

**COLAS
BREUGNON**

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Colas Breugnon by Romain Rolland & Katherine Miller

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ROMAIN ROLLAND & KATHERINE MILLER

**COLAS
BREUGNON**

COLAS BREUGNON

BY
ROMAIN ROLLAND

Author of "Jean-Christophe"

TRANSLATED BY
KATHERINE MILLER

"There is life in the old dog yet"



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To

SAINT MARTIN OF GAUL
PATRON SAINT OF CLAMECY

"St. Martin gaily drinks his fill
and lets the stream flow to the mill."
— an old Proverb

TO THE READER

THE readers of "Jean-Christophe" certainly never expected this new volume, but they cannot be more surprised than I am myself. I had sketched out other works,—a play and a novel on subjects of the day, in somewhat the same tragic key as "Jean-Christophe," but I had to break off abruptly, throwing aside all my notes and well-planned scenes, for this trifling work which only came into my head the day before. This book is a reaction from the constraint of "Jean-Christophe," which, like an outgrown cuirass, fitted well enough at first, but had become too tight for me; I felt an absolute need of something gay, in the true Gallic spirit—even perhaps verging on impropriety.

On returning to my native place for the first time since my youth, the renewed contact with the soil of Burgundy woke a past within me which I had believed silent forever; and roused all the Colas Breugnons under my skin, so that I was forced to speak for them—as if their tongues had not wagged enough in their lifetime!

They took advantage of the circumstance that one of their descendants chanced to have the pen of a ready writer (something that they had always coveted) and turned me into their secretary. To my protestations, "Now, Grandad, you had your day, it is my turn to speak now," they only answered: "Young one, you can talk when we have finished. In the first place you have nothing more interesting to say, so sit down, and listen with all your ears: you might do that much for the old

man; when you stand where I am now you will know that silence is the worst of death."

How could I help writing what was dictated to me? Now it is all over and I am free again—at least I suppose so—and can take up the thread of my own thoughts, if some one of these old chatter-boxes does not take it into his head to start up from the tomb and impart to me his message to posterity.

I am afraid that the society of my Colas Breugnon will not amuse my readers as much as the author; but they must take the book for what it is; something perfectly frank and straightforward which has no idea of transforming or explaining the world either politically, or metaphysically. He is just a true Frenchman, who laughs because he is well and hearty and life is sweet to him.

One cannot escape the Maid of Orleans at the beginning of a French story, so, as she used to say, "Take kindly to it"!

ROMAIN ROLLAND.

May, 1914.

PREFACE AFTER THE WAR

WHEN the War broke out this book was already printed and ready to appear, so I have left it untouched. The grandchildren of Colas Breugnon have just emerged as heroes and victims of a bloody epic, only to show an unquenchable flame to the world. Let me hope that the people of Europe, full of courage in spite of their sufferings, may find some solace in these reflections of "a little lamb caught between the wolf and the shepherd."

R. R.

November, 1918.