

of all ages between seven and fourteen—many with closely cropped hair, “à la malcontent,” like nice little innocent convicts; and nearly all in blouses, mostly blue; some with their garments loosely flowing; others confined at the waist by a tricolored ceinture de gymnastique, so deep and stiff it almost amounted to stays.

As for the boys themselves, some were energetic and industrious—some listless and lazy and lolling, and quite languid with the heat—some fidgety and restless, on the lookout for excitement of any kind: a cab or carriage raising the dust on its way to the Bois—a water-cart laying it (there were no hydrants then); a courier bearing royal despatches, or a mounted orderly; the Passy omnibus, to or fro every ten or twelve minutes; the marchand de coco with his bell; a regiment of the line with its band; a chorus of peripatetic Orphéonistes—a swallow, a butterfly, a humblebee; a far-off balloon, oh, joy!—any sight or sound to relieve the tedium of those two mortal school-hours that dragged their weary lengths from half past one till half past three—every day but Sunday and Thursday.

(Even now I find the early afternoon a little trying to wear through without a nap, say from two to four.)

At 3.30 there would come a half-hour's interval of play, and then the class of French literature from four till dinner-time at six—a class that was more than endurable on account of the liveliness and charm of Monsieur Durosier, who journeyed all the way from the Collège de France every Saturday afternoon in June and July to tell us boys of the quatrième all about Villon and Ronsard, and Marot and Charles d'Orléans (*exceptis excipendis*, of course), and other pleasant people who didn't deal in Greek or Latin or mathematics, and knew better