

**A NOCTURNAL
EXPEDITION
ROUND MY ROOM**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649339358

A Nocturnal Expedition Round My Room by Xavier de Maistre

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

XAVIER DE MAISTRE

**A NOCTURNAL
EXPEDITION
ROUND MY ROOM**

Bibliotheca Curiosa,

A

NOCTURNAL EXPEDITION

Round My Room,

BY

XAVIER DE MAISTRE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY

EDMUND GOLDSMID, F.R.H.S.

F.S.A. (Scot.)



PRIVATELY PRINTED, EDINBURGH.

—
1886.

△

10588-49.1

✓



*This edition is limited to 275 small-paper copies,
and 75 large-paper copies.*



A Nocturnal Expedition Round My Room.



I. **T**O arouse some interest in the new room in which I have performed a Nocturnal Expedition, I must inform the reader how it had fallen to my share. Having my attention continually called away from my work in the noisy house in which I lived, I had long thought of taking a quieter residence, when, one day, reading a biographical notice of Buffon, I found that that celebrated man had chosen in his garden, a lovely summer house, containing only his arm chair and the desk at which he wrote, while the only book admitted was the MS. on which he was engaged.

The trifles which occupy me are so essentially different from the immortal works of Buffon, that the thought of imitating him, even on this point,

would certainly not have occurred to me, had it not been for an accident. A servant, dusting the furniture, thought he saw a good deal of dust on a crayon drawing which I had just completed, and wiped it so thoroughly with a cloth that he succeeded in ridding it of all that I had so carefully put into it. After having raved against this fellow, who happened to be out, and after having said nothing to him when he came back, according to my custom, I started off at once and returned with the key of a little room which I had hired on the fifth story of a house in Providence Street. That same day, I had the materials for my favorite employments carried over, and henceforth I spent most of my time there, where domestics ceased to trouble, and picture-cleaners were at rest. Hours passed like minutes, and more than once my reveries caused me to forget the dinner hour.

Sweet Solitude! I have known the charms with which thou dost intoxicate thy lovers. Woe to him who cannot be alone for one day without feeling the weariness of *ennui*, and prefers, if need be, to hold conversation with fools, rather than with himself!

I will confess, however, that I love solitude in large cities; but, unless I am compelled by serious causes, such as "A journey round my room," I do not care to be a hermit except in the morning; in the evening, I like to see human faces again.

The inconveniences of social life, and those of solitude, thus counteract each other, and these two modes of existence thus beautify one another.

The inconstancy and fatality of earthly affairs are such, however, that the vividness of the pleasures that I enjoyed in my new residence ought to have warned me of their probably short duration. The French Revolution, which was surging on all sides, had just overtopped the Alps, and was pouring down upon Italy. The first wave carried me to Bologna. Here, nevertheless, I still kept on my hermitage, into which I had all my furniture moved, to await happier times. For some years I had been an exile: one fine morning I found myself without employment. After a whole year spent in seeing men and things I cared little for, and in wishing for things and men I could no longer see, I returned to Turin. It was necessary to take some definite step. I walked out from the *Hotel de la Bonne Femme*, where I had put up, with the intention of giving up my little room, and selling my furniture.

On re-entering my hermitage, I experienced sensations difficult to describe: Everything was in the same order, I mean the same disorder in which I had left it: The furniture piled up against the wall had been protected from the dust by the lowness of the roof; my pens were

still standing in the dried up inkstand, and I found on the table a letter which I had begun.

"I am still at home," I said to myself, with genuine satisfaction.

Each object recalled some event in my life, and my room seemed papered with memories. Instead of returning to the inn, I resolved to spend the night in the midst of my goods and chattels. I sent for my portmanteau, and determined to start on the morrow, without taking leave or advice from anyone, casting myself without reserve into the hands of Providence.

II. **WHILST** I was thus reflecting, glorying in this well-defined plan of travel, time was passing, and my servant did not return. He was a man whom necessity had made me take into my service a few weeks before, and as to whose faithfulness I had conceived some suspicions. No sooner did the idea occur to me that he might have carried off my portmanteau, than I ran to the inn: it was quite time. As I turned the corner of the street in which the Hotel de la Bonne Femme is situated, I saw him issue hurriedly from the gateway, following a porter who carried my portmanteau. He had himself undertaken to carry my cash box; and, instead of turning in my direction, he moved off to the left towards a point of the compass opposite to that

he ought to have sought. His intention was clear. I easily caught him up, and without saying anything to him, I walked for some time by his side without his perceiving me. Had any one wished to depict the highest degree of astonishment and fear on the human face, he would have made a perfect model, when he saw me at his side. I had plenty of time to study him, for he was so disconcerted by my unexpected apparition and the serious expression of my face as I gazed on him, that he continued the walk on for some time with me without uttering a word, as if we had been taking a walk together. At length he muttered some excuse about some business in the Rue Grand-Doire; but I set him on the right track, and we returned home, when I dismissed him.

It was then only that I determined to make a new journey in my room, during the last night I was to spend in it, and I set about my preparations at once.

III. I HAD long wished to revisit the country which I had formerly so delightfully travelled through, and the description of which did not appear to me to be complete. Some friends who had liked it urged me to continue, and, no doubt, I should have made up my mind to do so sooner, had I not been separated from my travelling companions. Sorrowfully, I again took up my