



THE COLUMN OF JULY (HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF)

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PARIS

UNDER THE COMMUNE:

OR,

THE SEVENTY-THREE DAYS OF THE SECOND SIEGE.

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS, SKETCHES TAKEN ON THE SPOT, AND
PORTRAITS (FROM THE ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPHS).

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BY JOHN LEIGHTON, F.S.A.,

&c.



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Socialism, or the Red Republic, is all one; for it would tear down the tricolour and set up the red flag. It would make penny pieces out of the Column Vendôme. It would knock down the statue of Napoleon and raise up that of Marat in its stead. It would suppress the Académie, the École Polytechnique, and the Legion of Honour. To the grand device Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, it would add "Ou la mort." It would bring about a general bankruptcy. It would ruin the rich without enriching the poor. It would destroy labour, which gives to each one his bread. It would abolish property and family. It would march about with the heads of the proscribed on pikes, fill the prisons with the suspected, and empty them by massacres. It would convert France into the country of gloom. It would strangle liberty, stifle the arts, silence thought, and deny God. It would bring into action these two fatal machines, one of which never works without the other—the assignat press and the guillotine. In a word, it would do in cold blood what the men of 1793 did in fever, and after the grand horrors which our fathers saw, we should have the horrible in all that was low and small.

(VICTOR HUGO, 1848.)



PREFACE.

EARLY in June of the present year I was making notes and sketches, without the least idea of what I should do with them. I was at the Mont-Parnasse Station of the Western Railway, awaiting a train from Paris to St. Cloud. Our fellow passengers, as we found out afterwards, were principally prisoners for Versailles; the guards, soldiers; and the line, for two miles at least, appeared desolation and ruin.

The façade of the station, a very large one, was pock-marked all over by indentations from Federal bullets, whilst cannon balls had cut holes through the stone wall as if it had been cheese, and gone down the line, towards Cherbourg or Brest! The restaurant below was nearly annihilated, the counters, tables, and chairs being reduced to a confused heap. But there was a book-stall! and on that book-stall reposed a little work, entitled the "Bataille des Sept Jours," a brochure a friend bought and gave to me, saying, "*Voilà la texte de vos croquis.*" From seven days my ideas naturally wandered to seventy-three—the duration of the reign of the Commune—and then again to two hundred and twenty days—that included the Commune of 1871 and its antecedents. Hence this volume, which I

liken to a French château, to which I have added a second storey and wings.

And now that the house is finished, I must render my obligations to M. Mendès and numerous French friends, for their kind assistance and valuable aid, including my confrères of "*The Graphic*," who have allowed me to enliven the walls with pictures from their stores; and last, and not least, my best thanks are due to an English Peer, who placed at my disposal his unique collection of prints and journals of the period bearing upon the subject—a subject I am pretty familiar with. Powder has done its work, the smell of petroleum has passed away, the house that called me master has vanished from the face of the earth, and my concierge and his wife are reported *fusillés* by the Versaillais; and to add to the disaster, my rent was paid in advance, having been deposited with a *notaire* prior to the First Siege. . . . But my neighbours, where are they? In my immediate neighbourhood six houses were entirely destroyed, and as many more half ruined. I can only speak of one friend, an amiable and able architect, who, alas! remonstrated in person, and received a ball from a revolver through the back of his neck. His head is bowed for life. He has lost his pleasure and his treasure, a valuable museum of art,—happily they could not burn his reputation, or the monument of his life—a range of goodly folio volumes that exist *pour tous*.

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LONDON, 1871.