

**THE EUROPEAN
LIBRARY. PEOPLE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649669172

The European Library. People by Pierre Hamp & James Whittall & J. E. Spingarn

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

PIERRE HAMP & JAMES WHITALL & J. E. SPINGARN

THE EUROPEAN LIBRARY. PEOPLE

THE EUROPEAN LIBRARY
EDITED BY J. E. SPINGARN



PEOPLE

BY
PIERRE HAMP

AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION BY
JAMES WHITALL



NEW YORK
HARCOURT, BRACE AND COMPANY
1921

10785A

COPYRIGHT, 1921, BY
HARCOURT, BRACE AND COMPANY, INC.

THE QUINN & BODEN COMPANY
NEWARK, N. J.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Introduction. By Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant	vii
Author's Preface	xiii
The Fried-Potato Sisters	3
Nounou	11
The Sweet Smeller	21
Monsieur Robled's Throat	29
The Tight-Wads	37
A Man with a Soft Job	44
Gracieuse	54
Mademoiselle Sourire	61
The Seine Rises	71
At the Express Window	89
At the Chevalier Restaurant	94
Fat-Month	104
The Fly-Catcher	111
A Rich City	119
"Miller, You're Asleep"	133
A Labour Demonstration	139
Boxers	146
A Bourbon's Pleasures	157
The Joy Boys	170
Monsieur Becqueriaux	187
The King's C's	193
The Screen	199

INTRODUCTION

ONE of the sketches in this volume, "Fat-Month," concerns an oven-man at a Paris pastry-shop. Fat-Month would, I think, have appeared to me with the robust plebeian countenance, the straggling black moustache, the quick brown eye of Pierre Hamp, even if I had not known that the author of "The Labour of Men" was once himself a pastry cook who, during off hours, read avidly in cheap copies of Victor Hugo by the light of a basement window. "Two things you must always care about: Justice and yer work," says the baker when he is discharged, to "Colossus," his tiny apprentice. That, in brief, is Hamp's whole philosophy. And I can see "Colossus," his overwhelming white sleeves tucked up from his grimy hands, gazing with unhappy longing after this friend of the miserable, this thick-set apostle of good work marching off so confidently into the future.

Hamp has indeed arrived at his place in French letters through the kind of material struggle which leaves most men voiceless and without hope. His great strength is that the struggle itself has made him articulate; his great originality, that in his evolution to intellectual power and expressiveness he has never

renounced his workman's heritage. Years as a pastry cook in France, England and Spain, followed, after a brief period of study, by years as a railway employee, and then by more years as a factory inspector in the textile north—this has been the substance of his life. He began to write of labourers as Conrad wrote of seamen; because he felt with them so passionately that he had to make some written record of their lives. His books, though not cast in autobiographic form, have the unmistakable quality of first-hand experience. Hamp is perhaps the only writer in any language who, rising from the "masses," has kept not only the un-sentimental realism and the instinctive sympathies, but the muscles, the tough hide, and so to say the craft technique of the manual worker.

Zola might have conceived "Fish, Fresh Fish" ("Marée Fraîche"), the history of the lives involved in the conveyance of a fish from the Channel to the Paris restaurant. Anatole France might have written the sketch of the carpenter in "People," who, mending the bookshelf of a dramatic critic, learns with immoderate surprise and laughter that this gentleman earns his living by sitting in a theatre. But neither Zola, with his naturalism, nor France, with his delicate irony, could have given to the speech and thought of their working-class personages the tang, the poignant verity achieved by Hamp. He knows from having been inside their skins how the fishmonger, the carpenter,

the section-hand, the textile-worker feels, thinks, eats, loves, most significantly how he works—works and suffers and rebels from the increasingly machine-made civilization whose weight he carries on his back. The religion of the French craftsman of old was that nothing must be done unless it was well done, and Hamp's books are full of an almost lyrical celebration of the "irreplaceable" quality of technique which is being gradually displaced in modern life by automatic processes.

He sees his workmen not at all as Conrad sees his sailors. Not as isolated individuals with romantic or tragic destinies, but always as a part of a complex social and economic system, which exploits them, squeezes them dry. He measures them, as he has had to measure himself, by their producing power, and gauges their human happiness by their good or bad relation to their work. Before the war he sought in vain for happy workmen. During the war he found some. In fact the greatest virtue of the war, as Hamp the Socialist discovered it in "*Le Travail Invincible*" ("*Labour the Invincible*")—that very beautiful book which is chiefly a record of his inspections of factories in bombarded areas—was to make men love their work again. "Professional probity becomes the perfect form of patriotism." And yet Hamp does not oppose the mechanization of industry. His practical understanding reckons with all the consequences of