

**OBERMANN: SELECTIONS
FROM LETTERS TO A
FRIEND; VOLUME 2**

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Obermann: selections from letters to a friend; Volume 2 by Etienne Pivert de Senancour & Jessie Peabody Frothingham

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ETIENNE PIVERT DE SENANCOUR & JESSIE PEABODY FROTHINGHAM

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OBERMANN

SELECTIONS FROM
LETTERS TO A FRIEND

BY

ETIENNE PIVERT DE SENANCOUR

*Chosen and translated with an Introductory
Essay and Notes by JESSIE PEABODY
FROTHINGHAM, Translator of the
Journal of Maurice de Guérin*

VOLUME TWO



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O B E R M A N N

L E T T E R S
TO A
F R I E N D

LETTER XXXVII

Lyons, May 2d, 6th year.

O F all the vague and fleet-
ing moments when I be-
lieved, in my simplicity,
that we were upon the earth
in order to live, none have left mem-
ories so deep as those twenty days of
forgetfulness and hope, when, towards
the close of March, near the torrent,
beside the rocks, among the happy
hyacinth and the simple violet, I had
the illusion that it would be given me
to love.

I touched what I was destined never

to grasp. Without tastes, without hope, I might have existed weary but tranquil; instinctively I could picture to myself human energy, but in my shadowed life I was content to endure my apathy. What sinister power has opened the gates of the world before me, and swept away the consolations of the nothing?

Carried along by a wide activity, — eager to love everything, to support everything, to console everything, forever torn between the desire to see so many wrongs redressed and the conviction that they never will be redressed, — I am weary of the evils of life, and still more indignant against the perfidious seduction of pleasures, my gaze being ever fixed upon the vast mass of hate, iniquity, shame, and misery of this misguided earth.

And I! twenty-seven years have come and gone; the beautiful days have passed away, and I have not even

seen them. Unhappy in the years of joy, what can I expect from future years? I have spent in weariness and emptiness the glad season of confidence and hope. On all sides repressed, suffering, my heart empty and wounded, I knew while still young the regrets of old age. Accustomed to seeing all the flowers of life wither beneath my blighting steps, I am like those old men from whom all things have taken flight; but more unfortunate than they, I have lost everything long before I have myself reached the consummation of life. With an eager soul, I cannot rest in this silence of death.

Memory of years long passed away, of things that have forever perished, of places never to be seen again, of men who are wholly changed! sentiment of the life that is lost!

What scenes were ever for me what they are for other men? What seasons were ever endurable, and under what