

in us ; we have already the best ordered house in Europe : haven't we ? ”

“ Certainly,” I replied, “ by far the healthiest and happiest of modern states.”

“ That's what exasperates us,” he went on, “ about this German menace. We want to put our house in order, to attend to this weakness, and bring about that reform, and we can't because of the barbarous menace on our frontier.”

The political situation again absorbed his interest, and the talk only flitted from it occasionally to worthier subjects. I can only recall one literary judgment which perhaps deserves to be recorded.

“ René de Gourmont,” he said, “ is one of the men I admire most in contemporary French literature : he always interests me.”

Then we talked of a bust of the master himself that was just completed and a drawing from the bust, and he discussed the differences between these allied creations with acute understanding and as dispassionately as if he himself were not in any way concerned.

Words can hardly render the ingenuous simplicity, the transparent sincerity of the man : no slightest trace in him of affectation or pomposity : no pose of any sort. As far as manners go, Anatole France almost reaches perfection. His simple attitude towards his own work and towards friends and foreigners alike filled me with admiration. I had never met anything like it among men of my own race save in two famous