for his science fiction and fantasy, the Scottish author put great stock in *The White Company*. This historical adventure was serialized in 1905–1906 and published as a book in 1906. Fifteen years later, he published a prequel in *Sir Nigel*. The fiction, about a band of archers (and vaguely reminiscent of *The Cloister and the Hearth*), was set during the Hundred Years' War, and ranged geographically across England, France, and Spain. It was inspired by a lecture on the Middle Ages that Doyle had heard in 1889. Like the early transport of *Our Lady's Tumbler* across the membrane of scholarship into belles-lettres, the book constituted a clear-cut case in which medieval studies gave rise to medievalism. After being serialized, the novel came out in its first edition precisely in 1891, the year in which Borrelli's *Le jongleur* appeared. Doyle's dedication reads: "To the hope of the future, the knitting together of the English-speaking races, this little chronicle of their common ancestry is inscribed."

*knight errant or paladin poet*. Benoît Guiffroy, "Le capitaine de Borelli, chevalier errant et paladin poète," Amicale des Anciens de la Légion Etrangère de Paris, [amalep.free.fr/le/grands/borelli/borelli09.htm](http://amalep.free.fr/le/grands/borelli/borelli09.htm) (consulted December 30, 2017).

*first allusion*. In the section "Mondanité et mélomanie de Bouvard et Pécuchet": see Marcel Proust, *Jean Santeuil: Précédé de Les plaisirs et les jours*, ed. Pierre Clarac, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, vol. 228 (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), 64.

*Swann's Way*. *Du côté de chez Swann*.

*lacks literary sensibility*. Marcel Proust, *À la recherche du temps perdu*, 4 vols., Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, vols. 100–102, 356 (Paris: Gallimard, 1987–1988), 1: 237 (with note at 1: 1211); vol. 1, trans. C. K. Scott-Moncrieff, *Swann's Way*, 2 vols. (New York: Henry Holt, 1922), 2: 31–32 ("Swann in Love"), with the substitution of the corresponding English for the French *Valse des roses*. Odette, in the opening stages of her relationship with Swann, reveals that Borrelli was among her favorite poets:

Except when he asked her for Vinteuil's little phrase instead of the *Waltz of the Roses*, Swann made no effort to induce her to play the things that he himself preferred, nor, in literature any more than in music, to correct the manifold errors of her taste. He fully realised that she was not intelligent. When she said how much she would like him to tell her about the great poets, she had imagined that she would suddenly get to know whole pages of romantic and heroic verse, in the style of the Vicomte de Borelli, only even more moving.

Like many others at the time, Proust spelled (or deliberately misspelled?) his victim's name with a single r.

*devoid of literary worth.* Proust was capable of being laudatory about other authors, as in fact he was about Anatole France. In a letter of 1913 he makes passing reference to both the 1881 novel entitled *The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard, Member of the Institute* and the later *Le jongleur de Notre Dame*. See Marcel Proust, *Correspondance*, ed. Philip Kolb, 21 vols. (Paris: Plon, 1970–1993), 12: 173. If the great novelist had been asked to take sides in a contretemps between Borrelli and Anatole France, there can be no question with whom he would have sided.

*could not contain himself.* The source is an essay originally published in the literary magazine *Mercure de France* in January 1896: Remy de Gourmont, "L'année littéraire," repr. in idem, *Épilogues: Réflexions sur la vie* (Epilogues: Reflections on life), 6 vols. (Paris: Mercure de France, 1903–1913), 1: 21–22 (January 6, 1896): "At its [the trumpet's] call, the herd reassembles as the echoes repeat, 'Borelli! Borelli!' These syllables form the name of a great poet, and unique in his genre to the point where the echoes are still not tired of it: all the glories pass by and go off to die, murmur, in the peace of the forests; Borelli sounds and rebounds from mountain to mountain. This viscount, who would deserve at least to be a count, if not a duke, has then carried off, this time again, the prize in French poetry. Oh, how just this is! Oh, how well he makes bad verse!"

*banner headlines.* "Poetry Does Have Uses," *New York Times*, Tuesday, July 4, 1905, 6, and "A Truly Parisian Trial," *The American Lawyer* 13 (1905): 401–2.

*self-congratulation.* "It appears to me that I deserve to be congratulated in this matter."

*watercolor.* The watercolor bears the subscription "A Teissere... du Jongleur qui Jongla devant l'Image de Notre-Dame, de M. Maurice Vloberg."

## The Hungarian Dezső Malonyay

*appeared first in Budapest.* Dezső Malonyay, "A bolond," *Budapesti Hírlap*, ser. 17, no. 342, December 10, 1897, 1–3. Later in the same year the text was reprinted in an anthology of short stories from the same newspaper: idem, *A Budapesti Hírlap tárcái* (Budapest, Hungary: Budapesti Hírlap, 1897), 6: 196–203.

*Le fou.* "Le fou," *Le Figaro de Noël* (December 1897): 221–226, illustrated, with a melody by the Hungarian composer Carolus (also known as Karoly) Aggházy. The story is summarized by Philippe Gille, "Le Figaro de Noël," *Le Figaro* 43, 3rd ser., no. 340, Monday, December 6, 1897.

*holy fool.* Malonyay appears to have been fascinated by the holy fool. He wrote another short story dealing with the legend of "Miserere tui, Deus."

*theaters in Hungary.* The libretto, by Jenő Rákosi (1842–1929), editor-in-chief of the Hungarian newspaper *Budapesti Hírlap*, was printed as *A bolond: Mese három felvonásban* (Budapest, Hungary, 1898). The 1898 edition, of 56 pages, circulated much less widely than the 1903 reprinting, of 130 pages (Budapest, Hungary: Budapesti Hírlap, 1903). A credit page following the title page acknowledges Dezső Malonyay for the story, the composer Béla Szábados for the music.

*hilarious.* It can be hard to gauge the degree to which the hilarity is intentional.

*faded largely out of view.* To go further, one writer contributed in an outsized way to the circumstance that the Old French was not translated formally until Pierre Kunstmann in 1981 or definitively until Paul Bretel in 2003.

## Anatole France and Gaston Paris

*It is rare.* Alvida Ahlstrom, *Le Moyen Âge dans l'œuvre d'Anatole France* (Paris: Société d'Édition Les Belles Lettres, 1930), 53.

*first printed in 1890.* It appeared in *Le Gaulois* (The Gaul), so called from 1868 until 1929, when it merged with *Le Figaro*.

*The Literary Life.* *La vie littéraire.*

*Arthur Meyer.* A French press baron of the Third Republic whose empire included the newspaper *Le Gaulois*.

*Gaston Paris has provided.* France's letter dated May 11, 1890 (as it happens, the very date on which France's father died) was once owned by Max-Philippe Delatte, and is quoted in Anatole France, *Œuvres*, ed. Marie-Claire Bancquart, 4 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), 1: 1421–22. The work in question by Gaston Paris is *La littérature française au Moyen Âge* (1888).

*scholarly reference.* "What you are going to read is taken from a *miracle* of the thirteenth century." Gaston Paris, *La littérature française au Moyen Âge*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1890), 208.

*dab the forehead of her tumbler.* France, "M. Gaston Paris," 269.

*French adjective.* He uses the word *pauvre*.

*My Lady or Milady.* France, *Œuvres*, ed. Bancquart, 1: 919, 922.

## Mayday, Mayday

*Story for the Month of May.* "Le jongleur de Notre-Dame: Conte pour le mois de mai," *Le Gaulois*, 3rd ser., no. 2811, May 10, 1890, 1, printed in its entirety in the leftmost two columns. The story was reprinted in *Les annales politiques et littéraires: Revue populaire paraissant le dimanche*, 1st semester, no. 465, May 22, 1892, 323–24.

*the month of Mary.* The practice of devoting the month especially to Mary seems to have taken strongest root first in Italy, from which it spread to France and then much more widely. See Alfonso Muzzarelli, *Il mese di Maria ossia di maggio per le persone secolari consacrato a Maria Santissima* (Rome: Presso Angeli Ajani, 1828).

*Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.* As its name suggests, the holiday commemorates the visit that Mary paid to her cousin Elizabeth, who was pregnant with John the Baptist. The episode is recounted in Luke 1:39–57.

*Ruth Sawyer.* Ruth Sawyer, *The Way of the Storyteller* (New York: Viking, 1942), 233: "It is the month of Marie—May, you call it."

*an issue devoted largely to the Virgin.* The lead article was entitled “Mary, Queen of May,” while the second bore the title “Eternal May.”

*three Marian legends.* “Maria Maienkönigin,” “Ewiger Mai,” “Marienerscheinungen,” and “Von dem Tänzer Unserer Lieben Frauen,” *Karmel-Stimmen* (Voices of Carmel), 19.5 (May 1952): 130–32, 133, 148–51, 152–56, respectively.

