

He was a young man with a warm look, with a cheek of faience, a planetary eye. Molded in a light grey suit, legs without genuflexions, shoulder extended with rubber, solitary fingers like cow's hooves, he longs for fresh blood, the sea air, boxing.

He carries a little trunk full of socks, a lorgnette and New York.

I hurry behind him, pen in hand.

—"Jerome, what kind of weather is it?"

—"It rains!"

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The Loustic frees itself from the rubbish of cables, anchors, women, from plaits of hemp; molting; suddenly appears smooth and new, serpent, fish, gelatine. It glides upon a sea with cabbages, with a sound of screws, snails and cabin boys. Already, yonder, the coast of France shades off. A block of houses becomes an ant hill; a tree, pipe; the estuary, string to cut butter. An odor of gramineous plants, of cattle, of tar gives up, and suddenly goes under. A daughter of Caux is plunged in up to her headdress. Soon the whole of France is only a horizontal line. And already, the evening breaks this line.

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At table we make the acquaintance of our heroine. You of course thought that sooner or later I was going to pull a woman out of my box of tricks. Here she is. Marcelle is twenty-one, she has several sous, the wit of a swallow, a plum coloured dress. She changes her poodle every time she changes her hat. In storms she has a muff of white bear. When the wind quiets down, she slips on colocynth gloves. In short a French woman like many another: a little eatable heart, a pair of silk stockings and a powder box. . The rest into the bargain.

Besides all are French on the Loustic. The Dutch, in polder gloves, are from the Ile de France; the Yankees come from Nice; a Spaniard speaks of Montparnasse; the Brazilians, the Peruvians are originally from Auvergne; the Swedes come from Ardeche and the Poles from Picardy. The little boys have an air of Toulon, the little girls of La Rochelle. A golden Chinese springs from Roche-Guyon.

They serve French food, measured, luke warm, in the form of hills, wheat, acacias.

After dinner, upon the bridge, one smokes, one reads, *à la Française*. Marcelle reads Marcel (Prévost, what!)