

# **LE CACHET ROUGE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649322909

Le Cachet rouge by D. C. Heath

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**D. C. HEATH**

**LE  
CACHET ROUGE**



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## PREFACE.

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As the tendency in our schools and colleges is to begin reading early in the course, and to read a great deal during the first year, this text has been fully provided with explanatory, historical, and grammatical notes. The purpose has been to encourage the student by explaining the most difficult expressions, and to endeavor to give him an interest in the work by helping him to understand everything pertaining to the history and customs of the epoch to which the story refers.

The most difficult rules of grammar are explained in the notes, as it is believed that it is important to call the attention of the student to rules which he may not yet have fully understood, since the text is intended to follow immediately such reading as is contained in the best elementary French Readers. The student, in preparing his lesson, sees the application and explanation of grammar rules, and will better understand the references which the teacher makes to those rules.

A few points about historical grammar have been introduced, as the great importance of the scientific teaching of languages is recognized by all.

This new text is presented to American students with the hope that the rapid reading of a gem in French literature will give them zeal and enthusiasm for the study of a language which has in store for them so many great works.

The editor desires to express his thanks to Prof. E. S. Joynes for valuable suggestions.

ALCÉE FORTIER.

TULANE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA,  
*August 1, 1890.*

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## INTRODUCTION.

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ALFRED DE VIGNY<sup>1</sup> was born at Loches, in Touraine, in 1799, and died in 1863. He belonged to a family of soldiers, and, full of military ardor, he joined the army in 1815, at the fall of Napoleon. His passion for war, however, was never satisfied; for, owing to the peaceful years of the Restoration, he was never engaged in a battle. He began to write to relieve the monotony of camp life, and produced works which have placed him among the greatest writers of this century.

As a poet Alfred de Vigny ranks immediately after Lamartine, Hugo, and Musset. His style is eminently chaste, elegant, and correct. It does not lack in inspiration, and is often sublime, especially when the author expresses some ideas which are in accord with his melancholy disposition. *Eloa*, the best known of his poems, is really charming.

De Vigny wrote a long and interesting historical novel, *Cinq-Mars*; several dramas, of which the best is *Chatterton*; *Stello*, a romantic biography of three unhappy poets; and *Servitude et Grandeur Militaires*. *Laurette ou le Cachet*

<sup>1</sup> For a full account of Alfred de Vigny's life and writings, see my *Sept Grands Auteurs du XIX<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, D. C. Heath & Co., Boston, 1889.

*Rouge* is an episode of the latter work. The aim of the author was to extol the heroism of the soldier, to show his self-devotion, his patience, his kindness of heart, and at the same time, to call the attention of society to the injustice done the soldier in modern warfare. He is obliged to obey blindly; and, like the old *Commandant* in *le Cachet Rouge*, he sacrifices all his feelings as a man to what he considers his duty. The soldier is the personification of *Abnegation*, and what is left to him after a long career? *Honor*, says the noble soul of Alfred de Vigny. It is this elevated sentiment which pervades every page of *le Cachet Rouge*, and makes this short work one of the most inspiring that one can read. The narrative is interesting, and the story is surely most graceful. Although very pathetic, it leaves no sad impression, as one feels, on reading such a book, that the personages presented to us did not live and die in vain. They have made us see that, in spite of apparent failure, life has still some compensation for him who, like the old *Commandant*, is guided throughout by *Duty* and *Honor*.