*nun.* Sister Marcella M. Holloway.

### *The Little Box of Mother-of-Pearl*

*France’s étui.* Christina Ferree Chabrier, “Polychromatic Piety: Saints according to Anatole France,” in *Medieval Saints in Late Nineteenth Century French Culture: Eight Essays*, ed. Elizabeth Emery and Laurie Postlewaite (Jefferson, NC, and London: McFarland, 2004), 163–94, at 165.

*L’étui du nacre.* An *étui* is a case or casket. On *Le Gaulois*, see Albert, “La presse française,” 200–201.

*essays on the short stories.* Murray Sachs, *Anatole France: The Short Stories*, Studies in French literature, vol. 28 (London: Edward Arnold, 1974), 38–39.

*saints’ legends.* On these stories, see Chabrier, “Polychromatic Piety.”

*Saint Euphrosina.* Raymond T. Hill, “La vie de sainte Euphrosine,” *Romanic Review* 10 (1919): 159–69, 191–22; 12 (1921): 43–49, 162–63.

*the first set of stories.* The whole volume was eventually put into English in 1896, the same year in which the inaugural authorized German translation of “Le jongleur de Notre Dame” came into print. See Anatole France, *Tales from A Mother-of-Pearl Casket*, trans. Henri Pène Du Bois (New York: George H. Richmond, 1896).

### The Golden Legend and the Irony of Philology

*an artistic fiction.* Allan H. Pasco, “On Defining Short Stories,” *New Literary History* 22 (1991): 407–22, at 414.

*Golden Legend.* On the *Golden Legend*, see Aviad Kleinberg, *Flesh Made Word: Saints’ Stories and the Western Imagination*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), 239–77.

*more editions of it were printed.* Brenda Dunn-Lardeau, “From the Légende dorée (Thirteenth Century) to the Fleurs des vies de saints (Seventeenth Century): A New Image of the Saint and Sainthood?,” *History of European Ideas* 20.1–3 (1995): 299–304.

*Christian Arabian Nights.* So Herlihy, *Medieval Culture and Society*, 170, with no indication of source.

*translations of it into French.* For their textual history, see Brenda Dunn-Lardeau, “Etude autour d’une Légende dorée (Lyon, 1476),” *Travaux de linguistique et de littérature* 24.1 (1986): 257–94. Paul Meyer tentatively identified seven different medieval French translations: see his “Notice du MS. Med.-Pal. 141 de la Laurentienne (Vies des saints),” *Romania* 33 (1904): 1–49, at 3–5.

*especial attention.* Anatole France's first novel *The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard* (1881) helped to cement his writerly reputation. His leading figure comes well credentialed, in his academic degrees and affiliations. He is a Chartist, that is, a graduate of the *École des Chartes*, and as the subtitle to the book indicates, a member of the Institut de France or "Institute of France." A bibliophilic stickler in his scholarship, he is given to atomizing; as a desiccated philologist with a tendency to be tedious, he feels more at home in the remote past of his imagined Middle Ages than in the immediacy of his own lived present (see Fig. n.11).

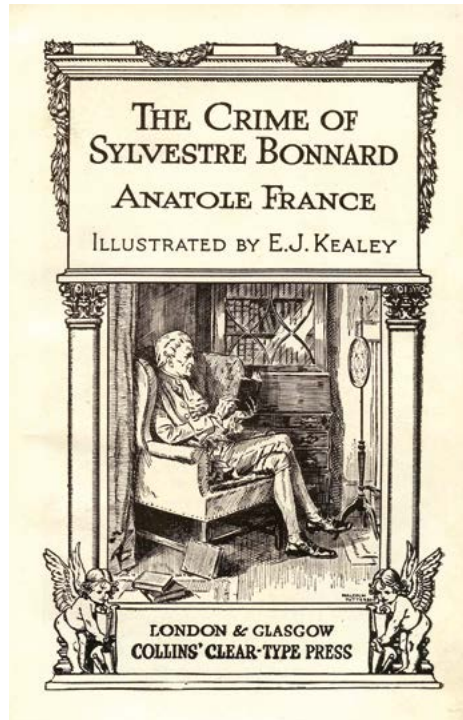


Fig. n.11 Title page of Anatole France, *The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard*, illus. E. J. Kealey (London: Collins' Clear-Type Press, 1931).

The first part of the volume, which opens on Christmas Eve, is thoroughly bibliocentric, since it tracks the bumps and roadblocks in the efforts of the elderly scholar to acquire a fourteenth-century manuscript he has long coveted. The precious object in question is a French version of the famous *Golden Legend*.

*last French-language edition.* Guy Philippart, "Les miracles mariaux de Jean Herolt (1434) et la *Legenda aurea*," *Le moyen français* 32.1 (1993): 53–67.

*How unworthy of the saints.* *De disciplinis libri XX*, part 1: *De causis corruptarum artium*, bk. 2 (Basel, Switzerland, 1555), 2: 371, "Quod Legendae illius auctori ita maledicit, ut virum sanctum et sapientem plumbei cordis, oris ferrei appellet, id sane miror in homine praesertim gravi et moderato." Cited by Baudoin de Gaiffier, "Légende dorée ou Légende de plomb?," *Analecta Bollandiana* 83 (1965): 350, and discussed by Sherry L. Reames, *The Legenda Aurea: A Reexamination of Its Paradoxical History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 22, 29, 37–38, 51–52 (with the English translation on the last page). Compare the same section as



presented in Juan Luis Vives, *De disciplinis: Savoir et enseigner*, ed. and trans. Tristan Vigliano, *Miroir des humanistes*, vol. 13 (Paris: Belles lettres, 2013), 118, “Quam indigna est diuis et hominibus christianis illa sanctorum historia quae legenda aurea nominatur, quam nescio cur auream appellant, quum scripta sit ab homine ferrei oris, plumbei cordis!” (How unworthy of saints and Christian people is that story which is called the *Golden Legend*. I cannot understand why they call it golden, since it was written by a person with an iron mouth and a leaden heart).

*Proust’s Remembrance of Things Past*. Sarah Joseph, “Proustian Rereadings, from the *Légende Dorée*,” *Romance Studies* 22 (2004): 105–14.

*ecumenical congregation of authors*. The *Golden Legend* had been widely used by writers and scholars alike since its publication in 1843 in a modern French translation by Gustave Brunet (Paris: C. Gosselin, 1843).

*what qualifies as a short story*. Pasco, “On Defining Short Stories,” 413–14.

*once in a blue moon*. The exception that proves the rule is *Fifth Business* (1970) by Robertson Davies. This novel by the Canadian writer deals with a bookworm hero who has a catalytic vision revolving around a statue of the Virgin and Child. This same protagonist becomes caught up with the Bollandists, an association of hagiographers that includes many historians and philologists. Since the early seventeenth century, members of this group have carried on the work of Jean Bolland (see Fig. n.12) in the endless enterprise of editing the *Acta Sanctorum*. The English equivalent to this Latin title would be *Deeds of the Saints*.



Fig. n.12 Jean Bolland. Engraving by Richard Collin, 1667. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum. Image from Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jean\\_bolland.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jean_bolland.jpg)

*Émile Zola*. For orientation concerning Zola’s outlook on the Middle Ages, see Claude Foucart, “Émile Zola,” in Bernard-Griffiths et al., *La fabrique du Moyen Âge*, 890–98.

*Angelic Mary*. The French is Angélique Marie.

*lives of the saints*. Emery, *Romancing the Cathedral*, 51–52, 55, 57, 74, 191n29; eadem, “The Golden Legend in the Fin de Siècle: Zola’s *Le Rêve* and Its Reception,” in Emery and Postlewaite, *Medieval Saints in Late Nineteenth Century French Culture*, 83–116; Jean-Louis Cabanès, “Rêver *La Légende dorée*,” *Les Cahiers naturalists* 48.76 (2002): 25–47.

*Joris-Karl Huysmans*. On Huysmans’s perspectives on the Middle Ages, see Sylvie Duran, “Joris-Karl Huysmans,” in Bernard-Griffiths et al., *La fabrique du Moyen Âge*, 890–98; Elizabeth Emery, “J.-K. Huysmans, Medievalist,” *Modern Language Studies* 30.2 (2000): 119–31.

*I may even go into a monastery myself*. Richard Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde* (New York: Knopf, 1987), 565.

*A rebours*. The title has been translated as both *Against Nature* and *Against the Grain*.

*chaste painting of the primitives*. My translation.

*one of his poems*. The poem’s title is “Cy est pourtraicte, Madame Ste Ursule, et les unze mille vierges” (Here are portrayed Saint Ursula and the 11,000 Virgins). First published in the magazine *Rogue*, the poem was the second in Stevens’s first book of poetry, *Harmonium*. On the possible debt to the French *Legenda aurea*, see Milton J. Bates, “Stevens in Love: The Woman Won, the Woman Lost,” *English Literary History* (1981): 231–55, at 247–49; 255.

