

**THE WORKS OF
CHARLES PAUL
DEKOCK: ADHÉMAR**

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The Works of Charles Paul DeKock: Adhémar by Paul DeKock & Jules Claretie & Mary Norris

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PAUL DEKOCK & JULES CLARETIE & MARY NORRIS

**THE WORKS OF
CHARLES PAUL
DEKOCK: ADHÉMAR**

The Works of
CHARLES PAUL DE KOCK

WITH A GENERAL INTRODUCTION BY
JULES CLARETIE

ADHÉMAR

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH BY
EDITH MARY NORRIS



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CHAPTER I

A MEETING OF FOUR

FIVE o'clock in the afternoon was just striking as a young exquisite, with a good figure and a very agreeable expression of countenance, although at times his big blue eyes expressed a decided liking for raillery, entered the café which is situated on the corner of the Faubourg Poissonière and the boulevard, on the right as you come from the boulevards.

This young man glanced around the first room, then he went into those which lay beyond, saying to himself,—

“Nobody here! Not a single one of them has come. Not a single one of them will come, perhaps; for in five years one has plenty of time to forget an appointment. However, I remembered it. I am positively certain they have not all joined the great majority, for I met Dodichet barely two months ago; and I have seen Dubotté at the theatre within the past week; Lucien is the only one of whom I have seen or heard nothing for a long time now. Well, I must wait a bit. They have still a quarter of an hour's grace!”

The young gentleman, by name Adhémar

Montbrun, seated himself at a table, took up a newspaper, ordered a glass of chartreuse, and read a criticism of a piece which had had a great success on the evening before, but which the journalist damned because the author was not one of his friends; which, fortunately, did not prevent the play from making its way and having a long run, as the public was beginning to take at their true value the articles of these Aristarchuses of the press, who have, as a general thing, taken for their motto, "Nobody has any wit but we and our friends."

Adhémar had not been reading the paper for two minutes when a gentleman who entered the café came straight to where he was seated and slapped him on the shoulder, saying,—

"Well, here I am too, old fellow! as prompt as the sun—that is, when he shines. You see, I didn't forget our appointment. Good-day, Adhémar, I'm delighted to see you again. Are you well? I am perfectly so, as you may see for yourself. Everyone says that I look thriving. That bothers me sometimes, for I've noticed that your very prosperous people often look stupid too; but I hope I don't go so far as that!"

This second personage was a man of thirty who quite looked his age, for he was already rather stout; rather under than over medium height, a plain, red, and always jolly-looking face, with a perfect thicket of curly light hair, china-blue eyes as round as those of a cat, and immense mutton-chop whiskers. Such

was Philémon Dubotté, who thought himself a very pretty fellow and paid court to all the ladies, but was very neglectful of his wife, who, on the contrary, adored him and overwhelmed him with caresses. But this is often the way with the ladies, the colder one is with them, the more ardent their affection becomes; as far as that is concerned, you will tell me, they are so, perhaps, in order to re-awaken their husband's love.

Adhémar pressed the newcomer's hand.

"Good-day, Philémon, sit you down there. Yes, you look so well that it's delightful to see you!"

"Believe me, I not only look well, but I am so—I'm as sound as the Porte Saint-Denis! By the way, is the Porte Saint-Denis still standing?"

"Yes, of course!"

"They are demolishing so many things! Well, then, I was correct in saying I am as sound as the Porte Saint-Denis."

"I see you have a good memory!"

"And why shouldn't I have one?"

"In five years one may forget many things!"

"In love, possibly, but not in friendship."

"People forget in friendship as they do in love. Memory is one of the rarest things on earth, especially the memory of the heart."

"There you go! just the same as ever; you have confidence in nothing."

"I'm not to blame for the fact that my confidence has always been misplaced. Time deprives