

**HISTOIRES CHOISIES, EXTRAITES  
DE NOS MEILLEURS ÉCRIVAINS  
CONTEMPORAINS; ED. WITH  
BIOGRAPHIES AND  
EXPLANATORY NOTES**

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Histoires choisies, extraites de nos meilleurs écrivains contemporains; ed. with biographies and explanatory notes by J. Belfond

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**J. BELFOND**

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B4287h

LA  
FRANCE LITTÉRAIRE AU XIX<sup>e</sup> SIÈCLE

# HISTOIRES CHOISIES

EXTRAITES DE NOS

Meilleurs Écrivains Contemporains

— FIRST SERIES —

EDITED WITH

Biographies and Explanatory Notes

BY

J. BELFOND,

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1890.

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TO  
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE AND RIGHT REVEREND  
FREDERICK TEMPLE, D.D.  
*Lord Bishop of London,*  
THESE SELECTIONS  
FROM THE  
BEST MODERN FRENCH AUTHORS

ARE, BY KIND PERMISSION,

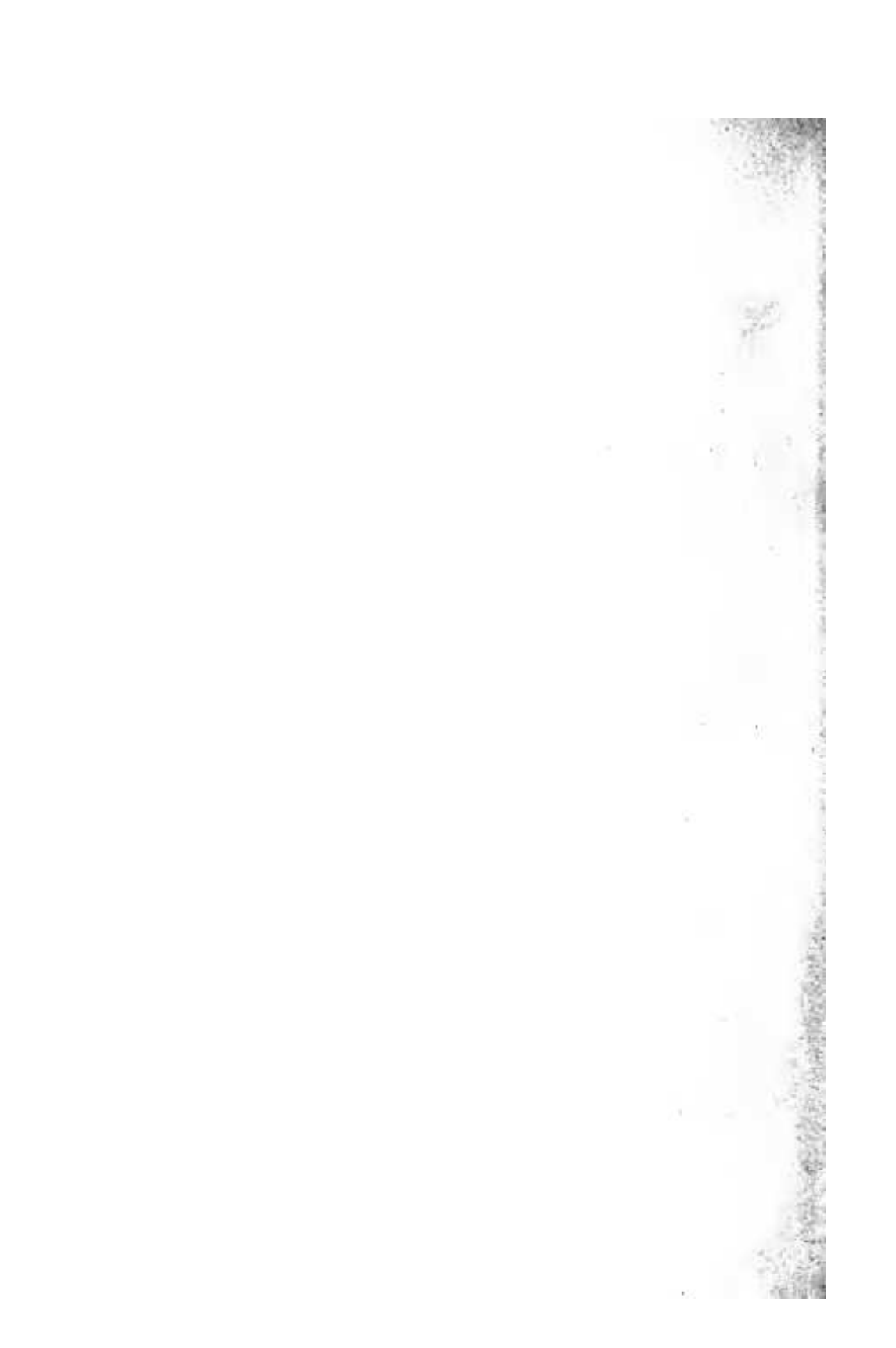
Respectfully Dedicated

BY

THE COMPILER AND EDITOR,

J. BELFOND.

1890.



## PREFACE.

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THE literary extracts of which this volume is the first of a series, are compiled with the view of familiarising the student with the names of some of the most important French prose-writers of the nineteenth century, and of placing before him samples of sufficient length to illustrate their characteristic styles.

The extracts have been chosen from various sources,—from works of history, books of travel, novels, newspapers, etc.; and the compiler has endeavoured to make such selections as can be read with interest apart from their context.

It is believed that the series will prove useful to candidates preparing for examination in French.

Explanatory remarks are limited to such idioms and unusual constructions as the pupil is unlikely to understand with the aid of grammars and dictionaries,—room being hereby left for the exercise of thought and effort.

The compiler is glad to avail himself of the opportunity afforded him by this *Preface* of remarking upon a mistaken, but not uncommon impression, that modern French literature is, as a rule, tainted with immorality. It is undeniable that in France, as elsewhere, there are writers of fiction who cater for vulgar and depraved tastes. But such writers are not among those many authors of sterling merit from whose works the following passages have been culled.

