

**CELEBRATED SALOONS,  
BY MADEME GAY;  
AND PARISIAN LETTERS,  
BY MADAME GIRARDIN**

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Celebrated Saloons, by Mademe Gay; and Parisian Letters, by Madame Girardin by Sophie Gay & L. Willard

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**SOPHIE GAY & L. WILLARD**

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**CELEBRATED SALOONS,**

BY MADAME GAY;

AND

**PARISIAN LETTERS,**

BY MADAME GIRARDIN,

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH,

BY L. WILLARD.

BOSTON:

W. M. CROSBY AND E. P. NICHOLS,

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1851.

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## PREFACE.

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MADAME GAY, the writer of "Celebrated Saloons," has herself held a saloon of no little celebrity; and her daughter, Madame Girardin, moves in the highest circles of fashion. Madame Gay is still living; that is, we have had no tidings to the contrary. She seems most known as a writer upon education; but I have seen stories and a play, with her name attached. She incidentally gives us some sketches of her early life in her "Celebrated Saloons." We find she moved in a brilliant circle, and adorned that circle. She evinces much filial love, and warm affections for her friends: as to her talents, they speak for themselves. Both she and her daughter, Madame Girardin, see the ludicrous side of things strongly: but Madame Gay is often serious; Madame Girardin, seldom. They are both truly French, and as French we must view them. They see the errors and absurdities of society, but are pretty well contented to enjoy it and laugh at it.

It is interesting to see the society of different nations; but we cannot measure them by our standard, especially the French. Their goodness is impulsive; their vices they do not take the trouble to conceal. Perhaps our vices may be called their errors. Surely, I should be

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far from extenuating vice; but we must make allowances for those nations who have blind guides, who are taught to swerve from truth from infancy, and whom the customs of society and the examples around them lead farther astray.

I have translated the present work, considering it a picture of French society, but am far from endorsing the sentiments advanced, especially by Madame Girardin, who sets forth no higher motive for action than the desire of pleasing.

I have understood that her husband was editor of the journal, *La Presse*; and his wife, Emile de Girardin, for several years contributed to that journal, with the assumed name and title of Vicomte Charles de Launay. Her pieces there were addressed to the Parisian public, under the form of Letters, with the title *Courrier de Paris*, and were afterwards published by themselves with her true name.

The French editor says in his Introduction: "They have served as a model for innumerable imitations, and deserve, even from their success, to remain as a faithful souvenir of the genius of French society, — their manners, customs, habits, absurdities, pretensions, whims." He adds: "What popularity at this epoch would these Letters obtain in a reprint! This belief has determined us to publish them under the title of *Lettres Parisiennes*; and we think this correspondence, by turns so light and so deep, always true, always brilliant, with her other works, evince such varied talent, and power of imagination, that we feel it a duty to the public to preserve them in a durable form."

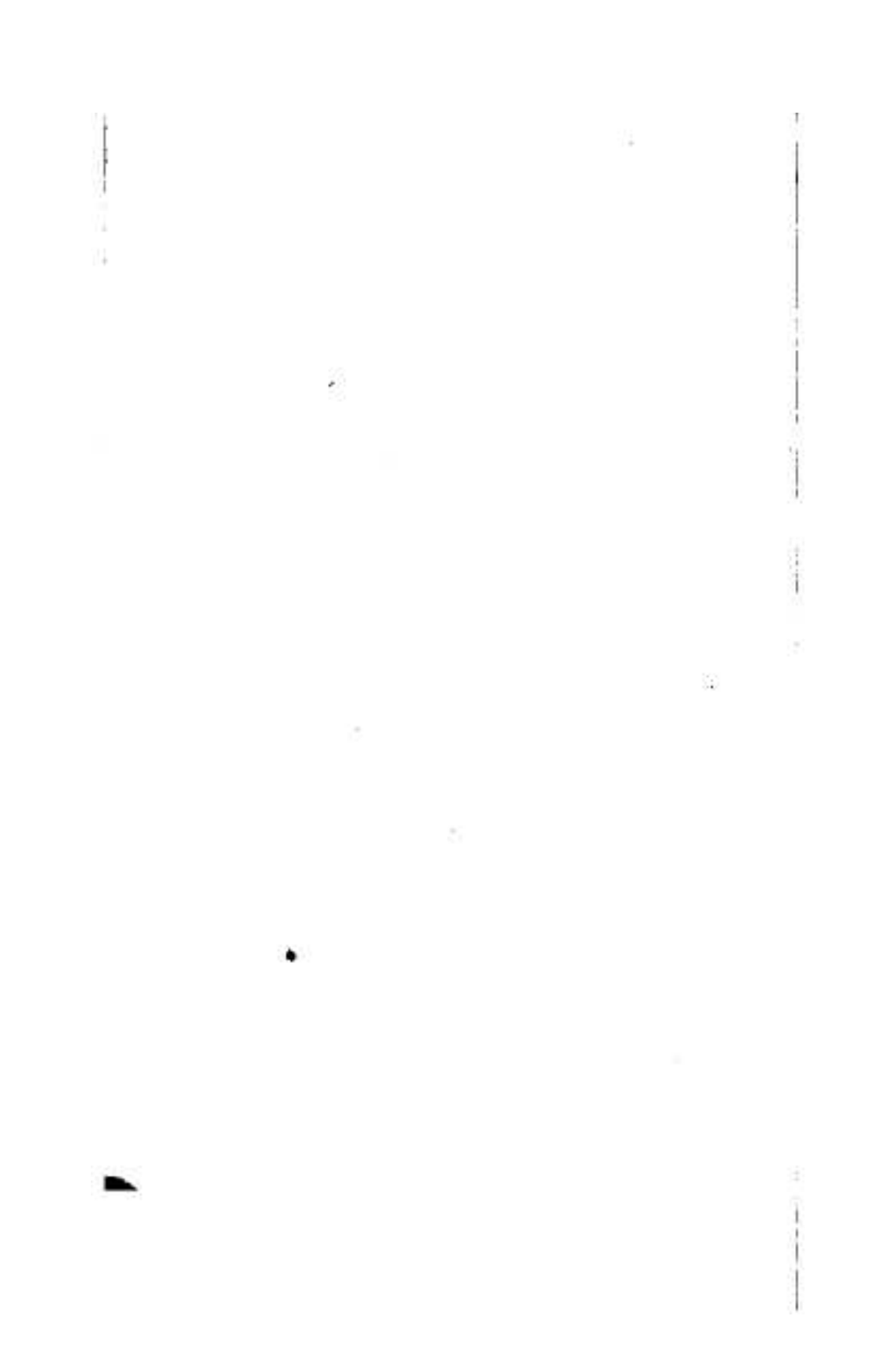
TRANSLATOR.



## CONTENTS.

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	Page
THE SALOON OF MADAME DE STAEL . . . . .	1
THE SALOON OF MADEMOISELLE CONTAT . . . . .	25
THE SALOON OF THE EMPRESS JOSEPHINE . . . . .	71
THE SALOON OF BARON GERARD . . . . .	147
THE SALOON OF THE COUNTESS MERLIN . . . . .	171
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PARISIAN LETTERS . . . . .	193



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