

# THE NEUTRAL FRENCH.

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## CHAPTER I.

The hour  
" Long wished for by the good,  
Of universal jubilee to all  
The sons of bondage.  
Old men, that on their staff had leaned,  
Crazy and frail, or sat benumbed with age,  
Ripe for the grave, felt through their withered limbs  
New vigor flow."

TWENTY years had elapsed since, at the command of a "despotic prince and infatuated ministry," a peace-seeking and peace-loving people, who might have been considered an acquisition to any country, were driven out from their happy homes and scattered among strangers, doomed to eat their bread by the sweat of the brow among a people whose manners, language, and laws, they were utter strangers to. As strangers and wanderers on the earth, they had been treading their weary pilgrimage. The greater part had perished. They had fallen as grass beneath the mower's scythe. And of those who remained, they were, for the most part, as martyrs looking for the hour of their dismissal. For them, the summer had smiled in vain—"the voice of the turtle" and the "singing of birds" had ceased to charm. In vain for them, autumn yielded up her bountiful stores, and landscapes more