

CHAPTER I

THE ZONE OF PARIS

FROM the balcony you look down upon massed and variegated tree-tops as though you were looking down upon a THE valley forest from a mountain ESCAPE height. Those trees, whose hidden trunks make alleys and squares, are rooted in the history of France. On the dusty gravel of the promenade which runs between the garden and the street a very young man and a girl, tiny figures, are playing with rackets at one of those second-rate ball games beloved by the French *petite bourgeoisie*. Their jackets and hats are hung on the corner of the fancy wooden case in which an orange-tree is planted. They are certainly perspiring in the heavy heat of the early morning. They are also certainly in love. This lively dalliance is the preliminary to a day's desk-work. It seems ill-chosen, silly, futile. The couple have forgotten, if they ever knew, that they are playing at a