

also find that he thinks of you with great concern. Yes, he has thought of you ever since the days when you were learning to read, when we who are now approaching our fortieth year were scribbling our first verses to the noise of the cannon which roared over Paris. We, in our study chambers, were not gay at that period. The oldest of us had just gone to the war, and those of us who were obliged to remain at college already felt the duty of our country's rehabilitation press heavily upon us. We often thought of you in that fatal year, 1871. O! young Frenchmen of to-day—all of us who were intending to devote ourselves to literature, my friends and I, repeated the beautiful verses of Théodore de Banville:

Ye in whom I hail the light,
All ye who will love me,
O young men of the coming fight,
O holy battalions!

We wished this dawn of light to be as bright as ours had been gloomy and misty with a vapor of blood. We wished to be worthy of your love, in leaving to you that which we valued more than we valued ourselves. We said that our work was to make of you and for you, by our public and private acts, by our words, by our fervor, and by our example, a new France, a France redeemed from defeat, a France reconstructed in its external and in its internal life. Young as we were then we knew,