

**PAUL VERLAINE;  
PP. 1-270**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649668588

Paul Verlaine; pp. 1-270 by Harold Nicolson

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](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**HAROLD NICOLSON**

**PAUL VERLAINE;  
PP. 1-270**



# PAUL VERLAINE

## BY HAROLD NICOLSON

Je suis venu, comme orphelin,  
Riche de mes seuls yeux tranquilles,  
Vers les hommes des grandes villes :  
Ils ne m'ont pas trouvé malin.

A vingt ans un trouble nouveau,  
Sous le nom d'amoureuses flammes,  
M'a fait trouver belles les femmes :  
Elles ne m'ont pas trouvé beau.

Bien que sans patrie et sans roi  
Et très brave ne l'étant guère,  
J'ai voulu mourir à la guerre :  
La mort n'a pas voulu de moi.

Sais-je né trop tôt ou trop tard ?  
Qu'est-ce que je fais en ce monde ?  
O vous tous, ma peine est profonde.  
Priez pour le pauvre Gaspard !

BOSTON AND NEW YORK  
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY  
LONDON: CONSTABLE & COMPANY, LTD.

1921

General Corp  
Waco  
4-11-27  
12276

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. YOUTH . . . . .	1
II. MARRIAGE . . . . .	37
III. ARTHUR RIMBAUD . . . . .	57
IV. "SAGESSE" . . . . .	109
V. MIDDLE AGE . . . . .	149
VI. THE LAST PHASE . . . . .	179
VII. VERLAINE'S LITERARY POSITION . . . . .	223

