

## THE PICTURE.

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### I.

I AM now seventy, and learning something every day ; especially my ignorance. But fifty-two years ago I knew everything, or nearly—I had finished my education. I knew a little Greek and Latin, a very little vernacular, a little mathematics, and a little war: could march a thousand men into a field, and even out of it again—on paper. So I left Paris, and went home to rest on my oars.

Months rolled on ; I still rested on my oars—rested on them so industriously that at last my mother, a very superior woman, took fright at my assiduous inactivity, and bundled me out of the boat.

She had an uncle who loved her, and, indeed, had reared her as a child. She wrote to him, concealing neither her maternal pride nor her maternal anxieties. He replied, "Send the boy here, and if he is anything like you, he shall be my son and successor." He was a notary, and had a good business.

In due course the diligence landed me far from home, at a town in Provence. A boy and an ass were waiting for me. On these beasts of burden I strapped my effects, and the quadruped conducted us by a bridle-road through groves and by purling streams to a range of hills, at whose foot nestled my uncle's villa, lawn, garden, and vineyard. The contrast was admirable. The hills, with their rocky chasms, were bold, grand,