*art historians*. Emery, “The Golden Legend in the Fin de Siècle,” 89.

*generic designation*. Reames, *Legenda Aurea*, 17. For example, for a performance in New York in 1915, Yvette Guilbert gave the title *Les légendes dorées* to two songs on the birth and death of Christ. Knapp and Chipman, *That Was Yvette*, 259–61.

*golden age*. Joëlle Prunghaud, *Gothique et décadence: Recherches sur la continuité d’un mythe et d’un genre au XIXe siècle en Grande-Bretagne et en France*, Bibliothèque de littérature générale et comparée, vol. 7 (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1997), 266–70.

*The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard*. Anatole France, *The Crime of Sylvester Bonnard*, illus. Sylvain Sauvage (New York: Marchbanks Press for Members of the Limited Editions Club, 1937), frontispiece.

*similar lexical items from the Middle Ages*. France, *Œuvres*, ed. Bancquart, 1: 310: “If by some miracle a fiancée from the fourteenth century came to talk to me about fabrics, I would soon understand her language!” (My translation; I have taken the liberty of modifying “Ah! By some miracle” to “If by some miracle.”) Along the same lines, Bonnard is accused of being more likely to be familiar with early medieval legislative or administrative acts known as capitularies than with the French civil law of his own day, the Napoleonic Code.

*France flagged Paris*. Anatole France, *La vie littéraire*, 3rd ed., 4 vols. (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1889–1892): 1: 155; 4: 59, 350–51.

*gray zone*. In the remainder of the paragraph I am indebted to Ursula Bähler, “De la place du sujet individuel à l’époque scientifique *Le crime de Sylvestre Bonnard*,” *Nouveaux actes sémiotiques* 60 (1998): 5–45, at 12–13. In notes to the Pléiade and Folio editions of this work, Bancquart points out likenesses between Bonnard and various scholars of France’s day.

*pedantic form of romanticism*. Paris, “Paulin Paris,” 2 (“forme pédante du romantisme”).

*a manner of positivism*. For background on positivism in the generation preceding that of Paris, see D. G. Charlton, *Positivist Thought in France during the Second Empire, 1852–1870* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959). The flavor of Paris’s own positivism is different and more complex.

*close friends*. These included the bookseller and historian Étienne Charavay, the historian and art historian Fernand Calmettes, and the politician and journalist Camille Pelletan (see Fig. n. 13). On these three friends of France’s, see Jacques Suffel, *Anatole France*, Collection d’art littéraire, vol. 3 (Paris: Edition du Myrte, 1946), 44 and passim.



Fig. n.13 Camille Pelletan. Photograph, early twentieth century. Photographer unknown. Image from Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pelletan\\_camille.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pelletan_camille.jpg)

*the same afternoon*. The afternoon in question fell on May 27, 1896.

*French Academy*. Bähler, *Gaston Paris*, 144–45. On Anatole France’s election, see Gier, *Der Skeptiker*, 207–17. This institution is entrusted with maintaining the purity of the French language in grammar and diction.

*Miracles of Our Lady*. Paris and Robert, *Miracles de Nostre Dame*.

*two-volume manuscript*. Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 819–820 (often called the Cangé manuscript).

*medieval hagiography*. See Donald Maddox and Sara Sturm-Maddox, “Introduction: French Confraternity Drama of the Fourteenth Century: The *Miracles de Nostre Dame par personnages*,” in *Parisian Confraternity Drama of the Fourteenth Century: The Miracles de Nostre Dame par personnages*, ed. Donald Maddox and Sara Sturm-Maddox, *Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe*, vol. 22 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2008), 1–28, at 4.

*Alexandre-Eusèbe Poquet. Les miracles de la Sainte Vierge, traduits et mis en vers par Gautier de Coincy*, ed. Abbé Alexandre-Eusèbe Poquet (Paris: Parmentier, Didron, 1857).

*female troupe*. Elizabeth Emery, “Resuscitating Medieval Literature in New York and Paris: *La femme que Nostre-Dame garda d’estre arse* at Yvette Guilbert’s School of Theatre, 1919–24,” in *Cultural Performances in Medieval France: Essays in Honor of Nancy Freeman Regalado*, ed. Eglal Doss-Quinby et al. (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2007), 265–78.

*sixteen years*. Until 1884.

*space*. 15, quai Malaquais.

*once*. From 1844 to 1858.

*next*. From 1858 to 1866.

*after leaving the first site*. Jacques Monfrin, *Honoré Champion et sa librairie (1874–1978)* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1978), 29.

*son and successor*. Édouard Champion.

*centerpiece of the composition*. The piece is by the painter Louis Édouard Fournier. It was displayed in the Salon of 1909, under the title “Le Livre rare—Portraits de MM. Honoré et Édouard Champion.”

*personal dealings with Gaston Paris*. Monfrin, *Honoré Champion*, 123.

*back chamber*. Monfrin, *Honoré Champion*, 125: “opisthodomé.”

*reborn within himself*. As he put it, “Feeling olden times come back to life in oneself is a powerful sweetness.” France, *La vie littéraire*, 2nd series: 349 (on opening page of “Jeanne d’Arc et la poésie”).

*a storyteller about the life of days gone by*. I refer to the section heading “un conteur de la vie d’autrefois” in W. M. Daniels, *Contes de la France contemporaine: Contes de guerre et autres histoires, choisis par “Les anciens” de Westminster City School* (London: George G. Harrap, 1918), 183–90.

*The Tales of Jacques Tournebroche*. The original French title is *Les contes de Jacques Tournebroche*. The tally could be ratcheted up by counting the “once upon a time”-like fantasy of the 1882 story *Abeille* (Honeybee).

## Notes to Chapter 5

### Bricabracomania

*Everything behind 1900*. Letter to Brooks Adams, January 9, 1903, in *LHA*, 5: 435.

*bricabracomaniac*. Elizabeth Emery, “Bricabracomania: Zola’s Romantic Instinct,” *Excavatio* 12 (1999): 107–15.

*France’s amassing*. Emery and Morowitz, *Consuming the Past*, 62–64, 83. The authors returned to the topic in a fine article adapted from their book: see Elizabeth Emery and Laura Morowitz, “From the Living Room to the Museum and Back Again: The Collection and Display of Medieval Art in the Fin de Siècle,” *Journal of the History of Collections* 16.2 (2004): 285–309, at 301 and 308n116. The term *bricabracomania* was used in the British title of Rémy G. Saisselin, *Bricabracomania: The Bourgeois and the Bibelot* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985; orig. publ. as *The Bourgeois and the Bibelot* [New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1984]).

*Universal Exposition*. In French, *Exposition universelle*.

*Museum of Comparative Sculpture*. In French, *Musée de la sculpture comparée*.

*special cabinets*. For rich information and insights relating to this entire paragraph, see Emery and Morowitz, “From the Living Room to the Museum.”

*The Little Box of Mother-of-Pearl*. Anatole France, *L’étui de nacre* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1892), 93–96. See also Sachs, *Anatole France*, 44; Anatole France, *Œuvres* 1: 1387.

*first citation in English*. Applying the noun as an attributive, the novelist William Thackeray asserts (with a French connection): “The palace of Versailles has been turned into a bricabrac shop.” *OED*, s.v., quoting William M. Thackeray, *The Paris Sketch Book*, 2 vols. (New York: D. Appleton, 1852; orig. publ. 1840), 1: 204.

*novel*. Honoré de Balzac, *Le cousin Pons*, ed. Anne-Marie Meininger (Paris: Garnier, 1974), 11.

*Edmond de Goncourt*. Edmond de Goncourt, *La maison d’un artiste*, 2 vols. (Paris: Ernest Flammarion, 1880), 1: 8–9; repr., ed. Dominique Pety and Christian Galantaris, 2 vols. (Dijon, France: l’Echelle de Jacob, 2002), 1: 3. See Emery and Morowitz, *Consuming the Past*, 82.

*1883 dictionary*. The French architect dealt with the phenomenon in a reference work with a title that may be put into word-for-word English as “Dictionary of Art, Curiosity, and Bric-a-Brac.”

*the manufacture of the new old*. Ernest Bosc, *Dictionnaire de l’art, de la curiosité et du bibelot* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1883), 133. Cited by Janell Watson, *Literature and Material Culture from Balzac to Proust: The Collection and Consumption of Curiosities*, Cambridge Studies in French, vol. 62 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 33; Emery and Morowitz, *Consuming the Past*, 128, 254n529 (French). The translation here is my own. The French corresponding to my English for one key phrase is *la fabrication du vieux neuf*.

