JULES VALLES AND THE SOCIAL ROLE OF LITERATURE
AN ASSESSMENT OF INTENTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENT

Thesis submitted by Pamela M. Moores for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Arts, University of Leicester, 1977.
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PART ONE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter I</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vallès and Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter II</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Antipathy to Literature?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter III</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature and Truth - The Rejection of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romanticism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter IV</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature and Truth - Vallès and Realism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter V</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Positive Rôle of Literature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter VI</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vallès versus the Naturalists: Political</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment in Literature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter VII</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Primacy of Literature: Vallès'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchy of Genres</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PART TWO</strong></td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section A. Vallès the Realist, a Writer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>without Imagination?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter VIII</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vallès' Autobiographical Writer?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter IX</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure in all but the Autobiographical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or Factual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter X</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Imaginative and Rebellious Style</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter XI</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vallès Realist?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section B. Vallès' Contribution to Social</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Political Awareness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter XII</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Journalist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter XIII</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Poet, Dramatist and Novelist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter XIV</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genuine Socialist or Opportunist?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conclusion</strong></td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bibliography</strong></td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FOREWORD

Throughout the text references will be drawn in general from "Les Oeuvres complètes de Jules Vallès", edited by Lucien Scheler, published by Les Editeurs Français Réunis, Paris, 1950-73 (15 vols) and designated throughout as O.C..

I have adopted the following numbering in referring to the different volumes of the complete works (this being the order in which the works are generally listed by the publishers):

I. L'Enfant, Jacques Vingtras I, preface by Lucien Scheler, 1964
V. La Rue à Londres, preface and notes by L. Scheler, 1951.
VI. Le Cri du Peuple, Février 1848 à Mai 1871, preface and notes by L. Scheler, 1970.
VII. Les Réfractaires, preface by René Lacôte, and notes by L. Scheler, 1955.
IX. Correspondance avec Hector Malot, preface and notes by Marie-Claire Bancquart, 1968.
X. La Rue, preface and notes by Pierre Pillu, 1969.
XI. Littérature et Révolution, Recueil de Textes Littéraires, preface and notes by Roger Bellet, 1969.


XV. Correspondance avec Séverine, preface and notes by L. Scheler, 1972.

In 1975 the first volume of an edition of Vallès' works, covering the period 1857-70, was published by Gallimard in the Bibliothèque de la Pléiade collection. Part of the text of 'L'Argent', also 'Le Testament d'un Blagueur', and many newspaper articles not included in the E.F.R. edition are reproduced here. This will be designated as Pléiade I.

Finally, where it is necessary to refer to texts not included in either of these editions but reproduced in the following less scholarly edition: Jules Vallès, Oeuvres complètes, 4 vols, Éditeurs Français Réunis et Livre Club Diderot, Paris, 1969-70, then I shall refer to this edition using the abbreviation LCD.

Many of Vallès' articles are not included anywhere in these editions of his "complete works". In such cases no page reference is given and the article in question may be consulted in the "Bibliothèque Nationale", the "Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal", the "Bibliothèque Spoelberch de Lovenjoul" at Chantilly, or in the archives of "Le Progrès de Lyon".

Where the author's name is not stated in a footnote, it may be assumed that reference is made to Vallès' work.
INTRODUCTION

Born in Le Puy, 11 June 1832, from his very earliest years Jules Vallès was inspired by the spirit of rebellion. His parents were of peasant origin but had risen to the ranks of the lower middle classes by virtue of Louis Valiez\(^1\) profession as teacher. Jules, however, preferring the company of his cousins on the land, rebelled against their social aspirations. He rebelled too against the repressive regime he encountered both at home and at school. In February 1848 he welcomed the revolution enthusiastically, setting up a republican club together with friends in Nantes. Although his hopes were disappointed by the turn of events in June, it was with great expectations that he set out for Paris on 23 September 1848 to pursue his education in that famous city of revolt. In March 1851 he demonstrated against the ban on Michelet's lectures, and in June of the same year he and friends conspired to kidnap Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte, though they failed to carry out their plan. On the occasion of Louis-Napoleon's 'coup', 2 December 1851, he tried desperately to rally a resistance movement, but once again to no avail. In June and again in July 1853 he plotted unsuccessfully against the life of Napoleon III, only to earn himself several weeks' imprisonment in Mazas (21 July - 30 August 1853). In the following years, despite the strict censorship, his revolt was channelled into controversial journalism, attacking conventionalism and also the repression of the Second Empire. Finally the events of 1871 brought him the opportunity to live out his revolutionary commitment to the full as member of the "Comité central républicain des vingt arrondissements" and of the

1. In different documents Gaston Gille (Jules Vallès 1832-1885, Ses révoltes, sa maîtrise, son prestige, Flammarion, 1941, p.2, n.3) found several different spellings of the family surname: Vallet, Vales, Valles, Valez, Vallez, Vallès. On Jules' birth certificate his name is spelt "Valles", but his father always signed as "Vallez".
Commune, as editor of "Le Cri du Peuple", and also fighting alongside fellow Parisians at the barricades. This was the climactic point of his career as a rebel.

This rebellion, however, was also manifest throughout his life in his attitude to literature, which, as we shall see, was often surprisingly negative considering that he himself was to earn his living by his pen. He attacked the classics and also much respected contemporaries such as Baudelaire and Hugo and was indifferent to, if not delighted with, his alienation of the literary establishment. He himself was torn between literary aspirations and revolutionary politics, and resolved this conflict finally in calling for a literary revolution introducing literature which might serve as a source of social and political enlightenment and symbol of revolt. He had strong feelings about the kind of literature he liked and the rôle he felt it should perform, and these are expressed in his journalism, in his personal correspondence with fellow journalists, particularly during his period in exile in London (1871-9) and Brussels (1879-80), and also in his creative writing. My aim in this thesis is to ascertain whether or not he was able or even determined to put into practice the ideals he preached. The thesis falls naturally, therefore, into two parts, discussing firstly his explicit expression of ideas, and secondly their manifestation in practice. However, I certainly would not wish to suggest that the formulation of ideas always preceded their realization (or otherwise) in his writing. On the contrary, as we shall see in Part Two, in some instances one senses that Vallès' attitudes stem from the discovery of and generalization from his own limitations.

For biographical information I myself have relied upon the works of Ulysse Rouchon, Gaston Gille, Henri Guillemin, Lucien
Scheler, Marie-Claire Bancquart, Roger Bellet, and Gérard Delfau, confining my research to study of Vallès' writing itself. Therefore I have no intention of reproducing here information which has been repeated so often elsewhere. However, on the point of Vallès' biography, I have observed that many biographers, Gaston Gille included, talk of Jules Vallès and the hero of his trilogy, Jacques Vingtras, as if they were one and the same, making no distinction between truly factual evidence and insights deduced from "fictional" works. The experiences of Jacques Vingtras and of his predecessor Ernest Pitou have been directly attributed to the author himself. This practice is invited by the choice of the name Jacques Vingtras, closely resembling Jules Vallès, with the constant initials J.V. and the pattern of a monosyllabic Christian name followed by the duosyllabic surname. The relationship between Vallès' biography and his "fiction" will be discussed at a later stage in this thesis, but certainly the two do not coincide absolutely. However, in its broad outlines, in the general configuration of characters, places and events, Jacques Vingtras' life resembles Vallès' own, and more significantly, his attitudes faithfully reflect those of the author. Therefore, following in the footsteps of Gille, I too shall draw upon descriptions and statements from Vallès' creative writing in order to supplement the portrait of his life and attitudes furnished

1. Full details of these works may be found in the bibliography at the end of this thesis.
2. Also the central character of "Le Candidat des Pauvres".
3. See G. Gille, op. cit. This is the most comprehensive account of Vallès' life and works to date. Not all biographers have adopted this approach, however. Ulysse Rouchon in "La Vie Bruyante de Jules Vallès" (Saint-Étienne, Région illustrée, 1935-37), sets out to establish the historical facts of Vallès' existence, and purposely avoids relying on the evidence of the trilogy.
4. Central character of "Le Testament d'un Blagueur", a "feuilleton" published in 1869 and clearly prefiguring the trilogy.
5. The similarity between the two names has led to the general adoption of the pronunciation of the final 's' in "Vingtras" so as to mirror the pronunciation of "Vallès".
by factual evidence. However, in order that the reader be able to distinguish fact from supposition, I shall endeavour always to state clearly the source of my information.¹

¹ References will often be made to "Souvenirs d'un Etudiant pauvre" (O.C. XIV). The subtitle of this work is "Mémoires Vrais", and here Vallès writes openly about himself not about Vingtras. Therefore, this is relatively reliable information (though this point will be discussed in greater detail in Part Two).
PART ONE

CHAPTER I. VALLES AND EDUCATION

A brief study of Vallès' attitudes to education is indispensable to an understanding of his attitude to literature, for the close relationship of literature and education is undeniable. Literature is the attribute of an educated society, and access even to its lowest forms is dependent upon a certain measure of educational achievement - on the ability to read and write. Furthermore, attitudes to literature are to a great extent determined by the nature of the education one receives, and the manner in which literature is first presented to a reader. This is also a matter of particular interest in Vallès' case since he himself attached such importance to the subject. It is one of the principal themes of his work, re-explored in innumerable newspaper articles throughout his career, and central also to the trilogy and other autobiographical works. In March 1871, when elected to the Commune, he became a member of the Commission for Education. Throughout his life problems of education were to preoccupy him to an almost obsessional degree, and so we must look to his formative years in search of an explanation for this deep concern.

From the age of five to seven (1837-39) Vallès attended a small infants' school in Le Puy, run by a Mlle. Labre. Between hours of formal schooling the children played happily in an attractive garden which Vallès was later to recall as a miniature paradise. Mlle. Labre and her niece, Emma, provided him with the warmth, love and maternal affection which his home had lacked. For him these

were happy years.\textsuperscript{1} However, in the autumn of 1839 he was transferred to the Collège royal du Puy. Our introduction to the college in "L'Enfant" leaves no doubt as to his unfavourable reaction to this dark, damp institution.\textsuperscript{2} From 1841 to 1845 he attended the Collège de Saint-Etienne, and from 1846 to 1848 the Collège royal de Nantes, his education being interrupted because his father's career as a teacher obliged him to move from one town to another in order to obtain promotion. In September 1848 Jules was sent to a boarding-school run by a M. Lemeignan\textsuperscript{3} in the faubourg Saint-Honoré in Paris. Pupils of the school attended the well-known Lycée Bonaparte, where many important figures of the period such as Gustave Planche, Alexandre Dumas, Sainte-Beuve, Hippolyte Taine, Prévost-Paradol and Eugène Sue were educated. Impressed by the illustrious academic reputation of this institution, Vallès' parents hoped he would pass his "baccalauréat" and prepare for entry to the Ecole Normale, but after a somewhat unsuccessful year\textsuperscript{4} he was recalled to Nantes to continue his studies under his parents' watchful eye.

It is obvious from Vallès' descriptions of his schooldays that, except for his years at infants' school, he was never happy in any educational institution. In the provinces in particular, not only were the school buildings themselves hostile and oppressive with their long bare corridors, their dark narrow staircases, and the putrid atmosphere which so often emanated from inadequate

\textsuperscript{1} My knowledge of this relationship is based on an early draft of "L'Enfant" to be found in one of Vallès' notebooks now in the possession of Lucien Scheler. This draft relates the experiences of a figure Ernest (N.B. affinity to Ernest Pitou of "Le Testament d'un Blagueur"), whose existence mirrors Vallès' own. The child's close physical relationship with Mile. Labre and, more particularly, with her niece is described, and a vivid impression of the happy carefree atmosphere of the school is evoked, thus affording an insight into an area of Vallès' childhood only fleetingly mentioned elsewhere (cf. O.C. X, pp.69-70, and "Mon Pays," L'Auvergnat, 14 Nov. 1867).

\textsuperscript{2} See O.C. I, p.40.

\textsuperscript{3} Referred to as Legnagna in the trilogy.

\textsuperscript{4} See below pp. 13-14.
sanitary facilities, but the rigorous discipline and brutal severity of some teachers was also reminiscent of a prison or barracks. Certainly for Vallès school seems to have been an interminable sequence of detentions and punishments. As a child he was forced to sit silently beside his father's desk until all lessons were over - twelve hours of silence and boredom every day! Vingtras talks of school as an enforced drudgery from which he longs to be free:-

"Je suis gai de nature; j'aime à rire et j'ai la rate qui va en éclater quelquefois! Quand je peux échapper aux pensums, éviter le séquestre, être loin du pion ou du professeur, je saute comme un gros chien, j'ai des gaiétés de nègre."

The teaching method itself was repressive. Lessons were dictated, memorized and reproduced with little or no opportunity for critical dialogue. Pupils were not encouraged to think for themselves, use their imagination or cultivate originality, but simply to accept, respect and imitate. Vingtras is reproached by Legnagna for exercising his individuality: "Il ne faut pas mettre du 'vôtre', je vous dis: il faut imiter les anciens." It is when he pieces together extracts from the classics and composes his homework by what he considers to be fraudulent means, "par le retapage et le ressemelage, par le mensonge et le vol," that he receives his master's praise and is reassured: "Vous n'êtes au collège que pour cela, pour mâcher et remâcher ce qui a été mâché par les autres." Vallès' disgust is apparent in the choice of

2. See Vallès' portrayal of Turfin (in reality Laurent), O.C. I, pp.153 and 156.
3. The analogy of the school to a prison or barracks recurs throughout Vallès' works. See, for example, O.C. I, p.40; "Les Lycées," La France, 4 Aug. 1882, O.C. XIII, pp.149-53; and "Le Tableau de Paris," La France, 16 March 1883, O.C. XIII, p.313.
4. O.C. I, p.158.
5. O.C. I, p.276.
6. ibid., p.256.
7. loc. cit.
so unpleasant an image. Rather than developing the intellect, this was a degrading and futile process whereby one was pumped with information, which was to be mechanically digested and reproduced on demand. Success was judged purely in terms of examination achievement, and the annual prize-giving was one of the major events of the school year. To Vallès, however, even as a child, such success was meaningless,¹ for, as he observed, all that the system required was a good memory, the ability to parrot.² He could take no pride in supposed educational achievement when he felt that he had in no way benefited from the exercise.³

This leads on to discussion of another cause of his discontent — the curriculum. Secondary education in France in this period still focused on the classics, and there was much resistance within the University to expansion and modernisation of the curriculum.⁴ Vallès complains continually of the manner in which science, maths and practical subjects were neglected,⁵ whilst studies centred on the intricacies of Greek and Latin verbs and works of Virgil, Homer and other classical writers, whom he considered irrelevant to the nineteenth century. Evidently Vallès' teachers never attempted a sensitive literary appreciation of such texts. Indeed, as Vallès later points out,⁶ few pupils understood what they were reading at all, and they were certainly not in a position to appreciate such texts as works of art. They were simply the basis for repetitious exercises and learning material for exams.

Thus Vallès' education failed to awaken in him any general cultural interest or awareness. He jokes about this in "L'Enfant":

1. See O.C. XIV, p.45.
3. See O.C. XIV, p.112.
4. P. Gerbod (op. cit.) traces the fate of the traditional curriculum from the early nineteenth century up to 1880, the persistent requests for reform, and the resistance which they encountered.
when on rainy Sundays Vingtras is taken to a museum by Matoussaint, he shows little gratitude and remains unmoved:

"'On apprend toujours quelque chose', dit Matoussaint, en entrant dans les galeries.
'On apprend quoi?
- Tu contempses les tableaux, les marbres!
- Et après?""1

Vingtras evidently sees little point in contemplating inert objects.

It is possible that literature and the arts might have received a more intelligent and sensitive treatment had Vallès been educated in a well-known Parisian establishment, rather than a series of provincial schools. As it is, however, when he did have the opportunity to attend lectures at the famous Lycée Bonaparte, he benefited very little from the experience,2 mainly no doubt because he was living in the Lemeignan boarding-school. There he was unable to overcome the social barriers which separated him, a provincial, from his elegant Parisian companions. His coarse country dialect and his unashamed admission of his rustic origins were a public embarrassment to the headmaster.3 Moreover, this was a cramming institution, which laid particular stress on examination success. Vallès had been accepted as a boarder at a reduced rate in the expectation that he would bring the school publicity by an outstanding performance in the "Concours Général".4 He had come to Paris keen to learn more about great contemporary figures such as Hugo, Barbier, Balzac and Alphonse Karr, only to find himself amongst contemptible "bêtes de concours" who did not share his interest or enthusiasm.5 For Vallès the only point in winning a

1. O.C. I, p.281.
2. Nonetheless his description of his teachers in Paris is far more sympathetic than that of their provincial counterparts (see "Chronique parisienne," La Situation, 26 Jan. 1868, Pléiade I, pp.1031-5).
4. Gerbod (op. cit., pp.85 and 111) denounces the "Concours Général", and in particular the then current practice of recruiting pupils from the provinces and coaching them at the expense of other pupils, in the hope that they might bring their sponsors favourable publicity.
5. See O.C. XIV, p.56.
prize would have been to pay his debt to the school and relieve himself of a humiliating obligation.\textsuperscript{1} However, when he failed to produce the expected prizes, he was met by the hate and contempt of his masters, and was dispatched to the provinces in disgrace. His year in Paris brought humiliation not enlightenment. The experience only served to increase his resentment of the educational system.

Another factor which exacerbated Vallès' resentment was the suffering which the system caused his father. In the summer of 1833 Louis Valiez lost his post at a state-school in Le Puy, when the Principal declared himself dissatisfied with his performance. He was obliged to work for several years in a private school for the deaf and dumb, for though he applied repeatedly to return to his post, for some unknown reason the Rector of Clermont had informed the Minister that it would be advisable to postpone his reinstatement.\textsuperscript{2} In the late thirties he obtained temporary posts within the state system, but not until 1840 with his move to Saint-Étienne did he gain a permanent post. Vallès was to experience early in life the tyrannical power of the University.

However, his father's humiliations were not yet at an end. In 1845, although successful in the written part of the "agrégation", he was not admitted on account of his performance in the oral. Not until the summer of 1846 was he finally successful. However, even the "agrégation" did not give a teacher security. Paul Gerbod describes the precarious and subservient position of a schoolmaster during this period.\textsuperscript{3} His livelihood depended on his not offending those in power, and he was obliged to be modest and discreet, to move only in respectable circles, to maintain a

\textsuperscript{1} See Vingtras' comments O.C. I, p.287.
\textsuperscript{2} See G. Gille, op. cit., p.3. N.B. Gille's information on Louis Valiez' career is not entirely correct and must be checked against the more recent research of R. Bellet (Pléiade I, Chronologie, pp.XXXVII-LVII).
\textsuperscript{3} Gerbod, op. cit., p.51.
position of neutrality in all religious and political disputes, and to lead a life of exemplary religious conduct and self-restraint. Louis Valiez' position was far from secure. Between 1849 and 1853, while he was teaching in Nantes, different inspectors submitted several unfavourable reports on his work. Clearly it was necessary for him to tread carefully.

Young Vallès suffered bitterly at the sight of his father's self-effacement and enforced subservience. Particularly in Le Puy when, as "pion", his father was on the bottom rung of the hierarchy, he found the family's humiliations intolerable. In "L'Enfant" the family are shown to be the victims of gross injustices. When Jacques retaliates against the attacks of a teacher's son, the child's mother exclaims in outrage, "Si maintenant les fils de pion assassinent les fils de professeur!", and it is Jacques who is punished by the headmaster, whose first concern is to preserve the hierarchy. Jacques is also obliged to look on helplessly as the older boys make fun of his father. It is not surprising that Vallès rebelled against a profession which so degraded and humiliated his father. He longed for dignity and self-respect:

"Et j'en étais arrivé, les paupières rougies, le coeur gonflé, à me dire qu'il valait bien mieux devenir ébéniste, comme mon oncle Joseph, porter le bourgeron et être son maître ... qu'être comme mon père, un professeur esclave et misérable, dans une redingote mal faite, dont le proviseur surveillait la trame et comptait les taches, comme il surveillait les gestes, espionnait les paroles et flairait les pas de ses subalternes."4

Yet out of loyalty to his father he was obliged to suppress his contempt for the teaching profession, this only aggravating his inner resentment.

1. See G. Gille, op. cit., p.22.
2. See O.C. I, p.70.
4. O.C. XIV, p.41.
5. See O.C. XIV, p.45, and also "Notes et Croquis," Le Réveil, 29 May 1882, O.C. VI, p.269. As Vallès was warned, to betray his father in this manner would have been a form of parricide.
When Vallès failed his "baccalauréat" or failed to gain a place at the Ecole Normale, not only was he disappointing his family's expectations, but he was also compromising his father in a professional capacity. His confessions in "Souvenirs d'un Etudiant pauvre" suggest that he himself cared little whether he passed his examinations or not, but his family made him suffer in his failure, and his hatred of the educational system reached almost obsessional proportions, as a violent inner conflict arose between his personal rejection of the system, and yet his need to conform to it for his father's sake.

It has often been suggested, particularly in the aftermath of the Commune, that Vallès' condemnation of the prevailing educational system was simply a jealous and petty reaction against a process which had branded him a failure. Ferdinand Brunetière designates "haine" and "impuissance" as Vallès' prime motivating forces. Narcisse Blanpain declares, "cette énigme a deux mots: impuissance et découragement, misère et envie haineuse", whilst Paul Bourget stresses the dominance of Vallès' pride, which made him unable to accept failure.

Undoubtedly Vallès' failure in his "bac" embittered him. However, this does not invalidate his genuine and pertinent criticisms of the system. He himself had shone consistently in school, winning numerous prizes for his excellent performances in Greek and Latin at a time when excellence in the classics was the ultimate

1. Vallès first failed his "bac" at Rennes in April and again in August 1850. In 1851 he tried again but without success. Finally in late April 1852 he was successful, though there are suggestions that this was due to the intervention of Arthur Arnould's father, Edmond, a lecturer at the Sorbonne. (See Vallès' letter to A. Arnould, 26 March 1852, O.C. IV, pp.31-2, and L. Scheler's introductory comments, p.23).
achievement. Science and mathematics were looked down upon as secondary subjects for those of lesser intelligence, and were scorned by pupils of Vallès' calibre, yet it was his ignorance of mathematics and the sciences that was to be the cause of his failure in his "bac". Moreover, once he left school and began to move in the working world, he discovered that it was these subjects he would have found most useful. Hence his bitter resentment of the lack of practical bias in his education and the undue emphasis placed on the classics.

Certainly there is an element of personal pique in his criticisms, but it would be unjust to suggest that he had been regarded as a failure throughout his years of schooling.

In any event a sense of personal failure would not ordinarily be considered sufficient to explain Vallès' obsessional preoccupation with education. He himself points out, "Balzac n'était pas bachelier, Victor Hugo n'est pas, Zola non plus." Yet they did not remain obsessed with the theme of education for the rest of their lives. Others may not have relished their schooldays. Champfleury is an interesting case in point. Clearly he did not enjoy Latin and Greek any more than Vallès:

"Virgile détermina la catastrophe: 'Tityre, tu patulae recubans' fut ma ruine. En vertu de quelle loi il fallait scanner les vers latins d'une certaine manière, c'est ce que mon cerveau se refusait à concevoir. 'Brèves, longues, césure, élisions', autant de mots de cabale. Les X, les =, les ::, les 'sinus' et les 'cosinus' géométriques ne me semblaient pas plus rébarbatifs que les élogues dont la douceur était cachée par cette damnée prosodie".

When he returned to his school in Laon in later years, his memories

2. See O.C. XIV, p.65.
3. ibid., pp.66-8.
4. Vallès complains also of the highly abstract manner in which even mathematics was approached (See O.C. I, pp.261-2 and O.C. XIV, p.67).
were unpleasant, but for him this was a sad rather than a traumatic experience. Vallès, however, after a visit to Le Puy in 1884, admitted that although he had returned to the town on many previous occasions, he had always been so overwhelmed with fear at the sight of the school that he had never even dared approach the building. Not until 1884 was he able to summon the courage to explore the scenes of his childhood shame and humiliation. Moreover, Champfleury recovers from his grievances and later comes to regret what he has missed in his youth:

" Certainement, le pédant ne savait pas présenter dépouillé de sa cire le miel virgilien que je regrette aujourd'hui de ne pas avoir savouré dans ma jeunesse."

He admits the "douceur" of the eclogues, even if he had not appreciated them in his youth. Attacked by the critics for his deficiencies in French grammar, he wishes that he had profited more from his schooldays. Vallès, however, continues to recall his education with unalloyed bitterness.

It was suggested above that Monsieur Valiez' suffering exacerbated Jules' resentment. This would not have affected him so deeply had there not been so intense and complex a relationship between his father and himself. In "L'Enfant" Jacques' attitude to his father is one of fear and resentment, mingled with feelings of pity and guilt. He fears him because he has the power to make his life a misery both at home and at school, yet pities him as a companion in suffering, shamed and humiliated both by his wife and son, and by his superiors within the teaching profession.

2. See "En Province," Le Cri du Peuple, 1 Sept. 1884.
3. Champfleury, op. cit., p.34.
4. See passage quoted above, p.17
6. See above, p.14
7. Jacques shames his father by his examination failure (see above p.16 note 1), whilst Madame Vingtras' eccentricities are clearly the cause of frequent public embarrassment (See O.C.I, pp.211-12 and 235-9).
He regards his cowardly subservience with scorn and repugnance, yet cannot suppress a sense of guilt at entertaining such feelings towards his own father. Mutual feelings of deep affection and yet intense affliction render Jacques and his father incapable of normal communication. In the first half of "L'Enfant", M. Vingtras scarcely appears, and it is Jacques' mother who dictates the relationship between father and son. Every attempt at a "rapprochement" between them results in awkward scenes verging on the farcical.¹ The climactic point is reached when Jacques, wounded in a duel, fought on his father's behalf, is sought by the police on his father's instigation. Learning of his son's courageous fight, M. Vingtras is overwhelmed with guilt and gratitude, and confides in his wife the love he feels for his son but cannot express. Jacques overhears this confession, and is overjoyed. Each party is now conscious of the other's affection, yet they must part, for M. Vingtras realises that as long as they remain together, they will continue to hurt one another. Once again his wife acts as intermediary imparting his farewell, for he cannot face his son.² His profession has obliged him to act as a bully and suppress any natural manifestation of tender emotions.³

Father and son part sadly, acutely conscious of their love, but unable to express it. Vallès held the teaching profession responsible for this. It had made of his father a bitter and pathetic figure. Moreover, it was the importance his parents attached to education which was one of the prime causes of the breakdown in family relationships. His parents' families were of peasant origin, but his father's ambition and perseverance is pursuing a career as a teacher had allowed the family to rise to middle-class status, even if only to the lower ranks of the middle classes.

¹. See O.C. I, pp.76-9, 92-3 and 320.
². See O.C. I, p.343.
³. See Jacques' comments, O.C. I, p.343.
Jules' parents were proud of this, and expected their one and only surviving son to live up to his father's example. Mme. Valiez cultivated bourgeois prejudices and considered herself superior to the working-classes. Jules, however, was attracted by the simple life of the peasants and was at his happiest in their company. This was the class to which he instinctively and traditionally belonged, and he resented the manner in which his education and his parents' aspirations set him apart. As suggested in the trilogy, they looked upon education as an instrument of social ascension; Vingtras comments, "... ma mère me fait donner de l'éducation, elle ne veut pas que je sois un campagnard comme elle." He, however, reacted defiantly, thwarting their intentions with his declaration of his determination to become a manual worker. This was evidently the cause of a great rift in the Vallès household. In the trilogy, after his father's death, Jacques thinks wistfully of how happy the family might have been, had his parents not entertained such aspirations: "J'aurais été un beau paysan! Nous nous serions bien aimés tous les trois, le père, la mère et le garçon!"

In "Le Candidat des Pauvres", he repeats the same lament:

"Un grand arbre est non loin de la tombe, comme il y en avait un devant la masure où il est né ... Ah! que n' est-il resté autour de la masure! ... Il n'aurait pas eu nos tristesses, je n'aurais pas mes colères ..."

1. Mme. Valiez gave birth to seven children within eight and a half years, but five of these children died at a very early age. Marie-Louise-Julie, the only surviving child apart from Jules, although she lived into her late teens, spent much of her time in a lunatic asylum. In these circumstances, it is understandable that Jules' parents pinned all their hopes on him.
2. Her prejudices are reflected in the attitudes of Mme. Vingtras, O.C. I, pp.25, 91 and 106.
5. O.C. I, p.68.
8. O.C. XIV, p.143.
Vallès' reaction against the education of the day was in part a reaction against a symbol of social ascension, an ascension which he felt had been the root cause of his family's misery. Indeed, as we shall see in the course of further discussion, class factors inspire many of his judgements and opinions.

Certainly, it would be wrong to conclude that Vallès was in principle opposed to education. On the contrary, he asserted its importance most vehemently:

"L'Education de l'enfant! - Ah tout dépend de là; l'honneur et le bonheur! la vie des nations et la vie des hommes, la santé du monde!"

This was why he was so angered by what he felt to be the University's total failure to recognize its true mission. His criticisms were directed purely against the system of the day, which in his view interpreted education in too narrow, elitist and academic a sense:

"... il s'agit de l'instruction d'un peuple, et non de la joie des lettrés, d'une nation à qui l'on enseigne à vivre, non d'une famille de délicats, que l'on renseigne ou qu'on distraît."

No attempt was made to develop the individual's personality, or endow him with a sense of purpose as a useful member of society. Young people were channelled through a highly formalized and repressive system which gave them little or no preparation for life and acted simply as a recruiting body for the middle-class professions, giving social cachet to those who won its approval.

2. Le Progrès de Lyon, 17 Oct. 1864, Pléiade I, p.413. (N.B. several of Vallès' articles in "Le Progrès de Lyon" are reproduced by "Les Editeurs Français Réunis" in "Littérature et Révolution" (O.C. XI), but I shall refer always to their appearance in the Pléiade edition, since this includes almost all Vallès' contributions to the paper, excluding only his articles of 26 Sept. and 3 Oct. 1864. I shall not reproduce the titles of these articles, for all appeared under the general heading "Variétés," qualified by the title "Les Romans nouveaux", "Les Livres nouveaux" or "Les Poètes nouveaux", according to the particular subject of the review.
In "Les Réfractaires", Vallès exposed the tragic fate of those who, in their desire to fulfil individualistic artistic or intellectual aspirations, opted out of the conventional progression through the system and on to the liberal professions. Once they ceased to conform to this pattern, their education proved a hindrance rather than an asset, setting them apart from working people, yet, on account of its highly abstract nature, failing to offer any alternative means of earning a living.

Vallès regarded the University as an introspective, self-perpetuating body. A "bachelier" was not qualified to do anything but regurgitate for others what he himself had had to memorize:

"Il ne sait rien le pauvre diable, qu'un peu de latin et de grec, qu'il vendra au mois, à l'heure sous forme de leçons. Où les trouver?"¹

"Le Bachelier" takes up this theme, as its dedication suggests:

"A ceux qui nourris de grec et de latin sont morts de faim, je dédie ce livre."² Vallès summarized the central thesis of the work as follows: "C'est farce et sottise, on n'est qu'un blagueur d'espérer VIVRE SUR SON EDUCATION."³ Experience had shown him that, whatever the schools like to imagine, achievement in the academic sphere bore little relation to a person's success in the outside world,⁴ for education was not orientated towards the needs of contemporary society.

The whole introspective and repressive academic world needed opening up. A confirmed empiricist, Vallès rejected the value of abstract knowledge, divorced from practical experience. It was for this reason that he put his faith in the masses rather than

¹. O.C. VII, p.31.
². O.C. II, p.21.
³. O.C. IX, p.348. (N.B. The statement is made with reference to "Mémoires d'un Révolté", an early title given to "Le Bachelier")
⁴. See Vallès' ironic comments in the first few lines of "Le Bachelier", O.C. II, p.23.
academic elites. Since learning was, in his view, an integral part of living, and vice versa, it was counterproductive to isolate children within the academic atmosphere of the "internat." A lack of liberty was, in his view, conducive to vice and corruption, and confinement was necessarily harmful:

"Toute agglomération crée le vice, comme tout tas le fumier; ... c'est la faute de l'emprisonnement: les idées et les sens s'y dessèchent et s'y pourrissent."

Also, as the system stood, members of the University were ill-equipped to provide the stimulus necessary for the education of young people, as they themselves were allowed so little freedom and were wary of speaking out of turn:

"... il faut façonner les esprits et élever les âmes, c'est-à-dire y faire passer le meilleur de soi-même, ses idées et ses convictions. C'est, je l'ai dit, ce que ne peuvent même essayer les universitaires, par cette raison seule qu'ils sont de l'université."

The obvious solution was to dismantle the hierarchical and monopolistic University, and to encourage learning within a broader sphere.

The basic philosophy underlying formal education as it existed, demanded thorough revision. Vallès had faith in the human being's innate curiosity and felt that education should exploit his ability to discover for himself:

"Voyons simplement le gamin tel qu'il est à l'âge de l'école tout insouciant et tout heureux ... Il est curieux comme un singe qui veut toucher à tout. Il faudrait le jeter en pleine nature, debout, l'oeil ouvert et la main tendue ...
Au lieu de cela on l'emprisonne dans un bâtiment noir,

1. See his comments in "L'Armée sociale," Le Cri du Peuple, 14 May 1884 (O.C. VI, p.367): "En matière de science économique un cuistre est plus ignorant qu'un ouvrier, un normalien plus sot qu'un ébéniste ... le malheur a fait l'éducation des foules ... ce blousier est devenu par force un réfléchi et un penseur." See also comments in similar vein, O.C. XIII, p.125.

2. In his article "L'Education," Le Cri du Peuple, 8 Feb. 1884, he reflects that Michelet could never have been such a great man, had he been an "interne". Contact with his family and the outside world allowed him to retain a vitality and a humanitarian morality which an "internat" would have suppressed.


où il ne peut pas pousser des fleurs, où on le punira s'il enferme des hannetons dans son pupitre, s'il élève des vers à soie derrière ses dictionnaires de langue morte, s'il cache quelque part un oiseau tombé d'un nid. Mais en soignant des cocons et en regardant des hannetons compter les écus, on penserait à apprendre comment se fait la soie avec les mangeurs de mûrier, et comment se défait la récolte avec les mangeurs de feuilles. Voir vivre un oiseau, ce serait plus humain que d'apprendre une homélie de Chrysostome ou que d'apprendre le petit Carême de Massillon!" 1

Rather than stimulating natural curiosity and encouraging the creative urge, however, the rigidity and dogmatism of the prevailing system suppressed originality and spontaneous self-expression. Indeed, Vallès asserted:

"... il est aussi difficile au sortir du collège d'être entier et personnel qu'il est difficile de sortir enthousiaste ou naïf du bagne!" 2

All individuality was stifled: "Pour être 'quelque chose', on est empêché d'être 'quelqu'un'." 3 Pedantry alone was rewarded.

Intent on preserving liberty and individuality within the educational as in the political sphere, Vallès rebelled. To the present-day reader, it is apparent that the ideals he expresses prefigure the trend of recent developments in education. Less emphasis is placed on discipline and formal learning, and more on personal initiative, free self-expression and the natural processes of discovery. For this reason one tends to sympathize with his criticisms, and consider him progressive. However, his resentment of the education system was so strong that he took his rebellion to irrational extremes. In the coming chapter, we shall see how the grievances which he harbourd were of such an obsessional nature, that he became narrow and bigoted in his attitudes to literature and culture which he looked upon as the property of the "educated".

CHAPTER II. AN ANTIPATHY TO LITERATURE?

On studying Vallès' attitude to literature, one is struck by the frequency of highly negative reactions on his part. This is surprising in a man who spent virtually all his life earning money by his pen. In this chapter we shall examine some of his negative statements seeking to explain their origins and to situate them in the context of his attitude to literature in general.

Evidently Vallès did not regard literature as inherently sacred and unassailable. He had little respect for "belles-lettres" as Vingtras' undignified literary exploits reveal. While working for a dictionary Vingtras has no qualms in inventing literary quotations and attributing them to well-known authors in order to spare himself time-consuming research. He revels in flaunting his knowledge of the classics in the rather inappropriate task of composing circus posters. In return for a fee he willingly composes a poem intended to destroy his client's enemies, or interweaves his account of a "première" with an advertisement for overcoats. He even collects puns for money. Clearly he is more akin to Etienne Lousteau than to d'Arthez. For him there is no such thing as literary integrity, and he is undisturbed by the knowledge that he is tampering with the nation's literary heritage.

1. The years 1860-65 constitute the only period of Vallès' working life when he earned his living other than by his pen. From 1860 until late 1862 he worked as a clerk in the town hall registry of Vaugirard. Towards the end of 1862 he took leave from this post and became a "pion" in the college at Caen, but in the spring of 1863 he was dismissed. He delayed his return to the registry at Vaugirard in order to prepare his "licence de lettres" but failed the exam, and, therefore, returned in September to his former post, where he remained until early 1865.

His letters from exile indicate a willingness to apply himself to any task in order to earn a living, but in fact he managed to eke out a living through his writing without resorting to any other trad

3. ibid., p.253.
4. ibid., p.344.
5. ibid., p.302.
6. ibid., p.349.
7. As we shall see below, however, Vallès was not willing to compromise his political beliefs in his writing.
Vallès had little respect for writers either and exposed with contempt the pretentiousness of elitist literary circles, the "cénacles", and their cults of well-known authors.¹ As a socialist and egalitarian he was offended by the manner in which they held themselves aloof, considering themselves superior to the people.

Although the position of literature underwent considerable change in the nineteenth century, as the advent of the industrial revolution brought about a vast increase in the size of the reading public,² and an increasing number of publications appeared on the market, the differences in the literary and cultural background of different social classes were still marked. Although workers may have read the popular daily newspapers and their "feuilletons", they could not afford to purchase their own copies of the classics, nor had they the leisure-time to enjoy them. Above all, however, they lacked the education necessary to tackle such works. We have already discussed Vallès' resentment of the insurmountable barrier placed between himself and ordinary manual workers by his education. As long as the majority of serious literature remained inaccessible to the masses, and thus distanced educated young men like himself from them, he was bound to regard literature with suspicion, for it was an instrument of social stratification, exerting an inherently conservative force, perpetuating and even exacerbating the gulf between social classes.

This explains to some degree the exceedingly scathing negative comments on the writing of Virgil, Homer, Cicero and other classical writers to be found in Vallès' works.³ As suggested above, however, this hostility also has its roots in his schooldays, for the manner in which classical literature was presented to him was...

