

**THE HOLIDAYS; A
BOOK OF GAY
STORIES, VOL. III**

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The holidays; a book of gay stories, Vol. III by Henri Duvernois

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HENRI DUVERNOIS

**THE HOLIDAYS; A
BOOK OF GAY
STORIES, VOL. III**

LES FLEURS DE FRANCE
VOL. III.

THE HOLIDAYS

A BOOK OF GAY STORIES

Translated from the French of
HENRI DUVERNOIS

LES FLEURS DE FRANCE

Edited by Alys Eyre Macklin

Is a series of translations of outstanding work by celebrated French authors.

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LES FLEURS DE FRANCE

THE HOLIDAYS

A BOOK OF GAY STORIES

Translated from the French of
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Introduction by
ALYS EYRE MACKLIN



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INTRODUCTION

ONE aim of this series of translations is to present from time to time to English readers representative examples of the modern French *conte*, comparatively unknown to those who do not read the language in the original. Another of its objects is to use the literature that is popular in France to-day (and therefore probably true to life) as a means of helping us towards a better comprehension of our Allies, whom we so frequently misunderstand in spite of closest ties—for what tie can be closer than that of blood shed side by side in a common cause?

This collection of some of the *contes* of Henri Duvernois answers both purposes; for Henri Duvernois is not only a master of his art, but he is essentially French both in his themes and treatment of them.

Even that "essentially French" is frequently misunderstood in this country. There is more than a tendency among those who have not lived in France to confound "French" with "Parisian." I had the good fortune to be kept from falling into this error almost as soon as I set foot in Paris when, sitting one afternoon under the trees of P. G. Hamerton's beautiful garden at Auteuil, I remarked that something was "very French."

Mr. Hamerton smiled indulgently as he replied : " Let me give you a word of warning. Do not fall into the common mistake of thinking Paris is France. Paris is a cosmopolitan City of Pleasure, and all that pleasure means ; the life-blood of France flows in her provinces, where you will find a splendid race of solid people full of solid virtues. Nor must you let the ' yellow-back novel ' influence your judgment ; it is very often nothing but part of the centralised Pleasure-scheme." It was not long before I realised that under the surface, so deceptive because the quick emotions of the Latin temperament keep it incessantly a-ripple, the French were not at all like our generally accepted idea of them, just as we are quite unlike their national conception of us. The temptation is strong to go into details ; to speak of their intense conservatism, of the beauty of their family-life, with its extraordinarily strong tie between parent and child, and the sacrifices gladly and consistently made by father and mother in the interest of the family. But I return to my starting-point : that because Henri Duvernois is essentially French, between the lines of this book the reader will obtain kaleidoscopic glimpses of French life, customs and emotions.

Occasional glimpses, too, of the " Parisian," for it is not for nothing that Duvernois has become one of the most popular writers in Paris as well as France. He pictures all aspects of life, and sees no reason for avoiding those little by-paths where we English do not—in literature, at all events—usually stray. As with most French writers, his outspokenness has the virtue of that Truth to Life which is apt to be missed through concealment and