*BIBELOT*. Bosc, *Dictionnaire de l’art*, 100.

*giant granite jewel.* Guy de Maupassant, “Le Horla,” in idem, *Contes et nouvelles*, ed. Louis Forestier, 2 vols., Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, vols. 253, 275 (Paris: Gallimard, 1974–1979), 2: 1627 (variant i), cited by Prungnaud, *Figures littéraires*, 57n34.

*colossal bibelot.* Huysmans, *La cathédrale*, cited by Prungnaud, *Figures littéraires*, 59.

*finished as the setting of a ring.* Théophile Gautier, “Élias Wildmanstadius or the Middle Ages Man,” in idem, *Works*, 11: 277–78.

*Pieces of this sort.* On landscape-inspired art and daguerrotypes in the nineteenth-century United States, compare Jennifer L. Roberts, “Nation’s Nation, 1820–1865,” in Angela L. Miller et al., *American Encounters: Art, History and Cultural Identity* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008), 241–77, at 241–65, 268–70, respectively.

*possession of a material commodity.* Saisselin, *Bourgeois and the Bibelot*.

*The name was coopted.* Philip Henry Wicksteed, trans., *Our Lady’s Tumbler*, Bibelot, vol. 5.11 (Portland, ME: T. B. Mosher, 1899).

*ephemeral bibelots.* F. W. Faxon, *Ephemeral Bibelots: A Bibliography of the Modern Chap-Books and Their Imitators* (Boston: Boston Book Company, 1903).

*scholarship on such journals.* For example, see Bartholomew Brinkman, “A ‘Tea-Pot Tempest’: The Chap-Book, ‘Ephemeral Bibelots,’ and the Making of the Modern Little Magazine,” *Journal of Modern Periodical Studies* 1 (2010): 193–215; Brad Evans, “‘Ephemeral Bibelots’ in the 1890s,” in *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines*, ed. Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker, vol. 2: *North America 1894–1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 132–53.

*true poetic jewel.* Foerster, “Del tumbeor Nostre-Dame,” 316: “Si c’est un témoignage éclatant de foi, c’est plus encore un vrai joyau poétique” (“If it is a striking attestation of faith, it is still more a true poetic jewel”).

*the pearl of these [pious] tales.* Petit de Julleville, *Histoire*, 1: 40–42, at 40: “la perle de ces contes.”

*medieval materials and themes.* France’s handling of the Middle Ages in his works has been investigated in book-length studies by Harry Toner Mercer, “Mediaeval Stories in Modern Fiction: A Study of the Treatment of Popular and Mediaeval Material by France, Kipling, and Hewlett,” MA thesis, University of California, 1921; Ahlstrom, *Le Moyen Âge*; and Joseph D. Saint-Vil, “L’Antiquité, le Moyen Âge et la Renaissance dans l’œuvre d’Anatole France,” Thèse principale, Université de Paris, 1958 (original in Bibliothèque de l’Université de Paris, negative microfilm in University of California, Berkeley). A more readily available and concisely insightful probing of the same topic is Gier, “Kenntnis und Beurteilung.” More specifically on France’s responses toward a single medieval author is Lommatzsch, “Anatole France und Gautier de Coincy.”

*one of the Magi.* Matthew 2:1–2:12.

*In 1890.* In installments already in 1889.

*harlot saint.* On the genre, see Ruth Mazo Karras, “Holy Harlots: Prostitute Saints in Medieval Legend,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 1 (1990): 3–32.

*grasshopper*. The word France uses is *cigale*, which would customarily be rendered as “cicada,” but which refers to Aesop’s fable known in English as “The Ant and the Grasshopper.” Marie de France’s fable 39 is entitled, differently again, *D’un gresillon è d’un fromi* (The cricket and the ant): see Marie de France, *Fables*, ed. and trans. Harriet Spiegel, Toronto Medieval Texts and Translations, vol. 5 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 126–29.

*one hundred fables*. *Esope*, after the name of the Greek fabulist Aesop.

1820. In that year, a two-volume edition appeared: see Jean-Baptiste-Bonaventure de Roquefort, *Poésies de Marie de France: Poète anglo-normand du XIIIe siècle; ou Recueil de lais, fables et autres productions de cette femme*, 2 vols. (Paris: Chez Chasseriau, libraire, 1820).

*The Ant and the Grasshopper*. Ben Edwin Perry, ed., *Aesopica*, vol. 1: *Greek and Latin Texts* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1952), 475, no. 373 (Babrius 140).

*Jean-Georges Vibert*. Or Jehan Georges Vibert.

*exhibitions*. Either the Paris *Salon de peinture, de gravure et de sculpture* (Salon of painting, engraving, and sculpture) of 1875 or the Universal Exposition of 1878.

*The Grasshopper and the Ant*. *La cigale et la fourmi*.

*the fable by the same name*. For the first, see The Art Institute of Chicago, watercolor with touches of gouache on cream wove card, 316 × 415 mm. For the second, the Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, Nebraska, 24" × 33".

*Vibert portrays the musician*. For his own interpretation of the story, see J. G. Vibert, *La comédie en peinture*, 2 vols. (Paris and New York: A. Tooth and Sons, 1902), 1: 237–39.

*Cigale*. Literally, cicada, but *cigale* fulfills the role in French fable that is conventionally played by the grasshopper or cricket in English adaptations of the Aesopic fable about the ant. Labeled a *divertissement-ballet*, the ballet suite of loosely connected dances was first performed in 1904 at the Opéra-Comique in Paris. It has occasionally functioned as a curtain-raiser for the opera of the juggler.

*Poor Little One*. In the original French, *La pauvrete*.

*Her life*. The tale of Saint Mary of Egypt is akin to that of Saint Thais about whom Anatole France wrote the other short story. In the case of Thais, the writer relied on a Latin play of the tenth century, composed by a German religious named Hrotsvitha of Gandersheim. See Édouard Leduc, *Anatole France avant l’oubli* (Paris: Publibook, 2006), 109. The key text for Maria Aegyptica (as she is often known) was the life written by Saint Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem (634–638).

*surrounded by doves and virgins*. The book painter’s work, as detailed knowingly by France, merited the iconographic insights to come from the foremost medieval art historian of his day, Émile Mâle.

*could have known about it*. On Anatole France’s references to Gautier de Coinci and to the frontispiece, see Lommatzsch, “Anatole France und Gautier de Coincy,” 670–83, reprinted in idem, *Kleinere Schriften*, 126–38.

*summarizing Our Lady's Tumbler.* In *La littérature française au Moyen Âge*.

*Hail, Mary.* The salutation spoken by the angel Gabriel to Mary, with fusion and slight modification of Luke 1:28 and 1:42. It became a traditional prayer to ask for the intercession of the Virgin.

*what Gaston Paris related.* Anatole France, "M. Gaston Paris," 268–69.

*Miracles of Our Lady.* Marguerite Stadler-Honegger, *Étude sur les miracles de Notre-Dame par personnages* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1926), 39–41, at 39.

*Soissons manuscript.* Once owned by the Duke of Berry.

*this frontispiece.* Lommatzsch, "Anatole France und Gautier de Coincy." The Soissons manuscript is today Paris, BN, nouv. Ac. Fr. 24541, illuminated by Jean Pucelle or a member of his *atelier*.

## Saints and Miracles

*rivals his sources.* Louis Reynaud, *La crise de notre littérature: Des romantiques à Proust, Gide et Valéry* (Paris: Hachette, 1929), 84.

*of all the medieval literature that France consulted.* Ahlstrom, *Le Moyen Âge*, 75.

*remembered his own childhood.* Anatole France, *Le livre de mon ami*, 4th ed. (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1885), 60–65.

*as opposed to military derring-do.* For the information in the remainder of the paragraph, see J. P. Wickersham Crawford, "Anatole France," *Modern Language Journal* 9 (1924): 171–79, at 172 ("not having a horse, uniform, regiment, or enemies, [he] thought to become a saint.").

*Saint Nicholas of Bari.* Better known in English as Saint Nick—or Santa Claus, in the byword formed from the other end of his name.

*Simeon the Stylite.* Simeon was a Syrian hermit of the fifth century. More specifically, he was a so-called pillar saint: the Greek from which the word stylite derives means "pillar dweller." The good saint lived for thirty-seven years in the fifth century atop a pillar.

*Saint Mary's.* In French, *Sainte Marie*.

*later school experiences.* On the school, see Leduc, *Anatole France avant l'oubli*, 20, 51n11; on the girl and the nunnery, 26–27.

*Lalanne.* Pierre Humbertclaude, *Un éducateur chrétien de la jeunesse au XIXe siècle: L'Abbé J.-P.-A. Lalanne 1795–1879* (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1931).