². See F.W.J. Hemmings' comments on the increasing rate of literacy in The Age of Realism, Pelican Guides to European Literature, Penguin Books, 1974, pp.146-7.  
not conducive to a sympathetic literary appreciation, and he was never able to dissociate it in his mind from memories of tedious pedantic studies. Vingtras reveals limited recollections of the works he has encountered:

"... je renifle des chants entiers de *l'Iliade* et des choeours d'Eschyle, du Virgile et du Bossuet, - mais ça part comme c'est venu. J'oublie le Bossuet comme on oublie l'aloës bienfaisant."¹

He recalls them only in the context of his suffering:

"... on me punissait si je ne pouvais pas réciter par cœur dix vers d'Eschyle, un morceau de Cicéron, ou une tranche de quelque autre mort."²

As Francis Jourdain observes³ Vallès' resentment of the torments of his schooldays was channelled into an indiscriminate and violent rejection of the classics. Virgil and Homer became symbols of the irrelevance of his education:

"... au lieu de nous apprendre à parler français et à gagner notre vie, on nous a fait éplucher des racines grecques, conjuger des verbes romains ... C'était toujours 'le vieil Homère' ou le 'mélodieux Virgile'; on est sorti à 19 ans ne sachant rien, rien, rien, obligé de commencer son éducation."⁴

Inevitably this attitude has brought Vallès much hostile criticism. Paul Bourget was horrified by his blindness to the sentiment of Virgil, the nobility of Livy, and the passionate rhetoric of Tacitus,⁵ and accused him of gross insensitivity:

"Çe fort en vers latin n'a jamais lu avec délices un morceau de Virgile. Ce prosateur de race ignore le frémissement de toute la nature intelligente devant une page de Bossuet."⁶

As Bourget observes, it is disturbing that Vallès' grievances against his schooling blinded him to the merits of classical literature; his reactions were often exaggerated and extreme.

¹ O.C. I, p.259.
² O.C. II, p.159.
³ See Jourdain's introduction to "Le Bachelier", ibid., p.12.
⁴ O.C. XI, p.233.
Bourget refers at one point to Vallès' indifference to the beauty of the classics, but as Abel Monnot points out, this was somewhat of an understatement: "Indifférence non pas! Mais horreur, colère et malédiction." Vallès' feelings were so strong that he was unable to approach classical works with an open mind, judging them on their intrinsic merits.

There are further reasons, however, for his animosity. Classicism implies discipline, and he rebelled violently against order, authority and conformity. The terms he used to describe himself were "irrégulier", "réfractaire", "bohème", "indécrottable", "incassé", "révolté", "insurgé". We may look upon him to some extent as an unruly late romantic. Later we shall be discussing his hostility to the restrictions of verse form. Prizing originality, individuality and liberty above all, he reacted against the strictures of classical convention.

However, his antipathy was not confined to classical literature; he rebelled too against the works of many established French writers. Vingtras also finds Chateaubriand's "Martyrs" boring and irrelevant:

"Ces 'Martyrs' m'ennuent mais m'ennuent! (...) On ne parle pas comme ces gens de Chateaubriand cependant, ni à Paris, ni à Nantes! Je ne suis pas un des premiers chrétiens. Je suis un vieux chrétien ..."^1

So too he complains of "Les Natchez":

"Mais je n'ai pas besoin non plus de savoir comment vivent les gens dans les forêts vierges. J'ai plus besoin de petit bois que des grandes forêts."^2

---

2. See "Lettres d'un irrégulier," Le Figaro, 8 May 1868: "Je suis un irrégulier comme tant d'hommes de tête et de gens de coeur qui n'ont pu aller nulle part sans qu'on voulût, de gré ou de force, les soumettre à une discipline ou les enchaîner à un drapeau. Quelques-uns, le nombre en grossit tous les jours, ont préféré marcher tout seuls." (O.C. XI, p.342).
5. loc. cit.
He is interested only in books which have some relevance to his own situation.¹ When he receives Sainte-Beuve's "Tableau de la poésie française au XVIe siècle" and the works of Bossuet and Victor Cousin as school prizes, he discards these with similar contempt:

"Je les aurais gardés, si j'avais trouvé dedans ce que coûte le pain et comment on le gagne. Je n'y ai trouvé que des choses de l'autre monde."²

Vallès' interest focused on the concrete and immediate and in this respect he resembled the Goncourt brothers of whom Caramaschi writes:

"Ce besoin et ce don de saisie concrète qui les (les Goncourt) opposent aux logiciens, aux discursifs, aux professeurs (...) ont conduit les Goncourt à un mépris croissant pour les livres, les ont dégoûtés d'un savoir abstrait qu'ils jugent vain ..."³

They, like Vallès, reacted against abstractions and were only appreciative of literature with which they could readily identify:

"Que nous fait César traversant le Rubicon? Ce sont des reliques, que la vieille histoire! Mais l'adulte de Mme. de Sully, voilà ce qui est de mon humanité de mon temps ... Il faut, pour s'intéresser au passé qu'il nous revienne dans le coeur et jusque dans les sens."⁴

However, there were basic differences between Vallès' attitude and theirs. They became well known historians of the eighteenth century, but his interest extended only to the very recent past. Whereas they spent their lives amongst books and art-collections, Vallès was not interested in scholarship at all. He was of a dynamic and exuberant temperament, attracted by light, life, movement and emotions,⁵ and was reluctant to sit quietly and study.

¹. In "Le Candidat des Pauvres" Vingtras tells Legrand he does not want to hear him reading literature he cannot relate to his own experience. He admits that he may lack imagination, that he may be "un coeur très sec" but claims, "Je ne puis voir que ce qui est autour de moi." (O.C, XIV, p.254).

². O.C. I, p.336.


⁴. Quoted by Caramaschi, op. cit., p.37.

⁵. See Vallès' comment in his letter to Ganesco, editor of "Le Nain jaune," 14 Feb. 1867: "... je n'aime que ce qui remue ... et je préfère un pharmacien vivant à un dieu mort" (Pléiade I, p.919) and likewise Vingtras' declaration: "... je n'aime que ce qui marche et reluit" (O.C. I, p.278).
When in the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, Vingtras complains of a sense of isolation from the great works of literature. He is more inclined to chat to a library assistant about immediate personal problems than to immerse himself in his books. The knowledge that all the books around him belong to the past, together with the deathly silence of the library, fills him with a stifling sense of claustrophobia. Evidently there emerged for Vallès a clear opposition between immediate sensuous enjoyment of the present, and stifling academic devotion to the "Livre" with its connotations of the past, death and aridity. A lover of the countryside, he was drawn by the warmth, immediacy and vitality of Nature, which contrasted strongly for him with the sterile introspection of the academic life. He considered that to spend one's life buried behind a book in a library was to contemplate life rather than to live and enjoy it.

"C'est être fainéant et poltron ... C'est avoir peur de réfléchir ... C'est avoir peur de marcher! C'est vouloir trouver des idées toutes faites dans les bouquins des autres. C'est fuir les spectacles du drame humain." Just as he condemned academics for divorcing learning from living, so too he felt that academic literature stood in opposition to life, restricting rather than enhancing it. This is one reason for his rejection of so many well-known writers, the cause of Vingtras' solemn burial of all his schoolbooks. Another reason is sheer obstinacy and defiance. There may well be many serious justifications for Vallès' attitude, but there is also an undeniable element of bravado in his reactions, as illustrated by the following conversation between himself and Toussenel (reproduced by Albert Callet):

"Vallès! je leve mon verre à l'immortalité des dieux de l'antique Hellade! Que trouvez-vous de plus beau et de plus divin qu'un cœur antique?"

'Un litre plein', répondait tranquillement Vallès.\textsuperscript{1}

He delighted in frivolous irreverence for writers of great fame, as for example, when he asserted:

"... je n'aime dans l'épopée d'Homère que ce qui a trait à la cuisine, les grands boeufs et les grasses brebis qui grillent devant des bûchers énormes. Encore ne vois-je jamais de jus dans leur histoire, et tout me fait supposer que leurs rôtis étaient trop cuits.

Quant à ce qui est des aventures, je préfère 'Robinson' à 'l'Odyssée', et 'l'Histoire de 1848' à 'l'Iliade'.
Pourquoi respecter ce qui vous ennue?\textsuperscript{2}

However, this passage reveals that his attitude was not entirely logical, for even though Robinson Crusoe's adventures may have appealed to his romantic imagination, they were little more relevant to him than the Iliad or Odyssey.

Bourget goes so far as to describe Vallès' attitude as that of a nihilist, and to compare him in terms of condemnation to Bazarov of Turgenev's "Fathers and Sons."\textsuperscript{3} Arkady, Bazarov's disciple, describes the nihilist's position as follows: "A nihilist is a person who does not take any principle for granted, however much that principle may be revered."\textsuperscript{4} This is certainly not an entirely negative position, for Bazarov asserts, "We base our conduct on what we recognize as useful. In these days the most useful thing we can do is repudiate ..."\textsuperscript{5} Indeed, as Rosemary Edmonds suggests, in her preface to the work, there is a positive side to Bazarov's attitude:

"Bazarov and his fellow nihilists sought to destroy not for the sake of destruction but in order to clear the ground for a new and better society. Their watchword was Reality and not Negation."\textsuperscript{6}

One cannot fairly describe Vallès as a nihilist anyway, for this

5. ibid., p.65.
6. ibid., p.11.
is to overlook the element of fun and irony in his comments, but also in his case too there was a positive side to his attitude. Caramaschi suggests that the Goncourts' aversion to classical literature was partly a reaction against the conventional attitude of indiscriminate admiration,¹ and this is equally true of Vallès. He was outraged at the manner in which contemporaries idolized their predecessors in antiquity irrespective of their merits:

"Il y a en France beaucoup d'admirations de commande, des enthousiasmes de convention, des bouquets de lauriers tout faits, qu'on jette aux pieds de certaines idoles, sans savoir si jamais elles ont mérité ces éloges et ces amours!"²

Admittedly in reaction to this servile acceptance he himself went to the opposite extreme, rejecting all the classics indiscriminately. Nonetheless, his intentions were positive. He sought to encourage contemporaries to express themselves in an original manner, rather than imitating their predecessors, for only in this way could they fulfil the needs of contemporary society. This positive aspect of his criticisms emerges in his article "Rome":

"... il s'agit d'affranchir l'intelligence humaine! Le passé asservit le présent. Quatre ou cinq hommes de génie tiennent tout un monde esclave (...) mais l'admiration ne doit pas être servante et lâche. Parce que Phidias, Michel-Ange ou Raphael furent grands, serions-nous condamnés à être toujours petits? (...) En leur nom, on méconnaît, on oublie, on dédaigne les droits nouveaux d'une société nouvelle ..."³

We have already mentioned that the attitude inculcated into a child in nineteenth century France was one of unquestioning acceptance. For this reason Vallès feared that the printed word assumed the status of a definitive truth, exerting a tyrannical power over the reader. Once committed to paper, words belong to the past, and therefore, he claimed, the reverent attitude adopted towards the printed word inevitably nurtured a cult of the past,

¹. See E. Caramaschi, op. cit., pp.103-4.
and literature thus exerted a potentially retrogressive influence.

Roger Bellet articulates the cause of Vallès' mistrust:

"Il (le livre) éternise le passager et le révolu, asservit au passé, est, par essence, inactuel: il fabrique des forçats du passé, il porte la tradition, il charrie toute tradition, et en particulier la tradition antique. Il transforme le passé en mythologie qu'il impose au présent."¹

However, one should not assume from this that Vallès was totally uninterested in literature. This was far from the case. He shunned the literature recommended to him by figures of authority, but delighted in "forbidden" works. When detained after school one evening Vingtras discovers a copy of "Robinson Crusoe" which he consumes enthusiastically.² He becomes a voracious reader of romantic fiction, for he finds in his reading an outlet for his suppressed imagination, and a welcome contrast to his drab surroundings. A few years later, it is political pamphlets and revolutionary propaganda (likewise forbidden) which occupy his attention. As a student in Paris he buys Proudhon's paper "Le Peuple" every day, and a subscription to a "cabinet de lecture" is one of his first priorities in a carefully calculated budget:

"... C'est là le plus clair de ma joie, le plus beau de ma liberté, sauter sur les volumes défendus au collège, romans d'amour, poésies du peuple, histoires de la Révolution!"³

He spends much of his time reading, and literature is seen to play an important and positive rôle in his life, in inspiring him with revolutionary aspirations and shaping his career.⁴

Indeed it was his recognition of the power of literature which was to prompt Vallès to warn of the dangers even of the books he himself enjoyed. In his article "Les Victimes du Livre" in "Le Figaro", 9 October 1862,⁵ he launched what appears to be a

2. See O.C. I, pp.111-112.
3. O.C. II, p.54.
5. This article was later incorporated in "Les Réfractaires," published by Achille Faure in 1865. (See O.C. VII, pp.141-62).
comprehensively negative attack on literature, denouncing the "Tyrannie comique de l'Imprimé",¹ the tyrannical influence of the printed word. Everybody, he claimed, is so influenced by their reading that it is impossible to be sure that one's actions are entirely one's own and not simply a re-enactment of the lines one has read:

"Pas une de nos émotions n'est franche.
Joie, douleurs, amours, vengeances, nos sanglots, nos rires, les passions, les crimes; tout est copié, tout!"²

Throughout his life Vallès exalted spontaneity and individualism³ and, therefore, his fear of obstacles to natural and spontaneous behaviour is understandable. However, in expressing himself in so absolute and categorical a manner, he detracted from the credibility of his own argument.

His awareness of the powerful influence of literature was not in itself something new. In the eighteenth century there had been much discussion of the dangers of reading novels, and the aim of instruction, necessarily implying a measure of influence, had long been coupled with the desire to amuse in definitions of the function of literature. The influence of literature had been a subject of much debate in the period immediately preceding Vallès' article. In 1856 "L'Académie des sciences morales et politiques" had set as the subject for their open essay competition a study of the influence of contemporary literature, and in particular the novel, paying special attention to "les erreurs morales et les

¹.(This article was later incorporated in "Les Réfractaires", published by Achille Faure in 1865.) See O.C. VII, p.143.
². loc. cit.
³. See his declaration: "Il faut être soi, jeter au loin les livres et les drapeaux lourds, affirmer, faible ou forte, sa personnalité ..." (O.C. XI, p.110). See also Vallès' "Notes d'un absent," Le Voltaire, 18 Oct. 1878 (O.C. VI, pp.176-82) focusing on Eugène Vermersch (opposition journalist of the Second Empire, Communard, and contributor to Vallès' newspaper "Le Cri du Peuple" of 1871) who had recently died in a mental asylum, after alienating his colleagues in exile by his attacks upon them. Vallès asserted that Vermersch had betrayed his true personality and beliefs, and that his wretched death illustrated the consequences of so doing.
fausses doctrines qu'avait pu émettre ou propager la littérature."

First prize was awarded to a magistrate who indulged in violent attacks on Balzac and Stendhal. However, one cannot accept that Vallès, a great admirer of Balzac, should have adopted a similar attitude!

In fact his argument was somewhat different. He claimed that, unconsciously attempting to realize a preconceived image, we are often unable to distinguish true emotions from those we are emulating:

"On croira n'être pas gai, pas triste, point en joie, pas en train parce que le livre marque autre chose à cet endroit. On voulait être simple, on est précieux; passer outre, on s'arrête; pardonner, on se fâche; saluer, on insulte; - Ici l'on rêve. - Ici l'on flâne. - Ici l'on pleure. Et un tas d'autre poteaux plantés tout le long de la vie, auxquels le premier mouvement vient se casser les ailes, et sur lesquels on lit son chemin, au lieu de le faire, l'œil en avant, le coeur en haut!"  

The phenomenon he describes is that for which Gaultier coined the term "bovarysme".  

His comments are ideally illustrated by Emma Bovary striving to fulfil a romantic image. Vallès greatly admired Flaubert and "Madame Bovary", which must have influenced if not inspired his thoughts on this theme. Emma is mentioned in the article. Like Fanny and Lélia she is described as "victime d'amour" - victim of the romantic image of love and the lover.  

However, whereas Flaubert presents a psychological analysis of a particular character, illustrating that it is her romantic feminine sensibility and impressionability which cause her to be dominated by preconceived images, Vallès claims that all are susceptible to this influence. At the root of every word, of every action, he

2. O.C. VII, p.144. N.B. Except where specifically stated otherwise, underlining in quotations denotes the use of italics in the original.
5. See O.C. VII, p.161. N.B. The novel "Fanny" was written by Ernest Feydeau in 1858, and "Lélia" by George Sand in 1833.
detects the inescapable influence of "le livre":

"... à travers les débris, les fleurs, les vies ratées, les morts voulues, le Livre, toujours le Livre! Cherchez la femme", disait un juge. C'est le volume que je cherche moi, le chapitre, la page, le mot ...

Although in later writings he acknowledged that the influence of literature might be to the good, here he mentions only its negative effects:

"Souvent, presque toujours, la victime a vu de travers, choisi à faux, et le Livre la traîne après lui, vous faisant d'un poltron un crâneur, d'un bon jeune homme un mauvais garçon, d'un poitrinaire un coureur d'orgies ..."

Also he makes no distinction between different types of literature; the writers he mentions include Prévost, Chateaubriand, Goethe, Sue, La Landelle, Defoe, Fenimore Cooper, Walter Scott, Alexandre Dumas, Balzac, Byron, Mürger, Musset, Flaubert, Feydeau and Sand, and even historical writers such as Esquiros, Crétilleau-Joly, Lamartine and Louis Blanc, and it would be difficult to find what qualities all these writers have in common.

His intention may have been to prompt the reader to be on his guard and analyse his own reactions and motives more carefully, but any positive intentions are swamped by his overwhelming and indiscriminating pessimism:

"Rares, d'ailleurs, bien rares, ... ceux que n'a pas plus ou moins entamés le Livre, qui n'en portent pas un peu la marque dans la tête ou dans la poitrine, sur le front ou la lèvre!"

His gross overstatement of his case is apparent when he asserts, "Toutes les femmes qui ont un peu empoisonné leur mari, jeté au feu leur enfant: des victimes du livre!"

Such exaggeration is in itself as dangerous as the influence he was denouncing. A few years later he was obliged to qualify his argument when a lawyer defending two young men accused of murder

1. O.C. VII, p.143.
2. Author of "La Gorgone" (1844) and specialist in seafaring novels.
4. ibid., p.162.
cited his article in their defence, arguing diminished responsibility on their part, claiming that they had been misled by literature. Convinced that the offenders were simply using his argument as a pretext in their defence, Vallès remarked that although literature might lead to crime, he had never meant to suggest that it be held responsible for all crime! 1

Clearly what was uppermost in his mind at the time of writing was that, whatever the differing effects of individual works, the submission of the personality to any form of tyranny was in itself to be denounced. In the section of "La Rue" 2 entitled "La Servitude" he discussed the different ways in which Man allows his freedom to be restricted. Paradoxically, he asserted, it is not always the inmates of prisons who are most deprived of liberty, for they may be free within captivity, 3 whilst elsewhere in society men are enslaved by the chains they themselves have forged, 4 by the goals and ideals they set themselves. He spoke of "le forçat du succès" — the man who is expected to live up to his reputation for success, "le forçat du bon mot" — the witty member of a group who must always be ready to amuse and never be found wanting. 5 The denunciations of "Les Victimes du Livre" may be seen then in this context, as one of many attempts to expose the unseen causes of servitude in society. 6 This would explain why Vallès' comments

2. "La Rue," originally published by Achille Faure in 1866 was a collection of Vallès' newspaper articles taken largely from his contributions to "L'Epoque" and "L'Evénement" in 1865 and 1866.
4. ibid., p.278.
5. ibid., p.264.
6. Vallès' concern to show Man's impressionability is continually apparent. In "Le Progrès de Lyon" he described Mme. Roland as "Bell et triste victime de l'antiquité" (29 Aug. 1864, Pléiade I, p.378), suggesting that her reading and her love of the classics were responsible for her tragic fate (6 Sept. 1864, ibid., p.380). Elsewhere he denounced the dangers of succumbing to the enchanting influence of music and mysticism (O.C. X, p.333), and in "Souvenirs d'un étudiant pauvre" he commented on the artificial merriment of Parisian balls, where all were "forçats d'une gaieté sans franchise", failing to enjoy themselves because they were trying so hard to look as if they were doing so. (O.C. XIV, pp.30-31).
appear to apply to literature in general.

A further possible explanation for such sweeping and catego-
rical statements at this early point in his career may be the desire
to attract attention by shock tactics. Nonetheless Vallès' article voiced genuine fears which are echoed in later works. In
the trilogy Vingtras is seen to be very much influenced by the
literature he reads: "Je dis 'o ma mère!' sans y penser beaucoup,
c'est pour faire comme dans les livres."¹ Since his own attempts
to run away and become a stowaway seem doomed to failure, he takes
refuge in adventure-stories, continually rehearsing them in his
imagination until he can scarcely free himself from their influence:

"J'ai déjà fait des narrations de sinistres comme si j'en
avais été un des héros et je crois même que les phrases que
je viens d'écrire sont des réminiscences de bouquins que
j'ai lus ou des compositions que j'ai esquissées dans le
silence du cachot."²

Finally he is enchained by the words he has read: "Je me répète
ces grands mots comme un perroquet enchaîné au grand mât..."³

Vallès perhaps had particular reasons, however, for writing
this article in 1862. Five years previously "Madame Bovary" and
"Les Fleurs du Mal" had been attacked by the censors as morally
reprehensible. In 1858 Ernest Feydeau was reproached for his presen-
tations of adultery in "Fanny". Vallès admired both novels⁴ and
was annoyed by the censors. He also disputed the validity of the
accusations made against "Les Fleurs du Mal."⁵ It may be that
"Les Victimes du Livre" was in part a reaction against the condem-
nations of these works on narrow moral grounds. Vallès wished to
make the point that all literature is potentially dangerous and

2. O.C. I, p.196.
3. ibid., p.197.
4. See his appreciative reference to "Madame Bovary" in "Chronique"
Le Présent, 8 Aug. 1857, p.187 (Pléiade I, p.41). His admiration
of Feydeau and "Fanny" in particular is apparent in "Variétés. Les
livres nouveaux," Le Progrès de Lyon, 12 Sept. 1864 (Pléiade I,
pp.386-7).
5. See "Chronique," Le Présent, 8 Aug. 1857, p.187 (Pléiade I,
p.41).
that no subject is in itself immoral. Indeed one of the most
depressing aspects of his article is his assertion that Balzac,
whom he admired as a most compelling writer, was consequently in
his view exceedingly dangerous: "Il résume la grandeur du livre
et ses dangers."\(^1\) The dangerous potential of a work was seen to
be a direct function of its power, not of its subject matter.

This point is indirectly reinforced by a note in "La Presse",
6 February 1865, in which Vallès discussed Alfred Asseline's recent
lecture on the contemporary novel. Vallès dismissed Asseline's
fear of the dangerous influence of popular literature as puerile:

"Il (Asseline) nous parlait des dangers que recélait dans
ses flancs estampillés la littérature de colportage, et il
avait l'air de penser que la langue française et la société
européenne étaient mises en péril par ces romans du
journalisme à prix réduit, où l'histoire et la vérité
seraient, paraît-il, massacréspar les plumes d'écrivains
maladroits et criminels. Ce sont là des craintes puériles,
et il est presque comique qu'on attache à ces futilités
inutiles une minute d'attention. Les journaux à un sou ne
sapent les bases de rien et ne prouvent l'immoralité de
personne; ils ennuient ou distraient l'ouvrier fatigué et
l'apprenti curieux."

Vallès' attitude is unexpected in the light of his denunciation of
the powerful influence of all literature in "Les Victimes du
Livre". However, there he cited illustrations from bourgeois
literature, whereas he was scarcely likely to join in any attack
on "le livre de colportage", which was almost the only working-
class literature of the period. He argued that mediocre popular
literature was of little danger as it was treated lightly by the
reader, making little lasting impression. He dismissed it as
superficial entertainment, but in my opinion in doing so, he grossly
underestimated its impact, and was unduly optimistic in his esti-
mation of the powers of discrimination of the average reader.

"Les Victimes du Livre" strikes one as exceedingly negative,
particularly since this was one of Vallès' first newspaper articles
for a large national newspaper, one of his first attempts to make

a career for himself through literature. However, Vallès admitted that he was more inclined to criticize than praise.\(^1\) In Roger Bellet's words, "Vallès sait mieux ce qu'il n'aime pas que ce qu'il aime."\(^2\) Bellet's comments help us to see Vallès' negativity in its true perspective:

"L'homme, pour Vallès, se définit d'abord par son pouvoir de négation. Vallès ne proclame pas de théorie, ne se fait pas le pontife d'une idée, ne marie pas la thèse et l'antithèse: il aime et vit l'idée militante, la vérité brandie, armée, assenée."\(^3\)

It is easier to criticize than to propose alternatives, and criticisms make a greater impact than praise. In "Les Victimes du Livre" Vallès declared a viewpoint openly and dramatically, even if in exaggerated form. He had a point to make, and any qualifications or subtleties would have detracted from the force if not the validity of his argument. Bellet admits his exaggerations but considers these an inevitable consequence of his polemical tactics:

"... Vallès n'est pas vrai au sens d'une vérité médiane et éclectique ... Il préfère le contre passionnel et unilatéral à la symétrie esthétique du 'pro et contra' ... Il croit plus à la vérité en relief du parti-pris qu'à la délicate et délicieuse pesée des nuances."\(^4\)

The fact that he defined his attitudes via a series of negatives should not be interpreted as proof of negativity, for, as Gille exclaims,"... Vallès n'est pas l'esprit de négation, mais l'esprit de révolte; or il n'est point de révolte sans un idéal secret, sans un tenace espoir en un monde meilleur."\(^5\) Beneath Vallès' condemnation of the classics and of the tyranny of literature in general, we must seek his underlying positive motivation, for, as in the case of Bazarov, what Bourget describes as Vallès' nihilism is merely a clearing of the ground to make way for

---

4. R. Bellet op. cit., p.11.
5. G. Gille, op. cit., p.258.
something new. In 1857, on learning of a fire at the headquarters of "Le Moniteur," in which all manuscripts had been destroyed, Vallès wrote the strangely prophetic lines:

"J'ai désiré parfois, que le même malheur atteignît à tous les monuments de Paris, pour que le lendemain, sur les cendres encore fumantes de l'édifice écroulé, une nouvelle génération vînt jeter les bases d'un art nouveau et faire le poème de pierre du XIXe siècle."¹

It was only because he sought to stress the need for innovation in the literary sphere that he indulged in such indiscriminate attacks.

Significantly his first book "L'Argent" (1857) was in itself a rejection of literature and the literary life as the full title of the work suggests: "L'Argent par un Homme de Lettres devenu Homme de Bourse." In the very moment that he took up writing as a profession he discarded it. Obviously he was not rejecting literature totally, for, as we have seen, he himself enjoyed reading, and anyway, were this the case, he would never have written the book at all (apart from the obvious financial motives). He was quite simply bored with the greater part of established literature and felt strongly that a new age was beginning which made new demands of its writers.² Paradoxically it was through literature that he exposed the tyrannical potential of "le livre", for only by exercising his literary talent in critical and creative writing could he hope to influence contemporary writers and point the way ahead. To quote Roger Bellet, "seule une littérature peut répondre à la littérature; il faut une insurrection de la littérature contre la littérature."³

². See his letter to Jules Mirès prefacing "L'Argent," Pléiade I, p.10. N.B. Comments on "L'Argent" and its preface will refer the reader to the Pléiade edition, as the preface alone is reproduced by Les Éditeurs Français Réunis, whereas the Pléiade edition also includes those parts of the text clearly written by Vallès himself (and not copied from Dervin's technical description of "La Bourse" (See Pléiade I, p.1160 ff. )).
³. See Bellet's introduction to "Littérature et Révolution", O.C. XI, p.44.
CHAPTER III. LITERATURE AND TRUTH - THE REJECTION OF ROMANTICISM

Having established that Vallès' negative statements on literature were often simply an overdramatization of his call for reform, we must now move on to establish more precisely what the positive ideals were which inspired his cry of revolt.

From his first articles in the literary review "Le Présent" in 1857 until his death in 1885, in book reviews, in reports on exhibitions and public lectures, in obituaries, in recollections of his own experiences, in letters to friends and followers, and even through the characters of those of his works presented in fictional form, Vallès commented on a wide variety of literary works and personalities. However, he reacted to the immediate situation, discussing the books or writers before him, venturing only rarely to make general statements on literature and aesthetics. He never set out a comprehensive view of the rôle he believed literature should play in society. In "Le Présent", 1 November 1857, he mentioned "un traité d'esthétique" which he claimed to have written in his youth but had since discarded. As this treatise was never mentioned again elsewhere in his writing, its existence has been questioned, but certainly, if it did exist, it is to be regretted that its contents have remained unknown, for this would have represented a unique attempt in all his career to set out his ideas within a logical and systematic framework. In the absence of such evidence we are obliged to deduce the general principles underlying his attitude to literature from an extensive study of his comments on a wide range of writers and works.

This task is not without its difficulties. In his reactions to well-known writers of the period it is apparent that Vallès

2. See R. Bellet's comments, Pléiade I, p.1222, notes on p.88, No. 1.
was often influenced by personalities and political beliefs, rather than basing his judgements purely on literary and aesthetic criteria. Consequently one encounters vague and contradictory statements, and since he did not divide his attention evenly between different writers or tackle specific issues systematically, it is impossible to form a balanced overall view or to know how much weight to give to differing statements. Nonetheless an insight into the factors determining his attitudes is in itself valuable. As long as allowances are made for personal antipathies and other such considerations, a survey of his reactions to a few well-known writers¹ and the trends they came to represent may help us to establish his literary position in relation to that of contemporaries, and also to understand his personality more fully.

In order to explain his often surprising attitudes in terms of literary criteria I shall frequently refer to his articles in "Le Progrès de Lyon". Vallès' regular contributions to this newspaper from 14 February 1864 to 30 January 1865 are invaluable, for here he confines himself to literary topics as never again. In his previous articles in "Le Présent" (1857) and "La Chronique Parisienne" (1858) one sensed that he was not entirely free to express his own views. His task was to entertain, not to become embroiled in heated literary debates, and although he expressed superficial literary judgements, his criticisms were guarded, his comments ironic and ambiguous. In later years he concerned himself increasingly with what became for him the more essential issues of politics. Therefore, his contributions to "Le Progrès de Lyon", where he was given

¹. It is impossible within the limits of these chapters to consider all Vallès' literary criticisms. I have, therefore, chosen to examine primarily his attitudes to better known writers whom he refers to most frequently.
considerable freedom to express his opinions, and where his main concern was to write book reviews, are of great importance to our appreciation of his attitudes to literature. This is particularly so as he reviewed the works of many minor writers of whom he know very little and whose works he, therefore, judged on their intrinsic merits, rather than being diverted by personal prejudice. He refers to these articles as "ces études purement littéraires", and although such a description is not entirely valid for here, as elsewhere, his opinions are often influenced by non-literary criteria, these articles together with a number of his contributions to "L'Epoque" and "L'Evénement" in 1865 and 1866, provide a substantial body of material upon which to base our discussion of his views on literature.

Setting out on his first literary criticisms, Vallès had no particular ideas to defend. He promised simply to express his own personal reactions to different literary works:

"Si le livre m'a ému, je le déclarerai; s'il m'a ennuyé, je l'avouerai; s'il m'a fait rêver ou rire, bâiller ou pleurer, je le dirai, sans crainte de pécher par excès d'enthousiasme ou d'indifférence ... Je suis fait comme tout le monde, j'ai lu un peu plus que quelques autres, regardé sinon vu beaucoup: voilà toute ma profession de foi et mon programme."4

However, in the course of writing his reviews his ideas became clearer to him, and he even went so far as to suggest he had

1. In his article of 28 December 1864 Vallès paid tribute to a director of the paper, who had died recently, for allowing him to express his opinions so openly (cf. Pléiade I, p.475). Also in an article in "La Presse," 18 January 1865, he described "Le Progrès de Lyon" as "un des organes les plus vaillants de la démocratie ..."
3. For example, he appreciated Ferdinand Fabre's "Julien Savignac," because of the similarities between Savignac and himself (see Le Progrès de Lyon, 30 March 1864, Pléiade I, pp.342-4). Calemard de la Faye'tte's poems appealed to him, because they recalled scenes of his native countryside (see Le Progrès de Lyon, 12 Sept. 1864, Pléiade I, pp.389-92). Similarly Erckmann-Chatrian's "Madame Thérèse" won his approval because it reflected his own anti-militaristic sentiments (see Le Progrès de Lyon, 28 Feb. and 13 May 1864, Pléiade I, pp.330-33, and 357 ff.)
evolved his own theory of literature:

"C'est en écrivant pour mes lecteurs du 'Progrès' que je me suis fait ou que j'ai affermi certaines idées qui sont comme le fond de ma théorie sur la littérature contemporaine ..."1

He also used the expression "mon école" in describing his set of views.2 The word "theory" suggests something more precise and systematic than anything he ever presented to the reader, and there is no question of his having initiated a literary school of thought, particularly at this early stage in his career.3 We know anyway that he was opposed to such schools which, he felt, encouraged blind imitation.4 However, it is true to say that his attitudes are articulated more clearly here than elsewhere. Whereas "Les Victimes du Livre" presented a vague and general condemnation, here he distinguished between different types of literature, and showed how its influence might be to the good:

"J'espère faire comprendre jusqu' où entre des mains heureuses, peut aller l'influence du roman."5 His criticisms were no longer to be purely negative.

In Chapter II we noted Vallès' hostility to the classics and classical literature, and also the romantic aspects of his personality, his undisciplined, rebellious and exuberant character. Yet this did not make of him a proponent of romanticism.

3. In 1864 Vallès was still relatively unknown. "L'Argent" had been published anonymously in 1857, and so it was not until the publication of "Les Réfractaires" in 1865 that he first commanded the attention of the public and critics. In the 1880s after the success of "Le Cri du Peuple" and the trilogy, Vallès evidently exerted considerable influence on his contemporaries as he has done on more recent generations. This influence is studied by G. Gille (op. cit., Ch. XI, pp.510-93), who tackles the question "Y a-t-il une école vallésienne?" (pp.592-3). He concludes that although Vallès exerted considerable influence this cannot be described in terms of a literary "school".
Although we find romantic elements in his own writing, he was highly critical of romanticism. In the letter to Mirès prefacing "L'Argent" in which he called for a revolution of literature and the arts, the outmoded forms against which he was rebelling were clearly those of the romantic era, whose decline he welcomed:

"Les vieux moules dans lesquels on coulait les erreurs dangereuses et les banalités ridicules, versificateurs, métaphysiciens, tribuns, gens à période, tout cela paraît fini, mort, à moitié enterré. Il semble que la Providence s'en mêle. Voyez comment ils s'en vont! Chateaubriand, David, Rude, Lamennais! J'ai suivi, hier, Musset au cimetière. Les proscrits meurent dans l'exil."

He now looked forward to literature more in keeping with the spirit of the second half of the nineteenth century.

One reason for his hostility to romanticism was simply that this constituted the dominant literary influence during his adolescence, and, therefore, despite the rebellion of romantic writers versus classicism, he looked upon them as the literary establishment. Also the fact that writers such as Hugo and Lamartine were idolized by many contemporaries was bound to provoke his sarcasm, for he was opposed to any form of hero-worship.

There were, however, more fundamental reasons for his hostility and these will become clear as I proceed to examine his attitude to several writers whom he described as romantic, in an attempt to establish precisely what he meant by the word, and why it constituted for him a term of abuse. Discussion will not be confined to his reactions to the Romantics of 1830 for his criticisms were directed against the whole cult of romanticism in the first half of the nineteenth century.

One might have expected Vallès to admire Rousseau as father of the Revolution and instigator of democracy and socialism. Also Vallès’ educational ideals (that the child should be allowed

1. Pléiade I, p.10.
to develop naturally, learning by his own sensations and experience rather than through books) were very much in line with the ideas defended by Rousseau in "Emile" in 1762. Yet Vallès' attitude to Rousseau was one of extreme hostility. He was reacting in part against current idolization, but more significantly, he regarded Rousseau with suspicion as a forerunner of the Romantics. He thought of him above all as author of "Julie ou la nouvelle Héloise", which he considered an excessively sentimental novel. He reproached him for his sickly sensibility ("maladivité") and his forced melancholy ("sanglotement étudié") referring to him disparagingly as "Jean-Jacques le triste". In 1864, reviewing Victor Cherbuliez' novel "Paule Mére", which he dismissed on account of its romantic excesses, he voiced his attitude to the romantic evocation of spleen and the torments of love in terms which could well be applied to his reactions to Rousseau. He described romantic writers as 'pseudo-souffrants', suffering "malheurs de fantaisie"; they were "Narcisses qui n'ont pas aimé mais qui s'aiment", "gémisseurs", "étalagistes de l'amour et de la douleur", "galériens de la désespérance". Vigorous and positive by nature, preoccupied with basic social problems, Vallès had no patience with such sentimental self-indulgence, for as he pointed out, there was enough genuine suffering in society without imagining still more.

In the light of his reaction to Rousseau, it is not

1. See Le Progrès de Lyon, 6 Sept. 1864, Pléiade I, p.381.
2. Vallès welcomed "Renée Mauperin" by the Concourt brothers as a pleasant relief from the sentimentality of novels modelled on "La Nouvelle Héloise" (cf. Le Progrès de Lyon, 29 April 1864, Pléiade I, p.350), and he criticized Madame Roland's "Mémoires" because, in their excessive sentimentality, they revealed Rousseau's influence (cf. Le Progrès de Lyon, 6 Sept. 1864, Pléiade I, p.381).
4. Le Progrès de Lyon, 6 Sept. 1864, Pléiade I, p.381.
surprising that his attitude to Chateaubriand was unfavourable,\(^1\) for he too may be looked upon as a father of romanticism, and Vallès evidently had little sympathy with his "ennui", his morbid unrest and melancholy.

This was no doubt a determining factor too in his attitude to Baudelaire, of whom he was extremely critical.\(^2\) He had no patience with melancholic poets, who sought their inspiration in unhealthy "unnatural" pleasures, and on 5 September 1867, just five days after Baudelaire's death, he openly condemned the poet's "unnatural" dissolute lifestyle, which he held responsible for his mental and physical degeneration:

"... on ne badine pas impunément et aussi effrontément qu'il le fit avec certaines lois fatales qu'il ne faut pas subir lâchement mais qu'il ne faut pas défier non plus; on ne surmène pas ainsi son corps et sa pensée, ou bien la nuit se fait dans le cerveau, le sang devient eau dans les veines et il ne reste d'un homme qu'un morceau de chair épaissée et fadasse comme un lot de viande soufflée qui tressaute et tremblote dans l'insensibilité d'une agonie piteuse."\(^3\)

Vallès was a full-blooded countryboy who revelled in invigorating exposure to the elements and placed his faith in Nature. As Gille remarks in describing his reaction to the "cénacles" which grew up in imitation of Baudelaire,

"Le bon sens robuste de Vallès réprouve cette hystérie poétisée, ces encens étrangers au terroir, ces envies de haschich, ces transes, ces langueurs, ces molles ardeurs soudain ranimées par une chair ambrée, toute, cette alchimie malsaine des plaisirs contre nature."\(^4\)

Vallès extolled the merits of the simple life and could not appreciate Baudelaire's diseased sensibility or his fascination with "artificial paradises".

