

**SANS FAMILLE PAR HECTOR  
MALOT. ABRIDGED,  
WITH INTRODUCTION,  
NOTES, AND VOCABULARY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649697915

Sans Famille Par Hector Malot. Abridged, with Introduction, Notes, and Vocabulary by Hugo Paul Thieme

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)

**HUGO PAUL THIEME**

**SANS FAMILLE PAR HECTOR  
MALOT. ABRIDGED,  
WITH INTRODUCTION,  
NOTES, AND VOCABULARY**



° SANS FAMILLE

PAR  
HECTOR MALOT

*ABRIDGED, WITH INTRODUCTION, NOTES, AND VOCABULARY*

BY  
HUGO PAUL THIEME, Ph.D.  
*University of Michigan*



NEW YORK  
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY  
1902

## A LUCIE MALOT

*Pendant que j'ai écrit ce livre, j'ai constamment pensé à toi, mon enfant, et ton nom m'est venu à chaque instant sur les lèvres. — Lucie sentira-t-elle ? — Lucie prendra-t-elle intérêt à cela ? Lucie, toujours. Ton nom, prononcé si souvent doit donc être inscrit en tête de ces pages : je ne sais la fortune qui leur est réservée, mais quelle qu'elle soit, elles m'auront donné des plaisirs qui valent tous les succès, — la satisfaction de penser que tu peux les lire, — la joie de te les offrir.*

**HECTOR MALOT.**



## INTRODUCTION

It has been the aim in these selections from *Sans Famille* to give the story in as complete and consecutive a form as possible, presenting what, to the editor, has seemed to be the most valuable and characteristic in this work of Malot, and at the same time the most interesting from the narrative standpoint; for this reason almost all long descriptions have been omitted and chapters that do not directly bear on the immediate advancement of the story, such as Remi's stay at the gardener's and his experiences at the mining town. A straightforward, uninterrupted narration has been the principal aim; a text in which ample opportunity is given for conversation in the classroom; notes which do not translate (the selections being especially light and easy), but which may serve to point out illustrations of the principal rules of grammar which a first-year student is likely to compass, or a second-year student needs to review.

It seems that this story has never been given its proper place in the evolution or development of French literature in the latter half of the nineteenth century.



It has been called a most clever, fascinating story, full of genuine pathos, of graceful and delicate descriptions; a popular book for all classes. But what its significance is as a literary work of art and as a literary-moral-reform instrument has never been clearly stated.

French literature, at the time when this story was first published, 1878, was passing through the most critical and dangerous period in the century. Most of the great literary artists of the time, Mérimée, George Sand, Flaubert, Gautier, Leconte de Lisle, Augier, Taine, etc., had either ceased writing or had produced their epoch-making works. Two elements or tendencies in literature, that heretofore had been legitimate and acceptable, were rapidly falling into what M. Brunetière so aptly called *la phosphorescence de la pourriture*. The first of these was a pessimistic or unwholesome expression of antipathy to and contempt for humanity, noticeable first in Chateaubriand, but developing into a loathsome nausea in Baudelaire; of an eager and voluntary sensuality, of a mere physical pleasure, with Maupassant and Huysmans; of an intellectual pessimism, unbelief, and physiological analysis of passion, with Paul Bourget; of what may be called a descriptive pessimism, a mere display of the brutal ferocity of human nature, of the vileness and brutality of man and life, of gloom and despair, with Emile Zola.

The second tendency was what may be called an excessive leaning toward the purely ornate; that is, an absolute respect for form; the first requisite of a work

of poetry was well-made verses; the essential virtue was suggestion, the power of evoking images or particular states of the soul, by sequence of syllables, so skillfully conjoined to these images and states as to produce, as nearly as possible, the perceptible figure. Thus, strange and sonorous words had to be found to accomplish this; rhyme became of paramount importance. This tendency finally developed into pure symbolism.

There was no relief from this monotony, from the refinements of this artificial literature, which either ran into specialism in erudite researches, into the most subtle analyses of physical love, into gross and indecent libertinism, or into obscure thought, purely technical and æsthetic or artistic scribbling. There was an absolute lack of sympathy, inspiration, and refinement, of the ethical; literary productions, to be successful, it seems, had to be written in a spirit of arrogant superiority, of a loathing for life and humanity, of indifference. All that tends to the finer feelings, to the sympathetic and humane, to delicacy and compassion, to the child and the mother, to the friend and councillor, was not in evidence.

Literature, with few exceptions, had become a mere vocation or trade. Although there were Coppée's delightful and wholesome poems and Alphonse Daudet's sympathetic and adventurous tales of *Mon Moulin*, *Le Petit Chose*, *Contes du lundi*, *Tartarin de Tarascon*, these were rare exceptions. To be new, strange, to find a delicate combination of words to shock, to arouse the

reader's curiosity by indelicate and obscure allusions, to spice these with the scandals of the day, all this seemed to be the fad.

This touching story, moral, pure, refreshing after the nausea, full of lively and moving incidents, entirely free from the licentious love of the nineteenth-century novel, depicting the true and noble friendship of two boys in whose destiny we immediately become interested, must interest the young student. It is possible for him to feel and live with them, to enjoy a personal pride in their successes, and many of their experiences could appeal to memories of their own past.

It is due as much to this beautiful and refreshing story, and to the few other wholesome and readable books of the period, as to the fierce, powerful, and vigorous onslaughts of the cutting pen of a Brunetière that this tendency to the coarsest degeneracy was checked. Such credit has never been given to this story of Malot.

The influence and effect were seen at once; first, in the immense sales, an evidence that the French people were eager for such a reaction against the generally unwholesome literature of the period; second, in the recognition of the French Academy by conferring upon the author the much-sought-for Montyon prize of 50,000 francs.

M. Hector Malot is now over seventy years of age. He was born in 1830 at Bouille, near Havre. His father was a lawyer and sent his son to Rouen to study