*dramas on medieval topics.* For one such occasion he composed *Cyrille*, on Cyril of Alexandria, both patriarch and saint. He set the action in the forest of the Ardennes on the day following the Battle of Tolbiac, between the Franks and the Alamanni. In another case, the Abbé came up with *The Four Sons of Aymon*, after an anonymous *chanson de geste* by the same name (*Les quatre fils Aymon*). In a third instance, he took on the topic of *la Trêve du Seigneur*, literally the Truce of the Lord but meaning the Truce of God, referring to the development of the Peace of God (in



French, *la Trêve de Dieu*) movement that was intended to curtail violence in feudal society. Lastly, he devised a Clodoald, on the son of King Chlodomer of Orléans who became better known as Saint Cloud. The only one published was Abbé Jean-Philippe-Auguste Lalanne, *Cyrille, ou, Le triomphe du christianisme dans les Gaules: Essai de tragédie à la manière des anciens, exercice de collège* (Paris: Librairie classique et religieuse de Cent-Brière, 1855).

*instincts were not out of step*. For instance, the story about Aymon's four sons became popular not too much later.

*France penned a composition*. Augustin Thierry, *Récits des temps mérovingiens*, 2 vols. (Paris: J. Tessier, 1840), 2: 210–328 (“Cinquième récit”). See Hubert Morand, “Les débuts littéraires d’Anatole France au Collège Stanislas,” *Journal des débats*, October 15, 1924. For this reference I am indebted to Ahlstrom, *Le Moyen Âge*, 55n12. On France's later references to Radegund, see Ahlstrom, *Le Moyen Âge*, 77; Marie-Claire Bancquart, “Anatole France, de sainte Radegonde à la sainteté de Satan,” in *Les représentations littéraires de la sainteté du Moyen Âge à nos jours*, ed. Elisabeth Pinto-Mathieu (Paris: Presses de l’Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2005), 187–97.

*he was inspired dually*. See Kudrycz, *Historical Present*, 99–100.

*Thierry's historicization and nationalization of France's past*. Barbara G. Keller, *The Middle Ages Reconsidered: Attitudes in France from the Eighteenth Century through the Romantic Movement*, Studies in the Humanities: Literature — Politics — Society, vol. 11 (New York: Peter Lang, 1994), 157–62; Peter Raedts, *Die Entdeckung des Mittelalters: Geschichte einer Illusion*, trans. from the Dutch by Klaus Jöken and Stefanie Schäfer (Darmstadt, Germany: Philipp von Zabern, 2016), 248–54.

*a couple of lovely pages*. Brun, *Bucy*, 49–50.

*Legend of the Recluse*. On the recluse, see Leduc, *Anatole France avant l'oubli*, 24.

*on the left bank*. His ramblings took place within the Latin Quarter, so called because for centuries it had been inhabited by scholars who communicated in the learned lingua franca of Latin.

*skepticism*. Not solely on France's handling of miracles but instead on his portrayal of saints, see the excellently detailed study by Chabrier, “Polychromatic Piety,” 163–94. On France's skepticism in general, see Alfred Carter Jefferson, *Anatole France: The Politics of Skepticism* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1965); Helen Belle Smith, *The Skepticism of Anatole France* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1927). On the response it elicited from the press at the time of writing, see Gier, *Der Skeptiker*.

*I don't see any wooden legs*. Clifton Fadiman and Andre Bernard, eds., *Bartlett's Anecdotes* (Boston: Little, Brown, 2000). France himself reported on the witticism first in *Le jardin d'épicure* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1895), 204. The best analysis of the episode is in Leduc, *Anatole France avant l'oubli*, 113.

*rejected the religion*. Another author dissected, extensively and pointedly, the preoccupation of Anatole France with the Virgin. In a piece that was supposedly dated Christmas of 1894, he imagined a prayer by France to Mary and her reactions to it. See Ernest La Jeunesse, *Les nuits, les ennuis et les âmes de nos plus notoires contemporains* (Paris: Perrin, 1896), 15–38 (“La prière d’Anatole France”).

*grotto*. The grotto is located at the northern end of a rocky outcrop known as Massabielle (corresponding to the French *masse vieille* “old mass”), near the Gave de Pau river. Harris, *Lourdes*, 52.

*typical Madonna*. Thérèse Taylor, *Bernadette of Lourdes: Her Life, Death and Visions* (London: Burns & Oates, 2003), 84.

*rivalries between communities*. Harris, *Lourdes*, 36–37.

*Calvados*. In the Norman diocese of Bayeux-Lisieux.

*from 1896 to 1899*. Herbert Thurston, *Beauraing and Other Apparitions: An Account of Some Borderland Cases in the Psychology of Mysticism* (London: Burns, Oates, and Washbourne, 1934), 128–31; Laurentin and Sbalchiero, *Dizionario*, 769–72.

*Thérèse’s overall spiritual doctrine*. John A. Hardon, “Devotion of St. Thérèse of Lisieux to the Blessed Virgin Mary,” *Review for Religious* 11 (March 1952): 75–84.

*deep-seated distrust*. McManners, *Church and State in France*, 6–7, 9.

*not always mutually exclusive*. McManners, *Church and State in France*, 14.

*The spire of the cathedrals*. Anatole France, “M. Gaston Paris,” 267: “La flèche des cathédrales marque la limite indécise entre le ciel et la terre.”

*Life of Joan of Arc*. *Vie de Jeanne d’Arc*.

*heroism*. Paul Gerbod, “L’éthique héroïque en France (1870–1914),” *Revue historique* 268 (1982): 409–29; Martha Hanna, “Iconology and Ideology: Images of Joan of Arc in the Idiom of the Action Française, 1908–1931,” *French Historical Studies* 14.2 (1985): 215–39.

*not remonstrate with their ancestors*. It sufficed to “know that they toiled, suffered, and hoped for you and that you owe them everything!” See Anatole France, “M. Gaston Paris,” 274. See Dakyns, *Middle Ages in French Literature*, 276.

*exceptional*. See Gier, *Der Skeptiker*, 142, 144–45.

*divide between Church and State*. The confrontation of the two camps is described in Brown, *For the Soul of France*.

*restiveness*. The story is styled “an openly anticlerical and iconoclast work” in the opening sentence of Richards, “La devotion mariale,” 233.

*pious appearance*. With reference to Anatole France but not specifically to *Le jongleur de Notre Dame*, see Marie-Claire Bancquart, *Anatole France* (Paris: Éditions Julliard, 1994), 39.

## Fantasy and Humility

*favorite short story*. Spider Robinson, *The Best of All Possible Worlds* (New York: Ace Books, 1980).

*medievalisms of fantasy and science fiction*. Without reference to Anatole France, see Helen Young, ed., *Fantasy and Science-Fiction Medievalisms: From Isaac Asimov to A Game of Thrones* (Amherst, MA: Cambria Press, 2015).

*“best short story” collections.* One of the first was in 1901 (copyright 1898), where it is placed prominently as the second story in the first of ten volumes of *Stories by Foreign Authors* (New York: C. Scribner’s, 1898), 1: 23–33. Thereafter its position was assured for the first half of the twentieth century: to single out only a few examples, see Nina Hart and Edna M. Perry, *Representative Short Stories* (New York: Macmillan, 1917), 60–67; Barrett Harper Clark and Maxim Lieber, eds., *Great Short Stories of the World: A Collection of Complete Short Stories Chosen from the Literatures of All Periods and Countries* (Cleveland, OH: World, 1925), 378–82; Bernardine Kiely, ed., *A Treasury of Short Stories: Favorites of the Past Hundred Years from Turgenev to Thurber, from Balzac to Hemingway. With Biographical Sketches of the Authors* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1947), 103–7; Leland W. Lawrence, ed., *The Family Book of Best Loved Short Stories* (Garden City, NY: Hanover House, 1954), 349–54.

*one story collection.* Grant Overton, ed., *The World’s One Hundred Best Short Stories*, vol. 6: *Courage* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1927), 218–24; Gilbert Frankau, ed., *A Century of Love Stories* (London: Hutchinson, [1930?]), 993–97; Paul A. Mankin and Alexi Szogyi, eds., *Anthologie d’humour français* (New York: Scott Foresman, 1971), 127–35; Georges Londeix, *Les fous dans la littérature*, Collection “Les inattendus” (Talence, France: Castor Astral, 1993), 93–101.

*written to abase pride and to exalt humility.* Petit de Julleville, *Histoire*, 1: 40: “[la perle de ces contes.] écrits pour abaisser l’orgueil et exalter l’humilité.”

*editor.* The editor was Eric Parker, the magazine *Country Gentleman* (published from 1898 to 1955).

*British weekly.* *Spectator*, founded in 1828.