It is to be noted that Vallès' accusations of "maladivité"

---

1. See above p.28
were not directed against the Romantics of 1830, for they, he felt, had displayed energy and vigour. He was attacking rather the general romantic image of the weak and sickly poet, and his harshest criticisms are to be found in his comments on the Parnassians, whom he regarded as puny weaklings in contrast to their predecessors:

"Des poitrines de poulet, des mollets de coq! - On dit que ceux de 1830 agitaient des têtes de lion sur des cous d'athlète; avec cela des appétits à manger un veau, des poings à tuer un boeuf! C'est donc que le romantisme a vieilli ou que, bourré de mauvaise graisse, il a fait des fils rachitiques."1

Zola was equally harsh in his appraisal of the Parnassians, criticizing the lifelessness and mechanical impassivity of their poetry.2 Vallès had mocked their self-restraint and orderliness.3 Zola too commented on their lack of vigour or personality, and their consequent need to band together for mutual support, acting in unison. Vallès and Zola held similar attitudes to several contemporary poets, this suggesting that Vallès' views were perhaps widespread amongst radicals of the period and that, as we shall see below, political factors determined his attitudes to some degree. In any event, in view of his own undisciplined nature, it is not surprising that, despite his criticisms of romanticism, he felt more akin to the Romantics than the Parnassians.

However, there are inconsistencies in his attitudes. In 1868, just one year after his condemnation of Baudelaire's excesses, he rallied to the defence of Musset and his drunken

---

3. See Vallès' comic portrayal of their arrival at the first nigh of "Hernani" in 1867, as they emerged in grave and orderly fashion from the omnibus they had hired in swallow-tail coats and white ties (O.C. XI, p.299).
debauchery, declaring, "Peut-être Musset sentait-il, et il était seul juge, qu'il lui fallait la débauche pour entraîner son génie ..."\(^1\) In "Les Victimes du Livre" he had commented on the number of young men who were misled by Musset's example and turned to women and drink in order to fulfill the image of the romantic poet,\(^2\) but now in 1868 he argued that Musset's debauchery was his own affair and that he had the right to destroy himself if he so wished. Evidently he made a distinction between the case of Musset who, he felt, succumbed to irrepressible natural impulses, and Baudelaire, whose dissipation he regarded as sheer exhibitionism.

One might have expected Musset's romantic sentimentality to have incurred Vallès' disapproval, whereas Baudelaire, as member of the group centering on Courbet and the realists should have been more likely to win his sympathy.\(^3\) However, Vallès was not opposed to the dominant lyrical expression of the self as such. On the contrary, as we shall see in the coming chapter, he expected the writer to concentrate on his personal emotions and experiences, but he criticized when this descended to sentimental self-indulgence. Musset was not a pure romantic. He very soon detached himself from the Romantic school. He was witty and ironic and had the ability to puncture his own seriousness and lightly mock romanticism.\(^4\) Vallès mentions "son

3. In the coming chapter (pp.74-107) we shall discuss Vallès' sympathy for Courbet and the realists, but his hostility to Baudelaire is not incompatible with this, considering Champfleury's claim that Baudelaire was always regarded as a dissident within the realist group (see Champfleury, Souvenirs et portraits de jeunesse, Slatkine Reprints, Geneva, 1970, p.191).
4. Musset's "Ballade à la lune" (in "Les Contes d'Espagne et d'Italie," 1829) was a parody of the romantic cult of the moon. Indeed Musset never became a slave to romanticism, and in "Lettres de Dupuis et Cotonet," 1836-7, he set out to debunk romanticism. In his speech of reception as a member of the Academy, 27 May 1852, he defended the independent attitude he had adopted towards his one-time masters in the romantic movement.
He appreciated his ironic touches as he did those of Voltaire, and in contrast he found Rousseau and Baudelaire overwhelmingly mournful and serious.2

Whereas he considered Musset's lyricism to be sincere self-expression, and identified with the familiar emotions of his poetry,3 he regarded Baudelaire as the epitome of the falsity of romanticism, "le romantisme menteur et cabotin."4 He denounced his artificial posturing, his petty attempts to shock and impress, and referred to him as "ce forçat lugubre de l'excéntricité."5 He even questioned whether he actually took opium and hashish, or whether this too was simply a pose. Above all he felt that Baudelaire's supposed revolt was a sham:

"C'est que, voyez-vous, ce fanfaron d'immoralité, il était au fond un religiosâtre, point un sceptique; il n'était pas un démolisseur, mais un croyant; il n'était que le niamniam d'un mysticisme bêtasse et triste, où les anges avaient des ailes de chauves-souris avec des faces de catin.."6

Vallès had little sympathy for religious beliefs of any kind, but in Baudelaire's case he was particularly critical as he felt that such beliefs made a mockery of his metaphysical revolt. He felt that, in a degrading compromise, Baudelaire was attempting to keep all options open.7 In his view such hypocrisy was typical of romanticism in general, and he longed in contrast for naturalness, honesty and simplicity.

2. See Vallès' assertion: "... je préfère aujourd'hui le rire libre d'Arouet au sanglotement étudié de Rousseau, le scepticisme de 'Candide' à l'enthousiasme du 'Vicaire'"(Le Progrès de Lyon, 6 Sept. 1864, p.381).
6. ibid., p.325.
7. See Vallès' comment: "Il n'avait pas la santé d'un débauché et avait dans son enfer une petite porte masquée par où l'on pouvait remonter au ciel." loc. cit.
Once again Zola's attitude resembled Vallès'; he too was critical of Baudelaire yet admired Musset. His portrait of Baudelaire in January 1869 was similar to Vallès' portrait of sixteen months earlier. Vallès maintained that Baudelaire was not naturally gifted: "Poète, il ne l'était point de par le ciel ..." and predicted that his popularity would not outlive him by more than two years! So too Zola claimed that he lacked creative talent, and regarded him as a pathetic individual living in his own hallucinatory world:

"Moi, je me l'imagine volontiers comme un cénobite littéraire qui se serait creusé une étroite niche dans une roche dure et qui y aurait vécu seul, en face des hallucinations de son cerveau détraqué. Ce ne fut point un créateur."³

Like Vallès he saw little future for his works except as examples of individualistic eccentricity, and interpreted his dependence on artificial stimulation as a sign of weakness, comparing him unfavourably to Balzac and declaring, "Il n'y a que les cerveaux faibles qui veulent la folie."⁴ He too had difficulty distinguishing the true Baudelaire beneath his series of poses.

This similarity in attitudes again suggests that Vallès' hostility was rooted in political attitudes and philosophy. Pierre Emmanuel⁵ discusses Vallès' and Baudelaire's respective concepts of individual liberty, contrasting Vallès' ideal of naturalness and spontaneity with Baudelaire's belief in intellectual effort, and his view that man must strive to assert his essential human essence or else relapse into the degrading animal state. He shows how for Baudelaire the natural instincts exalted

---

by Vallès were "le pire ennemi de ce qui dans l'homme crée les formes hautes de la conscience, l'identité de l'être libre," and how in his eyes the spontaneous revolt advocated by Vallès was the degrading manifestation of "l'instinct grégaire." Whereas Vallès saw man as part of nature and believed that individual liberty might be achieved on the social plane, for Baudelaire, "L'individu entièrement socialisé, c'est l'homme à l'état de nature."\(^1\) Clearly such fundamental differences in political philosophy must have contributed to Vallès' as to Zola's hostility to Baudelaire.\(^2\) There was also the question of Baudelaire's attitude to the revolutionaries of 1848. He had soon repented of his support for them, expressing his contempt for utopian socialists who, he declared sarcastically, expected all Frenchmen to become rich and virtuous overnight.\(^3\) The anti-liberal, anti-humanitarian views he expressed in a poem such as "Assommons les pauvres!" were bound to arouse Vallès' and Zola's indignation.\(^4\)

Certainly Vallès did not judge Baudelaire purely on the merits of his works. In 1857 when he did not know Baudelaire personally, he observed that "Les Fleurs du Mal" could only appeal to a literary elite, but his remarks were generally sympathetic, because he felt sorry for Baudelaire who was a victim of the censors.\(^5\) Later when the two were better acquainted, as

---

2. Criticisms of Baudelaire's affectation came not only from radical opponents, however, for the great individualist and reactionary Jules de Goncourt describes Baudelaire as "un Prudhomme exaspéré, un bourgeois qui s'est tourmenté toute sa vie pour se donner l'élegance de paraître fou." He continues, "Il s'y est si bien appliqué et tendu qu'il est mort idiot. Paix à cette pose." (cf. Journal, 15 Dec. 1868).
3. See his draft for a preface to "Les Fleurs du Mal".
4. The title alone suggests why this poem was rejected by a magazine in 1865, and remained unpublished until its appearance in the posthumous collection of Baudelaire's poems "Le Spleen de Paris." Vallès, therefore, would not have read this particular poem, but it is typical of the anti-liberalism which pervades much of Baudelaire's work.
they frequented the same literary circles, it is obvious that Vallès began to feel a strong dislike for the poet. He was contemptuous of literary elites and disapproved of Baudelaire's "cénacle," but probably he was also jealous of his popularity. As Lucien Scheler and Roger Bellet conclude, Vallès' article of 1867 must be seen as "le témoignage malheureux d'une violente antipathie pour l'homme et d'un aveuglement absolu à l'égard de l'oeuvre." A later article in 1883 revealed a softening in Vallès' attitude, yet he remained insensitive to Baudelaire's poetry even if he became slightly less antagonistic towards him as a man. It is ironic, therefore, that he should have reacted to widespread condemnation of Musset on account of his debauchery, with the observation that it was the poet's works not his character which people should be judging:

"L'homme, c'est la gaine, et le vers c'est la lame: la gaine est rongée et usée par l'alcool, c'est bien; mais le vers en sort fin comme une épingle d'or ou étincelant comme une épée d'acier. Je n'ai que le vers à juger." Here Vallès' choice of imagery suggests the incisive and ironic qualities of Musset's writing which evidently appealed to the radical rebellious streak in both himself and Zola. Commenting on Musset's poetry Zola too wrote appreciatively of "sa crânerie de gamin de génie", "un romantisme railleur", "cette finesse de

1. Baudelaire and Vallès are both known to have frequented the Cafe de Madrid, the Cafe Tabourey, the Cabaret Dinochau and the Brasserie Andler (otherwise known as La Rotonde) in the 1850's.
3. Bellet and Scheler, in their article "Vallès et Baudelaire" (op. cit., p.218), suggest that Vallès as a journalist rather than poet, and also an 'auvergnat', may have been considered a second-class member of the group, and may, therefore, have been relegated from the Cabaret Dinochau to Le Rat-Mort next door, this prompting his jealousy. However, this is merely a hypothesis and Vallès is known to have frequented the Cabaret Dinochau itself.
4. ibid., p.221.
5. See Note 2 above.
moquerie, ce scepticisme", and suggested a feeling of affinity between radicals like himself and Musset: "Il était sceptique et ardent comme nous ..." He explained his generation's enthusiasm for Musset in terms which no doubt characterized Vallès' attitude too:

"La ballade à la lune nous enthousiasmait, parce qu'elle était pour nous le défi qu'un poète de race portait aussi bien aux romantiques qu'aux classiques, le libre éclat de rire d'un esprit indépendant, dans lequel toute notre génération reconnaissait un frère." Like Vallès he praised Musset's simple expression of emotions in contrast to the rhetoric of many romantic poets, and his genuineness in contrast to Baudelaire's artificiality. In his view too Musset's so-called dissipation was merely youthful extravagance, and anyway his personal conduct was his own affair. He defended his love of Musset's poetry declaring, "Nous nous sommes donnés à celui dont les vers mentaient le moins."

This comment points to a key factor in his and Vallès' aversion to much romantic literature. Although this was not made clear in "Les Victimes du Livre", it is apparent from Vallès' writing elsewhere that he feared the tyranny of romantic literature above all on account of the romantic tendency to present an idealized vision of the world which might excite the imagination yet was harmful in so far as it distracted attention from or misrepresented reality. In the trilogy we experience Vingtras' disillusionment on discovering the discrepancy which so often exists between the world of fiction and that of reality. He longs to emulate the ingenuity of Captain Cook and make

2. ibid., p.331.
3. ibid., p.329.
4. ibid., p.330.
5. ibid., p.337.
6. ibid., p.330.
window-panes from fish scales, but succeeds only in repelling his neighbours with the stench of fish that emanates from his pockets. Consequently he becomes increasingly cautious in his response to literature, and wary, for example, of being taken in by a romanticized vision of revolt, he questions the true motives of his revolutionary fervour.

Evidently Vallès had been alerted to the potential dangers of romantic literature by the fate of many young companions who were cruelly misled by the romantic image of the poet and idyllic portrayals of the bohemian life. Their expectations were harshly punctured when they were confronted with the sordid realities of the struggle for survival in the attics of a hostile city. Disillusioned, dejected, they found it difficult to come to terms with reality. Describing his neighbours in a house formerly inhabited by Rousseau and subsequently by George Sand, Vallès writes:

"J'y fus le voisin de quelques garçons 'victimes du livre' qui ont mené, les yeux sur leur rêve, une vie d'aveugles, et sont tombés de la hauteur de leurs espoirs dans les trous profonds où l'on descend parfois non seulement le corps d'un homme, mais encore l'honneur d'un nom! Ils avaient cru aux romans qu'ils avaient lus!"

Throughout his articles of literary criticism and his "fiction" he attacked the writers most guilty of deceiving the young in this manner. He was disgusted with Gautier and Nerval when he realized how starkly their visions of carefree youth contrasted with the harsh facts of their personal experience:

"Ils crient que le printemps de leur jeunesse fut tout ensoleillé - Mais par quel soleil? (...) Ce Gautier, ce Gérard de Nerval, ils en sont à la chasse au pain! Gautier le récolte dans les salons de Mathilde, Gérard court après des croûtes dans les balayures. On me dit qu'il a parlé de se tuer un soir qu'il n'avait pas de logis."

2. See O.C. II, p.78.
Henri Mürger, however, author of "Scènes de la Vie de Bohème," was to be the most frequent object of his attacks. It was at Mürger's funeral that Vallès was first inspired with the theme of "Les Réfractaires." It struck him as bitterly ironic that Mürger should be buried with such pomp and ceremony after a life of hardship. Evidently the lighthearted romantic vision of bohemia presented in "Scènes de la Vie de Bohème" differed as much from Mürger's as from his own experience. Through "Les Réfractaires" Vallès hoped to free young men from the romantic illusions with which Mürger and others had inspired them:

"Moi qui suis sauvé, je vais faire l'histoire de ceux qui ne le sont pas, des gueux qui n'ont pas trouvé leur écuelle."^3

Both in his preface to "L'Argent" and in "Les Réfractaires" he rebelled against the seductive poetic presentation of poverty, asserting, "La Pauvreté, elle épuise les forts et corrompt les faibles."^4 His intention was to present a less attractive but more realistic portrayal of bohemia. The young girls he met in the Latin Quarter were, he claimed, slovenly sluts rather than delightful Musettes, and in his descriptions of his own experiences he evidently relished expounding this discrepancy, savagely debunking Mürger's romantic vision.6

In fact Mürger is often regarded as a realist rather than a romantic, because of the subject-matter of his works, the unconventional bohemian "milieux" he describes. Pierre Martino refers to "Scènes de la Vie de Bohème" as one of the first

2. See O.C. III, pp.34-5.
3. O.C.III, p.35.
5. See Bianca Chiabov's comparison between Mürger's lighthearted, sympathetic bohemia and Vallès' sombre and politically charged portrait in La Bohème à la moitié du siècle, Mürger et Vallès, 1837-61, Milan, Universita Commerciale Luigi Bocconi, 1957-8.
realist novels. He admits the presence of unrealistic qualities and a degree of idealization in Mürger's writing, but maintains that he has moments of truth when with comic verve he himself contrasts his romanticization with the reality of his pitiful surroundings. Robert Baldick too argues that his portrayal of bohemia is not wholly unrealistic. He quotes from Mürger's letters showing his discontent with his way of life, and cites his warning that Bohemia is a "preface to the Academy, the Hôtel-Dieu or the Morgue." Nevertheless he is obliged to admit that Mürger's works gave birth to the legend of romantic bohemia, and it is this legend which Vallès attacked. (Champfleury, whom Vallès respected as a leader of the realists, also criticized the lack of realism in Mürger's works, and commented that he was not inclined to observation, but was inward-looking.)

Mürger also fell within Vallès' definition of romantic writers by virtue of his excessive sentimentality. All his life he treasured the relics of a youthful and idealistic love-affair, a pair of white gloves, a velvet domino and a faded bouquet of flowers. His works abound in effusive sentimental outpourings of love. Maybe he did have moments of comic verve, but for Vallès these were not sufficient to redress the balance.

Béranger, like Mürger, may not generally be considered a romantic writer, but he too was dismissed by Vallès as typical of the romantic generation. Although Béranger was influenced by Chateaubriand's "René" and "Le Génie du Christianisme" in his

2. ibid., p.35.
4. ibid., p.128.
5. See below p.77
7. ibid., p.101.
youth, and although romantic "mal du siècle" pervades his early writing,¹ he was a song-writer rather than a poet, and the majority of his songs, written in a ribald popular vein, are so down to earth that he is generally considered in a separate category apart from the elevated Romantics. Vallès, however, found in his writing the same romanticized portrayal of youth he had complained of in Mürger's works:

"Et il se moque de nous!
'Dans un grenier qu'on est bien à vingt ans!'
On y est bien comme un évadé qui, contre un coin de mur a une minute pour se reposer, mesurer l'espace et bander sa blessure."²

Also he declared Béranger dishonest and unrealistic in his attitude to young writers whom he misled through excessive and indiscriminate praise of their works. In his preface to "L'Argent" he described him as "ce triste vieillard qui prête du génie à usure, et vous envoie bon an mal an trois grands poètes à l'hôpital."³ In "L'Epoque" in 1865 he referred once again to his irresponsibility in this respect.⁴ He and Mürger alike were to be held responsible for the untimely misery and death of many young writers. Both were guilty, he claimed, of glossing over reality and disguising the truth in poetic fantasy. Indeed he seems to have totally overlooked the fact that much of Béranger's writing displays a keen social and political awareness. (I hope to make clearer the reasons for this below.)

Hugo was to be another object of Vallès' attacks. In 1865 he described "Les Chansons des Rues et des Bois" as a detestable book, and accused Hugo of distracting attention from reality with superficial light-hearted poems whose gaiety and fantasy he found forced and pathetic. He considered Hugo's

2. O.C. II, p.130.
3. Pléiade I, p.3.
language highly artificial and was irritated by passages of fanciful romantic sentimentality and preciosity. Faced with such sentimentalities he even looked back longingly to Hugo's epics, for at least his language had then been vigorous and forceful. Admittedly "Les Chansons des Rues et des Bois" was a special case, but Vallès tended to generalize from the individual works before him, and faced with the artificial language and limited scope of these poems he rebelled against Hugo, and called for the vigour, naturalness, and breadth of a more realistic literature.

Another aspect of Hugo's writing which led Vallès to dismiss him as a romantic was his preoccupation with religious and metaphysical questions. Vallès' attitude to religion, his oscillation between fits of virulent anti-clericalism and moments of apparent tolerance would in itself constitute the subject for a thesis, but if we may be allowed to summarize his view, it was simply that to indulge in metaphysical speculation was futile escapist fantasy. Reality for him was confined to the immediate social realities of the nineteenth century, and he declared, "... je suis sage, ce me semble, en demandant qu'on s'attache aux spectacles de la terre plutôt que d'essayer de voir clair au fond du ciel ..." He felt that belief in "non-existent" deities prevented people from facing life in a positive constructive manner: "Le malheur est que ceux qui croient en Dieu n'ont pas besoin de conclure et attendent tout de la Providence." He was opposed, therefore, to the intrusion of religious elements in literary works. This was a further reason for his rejection

2. ibid., p.188. Generally Vallès was critical of epics because of their inherent tendency to glorify and magnify.
5. See his objections to the religious dimension of Calemard de la Fayette's poetry which he admired so deeply in other respects; (Le Progrès de Lyon, 12 Sept. 1864, Pléiade I, p.391.)
of Rousseau and Chateaubriand, and the deeply religious aspects of their works. Discussing Baudelaire's poems, he complained of "un mysticisme bêtasse," whilst in Musset's works, on the other hand, he appreciated the poet's scepticism: "Son scepticisme amer, son désespoir cynique ont porté, n'en doutez pas, un coup terrible à la foi chrétienne." As for Hugo's "Contemplations," he dismissed this collection of poems outright, referring to it contemptuously as "ce galimatias mystique". In his view this marked the beginning of a period of romantic decadence in Hugo's life, during which the products of his extravagant imagination defied all reason. Commenting on the mysticism in "Les Chansons des Rues et des Bois," Vallès argued that this was merely an indication of Hugo's inadequacies, an attempt to disguise banal reality and endow his poetry with seductive charm:

"C'est la tactique de tous ceux qui ont le cerveau épuisé ou vide de se draper ainsi dans des pans d'ombre et de se perdre dans les mages. Ils veulent avoir l'attrait du mystère et le prestige de l'élévation. Il faut que nous combattions de toutes nos forces cette tendance au mysticisme qui n'est qu'un manteau de l'impuissance ou le masque d'une tyrannie." The expression "masque d'une tyrannie" reminds us of Vallès' article "Les Victimes du Livre" and his discussion of the power of literature to dominate and delude the reader. He evidently saw Hugo's mysticism in the same light as Mürger's idealization, for both had the power to beguile and mislead.

Closely linked with this mysticism in his view was the romantic tendency to ennoble and elevate through the use of grandiose but empty rhetorical language. Although he admired Lamennais as a leading socialist thinker, he considered him as

4. loc. cit.
pontiff of a "biblisme majestueux et vide." So too in his review of "Les Chansons des Rues et des Bois", he criticized Hugo's vain attempts to elevate uninspired material:

"... vos substantifs énormes ne me touchent pas; on n'agrandit pas les idées parce qu'on allonge les mots. Je ne prends pas le vide pour la profondeur et le creux pour l'abîme." A few years later, in June 1868, irritated again by the poet's persistent tendency to magnify and elevate, he referred to him scornfully as "cet épopiste, ce bibliste, chez qui il n'est question que d'empereurs, de papes etc." Even in 1874, when reviewing "Quatrevingt-Treize", a work to which Vallès responded more favourably than to any other of Hugo's works, he accused Hugo of:

"... un biblisme de phrases qui noie l'idée dans l'ombre ou la mouille dans le brouillard. Une manière solennelle et vague, mal appropriée à la précision terrible du drame qui se joue."

For Vallès, romantic rhetoric was yet another form of romantic falsity and mystification, a further means of disguising and concealing reality. In 1883 he compared Hugo's poetry to that of Eugene Pettier in terms which revealed very clearly his criticisms of the Romantics:

"... ils (les vers de Pettier) ne s'envolent pas d'un coup d'aile sur la montagne où Olympe rêve et gémit. Ils ne se perchent ni sur la crinière des casques, ni sur la crête des nuées: ils restent dans la rue, la rue pauvre."

He appreciated simple realism and familiarity, and demanded a literature accessible to ordinary people and related to their everyday lives.

However, not only was this tendency to elevate manifest in mysticism and a preoccupation with the metaphysical rather than the social, it also revealed itself in the creation of superhuman heroes. Empty heroism, Vallès observed, was a marked feature of French literature of the romantic era:

"Notre littérature sent toujours l'héroïsme par quelque coin ... C'est sur un piédestal toujours que nos auteurs placent les gens dont ils racontent la vie, l'agonie ou la mort, au lieu de les suivre simplement sur la terre ferme."1

He resented the manner in which this cult of heroism had dominated his upbringing:

"... il y avait, hélas! un mot qui pesait glorieus, sur les âmes, un mot qu'on prononce: l'héroïsme! ... au lieu de la vie vraie, on nous représentait toujours une vie factice que traversaient des éclairs de théâtre; on ne peignait pas le monde actuel, vivant, avec ses exigences, ses dangers. On donnait à des personnages imaginaires une vertu et un bonheur qui leur faisaient franchir tous les obstacles. On n'apprenait pas à l'auditoire ou aux lecteurs ce qui est, on mettait son talent et sa gloire à créer des fictions et à développer des légendes."2

The presentation of such illusory grandeur and superhuman heroes capable of overcoming insuperable barriers would, he feared, only encourage dangerous delusion.

Vallès was particularly critical of Béranger and Hugo on this count. Béranger had created the glorious image of Napoleon the great leader and perpetuated the legend of the "petit caporal", whilst Hugo, so Vallès maintained, generally portrayed only noble royal and powerful figures.3 This was one reason for his appreciation of "Quatrevingt-Treize" (and "Les Misérables") for here, he claimed, Hugo had broken with his usual habits in portraying ordinary people.4

However, it was Hugo's and Béranger's military heroism

which irritated Vallès above all. He himself was a bitter opponent of war. In "L'Epoque" in 1865 he declared "je hais la guerre et j'immole sa poésie sauvage sur l'autel de l'humanité."  

When war broke out in July 1870 and Paris seethed with the spirit of patriotic enthusiasm, he was attacked by the mob as he paraded his banner "Vive la paix" through the streets of Paris. In 1883 and 1884 he was to lead a vehement anti-militaristic campaign in "Le Cri du Peuple", criticizing French involvement in the Far East. It was not simply the fact that Béranger and Hugo magnified their heroes to unrealistic proportions that annoyed him, but rather the feeling that they had thus perpetuated the ethos of military grandeur and facilitated the return of the imperial regime in 1851. He complained of Hugo:

"Fils d'un père soldat, il a chanté la guerre, la guerre horrible, d'où les tyrans sortent éperonnés, bottés, en criant: la Patrie, c'est moi! ... Il est pour moitié avec un autre poète, Béranger, dans notre malheur!"  

Indeed it is in discussing this question of heroism that it becomes clear how far Vallès' objections to the Romantics were in essence political. His criticisms of romanticism have pinpointed different manners in which literature may disguise reality. It soon becomes apparent that it is a particular political reality which he wished literature to reflect.

One might have expected Béranger to win his approval as champion of liberty and the people, for Béranger claimed that his first concern was the well-being of the people and that he would support any form of government which improved the conditions of the working classes. However, as we have seen, this did not win him Vallès' sympathy. In "Le Bachelier" Béranger is seen to be the subject of much heated debate between Vallès and his

2. See O.C. III, p.158.  
life-long friend Arthur Arnould (i.e. Renoul). In 1864 when Arnould published an eight hundred page study of the poet, this divided them deeply, for Vallès could not understand his friend's admiration for Béranger. His own references to him are consistently unfavourable, and this for basically political reasons. He was alienated by a song such as "Les Gueux" and the complacency implicit in the lines:

"Les gueux, les gueux
Sont des gens heureux.
Qui s'aident entre eux;
Vivent les gueux!"

He accused Béranger of lulling the people into a state of apathy declaring, "Mais il ne faut pas dire cela aux gueux! S'ils le croient, ils ne se révolteront pas, ils prendront le bâton, la besace et non le fusil!" He was suspicious of his supposedly democratic beliefs and reproached him for his cowardly resignation early in 1848. He associated him continually with the Napoleonic legend and cowardly subservience:

"... ce Béranger, il a chanté Napoléon! Il a léché le bronze de la colonne, il a porté des fleurs sur le tombeau de César, il s'est agenouillé devant le chapeau de bandit qui menait le peuple à coups de pied..."

For Vallès the imperial family was the embodiment of caesarism, militarism and repression, and the events of 2 December 1851 had been one of the most bitter disappointments of his life. He was enraged by the manner in which Louis-Napoleon, in the guise of a sincere inheritor of the Revolution, had led people to believe that he was fighting for their liberty, and he blamed Béranger

1. See O.C. II, Ch. X, pp.120-34.
6. ibid., p.129.
7. loc. cit. See also O.C. VI, p.378 and XIII, p.296.
for perpetuating the Napoleonic legend in his songs, and thus becoming Louis-Napoleon's accomplice in repression:

"... il aidait Transnonain par ses odes à la soldatesque, et ses saluts à la Napoléon, passant les bras de la démocratie dans les manches de la Redingote grise." 1

On Béranger's death in 1857, despite the poet's request for a simple burial, Louis-Napoleon insisted that a national funeral was held, paying tribute to a great poet who had fostered patriotism and perpetuated memories of imperial glory. 2 Since Vallès was a bitter opponent of the Second Empire, it is not surprising that he should have condemned a poet set up by Louis-Napoleon as a national hero.

Vallès criticized Hugo on similar grounds, for he had given his support to Louis-Napoleon when he stood as a candidate for the presidency in 1848. He had since campaigned against caesarism in "L'Evénement", had attempted to excite resistance to the coup of 1851 and had opposed Louis-Napoleon's regime thereafter, yet the fact remained that he was amongst those who had paved the way for him in 1848.

Deeply concerned himself with social and political problems, Vallès was critical of those who refused to involve themselves in political affairs. He attacked Vigny on this count, 3 and there is no doubt that Murger's political indifference "exacerbated his hostility towards him. However, worse still than indifference, in Vallès' view was the misplaced political involvement of writers such as Béranger, Lamennais, Lamartine and Hugo. Although

2. See S. Dillaz, op. cit., p.68.
4. Murger remained uninvolved in the events of 1848 except in so far as he acted as a minor spy for Tsarist Russia, passing on information through his Russian employer. Had he participated in events, he would undoubtedly have been amongst the reactionaries. (cf. R. Baldick, op. cit., pp.110 and 133).
they might have appeared to have espoused the cause of liberty and defended the rights of the people, Vallès regarded them as half-hearted liberals who had deserted the people in their hour of need:

"Tandis que lui, ce pauvre peuple, a donné pour la conquête de la Liberté, aux heures d'égarement, tout ce qu'il pouvait donner, son sang, les gentilshommes de l'esprit, eux, n'ont rien osé, rien ..."¹

He criticized Hugo's and Lamartine's involvement in the events of 1848 declaring,

"Ils donnèrent à la République, l'un des pieds de cygne, l'autre une tête d'aigle et la menèrent ainsi endormie et saignante à l'abattoir. Ne le savez-vous pas? Ne savez-vous pas que Lamartine avachit le peuple le lendemain de Février, et que Victor Hugo vota pour un Bonaparte président le 10 décembre?"²

These accusations, however, are somewhat unfair. Vallès appears to overlook the fact that it was by a free election based on universal suffrage that a predominantly conservative majority was elected to the Constituent Assembly on 23 April 1848. He supported the democratic principle, but was unwilling to accept the conservative government voted to power by the peasantry in their fear of the "péril rouge".

His criticisms of Lamartine are particularly unjust. It was probably Lamartine's support for the socialist republican Ledru-Rollin which led to his own decline in popularity in 1848, and, although he was blind to Grévy's warnings when, foreseeing the possible upsurge of bonapartism, and fearing the power to be invested in the presidency, the latter proposed an amendment to the constitution, he was one of Louis-Napoleon's opponents as a candidate for the presidency in December 1848. Certainly he was not guilty of fostering the Napoleonic myth, for with poems such as "Bonaparte" (1823) he attacked the emperor's

tyranny and evoked his glory only in so far as it highlighted his crime. He accused him of having interrupted the natural processes of revolution, depriving the people of their rights, and denounced him as "le génie de la contre-révolution." In 1840 when the Chamber debated the fate of Napoleon's remains, it was he who warned of the dangers of bonapartist enthusiasm, for he regarded Napoleon as a man of force who had strangled public liberty. Although he was perhaps not so hostile towards Louis-Napoleon as to his uncle, nonetheless Vallès' criticisms seem undeserved.

There is more truth in what Vallès says of Hugo for he had supported Louis-Napoleon's candidature for the presidency with his articles in "L'Événement", and was subsequently rewarded with the offer of the position of French ambassador in Spain. Moreover, although his early works had been strongly royalist, from 1825 onwards his attitude became increasingly pro-Napoleonic. Even when he had shown little love for Napoleon himself, he had respected the soldiers of his army, and anyway from 1827 onwards he glorified the Emperor in poems such as "A la Colonne", "Lui" and "Bounaberdi". He justified his tyranny as having preserved the acquisitions of the Revolution and having earned the nation great glory. Evidently he came to regard him as a superhuman, the very incarnation of the greatness of France, interpreting his defeat at Waterloo as the work of God and fate rather than the result of his own misjudgement. Although after 2 December 1851 he contrasted the grandeur of Napoleon I with the mediocrity of his nephew, he had contributed nonetheless to the latter's

2. Ibid., p.129.
3. Ibid., pp.130-31.
rise to power.

In any event, whether or not Vallès' attitudes are justifiable, his disillusionment with the failure of liberal writers to advance the cause of the people in 1848 was so strong that he declared indifference preferable to the commitment of a Lamartine or Hugo: "Mieux vaut avoir été 'inutile' comme Musset que glorieux comme eux."¹ Hugo's political inconstancy aroused his mistrust.² His liberalism, he claimed, was of shallow foundation. Indeed, until after the Commune, which marked a considerable change in Vallès' attitude to Hugo,³ Vallès dismissed him con-

1. "Lettres d'un Irregulier," Le Figaro, 7 June 1868, O.C. XI, p.357. NB. Although Musset did not involve himself directly in politics, his play "Lorenzaccio" (1833) is clearly political. Lorenzo longs to free Florence from the oppression of a tyrannical ruler, his cousin, but his 'coup' fails because, although avowed Republicans, the Florentines prove reluctant to involve themselves in direct action. The play must have gained a new poignancy after the events of 1848-51 in France. We have no evidence that Vallès read or saw the play, but it is possible that Musset's condonation of tyrannicide and the general political attitudes revealed in the play are partly responsible for Vallès' sympathy for him. Vallès would not have been repelled by Lorenzo's pessimism, for he accepted this in the works of Musset's generation, even though he found it intolerable in Baudelaire and his own contemporaries (cf. ibid., p.359).


3. All Vallès' references to Hugo before 1871 are hostile. Consequently when Hugo was asked to edit the Paris-Guide of 1868 he put Vallès at the top of the list of those whose collaboration he refused to consider. This only aggravated Vallès' hostility, for as "Le Tableau de Paris" reveals, he was in his element evoking Parisian scenes.

However, in February 1871 Hugo opposed the peace and also the withdrawal of the government to Versailles. On 8 March 1871, finding himself part of a powerless minority within the National Assembly he resigned his office. Later, when the Belgian government refused to grant the Communards political asylum, he publicly condemned this decision and offered them refuge in his own home in Brussels. He continued to defend the Communards in 1872 (Rochefort in particular), and published a collection of poems entitled "L'Année terrible" and also a work entitled "Actes et Paroles" in which he criticized the Government of National Defense and praised the courage of the people of Paris. Vallès now warmed to him and was enthusiastically appreciative in his review of "Quatrevingt-treize" (reproduced by G. Delfau, op. cit., pp.355-9), this suggesting how far his literary judgements were influenced by political considerations.

Zola was as unenthusiastic as Vallès over "Les Chansons des Rues et des Bois" (cf. Emile Zola, Oeuvres Complètes, vol. X, pp.80-86) and "Hernani" (Ibid., vol. XI, pp.585-9), and his attitude too changed considerably over the years, but he liked some and disliked other of Hugo's works both before and after the Commune and was obviously not so swayed by political prejudice.
temptuously as a political opportunist. When "Hernani" was revived in 1867, it was generally heralded with enthusiasm as a symbol of romanticism and revolution, but Vallès' reaction was unfavourable, for he considered the play an artificial symbol which in no way did justice to the reality of revolution. He found the Romantics' revolt against convention tame and limited, and questioned the sincerity of their commitment to the cause of liberty. Men such as Hugo and Béranger had come for many people to symbolize the cause of Liberty and Justice, and inevitably this irritated Vallès, since he considered their political conviction highly dubious. Moreover, in his view their general tendency to mystification militated against such liberty and was incompatible with the open honesty he expected of a liberal thinker. In his criticism of "Les Chansons des Rues et des Bois" he complained,

"... je n'aime point à voir, dans notre camp, ceux qui se prêtendent des esprits libres prendre des allures de visionnaire ou d'astrologue. Si la liberté les suivait, elle irait avec eux trébucher dans le baquet ou dans le puits."3

He questioned whether the Romantics truly wished to enlighten and liberate the masses, for even Lamennais, he felt, had become an involuntary accomplice to Louis-Napoleon, and had contributed to the general process of mystification through the vague and mystical nature of his writing.4

Furthermore all these writers were, in Vallès' opinion, essentially bourgeois, and for this reason alone unlikely to win his sympathy. Mürger may have been of working-class origin but his mother had great hopes for her son, and whereas Vallès reacted against his parents' bourgeois aspirations, Mürger

2. ibid., p.302.
inherited his mother's ambitions, her disdain for the working-
classes and for manual work. In his preface and epilogue to his
collected "Scènes de la Vie de Bohème", published in 1851, Mürger
glorified material success and appeared to turn his back on
bohemia. Vallès was no doubt amongst those who considered this
the hypocritical betrayal of an aspiring bourgeois materialist.
Certainly he regarded the bohemian circles described by Mürger
and Nerval as narrow, introspective and essentially bourgeois.¹

Unjustifiable though this may appear, Béranger too became
a symbol of the bourgeoisie in his eyes. Béranger's childhood
had been every bit as disturbed and deprived as Vallès', and his
upbringing appears to have been less bourgeois in character than
Vallès' own. His parents had separated on his birth in 1780 and
after being put out to nurse he was cared for by different
relations in turn. He received little formal education and
throughout his life remained unsure of spelling. In his youth
he performed all manner of jobs, including that of ostler and
printer's devil. Nonetheless Vallès considered him a bourgeois
perhaps because he had favoured the bourgeois monarch Louis-
Philippe, but, more significantly, because his songs appealed
to popular bourgeois sentiments. Vallès' own father admired him,
and from what we know of M. Valiez' attitudes, this would seem
to suggest that Béranger was neither a true democrat, nor
progressive.² In "Le Bachelier" Vingtras criticizes Renoul's
"embourgeoisement" and evidently associates this with his love
of Béranger.³ In Lucien Scheler's words, Vallès looked upon
Béranger as,

2. Vallès' parents social aspirations and their pride in
belonging to the middle-classes reveal their bourgeois conserva-
tism. They were horrified by Vallès' involvement in left-wing
politics in 1848, but were unable to restrain him. This was
what made M. Valiez finally resort to having Jules committed
to a lunatic asylum in December 1851.
In the case of Hugo, his bourgeois characteristics no doubt contributed to Vallès' hostility, and in Baudelaire's case too, Vallès makes specific reference to the poet's bourgeois origins.