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

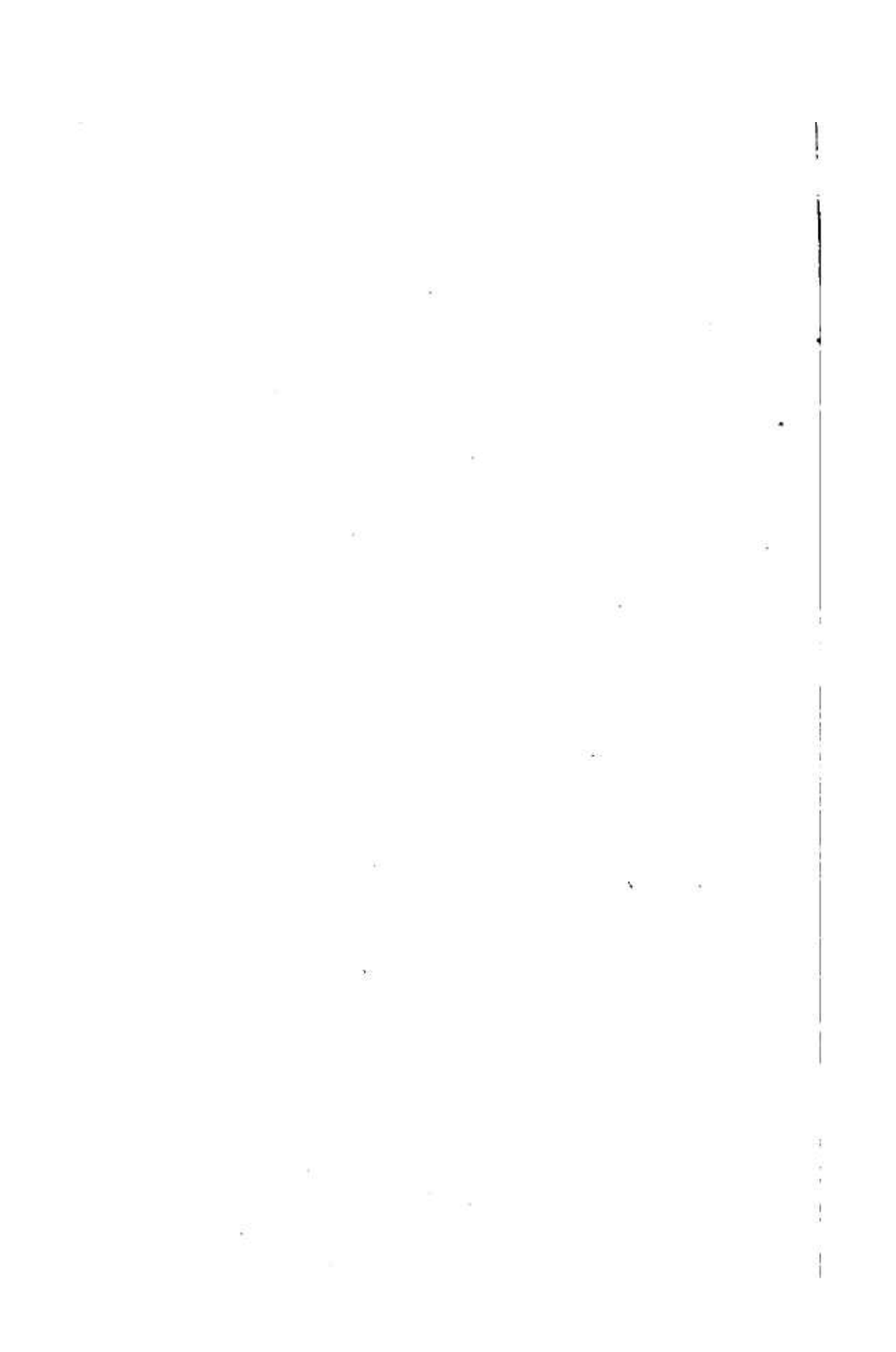
1000

1000

I  
YOUTH

Malheureux ! Tous les dons, la gloire du baptême,  
Ton enfance chrétienne, une mère qui t'aime,  
La force et la santé comme le pain et l'eau,  
Cet avenir enfin, décrit dans le tableau  
De ce passé plus clair que le jeu des marées,  
Tu pilles tout, tu perds en viles simagrées  
Jusqu'aux derniers pouvoirs de ton esprit, hélas !  
La malédiction de n'être jamais las  
Suit tes pas sur le monde où l'horizon t'attire !  
L'enfant prodigue avec des gestes de satyre !





It is not an easy thing to write a life of Paul Verlaine. It is not easy; and it is not quite necessary. The material is there, of course; vivid and, if you like it, sensational. The collected works are there; seven volumes of heterogeneous prose and poetry. There are the official biographies, friendly, discreet, and on the whole accurate; there are memoirs galore, kind or unkind references scattered throughout the writings of the period, and behind it all a great fund of floating memories both in France and England. But the subject has been worn threadbare. For those who care for French literature the facts of Verlaine's life are abundantly familiar. For those who do not care, the story may appear merely unpleasant or even deleterious. Although there exists no Anglo-Saxon monograph on the life and works of Paul Verlaine, it is questionable therefore whether to put down in English what has been done so adequately by Lepelletier and Delahaye may not, after all, be a gratuitous undertaking. The thing can be little else than a picture, more or less sympathetic, of a character

failing consistently to cope with the rudiments of a social conscience, of a nature despicable by all current standards, of a life-story which is apt to pall in its monochrome of vice and futility. Even from a strictly literary point of view Verlaine is somewhat of a back number, a plaintive miscellany thumbed only by the eighteen-nineties; an influence indirect rather than vital, a habit and an atmosphere rather than a directive force.

And thus, as one reads the guarded testimony of others, or the jaunty revelations of Verlaine himself, one feels that it is but a thankless task to disinter these forgotten and fugitive scandals, that it were better done, perhaps, to leave the Verlaine of most Anglo-Saxons as a vague and suffering figure, apprehended only through his few successful poems or in the facile ditties of Reynaldo Hahn.

Perhaps this is so: but, if so, there are other reasons which may justify this monograph. In the first place, Verlaine, however diffused and indefinite his present influence, stood during his lifetime in a quite unique relation to the movements of French literature. He was born during the Romantic period, his first writings were composed under the aegis of the Parnassiens, and in his later years he reflected and inspired the impulses of the Symbolists and the Decadents. There is no one who illustrates more vividly the currents and cross-currents which swayed French poetry between the 'sixties and the 'nineties; there is no biography which can equal his as an introduction to the French literature of