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The Lament of Venus.

The hours have fled away; the night has come,
Night of the world and morn of my despair!
Alas! that time should ever onward move
To work such change. O! what a hateful thing
Is time, that bringeth woe to gods and men.
How pleasant once to me were the swift hours,
When fair Adonis brightened all my world,
And he is dead. The woods my painful sighs
And moans re-echo, but he answers not,
For, as his heart was ever deaf in life,
So now his ear is closed. O, Adonis!
Gone from the light, taken away from bliss,
Covered with darkness and with gloom o'erwhelmed,
As I am goddess, so thy hapless fate
Hath filled me with immortal agony—
The unutterable sorrow of the gods!
Thee do I mourn and sigh for, thee lament,
And sorrow, feeding on itself, still grows,
While still my being cries and longs for thee;
Thee whom my heart rejoiced in, whom my eyes
Gladdened themselves in seeing. Nevermore
Shall this sad heart its lamentation cease,
Or these sad eyes forget to weep o'er thee.
The nightingale sings forth its song of love;
But ah! it is a song of death to me,
And, like a mocking echo, to my heart
Comes back the song I sang at yestereve:

Why art thou cold, love, why estranged?
Thou knowest my fondness and desire,
Thou see'st my beauty, so divine,
Why doth not thy cold heart aspire?

All soft embraces are my arms,
My eyes are full of love for thee,
Thy will is master of my charms,
Thy love alone can comfort me.

My lips are parted, and the sighs
That come and go must surely move;
Or wilt thou evermore despise
And hate me still, who still doth love?

All pleasures and delights are mine,
That love can take or love can give.
Let once thy heart say—"I am thine"
And thou among the gods shalt live.

Alas! what are the gods to me? Alas!
I see him now before me, the face pale
That was so rosy-beautiful, the eyes
Are closed fast, and the quick soul that shone
In every glance, has fled, and restless roams
The gloomy cloisters of the lower world.
And what can Pluto have to do with thee?
Thou son of light, thou child of love and joy,
Ye dark abodes give back, give back my love!
Adonis! O Adonis! Dear Adonis!
Like to my doves will I lament my mate,
And for thy loss be still disconsolate.

H. A. DWYER.

Prosper Mérimée.

AMONG the many remarkable men who headed the poetic renaissance in France in the beginning of the present century, not the least remarkable was Prosper Mérimée. Like his friend Sainte-Beuve, and his younger contemporary Alfred de Musset, he soon deserted the paths of Romanticism, as it is usually known, and in later writings exhibited an ideal of prose fiction, diametrically opposed to that evolved from the fervid impetuous imagination of Victor Hugo, the chief of the Romantic school. Indeed, it is an injustice to that school for the world to have so completely identified the Romantic movement with the work of a poet and dramatist, whose defects and limitations are as striking as his better qualities—defects and limitations too, for which the Romantic movement is in no way to be held accountable. This strange opinion is partly the result of what Gautier has called *Hugolatric*, on the part of the succeeding generation of poets and littérateurs, and partly of that antagonism which Hugo's peculiar faults aroused in his former fellow-Romantics, and which led them to renounce even a connection in name with a writer, whose methods fell so far short of what they considered best worth striving after.

Mérimée was, with de Musset and Sainte-Beuve, one of the most important members of the Cénacle, next to Hugo the chief. Like the two former, he was reproached with reverting to the Classic school, but with as much injustice as in their case. There is no past school to which he clings; he has no master but Stendhal, who was an independent Romantic, nourished upon Italian and English literatures. In the matter of style, Mérimée indeed is Classical, if by that term it is meant that he has a just appreciation of the value of words and an unvarying tact in the use of them, never employing two adjectives where one is sufficiently expressive, and never putting an emotional strain upon a situation beyond its natural content. This characteristic moderation of Mérimée is as obvious in his first writings as in his last. He made his appearance in literature with a volume of prose plays, professedly a translation from the Spanish, the *Théâtre de Clara Gazul*. He thus set the fashion to Victor Hugo and the Cénacle, though it is hard to see wherein they followed his example, except in the choice of Spain as a convenient habitation for the nightmares of their imagination. These plays are dramatic in a sense beyond the interest of situation, which is the only dramatic quality of Dumas and Hugo, as it is of Corneille, Racine and Voltaire. Theatrical pose Mérimée's plays have in a moderate degree only, and depend for their dramatic value upon the only true and abiding interest, the conflict of character. "L'Occasion" is the best example of his peculiar treatment. The scene is laid in a convent in our own time, and the story is of the simplest. There are three prominent characters, two girls, Maria and Francisca, pensionnaires of the convent, and a young priest, tutor and confessor to the school. The priest, who by stress of circumstances has taken orders, but by inclination and temperament is a most ardent cavalier, has formed an attachment for Francisca, the elder of his two pupils, a vain and frivolous young lady, who returns his affection with school-girl readiness. The other, Maria, of melancholic temperament, with a