Romanticism, in Vallès' eyes, signified the extravagances of a diseased sensibility, unnaturalness and falsity, the distortion of reality, the veiling of truth in high-faluting rhetoric, a futile preoccupation with the spiritual and metaphysical, a tendency to magnify and glorify, and finally a hypocritical political liberalism. He evidently felt that the majority of writers of the romantic era were a party to a bourgeois plot to conceal the true nature of contemporary social realities. He looked upon the mystification and falsity of romantic literature as political instruments, entertaining the public with idle poetic fantasies and preventing them from discovery of the Truth. Indeed, as suggested above, although "Les Victimes du Livre" refers to all manner of literature, it soon becomes apparent that Vallès' fears centred on the dangers of romantic literature and its misrepresentation of, or diversion from reality. Simple and natural presentation of the Truth became his first priority. Realism emerged for him as the only means of guarding against the deleterious influence of literature. In Bellet's words, "... puisque l'on est toujours plus ou moins victime du livre, il faut que le critère du livre, cet écran, soit la vie."4

Whereas Vallès associated romanticism with melancholy,

decadence, day-dreaming and bourgeois half-heartedness, as we shall see in the coming chapters, he envisaged that the vigorous, dynamic and radical realism, for which he longed, might fulfil a positive rôle in society.
CHAPTER IV. LITERATURE AND TRUTH - VALLES AND REALISM

Vallès' first arrival in Paris in September 1848 coincided with Courbet's outstanding success in the 1848 Exhibition, and hence with the beginnings of the realist movement. Champfleury tells us that it was towards the end of 1848 that he, Courbet, Gustave Planche, Baudelaire, Corot, Proudhon and several other writers and artists first began to meet in the rue Hautefeuille.¹ Their meetings in the "Rotonde" and the "Brasserie des Martyrs" were the scene of lively discussions as they exchanged ideas for more realistic forms of art and literature. Vallès is known to have attended these informal gatherings from the early 1850's onwards, and it is evident that they very much influenced his attitudes.

Courbet, Champfleury and Duranty are generally regarded as the protagonists of the realist movement, but they never put their names to a statement of common ideals, defining precisely what they understood by "realism". Hence the vagueness and confusion which surrounds the term. However, this vagueness was not purely accidental. One essential characteristic of the group was their common reaction against servile imitation, and their opposition to narrow and dogmatic literary schools. The essence of the movement was independence and innovation. Courbet, who has remained the best known of the realists is generally considered to have revolutionized art with "L'Enterrement à Ornans" and "Les Casseurs de pierre". Vallès hailed him as a courageous, independent innovator: "Quand Courbet parut, tout étouffait encore dans le cadre étroit de la tradition. Ce cadre, il le fit craquer ..."² As Duranty suggests in his periodical "Le Réalisme", the realists were not a well defined

1. See Champfleury, Souvenirs et portraits de jeunesse, Ch. XXVII, pp.185-92.
group of like-minded disciples, but loosely associated individualists, who refused to be bound by set formulae:

"Dire école réaliste est un non sens: Réalisme signifie l'expression franche et complète des individualités; ce qu'il attaque, c'est justement la convention, l'imitation, toute espèce d'école."1

The only documents we have from which to deduce the essential tenets of the movement are the periodical "Le Réalisme", produced by Durandy, Henri Thulié and Jules Assézat2 in 1856, and Champfleury's "Le Réalisme" of 1857. Throughout these works hostility to dogma and conformity is continually apparent, as in the following passage by Thulié:

"L'esprit d'école est la pire des choses; quand une école a formulé son système, il est formulé pour toujours, elle ne bronchera plus; elle prétend avoir trouvé le nec plus ultra de ce qui peut être fait. Ecoles, académies, tout cela se ressemble, ce sont des entraves ..."3

The realists joined together then, not in formulating a set of artistic principles, but in revolt. Champfleury declared emphatically, "Je n'aime pas les écoles, je n'aime pas les drapeaux, je n'aime pas les systèmes, je n'aime pas les dogmes ...",4 yet he did not dissociate himself from the movement, for he regarded it as essentially revolutionary: "On a dit que le réalisme était une insurrection ... je ne crains pas de faire partie de cette insurrection."5

Considering Vallès' scathing attitude to the "cénacles" of Gautier and Baudelaire, one would not have expected him to associate with any literary school or group. He inveighed fiercely against conventional imitation and the unifying conformist

2. Durandy wrote most of the articles in this periodical. Thulié and Assézat were his sole collaborators, and all other names under which different articles appear, are merely pseudonyms for Durandy.
influence of academies and other such literary institutions. In a letter to Richepin he wrote, "Je voudrais que les conventionneux de l'art, littérature, théâtre, poésie, fussent fusillés sans pitié." Only the new attracted him: "... il faut être neuf et vivant pour me séduire et attacher." He believed that literature and ideas should be in a constant state of flux.

Throughout his life, he continually reasserted his independence, as for example in "La Rue" in 1867: "Nous n'appartenons à aucune école, nous tirons sur toutes" or, many years later, in "Le Citoyen de Paris": "Je tiens à rester un incassé ..." Yet it is not surprising that he associated with the realists, considering the great emphasis which they too placed on individuality, independence and innovation.

It was Courbet above all who won Vallès' admiration through his single-mindedness and his unfailing disregard for tradition and popularity. Vallès declares enthusiastically,

"J'adore ces natures tout d'une pièce qui ne reculent pas d'une semelle et suivent bravement leur chemin à travers les quolibets, les huées et même la misère."

In 1866 he described "Les Casseurs de pierre" and "L'Enterrement à Ornans" in loving detail, recalling how their striking and compelling realism had riveted his attention. Courbet's participation in the Commune gave further proof of his rebellious spirit and endeared him to Vallès. Shortly after the artist's death in December 1877 he wrote a eulogy on him in "Le Réveil", 6 January 1878. Apart from this he showed little interest
in painting. Evidently it was above all through outspoken honesty, independence and revolt both in his personal life and in his painting that Courbet had made a deep impression on him.

As for Champfleury, Vallès had high expectations of him as leader of the realists, and when "Les Demoiselles Tourangeau" first appeared in 1864, he was ready to herald the author:

"... j'allais, tout joyeux, saisir l'occasion qui s'offrait d'exprimer toutes mes sympathies pour le chef littéraire de cette école réaliste, qui porte en elle, quoi qu'on dise, le secret du génie nouveau." 1

However, he was obliged to let the occasion pass, offering very little comment, for the novel did not live up to his expectations. 2 Indeed Vallès soon concluded that Champfleury was a mediocre writer with little creative talent. 3 Duranty too, although well-known as exponent and defender of realism in his periodical, enjoyed little success as a novelist, and as Vallès perceived, it was in painting rather than literature that realism was to achieve its greatest successes. 4

Nevertheless, however disappointing the creative writing of the realists, Vallès was greatly influenced by their ideas, 5 and supported the essential principles expressed in their theoretical writing. In discussing the criteria of realism which emerge from his articles of literary criticism, I shall refer to the theoretical writing of Champfleury, Duranty and

2. He found no more cause for satisfaction in Champfleury's "Histoire de la caricature moderne" which he reviewed in Le Figaro, 23 Nov. 1865, O.C. XI, pp.199-208.  
4. ibid., p.399.  
5. On founding "La Rue" in 1867, Vallès invited both Champfleury and Duranty to collaborate with him. Champfleury does not appear to have responded, but Duranty wrote three articles for the paper on 13, 20 and 27 July 1867 (see G. Gille, op. cit., pp.179-81). On 27 July Vallès and his fellow collaborators stated that they were not in entire agreement with Duranty's views, but nonetheless Vallès admired his outspokenness.
other members of the group, in order to show how far Vallès reflected their beliefs. However, I should also make clear that Vallès never regarded realism as it emerged in the fifties and sixties as an ultimate solution to all literary problems. He believed in a constant process of change and betterment:

"Allons donc! le réalisme, le naturalisme crèveront après le classicisme et le romantisme. Ce serait à cracher sur la littérature, si la révolution ne l'emportait pas dans son torrent!"¹

As we have seen, the realist movement grew out of a desire for change and innovation. Vallès firmly believed that changes in literature should reflect changes in society: "Tout se tient. La littérature change de tour quand la politique change de face."² The romanticism of the thirties and forties, he claimed, had been a reflection of the vague political idealism of that era. In 1851, however, the people's aspirations had been harshly crushed, the glorious Napoleonic legend punctured, and the disillusioned public now longed, so he felt, for political and literary honesty and simplicity:

"Nous n'avons plus si vive la foi du régiment, et nous croyons plus beau d'être des hommes simples que des soldats glorieux.
Le même sentiment triomphe en littérature: on y aime davantage la simplicité et l'on n'étouffe pas la vérité dans le manteau du romanesque."³

He believed that literature, which had in the past assisted those in power by its tendency to mystification, could now serve the people by revealing the truth. The mass of the public had had enough of pretence and deception. He spoke of a general disaffection for fiction.⁴ The mood of the age was one of grim realism. He described the men of the fifties and sixties as:

"hommes nouveaux ... qui préfèrent la simplicité robuste au classique bouffi, la réalité puissante au romantisme

3. loc. cit.
4. loc. cit.
fanfaron, et qui demandent qu'on leur peigne la Vie sans 'fioritures' ...

Reacting violently against the empty rhetoric and falsity of romanticism, he advocated simple unadulterated presentation of reality, and was not alone in this. In Duranty's periodical "Le Réalisme" and in Proudhon's "Du principe de l'art et de sa destination sociale" too we find many passages paralleling Vallès' invectives against romanticism.

The realists were agreed that, in the past, excessive attention had been given to considerations of style and form, to artistry rather than to ideas. They asserted that the essence of literature was to communicate ideas rather than to experiment with elaborate artistic effects. Style and form must be subordinated to meaning, and not vice versa. Duranty declared, "le style est un instrument et non un but." So too Thulié remarked that style was merely "le véhicule de la pensée." (These views were echoed by Champfleury who asserted "l'ininfériorité de la forme et la puissance de l'idée", and Proudhon, who demanded "la substitution de l'idéalisme de l'idée à l'idéalisme de la forme." Consequently the realists considered the utmost simplicity and clarity in style and form necessary, in order that ideas might emerge clearly. As Thulié argued, "plus le style est clair et simple, mieux on comprend la pensée." A perfect expression had been found, not when an effect of artistic beauty was created, but when the artist had fully succeeded in communicating his ideas. Beauty lay in simplicity. Hence

---

7. See Thulié's conclusion: "le style le plus beau est celui qui est le plus simple." loc. cit.
Vallès' repeated calls for simplicity of form and expression throughout his articles of literary criticism.

In the realists' view it was the Romantics' and in particular the Parnassians' cult of Beauty, which had led to their ennoblement and idealization of reality. They extolled in contrast the merits of Truth. Thulé quoted approvingly Boileau's assertion: "Rien n'est beau que le vrai." Similarly Duranty declared, "il ne faut plus que le beau ait toute la place mais seulement une place; le XIXe siècle a affranchi l'ordinaire, le général, le vrai." Beauty in itself, he claimed, was meaningless: "La beauté ne veut rien dire sinon la beauté." Its presence was only justified when reality so demanded. In Assézat's words, "Pour nous, nous admettons le laid, parce qu'il est vrai; nous admettons le beau parce qu'il est vrai aussi ..."

In Vallès' literary criticisms "le vrai" emerged as the central criterion dictating his judgements, but he asserted nevertheless that Beauty was desirable: "On n'est vraiment sympathique et fort qu'en mêlant l'amour du vrai à l'amour du beau." Ideally the artist should combine a love of Beauty with his desire for Truth. However, on no account was Beauty to be sought at the expense of Truth. "N'allez pas pommader les fleurs, auréoliser les crânes, décrotter les batailles!" he declared, "Faites ressemblants les arbres et les hommes!" The first essential was faithful reproduction of reality. In Vallès' words, "un grain de vérité vaut mieux qu'une moisson de phrases."

2. E. Duranty, "Notes sur l'art," Le Réalisme, 10 July 1856.
3. loc. cit.
5. Le Progrès de Lyon, 29 Nov. 1864, Pléiade I, p.444.
It is this desire for Truth which explains his preference for personal memoirs rather than imaginative fiction. In 1864, reviewing Madame Roland's memoirs, he observed that they corresponded to the needs of the age in satisfying the public desire for Truth and exactitude:

"Le génie de notre époque se trahit bien dans ces préoccupations. Les commentaires passionnés ou romanesques passent après les Mémoires sûrs et fidèles. Fatiguée de la déclamation, un peu dégoûtée des phrases, notre génération a soif d'exactitude et de franchise." ¹

Champfleury too felt that memoirs had a particular fascination, simply because they were believed to be true. In 1857 he predicted that in a few years time Byron's memoirs, written by Charles Lamb and other friends, would still be remembered when the poet's own works were already forgotten.²

Taking this preference for factual accounts to its logical conclusion, the realists claimed that Truth might be ensured throughout art and literature in general, if the artist's work were always based on detailed observation of reality. They were wary of the imagination which, they felt, led to misrepresentation of reality. Indeed this mistrust was one of the most striking characteristics of the realist movement. In "Le Réalisme" Thulié maintained, "Le portrait fait d'imagination est toujours faux."³ He declared the imagination responsible for the creation of misleading illusions: "... l'imagination est inutile et souvent induit en faute; ne l'appelle-t-on pas la folle du logis?"⁴ As for plot, if a person's actions were to be a logical consequence of his or her character, then evidently, he maintained, the imagination was superfluous:

"Quand on met trop d'imagination dans un livre, il est bien rare qu'il y ait des caractères, et s'il y en a,

¹ Le Progrès de Lyon, 6 Sept. 1864, Pléiade I, p.383.
² Champfleury, Le Réalisme, p.42.
on les trouve en contradiction perpétuelle avec l'action."

Champfleury was more ready to admit the importance of the imagination. He showed a preference for works based directly on reality, for example, Diderot's "Histoire de Mademoiselle de la Chaux" in "Ceci n'est pas un conte", of which he wrote approvingly, "Diderot n'a rien inventé, rien trouvé, rien imaginé, il n'a été que le copiste intelligent d'une passion malheureuse qui se jouait devant lui." However, he recognized that the artist exercised his creative faculties in selecting and arranging details of reality, and was, therefore, not so contemptuous of the imagination as Thulié had been.

Vallès, however, was undiscriminating and particularly extreme in his condemnation of the imagination, declaring:

"Quand l'imagination crée tout, elle emporte l'oeuvre dans le pays de la curiosité tragique ou plaisante, mais où le sol n'est pas solide, les personnages n'ont pas les pieds dans la terre ferme de la vérité." In "Le Candidat des Pauvres" Vingtras mocks the notion of creative inspiration, telling us how, when he wants to compose poetry to please his poet friends, he stuffs his fingers in his ears, and cuts himself off from reality:

"... l'inspiration vient bien mieux quand on a les yeux fermés et qu'on n'entend rien du tout. - Regardez Homère, Milton? Homère, Milton ne m'amusent pas énormément, quoiqu'ils aient été aveugles et par conséquent très inspirés."

In Vallès' view, realism stood in opposition to the imagination,

2. Champfleury, Le Réalisme, p.94.
3. ibid., pp.95-8.
5. O.C. XIV, p.271.
and the latter was to be dismissed as characteristic of romanticism.

All that he demanded of the artist was that he present a mirror image of reality, "faire se refléter le monde dans un miroir," for he too believed that the imagination was liable to produce deceptive literature of an improbable nature, which would confuse rather than illuminate. He was not ashamed to admit to Texier that he himself had little imagination:

"Vous voyez devant vous l'homme le plus dépourvu d'imagination qui soit en ce monde. Je n'en ai pour un sou et j'en suis fort aise. Ah, l'imagination! une drôlesse que met des vessies à la place des lanternes." Imaginative fantasies might provide superficial amusement, but they did not further the cause of Truth.

Vallès did not feel in a position to venture beyond the evocation of his own experience. Vingtras maintains, "je ne sais pas causer de ce que je n'ai pas vu." Regarding personal experience as the only reliable source of inspiration, Vallès declares, "Je préfère l'écrivain qui ne dit que ce qu'il a vu, et nous apporte ses émotions, rien que cela." Moreover, when the author seeks to convey emotions, he maintains, the imagination is clearly superfluous, for human passions are eternal and finite: "Inventer! mais pour ce qui est des larmes, il n'y a pas de sources à découvrir, de puits artésien à creuser: c'est la même histoire toujours ..."

Other critics have on occasion observed that works of art based on personal experience may be particularly compelling.

2. Quoted by Ulysse Rouchon, La Vie bruyante de Jules Vallès, p.125.
4. "Le Tableau de Paris," La France, 10 Aug. 1883, O.C. XIII, p.419. N.B. In placing such faith in the individual's perceptions he seems totally unaware of the possibility of human fallibility and also of the essentially subjective nature of the realism which must result from such an approach.
5. Le Progrès de Lyon, 13 May 1864, Pléiade I, p.358.
Zola, for example, in 1867, asserted, "Les œuvres vécues ont toujours été supérieures aux œuvres rêvées," but this observation did not dominate all his literary criticism. In Vallès' case, however, his judgements of artists' works were greatly influenced by whether or not he knew them to be based on actual experience. Reviewing the second edition of Hector Malot's "Amours de Jacques", Vallès claimed that the fact that he knew that the novel was based on true events had enhanced his enjoyment: "Il me suffit, je l'avoue, d'être averti pour avoir soif de ces confidences, et l'idée que ces gens ont vécu de ma vie, de la vôtre, me séduit et m'attire." He was willing to excuse the apparent artificiality of Malot's evocation of emotions, simply because he knew that his work was based on actual experience: "Elles (ces émotions) paraissent fausses, Dieu sait qu'elles étaient vraies!" He went on to cite illustrations from several well-known authors in support of his claim that if a work were based on actual occurrences then it was far more likely to prove convincing and successful:

"La première moitié d'"Indiana", 'Valentine', c'est Mme. Sand elle-même, c'est Mme Du Devant, veux-je dire. 'La Vieille Fille', 'Philippe Bridon', de Balzac, ce sont des souvenirs de Tours. Mme. de Surville pourrait nous dire où son frère les a connus. Tous les romans d'Alphonse Kerr, c'est un morceau de sa jeunesse, un lambeau de sa vie. 'Madame Bovary', de Flaubert, c'est le journal d'un chirurgien, fait jour par jour, avec le journal des opérations et le procès-verbal des agonies. 'Julien Sorel', c'est Henri Beyle! Enfin, tous ces cris de terreur, d'amour, de bêtise, d'orgueil, ils ont été poussés par un être vivant ..."

Needless to say, Flaubert would have been little gratified to hear Vallès' description of "Madame Bovary"! Although it is no doubt possible to trace the source of inspiration of the works Vallès mentions back to the authors' personal experiences, his

2. Le Progrès de Lyon, 13 May 1864, Pléiade I, p.358.
3. Loc. cit.
4. Loc. cit.
examples are not well-chosen. The works of the Goncourt, which
he discusses elsewhere,¹ might have illustrated his point more
convincingly, for their journal reveals that "Germinie Lacerteux"
and "Renée Mauperin" were directly based on characters and events
of their own experience, whereas Balzac, Stendhal and Flaubert
relied to a much greater extent on the creative imagination.
However, in any case Vallès' argument is based on a fallacy,
namely the assumption that when a work of art is based on
reality, it will necessarily reproduce an impression of reality.
He should have been the first to recognize that this is not the
case, for although Mürger's "Scènes de la Vie de Bohème" were
drawn from first-hand experience and modelled on real characters
and situations, he found the work unrealistic. Despite the
example of Malot's "Amours de Jacques" mentioned above, he failed
to recognize that reality itself may be presented in an impro-
bable manner, and that it is the convincing presentation of a
coherent vision of reality which is important not the sources
which inspire this vision.

Caramaschi criticizes the Goncourt for similar reasons.
"Le vrai n'a pas besoin pour eux d'être vraisemblable ou logique",
he complains.² He maintains that they attribute to characters
actions which are incompatible with their personality, failing to
recognize that reality must be made to appear probable in the
fictional context, that it must be transposed and not merely
transported. Both Vallès and the Goncourt were under the
impression that to rely on realistic detail is to guarantee
realism, but this is clearly an illusion, for a collage of photo-

¹. See his reviews of "Renée Mauperin" (Le Progrès de Lyon, 19
April 1864, Pléiade I, pp.350-55), "Germinie Lacerteux" (Le
Progrès de Lyon, 30 Jan. 1865, ibid., pp.495-501) and "Manette
Salomon" ("Chronique parisienne," La Situation, 10 Nov. 1867).
². E. Caramaschi, op. cit., p.70 ff. See also pp.186, 252-3
and 288-9.
graphic material may give an extremely distorted impression of reality. They overlooked the creative talent necessary to reproduce logical and realistic relationships between the disparate elements extracted from reality.

Greater writers have recognized this. In Balzac's "Le Chef d'Oeuvre inconnu" Frenhofer asserts that art must not merely copy but must attempt to express the essence of reality: "La mission de l'art n'est pas de copier la nature, mais de l'exprimer!"\(^1\) Otherwise the sculptor might as well resort to plaster-casts, the painter to photography. Similarly, in a letter to Turgenev (1877), Flaubert observes, "Il ne s'agit pas seulement de voir, il faut arranger et fondre ce que l'on a vu. La Réalité n'est qu'un tremplin.\(^2\) Vallès, like other realists,\(^3\) had the greatest respect for Balzac as precursor of the realist movement. He also admired Flaubert. However, ironically, he did not recognise the positive role played by the creative imagination in their works, but saw only its negative aspects. Duranty had argued that Balzac was not a true realist because he fired his heroes with daemonic, satanic qualities and exaggerated their exploits.\(^4\) Vallès too could not admire his works wholeheartedly, for he and George Sand alike, he claimed, had inherited the romantic tendency to magnify:

"... ils ont regardé le monde et la nature avec des verres grossissants ... Avouons qu'ils ont tous les

He criticized the visionary qualities of Balzac's work, and obsessed by fears of the dangers of the imagination, regarded his great creative power as a defect rather than a virtue. He failed to see that he was a great writer not simply because he drew upon detailed observation of reality but precisely because he was able to transcend reality and inspire his works with a compelling dynamism.

Evidently, in Vallès' eyes, strict adherence to the evocation of observed reality was the only means of guarding against the nebulous and deceptive qualities of romanticism. He recommended that the writer should confine himself to the rôle of "observateur" (and to a minimum degree that of "commentateur"), hoping thus to endow literature with the positive qualities of a science. He had great faith in science and advised parents of the merits of a practical, scientific education, recalling angrily how in his schooldays those who had excelled at geometry and mathematics had been condemned for their pedantry and lack of imagination. He considered this attitude responsible for the vague idealism of recent decades. In this modern industrial age, however, he maintained, science was essential to progress:

"J'ai pour les lettres un amour profond, mais je trouve qu'on a été maladroitement ingrat envers la science pendant de longues années, sous tout un règne. (...) un pays où il n'y aurait encouragement et gloire que pour la littérature, courait risque, par ce siècle de vapeur et d'industrie, de marcher pauvre et souffrant, à la queue du monde moderne."

This was not to say that literature had become superfluous but rather that it must come to reflect the positive spirit of the

2. Le Progrès de Lyon, 13 May 1864, Pléiade I, p.359.
4. See Le Progrès de Lyon, 3 Jan. 1865, ibid., p.479.
5. loc. cit.
modern industrial age.

However, neither Vallès nor the realists went as far as the Naturalists in their desire for scientific notation. Indeed Vallès condemned the Naturalists as "maniaques de la constatation".\(^1\) He admired the powers of observation evident in "Renée Mauperin" but complained of falsity and unnaturalness on the emotional plane.\(^2\) Indeed he found that in general the Naturalists' preoccupation with detailed documentation distracted their attention from the human and emotional aspects of the situations they exposed. When an orphan knocked on his door, he declared, his first concern was to find the child a home, not to count the number of spots on her dress.\(^3\) The impassivity of the Naturalists irritated him, and he described them disparagingly as Benedictins of realism.\(^4\)

Indeed, although the realists' demand that art and literature be based on direct observation of reality might appear at first sight to reflect a desire for maximum objectivity, this is not the case, for they also stressed the importance of an emotional response to reality. In his review of "Madame Bovary" in "Le Réalisme", 15 March 1857, Duranty describes the novel as "sec et aride". Flaubert is criticized for his monotonously precise and detailed descriptions and the cold impersonality of his realism: "Il n'y a ni émotion, ni sentiment, ni vie dans ce roman, mais une grande force d'arithméticien ..." The realists' criticisms reveal that they were not seeking objectivity at all, but demanded rather the transcription of subjective personal impressions. "Rien de personnel" Duranty complains, "... toujours 'description' matérielle et jamais 'impression'". Although more perceptive in

2. See Le Progrès de Lyon, 29 April 1864, Pléiade I, p.353.
his appreciation of "Madame Bovary",¹ Vallès was equally critical of such impersonality.

We noted above that his antipathy to literature stemmed from a reaction against the sterility and apparent irrelevance of academic literature. It was for this reason that he insisted on the importance of emotional rather than intellectual appeal. Literature based on immediate reality, he maintained, had the vigour and compelling relevance which academic literature lacked, precisely because it appealed to the emotions and not merely to the intellect. In "Notes d'un Absent" in "Le Voltaire", 13 April 1880, he wrote,

"Il n'y a que les réalités de la vie qui donnent le bon et grand style et qui ajoutent de la couleur à l'encre parce que dans l'encrier il est tombé quelques larmes et quelques gouttes de sang."

A sense of immediate relevance only imposed itself, he claimed, when the reader forgot that he was reading a series of lifeless letters on a printed page, and, through emotional identification, fully entered the world of the novel. Vallès was using his greatest terms of praise, when he wrote of Andre Léo's "Un mariage scandaleux", "on oubliait qu'on tenait un livre, et l'on écoutait murmurer le printemps, on entendait sourdre la vie."²

As Bellet so neatly puts it, in Vallès' view, "Le rôle du livre est de traduire la vie; le livre doit faire oublier l'encre qui l'a imprimé."³ He conceived of reading as an emotional experience rather than an intellectual activity. Indeed, all that the average reader desired of a novel, so he maintained, was to be moved emotionally, "être tout bêtement ému",⁴ for the public turned to literature primarily in search of emotions with which

---

¹. See "Chronique" Le Présent, 8 Aug. 1857, Pléiade I, p.41.
⁴. Le Progrès de Lyon, 14 March 1864, Pléiade I, p.335.
The author's task was to provide "un chapitre saisissant de l'histoire des passions humaines", and realists, therefore, in their desire for detailed documentation must be wary of allowing their works to become dry and uninteresting.

Vallès felt that he had found a solution to the problem of combining detailed documentation with the expression of genuine emotion in requiring that the artist concentrate on the notation and recollection of personal experiences. The artist should look upon his work as an outlet for personal emotions. "Confions-lui (le roman) nos espoirs, nos peines, faisons-en pour nous consoler, le confident de nos faiblesses ou de nos vices", he declared.

What he sought was a balance between the mechanical frigidity of objective realism and the sentimentality of romanticism, a modest personal form of realism, infused with genuine emotion. Dickens, he claimed, had achieved this. Indeed, in 1865 he devoted two articles in "Le Courrier du Dimanche" to an analysis of Dickens' work, comparing it to that of Balzac and Georges Sand, and contrasting the heroism, grandeur and oratorical eloquence of the latter with the simplicity, familiarity and tender emotional appeal of Dickens' work:

1. Le Progrès de Lyon, 14 March 1864, Pléiade I, p.335.
3. Vallès' insistence on the necessity for emotional appeal is in no way at variance with the importance he and the realists attached to the ideas expressed in literature, for he considered this emotional response necessary if the writer was to attract attention and win sympathy for his ideas.
"C'est l'humour dans l'observation, la poésie de l'image dans la réalité des faits: l'émotion arrive sur l'aile humble et fine de la mélancolie, et, à cette émotion se mêle une gaieté tendre ..."\(^1\)

The English writer had succeeded in combining realistic observation with intimate poetry and humour. This was Vallès' ideal.\(^2\)

Emotions are often associated in one's memory with particular physical surroundings, and clearly an environment may be brought to life if experienced through a figure living and moving within it. At the same time the expression of emotions may be safeguarded from excessive sentimentality, if rooted firmly in reality. This is the crux of Vallès' formula for realism. In Bellet's words, "Seul le réel peut durer l'émotion; seule l'émotion soulève le réel."\(^3\)

However, whatever pretensions Vallès may have had to scientific Truth, Truth in this instance is defined subjectively, and depends upon the accuracy of the artist's memory and his ability to reproduce his impressions faithfully. It is not objectivity but candour and sincerity which are called for. Hence, Vallès' declaration: " ... je ne demande aux artistes contemporains que de la franchise!"\(^4\) Indeed, although it is not clear that he himself was conscious of the fact, the realists in general recognized that absolute objectivity was impossible in art,\(^5\) and placed their reliance in sincerity, which Champfleury regarded as the one essential principle of realism, asserting:

2. He remarked here that Alphonse Karr was the only French writer successful in intermingling tender melancholy and gaiety like Dickens, but elsewhere (cf. "La Révolution," La Rue, 21 Dec. 1879, O.C. XI, pp.385-6) he also expressed admiration for Alphonse Daudet and in particular "Jack" and "Froment jeune et Risler aîné", acknowledging that Daudet too had captured the qualities he admired in Dickens.
5. See Champfleury's admission that man can at best interpret but never reproduce reality, Le Réalisme, p.92.
"Je ne reconnais que la sincérité dans l'art."¹ Indeed he equated realism with sincerity: "Qui dit réalité dit sincérité, et la sincérité est le meilleur sauve-gardien d'une oeuvre."²

The criterion of sincerity is most meaningful when the artist is evoking contemporary scenes which he himself has witnessed. The realists were unanimous in their condemnation of art which looked to previous eras for its subject matter. Commenting on David's "Léonidas aux Thermopyles", Proudhon³ suggested that not only would the painting have meant more to the nineteenth century public if David had portrayed a modern patriot, but it would also have been more realistic, for David had relied on myth and imagination, and any work produced under these circumstances must inevitably be "une fantasmagorie."⁴ Vallès argued along similar lines. He condemned artists and writers who looked back to Rome or mediaeval times for inspiration,⁵ and recounted with glee the story of Courbet's irreverent reaction to one of Delacroix' paintings, and his impudent question: "Vous l'avez donc connu, vous, Apollon, et saint Machin, et Jésus-Christ?"⁶ Vallès too maintained that it was impossible to capture the atmosphere of a period one had not witnessed. He was not without respect for history,⁷ but held that the most valuable historical documents were accounts of events given by contemporary witnesses (e.g. memoirs), rather than the inevitably falsifying reconstructions of historians. In Thulié's words, "Qu'on lise les auteurs d'une époque, si on veut connaître les

¹. Champfleury, Le Réalisme, p.3.
². ibid., p.42.
⁴. ibid., p.113.
⁶. "Courbet," Le Réveil, 6 Jan. 1878, O.C. XI, p.365. N.B. This was one of a series of articles Vallès had published in "Le Réveil" under the pseudonym Jean la Rue, while he was still in exile.
moeurs de cette époque". The modern artist must portray contemporary society. If his works were cherished after his death as valuable historical documents, then so much the better. However, his first concern was his contemporaries, and both Vallès and the realists maintained that their interest was only to be aroused by the depiction of familiar scenes which they could relate to their own experience. Moreover, as Vallès claimed, it was more positive to study contemporary society than to dwell on the past, or make vague speculations about the future:

"Quoi! toujours nous discuterons le passé et nous regarderons derrière, en haut, au lieu d'aller notre chemin, droit devant nous; nous rêverons au lieu d'agir, et pour parler de la vie future, nous oublierons la vie présente!"

Certainly there were lessons to be drawn from the past. However, he claimed, one's own age was the summation and embodiment of all achievements of past eras, and, therefore, constituted the most profitable period for study. He may have appeared nihilistic in his rejection of ancient art treasures, as he exclaimed, "... jetez-moi par les fenêtres, sur le pavé, dans le Tibre, les statues, les tableaux les livres: jetez tout." So too Duranty, who recounted sympathetically how a friend was tempted to the Louvre! However, this was not nihilism, for both writers recognized that progress was to be made by building on the past, but they felt it necessary to insist repeatedly that the past must not be allowed to dominate the present.

They also demanded that art evoke the immediate environment rather than geographically remote civilisations. So, reviewing Charles Barbara's "Ary Zang" in 1864, Vallès exclaimed:

5. See E. Duranty, "Notes sur l'art," Le Réalisme, 10 July 1856.
"Pourquoi diable aussi, quand on loge rue Saint-Jacques, partir en guerre pour le Cachemire! quand on est un réaliste sanguin, en sabots, aller dans le pays de Bibi-Djane, des Mahmoud et des Foramour! Peignez-nous des assassins d'ici, non pas des Mustapha de là-bas."

The artist, he declared, should confine himself to the evocation of nineteenth century France, and in his reviews he criticized any work which contravened this requirement.\(^2\)

In his criticisms of the Romantics, Vallès had complained of their predilection for elevated and exceptional characters. If the writer's task was to reflect contemporary life, then inevitably, now that the Revolution had brought about a breakdown of social barriers, literature must reflect a more egalitarian society, portraying all classes and not merely an elite. In 1865 Vallès heralded the publication of "Germinie Lacerteux" as one of the first examples of modern realism, for the novel depicted the sufferings of the working classes. He observed with satisfaction: "... la littérature de sentiment suivant le grand chemin de la révolution, est descendue jusqu'aux inconnus et aux souffrants."\(^3\) He quoted at length from the brothers' preface to the work, reasserting their claim that in an age of liberalism and democracy, all classes of society should take their place in the novel which must reflect in its entirety "l'histoire morale contemporaine".\(^4\) This was one reason why he welcomed "Jack" and "Froment jeune et Risler aîné", whose characters, he felt,  

1. Le Progrès de Lyon, 13 May 1864, Pléiade I, p.357. N.B. Charles Barbara is generally regarded as a realist, and, therefore, one might expect Vallès to be sympathetic towards his work. Evidently he approved of "L'Assassinat du Pont Rouge" and "Esquisse de la vie d'un virtuose", two of Barbara's short stories (ibid., p.356), but the fact that Barbara moved in realist circles did not prevent him from condemning "Ary Zang" as "illisible"!
2. See for example, Le Progrès de Lyon, 3 Oct. 1864, where Vallès condemned "Les Sabotiers de la Forêt-Noire" by Emmanuel Gonzalès, because the events of the novel were supposed to have taken place in 1770, and also "L'Héritage de Charlemagne" by Charles Deslys, because he considered it presumptuous of Deslys to write about historical events which he had not witnessed.
4. Loc. cit.
resembled ordinary people of the period, whereas he condemned Daudet's anachronistic evocation of royalty in "Les Rois en Exil". This also helps to explain his admiration for Eugène Sue, for in the past the lower classes had been neglected in literature, but Sue had played his part in remedying this through his presentation of the crime and squalor of the Parisian gutters. He and Balzac alike presented scenes of misery side by side with scenes of fashionable luxury and extravagance, and thus endeared themselves to Vallès, as to the realists in general, who greatly admired the breadth and scope of "La Comédie Humaine".

However, they themselves have been accused of concentrating on portrayal of the lower classes, rather than projecting a broad and balanced view of society, for they were drawn by preference to the working classes whose condition aroused their sympathy. Champfleury argued that workers were the most rewarding objects of study for humanity as a whole, for they were sincere and unaffected in their behaviour. Similarly Assézat maintained that they were not only more interesting and relevant to the modern reader than kings and princes, but also more natural and human! Thulé, however, made an attempt to correct the impression that realists were necessarily plebeian writers, arguing that realism ought not to confine itself to portrayal of the lower classes, and that if Champfleury was guilty of this, then this was simply because these were the people he knew best.

Certainly Vallès himself never claimed that the simplicity of ordinary workers gave them any special rights as far as literature was concerned. Yet he sympathised instinctively

with their condition, and in his desire to further their cause, and compensate for the neglect they had suffered, he was enthusiastic in his appreciation of works in which they took pride of place, as his review of "Germinie Lacerteux" suggests. In this review, however, he was undoubtedly deceived when he claimed that the Goncourts' intentions coincided with his own,\(^1\) for politically they were miles apart. The preface of "Germinie Lacerteux" is misleading, for the brothers' portrayal of the working-classes was not inspired by sympathy for their condition, as Vallès seemed to assume. As Caramaschi demonstrates, they equated "le peuple" with "le laid", declaring: "La littérature peut et doit descendre au peuple, au laid ..."\(^2\) They derived a feeling of superiority and self-satisfaction from mixing with the working classes and portraying their way of life, and were inspired not by compassion, but by a fascination for the strange and exotic.\(^3\)

Indeed, despite Vallès' effusive praise of the Goncourts, in other respects too they departed from his ideal of realism, for they cultivated beautiful images and turns of phrase. He admitted his annoyance at their preoccupation with detail, their aestheticism and the fatuous pleasure they derived from stylistic achievements.\(^4\) He sought vigour and totality of vision, whereas theirs was a fragmented pseudo-reality, skilfully reconstructed from carefully arranged details, but lacking emotional cohesion, as he himself had observed.

Indeed as one attempts to reconcile Vallès' individual judgements with some of his general statements, one becomes increasingly aware of the confusion and contradiction in his attitudes. In

1. See Le Progrès de Lyon, 30 Jan. 1865, Pléiade I, p.496.
2. See E. Caramaschi, op. cit., p.91.
his article "Chronique parisienne" in "La Situation", 10 November 1867, he complained of the Goncourt brothers: "Ils n'ont que les émotions de leur milieu", but what else can one expect? He had demanded that the artist confine himself to evocation of his own experiences and environment. Yet on the other hand he demanded a broad view of society, giving particular emphasis to portrayal of the working classes. These demands are irreconcilable, particularly for middle-class or upper-class writers. Reviewing Hector Malot's "Amours de Jacques", Vallès spoke of an oppressive atmosphere of passion and degradation, and urged Malot to extend his horizons.\(^1\) In a review of Erckmann-Chatrian's "Madame Thérèse" he criticized the authors' excessive regionalism, asserting that the writer must avoid allowing his desire for local colour to cause him to concentrate on a narrow section of society.\(^2\) However, this was a likely consequence of his demand for reliance on personal experience. Ironically the breadth he sought is only to be found in the works of a visionary such as Balzac, whose great creative power aroused his mistrust.