*wiped the sweat from his brow.* Four pages, small octavo, invitation and original autograph envelope, 48 Upper Berkeley Street, May 10, 1909. The letter became known while on sale: its present disposition is unknown to me.

*William John Locke.* William John Locke, *Simon the Jester* (New York: John Lane, 1910), 68.

*printed repeatedly in newspapers.* Thus, the educator, philosopher, and translator Anna C. Brackett published “The Juggler of Notre Dame” in *New York Times*, February 13, 1893, 9, and *Cleveland (Ohio) Plain Dealer*, March 14, 1893, 3; “Juggler of Notre Dame” was printed anonymously in *West Bay City Times-Press*, April 17, 1899, 4, with credit to *New York Home Journal*; and “The Juggler of Notre Dame” by Anatole France in *State Ledger* (Topeka, Kansas), March 20, 1901, 3.

## Why Compiègne?

*deviations.* He presented the narrative in three subsections, distinguished by Roman numerals. The first is almost entirely of his own devising. The second and third both compress the events of the original poem and add specifics in both content and style.

*the city of Compiègne.* In a later article, France related to the local history of Compiègne the story of Saint Euphrosina, another saintly character to whom he devoted a tale included in *The Little Box of Mother-of-Pearl*. The piece appeared in *L’echo de Paris* on January 31, 1899. See Chabrier, “Polychromatic Piety,” 177, 191–92n56.

*rallying cry.* Jennifer Kilgore, “Joan of Arc as Propaganda Motif from the Dreyfus Affair to the Second World War,” *Revue LISA/LISA e-journal* 6.1 (2008): 279–96.

*the time of King Louis.* The only person who has bothered to situate the Louis chronologically is Cormack, *Our Lady's Tumbler*, 6, with a sniff about 1270 being “a somewhat tardy suppositious date.”

## Why Barnaby?

*calling him Barnabé.* Modernity and postmodernity abhor anonymity. Namelessness is the nauseating opposite of the brand-name culture that pervades the world of commerce today. By the same token, we want our literary heroes to have proper names. The process of deanonymization can be witnessed in many Disney animations of fairy tales. It has held equally true of most modern treatments of the *jongleur*.

*Acts of the Apostles.* Acts 4:36. The name is glossed there as meaning “son of consolation.” Alternatively, a case has been made that originally it meant “son of Nebo.” In this latter case, the father mentioned in the patronymic could have been once upon a time a god. On the name, see Jon B. Daniels, “Barnabas,” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman, 6 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1: 610–11. The most recent, extensive consideration of the New Testament Barnabas appears in Markus Öhler, *Barnabas: Der Mann in der Mitte*, *Biblische Gestalten*, vol. 12 (Leipzig, Germany: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2005).

*Gospel of Barnabas.* F. P. Cotterell, “The Gospel of Barnabas,” *Vox Evangelica* 10 (1977): 43–47.

*Gelasian Decree.* The title refers to Pope Gelasius: *Decretum Gelasianum de libris recipiendis et non recipiendis*, ed. Ernst von Dobschütz, *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur*, vol. 38.4 = 3rd series, 8.4 (Leipzig, Germany: J. C. Hinrichs, 1912), 50 (chap. 5.3.2): “Evangelium nomine Barnabae: apocryphum.”

*attired as a juggler.* *The Gospel of Barnabas, Edited and Translated from the Italian MS. in the Imperial Library at Vienna*, ed. and trans. Lonsdale Ragg and Laura Ragg (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907), 474–75 (224a, “il uestirno da giocholatore”: compare p. 479). This 1907 translation has formed the basis for lively interfaith polemics that continue to the present.

*depicted in stained glass.* The late nineteenth-century American glassmaker John La Farge created a window of leaded opalescent glass, glass jewels, and fired glass paint for the Channing Memorial Church in Newport, Rhode Island, with Saint Barnabas and the Virgin Mary. Yet La Farge gravitated toward this theme for a specific reason that had nothing whatsoever to do with the story of the juggler: rather, the person who was to be memorialized had the first name of Barnabas. See Reverend Barnabas Bates Memorial Window, 1880–1881, 90” x 60”. See James L. Yarnall, *John La Farge: A Biographical and Critical Study* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2012), xvi (no. 17).

*tale of a cave dweller.* John Moschus, *The Spiritual Meadow*, trans. John Wortley, *Cistercian Studies Series*, vol. 139 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1992), 9.

*patron saint of variety acts.* Tony Curtis and Barry Paris, *Tony Curtis: The Autobiography* (New York: William Morrow, 1993), 178, 341.

*Cyprus and harvesters.* The saint’s feast day is June 11.

*applied to jugglers.* The prevalence of the name is attested in print in *Juggler’s Handbook*, by Barnaby (Santa Fe, NM: Dan Jeffery, 1976), on the website of a comedy juggler named Barnaby.

## Jongleur as Juggler

*public fascination.* Emery, *Romancing the Cathedral*.

*particularly a juggler.* France, Abeille, ed. Ritchie, illus. Morin, 125.

*related terms.* For example, consider the Italian *giocoliere* and Spanish *juglar*, and, in interplay with native Germanic roots, the German *Gaukler* and Dutch *goochelaar*. See Pfeifer and Braun, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Deutschen*, 400 (“gaukeln”); *Nederlands etymologisch woordenboek*, ed. Jan de Vries, with Felicien de Tollenaere and Maaik Hogenhout-Mulder (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1997), 214 (“goochelen”).

*also been cast as a jester.* For the jester, see Rex Knight, *Our Lady’s Jester: A One-Act Play* (London: Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons, 1952); Olofsson, *The Little Jester*, trans. Board. For the clown, see Chancerel, *Frère clown*; Thomas Anthony (Tomie) dePaola, *The Clown of God: An Old Story* (San Diego, CA: Voyager Books, 1978); Mark Schweizer, *The Clown of God: A Christmas Chancel Drama for Children’s Choir* (Tryon, NC: St. James Music Press, n.d.) The main character in Peter Maxwell Davies’s *Le Jongleur de Notre Dame*, first performed in 1978, is also a clown-juggler.

Early testimony to the conflation of the *jongleur* with a clown can be found in a novel entitled *Gentle Julia* (New York: Doubleday, 1922), where the American author Booth Tarkington describes a character named Gamin, who had “a bang like a black chrysanthemum, eyes like twinkling garnets, and a clown’s heart so golden that he sometimes reminded me of the Jongleur of Notre Dame.”

*Anatole France contributed.* It is harder to be confident in analyzing his story that “of course, its appeal, its ‘poetry,’ rests above all on a wholly anthropomorphic image of God, which allows the mother of God to appear not only as a loving protectress of her devotees but even as a circus fan!” See Gier, *Der Skeptiker*, 142.

*tumbler, jongleur, and minstrel.* Bretel, *Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame*, 104, on *tumeor* and *tumbeor*, *jeleur*, and *menestrel*.

*The Dance of the Dead.* “La danse des morts,” composed in October 1869; first published in *Le Parnasse contemporain: Recueil de vers nouveau*, 1.–3. série (Paris: A. Lemerre, 1866–1876), 2nd series (1869–1871); later included among the *Idylles et légendes* in Anatole France, *Poésies de Anatole France* (Paris: Alphonse Lemerre, 1896), 108–13.

*danse macabre.* The expression, although found sometimes in English, is especially current in French.

*association of juggling with medieval.* Marc Cels’s *Arts and Literature in the Middle Ages* (2004) assumes that “during the Middle Ages in Western Europe, many people made their living by creating art for the Catholic Church and entertaining nobles and townspeople with music, acrobatics, juggling, and plays.” Kris Bordessa (*Great Medieval Projects You Can Build Yourself* [2008]) includes juggling sticks as one of the activities.

*nuances.* Loosely relevant to the trajectory of the noun, a postcard from around 1910 advertises “Estio & Luigi: Champion Ball-Jongleur” (see Fig. n.14). The image side forms a montage of five pictures, one of a juggler clowning with his clown partner, another of the clown alone juggling, the central (and largest) with the two of them juggling three balls, a fourth with the clown strumming a small guitar as they juggle, and the final one with the juggler alone, juggling with a dog.



Fig. n.14 Postcard depicting "Estio & Luigi: Champion Ball-Jongleur" (early twentieth century).

*bound up in popular thought with the Middle Ages.* The craft and its practitioners are treated as a medieval phenomenon in Arthur Watson, "Jugglers," *The Reliquary and Illustrated Archaeologist: A Quarterly Journal and Review Devoted to the Study of Early Pagan and Christian Antiquities of Great Britain* 13 (January 1907): 1–16. The same point, now so well established as not to be discussed, is made visually in very simple fashion in *Fun with Medieval Stencils* (Dover) (see Fig. n.15). The cover shows a knight on a stallion, castle, and juggler.



