

**THE PARLOUR LIBRARY.  
MEMOIRS OF A  
PHYSICIAN. PART I.  
JOSEPH BALSAMO. VOL. II**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649646784

The Parlour Library. Memoirs of a Physician. Part I. Joseph Balsamo. Vol. II by Alexandre Dumas

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)

**ALEXANDRE DUMAS**

**THE PARLOUR LIBRARY.  
MEMOIRS OF A  
PHYSICIAN. PART I.  
JOSEPH BALSAMO. VOL. II**





THE  
PARLOUR LIBRARY.

X.

---

MEMOIRS OF A PHYSICIAN.

BY

ALEXANDRE DUMAS.

---

VOL. II.

---

LONDON:

Simms & McIntyre, 13, Paternoster Row;  
and 26, Donegal Street, Belfast.

1841

MEMOIRS

OF

A P H Y S I C I A N .

BY

49773

ALEXANDRE DUMAS.

AUTHOR OF "THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO," ETC.

PART I.

JOSEPH BALSAMO.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

SIMMS AND MINTYIE,  
13, PATERNOSTER ROW; AND  
26, DONGALL STREET, BELFAST.

1847.

# MEMOIRS OF A PHYSICIAN.

## PART I.

JOSEPH BALSAMO.

### CHAPTER XLV.

MONSIEUR JACQUES' GARRET.

THE staircase, narrow and steep even at its commencement in the hall below, became still more narrow and more steep from the third story, on which Jacques lived, to the rooms above. It was therefore with considerable difficulty that they reached what was really a loft. There was right for once; it was neither more nor less than a loft, divided into four compartments, three of which were uninhabited.

To say the truth, they were all, except the one destined for Gilbert, uninhabitable.

The roof sloped precipitately down and formed an acute angle with the floor. In the middle of the slope, a skylight in a broken frame, without glass, admitted both light and air; the former rather scantily, the latter superabundantly, particularly during high winds in winter.

Fortunately summer was near; and yet in spite of the approaching warm weather, the candle which Jacques held was nearly blown out on entering the loft.

The mattress of which Jacques had spoken so boastfully lay on the floor, and at the first glance seemed to be in itself the whole furniture of the place. Here and there were piles of old printed papers, which had turned yellow at the edges from age, and in the midst of them were some books half gnawed away by rats.

From two cords which were stretched from one side of the loft to the other, and the first of which was nearly strangling Gilbert, hung, dancing in the night breeze, several paper bags containing kidney-beans dried in their pods, a few bundles of aromatic herbs, some household linen, and several articles of female attire almost in rags.

"It is not a very handsome place," said Jacques, "but sleep and darkness make an humble cabin equal to a sumptuous palace. Sleep, my young friend, as you ought to sleep at your age, and to-morrow morning you may believe that you have slept in the Louvre. But, above all things take care of fire."

"Yes, sir," said Gilbert, a little bewildered at all that he had heard and seen.

Jacques left the room smiling, then returned.

"To-morrow we shall have some conversation," said he, "you will have no objection to work, will you?"

"You know, sir, that on the contrary to work is my strongest wish."

"That is right," said Jacques, and he turned away.

"To work in an honourable way you understand, sir," added the punctilious Gilbert.

"I know of no other, my young friend; so then, good-night!"

"Good-night, and thank you, sir."

Jacques retired, closed the door, and Gilbert was left alone in his garret.

At first amazed, then stupified at the thought that he was in Paris, he asked himself could this really be Paris? could there be in Paris such rooms as his?

He then reflected that, in reality, Monsieur Jacques was bestowing charity on him, and as he had seen alms bestowed at Taverney, not only did his surprise subside, but gradually gave way to gratitude, so much difference was there in the manner of performing the two acts.

Then, candle in hand, and taking every precaution against fire, as recommended by Jacques, he went over all parts of his garret; thinking so little of Therese's clothes that he would not take even an old gown to serve him for a quilt.

He stopped at the piles of printed papers. They roused his curiosity to the utmost; but they were tied up, and he did not touch them.

With outstretched neck and eager eye he passed from these parcels to the bags of kidney-beans. The bags were made of very white paper also printed, and were fastened together by pins.

In making rather a hurried movement he touched the rope with his head and one of the bags fell. Paler and more frightened than if he had been discovered breaking open a strong-box, Gilbert hastened to gather up the beans scattered on the floor and to return them to the bag.

During this process he naturally looked at the paper, and mechanically read a few words. These words excited his interest; he pushed aside the beans, and sitting down on his mattress he read with eagerness, for the words were so completely in unison with his own character and feelings that he could almost imagine them to have been written, not only for, but by himself. They were as follows:—

"Besides, grisettes, tradesmen's daughters, and filles-de-chambre never presented any temptation to me—I was influenced by ladies alone. Every one has his whim, and this was mine. I do not agree with Horace on this point. It is not, however, mere admiration of rank or wealth which induces this pre-



ference; it is the superior delicacy of complexion, the soft white hands, the becoming attire, the air of delicacy and order exhibited in the whole person, the taste which appears in every gesture and every expression, the dress so much finer and better formed, the shoes of more delicate workmanship, the more judicious blending of ribbons and laces, the hair arranged with superior care. Thus adorned, I should prefer the plainest features to beauty without them. This preference may be—and I feel that it is—very ridiculous, but my heart has made it almost in spite of me.”

Gilbert started, and the perspiration burst from his forehead—his thoughts could not be better expressed, his desires more clearly defined nor his tastes more perfectly analysed. But Andree, though thus adorned, did not require these auxiliaries to set off “the plainest features.” All these were subservient to her peerless beauty.