Nonetheless Vallès' fear of narrowness is understandable, for this in itself may constitute a distortion of reality. In a review of Paul Féval's novel "Les Habits Noirs" he applauded the author's interest in the lower echelons of society, but criticized his concentration on squalor and his exaggeration of its horrors.\(^3\) He observed that many writers of the period particularly the authors of sensational pot-boilers, focused so exclusively on a single aspect of reality that they created a new mythology, "la mythologie du ruisseau", and a new aristocracy, that of vice.\(^4\) "Qu'on ne fasse pas après la mythologie de l'Olympe la mythologie du ruisseau!"\(^5\) he implored. This was

\(^{1}\) See Le Progrès de Lyon, 13 May 1864, Pléiade I, pp.359-63.  
\(^{2}\) See Le Progrès de Lyon, 28 Feb. 1864, ibid., pp.332-3.  
\(^{4}\) See also Le Progrès de Lyon, 18 Aug. 1864, ibid., p.366.  
\(^{5}\) Le Progrès de Lyon, 14 Feb. 1864, ibid., p.329.
merely a further form of mystification. The writer must achieve a well-balanced view of society, reflecting "tout le mal à côté du bien." ¹

Yet despite this demand and despite his assertion that all subjects were admissible in literature, Vallès' reviews suggest that he did not always approve the consequences of this demand in practice. Roger Bellet talks of his "pudeur antiréaliste". ²

As Vallès' favourable reaction to Feydeau's treatment of adultery in "Fanny" indicates, he had no prejudices as to the subjects he considered morally permissible in literature. Indeed he was deeply disappointed that the anonymous novel "Mémoires d'une femme de chambre" 1864 (predecessor of Octave Mirbeau's novel of similar title, published in 1900) was not more salacious or scandalous. ³ However, he lacked the interest in the physical and medical which was to preoccupy the Naturalists. In his review of "Renée Mauperin" he cites at length the description of Renée's visit to the burial place of her dog, terminating his quotation with the line: "Elle voyait encore son père le promenant dans le potager, sur son bras, après lui avoir donné un lavement". He declares this last detail crude and unnecessary, exclaiming indignantly, "C'est presque une profanation!" ⁴ Evidently it was not a profanation of the truth but rather an intrusion upon the tender emotional atmosphere created by the preceding passage. Once again emotional atmosphere is shown to be more important to Vallès than objectivity.

This is apparent too elsewhere. Vallès welcomed Fromentin's novel "Dominique" as a work "pénétré de l'esprit nouveau", ⁵ suggesting that it was an example of modern realism. He was

4. Le Progrès de Lyon, 19 April 1864, ibid., p.353.
5. Le Progrès de Lyon, 10 Oct. 1864, ibid., p.401.
moved by the author's recollection of childhood impressions, and also Fromentin's condemnation of romantic fantasies and his call for closer understanding of reality won his sympathy. Moreover the novel met Vallès' criteria for realism in so far as it was autobiographical. However, it is generally described as "roman idéaliste" rather than "roman réaliste". Vallès appears to have overlooked Fromentin's romanticism. His conception of realism was vague and inconstant, and he welcomed as realist many works which would not normally be considered as such.

Bellet\(^1\) observes that the portrait of Blampoix in "Renée Mauperin", quoted appreciatively by Vallès,\(^2\) is an example of witty eighteenth century charm rather than realism, and compares unfavourably with Flaubert's portrayal of Bournisien.

However, Vallès was not alone in his confusion. After the audacity of "Fanny" he evidently looked upon Feydeau as a realist,\(^3\) as did many contemporaries, even though, as Pierre Martino observes,\(^4\) there is little justification for this classification. Detailed descriptions are scarce in "Fanny", secondary characters non-existent. All focuses introspectively on the passion of Roger, Fanny and her husband, about whose identity and background we know virtually nothing. As Martino maintains, it is a lyrical poem not a realistic social study,\(^5\) but because of similarities to "Madame Bovary",\(^6\) because of the shocking "immoral" aspects of the novel, Feydeau, like Flaubert, came to be regarded as a realist.

Feydeau's disregard for conventional morality evidently appealed to Vallès, and so one is not surprised at his admiration

2. Le Progrès de Lyon, 19 April 1864, Pléiade I, pp.354-5.
5. ibid., p.192.
6. ibid., p.188 ff.
for the work. Indeed, were he to have confined his praise to works which conformed absolutely to his demands for realism, particularly in so far as the imagination was concerned, then he would have found little to his liking. Fortunately he reacted instinctively to individual works without following through logically the implications of his demands, for, as Zola observed in 1878,¹ the realists' mistrust of the imagination considerably restricted the scope of literature. Moreover, Vallès' views were more limiting still than those of many of his colleagues, for though he expressed his admiration for "Fanny" and "Madame Bovary",² he questioned whether their authors would be able to produce further works of similar calibre. Feydeau's later works had opened his eyes to romantic traits in his writing,³ and he was prompted to question whether any artist could produce more than one great work in his life, for if his work were based purely on personal experiences, then successive works could only be variations on the same theme. "Un homme, si fort qu'il soit, porte-t-il en lui plus d'un livre?" he asked.⁴ All Feydeau's subsequent successful novels were bound to resemble "Fanny", he claimed, for here the author had found his successful vein. Although, as we shall see in the second part of this thesis, Vallès' observations hold true in the case of his own works, which are to a great extent variations on certain favourite themes, his argument is refuted by the very example of the artists he himself admired. The breadth and variety he admired in Balzac's novels rested entirely on the visionary powers he condemned.

In contrast to Vallès, Champfleury perceived that, whereas

2. Le Progrès de Lyon, 12 Sept. 1864, Pléiade I, p.386.
3. Ibid., p.387.
4. ibid., p.386.
the average man could produce one book only, by recounting personal experiences simply and sincerely, the true artist was characterized by his fecundity.¹ He accepted the notion of talent and its necessity, whereas Vallès often did not. Valles was sceptical in general of the concept of creative genius, and denied the possibility of creating anything entirely original, arguing that man built necessarily on the knowledge of his predecessors and could not be held entirely responsible for any discovery.² Originality was impossible in the literary sphere as elsewhere. He maintained that no particular talent or inspiration was required of a novelist: "... il n'est pas même besoin de la magie du talent pour faire un roman intéressant et passionné."³ All men were equally capable of writing: "... il n'est pas plus besoin d'hommes providentiels en littérature qu'en politique. Chacun de vous, s'il veut écrire avec franchise et simplicité, porte en lui un chef-d'oeuvre."⁴ He asserted, somewhat naively, that if a man were sufficiently educated to express genuine impressions simply and honestly, then his work was bound to enjoy some success:

"Je suis, quant à moi, convaincu que si l'on se contentait de retracer l'histoire vraie, entière, complète de ses impressions vulgaires ou romanesques, extravagantes ou naïves, en toute sincérité, sans orgueil ni cynisme, homme ou femme, on écrirait une oeuvre dont seraient émus bien des cœurs dans le monde."⁵

He maintained that as long as the writer succeeded in arousing the reader's sympathy and convincing him of the genuine nature of the experiences described, then his manner of expression was

4. "Notre premier numéro," La Rue, 8 June 1867, ibid., p.941.
5. Le Progrès de Lyon, 30 Jan. 1865, Pléiade I, p.496.
"Qu'importe, après tout, que le génie manque, si l'impression est vive? L'écrivain n'a pas su traduire, en homme supérieur, ses sensations; n'est-ce point assez déjà qu'il ait éveillé les nôtres?"¹

The suggestion that all men were equally capable of writing was a reaction against the romantic concept of the artist as an exceptionally gifted individual chosen by the gods to fulfil a prophetic mission. Vallès declared writing an ordinary profession "un métier comme un autre".² The prerequisite for success was a combination of honesty, perseverance, and sheer hard work: "... il faut, pour avoir du talent, longtemps travailler et beaucoup souffrir; il faut bien de l'encre perdue et des larmes pleurées ...",[³] Rather than an extraordinary act of creation, he looked upon writing quite simply as "une affaire de patience et de sincérité",⁴ thus reducing the writer to the status of translator or copy-clerk. He conceived of him not as a self-centred individual striving for fame and originality, but a modest self-effacing man, devoted to the cause of Truth.⁵ When congratulated for a moving article on the painter Vigneron, Vallès would not accept any praise for himself. He declared that the writer was merely a mouthpiece for his own and others' emotions, and all he had done, was to put Vigneron's misfortune into words:

"Je ne mérite point cet éloge, j'ai dans un miroir, tout simplement, reflété une vie courageuse et pure, j'ai exprimé les sensations que m'a fait éprouver un tableau. Si j'ai réussi à émouvoir, toute la gloire en est à celui qui a fait naître chez moi l'émotion."⁶

³. Le Progrès de Lyon, 3 Oct. 1864.
⁴. Le Progrès de Lyon, 30 March 1864, Pléiade I, p.344.
⁶. "Courrier," L'Evénement, 31 Dec. 1865. N.B. I cite this example to show how far Vallès diminished the credit accorded to the writer. However, his literary criticisms reveal that he recognized that different writers succeeded to differing degrees in translating emotions into words, and so he could not justifiably disown the credit for his article.
He mocked the suggestion that the poet was an exceptional figure, who might achieve immortality by virtue of the universal and eternal value of his work. He referred to the artists of ancient Rome sarcastically as "ces morts pour qui on a inventé une immortalité", and debunked the significance generally attached to election to the Academy: "J'ai connu un candidat à un fauteuil d'immortel. Il est mort".

Whereas the Romantics had conceived of the poet as a solitary individual, isolated by his mission from the masses, Vallès, who criticized elitist "cénacles", declared not only that all members of society were in a position to write, but that they should combine their writing with a second profession:

"... on ne va plus s'encaserner dans une profession égoïste et seule: on va abolir aussi, dans le domaine de l'esprit, la maîtrise et les jurandes, et bientôt nous verrons des gens qui seront en même temps polémistes et dramaturges, banquiers et poètes".

If romantic poets had felt isolated, this, he claimed, was due simply to their inbred feeling of superiority, which prevented them from making any effort to mix with the masses. They were in fact no different from their fellow men. In his view the qualities demanded of a writer were not dissimilar from those demanded by the business world. In September 1857, in commenting on the recent newspaper articles of the Jewish banker and newspaper owner Jules Mirès, and in particular Mirès' discussion of "Manieurs d'argent" by Oscar de Vallée, Vallès expressed his indignation at the widespread rumour that these articles were too

4. See his assertion: "Il faut, pour mener une oeuvre littéraire à bon fin, à la fois oser et prendre garde, inventer et réfléchir, et l'on arrive par les mêmes qualités à la fortune et à la gloire." ("Paris," L'Evénement, 22 March 1866). See also his open letter to Jules Mirès which prefaced "L'Argent" and his declaration: "Il faut pour fonder une école, juste ce qu'il faut pour fonder une banque "..." (Pléiade I, p.4.)
well-written to be the banker's own work. He saw no reason why an intelligent banker should not prove a successful writer.¹

Vallès' desire for the submergence of the man of genius in the masses was a corollary of his desire for increased democratization. As the lower classes were better educated, acquired greater freedom and were granted access to literature, individuals who had previously excelled would now find themselves only one amongst many poets and writers:

"... désormais, l'intelligence humaine choisira moins volontiers pour s'y loger un cerveau seul où foisonneraient les idées comme un millier d'oiseaux dans un grand arbre. Par ce temps de démocratie, la vérité ne tiendra pas toute dans les mains d'un seul. Non, au lieu d'être le privilège et souvent le malheur d'exceptions sublimes, l'intelligence se répandra ... au lieu de quelques cèdres debout tout seuls sur les sommets, nous aurons dans la plaine immense la végétation plus heureuse et plus riche."²

Some might feel that art and literature were bound to suffer as a consequence of this egalitarianism, and Vallès admitted that this might be so:

"N'y perdrait-on pas un peu de poésie? Je ne dis pas non! Ces hasards qui s'appellent des hommes de génie distraient et étonnent le monde, qui en a quelquefois besoin ..."³

However, he maintained, "Ce que nous semblerons perdre en élévation, nous le rattraperons en étendue ..."⁴ Originality might appear to be diminished, but literature would in general be regenerated, revitalized, as it played a more meaningful rôle throughout society as a whole.

Sentiments of political egalitarianism evidently inspired Vallès' reaction against the cult of Genius.⁵ Working from the

2. Le Progrès de Lyon, 28 Dec. 1864, ibid., pp.472-3. See also "Les Francs-Parleurs," Le Courrier Français, 26 Aug., O.C. XI, p.296: "C'est qu'il n'y a plus de classes en littérature ... L'intelligence humaine s'est éparpillée; les hommes-providence, les génies qui résument, tout cela va s'affaiblissant d'éclat, comme des lampes portées en plein soleil."
4. Loc. cit.
5. This is apparent in the following declaration: "Génie! gloire! peut-être deux expropriés aussi! Expropriés par le jury anonyme de la foule, démolis par les conclusions de l'histoire qui a fini par battre en brèche la théorie des providentiels et qui rogne les immortelles." ("Le Tableau de Paris," La France, 12 Jan. 1883, O.C. XIII, p.264).
premise that all men were politically equal, he ventured to suggest that they might be equal in other respects too. To take his declarations of equality to their logical conclusion would be to deny the possibility of differences in human intelligence and creativity. Similarly, his assertion that all were equally capable of writing might be construed as implying that different literary works were all of equal merit. Evidently, however, he did not mean his remarks to be interpreted quite so literally. He was simply rebelling against the elitism of many Romantics, and in his desire to refute their claim to superiority, understated the rôle of innate ability. His literary criticisms reveal, however, that he acknowledged some writers to be more proficient and talented than others. In a review of Glais-Bizoin's "Le Vrai courage" he declared sarcastically, "Il fallait le vrai talent, et il n'a que le vrai courage"¹ (this remark being all the more significant as Glais-Bizoin was an ardent republican of whom Vallès approved politically).

Nevertheless the traditional prestige and status of the writer were diminished or at least redefined in Vallès' "theory". The writer was no longer to take a pride in developing a personal and distinctive style, in cultivating artistic turns of phrase, or seeking originality in his imagery. His ultimate aim was simplicity and clarity. He was no longer to prove his exceptional talent by extravagances of the imagination, or display his superior learning in the evocation of remote civilisations, for the

¹. "Paris," L'Événement, 22 March 1866. Vallès admired Glais-Bizoin as an outspoken left-wing Republican, but felt that he should have confined himself to politics, for he was an ideal illustration of Vallès' belief that progressive politicians generally make unoriginal conservative writers: "Les ardents de la politique sont presque toujours des arriérés en littérature" (loc. cit.). This, he claimed, was because their first concern was public life rather than deep personal feelings, "Le Forum vous bronze, et toutes les émotions en dehors sentent l'artifice et le plagiat." (loc. cit.).
closer literature reflected immediate reality the better.

Clearly Vallès' views were based on a fallacy, for creative imagination is essential to any work of art simply in order to recreate and transpose. However, if one does accept that the artist should simply transcribe reality, then one must also ask what is the purpose of his work. The realists spoke of the essential truths to be expressed in literature but it is not certain that every individual has something of interest to impart. The bald accounts of any and everyone's everyday experiences are unlikely to be inspiring.

Indeed Vallès' own likes and dislikes suggest that he did not approve in practice what he appeared to be recommending (although he does not seem to have been aware of this discrepancy) However often he demanded that the writer be self-effacing, however often he stressed the insignificance of originality, the writers who won his admiration were those whose works were marked by their distinct individuality. Barbey d'Aurevilly was certainly not a realist, but Vallès admired him nevertheless, and declared approvingly,

"M. Barbey d'Aurevilly appartient à cette race d'originaux à outrance qui se jouent des formes connues et aiment à s'ensanglanter, tout fiers, presque joyeux, aux difficultés de la lutte ..."1

He appreciated writers of energy, vigour and independence. Champfleury's "Les demoiselles Tourangeau", however, although the product of a realist, did not appeal to him. He found it dreary and monotonous. "... On nous offre une monnaie aux types effacés,"2 he complained. Although there were no obvious points on which to fault the novel, there were none to recommend it either: "roman tranquille, chrétien d'allures, il n'a rien qui choque ou attire ..."3 This was likely to be the case for the

1. Le Progrès de Lyon, 19 April 1864, Pléiade I, p.348.
3. Ibid., p.333.
majority of novels conforming to his demands. In fact those of Champfleury's works which he did appreciate, appealed to him because they were out of the ordinary. \(^1\) Whatever his theoretical demands seem to imply, it was the distinctive and exceptional which attracted his attention.

Although Vallès undermined the traditional image of the writer, we must not conclude that he regarded him as a colourless, insignificant figure. On the contrary, as I hope to show in the coming chapter, his reassessment of his rôle gave him a new and greater purpose and importance in society.

---

1. Reviewing "Les demoiselles Tourangeau" he complained, "Je n'y rencontre point ... ce fantastique, à la façon d'Hoffmann, où s'égareraient, étranges, quelques-uns de ses héros". (Le Progrès de Lyon, 28 Feb. 1864, Pléiade I, p.334). However, he enjoyed "Les Excentriques" (1852) which, like his own work "Les Réfractaires" (1865), revealed a fascination for the extraordinary.
CHAPTER V. THE POSITIVE ROLE OF LITERATURE

One of the central characteristics of the realist movement in the 1850s was a reaction against the Parnassian school and the doctrine of "l'art pour l'art," and a desire to endow literature and the arts with a clear social and utilitarian purpose. Duranty and his collaborators argued that literature should not simply amuse with "contes inutiles", but must contribute to the general enlightenment of mankind. The writer was described as "éducateur", "éclaircisseur", for, through a realistic analysis of contemporary society, he was to deepen the reader's insight into his environment. Duranty compared the function of realist literature to that of an optical instrument magnifying and clarifying reality, and maintained that it was through his function of enlightenment alone that the writer would be seen to fulfil an important rôle in society.

Proudhon, in "Du principe de l'art et de sa destination sociale" as the title of the work itself suggests, reiterated Duranty's arguments, stressing more emphatically still the social rôle of art. He argued that mere imitation of reality was in itself futile, and that art must be inspired by a central ideal which justified its existence:

"L'art n'est rien que par l'idéal, ne vaut que par l'idéal; s'il se borne à une simple imitation, copie ou contrefaçon

1. As we shall see below (pp. 115-6), Champfleury's views on this matter differed somewhat from those of Duranty.  
2. E. Duranty, "Contre un certain mauvais vouloir qu'il y a contre les romanciers," Le Réalisme, 15 Nov. 1856.  
4. Loc. cit.  
5. See E. Duranty, "Pour ceux qui ne comprennent jamais," Le Réalisme, 15 Dec. 1856. In Duranty's view literature gained in status the more its instructive function dominated over that of entertainment. Marguerite Iklayan demonstrates that this was in fact true in the case of the novel in France in the early nineteenth century. As it gained in moral purpose, so it rose in status and gained acceptance as a serious genre (op. cit., pp. 51-103).
de la nature, il fera mieux de s'abstenir; il ne ferait qu'étaler sa propre insignifiance, en déshonorant les objets mêmes qu'il aurait imités. Le plus grand artiste sera donc le plus grand idéalisateur ..."1

He criticized Ingres' sterile contemplation of Nature2 and extolled in contrast "l'idéal" which, he claimed, dominated Courbet's social realism.3

Not all realists, however, would have agreed with this conception of the moral, utilitarian function of art. Champfleury, like the Goncourt, believed in art as an end in itself.4 Clearly it is necessary to examine Vallès' views and define his position in relation to that of other realists.

Like Duranty and Proudhon he rejected art for art's sake, and the futility which this seemed to him to imply, asserting repeatedly that art and literature were only justified by their immediate social relevance. He had little patience with academic literature,5 or the petty debates of elitist literary circles, and expressed his contempt for "littérature littératurante, parlant d'elle et encore d'elle, et toujours d'elle!"6 He abhorred such introspection and circularity.

As we have seen, from early childhood onwards he envied the peasants the fruits of their labour, in contrast to the apparent futility of his academic education. Perhaps because of his emotional insecurity he longed to feel needed, longed for the reassurance of fulfilling a positive rôle in society. "Les

2. ibid., pp.129-30.
3. ibid., pp.186-217.
4. See Champfleury's postscript to "Souvenirs et portraits de jeunesse" (pp.335-6), in which his faith in "belles-lettres" and his aversion to politics are apparent. This reveals the wide gulf between Vallès and himself.
5. See Vallès' equation of the academic with the futile: "... la littérature futile, je veux dire académique". (Quoted by H. Guillemín, "La route sans fleurs," Le Nouvel Observateur, 13-19 July 1966)
Réfractaires" and "Le Bachelier" reveal his concern for the fate of the socially alienated intellectual and the problems of his integration in the modern, industrialized world, and it is his desire to justify the artist's or intellectual's existence which underlies his insistence on the social utility of art. The greater part of his autobiographical writing may be regarded as illustrating the quest of the socially conscious writer for a sense of purpose and positive achievement in life. In "Le Candidat des Pauvres" we witness Vingtras' doubts as to the validity of the sporadic and largely irrelevant literary production of many a contemporary writer, as he exclaims,

"C'est de la folie de croire qu'on vivra et qu'on a le droit de vivre, entre Montparnasse et les Batignolles, avec le produit d'un proverbe, d'un proverbe italien, dont la scène est à Venise du temps des doges! On se fout des hommes de lettres, on a raison!"

In his conversations with Legrand, he voices Vallès' feeling that the artist will never be fully accepted into society until he makes a positive contribution to the general good:

"... ceux qui se sont fatigués à l'établi, au pétrin, à la meule, tandis que nous romantisons, ceux-là ont le droit de jeter des trognons de choux à notre agonie, et n'ôtrent pas leur casquette devant notre corbillard d'indigents."

Evidently, in Vallès' estimation, the creation of poetry, however beautiful and original, and the consequent enrichment of our cultural heritage, are not sufficient to justify the writer's activities. In "Notes d'un Absent" in "Le Voltaire", 15 August 1878,

1. O.C. XIV, p.261. Vingtras' comments are prompted by "Les Larmes d'Antonia" (1853) by Pierre Cressot (whom Vallès describes in "Les Réfractaires", O.C. VII, pp.132-7), though he refers to the work as "Les Larmes de Théodora" by Cressié. It is described as "un proverbe à la Musset."

2. O.C. XIV, p.255. N.B. Vingtras attributes his and Legrand's irritability to their feelings of inadequacy and their consciousness of the futility of their literary activities (cf. p.280). This drives them finally to fight one another in a duel (pp.282-307) in their desire to prove themselves and rid themselves of this frustration.
he commented on the expression, "M. UN TEL, POÈTE", which had recently attracted his attention in a newspaper. Nobody with any self-respect would describe himself simply as a poet, he exclaimed, for the poet was expendable, and society at large would suffer no loss on his death, "ce ne sera qu'un inutile de moins". He argued that, in an age of materialism and rapid industrial progress, the nation could not afford the luxury of the vast and leisurely elite of artists, orators and writers it had nurtured during the Romantic era, for all must make a positive contribution to the progress of the nation.

On several occasions Vallès suggested that the solution to the intellectual's problems lay in a combination of manual and intellectual activities. After a hard day's work, strengthened by the satisfaction of having made a practical contribution to the general good, and by his communion with ordinary working people, a man could then settle down to writing in the evening with a clear conscience. So Vingtras declares enthusiastically in "Le Candidat des Pauvres",

Ensuite - (rêve de toute ma vie, but éternellement poursuivi depuis que j'ai l'âge d'homme, éternellement poursuivi et jamais atteint), - ensuite, la journée finie, je mettrai ma tête dans mes livres."

However, as we are reminded by Vingtras' frustrated attempts to find work, academic qualifications may prove a disadvantage to anyone seeking manual or clerical work, and Vallès was never able to achieve this balanced combination of activities. Instead he concentrated exclusively on literature, attempting to make his positive contribution through his writing.

2. See, for example, O.C. XIV, pp.136, 321, 421.
3. O.C. XIV, p.421.
5. See O.C. II, pp.381-5.
In his reviews he expressed his admiration for Balzac, Sue, Courbet and Dickens, because in their realism he perceived the means of exposing social injustice and inequality, and revealing the misery and poverty which resulted from capitalist exploitation. He sought to convince writers that in producing realist literature they would be assuming their moral responsibility, in leading and enlightening the public. In his review of Arsène Houssaye's portrayal of the dandy's idle life and love affairs in "Mlle Cléopâtre", he reproached Houssaye for failing to portray realistically the pathetic shallowness of such an existence, for, had he done so, he might have discouraged young men from adopting such a life style:

"Si, d'autre part, la littérature était franche, hardie, si elle montrait bien le dessous de ses cartes, et ce qu'il se cache vraiment d'enmî et de fatigue sous ces ombres de joie, si, au lieu d'accepter cette convention, elle disait la vérité, le 'genre' tomberait peut-être, la 'mode' changerait ..."

Note here Vallès' expressions: "si elle montrait bien le dessous ... et ce qu'il se cache ... sous ces ombres." Elsewhere he expresses his desire for probing analytical literature in similar terms.² He insisted that the writer investigate the underlying causes of social and psychological problems, thus encouraging the development of the reader's critical faculties. For this reason, on reviewing Mario Uchard's novel "La Comtesse Diane", he expressed his regret that, rather than tracing the causes of his hero's decline, Uchard had presented his insanity bluntly as an undeniable yet inexplicable fact. Vallès reproached him:

2. e.g. "C'est à la littérature à montrer le dessous du jeu, à indiquer combien il se cache vraiment de fatigue et d'enmî sous ces ombres de joie ..." ("Causerie," L'Epoque, 11 Oct. 1865). N.B. Many of Vallès' reviews do not offer new insights, for he regarded each article as a further opportunity to reiterate a pet theme.
"Il fallait serrer de près la question, le rendre fou, le vexer bien, mais en analysant un à un les symptômes de la déchéance, en suivant pas à pas la marche du fléau secondé par le crime, en montrant comment, sous le coup de ces émotions et de ces terres, la nuit s'est faite ..."¹

The writer must not simply present facts, but must explore their whys and wherefores.

This point emerges most clearly in Vallès' articles on children's literature. This was an area in which he showed particular interest, for, if literature was potentially tyrannical, then it was the impressionable child who was most vulnerable. He knew from personal experience how difficult it is to efface the impressions of early childhood. (In the trilogy the repressive atmosphere of Vingtras' home and school is seen to provoke the revolt, which leads ultimately to his participation in the Commune. Similarly, in his article "Les Proscrits" in "Le Corsaire", 20 November 1869, Vallès describes Félix Pyat's childhood, showing how clearly this shaped his later life.²)

Therefore in his review in "Le Progrès de Lyon", 3 January 1865, Vallès was pleased to note the positive qualities of many recent children's publications which, in his opinion, avoided both idle fantasy and didacticism, and encouraged the child to think and discover for himself.³ We have already noted his faith in science.⁴ Commenting on these books, he observed appreciatively, "c'est la science qui est l'âme du livre ..."⁵ On a similar occasion several years later, he urged parents once again to seek out "l'étrenne scientifique et utile,"⁶ that is, analytical realist literature, for they would thus be presenting their

2. See Vallès' comment: "... la vie d'enfance laisse des souvenirs et des impressions qui souvent dirigent et dominent la vie de l'homme." ("Causerie," L'Epoque, 11 Oct. 1865.)
4. See above p.87.
child with a source of infinite enlightenment, "un trousseau de clefs ... offert à la jeunesse pour ouvrir les portes des mondes jusqu'ici mal connus ..."¹

Vallès was not blind to the public's need for entertainment. He admitted that in certain circumstances unrealistic literature might provide a welcome relief from reality:

"Je ne prétends point qu'il faille couper sans pitié les ailes aux beaux rêves. Sur ces ailes-là, la pensée de l'enfant s'envole au-dessus des murs de la prison, l'école ou le lycée! le fils du misérable y trouve un reflet d'or; il est riche pendant un jour d'illusion et d'espoir."²

However, such illusory happiness could only provide temporary respite from Man's basic problems. Vallès concurred with Duranty and Proudhon in stressing above all the instructive function of literature.³ It was the writer's or artist's task to point the way towards the possible resolution of such problems.

Hence Vallès' criticisms of banal and superficial art, lacking in idealism or moral purpose. Reviewing an exhibition of paintings in Paris in 1866 he attacked the servile conformity and mediocrity of the exhibits, and accused their authors of shallow opportunism.⁴ Like Proudhon he felt that the artist should give a lead to the people, striving after an ideal. He admired bold innovators like Courbet, "coureurs haletant sur une piste neuve,"⁵ and showed utter contempt for commercial artists. Similarly he condemned many contemporary journalists who, in their fear of the censors, produced trivial innocuous literature, lacking in vigour and conviction. He described them contemp-

2. loc. cit.
3. Although Vallès' desire to instruct took priority over his desire to amuse, as is evident from his writing, he recognized the necessity to win over his audience before it was possible to exercise any influence. The trilogy is often frivolous and highly entertaining, however serious its moral and political purpose.
tuously as "boulevardiers"\(^1\) or "boulevardicules",\(^2\) lamenting the aimlessness of their works:

"C'est vraiment pitié de voir tout un peuple d'intelligences s'égarer follement dans les sentiers battus, se nourrir de rêves et de fleurs, de mièvreries et de banalités, perdre tant de papier, sans qu'il pousse une pensée forte au milieu de ces feuilles perdues lancées chaque matin à tous les coins de la ville!"\(^3\)

He had great faith in the political potential of art and its power to inspire and direct the nation:

"...l'art, à mon sens, peut diriger les destinées d'un peuple. Il est l'inspirateur souverain des sentiments qui entraînent les défaites méritées ou les victoires justes."\(^4\)

He looked to writers and intellectuals to play an important rôle in the fight for liberty and justice: "C'est à ceux qui s'occupent des choses de l'esprit qu'appartient [sic] la tâche et le pouvoir de faire un peuple libre."\(^5\) Such declarations are reminiscent of the Saint-Simonians. Indeed, in their grand conception of the social mission of art, both Vallès and Proudhon may sometimes appear to have more in common with the social romantics than with some of their fellow realists. The latter may all have sought literature reflecting an increasingly egalitarian society, literature portraying the working classes, yet their motives were diverse. The Goncourts believed above all in art and confessed a complete indifference to politics.\(^6\) Champfleury too insisted

3. L'Argent, Pléiade I, p.35.
5. loc. cit.
6. See Edmond's expression of contempt for politics and his exaltation of art:
   "... cela amène à la longue ... une indifférence de la passion politique ... On voit qu'il ne faut mourir pour aucune cause, vivre avec tout gouvernement qui est, quelque antipathie qu'il vous soit, et ne croire rien qu'à l'art, et ne confesser que la littérature. Tout le reste est attrape-nigauds." (Quoted by André Billy, Les Frères Goncourt. La vie littéraire à Paris pendant la seconde moitié du XIXe siècle, Paris, Flammarion, 1954, p.231.)
that art and politics remain totally divorced: "L'art ou la politique, et non pas l'art et la politique. Entraîné dans la politique, l'artiste ne s'appartient plus."\(^1\) Duranty was concerned for the social usefulness of art. He hoped that literature might contribute to the general intellectual progress of mankind ("la marche de l'intelligence générale"),\(^2\) and favoured the use of simple language, which might facilitate the spread of literature to the masses.\(^3\) Yet he claimed that he did not have the advancement of any particular social class in mind, explicitly denying Max Buchon's claim that the desire to provide literature for the people ("le peuple") was a central feature of realism.\(^4\) He wished simply to appeal to all sections of the community, and stressed that he had no desire to become involved in political debate.

Both Vallès\(^1\) and Proudhon's motives, in contrast, were markedly political and their sympathies did lie primarily with the people. Vallès did not believe in intrinsic literary or artistic merit and stressed that social and political issues were more important to him than the arts. Léon Séché recounts how when he once suggested to Vallès, as they were passing Nantes cathedral, that they should go in and have a look, Vallès retorted indignantly, "... ces choses-là me laissent indifférent, parlez-moi de la sociale."\(^5\) A writer only assumed importance in his eyes in so far as he threw new light on the contemporary

---

1. Champfleury, Souvenirs et portraits de jeunesse, p.167. See also Le Réalisme, pp.232-3, where he asserts his belief that the writer should remain aloof from politics.
5. Léon Séché, Portraits à l'encre, Jules Vallès, sa vie, son oeuvre, Paris, Revue illustrée de Bretagne et d'Anjou, p.56.
social situation, and thus directly or indirectly furthered the cause of the underprivileged.

Here we may detect Michelet's influence. Vallès had read Michelet enthusiastically as a youth and had had instilled in him a faith in the social and political potential of art. In 1850 and 1851 he attended Michelet's lectures at the Collège de France, and in March 1851 was amongst those who protested against their suspension. Michelet reinforced Vallès' instinctive respect for the people and manual labour. Also Vallès' desire to transcend his bourgeois origins and represent the people's cause, acting as an intermediary "debout au milieu des redingotes comme un défenseur des blouses", may have been inspired by Michelet's definition of the young man's rôle as "médiateur dans la cité" and "principal agent de la rénovation sociale". Certainly we may detect the historian's influence in Vallès' declarations of the need for literature of and for the people. In his lecture on "L'Education Nationale", 17 February 1848, Michelet had recalled with disapproval the fantasy and rhetoric of the Romantic generation (as Vallès was to), outlining in contrast his hopes for a new social and realistic literature:

"La génération qui va passer fut une génération de 'parleurs'. Que celle-ci en soit une de 'producteurs' véritables, d'hommes 'd'action', de travail social. D'action, en plusieurs sens; la littérature, sortie des ombres de la fantaisie, prendra corps et réalité, sera une 'forme d'action', elle ne sera plus un amusement d'individus et d'oisifs mais la voix du

peuple au peuple."¹
This clearly prefigures the views expressed in Vallès' work.

Indeed Vallès had much in common with the social romantics in general. He may have been hostile to Hugo, yet in "Les Misérables", "Claude Gueux" and "Melancholia" Hugo had displayed a concern for the social justice he so esteemed. Also in "La Fonction du poète" in "Les Rayons et les Ombres" (1840) Hugo had called for the poet's involvement in public affairs. Lamartine too had been inspired by humanitarian ideals in his speeches on orphans and the starving, and his attacks on slavery and capital punishment. Yet, for the political reasons discussed in Chapter III, Vallès refused to acknowledge that either writer had genuinely attempted to provide moral and political leadership. Also he could not overlook the spiritual and religious aspects of the romantics' writing, which were abhorrent to him, an anti-clerical materialist! Hugo had referred to the poet's mission as "presque un sacerdoce" and, although Michelet was clearly much closer to Vallès politically, Vallès accused him too of romantic rhetoric² and mysticism,³ and commented on one of his lectures, "j'aurais préféré que ce fût moins élevé, plus terre à terre."⁴ One scans his articles in vain for comments on Saint-Simon and the early socialists. The absence of comment is partly explained by his aversion to philosophy and systematized thought,⁵ but also Saint-Simon's and Enfantin's tendency to treat social and religious questions as one would have alienated him. Furthermore, although Vallès too stressed the great social mission of art, he was at pains to stress the insignifi-

5. See below p.156 ff.
cance of the individual artist, emphasizing that his was not an elevated and mystical rôle and that he was rather a servant to the people's cause, charged with concrete social responsibilities.

In this, and indeed in other respects, Vallès' views are closest of all to Proudhon's. In "Qu'est-ce que la propriété?" (1840) Proudhon makes clear that for him the poet is inferior to the most humble worker in so far as he depends on the worker for his material well-being, whereas he himself is expendable. This is very much the view expressed by Vingtras.

Clearly Vallès and Proudhon had more in common with one another than with the other realists mentioned, because of the similarity of their political views and activities. They were both realists who followed to some extent in the tradition of the social romantics. Vallès admired Proudhon greatly both as a writer and a leading socialist politician. When Paul Alexis interviewed Vallès in 1881 he noted that, apart from his portrait of Dickens, a photograph of Proudhon was one of the few decorations in his room in the rue Taylor.¹ Indeed in "Le Testament d'un Blagueur" Vallès reveals that Proudhon was one of the few politicians to make a favourable impression on him on his first visit to the Assembly in 1848.² In "Le Bachelier" it is Proudhon's "La Voix du Peuple" which inspires Vingtras with revolutionary fervour in his early years in Paris.³ He reads Proudhon enthusiastically and is outraged when he finds that the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève possesses none of his works.⁴ Moreover, it is evident from "Le Candidat des Pauvres" that Vallès' first publication "L'Argent" was directly inspired by Proudhon's "Manuel du Spéculateur à la Bourse."⁵ Certainly

² See Pléiade I, pp.1125-6.
³ See O.C. II, pp.77-8.
⁴ See O.C. XIV, p.236.
⁵ ibid., p.410 ff.
he quoted at length from this work. Indeed his debt to Proudhon is continually apparent throughout his writing. His newspapers "Le Peuple" (1869) and "Le Cri du Peuple" (1871 and 1883-5) are inspired both in title and sentiment by Proudhon's "Le Peuple" (1848) and "La Voix du Peuple" (1850). Also Vallès wrote several panegyrics on Proudhon at different stages in his career.

Apart from two articles entitled "Causerie" in "L'Epoque" on 8 and 16 June 1865, the entire final issue of "La Rue" (No.34), which was seized on the presses in January 1868, was also devoted to study of Proudhon, as a final gesture of defiance of the authorities. So too, on 8 February 1871, as the Commune approached, Vallès wrote a full-page article on Proudhon in Pilotell's "La Caricature politique".

Proudhon's influence on Vallès is generally accepted, but it is in fact difficult to establish how familiar Vallès was with Proudhon's various works. From Vallès' two articles in "L'Epoque" in 1865 we may deduce that he had read "Confessions d'un révolutionnaire", although, as Gille comments, it is less likely that he was familiar with Proudhon's theoretical writing. Nevertheless, Julien Lemer informs us that while Vallès was imprisoned in Sainte-Pélagie in 1868, he supplied him not only with copies of "Le Peuple" and "La Voix du Peuple", but also with "De la Justice dans la Révolution et dans l'Eglise", although Vallès apparently progressed very little in his reading of the latter. We also know that Vallès wrote to Hector Malot from exile in England in 1877, asking for copies of the works of certain economists, including Proudhon.

2. See O.C. X, pp.294-5.
5. See O.C. IX, p.239.
A thorough study of Vallès' notebooks from his period in exile (now in the possession of L. Scheler) might reveal more precise details of his reading, but unfortunately such a study is impossible at the present time...