Fig. n.15 Front cover of Paul E. Kennedy, *Fun with Medieval Stencils* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1996).

*only in this later span of time.* For instance, the French juggler Henri Laurent Agoust and his family were famous over the last four decades of the nineteenth century. A black-and-white silent film of 1898, entitled simply “Agoust Family of Jugglers,” captured one of their routines, in which they toss dishes and chairs back and forth for one minute with astonishing speed and dexterity in a restaurant. Released September 1898, produced (United Kingdom) by British Mutoscope and Biograph Co., distributed by American Mutoscope Co. The film survives.

*five distinct subgroupings.* Marcello Truzzi, “Notes toward a History of Juggling,” *Bandwagon* 61.2 (2017): 64–69.

*praestigiator.* Glare, *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, 2: 1587, s.n. praestigiator, b.

*prestidigitation.* The *Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, ed. C. T. Onions (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 708, s.v. prestige.

## Anatole France as Juggler

*not too many demands.* He stressed that students of foreign languages should be expected to apply only a reasonable number of straightforward grammatical constructions and principles at once. The metaphoric message? Do not ask a learner to juggle too many copper balls. See Jacob Warshaw, “Automatic Reactions in Practical Foreign Language Work,” *The Modern Language Journal* 9.3 (1924): 151–58, at 156: “The *jongleur de Notre-Dame* was able to throw six copper balls in the air and catch them right cleverly with his feet; but suppose he had tried to juggle six-and-twenty or six-and-thirty balls? Quite wisely the *jongleur* juggles the number of balls that it is within his power to juggle skillfully, and not more. Many language teachers, however, believe that there is no limit to the number of rules that students can handle.”

*no more profound philosophy.* Georges Pellissier, “M. Anatole France,” *Revue bleue*, 4th series, 2.26 (December 29, 1894): 84 (my translation).

*The simplicity France attempted to achieve.* France receives interesting but only fleeting treatment in Mariane Bury, *La nostalgie du simple: Essai sur les représentations de la simplicité dans le discours critique au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Champion, 2004), 158, 227. The reaction to the Middle Ages during the nineteenth century is absent from her argument about French attitudes toward simplicity during the nineteenth century.

*Index of Prohibited Books.* *Index librorum prohibitorum* (Rome: Typis polyglottis Vaticanis, 1922).

*unadulterated nostalgia.* The only detailed examination of irony in the story has been by Théodor Reik, “Psychologie de l’ironie: Analyse de la nouvelle d’Anatole France, *Le Jongleur de Notre Dame*,” *Psyche: Revue internationale de psychanalyse et des sciences de l’homme* 5.44 (1950): 472–84. But Reik’s analysis is resolutely non-literary-critical and instead Freudian, which makes it irrelevant for the present purposes.

*tales that appear to be pious.* Bancquart, *Anatole France*, 39: “les contes d’apparence pieuse.”

*Irony and Pity are two great counselors.* *Le jardin d’épicure* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1894), 122: “L’Ironie et la Pitié sont deux bonnes conseillères; l’une, en souriant, nous rend la vie aimable, l’autre, qui pleure, nous la rend sacrée. L’Ironie que j’invoque n’est point cruelle. Elle ne raille ni l’amour ni la beauté. Elle est douce et bienveillante.”

*serialized*. In *Revue des deux mondes*.

*rescind their journal subscriptions*. Marie-Claire Bancquart, *Anatole France, polémiste* (Paris: A. G. Nizet, 1962), 229.

*the solemn asceticism*. Anatole France, “Vacances sentimentales: En Alsace,” *Revue politique et littéraire*, 3rd series, 2nd year, 16 (1882): 481–92, at 490: “J’aime... l’ascétisme sombre des grands siècles chrétiens” (I like... the solemn asceticism of the great Christian centuries”).

*The Procurator of Judea*. “Le procureur de Judée.”

*Three Tales*. *Trois contes*.

*unfractured and perfect*. Bretel, *Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame*, 53.

*unrefined faith*. According to Georges Pellissier, *Nouveaux essais de la littérature contemporaine* (Paris: Lecène, Oudin et Cie, 1895), 353, France believed, “Il n’y a pas de philosophie plus profonde que celle des âmes ignorantes, comme il n’y a pas d’art plus exquis que celui des âmes naïves” (There is no more profound philosophy than that of ignorant souls, just as there is no more refined art than that of naïve souls).

*This naïve idea of the universe*. Anatole France, *L’anneau d’améthyste*, in France, *Œuvres*, ed. Bancquart, 3: 162: “Cette idée naïve de l’univers, qu’avaient exprimée là des ouvriers morts depuis plus de cinq cents ans l’attendrissait. Il la trouvait amiable dans son absurdité” (This naïve notion of the universe that craftsmen had expressed who had been dead for more than five hundred years moved him. He found it pleasant in its absurdity).

*artless, whole-souled faith*. George Neely Henning, ed., *Abeille et autres contes: With Notes, Direct-method Exercises and Vocabulary*, illus. Kurt Wiese (Boston: Heath, 1928), 115.

*yearning for the simple*. Bury, *La nostalgie du simple*.

*simple forms*. André Jolles, *Einfache Formen, Legende, Sage, Mythe, Rätsel, Spruch, Kasus, Memorabile, Märchen, Witz*, Sächsische Forschungsinstitute in Leipzig: Forschungsinstitut für neuere Philologie, vol. 2.2 (Halle, Germany: M. Niemeyer, 1930).

*more miracles of the Virgin*. See “Le Miracle de la Pie,” in Anatole France, *Les contes de Jacques Tournebroche*, in *Œuvres*, ed. Bancquart, 4: 258–68, and *Le puits de sainte Claire*, chap. 9, “La Caution,” in France, *Œuvres*, ed. Bancquart, 2: 693 (epigraph drawn from *Miracles de Notre-Dame par personages*). For analysis, see Ahlstrom, *Le Moyen Âge*, 85–97.

*The Amethyst Ring*. France, *L’anneau d’améthyste*, in France, *Œuvres*, ed. Bancquart, 3: 19–21.

*By what charms*. France, “M. Gaston Paris,” 272–73.

*formulation*. Paris, *La littérature française* (ed. 1888), 32. Quoted in chap. 6, above.

*Life of Joan of Arc*. Anatole France, *Vie de Jeanne d’Arc*, 2 vols. (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1908), 1: 239–40.

*The Cardinal’s Snuff-Box*. Henry Harland, *The Cardinal’s Snuff-Box* (London and New York: John Lane, 1900), 186 (final page of chapter 21): “At last she went into the house, and up to her rose-and-white retiring-room. There she took a book from the table, and sank into a deep easy-chair, and began to turn the pages. But when, by and by, approaching footsteps became audible in



the stone-floored corridor without, Beatrice hastily shut the book, thrust it back upon the table, and caught up another so that Emilia Manfredi, entering, found her reading Monsieur Anatole France's *Étui de nacre*. 'Emilia,' she said, 'I wish you would translate the 'Jongleur de Notre Dame' into Italian.'"

*eight years*. Already in 1897, the story was incorporated in an oft-reprinted anthology of France's selected writings, *Pages choisies de Anatole France* (Paris: A. Colin, 1897), 247–54.

*Oh, the lilac!*. The poet is Comte Robert de Montesquiou-Fezensac: "Oh, les lilas lilas! Le bleuets bleu! La rose rose."

*I will pluck from the proofs of my book*. Proust, *Correspondance*, 12: 173–75; Marcel Proust, *Lettres à Madame Scheikévitch* (Monaco: Sauret, 1993), 29. The first reference, specifically, is "old Sylvestre Bonnard when receiving from Countess Trépop the *Golden Legend of the clerk Toutmouillé* with the *Life of Saint Droctovée*." The book under discussion was none other than *Swann's Way*.

*steeped himself*. Ellen Eve Frank, *Literary Architecture: Essays toward a Tradition*. Walter Pater, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Marcel Proust, Henry James (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979), 113–65. Proust wrote five articles or obituaries in homage to Ruskin. See Jean Autret, *L'influence de Ruskin sur la vie: Les idées et l'oeuvre de Proust* (Geneva: Droz, 1955); Laurent Baridon, "Le patrimoine de la mémoire: Proust entre Viollet-le-Duc, Ruskin et Riegl," and Diane R. Leonard, "La langue perdue: Proust, la Recherche et le Moyen Âge de Ruskin," in *Proust et les "Moyen Âge"*, ed. Sophie Duval and Miren Lacassagne (Paris: Hermann, 2015), 57–69, 161–75, respectively; Jessie Murray, "The Influence of Ruskin on Marcel Proust," *Proceedings of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society* 2 (1932): 465–515; Cynthia J. Gamble, "Proust-Ruskin Perspectives on La Vierge Doreé at Amiens Cathedral," *Word & Image* 9 (1993): 270–86. On Proust and Viollet-le-Duc, see Luc Fraisse, "Proust et Viollet-le-Duc: De l'église de Combray à l'esthétique de la Recherche," *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France* 100 (2000): 45–90; on the generally low standing of Viollet-le-Duc in the waning nineteenth century, Dakyns, *Middle Ages in French Literature*, 231.