After this came a delightful adventure of a young man with two young girls. Their setting out all together on horseback was related, and all the pretty little fears of the ladies were described. Then their nocturnal return was told in the most charming style.

Gilbert's interest increased; he unfolded the bag and read all that was in it; then he looked at the pages that he might if possible go on regularly with what was so interesting. The paging was not regular, but he found seven or eight bags which seemed in the narrative to have some connexion. He took out the pins, emptied the beans on the floor, put the sheets together and proceeded to read.

He was thinking of the happiness he should have, passing the whole night in reading, and the pleasure he should find in unpinning the long file of bags yet untouched, when suddenly a slight crackling was heard; the candle being low had heated the copper around it, it sank in the melted grease, a disagreeable odour filled the loft, and in a moment all was darkness.

This event took place so quickly that Gilbert had no time to prevent it, and he could have wept with vexation at being interrupted in the middle of his reading. He allowed the papers to slip from his hands on the heap of beans near his bed, threw himself on his mattress, and in spite of his disappointment soon slept profoundly.

He did not awake until roused by the noise of taking off the padlock with which Jacques had closed the door the night before. It was broad daylight, and as Gilbert opened his eyes he saw his host enter softly.

His eyes immediately rested on the kidney-beans scattered on the floor, and the bags turned into their original form. Jacques' glance had taken the same direction.

Gilbert felt the blush of shame covering his cheeks, and scarcely knowing what he said, he murmured “Good morning, sir.”

"Good morning, my friend," said Jacques, "have you slept well?"

"Yes, sir."

"Are you a somnambulist?"

Gilbert did not know what a somnambulist was, but he understood that the question referred to the beans no longer in their bags, and to the bags despoiled of their contents.

"Ah, sir," said he, "I understand why you ask me that question. Yes, I have been guilty of this misconduct; I humbly confess it, but I think I can repair it."

"Yes. But why is your candle burned out?"

"I sat up too late."

"But why sit up?" asked Jacques distrustfully.

"To read, sir."

The old man's eyes wandered with increasing interest all round the garret.

"This first leaf," said Gilbert, taking up the first page which he had unpinned and read, "This first leaf which I looked at by chance, interested me so much—but, sir—you who know so much—do you know what book this is taken from?"

Jacques glanced carelessly at it and said, "I don't know."

"It is a romance, I am sure," said Gilbert, "and a charming romance too."

"A romance?—Do you think so?"

"Yes, for love is spoken of here as in romances, only much better."

"Well, as I see at the foot of this page the word 'confessions', I think that it may be a true history."

"Oh, no! The man who speaks thus does not speak of himself. There is too much frankness in his avowals, too much impartiality in his judgments."

"You are wrong," answered the old man quickly; "the author wished to give an example of that kind to the world."

"Do you know who is the author?"

"The author is Jean Jacques Rousseau."

"Rousseau?" cried the young man impetuously.

"Yes, these are some leaves from his last work."

So this young man, as he speaks of himself here, poor, unknown, almost begging on the high-way, was Rousseau, that is to say, the man who was one day to write *Le Contrat Social* and *Emile*?

"The same—or rather not the same," said the old man, with an expression of deep melancholy—"no, not the same: the author of the *Le Contrat Social* and *Emile* is the MAN disenchanted with the world, life, glory, almost with the Deity himself—the other—the other Rousseau is the CHILD entering a world rosy as the dawn—a child with all the joys and all the hopes of that happy age! Between the two Rousseaus lies an abyss which will for ever prevent them from being one—thirty years of misery!"

The old man shook his head, let his arms sink by his side, and appeared lost in reverie.

Gilbert was delighted, not saddened by what he heard. "Then," said he, "all that I read last night was not a charming fiction?"

"Young man, Rousseau has never lied; remember his motto, *vitam impendere vero!*"

"I have seen it, but as I do not know Latin I did not understand it."

"It means to give one's life for the truth. But my wife must have risen by this time; let us go down; a man determined to work can never begin the day too early. Rouse, young man, rouse."

"And so," said Gilbert, "it is possible that a man of such an origin as Rousseau may be loved by a lady of rank? Oh, Heavens, what it is to inspire with hope those who, like him, have dared to raise their eyes above them."

"You love," said Jacques, "and you find an analogy between your situation and that of Rousseau."

Gilbert blushed, but did not answer this interrogation.

"But all women," said he, "are not like those of whom I read; how many are proud, haughty, disdainful, whom it would be only folly to love."

"And yet, young man," replied the other, "such occasions have more than once presented themselves to Rousseau."

"That is true, sir; pardon me for having detained you; but there are some subjects which intoxicate me, and some thoughts which make me almost mad."

"Come, come, I fear you are in love!" said the old man.

Instead of replying, Gilbert commenced to make up the bags again with the help of the pins, and fill them with the kidney-beans. Jacques looked on.

"You have not been very splendidly lodged," said he, "but, after all, you have had what was necessary, and if you had been earlier up you might have inhaled through your window the perfume of the garden trees which, in the midst of the disagreeable odours that infest a great town, is certainly very agreeable. The gardens of the Rue Jussienne are just below, and to breath in the morning the fragrance of their flowers and shrubs is to a poor captive a happiness for all the rest of the day."

"It certainly conveys an agreeable sensation to me," said Gilbert, "but I am too much accustomed to these things to pay any particular attention to them."

"Say rather that you have not yet been long enough the inhabitant of a town to know how much the country is to be regretted. But you have done; let us go down."

And motioning Gilbert to precede him, he shut the door and put on the padlock.

This time, Jacques led his companion directly to the room