Nonetheless direct parallels may be drawn between Vallès' and Proudhon's views on many issues. Vallès inherited Proudhon's lack of faith in the parliamentary system,¹ his belief in federalism and his fear of the centralized state.² Both men attacked religion which, they felt, relieves Man of the need to act himself in order to improve society.³ Also Vallès appears to have inherited Proudhon's patriarchal notions on the institution of the family, and his attitude to the rôle of women in society, like Proudhon's, was in stark contradiction with that of most left-wing thinkers such as Saint-Simon, Enfantin and Fourier. He was most conspicuously not a feminist! Obviously this cannot be attributed purely to Proudhon's influence. Vallès' attitude has its roots in his own relationships with women. It is noticeable that, although a few fleeting affairs are mentioned in his autobiographical writing, and the prospect of marriage is in fact discussed (and rejected),⁴ women feature little in his work, apart from his mother! He does not describe Joséphine Lapointe, his mistress of many years, nor the Belgian schoolmistress who gave birth to his child in England.⁵ His sex

1. See Vallès' articles "La Chambre" and "Le Congrès", Le Cri du Peuple, 30 May and 11 Aug. 1884 respectively.
5. See G. Delfau, Jules Vallès. L'exil à Londres (1871-1880). Paris, Bordas, 1971, pp.70-72, for description of these relationships. Vallès' daughter Jeanne-Marie and her mother are mentioned on several occasions in Vallès' letters to Arnould (O.C. IV, pp.82-6, 143-4 and 15053) as is Joséphine (egs. ibid., pp.61, 62, 67, 76, 77, 85, 86, 89 etc.)
life is relegated to the background in his writing in the inter-
ests of the political. Fascinating though Vallès' attitudes to
women may be, however, this is not the place to explore them in
full. It is sufficient to note that particularly in the period
prior to 1871 he was extremely chauvinistic, and even though,
after the Commune, he was able to admire and accept the colla-
boration of women, he continued to regard them in general as
sexual objects or male appendages. When they asserted their
independence, he accused them of masculinity. Such an attitude
may have been common at the time, but it is surprising in a
socialist who laid such stress on the emancipation of the indi-
vidual, particularly one who admired George Sand (though he did
in fact accuse her of portraying "des femmes-centaures").

Many other similarities link Vallès and Proudhon. They
were both political animals, more concerned with the social than the
aesthetic, and well-known as militant political journalists.
Proudhon was confined to Sainte-Pélagie for his attacks on Louis-
Napoleon in 1848, Vallès in 1868. Both wrote their political
confessions, Proudhon under the title "Confessions d'un révolu-
tionnaire" (1849), Vallès in the trilogy, of which the second
volume was originally entitled "Mémoires d'un révolté". Both
remained unwelcome in literary circles. Champfleury dismissed
Proudhon as a cultural ignoramus, and, as we have seen, many
critics were equally contemptuous of Vallès and his apparent

1957, pp.28-34.
2. See Le Progrès de Lyon, 29 Aug. 1864, Pléiade I, pp. 371-2,
and also his assertion "nous luttons pour que les femmes fussent
femmes" in a letter to Emile Gautier, 20 Nov. 1879, in Les Belles
Lectures, 1-14 June 1952.
3. "Littérature anglaise: le roman," Le Courrier du Dimanche,
4. Vallès was imprisoned on account of his outspoken article
"Un chapitre inédit de l'histoire du 2 décembre," Le Courrier de
l'Intérieur, 8 Sept. 1868 (O.C. VI, pp.443-460).
5. See Champfleury, Souvenirs et portraits de jeunesse, p.295.
insensitivity to artistic beauty.\(^1\) Indeed, just as Proudhon is known primarily for his political views and his contribution to the evolution of socialism rather than for the more questionable literary merits of his work, so too for many years Vallès was known and condemned as a protagonist of the Commune, whilst his trilogy and other works received relatively little acclaim.

If one compares the two writers' descriptions of realist literature, it is evident that Vallès is indebted to Proudhon for his conception of "art critique". We have already noted the importance Vallès attached to the task of critical investigation. In his articles on Proudhon and Courbet and in "Les Francs-Parleurs"\(^2\) he expresses his admiration for independent individuals willing to voice their opinions in bold and forthright criticism, challenging prejudices and convention, for, he maintains,

"... pour achever l'éducation du peuple, il suffit de quelques hommes personnels hardis, crevant à coup de franchise les cadres où la tradition nous a emprisonnés et qui, parlant de la liberté, prêchent d'exemple."\(^3\)

Critical questioning and innovation were essential to art which purported to be an instrument of progress and enlightenment.

In "Du principe de l'art" Proudhon had defined ideal art as "art critique, comme qui dirait art justicier, art qui ... unissant la conscience et la science au sentiment, discerne, discute, blâme ou approuve à sa manière,"\(^4\) thus prefiguring Vallès' ideal of critical independence. Vallès would have agreed entirely with Proudhon's definition of his ideal as,

"L'art, devenu rationnel et raisonneur, critique et justicier, marchant de pair avec la 'philosophie positive', la 'méthaphysique positive', ne faisant plus

\(^1\) See above p.27.
\(^3\) Ibid., p.296.
profession d'indifférence, ni en matière de foi, ni en matière de gouvernement, ni en matière de morale."¹

Vallès did not formulate his ideas in so concentrated and precise a form, but this was the gist of his own comments on many occasions. He and Proudhon both demanded that the artist express himself openly on matters of public interest.

However, on this issue Vallès often expressed himself in more forceful and extreme terms than Proudhon. In "Du principe de l'art" Proudhon openly admitted his socialist sympathies,² but his demands for committed art and literature were couched, as Duranty's were, in general humanitarian terms. He called for art which might foster "l'éducation progressive du genre humain,"³ striving towards Man's moral perfection, and defined perfect art as "une représentation idéaliste de la nature et de nous-mêmes en vue du perfectionnement physique et moral de notre espèce."⁴

Vallès' statement of aims was more specific and political. His calls for clear, simple language, accessible to all, were couched in emotive terms betraying a deep class-consciousness. He sought the extension of literature to the masses as a move towards the abolition of privilege:

"Nous sommes arrivés au temps où l'art ne doit plus se tenir orgueilleusement sur les cimes, mais descendre des hauteurs dans la rue et parler un langage que tous pourront comprendre, les riches, les pauvres, les raffinés, les simples."⁵

He regarded prevailing literary elitism as a form of political conspiracy, as is apparent from his call for "une langue franche

2. See Proudhon's claim to represent the opinion of socialist revolutionaries, op. cit., p.373.
3. ibid., p.232.
4. ibid., p.43.
et claire que tous pourront comprendre, les gens de la foule, comme les petits conspirateurs d'écriture."\(^1\) The expression "petits conspirateurs d'écriture" reveals his resentment of the literary establishment, from which he dissociated himself, identifying rather with the cause of the poor and underprivileged, whom he sought to emancipate. Defending his exposition of the mechanics of capitalist finance in "L'Argent" he revealed the great importance he attached to the provision of economic and political education for the people:

"Les habiles profitent de l'ignorance des autres, et rien n'est plus facile à la bande noire que de régner en souveraine. Mais si ... la masse s'instruit, épelle l'alphabet de la Spéculation, lit dans ce livre comme elle a lu dans d'autres, la masse aura droit et pouvoir à gouverner ceux qui la saignent aujourd'hui!"\(^2\)

Apart from campaigning for educational reform, he sought to provide the working classes with a literature of their own, which might serve as an instrument of power and enlightenment, countering the effects of bourgeois mystification.

Proudhon would have sympathized with Vallès' aims and sentiments. He was no less committed to the people's cause, yet he never suggested in "Du principe de l'art" that narrow political commitment was universally desirable in every sphere of literary and artistic activity. Vallès, however, asserted categorically that one was faced with a choice between the servility of art destined for the commercial market and the noble altruism of art inspired by commitment to the people's cause. There was no alternative: "Il faut manger dans la main des grands, ou, son outil en main devenir le porte-drapeau des

2. L'Argent, Pléiade I, p.34.
126 pauvres."¹ On such occasions political passion clearly led him to simplify and overstate his case.

This is true too when he exalts the salutary effects of such commitment. In 1881, when André Gill was confined to a lunatic asylum, he asserted that his derangement was due to his lack of purpose in life, his lack of commitment:

"Il ne voulait pas m'écouter quand je lui parlais de l'émotion fertile des grandes luttes, de la santé que porte au cœur l'air bu sur les champs de bataille populaires, de la fierté que donne le sentiment du devoir accompli, de la justice défendue (...) Il faut prendre parti. Il ne voulut pas, il repoussa tous les képis et se contenta de coiffer le bonnet de l'artiste. Le bonnet s'est resserré sur les tempes et est devenu la coiffure d'un galérien de Sainte-Anne!²

He declared political commitment necessary not only to social progress but also to the sanity of the individual. Although this may have been true for himself, it cannot be accepted as a general statement of fact. Furthermore, although commitment to a specific cause is generally accepted in journalism or in literature ostensibly philosophical or political in character, blatant political bias is liable to incur widespread disapproval in works of fiction. Vallès, however, appeared to make no distinction between the degree of commitment acceptable in different

1. "Un Suicide," Le Matin, 6 July 1884. In this article Vallès attributed the failure and suicide of the sculptor Combarien to the mistaken attempt to tread a path midway between these alternatives. N.B. In his opposition of idealist commitment and degenerate commercialism he overlooked the possibility that art committed to a specific cause might itself become a servile instrument of propaganda.

2. "Chronique," Le Réveil, 23 Oct. 1881, O.C. VI, pp.234-235. Vallès' remarks provoked hostile reactions from contemporaries such as Jean Richepin who accused him of betraying his friend (cf. Gil Bias, 2 Nov. 1881), but Vallès continued to cite Gill's fate as an illustration of the futility of life without commitment (cf. "Chronique," Le Réveil, 4 Nov. 1881, O.C. XI, p. 399). Today, when mental illness is sometimes ascribed to material prosperity which removes the need to fight for essentials and leaves people with no immediate aims, Vallès' view perhaps appears more acceptable than it did to his contemporaries.
literary forms. Fictional works too, he claimed, had their part to play in the dissemination of political ideals. Otherwise they were futile:

"S'il n'y a rien, dans ces livres, qui y ait été glissé entre les pages comme un pistolet sous des chiffons, pour servir d'arme à des douleurs jusque-là éparcées et résignées, l'auteur n'a été qu'un gymnaste, un jongleur, un cabotin!" 1

As was to be expected, such a view met with much hostility in literary circles, and immediately raised a crucial question: did Vallès intend to reduce the status of literature and the arts to that of mere vehicles of political propaganda?

CHAPTER VI. VALLES VERSUS THE NATURALISTS: POLITICAL COMMITMENT IN LITERATURE.

It was Vallès' extreme statements on the necessity for political commitment in literature which were to provoke disagreement between himself and the Naturalists. This is a subject frequently touched upon by the critics, but one which deserves much closer attention than it has so far received.

Zola, and his disciple, Paul Alexis, respected Vallès as a writer, but feared that he might allow his political convictions to compromise his literary talent. In their reviews of "Le Bachelier" in 1881 they purposely underplayed the significance of Vallès' political views and stressed his literary merits. According to Alexis, Vallès was suspicious and indignant on learning that he, Alexis, intended to write a purely literary review of his work:

"Et il m'a énergiquement chapitré, me recommandant de dire qu'il place avant tout, quand même, la politique; qu'il est pardessus tout un révolté, dont son prochain livre "L'Insurgé" donnera la vraie mesure; que, s'il cherche à avoir un talent littéraire, c'est uniquement parce qu'il voit dans le talent un outil de révolution."

However, Alexis refused to accept these assertions and claimed, rather presumptuously, that he knew Vallès too well to be deceived by such defiant poses. Vallès was still regarded by many with horror on account of the part he had played in the Commune, and Alexis evidently felt he was acting in his best interests in underplaying his political views. Seeking to rehabilitate Vallès

3. Alexis probably knew Vallès fairly well at this period, and from 1883 onwards he contributed two to three articles per week to "Le Cri du Peuple", together with a daily column on slang under the pseudonym Trublot.
in the eyes of the reading public, he maintained that the rebel of the Commune had now settled down to peaceable literary activities. The true Vallès was Vallès the writer and dramatist. This was why, in defiance of Vallès' wishes, Alexis confined himself to a literary study. However, to anyone familiar with Vallès and the inseparability of literary and political elements in his works, it is apparent that Alexis purposely closed his eyes to the truth, as he himself unwittingly suggests: "Aussi, de ce Vallès trépassé, je n'ai nullement voulu tenir compte ..."¹ Earlier in his review Alexis confessed his disillusionment with politics, admitting unashamedly that he never voted in elections. Evidently politics was so abhorrent to him, and yet his admiration for Vallès so profound that he attempted to suppress and deny the essentially political nature of Vallès' writing.

Two weeks later the sincerity of Vallès' political commitment was brought into question once again, when Zola, after reading "Le Bachelier",² adopted a similar attitude. In his review, "La Souveraineté des Lettres", Zola criticized Vallès for dishonouring himself by his apparent involvement in politics. In Zola's view too, politics was compromising and degrading:

"Ah! cette politique, quelle personne désagréable et plate, quelle mangeuse d'hommes. Elle est comme ces femmes de trottoir qui diminuent leurs amants et les enfoncent dans le train-train d'un concubinage maussade et exaspéré."³

He too refused to accept that Vallès was essentially a political being:

1. P. Alexis, "Jules Vallès," Le Figaro littéraire, 14 May 1881. N.B. This is my underlining.
2. "Le Bachelier" first appeared as a "feuilleton" entitled "Mémoires d'un Révolté" by Jean la Rue in La Révolution française, 13 January to 13 May 1879. Not until 1881, when Charpentier published a revised version in volume-form under the title "Le Bachelier" was it openly acknowledged to be Vallès' work.
"Un homme politique, allons donc! il a trop de talent, trop d'originalité, pour être cette chose bête ou hypocrite, cette chose qui doit marcher dans le rang, sans même avoir la permission de rire."  

He could not deny the rôle he had played in the Commune, but attempted to diminish its significance, and to cast doubt upon Vallès' political influence:

"Aussi M. Jules Vallès, très heureusement, n'a-t-il aucune autorité en politique ... On m'a bien conté qu'il a été membre de la Commune; seulement, cela n'importe pas pour lui. Il était déjà Jules Vallès en y entrant; et quand il est sorti, il n'était toujours que Jules Vallès, ni plus ni moins. S'il n'y a rien perdu, il n'y a rien gagné."  

My aim at this point is to discuss Vallès' intentions rather than the actual rôle of politics in his works. Nonetheless one cannot let Zola's assertions pass without comment. For Vallès the Commune was the culmination of his political and literary aspirations. As editor of "Le Cri du Peuple" and elected member of the Commune, for the first time in his life he felt in unison with the people and their cause. It is manifestly untrue to suggest that the Commune made little lasting impact on his life, and contributed little to his development. As "L'Insurgé" had not yet appeared, when Zola made these remarks, we may perhaps forgive his error of judgement. However when one considers the trilogy as a whole, 1871 is clearly represented as the highpoint of Vallès' life. Certainly it is the works he wrote after 1871, and in particular the trilogy, which have brought him the little fame he has earned, and critics are generally agreed in regarding 1871 as a crucial landmark in his career.  

2. loc. cit.  
3. R. Bellet, for example in "Vallès à la recherche de son vocabulaire politique, 1848-1871," (Europe, June - Aug. 1968) traces an increasing politicization of Vallès' vocabulary from adolescence onwards, culminating in his political maturation in 1871.
sion to "L'Argent", he had expressed his deep desire to educate and emancipate the people,\(^1\) it was only after the catastrophe of the Commune that he fully realized the necessity for all to play a part in the combat for social justice, and, therefore, became more fiercely aggressive in his insistence on the necessity for far-reaching political commitment on the part of the artist.

Not surprisingly he reacted indignantly to Zola's and Alexis' belittlement of the political import of his works, and to the former's declaration: "C'est lui seul, lui l'écrivain qui importe et qui intéresse."\(^2\) Much though he despised literary polemics, he felt obliged to reply to such accusations,\(^3\) and in "La Révolution littéraire" and "Ingrats" in "Le Réveil," 24 July and 1 August 1882 respectively, we find him defending his belief in political commitment and condemning the Naturalists' lack of involvement in contemporary political affairs.

The central thesis of Vallès' reply was that all true realists, whether or not they publicly dissociated themselves from politics, inevitably produced revolutionary literature, if their works truly reflected contemporary society. Although an authoritarian catholic and conservative, Balzac, Vallès claimed, had produced so realistic a presentation of nineteenth century France, reflecting so poignantly wretched social conditions and the imminent collapse of capitalism, that, without ever consciously wishing to do so, he exposed the need and indeed the inevitability of social change.\(^4\) The same was true of the works of

---

1. See Pléiade I, p.34.
2. E. Zola, "Souveraineté des Lettres."
3. Vallès is most apologetic in his reply, because, considering the dangerous implications of the French intervention in Egypt in the summer of 1882, he feels he should be defending the nation rather than himself (see "Ingrats," Le Réveil, 1 Aug. 1882, O.C. XI, pp.428-9).
Dumas, Flaubert, the Goncourts and Zola, Vallès felt, however much these writers insisted upon their indifference to politics:

"Est-ce que 'La Dame aux Camélias', est-ce que 'Madame Bovary', est-ce que 'L'Assommoir' ne sont pas, en dehors de toute volonté de l'écrivain, des œuvres sorties des entrailles même de la république des douleurs et des vices? Est-ce que les socialistes socialisants ont écrit contre la famille, la vertu et l'or, des pages plus cruelles que Dumas fils, Flaubert, de Goncourt, Zola?"  

It was, therefore, inconsistent of these bourgeois writers, "ces messieurs Jourdain de l'insurrection", to dissociate themselves from politics, when the realism of their literature was as revolutionary as direct, political action: "L'insulte et le coup atteignent les choses sacrées, tout autant par la meurtrière des livres que par le trou aménagé pour le tir entre les tas de pavés."  

Vallès noted with satisfaction that faced with the disintegration of the aristocracy, even reactionary writers from the upper classes were now portraying scenes of misery and deprivation as the only scenes worthy of their attention. Vallès' contention that realism is in itself revolutionary was not an original argument (although it certainly explains the importance he himself attached to realist literature). Critics have often observed that, despite Balzac's reactionary views, his vision was in essence revolutionary. This thesis is discussed at length by Lukács, who considers it a sign of Balzac's greatness that he does not distort reality so as to reflect his own political views, but is rather so objective in his descriptions that absolute realism outweighs his conservatism, producing a progressive vision of society.  

Lukács quotes from a letter from Engels to Margaret Harkness in April 1888, in which Engels had already described in similar terms the relationship

2. Ibid., p.426.  
between Balzac's political views and his realism. However as Henri Mitterand maintains in his article "Emile Zola et 'Le Rappel'" 1 Engels was not the first to present such an argument for, eighteen years previously, this had been the central theme of Zola's article on Balzac in "Le Rappel", 13 May 1870. 2 In fact, already in 1856, both Armand de Pontmartin and Duranty had commented upon the discrepancy between Balzac's avowed political opinions and the ultimate political character of his portrayal of society. 3

Clearly other critics had made this point with respect to Balzac long before Vallès. However, neither Duranty not Zola had gone on to generalize from this instance, and to suggest, as Vallès and Lukács later did, that absolute realism is of necessity revolutionary. Vallès had not simply lifted his comments on Balzac from other critics. He had long since observed that there was no need for the politically conscious writer to be partisan or to apportion blame, for the facts would speak for themselves. Already in 1867, he commented that honesty and accuracy on the part of the writer in themselves sufficed to prompt the reader's indignation at social injustice:

"Faites ressemblants les arbres et les hommes! ... à contempler les luttes horribles ou les pauvretés lamentables, on sera pris de haine pour ceux qui oppriment et de pitié pour ceux qui souffrent! Vous n'êtes ni le ministère public ni la défense: vous êtes des témoins! - La vérité, toute la vérité, rien que la vérité!" 4

Indeed, several years before the outbreak of his dispute with the Naturalists, he had suggested the revolutionary character of

the Goncourts' writing, in referring to them as "race d'insurgés, quoique légitimistes." Similarly in 1879, in a review of Alphonse Daudet's works, he had proclaimed the revolutionary character of realism:

"Vous voyez bien que sans le vouloir, tout en croyant qu'on n'est pas républicain, on est pis que ça, on devient socialiste et insurgé! ... On se dit légitimiste ou mornyste, mais si vous regardez de près la vie et que vous ayez le génie de l'observation et de l'héroïsme de la vérité, quelle que soit la couleur de votre cocarde, qu'on soit élançé et hautain comme de Goncourt, ou coquet et poétique comme Daudet, on est du parti de l'audace dont parlait Danton et l'on fait la joie de la Révolution."2

As a reply to the Naturalists' criticisms, Vallès' assertion that realism is inevitably revolutionary was in some respects by the way. Certainly Zola, with his left-wing sympathies, would not have objected to Vallès' assertion that his works, like Balzac's exposed the need for social change. The point was, however, that, whereas Vallès stressed the impossibility of remaining politically neutral, and, therefore, called for the writer to declare himself publicly, Zola made a distinction between the expression of overt political judgements in public life or in his literary works, and supposedly objective depiction of scenes with undeniable social and political implications.

Nevertheless, upset by the differences which had arisen between his friends, Alexis, loyal disciple of Zola, but also a friend of Vallès and contributor to "Le Cri du Peuple", now strove to reconcile the two parties. In his article of 30 July 1882,3 he commented on a line which had caught his attention in Juliette Adam's letter of 30 July 1881, in which she had quoted from Vallès' remarks as to his intentions in his forthcoming work

"L'Insurgé"1: "vous m'avez déclaré que ce livre serait la défense absolue de ceux qui ont été vaincus en 1870". Alexis was so horrified at the idea that Vallès might present a partisan defence of the Communards, that he simply refused to believe that he meant what he said:

"Vous possédez mille fois trop de talent pour avoir jamais, dans ce livre que je n'ai pas lu, rapetissé votre rôle d'écrivain à présenter une apologie ou un réquisitoire quelconque."2

Here, as in subsequent articles, he tried to gloss over the differences between Vallès and the Naturalists, stressing the common ground which united them. He maintained that what Vallès referred to as revolutionary realism was simply the scientific analysis which others described as naturalism:

"Cette force sourde et irrésistible qui emporte dans un même courant les écrivains modernes,3 elle existe. Il vous plaît de l'appeler la Révolution, vous; mais c'est tout simplement cet esprit scientifique, ce besoin de vérité et d'analyse, qui emporte le siècle. C'est ce qu'on a appelé le naturalisme."4

Vallès admitted there was a degree of truth in Alexis' claims:

"Vous avez mis le doigt dessus, jeune homme! La Révolution n'est que la marche de la science en avant ..."5 However, although Vallès appears to agree with Alexis, although he, like Zola, regarded science as an instrument of social progress, this is not to say that he trusted passively to the evolutionary process to bring about social change. Zola was later criticized by socialists such as Leon Blum for his naive faith in science, and his

1. It was in Juliette Adam's paper, "La Nouvelle Revue", that "L'Insurgé" first appeared as a "feuilleton", between 1 Aug. and 15 Sept. 1882.
N.B. Alexis' expectations are fulfilled in so far as "L'Insurgé" does not present a one-sided and dogmatic view of the Commune, but rather a critical view of both Communards and Versaillais.
3. Here Alexis is citing Vallès' own words in "La Révolution littéraire," Le Réveil, 24 July 1882.
view that the writer should confine himself to the rôle of social scientist, leaving it to the politicians to act on his findings and introduce reforms. As Blum observed, science might equally well be put to good or evil ends, and it was the scientist's responsibility to ensure that his discoveries were used to the benefit of mankind. Vallès too criticized Zola on this count. Alexis had overlooked the insurmountable barrier which remained between Vallès and the Naturalists, namely the issue of political involvement in public affairs. Vallès denounced the selfish ingratitude of Zola and his colleagues. Their refusal to involve themselves in politics necessarily implied that others were obliged to fight for the freedom they enjoyed. He rebuked them savagely for this selfish abdication of political responsibility: "Théorie commode, celle du mépris de la vie publique, métier de moine dans le couvent et d'eunuque dans le sérail des belles-lettres." Only a few months earlier he had attacked the recently elected academician Sully Prudhomme for his selfishness and complacency in retreating from society into the world of his own writing:

"... je l'ai trouvé trop bébête quand il a déclaré qu'il vaudrait mieux rester tranquillement dans son coin à travailler les belles-lettres plutôt que de sauter dans le forum plein de poussière et de sang!"

He compared Prudhomme to a man looking on in amazement at people fighting a terrifying fire and objecting to their disturbing his peace by their calls for help. Not only did he find his attitude egotistical, but in any event, he maintained, it was impossible to remain apolitical, and the man who refused to make a stand and take an active part in public life, was simply an involuntary accomplice to oppression:

"... l'homme qui dit n'avoir pas d'opinions politiques en a une.
Il est le collaborateur et le complice de tous ceux qui ont mis la main sur le pouvoir, le pied sur la gorge de la Patrie. C'est sur son indifférence que s'appuient les tueurs de pauvres et les bourreaux de la pensée."¹

Alexis was not to be deterred, however, from his attempts at reconciliation. On 9th November 1883 he asserted,

"Par deux voies parallèles, nous allons au même but,... les naturalistes sont des socialistes dans les idées; les socialistes sont des naturalistes dans l'ordre des faits. Les uns comme les autres veulent trouver le ciel et refaire le monde."²

This was a gross oversimplification. Zola was a left-wing republican, though scarcely a socialist, and the other leading Naturalists, Flaubert, the Goncourt brothers, Alphonse Daudet and Maupassant were all politically reactionary. One may accept that in Vallès' eyes, their realistic presentation of society pointed to what he considered to be political truths. However, there was no justification whatsoever for Alexis' suggesting that the writers themselves were motivated by the desire to revolutionize society. Furthermore, Alexis seems to have failed to appreciate that it was precisely the manner in which social change was to be effected which was at issue in this debate.

Vallès was not taken in. He retaliated by insisting yet again on the necessity for open political commitment and mocked the ineffectual nature of naturalism:

"Vous vous figurez qu'il n'y aura pas la guerre et la famine, qu'on ne crèvera pas de misère dans les taudis et qu'on ne mourra pas sous le canon dans les faubourgs parce que le naturalisme est venu ..."³

Nonetheless there was some truth in Alexis' claims. Although Vallès was more of a political animal than Alexis liked to admit, he was nevertheless as suspicious as Zola of narrow party politics,

which he referred to disparagingly as "la politique politiquante". 1

In his first issue of "La Rue" in 1879 he insisted, "... nous ne sommes pas des politiciens, nous sommes les soldats et les peintres de l'idée sociale." 2 He responded with indignation to the suggestion that he might be the pawn of a political party:

"... vous m'adressez une injure dont je me fâche, en me traitant à l'égal d'un de ces politiciens qui vivent de la politique, comme les prêtres vivent de l'autel ... je ne veux pas gagner mes éperons comme maquignon d'un parti ..." 3

The newspapers he edited revealed a left-wing bias yet he was wary of becoming partisan. He hoped that "La Rue" of 1867 would become "la tribune du peuple et le confidant de l'individu, non pas le journal de quelques-uns mais l'oeuvre de tous." 4 Although it would not have been in character for Vallès to affect indifference to public affairs, he expressed his desire to retain a degree of impartiality. In the case of "Le Cri du Peuple" too, although many radicals such as Jules Guesde were amongst Vallès' collaborators, he was concerned not to allow the paper to become an organ of party propaganda: "Social, humain, perlé de larmes ou pailleté de rires, ouvert à tous, tribune libre, voilà ce que veut être le 'Cri du Peuple'". 5 He insisted that the paper should not be monopolized by any one political faction (though his collaborators were all left-wing): "Au 'Cri du Peuple' on est socialiste révolutionnaire: on n'est ni anarchiste, ni blanquiste, ni possibiliste, ni guesdiste." 6 He demanded that writers declare their opinions openly, not because he sought doctrinaire literature reiterating his own views, but because he believed in the free exchange of ideas, and felt that open

2. "Lettre d'un fusillé," La Rue, 29 Nov. 1879, O.C. VI, p.199.
4. "Notre premier numéro," La Rue, 8 June 1867, Pléiade I, p. 941.
discussion alone would lead to the discovery of Truth and Progress. In "Les Francs-Parleurs" he praised the candour of the Catholic monarchist Gustave Janicot, the royalist Armand de Pontmartin, and the Catholic and aristocratic Barbey d'Aurevilly, however much he disagreed with their views. In fact, although Vallès was politically more active than Zola, there is not as much difference between their respective treatment of political issues in their creative writing as this debate may seem to suggest. As we shall see in the second part of this thesis, "L'Insurgé" is not the propagandist work some of Vallès' statements lead one to expect. Replying to Alexis' reservations about his proposed defence of the Communards, Vallès maintained, "Défendre ne signifie pas glorifier." He sought simply to expose the facts of the Commune and thus to defend his colleagues from unjust calumny, but as he insisted elsewhere, "sans prendre le ton d'un partisan." He hoped to appeal to people of differing political persuasion "par le pittoresque et l'émotion" and, in outlining his plan for the trilogy, declared, "Ce que je veux faire, c'est un bouquin intime, d'émotion naïve, de passion jeune - que tout le monde pourra lire, même dans le monde de mes ennemis ..."

He was wary from the outset of attempting to impose his judgments upon the reader:

"Je crois que je ne devais pas dicter la colère, souligner le droit d'insurrection filiale, et que je toucherai plus sûrement ma cible pour n'avoir pas fait de moulins avec mon fusil. C'est le lecteur qui, je l'espère, criera ce que je n'ai pas crié."

1. See his prefacing comments to Benoit Malon's "Le Nouveau Parti": "J'aime à voir des clartés vives. Je suis pour les affirmations pures, pour les formules nettes. Il est bien que toutes les idées prennent corps et qu'elles se dressent isolées et droites comme des cibles ou des drapeaux. On peut alors discuter autour d'elles ou tirer dessus." (LCD IV, p.1516).
5. loc. cit.
In 1873, commenting on his play "La Commune de Paris", he remarked, "C'est, je crois, sobre, impartial, très digne (l'histoire veut être ainsi traitée)". These comments are all to be found in Vallès' correspondence, but this was not available to Alexis and Zola. Had it been, they would no doubt have felt less apprehensive about Vallès' intentions.

However, if one looks back at Vallès' earlier literary criticisms, this suspicion of partisan and didactic literature is already apparent. Much though he admired George Sand, he objected to her didacticism, declaring, "... je ne voudrais pas que le roman se fît avocat ou tribun, même pour défendre les idées que j'aime." In contrast he admired the subtle manner in which the moral was implicit in Dickens' works, never intruding upon the narrative:

"J'insiste sur cette absence de manie moralisatrice et prédicante. Jamais, dans Dickens, l'action ne languit au profit de l'écrivain: il ne fait point halte pour lancer un paradoxe, débiter un sermon ... Le romancier anglais ne songe pas à dicter les sensations; il est plus moderne et plus fort, il les éveille."

Indeed had Zola and Alexis studied Vallès' literary reviews, they would have been reassured by passages such as the following:

"L'art nouveau ne peut devenir une forme sociale qu'en adoptant pour drapeau la sincérité, en mettant sans peur, le mal, tout le mal à côté du bien. Au lieu d'écraser l'un, d'exalter l'autre au nom de la saine morale, son rôle est de ne prendre parti pour personne et pour rien, jamais. L'artiste ne doit tenir ni un goupillon ni une férule, ni une balance ni un glaive mais faire se refléter le monde dans un miroir."

Not only in the novel but also in his journalism Vallès made clear his desire to maintain a degree of openness, avoiding didacticism.

In "La Rue" he declared, "Point la raison de ceci, la philosophie de cela! Nous exposons et ne concluons pas,"¹ and "... nous voulons éveiller et non pas dicter les sensations, et nous laissons le lecteur conclure ..."²

Thus, there seems to be little real justification for Zola's and Alexis' fears. The polemic arose in part from a misunderstanding of Vallès' intentions. He spoke continually of defending the people and serving the cause of socialism. He demanded that the writer participate actively in public affairs and voice his opinions on political issues. Yet what he probably had in mind was the expression of such views in political journalism, in open letters to politicians and to the editors of newspapers, not in the novel or any other form of creative writing. He was as aware as Zola of the limitations of didactic and partisan literature, and placed his faith in the conviction that, if people were in full possession of the facts about the society in which they lived, then this itself would lead to change.

That this misunderstanding arose, however, is not surprising, for Vallès made general and dogmatic statements on the necessity for political commitment, without defining precisely what he meant by this, and without making explicit distinctions between journalism and creative writing. Moreover, as we have seen, much of the evidence which convinces us of his desire to maintain a degree of impartiality in his presentation of political events is to be found in his letters to Malot and Arnould. Zola and Alexis did not enjoy his confidence in this manner and judged his intentions by public statements often designed to shock and provoke. In these circumstances it is understandable that they sometimes felt that he did not mean what he said.

Similarly we may conclude that the differences between Vallès' and Proudhon's attitudes to political commitment suggested above are probably only surface-deep, the confusion being due to Vallès' failure to distinguish between the artist's declaring his political views publicly and his allowing these to dominate his creative writing.

Basic differences in priority remain, however, between Zola and Vallès, even though Vallès may not have fulfilled Zola's fears in producing works which were nothing more than propaganda for the socialist cause. Although both writers had begun their careers as journalists, and had written for Lyons' newspapers at about the same time in the mid 1860s (Zola for "Le Salut public" and Vallès for "Le Progrès de Lyon") their paths had soon parted. By the 1880s Zola had established his reputation as a novelist, and mixed with Flaubert, Edmond de Goncourt, Turgenev and Daudet, whereas Vallès' main claim to fame was as a Communist. He was known in Medanist circles and is mentioned on numerous occasions by the Goncourts in their journal, generally, however, in terms of scorn, for they found him vulgar.\(^1\) In 1867 Zola and the Goncourts alike had contributed to "La Rue", but after the Commune, when Vallès began to publish the paper again in 1879, they declined to join him. On account of his political reputation, he was regarded with suspicion, and certainly he made no effort to allay the fears of his literary colleagues. Edmond de Goncourt had a soft spot for him and claimed that he would have protected him from the Versaillais in 1871. However, when he suggested making Vallès a founder member of the Académie Goncourt in 1882, his reward was to have the whole idea ridiculed by Vallès in indignation.\(^2\) Zola and Vallès remained on fairly good

1. See, for example, entry for 21 July 1867.
terms, and during the 1870s Zola helped Vallès to find publishers for his work while he was in exile, but in the 1880s they were clearly divided on the issue of political commitment. However, already in 1870 and 1872 Zola had risked prosecution in speaking out on political issues. When on 13 January 1898 the Dreyfus affair provoked him to declare himself publicly in his article "J'accuse" in "L'Aurore", although he insisted that he remained essentially a writer and not a politician, his position was to all appearances little different from Vallès' own. Had Vallès lived to witness this change of attitude, he would have considered this confirmation of the untenability of Zola's earlier position.

However, extreme circumstances were necessary to compel Zola to relinquish his supposed political neutrality. Vallès, in contrast, turned to writing almost as a last resort. He became a journalist during the Second Empire, when this was the only political avenue open to him. In a letter to Albert Rogat in 1867 he wrote,

"Je fais de la littérature par pis-aller; la politique m'attirait avec ses orages et ses dangers; un jour il fallut me taire!"

Never a violent man, the bloodshed of the Commune convinced him of the futility of violent political action. However, he had little faith in parliamentary democracy either. He turned to

4. Bourget and Brunetière claimed otherwise, insisting on his nihilism, but they were clearly bigoted. Vallès opposed the senseless destruction of war (cf."Causerie," L'Epoque, 27 July 1865 and "Rome," La Rue, 26 Oct. 1867, Pléiade I, p.991 ff), and in "L'Insurgé" Vingtras is presented as a man of moderation (O.C. III, p.136), horrified by bloodshed (p.239), who restrains his comrades from violent reprisals (p.298).
literature as an alternative means by which to influence the public, and effect social and political change.

His priorities were bound to alienate the literary establishment, and this probably explains why he received so little recognition for many years. Had he written in the 1970's rather than the 1870's however, we would find nothing exceptional in his attitude. Sartre and Camus have familiarized us with the concept of "littérature engagée," and it is surely this which he pre-figures, for in his views on the inter-relation of political and literary activities, he was years ahead of his time.
CHAPTER VII. THE PRIMACY OF LITERATURE: VALLES' HIERARCHY OF GENRES.

This thesis was given the title "The Social Rôle of Literature" rather than the wider title "The Social Rôle of Art" after due consideration. Occasional reference has been made to Vallès' comments on art forms other than literature, and in particular to his attitude to Courbet, but we have concentrated on his views on literature. The reason is simple - he did not feel confident enough to comment at length on other art forms, nor was he very interested in them. In "Le Présent", 8 September 1857, he informed his readers in passing of an exhibition of sculpture at the "Ecole des Beaux-Arts", but he showed no interest in it himself and commented, "Je n'ai point vu les ouvrages des exposants, et ce n'est point à moi d'ailleurs de les juger." The following month he mentioned an exhibition of architecture and listed award-winners, but again without commenting on their work. In contrast, although he never professed to be a learned literary critic, he was always ready to share with others his views on different books and their authors. Clearly his cultural horizons were limited and this is why he has so often been declared an ignoramus.

In 1867 he admitted that he was not moved by the sculptures currently exhibited in the Louvre. His zest for life and movement rendered him indifferent to such frozen static beauty:

"Faut-il s'arrêter devant ce tas de statues qui gèlent invalides en pierre ... qui ... vous donnent froid"

4. G. Gille (op. cit., p.615) declares, "Il faut en finir avec la légende de Vallès inculte," listing Vallès' wide and varied reading to illustrate this point. But many of the books mentioned were read unwillingly by Vallès out of a sense of duty. Also the point I wish to make is that Vallès was poorly versed in the arts in general, even though, as a schoolmaster's son, he may have read fairly widely.
quand ils vous regardent de leur œil stupide et sans prunelles?"1

Also he equated the admiration of statues with the servile adora-
tion of idols. Above all, however, he considered sculpture
elitist, since contemporary artists, limited in their range of
subject-matter, constantly turned to the classical world for
inspiration.

"Et si moi, Léonidas Requin," he wrote, "qui ai eu dix
ans d'affreux collège, qui suis bachelier de ci, bachelier
de ça, je n'y comprends rien, qu'y comprendront ceux qui,
ne s'étant pas usé le derrière sur les bancs, ne peuvent
de bonne foi savoir quels furent le rôle et la vie de ces
bonhommes en marbre!"2

Painting he evidently found more accessible, though his
comments reveal that he was not a specialist in the subject. He
never discussed technique, only content, opposing conventional
classical art to modern realism, that is, simply applying to
painting the same broad criteria by which he judged literature.
Where he did venture to describe Courbet's work at length, he
showed more interest in his attitudes than in his actual pain-
ting.3

He paid little attention to music either, for this too he
regarded as elitist:

"La musique, elle est le bonheur de quelques dilettantes
difficiles et rares. Elle exige une éducation. On ne
can entendre, ce me semble, avec profit et joie, un
'oratorio' ou un opéra si l'on ne sait pas quelles diffi-
cultés l'artiste a dû vaincre et en quoi son œuvre diffère
de celle de ses devanciers et de ses rivaux."4

Although there is some truth in his comments, most of us would
agree, I think, that one can enjoy music without the specialist
knowledge of which he speaks.

