

**THE FAN:
ILLUSTRATED
BY PAUL AVRIL**

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The Fan: Illustrated by Paul Avril by Octave Uzanne

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OCTAVE UZANNE

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THE MAN

BY

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ILLUSTRATED BY PAUL AVRIL



LONDON

J. C. NIMMO AND BAIN

14, KING WILLIAM STREET, STRAND, W.C.

1884

503



PREFACE.





LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,



HE author of the Fan dares to present himself before you in the undress of *home*, just as he is leaving his work-table, with that half smirk of satisfaction which the expansive beatitude of a work accomplished brings into the corners of the lips. It seems to him now, in the happy transport of fancy which unrolls before the brain the decoration of apotheosis, that his labour has been but a dream, and that borne to him on rosy



mists, nymphs, half fairy, half muse, have facilitated his task in keeping him sweet company, and by inspiring him with ardour, constancy, and good fortune. The Graces themselves, so forsaken since the last century, have surely brought him one, the magic plume torn from the bird of Cyprus; another the encyclopedic fan, which can tell its own story like the pretty toys of fable; whilst a third has distilled into the perfumed ink of his standish the poetic essence of flowers from the double hill. Thus the writer, thoroughly charmed with himself, was never more beaming or better disposed to make his advances towards the reader, with hand stretched out and face good-humouredly rounded into that expression which seems to say, "Sit, and let us chat."

Let us chat, then, if you please, with that familiar talk which is known by a term rather impure than improper, as the unbuttoned (*débuttonné*) in conversation, which, by the way, does not at all imply the unsewn (*décousu*).

This Fan, then, of which the text runs or winds across the coloured prints of the volume, is not by any means a work of mighty wisdom and erudition, such as to set good-sized spectacles on the noses of the *magisters* and eminent savants of Christendom—men whom I hold in the profoundest respect and esteem, but would never pardon myself for having disturbed them for a banquet so little



abundant as mine in wondrous archæological discoveries. I address myself not, understand me, to those positivist gentlemen of exact documents, to those patient searchers of the past, to those exhumators of dead letters, whom a disciple of Buffon would long to classify in the natural kingdom among mammiferæ, catalogued under the name of *diggers*, and to set in the domain of those subterraneous chimney-sweepers who erect their pyriform hillocks in the midst of pleasure gardens.

To beget a work of vast science, to turn over voluminous folios, to call to one's aid linguistics, orientalism, archæology in all its branches, the fathers of the Church, the pedants in *us* of Germany, and all the square caps of the Dutch savants, to register notes, to affect literary patches, to bury oneself under hills of justificative pieces, of varied reproductions, to analyse the bibliographic bibliography of works written about the Fan—all this in connection with that delicious feminine trinket which our spiritual ancestors contented themselves with singing or wrapping up in amiable little verses, would have been in our opinion an act of heavy and gross stupidity, attaching, as it were, a formidable weight to the delicate antennæ of a dragon-fly.

A pretty woman, says an Oriental proverb, is born with a crown of roses and pretty playthings in her cradle; everything blossoms around her;

