

**IMPERIAL GRANDEUR, OR
THE FAMILY;
FROM SOUVENIRS OF
COUNT ALFRED DE VIGNY**

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Imperial grandeur, or The family; from Souvenirs of Count Alfred de Vigny by Alfred de Vigny

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ALFRED DE VIGNY

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SOUVENIRS OF COUNT ALFRED DE VIGNY

"JETONS L'ŒUVRE À LA MER!"

(LA MER DES MULTITUDES)

1899

Washington

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DEDICATED
TO
AN ENTIRE FAMILY
IN
HEAVEN
AND
ON
EARTH.

PREFACE.

“C'EST LÀ UNE ŒUVRE DIVINE A FAIRE.”

An officer of the Garde-Royale, Alfred-Victor, Comte de Vigny, recorded these Souvenirs after the Revolution of 1830, after twenty years acquaintance with the highest military service.

In literature he then became the personification of that Passive Grandeur he so highly and so justly honored; in marked contrast to the Active Grandeur of the world-renowned Victor Hugo.

Above all men, Victor Hugo recognized the worth of de Vigny; towards the close of the reign of Louis Philippe, his friendship and

firmness made de Vigny a member of the French Academy ; and he would have made him Director or Chancellor of the Academy, so highly did he appreciate the silent grandeur of this man. When he was himself proposed as Director, Hugo declined the honor, saying : " So long as the Academy chooses to keep one of its members 'in the corner' I will keep company with that member."

Not only Victor Hugo, but Lamartine, though much older, and Alfred de Musset looked upon de Vigny as

" L'IDEAL du poëte et des graves penseurs."

" His nobility of thought, winnowed as wheat and refined as purest gold, saves him from the reproach, which has been unjustly thought to rest, upon the technically perfect work of Theophile Gautier."

In our own day, we have seen Ernest Renan, envying the future historian of the Genius of Greece, almost regretting his "Nazarite's vow;" and we contemplate the "Tour d'Ivoire" of Victor de Vigny :

“He will have for his recompense the greatest joy which man can taste; that of following up the evolution of Life in the very centre of the divine egg, within which, life—the life of Honor—first began to palpitate.”

De Vigny himself says, in the greatest of his works :

“NO ONE CAN HASTEN TOO RAPIDLY THE TIME WHEN ARMIES SHALL BE IDENTIFIED WITH NATIONS, IF THE NATIONS DESIRE TO FORWARD THE DAY WHEN ARMIES SHALL BE NO MORE, WHEN UNANIMITY OF SOCIAL FORMS SHALL MAKE THE NATIONS OF THE GLOBE, ONE.”

To nationalize the first of modern armies, even the invincible genius of Von Moltke found necessary, to convince the opposing nation, three decisive wars: that of 1864, (following immediately the death of de Vigny), the war which lost to Denmark, Schleswig-Holstein; that of 1866, which lost, to Austria, the control of Germany; and that of 1870, which lost to France, the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine.

The French Republic, born in anguish, with