The more one studies Vallès' attitudes, the more aware one becomes that his lower middle-class provincial upbringing gave him an acute inferiority complex. He was immediately on the defensive on encountering art he felt unable to appreciate. He was unsure of himself and inconsistent. In the very article in which he denounced the elitism of music, he invalidated his own argument by complaining of the tyrannical power which music exerted over the masses. Prompted by the performance of Liszt's "Messe de Grav," conducted by the composer himself, at Saint-Eustache, 15 March 1866, he expressed the fear that, entranced by this romantic sentimental music, the congregation might imagine that they were undergoing a deep religious experience. Just as he feared the tyranny of the printed word, so he felt that music, in evoking a mood rather than articulating a message, was liable to hypnotize or "brainwash", and submerge the critical faculties.

In exile in London in 1873 Vallès became a close friend of Gounod, but this should not be interpreted as an indication of increased interest in music on his part. He admired Gounod, like Courbet, on account of his courage and independence. Together they eagerly discussed liberty in the arts. Significantly his greatest expression of enthusiasm for Gounod is when he relates how he had once planned to compose a symphony on the theme of revolution. Indeed, where Vallès did comment upon music, painting and sculpture, it was not so much in order to offer perceptive insights as to re-explore his favourite themes, liberty, self-expression, independence, revolution.

It was not only because of his narrow and mediocre education that his interest was confined essentially to literature. Whereas, in his view, music exerted, over the uninitiated listener at

least, a purely emotional influence, literature might be dis-
cursive, appealing to reason, and communicating a message expli-
citly and precisely. Here once again we detect the realists'
1856, Thulie had sketched a rather spurious hierarchy of art
forms. On the one hand he too had declared music elitist:

"Pour apprécier la grande musique il faut une oreille
délicate et exercée, comme il faut un palais exercé et
délicat pour apprécier les excellents vins et la cuisine
savante."

Yet on the other hand he too stressed that it was a base art
form in so far as it appealed to the senses and the imagination
rather than the reason. Painting he placed above music on the
grounds that in comparing a painting to its source in reality
the observer exercises his reason, but literature he prized above
all else as a direct appeal to the intellect:

"... la littérature ne s'adresse qu'à la raison ... En
écoutant la musique on est passif ... en lisant on est
actif, on discute, on approuve ou l'on refute ..."

How he would have matched Cyrano de Bergerac's "L'Autre monde",
Hoffmann's "Heinrich von Ofterdingen" or on the other hand Bach's
fugues to these definitions is difficult to see, but it was on
this basis that he declared literature supreme, for in stimula-
ting the critical faculties it was truly "l'art utile". Vallès
never suggested, as Thulie and also Champfleury did,¹ that music
and the visual arts were inherently inferior. He recognized
that Courbet had achieved greater realism in his painting than
had been achieved as yet in other art forms.² However, his views
were broadly similar, and he devoted himself virtually exclu-
sively to literature, stressing its intellectual appeal, and
hence its utilitarian, educative function.

¹. Champfleury describes painting as "art inférieur, qui
n'élève pas l'âme, qui n'apprend rien à l'esprit" (Le Réalisme,
p.94) and declares literature the supreme art form (p.101).
². See Le Progrès de Lyon, 10 Oct. 1864, Pléiade I, p.399.
Obviously, however, not all literature is discursive, and this is clearly one factor determining Vallès' preference for certain literary "genres", for his preferences may be interpreted in terms of the potential of different "genres" to fulfil a rôle of enlightenment.

Like the majority of realists he expressed utter contempt for poetry and the poet. In "La Multiplication des poètes" Duranty had compared the escalating number of poets to a plague of rabbits gnawing away at "le sentiment du vrai et du juste" and replacing this with "l'amour de l'ampoulé, du maniére et du niais."¹ He condemned the poet's tendency to allow formal and stylistic considerations to take priority over ideas, and poetic effect priority over truth.

This too was Vallès' argument. Poetry, he claimed, encouraged the writer to engage in the self-indulgent and futile exercise of playing with words for their own sake. "Pas de phrases pour le plaisir d'en faire!" he declared.² This is the theme of his articles of the 1880's collected together and published posthumously by Edouard Joseph under the title "Des mots" in 1920. Illustrating his argument with samples of his own poetry, he attacked the tendency to embroider on or distort reality. His poem "Vingt-huit mai" for example, written shortly after 28 May 1871 in a mood of utter dejection, had nonetheless a grandiose heroic ring - the effect of poetic rhetoric! The sincerest emotions might be obscured in the search for pleasing sound-patterns and rhythmic rhyming lines. Such considerations must be rejected and the poet cease to be "esclave des mots"!

Both Duranty and Vallès rebelled against the rigid falsifying constraints of verse. Duranty denounced "le mal de la

¹ E. Duranty, "La Multiplication des poètes," Le Réalisme, 15 July 1856.
² "Notre premier numéro," La Rue, 8 June 1867, Pléiade I, p.941.
versification", declaring the composition of poetry to be a skilful but purely mechanical task:

"... la poésie est un métier où l'on compte et mesure au compas, un métier de faiseurs de cartonnages ou de jeux de patience."¹

Vallès too directed his attacks not against lyricism but the formal restrictions which debilitated the "genre":

"Pour la Poésie ... je crois que le pauvre ange a du plomb dans les ailes: la poésie en vers, entendons-nous. Ne peut-on pas être poète sans l'hémistiche et sans la césure? La strophe, le décamètre, la stance, l'alexandrin, des bêtises!"²

He longed for spontaneity and, seeing no merits whatsoever in verse-form, was as we have seen, contemptuous even of Hugo and Baudelaire, generally regarded as two of the greatest poets of the century.

For him, as for Duranty, the attack on poetry was also an integral part of the assault on romanticism, as the Romantics were the prominent poets of their formative years. Vallès associated poetry in general with his negative image of the eccentric distraught Romantic. When Vingtras is asked if he is a poet, he asks indignantly if the question is intended as an insult. Does he really have a glazed absent-minded expression, and manuscripts hanging out of his pockets?³

Also Vallès and Duranty both despised poetry as the property of an elite. Duranty comments, "la poésie est une franc-maçonnerie dont on prend encore les mystères et les rites au sérieux",⁴ while Vallès attacks the elitist "cénacles" formed around Gautier and Nerval.⁵ Ironically, he, author of "Les Victimes du Livre" dismissed all expression of misgiving as to the moral character of "Les Fleurs du Mal", confident that the

1. E. Duranty, "La Multiplication des poètes.
4. E. Duranty, "La Multiplication des poètes.
work was accessible only to an educated elite.

"... sont-ils bien à craindre, ces vers savamment écrits, infiniment composés, que peuvent goûter, seuls, comme des fruits rares, les lettrés purs ..."¹

When Vingtras reads his verse to working-class friends, their reaction is one of consternation and incomprehension, and he is soon convinced of the irrelevance and futility of his inflated romantic rhetoric.²

Just as Vallès generally equated poetry with such rhetoric, so too he appears to have concluded, from the example of the Romantics, that poets in general are prone to religious worship and idolatry:

"... je m'aperçois que tous les bardes sans exception ont été des religieux ou des religiosâtres, qu'ils ont tous chanté le bon Dieu ou le roi. Tous!"³

Even Béranger was no exception in his eyes, for though he was neither a religious fanatic nor a royalist, he worshipped Napoleon with servile deference and admiration. In describing Beranger, Vallès refers to "ses longs cheveux, sa tête de vénérable" and "son allure de vicaire de campagne."⁴ He, therefore, became suspicious of the political influence of all poets:

"Je n'aime pas ceux qui saluent en vers les gloires mortes. Je les crois capables de saluer les tyrannies vivantes."⁵

His survey of the lives of Auguste Barbier and Victor Hugo suggested to him that poetry was perhaps an inherently servile and conservative art form:

"... il s'agit de se demander si la poésie n'est pas fatalement liée au sarcophage des vieilles traditions et des vieilles idolatries, et n'est pas condamnée au métier de courtisan et de courtisane ..."⁶

Surely no-one but a conformist traditionalist would willingly subject himself to such restrictions:

"Pour songer à faire porter à sa pensée la haire et la discipline de la césure, de l'hésitation ou de l'hémistiche, pour coudre, comme à un enfant Jésus, les ailes de la rime à sa plume, il faut avoir été baigné par l'encens, bercé par les cantiques et avoir gardé le fumet et l'amour de tout ça!"

One is tempted to conclude that in making such remarks Vallès had overlooked, for example, the worker poets of the 1840s, but in fact in the very same article he refers to Hégésippe Moreau, Savinien Lapointe and Pierre Dupont only to reject them. In his youth he had quite liked Moreau's work, preferring him to Béranger. He had at least attacked rather than encouraged the bonapartists. Vallès had also been fairly keen on Dupont, whose songs the students used to sing before Michelet's lectures. However, now in 1882, he turned against Moreau, Lapointe and Dupont, asserting that although they had once espoused the people's cause in song, they had deserted them when the time came for action, and had failed to sustain their revolt. They, like Barbier, according to Vallès, illustrated the complacency, introspection and inactivity typical of poets. In support of this point, he recalled how in 1871 he and fellow Communards on the barricades had been intensely annoyed by a poet who was more interested in reading his verses than concentrating on the fight for survival. He concluded that one could not depend on poets to take the positive action necessary to defend the interests of the nation. However, he gave no justification for dismissing Moreau, Lapointe and Dupont along with his fellow Communard.

That he should have accused Barbier of inconstancy is not surprising, for in later life Barbier had never matched the violent satire of "Les Iambes" of 1830-1831, from which Vallès

2. See O.C. II, p.132.
3. See, for example, his poem "Le Parti bonapartiste", 27 July 1833.
4. See G. Gille, op. cit., p.49.
quoted appreciatively.\footnote{1} Also, in Vallès' eyes, he was no doubt a symbol of the establishment since becoming a member of the "Légion d'Honneur" in February 1878. His reasons for rejecting the other poets mentioned, however, are more difficult to understand. His attitude to Lapointe is perhaps explained by the fact that, after the horrific bloodshed of 1848, the poet had declared, "Non, l'avenir n'est plus sur une barricade!"\footnote{2} Vallès would have considered this a betrayal, as also Lapointe's involvement in bonapartist agitation in the early 1870s. Moreau, however, can scarcely have given Vallès cause to change his attitude since the 1840s and 1850s for he died in 1838.\footnote{3} Vallès must surely have approved of his involvement in the street-fighting in Paris in July 1830 and June 1832, and likewise his outspoken political satire. However, he had always felt uneasy about his "pleurarderie,"\footnote{4} and was correct in suspecting that Moreau was introspective and apathetic. His premature death in 1838 was of his own doing, for he took repeated and ever larger doses of opium to while away his "ennui" and hasten his death. In Dupont's case though, one can find no cogent reasons for Vallès' attitude. The best one can suggest is that Dupont made concessions to romanticism, and became less vocal in later years.

Vallès' failure to acknowledge those whom we would expect him to regard as his allies is all the more surprising as his condemnation of poetry was not, as it may have appeared at times, all-embracing. He went into raptures over Calemard de la Fayette's "Le Poème des Champs", so much so that he reproduced the poem at length, without engaging in detailed comment,\footnote{5} though it is clear

\begin{footnotes}
\item[1] See O.C. XIII, p.46.
\end{footnotes}
nonetheless that it was the poet’s unassuming simplicity and realism he appreciated. On this occasion though, his enthusiasm was partly due to the nostalgia he experienced on reading de la Fayette’s descriptions of the countryside around Le Puy, where they were both born.

We must look to his reviews of poetry in "Le Progrès de Lyon", 24 and 31 October 1864, for a clearer impression of his preferences. Here he discussed Leconte de Lisle, Joseph Boulmier and André Lemoyne. Not surprisingly, Leconte de Lisle's love of Greece and his impassivity irritated him. He was less harsh on Boulmier, whose revolutionary violence he had appreciated in his youth, but he was now conscious of the limitations of Boulmier's fervent exclamatory poetry, and sought greater universal relevance. This was what he prized in Lemoyne’s simple and modest expression of familiar emotions, his intimate lyricism and realism, which contrasted so strongly with the Romantic poetry Vallès detested:

"... la déclamation avide d'antithèses, d'images ... s'efface pour laisser la réalité s'enfermer, vigoureuse et saine, dans le cadre de la nature. Partout on trouve plus de franchise et d'abandon: on est moins héroïque et plus humain."2

This contrast was again the theme of Vallès' article "La Poésie populaire" published in "Le Citoyen de Paris", 1 March 1881, and later incorporated in "Des mots." The article brings the pamphlet to a more optimistic conclusion than Vallès' opening attacks on poetry led one to expect. Here he compares Hugo’s and Eugène Pottier's poems, stressing enthusiastically his preference for the latter:

"Ils ne se perchent ni sur la crinière des casques, ni sur la crête des nuées; ils restent dans la rue, la rue pauvre."4

2. ibid., p.419.
4. ibid., p.214.
He looked upon Pottier as "poète du peuple" and asserted "... il a su peindre avec une déchirante simplicité la vie de labeur et de souffrance."\(^1\) Once again it was unpretentious realism which appealed to him, but also of course Pottier's political sympathies!\(^2\) Although he praised Pottier's poems, his views on the "genre" in general had not changed, and he continued to oppose formal constraints and concentration on stylistic "trivia". Yet he now acknowledged the possibility of a simple, realistic form of poetry which, rather than the inspired and refined product of exceptional individuals, was merely the modest yet moving expression of familiar emotions, transposed in song or simple verse. Pottier was as much "chansonnier" as "poète". In 1864 Vallès had defined the true rôle of poetry as "l'expression juste des sentiments d'un peuple",\(^3\) and this was what he heralded in 1881 in Pottier's work. His ideal of "poésie populaire" reminds one of Herder's ideal of the "Volkslied". He was reaffirming the value of the folksong or ballad, as a common expression of the people's laments and aspirations, bringing them together in sorrow and happiness. Such songs had an important social function and were not to be confused with the more individualistic poetry of a Hugo, Leconte de Lisle or Baudelaire, which Vallès continued to reject as a cultivated, elitist and restrictive "genre".

Although Vallès' preference for "poésie populaire" is readily understood, it is surprising that he singled out Pottier alone as exponent of his ideal, for he was no more talented than Moreau, Lapointe or Dupont. Also there were more recent poets such as Jean Richepin, whose work might have met his criteria. Richepin is generally acknowledged to have been considerably

2. Pottier is best known as author of "L'Internationale".
influenced by Vallès, but since his inaccurate and unkind biography of Vallès, "Les Etapes d'un Réfractaire", published in 1871, there had been much friction between the two men. In his review "Le Bachelier" published in "Gil Blas", 1 June 1881, although Richepin expressed his admiration for Vallès' novel, he also accused him of exaggeration. A few months later, they were to be divided again by Vallès' attitude to André Gill's death. Vallès would scarcely have enthused over Richepin's poems, had he considered they deserved this, but anyway he did not. The fact that "La Chanson des Gueux" is thought to require an appendix of three hundred slang expressions in itself suggests that the poem would not have satisfied Vallès' desire for simplicity. Commenting on Richepin's defence of Gill, Vallès wrote, "Je crains bien qu'il n'y ait, chez lui, plus d'universitarisme inconscient que de désespoir vrai". He perhaps felt that Richepin had had to make a conscious (and exaggerated) effort to express himself in the language of the populace.

Such information cannot be adduced though to explain away Vallès' lack of interest in other "proletarian poets", and he is certainly guilty in this instance of devoting more time to those he despised, than to seeking out those who might fulfil his ideals.

A second form of literature to be a frequent target for his attacks was academic and theoretical writing, and in particular philosophical works. He maintained that the average member of the public could not possibly understand the subtleties of philosophical debates, nor their relevance (if any) to everyday life. On announcing Auguste Comte's death in 1857 he

2. ibid., p.466.
4. O.C. XI, p.400.
admitted openly, "Et j'avoue pour ma part n'avoir jamais compris un mot de ses livres."\(^1\) Similarly he readily confessed that he could not understand Taine's discussion of the metaphysical.\(^2\)

One might have expected Vallès to identify with the philosopher in so far as they were united by their common desire to discover the Truth, but although he expressed an admiration for Taine's thirst for knowledge, Vallès admitted nonetheless, "je suis l'ennemi des philosophes."\(^3\) Throughout his work the philosopher is the subject of ridicule. In "L'Enfant" Bergougnard may declare proudly, "Je suis la Raison froide, glacée, implacable,"\(^4\) but the local people regard him as a madman, and he and his household are described in a series of paradoxical contrasts:

"... c'est là que monsieur Bergougnard écrit: 'De la Raison chez les Grecs ...' C'est la maison du sâge.' Tout d'un coup ses fils apparaissaient à la fenêtre en se tordant comme des singes et en rugissant comme des chacals."\(^5\)

Bergougnard beats his children in the interests of humanity! Later in the novel Vallès' description of a philosophy lesson affords a further opportunity for mockery. When asked by the teacher whether he is conscious of a being superior to Man, a pupil replies mischievously, "Oui, m'sieu, il y a un 'bonhomme' là-haut," for someone has suspended a paper figure from the ceiling. The teacher is satisfied with this reply, but is perplexed the following lesson when, on asking the same question, he is told, "Non, m'sieu, il n'y est plus." Vallès explains, "Il tenait mal et il est tombé."\(^6\)

Vallès placed his faith in factual analysis, and hence

---

2. See Le Progrès de Lyon, 21 Nov. 1864, Pléiade I, p.437.
3. ibid., p.436.
4. O.C. I, p.245.
5. ibid., p.247.
in memoirs and scientific studies. He mistrusted the retrospective rationalisations of historians, preferring the first-hand accounts of contemporary witnesses. For similar reasons he was suspicious of sophisticated philosophical argument, which likewise defies concrete substantiation. In his view abstract reasoning was as futile and escapist as the poet's fantasies. He demanded a concrete approach to problems of the day, not philosophical "truths" with no obvious practical application.

In fact, he was so ready to dismiss all philosophers that, apart from passing comments, there is little but his articles on Taine on which to base a discussion of his attitude to philosophical literature, and these articles are due to a personal rather than an intellectual interest in Taine. Vallès had entered the Lemeignan establishment in Paris shortly after Taine's departure, and frequently heard his teachers sing his praises. He also met Taine on several occasions and was fascinated by him. However, he confined himself to comments on his style and personality, and the nature of philosophy in general, never venturing to evaluate his or any other philosopher's views.

In 1864 he praised Taine because in comparison with his image of the eccentric absent-minded philosopher, he found him practical and down-to-earth. His style was colourful and emotional, compared to "la gravité sans émotions et la majesté impassible" which Vallès considered characteristic of philosophical and academic literature. Also, in Taine's observations on the English philosopher Macaulay, Vallès found an outline of the positive rôle he would have wished the philosopher to play.

2. Le Progrès de Lyon, 29 Nov. 1864, Pléiade I, p.444.
According to Taine, Macaulay approached philosophy "en homme pratique" dismissing the speculation of ancient philosophers as futile "jeux d'esprit", and condemning their sterile disputes, which had brought mankind so little benefit. In contrast he considered that modern philosophy had discovered its true purpose:

"Ce but est l'utile. L'objet de la science n'est pas la théorie, mais l'application ... L'objet de toute recherche et de toute étude est de diminuer la douleur, d'augmenter le bien-être, d'améliorer la condition de l'homme; les lois théoriques ne valent que par leurs usages pratiques; (...) Si l'on veut juger d'une philosophie, il faut regarder ses effets; ses œuvres ne sont point ses livres, mais ses actes."¹

The reader will appreciate Vallès' and indeed my own reasons for quoting this passage. It reveals once again Vallès' emphasis on the positive and useful. This was precisely the practical social rôle he hoped all writers might fulfill, though hardly the rôle he felt contemporary philosophers were actually performing.

Indeed by 1880 his sympathy even for Taine had waned. He no longer regarded him as an exception but attacked him as the personification of the philosopher. He found his recent work pedantic and lifeless, and referred to him as "prêtre", "moine", "vieillot", "séminariste",² criticizing the philosopher's life of solitary contemplation, removed from the world of action.

Already in 1864 he had expressed surprise that a man, motivated as Taine was, by the desire for liberty, should allow himself to be confined within so narrow a discipline. Now in 1880 he claimed that the effects of this restriction were manifest in so far as Taine's writing lacked its previous vivacity and spontaneity. He was so intent on being profound that his every utterance was the result of immense effort and torment:

"... il voulait être puissant, intense', et il raidit les muscles, s'enfonça les pouces dans les tempes, se

He was, in Vallès' words, "un constipé" in need of a laxative, for, like all philosophers, he had tied himself up in such knots that he was no longer able to express himself. Bergougnard is described in similar terms:

"... il tord les arguments comme du linge, il veut raisonner serré, lui, il ne veut pas d'une logique lâche, - ce qui le constipe, il paraît, et lui donne de grands maux de tête".

Vallès regarded philosophy in general as restrictive and unproductive and though he wanted literature to appeal to the reason, he reacted against excessive cerebrality.

He wrote of Taine: "Sa pensée a été comprimée et meurtrie dans le cadre du système auquel il a voulu attacher son nom et enchainer l'humanité ..." Not only did such a discipline cramp and restrict the thinker, but also the theory he produced was likely to enslave others. Indeed Vallès was opposed to theoretical works in principle, whether philosophical or political. His reading included Michelet and Proudhon rather than Marx or Hegel. Also, although strongly politically motivated, he never set out his own political philosophy in a systematic manner. This was partly because he found theoretical writing tedious and unpalatable, but also because he felt that theories were conducive to dogmatism and inflexibility. Where his own personal beliefs were concerned, he purposely defied all categories claiming, "... je ne suis rien non plus, ni janséniste, ni pliniste, ni panthéiste, rien, pas même athée".

2. The development of this and other equally crude images becomes the leitmotif of the article.
3. O.C. I, p.245.
5. Bored with learned works, Vingtrás declares, "Je n'aime que les romans." (Le Candidat des Pauvres, O.C. XIV, p.229).
critical independence rather than blind adherence to a particular theory or creed he criticized the philosopher's omniscient statements of Truth. He urged that personal reflections be incorporated within the framework of some form of creative writing or journalism, where they would assume a less authoritarian status, the reader generalizing himself from particular instances. This is not to say that Vallès approved the insertion of isolated philosophical passages within the novel. He criticized Victor Cherbuliez and Maurice Sand for precisely this, observing that one does not read a novel in order to encounter "un pédant qui fait sa thèse ou un illuminé qui s'égarer." Convinced, however, that one was more likely to influence the reader's thoughts and actions through the concrete example of individual characters of "fiction" than through abstract generalizations, he rejected theoretical writing as a medium through which to educate the people.

In contrast, he was attracted both by the theatre and the novel, which he considered not only more entertaining, but also, far better suited to the fulfilment of a positive social function.

The Social Romantics and in particular the Saint-Simonians had long since perceived in the theatre a powerful instrument of education. Hugo in his preface to "Lucrèce Borgia" had recognized this importance:

"Le théâtre ... a de nos jours une importance immense ... Le théâtre est une tribune. Le théâtre est une chaire. Le théâtre parle fort et parle haut."

More significant, however, as a possible influence on Vallès was Michelet's enthusiasm for a popular theatre educating the masses. In "L'Etudiant" he asserted,

"Nul doute que le théâtre ne soit aussi dans l'avenir le plus puissant moyen de l'éducation, du rapprochement des hommes; c'est le meilleur espoir peut-être de la

1. Le Progrès de Lyon, 14 March 1864, Pléiade I, p.335.
rénovation nationale. Je parle d'un théâtre immense-ment populaire, d'un théâtre répondant à la pensée du peuple..."1

Vallès too recognized this potential and longed to produce such theatre, for theatre, he declared, was "la véritable littérature du peuple".2

As far as the fulfilment of a social function is concerned, the theatre enjoys obvious advantages, for it is accessible to all, even the illiterate. Instead of intellectual abstractions, it is a living presentation of characters and events, appealing both visually and aurally. Vallès' enthusiasm is readily understood. In "L'Insurged", recalling the success of his lecture on Balzac, Vingtras talks of his preference for direct oral communication rather than communication via the written word. The former has greater emotional impact, and allows of greater interaction with one's audience.3 This was one advantage Vallès perceived in the theatre.

Also, his ideal of a modest writer regarding himself as servant to the public may be more readily realized here than elsewhere, for a hostile audience soon ensures that an unsuccessful play is removed from the repertoire. The playwright quickly discovers what is and is not appreciated,4 and may modify his work accordingly. This is not to suggest that Vallès felt that

4. As a literary critic Vallès felt that he should provide the novelist with this kind of immediate response (cf. Le Progrès de Lyon, 14 Feb. 1864, Pléiade I, p.323), although he recognized that critics were not representative of the people as a whole.
a writer should be dictated to by his audience, but he sought a theatre responsive to the public's needs. On several occasions he took up Thérésa's line, "Mais il faut en donner au peup' pour son argent!" Whereas he criticized the isolation of poet and philosopher, he was attracted by the playwright's contact with actors and the public, and the fact that he was participating in a communal social activity. What he advocated then was not the perpetuation of the elitist classical play, but the advent of a new popular theatre.

He wholeheartedly approved of Hugo's defiance of classical convention in "Hernani", and asserted that this rebellion did not go far enough. He criticized drama written in verse just as he criticized versification in poetry, finding it restrictive and unnatural. Indeed he sought in the theatre the same revolutionary social realism which he demanded of literature in general, declaring, "... il faut que le théâtre devienne un terrain de révolution." In 1882 he welcomed Henri Becque's controversial play "Les Corbeaux", congratulating the author for his ruthless attack on the bourgeoisie, and heralding his work as a step towards the fulfilment of the theatre's new social rôle.

1. This is an issue on which Vallès' opinions seem to waver. In September 1864 he denounced the dangers of pampering to the public's demand and acceding to majority tyranny: "... c'est l'écrasement du génie par le nombre! Vous appelez cela de la démocratie?" (Le Progrès de Lyon, 19 Sept. 1864, Pléiade I, p.394). Also in "Au hasard," L'Événement, 16 March 1866, he acknowledged that if one caters purely to the public's wishes then one never produces anything of lasting value. Elsewhere, however, he showed little concern for such lasting value, and called for submission to the needs of the masses. One can only conclude that, though he renounced individualism and sought to provide literature for the people, he recognized nonetheless the dangers inherent in such an undertaking.


Here as elsewhere, however, he remained wary of partisan literature:

"Le théâtre ne doit pas s'enfermer dans le rôle de panorama royaliste ou républicain, mais il doit être dans une série de tableaux de tout genre, grands ou petits, gaïs ou sombres, la peinture des moeurs d'un temps."  

He was aware that the theatre perhaps more than any other medium lent itself to use (or rather abuse) as a forum for political declamation, and reassured his reader,

"Nous, les indisciplinés de la politique ou de la littérature, nous sommes les premiers à répudier la responsabilité de déclamations tribunitiennes ou théâtrales qui semblent représenter la révolution."  

Though he envisaged the theatre as "terrain révolutionnaire," it must not be encroached upon, he declared, "par l'ourlet du Forum."  

It was in this area in particular that Vallès felt the novel enjoyed certain advantages over the theatre. The theatre appeals partly through external show and tends, therefore, to exaggeration, and a lack of subtlety, whereas the novel is a more intimate medium, less prone to distortion: "... la vérité se trouve mieux du demi-jour du livre que du feu de la rampe."  

In the theatre it is only by artificial devices such as the monologue or the use of a confidant that we are familiarized with a character's deepest emotions, whereas the novel lends itself to intimate psychological analysis:

"C'est au roman qu'il appartient de poursuivre cette étude de la vie intérieure, des dessous du monde et des secrets de l'âme."  

Only in the novel, Vallès declares, do we truly perceive "l'homme

2. ibid., p.443.
3. loc. cit.
5. loc. cit.
derrière le citoyen, la personne au sein de la foule.\textsuperscript{1} In contrast to the often superficial mass reactions of the theatre, he valued this subtle appeal to the individual:

"Il (le roman) est, par ce temps d'enrégimentation féroce, comme un asile où l'homme s'est réfugié. Les côteries et les partis, la littérature militante et la politique retiennent dans des casernes ou dans des camps des citoyens, des fidèles ou des soldats: seul ou presque seul, le roman ouvre à l'individu un théâtre et un champ de bataille.\textsuperscript{2}

There is little point, however, in debating which he preferred, the novel or the theatre, since he purposely avoided drawing any such conclusions, exclaiming, "A Dieu ne plaise que j'établisse des hiérarchies!"\textsuperscript{3} In his first article in "Le Progrès de Lyon" (presented by Roger Bellet in "Littérature et Révolution" under the title"Primauté démocratique du roman") he argues that the novel is more versatile than the theatre: "... le roman avec son art des descriptions et des nuances a plus de ressources que le théâtre pour tout traduire et pour tout peindre."\textsuperscript{4} He mentions the practical limitations of the theatre, limitations of time and space, the difficulties of staging certain types of scenes and the virtual impossibility of portraying realistically the changing aspects of nature. He even states categorically:

"Je préfère au plus beau décor, la page, la simple page où l'écrivain aura tracé, de souvenir ou d'intuition, le milieu dans lequel l'action s'agit, mansarde ou salon, sentiers ou grands chemins ..."\textsuperscript{5} this contradicting the preference for oral communication mentioned above. Moreover, according to Hector Pessard, the theme of Vallès' lecture on Balzac in the rue Cadet on 15 January 1865 was the

\textsuperscript{1} Le Progrès de Lyon, 14 Feb. 1864, Pléiade I, p.324.
\textsuperscript{3} ibid. p.324.
\textsuperscript{4} loc. cit.
\textsuperscript{5} Le Progrès de Lyon, 14 Feb. 1864, Pléiade I, p.324.
supremacy of the novel. However, the variations in his attitude are simply a function of the different circumstances in which he made these comments. When introducing a series of reviews of novels, for example, he evidently wished to stress the importance of the "genre". In fact, he appreciated the merits of both novel and theatre, recognizing their different functions in society. If he devoted himself mainly to the former, this was simply a function of his personal aptitude, as we shall see in Part II.

Finally we must consider Vallès' views on journalism, as it is in newspapers that the majority of his writing is to be found. Many writers look upon journalism as an inferior secondary activity, a source of ready cash, while they concentrate their efforts elsewhere. Edmond de Goncourt, for example, on setting up his academy, claimed that one of its virtues was that it would provide extra money for writers at present obliged to waste time "dans les oeuvres basses du journalisme." In "Illusions Perdues", Balzac reveals similar priorities contrasting d'Arthez' idealism with the opportunistic journalism of Lucien. Vallès, however, though critical of such opportunism and commercialism, did not look down on journalism in general, as is indicated by his deep respect for militant journalists such as Proudhon and Rochefort, or the famous newspaper editors, Emile de Girardin and Henri de Villemessant. The prime aim of his hero, Pierre Moras, is to become a journalist.

It is easy to see how the committed journalist, immersed in contemporary affairs, analyzing problems, imparting informa-

---

1. See Pessard's article in Le Temps, 18 Jan. 1865 part of which is quoted by Gille, op. cit., p.117.
2. See Edmond's entry in his Journal, 14 July 1882.
tion, conducting his own investigations, and rallying support for specific causes, fulfils the function of social and political enlightenment outlined by Vallès. The scope of the newspaper is such that the journalist is able to express his opinions freely on a wide range of issues. Moreover, in contrast to the bald generalizations of the philosopher or theoretician, each of his general points may be seen to emerge from concrete examples. Also, whereas the novel purports to be of universal relevance and must avoid narrow political commitment and treatment of issues of fleeting interest, it is generally accepted that the newspaper is a transitory localized medium of communication, and the journalist is free to make open political judgements on specific issues without this being considered to impair his work.

Furthermore, if newspapers are concerned with transitory communication, aiming at immediate reactions, and not the creation of tyrannical definitives, then journalism avoids the inherent dangers of the 'Livre' as outlined above. The 'Journal' stands in opposition to the 'Livre' because the latter is a completed, definitive piece of work, whereas the former presents a medium of interaction and exchange between reader and writer, reflecting changes in society. The journalist's rôle is to describe and discuss current events, rather than attempt to make final statements of truth.

Vallès himself was clearly more concerned to communicate through his writing than to create great literature. In "Le Candidat des Pauvres," after months of writing, without managing to get anything published, Vingtras emerges from his isolation exclaiming:

"Ecrire pour n'être pas publié! - C'est fini! Je me mangeais le coeur, je me rongeais le foie dans la solitude de ma chambre, en face de mes productions, qui sortaient muettes de mon cerveau et que j'entendais ni vivre ni crever. (...) J'aime mieux parler pour être entendu, même
Hence Vallès' enthusiasm for the newspaper, which he regarded as a two-way medium of communication, the journalist responding to a public ready to voice its demands. In 1866 in "L'Evénement" he wrote, "En ce temps de démocratie un journaliste doit avoir pour collaborateur le peuple entier ...", and the following year in "La Rue", "Nous voudrions que la 'Rue' fût en relation directe avec la foule, qu'elle profitât de ses avis, pesât ses conseils ..." When isolated in exile in England, he complained in his letters to Hector Malot that he was at a loss to know what to write, as he had no means of anticipating or verifying the French public's reactions. In his letters to Aurélien Scholl too he spoke of his disorientation, describing himself as "proscrit perdu dans le brouillard", and "pauvre aveugle". Undoubtedly one reason for his love of journalism was the close contact which the journalist has with his public.

Also the practical and technical tasks involved in the production of a newspaper were a further attraction for Vallès who had always envied the "ouvrier". When Vingtras visits a printer's he is intoxicated with the atmosphere and declares enthusiastically,

"J'ai trouvé l'état qui me convient ...
J'aurai moi aussi le bourgeron bleu et le bonnet de papier gris, j'appuierai sur cette roue, je brusquerai les rouleaux ..."

As a printer he would have learnt a trade, and would have worked in the company of "ouvriers" and intellectuals, for, he observed, "La blouse et la redingote, s'asseyèrent à la même table."

8. Ibid., p.315.
Similarly, in the production of a small newspaper, Vallès felt that one might perform a combination of intellectual and practical tasks and enjoy the company of workers and intellectuals. In "Comment un journal se fonde" in "Le Peuple," 8 February 1869, he recounted the hectic circumstances of the publication of the first issues of the paper in terms which reveal the satisfaction he derived from participating in its production both materially and intellectually:

"Nous avons vécu comme cela trois jours et trois nuits pleins, barbouillant le papier, surveillant les machines, épluchant des idées, comptant des feuilles, les rédacteurs se faisant ouvriers, moule à phrases, machine à labeur; c'est bien, et il n'y aurait pas grand mal à voir quelquefois passer sur le pantalon noir de l'écrivain la culotte de coton bleu du travailleur."

Whereas he was repelled by the narrowness of the teaching profession and academic disciplines, he was attracted by the variety of activities which journalism embraced. For an editor, he claimed financial management, marketing and publicity were as important as literary ability. He praised Emile de Girardin for his astute evaluation of such considerations, and his attention to details of spacing, size of lettering etc., which were crucial to the impact of an article. The world of journalism seemed to him so alive, and he was stimulated by the bustle of machines, the urgency of deadlines, and involvement in a team effort.

Last, but not least, it was through the "Journal" rather than the "Livre" that he was likely to communicate with the working classes. Workers with little cash to spare might be willing to pay a few pence for a paper, but could not afford a book. They were eager to learn of anything new, and read of matters affecting their own lives, but did not have the leisure-time to engross themselves in a novel. Vallès would undoubtedly have agreed with Emile Gautier who, in reply to a letter in which

1. Pléiade I, p.1722.
Vallès had outlined to him the importance of the "Livre", wrote: "... il serait besoin de livres si les masses frivoles et émiettées savaient les lire ... Aujourd'hui, elles ne se passionnent plus pour les idées, si on ne les leur sert pas hachées en petits morceaux. A leur gastre intellectuelle, il faut de la sociologie au jour le jour, en menue monnaie. La grande science n'est plus digérée que par une élite. Pour cette élite seule, les livres sont bons ... pour remuer la foule, pour faire bouillonner les ferment révolutionnaires épars, pour reconstituer un parti et recoudre le drapeau, il faut un journal ..."।

As we have seen, Vallès evidently recognized that the specific political commitment he called for belonged primarily to the realm of journalism. Also it was within the newspaper that the advantages of the novel and journalism could be combined in the form of the "feuilleton". As his introduction to "La Dompteu" reveals, he attributed great importance to the rôle of the "feuilleton", recognizing the need, outlined by Gautier, to serve up ideas "hachées en petits morceaux" and blended with excitement and entertainment:

"Mais votre public d'hommes qui travaillent n'a guère le temps d'aller jusqu'au bout d'une œuvre pour en voir la philosophie: on rentre brisé de fatigue, et l'on a besoin d'être chaque soir distrait par un feuilleton qui contient aussi un bout d'aventure."

Particularly in the light of his lack of literary pretensions, it is not surprising that he appears to have been attracted above all by the newspaper, the medium through which the writer might entertain and educate the widest public most effectively and immediately.

PART TWO

It is not feasible within the limits of this thesis to discuss in detail in Part Two every single point mentioned in Part One, comparing each of Vallès' statements to his actual practice. I shall concentrate particularly, therefore, on those points where Vallès' intentions and achievements coincide or diverge significantly, attempting to explain why this is the case. The issues covered will follow one another, broadly speaking, in the same sequence as in Part One, focusing initially on Vallès and realism, and then moving on to the social and political dimensions of his work.
SECTION A. VALLES THE REALIST, A WRITER WITHOUT IMAGINATION?

The central point to emerge from our discussion of Vallès' views on realism was his contempt for the imagination, which he held largely responsible for the deleterious influence of romantic literature. He called for direct reproduction of personal experience, leaving nothing to the imagination. How far does he fulfil this demand in his own writing?

CHAPTER VIII. VALLES AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WRITER?

The Jacques Vingtras trilogy is generally considered to be autobiographical, and critics refer to Vallès and Vingtras as if they were entirely synonymous. Clearly if this is the case, Vallès succeeded in emulating the memoirs he so esteemed and thus fulfilled one of his main criteria of realism. However, since the trilogy is not presented as an autobiography, we must attempt to establish more precisely how much of it is fact, and how much the product of his imagination.