J. B.



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## LAMARTINE.

LAMARTINE (Alphonse Louis Marie de Prat de), one of our best prose writers as well as one of our greatest poets, was born at Mâcon, October the 21st, 1791. After having learnt to read in his mother's Bible, he was 5 educated consistently with the religious ideas and social position of his family. In order that he might escape service in the armies of Napoleon I., he was sent abroad by his father when about twenty years old. After Waterloo, he returned to France and married an English lady, Elise 10 Marianne Birch. In 1824, he entered the diplomatic service, but withdrew from it when the Revolution of July 1830 broke out, that he might pursue an active political life.

Having failed as a candidate for parliament at the 15 elections of Toulon and Dunkirk, he set his mind upon travelling, and equipped at his own expense a vessel to take him with his family to the East. During this journey his daughter died at Beyrout. Lamartine continued his travels, and visited Jerusalem. Lady Esther Stanhope, 20 whom he saw on his way, predicted that he would be one day at the head of the government of France. That prediction was realised at the fall of King Louis Philippe, in 1848, but Lamartine occupied his high office for a

short time only. After the publication of his *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*, he was elected a member of the *Académie française*.

The last years of this world-famed writer were saddened  
5 by the death of his wife, and other heavy losses. He died at Passy, March 1st, 1869.

Amongst his many noble works we may mention: *Méditations* (1820), *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*, (1830), *Voyage en Orient* (1833), *Jocelyn* (1836), *Chute*  
10 *d'un Ange* (1838), *Histoire des Girondins* (1847), *Confidences* (1849), *Le Tailleur de Pierres de Saint-Point* (1851).

Alfred de Vigny pays the following tribute to the genius of the poet: "Je n'ai jamais lu deux *Harmonies* ou *Médi-*  
15 *tations* de Lamartine sans sentir des larmes dans mes yeux. Quand je les lis tout haut, des larmes coulent sur ma joue: heureux quand je vois d'autres yeux encore plus humides que les miens! Larmes saintes, larmes bienheureuses d'admiration et d'amour."