*surpassing the original English*. A point made by Emily Eells, "La Bible d'Amiens: Translation and Transformation," in *Translation Practices: Through Language to Culture*, ed. Ashley Chantler and Carla Dente (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), 131–44.

*editions across the globe*. For instance, a Hungarian printing within an anthology of short stories by various authors is *Legendes et contes pour rire* (Budapest, Hungary: Edition Lantos, 1900), and a Japanese one is *Seibo no karuwazashi*, ed. Kenzo Nezu (Tokyo, Japan: Hakusuisha, 1957). France's "Le jongleur de Notre-Dame" was translated repeatedly into other modern languages both within *The Little Box of Mother-of-Pearl* and in anthologies with selections from his writings: *Paiata Maicii Domnului, urmata de Mustafa Efendi ajunge Macarie Monahul*, trans. Gala Galaction (Iasi, Romania: Viata romîneasca, 1920); *Kuglarz Najswietszej Panienki i inne nowelki* (Warsaw, Poland: Lingwisty, 1923); seventh printing, trans. Ohoi Tadasu, Iwanami bunko, vol. 958 (Tokyo, Japan: Iwanami shoten, 1934).

*separate book*. Anatole France, *Markedsgøglere*, retold by Paul V. Rubow, woodcut by Povl Christensen (Copenhagen, Denmark: Danske Forlag, 1947). The title is translatable literally as "market juggler."

*A poor juggler and Trappist*. Anonymous, "Aneddoti e spezzature," *Mater Dei: Bolettino dell'opera "Mater Dei" diretto da Don Giuseppe de Luca 1954–1959* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1972): 42–44, no. 4, at 43–44 (my translation from the Italian).

*elegance recognized across the board.* Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 302.

*He is remembered primarily as a dilettante.* Germaine Brée and Anne Prioleau Jones, *Hier et aujourd'hui: Premières lectures littéraires* (New York: Ronald Press, 1958), 77.

## Edwin Markham's Working-Class Juggler

*The Juggler of Touraine.* "The Juggler of Touraine," first published in *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine* 75.2 (December 1907): 221–33. It was also incorporated in Markham's frequently reprinted *Shoes of Happiness* (next note), 30–46.

*Isabel Butler's translation.* Edwin Markham, *The Shoes of Happiness, and Other Poems: The Third Book of Verse* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page, 1915), vii.

*devising his own version.* Markham, *Shoes of Happiness*, viii: "There are other variants of the legend, and all have helped in the present rendering. Mr. Markham has made free with the old legend, suppressing parts and adding both color and incident from his own invention."

*the happiness of lowliness.* The discussion is in William L. Stidger, *Giant Hours with Poet Preachers* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1918), 20–22 ("the happiness of lowliness," at p. 21), and idem, *Standing Room Only* (New York: George H. Doran, 1921), 26 (roughly, "verse sermon" and "a great sermon in itself"). The same author later wrote a biography of Markham: *Edwin Markham* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1933). A short study is George Truman Carl, *Edwin Markham: The Poet for Preachers* (New York: Vantage Press, 1977). Neither makes mention of "The Juggler of Touraine."

*I Hear America Singing.* The poem appears first under the title "Chants Democratic no. 20," in *Leaves of Grass*, 3rd ed. (1860), and later under its present title in *Leaves of Grass*, 4th ed. (1867). It is printed as "Inscriptions," no. 18, in *Leaves of Grass*, 6th ed. (1881).

*The Man with the Hoe.* Published first on January 15, 1899, in a special edition of the *San Francisco Examiner*.

*seeing with his own eyes.* In copious notes, Markham explains how he was exposed to the painting, how he came to write the poem, and how he meant it to be understood. He saw the canvas, then owned by Mrs. William H. Crocker, in San Francisco.

*Sitting before the actual object.* Jesse Sidney Goldstein, "Edwin Markham, Ambrose Bierce, and *The Man with a Hoe*," *Modern Language Notes* 58 (1943): 165–75, at 168. An article in the newspaper *San Francisco Call* 87.15, December 15, 1899, 14, describes the painting as being on loan in that month at the Art Institute of San Francisco from Mrs. William Crocker. The canvas is now at the Getty Museum in Los Angeles. It is catalogued in *Jean-Francois Millet: Drawn into the Light*, ed. Alexandra R. Murphy (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 92–94, no. 58.

*encyclical.* Issued on May 15, 1891, the text is known from the first two words of its incipit as *Rerum novarum* (Of revolutionary change). It was drafted by Tommaso Maria Zigliara. This Dominican priest was in the vanguard of the so-called Thomist revival that gave new strength to the thinking of Thomas Aquinas.

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## Abbreviations

- LHA *The Letters of Henry Adams*, ed. J. C. Levenson et al. 6 vols. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982–1988.
- MSMC *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres*, in Henry Adams, *Novels, Mont Saint Michel, The Education*, ed. Ernest Samuels and Jayne N. Samuels, 337–714. New York: Library of America, 1983.
- OED *Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. John Simpson and Edmund Weiner, 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.

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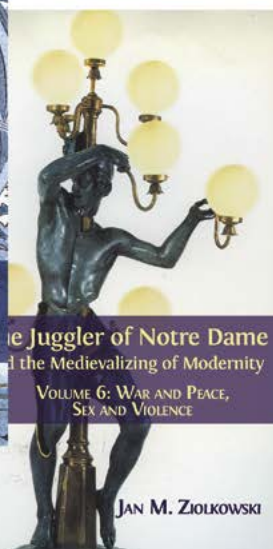
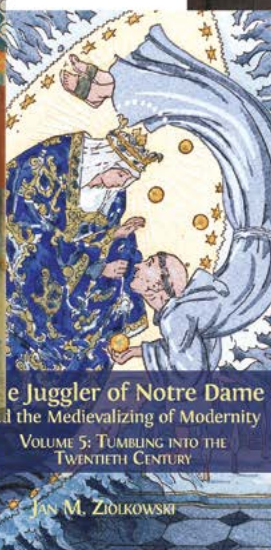
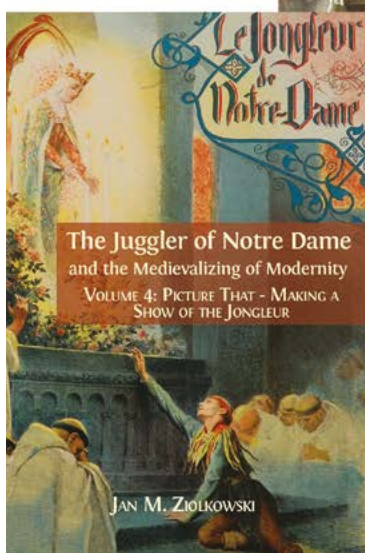
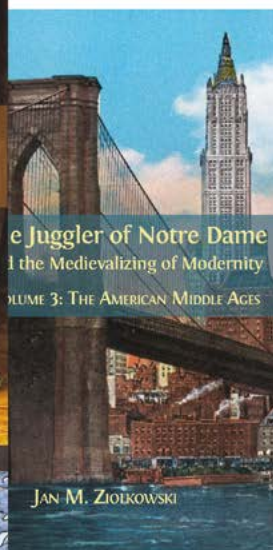
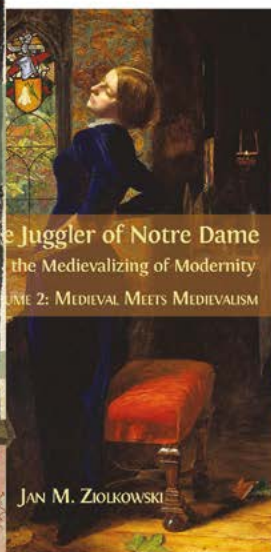
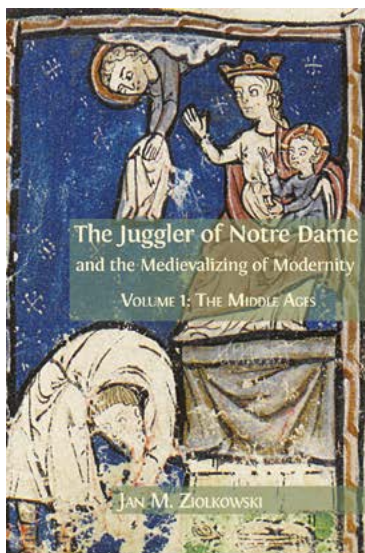
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