Not only the trilogy, but also the "feuilletons" "Le Testament d'un Blagueur,"¹ "Le Candidat des Pauvres"² and "Souvenirs d'un Etudiant pauvre"³ all appear to be largely autobiographical, for whether the hero's name is Ernest Pitou, Jacques Vingtras or Jules Vallès, his circumstances, character and experiences closely reflect Vallès' own. This is confirmed by innumerable newspaper articles written by Vallès throughout his life in which he nostalgically recalls scenes of his youth and native province in descriptions which are interchangeable with passages of these works.⁴ Also Vallès' use of the first person narrator suggests

1. Published in La Parodie, 30 Oct. - 12 Dec. 1869.
2. Published in Le Journal à un sou, 7 Dec. 1879 - 12 Feb. 1880, under the pseudonym Jean La Rue.
3. Published in Le Cri du Peuple, 8 Jan. - 5 March 1884.
4. The section of "La Rue" entitled "Souvenirs" (O.C. X, pp.83-126), made up of articles written for "L'Événement" and "L'Époque" 1865-66, contains several passages which are closely paralleled in the trilogy: the story of Vallès' money-box (O.C. X, pp.109-10) reappears in "L'Enfant" (O.C. I, Ch. XIII, "L'Argent", pp.125-6 ff) his recollections of New Year's Day (O.C. X, pp.112-3 ff) are likewise echoed in "Les Joies du Foyer. 1er janvier" (O.C. I, Ch. VII, pp.74-6 ff).
his identification with his hero. The letters he wrote to Arthur Arnould and Hector Malot while working on the trilogy indicate beyond any doubt that it was his own experiences he drew upon in writing. He himself describes the trilogy as "mon roman-mémoire", \(^{1}\) "mes 'Confessions'" \(^{2}\), and chooses for his hero a name clearly reminiscent of his own.

However, the fact that he creates the fictitious Jacques Vingtras (or Ernest Pitou), suggests that he did not wish the public to regard the trilogy as pure autobiography. Also he systematically encodes the names of other characters: Royné is referred to as Royannez, Collineau as Collinet, Arnould as Renoul, Ranc as Rock, Charles-Louis Chassin as Matoussaint, Poupart-Davyl as Legrand, Testus as Entêtard, and so on. This artifice reveals a desire to disguise his own life-story as fiction. Philippe Lejeune does not treat the trilogy in his recent study "L'Autobiographie en France" for precisely this reason. "Le pacte autobiographique est nécessaire", \(^{3}\) he claims, and in Vallès' case this is demonstrably lacking. Above all the publication of "Souvenirs d'un Etudiant pauvre" in 1884, recalling a period of Vallès' life already described in the trilogy, but under the pointed sub-title "Mémoires vrais", brings into question the absolute veracity of the trilogy and confirms that Vallès did not intend it to be read as his autobiography.

His motives for adopting this approach are various. Shyness had prompted him to conceal the autobiographical nature of "Le Testament d'un Blagueur":

"Ne voulant pas me découvrir et me livrer, je me supposais l'héritier d'un suicidé et publiais sa confession." \(^{4}\)

---

2. O.C. IX, p.110.
In a letter to Malot he reveals that this was also one reason for the creation of Vingtras:

"... avertir le public que c'est bien le coeur de M. Vallès qui a été remué par ces misères ou ces amours, cela me répugne et me paraît presque ... une trahison."¹

Moreover he was not convinced that the public would be interested in Jules Vallès’ memoirs as such: "Des mémoires? Je ne suis pas assez célèbre et encore trop nouveau dans la vie publique."² A novel was likely to attract more interest. Also, in creating a fictional hero, he hoped to endow his work with a general symbolic significance, so that it might be regarded as representative of the fate of a generation, and not considered purely as his personal memoirs.³ Perhaps more important, however, were the political considerations, which necessitated this disguise. It is to be noted that until the amnesty of 1880, the first two parts of the trilogy appeared under the pseudonyms "La Chaussade" and "Jean La Rue", for had these works been presented openly as the memoirs of the Communard, Jules Vallès, the public outrage which followed their publication would no doubt have been very much greater. In fact no mention is made of the Commune until the third volume "L’Insurgé", and this was not published until after the amnesty.⁴ Now that the political atmosphere was more relaxed, Vallès in turn relaxed his systematic disguise of characters and in "L’Insurgé" apart from Vingtras himself, characters are referred to by their true names.⁵

¹ O.C. IX, p.60.
² O.C. IV, p.90.
³ In Le Présent, 1 Nov. 1857, Vallès asserted, "Mais nous sommes tous les mêmes! En parlant de moi, je parle aussi de celui-ci, de celui-là et toutes mes émotions ... vous les avez éprouvées à votre heure." (Pléiade I, p.88). In "L’Enfant", for example, he was not engaging in a personal vendetta against his own parents, but sought to defend martyred childhood and expose parental tyranny in general, as he claimed in his correspondence, where he continually reasserted that he wrote always in the interests of the Revolution (See O.C. IV, pp.282 and 294).
⁴ A first incomplete version of "L’Insurgé" was published in Juliette Adam’s La Nouvelle Revue, 1 Aug. – 15 Sept. 1882.
⁵ Here the name Arnould is used, not Renoul (O.C. III, p.30).
Some critics have maintained that the transformation of names in the trilogy is only a superficial disguise, and that the novels are nonetheless entirely factual. For example, Arthur Ranc apparently asserted,

"Il n'y a pas, à ma connaissance, de faussetés dans les volumes 'Vingtras', tout au plus quelques exagérations sans importance."

The exaggerations he mentions are obvious. Characters are often caricatured and the ridiculous nature of the situations in which Vingtras finds himself overstated. However, this is evidently a consequence of Vallès' attempt to derive the maximum comic effect from the situations he describes, and, in the interests of farce, the reader accepts such blatant exaggerations, which do not significantly detract from his perception of reality. Nevertheless it is untrue that there are no significant deviations from reality in the Vingtras volumes and as we shall show below, Ranc was undoubtedly aware of this.

Firstly, there are discrepancies between the chronological sequence of events in the different volumes treating Vallès' adolescence. In his preface to "Le Candidat des Pauvres", Lucien Scheler illustrates this by comparing directly the sequence of events in "Le Bachelier" and in "Le Candidat des Pauvres". He points out that "Le Bachelier" remains closer to the true chronological sequence, but is not entirely accurate nonetheless. For example, in "Le Bachelier", as in "Le Candidat des Pauvres", Vallès' period as "pion" in Caen immediately follows his father's death, running approximately from May 1857 to the beginning of the following year, whereas in fact official documents reveal

1. Quoted by G. Gille, op. cit., p.607.
3. See below p.179.
that Vallès was working in Caen from late 1862 to early 1863. Other similar discrepancies are to be found, illustrating Vallès' disregard for strict observation of chronology, and confirming that the trilogy is reality transposed rather than transcribed.

Critics such as Ulysse Rouchon, who have attempted to check every detail of the trilogy against reality have been continually frustrated in their research. Although Rouchon's biographical study of Vallès is an invaluable source of documentation, Rouchon finds himself unable to explain the fact that a character such as Mme. Toullier appears to have been invented, or that Grelin seems to be an amalgam of two different characters. He is perplexed by the identity of Apollonie, as Vallès' Aunt Marion apparently had a son not a daughter. Clearly sufficient factual documentation is not available to verify every detail of Vallès' work. There are certain areas of interest such as Louis Valiez' extramarital relationships, about which biographers have been able to discover very little information indeed. Moreover, where meticulous research has been undertaken, as in the case of Henri Guillemin's or Gérard Delfau's investigations in the police archives, in order to establish details, for example of Vallès' movements during his period in exile, supposedly factual information has often proved unreliable and contradictory. Furthermore, several debates in which the critics have involved themselves centre on insoluble subjective issues. Michel-Léon Hirsch may have collected and compared the views of several witnesses who knew or met Vallès' parents, but it is still

5. See C. Delfau, op. cit.
impossible for us to evaluate whether or not Vallès was justified in portraying them so harshly. Similarly, although Léon Séché may claim that Vallès does not do himself justice in his self-portraits,¹ this is not an issue on which we can reach any new conclusions today.

It is possible nevertheless to identify certain points where Vallès has deviated significantly from reality. In "L'Enfant" Jacques declares, "Je suis le premier enfant de cette union bénie", whereas in fact Vallès was the third of seven children. Admittedly all but one of his sisters and brothers died at birth or shortly afterwards, but nevertheless the impression given in the trilogy that he was an only child is misleading, especially as his younger sister Marie-Louise-Julie, born on 23 July 1835, lived to the age of twenty-four. As Béatrice Didier suggests,² one tends to regard young Vingtras' comment: "... je croyais que les enfants naissaient sous les choux"³ with some scepticism, when one notes that Mme. Valiez gave birth seven times between 1829 and 1838. The slight discrepancies over dates mentioned above could possibly be put down to carelessness or forgetfulness, but such major omissions cannot be dismissed in this manner. One is bound to question why Vallès concealed the existence of his brothers and sisters.

Béatrice Didier suggests that this is a classic example of the jealousy of the insecure child who wishes to be the centre of attraction and, therefore, suppresses the existence of any rivals in the struggle for his parents' affection. This is unlikely, however, for, apart from Julie, Vallès' brothers and sisters lived for too short a time to pose any serious threat to

⁴. O.C. I, p.35.
his position. In fact, one suspects that, rather than resenting the affection lavished on his brothers and sisters, he resented his parents' indifference to their suffering. In an early version of "L'Enfant" (to be found in one of Vallès' notebooks, now in the possession of Lucien Scheler) Vallès describes the suffering and death of Louisou, the younger brother of Ernest Pitou. Louisou is a sickly unattractive child but Ernest dotes on him. One evening Ernest's parents are informed that Louisou's survival can no longer be guaranteed, and that night they sit obstinately downstairs playing cards, whilst upstairs Louisou lies suffering. When Ernest calls out for help for his younger brother they turn a deaf ear. By the morning the child is dead. Ernest is overwhelmed with resentment and grief and his parents' attitude is implicitly condemned.

This episode is probably based on fact, for Vallès had a younger brother Thomas Jean-Louis, born on 23 September 1836, whose death he must have witnessed at an early age. He was presumably the model for Louisou.

This episode is omitted in "L'Enfant" and again one is prompted to ask why. My conclusion is that Vallès chose to omit certain facts of his life out of loyalty to his parents and in an attempt to soften his portrayal of their cruelty. Certain details included in "Le Testament d'un Blagueur" are suppressed in "L'Enfant", perhaps because in the trilogy Vingtras is more readily recognizable as Vallès. In the episode entitled "Au cachot ..."\(^1\) Ernest is beaten because he expresses the desire to become an apprentice cobbler. His father drags him through the streets, humiliating him publicly, and locks him up at school in a dungeon full of rats. His mother has hurt herself hitting him, but the headmaster is told that Ernest attacked her! No

\(^1\) Pléiade I, pp.1100-1101.
mention is made of this in "L'Enfant", nor of the fact that Ernest (or Jacques) has to board at school throughout the summer holidays in order to save money. To compare fiction with fiction, however, is inconclusive, for it may be that "Le Testament d'un Blagueur" in fact presents a melodramatic and exaggerated view of Vallès' life (as the hero's suicide suggests), and that it is the trilogy which is closer to reality.

Factual evidence, however, confirms that Vallès played down his parents' cruelty in the trilogy. In reality, towards the end of December 1851, fearing that Jules' political activities might disgrace the family, Louis Valiez conspired with a doctor Lequerré of Nantes to have his son committed to a lunatic asylum. This was a horrific, traumatic experience for Jules. He lived amongst lunatics for two months until on 2 March 1852, thanks to Ranc's and Arnould's threats to expose his father's action and cause a public scandal, he was suddenly released. Vallès' father had grossly abused his paternal authority and endangered his son's mental stability in order to protect his own reputation. Yet despite the magnitude of his crime, Vallès does not mention this in the trilogy. Here M. Vingtras only threatens his son with internment, and it is one of his colleagues who treats his son in this despicable manner. Vallès also omits all reference to his sister Marie-Louise-Julie who suffered from mental disorders from a very early age, and was eventually interned in an asylum where she died in 1859 at the age of twenty-four. Commenting on the arbitrary internment of the colleague's son, he does observe,

"... sa soeur a été tellement émue d'entendre dire que

son frère était fou qu'elle est tombée malade et va, dit-on, en mourir."

However, this indirect attack on his father is only recognizable to a reader already acquainted with the true facts.

In such cases it was partly filial loyalty which prevented Vallès from exposing fully his parents' cruelty. Also, however, he no doubt recognized that, were he to have presented these facts in full, he would only have exposed himself to accusations of insanity. Dr. R. Benon's studies of the medical records suggest that Julie was indeed mentally abnormal and suffered from severe paranoia and fits of melancholy, but that in Vallès' case his internment was arbitrary. He may have been a slightly eccentric temperamental individual, but he was not mentally ill, for his fits of enthusiasm or depression could be directly related to identifiable causes. However, those who hated Vallès because he was a Communist would no doubt have ignored such subtle distinctions, tarring him and his sister with the same brush. Already in 1872 Paul de Saint-Victor had portrayed Vallès as a frenzied revolutionary fanatic (an "énergumène") and Vallès was obviously wise to avoid giving fuel to the fire of such calumniators.

Although he thus avoided disclosing facts about his family-life, which he might have considered a betrayal, this did not prevent him giving full expression to the themes which were important to him because of his own experiences. As we have seen, rather than M. Vingtras committing Jacques to an asylum, these events take place in a colleague's family. Similarly the theme

of martyred childhood finds its harshest exploration in another household, that of the philosopher Bergougnard (whose similarities to M. Vingtras are repeatedly stressed). Bergougnard beats and tyrannizes his sensitive innocent daughter, Louisette, until she dies of grief and distraction at the age of ten. Memories of Marie-Louise-Julie and Thomas Jean-Louis probably prompted Vallès to choose the name Louisette. His descriptions of Louisette "folle de peur" resemble Dr. Benon's descriptions of Julie's condition. So too Jacques' grief and silent reproaches remind one of Ernest Pitou's reactions on Louisou's death.

However, Vallès' omissions are not always to the advantage of his parents. On the contrary, when M. Vingtras is appointed to a post in Nantes, we are given the impression that his promotion is purely thanks to M. Laurier's efforts on his behalf, whereas for M. Valiez it was very much due to his recent success in the written part of the "agrégation". Wishing to present M. Vingtras as a stolid, hard-working, but not particularly intelligent man, Vallès describes only the drudgery of school-teaching and never mentions academic success. Similarly he is unjust to his mother in portraying Mme. Vingtras as a harsh and bitter individual, without suggesting any reason for this, when in fact Mme. Valiez deserved considerable sympathy after giving birth to seven children, only one of whom lived to become a healthy adult. Mention of such extenuating circumstances, however, would have detracted from the intensity of Vallès portrayal of martyred childhood.

It is inevitable that Vallès gave considerable attention to some details of his life, whilst omitting others, and it is

1. See O.C. I, p.244 ff.
2. ibid., p.248 ff.
3. ibid., p.249.
interesting to examine the criteria underlying his choices. Take, for example, the question of names, treated by Mieczysław Kaczynski in a recent article.¹ Vallès does not introduce us to all his schoolfriends by name, but concentrates rather on those who lend themselves most readily to caricature, thus accentuating the humorous aspect of his work. Also, whereas he does not even refer to all his schoolteachers by name,² in "L'Insurgé" he is careful to mention many historical figures, conscious that this will lend the work an air of authenticity.

One may give totally different impressions of a person's life, according to which episodes one chooses to relate. Comparing Vallès' different autobiographical works, one notes many changes in emphasis and priority. For example, in the early version of "L'Enfant" mentioned above,³ Ernest's joyful experiences at Mlle Labre's infants' school, and his passion for her niece, Mlle. Irma, are described in great detail, whereas in the final version only fleeting reference is made to this "belle petite école".⁴ Any suggestion of childhood happiness is played down, and we move quickly on to Vingtras' grim college-days, whose evocation intensified the overwhelming atmosphere of gloom and suffering. Thus we see how reality is manipulated. Vallès' thoughts of marriage, which are explored at length in "Le Candidat des Pauvres"⁵ are given much shorter shrift in "Le Bachelier",⁶ where the episode simply serves to illustrate that marital attachments, particularly to a "bourgeoisie", will prevent Vingtras from committing himself fully to his friends "les pauvres". The love

¹ See M. Kaczynski, "Dans quelle mesure 'Jacques Vingtras' est-il une autobiographie?" Romanica Wratislaviensiā, VI, 1971, pp.41-51.
² See, for example, his Greek teacher, O.C. I, p.253 ff.
³ See above p.178.
⁵ See O.C. XIV, pp.352-65.
affair with the blue-eyed Mademoiselle Laura of Nantes, which he describes in "Mémoires vrais" is not included in the trilogy at all, as Vallès explains:

"Je n'ai pas fait allusion, dans 'Vingtras', à cette aventure, parce qu'elle ne se rattachait pas par un lien serré à la trame de ma vie."¹

Similarly, in "L'Insurgé", we are unaware of the existence of Vallès' mistress, Josephine Lapointe, for he no doubt felt that description of his personal affairs would detract from the importance attached to political events.² Significantly the genesis of "L'Argent", which is discussed in "Le Candidat des Pauvres",³ is not mentioned in the trilogy either. Vallès chose to relate only those incidents which served to illustrate or reinforce the central themes of the novel, in particular those of repression, rebellion and political commitment (although in lesser "feuilletons" and articles he was not too ashamed to fill in other details of his life). Vingtras of the trilogy is, in Léon Séché's words, "un Vallès arrangé pour les besoins de la cause".⁴

Looking back at the difficulties Rouchon encountered in attempting to solve problems such as that of Apollonie's identity,⁵ we must seriously consider the possibility, suggested by Kaczynski,⁶ that Apollonie had no counterpart in reality, but was created by Vallès in order to convey the awakening of Vingtras' senses,

¹. O.C. XIV, p.71.
². It was not that Vallès was opposed to mentioning a love-affair when it served his purposes. Early in our hero's life, when the family moved from Saint-Étienne, this was above all because of Louis Valiez' promotion, but in "L'Enfant" it is also seen as a consequence of M. Vingtras' affair with Mme. Brignolin (see O.C. I, Ch. XVI, p.168 ff), which cannot be substantiated in reality. This affair was clearly introduced to increase dramatic tension, and accentuate the dissolution of the bourgeois family.
³. See O.C. XIV, pp.412-14 and 441-4.
⁴. L. Séché, op. cit., p.5.
⁵. See above p.176.
⁶. See M. Kaczynski, op. cit., p.48.
and complete his image of the rustic idyll. It is dangerous to assume that every detail of the trilogy is drawn directly from reality.

One might suppose that Vallès' "Mémoires vrais" present a more reliable and authentic account of his life. However, the work is limited: no attempt is made to describe Vallès' early years, nor were these memoirs completed; the work as it stands covers roughly the same events as the first few chapters of "Le Bachelier", though in greater depth. However, apart from the restoration of the characters' true names and the distinction made between Vallès and Vingtras, there are few significant differences between the memoirs and the trilogy. The two "récits" do not conflict but reinforce one another, as indicated in the opening lines of Vallès' memoirs:

"Je n'étais pas riche! ah! fichtre non! La somme que je mets dans la poche de Vingtras au commencement du 'Bachelier' est bien celle que j'avais dans la mienne lorsque j'arrivai à Paris ..."  

Repeated references to "Le Bachelier" and Jacques Vingtras suggest many such parallels. Also Vallès explicitly relates the figures of reality to their counterparts in the trilogy. His intention seems to have been to stress the authenticity of the trilogy, rather than showing where it deviated from reality. In fact, these memoirs do not expose the full truth either. No mention is made of Vallès' period in the lunatic asylum; he talks only of his father's threats. By this time Vallès had evidently come to enjoy teasing the public about what was fact and what fiction. In his "Mémoires vrais" he, Vallès, talks about Jacques Vingtras,

1. O.C. XIV, p.23.
2. eg. "Les paroles que je prête à 'Jacques Vingtras', je les avais prononcées devant mon père stupéfait ..." O.C. XIV, p.41. See also pp. 26, 50, 68, 71, 73, 92, 97, 99, 125.
3. eg. "Matoussaint, qui, de son vrai nom, s'appelait Charles-Louis Chassin ..." O.C. XIV, p.24; "Le Royanny de Vingtras, qui s'appelait Royné à Ancenis ..." ibid., p.29.
4. ibid., pp.72-3.
whilst in "Journal d'Arthur Vingtras" Arthur talks both about the experiences of his cousin Jacques\(^1\) and about Vallès himself.\(^2\)

Although we have established that not every detail of "Le Testament d'un Blagueur", the trilogy, "Le Candidat des Pauvres" and even "Souvenirs d'un Etudiant pauvre" is exact, it is clear nonetheless that these works are largely autobiographical, for we have been quibbling only over details. These works then fulfill one of Vallès' basic criteria for realism, but can we say the same of all his writing? Had he always practised what he preached? Moreover, was it purely out of a desire for consistency, purely because he had expressed his faith in memoirs, that he came to rely so heavily on autobiographical inspiration himself?

These are the questions to be tackled in the coming pages.

---

CHAPTER IX. FAILURE IN ALL BUT THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL OR FACTUAL.

In the 1860's, long before the publication of "Le Candidat des Pauvres", the three volumes of the trilogy, and "Souvenirs d'un Etudiant pauvre" as serials in various different newspapers, Vallès had already tried his hand at writing "feuilletons". However, whereas his newspaper articles of this period and his volumes of collected articles such as "Les Réfractaires" (1865) and "La Rue" (1866) brought him considerable acclaim, these "feuilletons", "Jean Delbenne", "Un Gentilhomme", "Le Testament d'un Blagueur" and "Pierre Moras" went largely unnoticed. "Jean Delbenne", for example, has received so little attention that it was not even included in the edition of Vallès' "complete works", published by Les Editeurs Français Réunis (1950-73). Its inclusion in the Livre Club Diderot edition marks its first reproduction since 1865. Even Gille devotes only two pages to the work, less, that is, than he devotes to many individual newspaper articles.

One reason for this lack of success was the haste with which the "feuilletons" were written. "Un Gentilhomme", "Pierre Moras" and also the more successful "Testament d'un Blagueur" were all published in close succession towards the end of 1869. The latter ends abruptly without explaining the joker's suicide. The final scenes do not even have any bearing on this issue. Obviously Vallès did not have a clear conception of the novel as a whole when the first installment appeared, and when he and André Gill, the editor of "La Parodie", disagreed over its outcome, he simply abandoned it. These were his first efforts in

1. See bibliography for details.
2. Published in L'Epoque, 5-8 Oct. 1865.
4. See above p.172 n.1.
5. Published in Paris, 18 Nov. 1869 - 8 Jan. 1870.
the realm of "fiction" and pressure from editors cannot have made his task any easier. Also, if one bears in mind the sensational "feuilletons" of the period, pot-boilers designed to increase sales, then the faults we observe in Vallès' work are perhaps not so shocking as they may at first appear. However, it is important to note that they hinge essentially on weaknesses of the imagination.

The plot of "Jean Delbenne" is unoriginal; it is a superficial uninspired imitation of the novels of Stendhal and Flaubert: Laure, beautiful wife of a provincial doctor, is seduced by Jean, a proud young man from Paris. Like Emma and Rodolphe, they meet regularly in the countryside to pursue their love affair, but, predictably, Jean soon loses interest, and begins to rebuke Laure sadistically for her infidelity to her husband. She refuses to see him again and he, enraged by her defiance, attempts to rape her, only to be interrupted by the "unexpected" return of her husband. Jean is arrested and convicted of rape, whilst Laure is driven to distraction with remorse and dies demented.

Vallès exploits the much overworked themes of melancholic fatal passion, adultery and honour. His characters conform largely to the conventional mould: Jean is a symbol of ruthless, instinctive masculinity, suffering no moral qualms and thriving on danger, Laure a virtuous but helpless victim. The third person narrative lacks the vitality and individuality of Vallès' journalism or the trilogy, and is constantly interrupted by clichéd generalisations about love and passion.

However, at least Vallès is not beset here by the structural problems which defeat him in some of the other works we shall discuss. His plot is simple and predictable. He does not involve himself in complex, psychological exploration of his protagonists, nor does he introduce peripheral characters who might divert attention or complicate the outcome. This is
foreseen in the first few lines, as Jean and Laure, reading Dumas' play "Antony", dwell upon the dramatic line:

"Elle me resistait, je l'ai assassinée."¹

Although expressed in rather simplified and brutal terms, this is the story of their relationship, as we are pointedly reminded.² Jean takes Laure by force and, unable to live with her shame, she dies.

This is a romantic trait which reminds us of Werther and Lotte reading Ossian's songs together, or of the copy of "Emilia Galotti" left on Werther's table at his death. Indeed the "feuilleton" is a total betrayal of the ideals Valles proclaimed in "Le Progrés de Lyon" 1864-5, and which he was currently defending in "L'Epoque". Jean is a victim of romantic literature, but rather than decrying the fact, Valles simply accepts his hero's fate. Moreover, his sinister descriptions of Delbenne and his repeated images of doom are intensely melodramatic, as is the general mood of the "feuilleton", oscillating between the burning heat of passion and the pallor of melancholy.

Valles thus conformed to a particular stereotyped "genre", blatantly betraying his declaration of integrity and idealism, and giving the public what they expected rather than what he himself recommended. There is little to identify the work as his but for the autobiographical traits in his portrayal of Delbenne: a sensitive child, deprived and humiliated in his youth, Jean grows up to be proud and ambitious. He becomes a well-known pub-orator in Paris and achieves rapid success as a writer, but dissatisfied with such hollow victories, leaves the capital to take up a teaching post in the provinces. The parallels to Valles' own life are unmistakeable. The proud, obstinate and moody Delbenne is a reflection of himself. Significantly the descriptions of Delbenne's temperament and his past have been described

1. LCD IV, p.295.
2. Ibid., pp.314 and 316.
as the most noteworthy aspects of an otherwise undistinguished work.¹

"Un Gentilhomme" is more characteristic of Vallès in so far as it reflects his democratic sentiments. The aristocratic de Vérac family has disintegrated since the Revolution and whilst the marchioness, the countess and her son Maurice, lead a life of austerity and deprivation, isolated within the walls of their castle, François de Vérac, the rebel of the family, works on the land, alongside the peasants, enjoying the fruits of his labour. He and his family are hardworking, healthy and very happy, whereas in the castle relationships are poisoned. Maurice has a wretched childhood, mocked by his fellows at school, and rejected too by his grandmother as a bastard.

The plot of the "feuilleton" is invented, but there are obvious autobiographical traits in the description of Maurice. The latter's desire to flee the castle and join his uncle François parallel Vallès' own envy of the simple life of his uncle Joseph and his cousins on the land. Like Vallès, Maurice is frustrated by the futility of his education and lifestyle. The novel is thus of interest as a reflection of Vallès' views, but more importantly, it exposes his weaknesses as a writer of fiction.

Structurally the novel is weak. It opens dramatically: "La marquise de Vérac va mourir",² but this impetus is lost as Vallès brings us up to date on family history,³ and fills in the background on central characters.⁴ Moreover, these flashbacks are so sketchy that they do not enable us to fully understand and sympathize with the characters concerned. Babassou remains an enigma throughout the novel. His actions are horrific and

¹. See G. Gille, op. cit., p.126.
². O.C. VIII, p.15.
³. See Ch.I and first part of Ch.II.
⁴. Ch.III is devoted entirely to describing Babassou's past, and Ch.VI that of Mlle. de Laubanil.
unpredictable. Admittedly his case is rather particular as he is portrayed as a subhuman mass of flesh without personality, a symbol of animality. However, there is little psychological exploration of any of the central characters, and their actions appear arbitrary, unmotivated and improbable. Interest shifts continually from one character to another and even our understanding of Maurice remains superficial.

In the introduction to the "feuilleton" in "Le National" on 29 July 1869, reference was made to "la hardiesse des situations". This is a restrained description for the melodramatic scenes of the novel! Violence abounds: the countess strangles the marchioness in a fit of fury; Babassou attacks Louise with savage animality, so degrading her that she dies of shame; finally, the novel ends in a general massacre: the countess, after murdering the marchioness and setting Babassou on Louise, now/latter's mother; Maurice turns on his mother, shoots her, and then commits suicide in despair; finally Babassou's dead body is found lying at the castle walls. In stark contrast to the slow exposition, five characters are lost to the world within the space of 200 words, and, with Mlle. de Laubanil's flight to a convent, we see the end of the de Vérac family.

The novel reveals the same predilection for the monstrous, macabre and fantasmagoric already illustrated in "Les Réfractaires" and "La Rue", but here it is totally misplaced. The stark contrast between Mlle. de Laubanil's virtue and elegance and Babassou's hideous animality offends us. It is unbelievable that so monstrous and repulsive a figure should have inspired her with physical desire. It is equally unacceptable that the countess should have guessed what took place between them, or

2. ibid., pp.115-6.
that her jealousy should suddenly have become so passionate as to impel her to resort to the vile act of unleashing Babassou on Louise. Moreover, it is a convenient coincidence that both Mlle. de Laubanil and the countess happened to be lurking in the shadows and witnessed Maurice and Louise's first kiss!¹

The novel shows a lack of proportion both at the structural level and on the plane of action. It exposes the shallowness and the extravagance of Vallès' imagination, for he conceives of horrific, violent action, yet lacks the understanding of human nature necessary to create psychologically consistent characters and involve them in a chain of events which might lead them to commit the acts he describes. There are certain redeeming features, in particular Vallès' lyrical descriptions of life in the countryside, inspired by memories of his childhood. In commenting on the work Gille observes, "Plus qu'aucun autre romancier, peut-être, Vallès ne décrit bien que ce qu'il a vu ou vécu."² In his view autobiographical elements save the work from mediocrity. Certainly, as in "Jean Delbenne", Vallès fares better when writing from personal experience, but the beauty and realism of a few isolated passages cannot compensate for many melodramatic excesses and a gross underestimation of the rôle of the imagination.

Whether by chance or perhaps because he had begun to recognize that this was his "forte", in "Pierre Moras" Vallès relied more heavily still on autobiographical inspiration. Pierre resembles Vallès in appearance, temperament and aspirations. He is a disorientated "bachelier" who cannot settle into a routine office job, and eventually leaves his home town in the Auvergne to become a journalist in Paris. His family background is similar too. His father is a feeble, shabby schoolteacher, whose

¹. See O.C. VIII, pp.97-8.
². G. Gille, op. cit., p.208.
miserable existence reduces him to alcoholism, his mother a
stupid, domineering and ambitious creature. Though once again
the events of the novel do not correspond closely to those of
Vallès' life, many scenes and episodes reflect his own experi­
ences, for example, his description of life as a clerk in the
town hall,¹ or his amorous adventure with a wealthy and influen­
tial Parisian lady. Similarly Vallès' favourite themes recur,
his envy of the simple life of peasants, his consciousness of
the futility of classical education, his contempt for social
hierarchies etc. Already one begins to receive the impression
of monotonous repetition, but here once again it is these per­
sonal elements which inspire the better sections of the work,
whilst weaknesses are apparent in plot, structure and psychology.

The novel rambles on interminably. Pierre's attack on
Mme. Jourdain has an air of finality, and one expects him to
serve his sentence and be reunited with Rose, but with his
escape and his return to his father a whole new novel begins.
One has the impression that Vallès was writing from week to week
with little concern for overall structure.

Pierre's volte-face in this instance points to another basic
weakness. He is a shallow, changeable character. He enjoys
Rose's or Mme. Jourdain's company when he is with them, but for­
gets them immediately afterwards. His reactions take us by
surprise and are in some instances unpredictably violent. Though
there may be slight hints of mental disturbance and jealousy
before the court-scene, and though Vallès no doubt intends to
foreshadow Pierre's outburst by mention of "le brouillard de
sang"² which clouds his eyes on Mme. Jourdain's appearance, he
fails completely to convey the burning desire for vengeance which
presumably prompted this attack. Similarly, although Pierre's

2. ibid., p.783.
utter degradation at the end of the story is fully apparent, his suicide is unexpected, for it is not preceded by mounting depression and despair and is in fact passed over briefly without emotion. The end is anti-climactic for by this time we feel detached from Pierre's fate. Vallès has alienated us by passing judgement on his actions, and, in any event, he is so incomprehensible a character that, though we may pity him, we cannot sympathise.

Finally the "feuilleton" is more melodramatic still than its predecessors. Vallès' description of Pierre's monstrous deformation of Mme. Jourdain's face is exaggerated beyond belief, and there are other intensely violent scenes which follow this outburst. Vallès' fascination for "irréguliers" is also given free rein in his exploration of Parisian night life, and his description of seedy characters such as Barjou and Blanche. The plot too is contrived: it is unfortunate that Pierre should have the mislaid bracelet in his pocket just when his baby's unprecedented convulsions require him to find money for a doctor quickly!

Vallès was not proud of "Un Gentilhomme" or "Pierre Moras" and in 1879 refused François Enne permission to republish them.\(^1\) Apparently, not only were the stories written in haste, but also Gustave Puissant seems to have played some part in their composition.\(^2\) This explains certain inconsistencies such as the reference to Pierre Moras' daughter as "gros gamin".\(^3\) However, these works are distinctively Vallesian in inspiration and are signed with Vallès' name, and he must, therefore, bear responsibility for their incoherence, their psychological failings and weak implausible plots. The existence of similar failings in the later "feuilleton", "La Dompteuse"\(^4\) confirms that the fault is

---

2. See also G. Gille, op. cit., p.215.
3. LCD II, p.827.
4. See below p.201-3.
The last of the early "feuilletons", "Le Testament d'un Blagueur", marks a significant point in Vallès' development, for though he adopts a superficial device dissociating himself from Ernest Pitou, for the first time this is by and large his own life story, unmarred by the introduction of an artificial and improbable plot. Significantly, though the "feuilleton" is not satisfactorily completed, it is far more realistic than its predecessors. Vallès has found his successful vein!

In fact all the works discussed so far have been shown to be autobiographical to some degree, and this proves true of virtually all Vallès' other works too. Even Aristide Gerdit of "L'Assommoir", 1 who was to be the antithesis of Vallès in so far as he followed obediently in his father's footsteps, training to be a teacher, even he apparently was to resemble his creator in many respects. Admittedly in "Les Blouses"2 and "La Dompteuse"3 one cannot pick out one single character who embodies Vallès' views and experiences. However, in "Les Blouses" he draws on his knowledge of the problems of popular revolt acquired during the Commune, whilst the varied scenes of "La Dompteuse", from the English countryside to squalid quarters of Paris or the circus world, are likewise all familiar to him.

However, although Vallès' theoretical statements on realism precede in general his literary efforts,4 and one might therefore conclude that his criteria of realism predetermine and limit the sphere of his inspiration, it is unlikely that this is the main reason for the preponderance of autobiographical material in his

---

1. Details of the manuscript of this unpublished work are given in Catalogue Andrleux de la Vente Séverine, 17 May 1934, p.106, No. 1235.
4. See his literary reviews in Le Progrès de Lyon, 1864-5.
work. His memory was short. He frequently contradicted himself. Moreover had it been a point of principle for him to carry out his own recommendations to the letter, he would never have written "Jean Delbenne", nor would he have invented the plots of "Un Gentilhomme" and "Pierre Moras".

He was evidently naturally inclined to write about his own life and did so frequently in newspaper articles. Contemporary witnesses describe his habit of recounting anecdotes from his youth, whenever friends were gathered together over a drink in a café. He was egocentric and was so motivated by his desire to express the injustices he had suffered that he was virtually incapable of creating feasible characters whose dilemmas were not in some way a reflection of his own. As Neil Arvin writes,

"He is utterly incapable of feeling, of understanding and of expressing anything that does not touch him directly and acutely in one way or another."  

In his praise of Dickens Vallès describes how the English author's evocation of unhappy childhood reminds him of his own youth. This identification is obviously one reason for his admiration. It also explains his fascination for "irréguliers". Indeed it is significant that although Vallès planned broad historical works such as "L' Histoire de Vingt ans (1848-1868)" and later "L' Histoire d'une Génération (1848-1871)" which was to be his "Comédie humaine", and although he planned in "L' Assommoir" to present "une vaste fresque de la vie politique et sociale," incorporating characters from a wide variety of trades, none of

5. ibid., p.211 and O.C. IX, p.129.
6. See O.C. IX, pp.139 and 147.
these projects were ever realized as such, and the view of history he finally presents in the trilogy is essentially personal.

In "La vie littéraire" Anatole France comments, "On reproche aux gens de parler d'eux-mêmes. C'est pourtant le sujet qu'ils traitent le mieux."¹ This is undoubtedly true in Vallès' case. On reviewing his works it is apparent that the more heavily he relies upon autobiographical inspiration, the more successful he is. Conversely the more he exercises his exuberant, uncontrolled imagination, the more likely we are to criticize his works for melodrama, coincidence, inconsistency and sensationalism. It is only when he depends virtually entirely on autobiographical material for his inspiration, and only when he adopts the autobiographical format in toto, assuming the rôle of the first-person narrator, that the effect is truly realistic.

The importance of the first of these conditions is illustrated by "Les Blouses". Evidently Vallès spent some time in the libraries in Brussels in 1880, acquainting himself with historical accounts of the uprising in Buzançais in 1847, which was to be the basic source of inspiration for the work. However, as Jean Dautry maintains,² he makes the mistake of taking some names and facts from reality, but elaborating rather freely on these, introducing characters and episodes of his own invention. The result cannot be regarded purely as fiction, since the parallels to the events of 1847 in Buzançais are so marked and the name Buzançais is actually used.³ On the other hand, the story is a gross distortion of reality, as readers of "La Justice" were quick to let Vallès know.⁴ He made the lame excuse that, writing

1. A. France, La vie littéraire, Calmann-Lévy; 1er série, p.68.
3. When the work was serialized in "Le Cri du Peuple," 15 April 1885 onwards, the name was changed to Charançais.
4. See O.C. VIII, p.121.
in exile, he had not had access to all the necessary documents, but this cannot absolve him, particularly in the light of his own insistence on authenticity. This is a clear illustration of his failure to integrate satisfactorily factual and fictional.

The play "La Commune de Paris" confirms this point, and also illustrates the importance of my second condition, that is, that Vallès is only successful when he adopts the autobiographical format in toto. The play is based on Vallès' experience of the Commune, supplemented with historical documentation, but he is unable to integrate these two sources of inspiration successfully and produce a suitable plot.

Firstly, he fails to conform to the structural limitations of the theatre. The play is demonstrably impractical on account of its considerable length, the multiplicity of characters, and the great number and complex nature of the different scenes to be staged. The plot is contrived. The only means Vallès finds of exploiting fully the excessively complex interrelationships between the central characters is to resort to improbable chance encounters and overheard conversations. He grossly overworks the dramatic potential of these relationships. In view of the number of people involved in the clashes of May 1871, it is scarcely credible that so few characters should continually confront one another and control one another's fates, that Bonnal

2. Writing to Malot in 1878 (O.C. IX, p.256) Vallès asserted that he was sure one could produce some form of theatre which did not require "le génie du charpentier". Even after the failure of "La Commune de Paris" he did not fully appreciate the need for shape and structure in the theatre. Vingtras' remarks too reveal little critical awareness of the "genre": "En fait de théâtre, j'aime les pièces qui m'amusent et je ne suis pas fou de celles qui ne m'amusent pas. Voilà mes idées, pas davantage." (O.C. II, p.401).
3. For example, Jeanne is nursing Bryas when her rival for his love, Hélène de Vernay, also arrives to act as nurse (O.C. XII, p.128).
4. For example, Jeanne happens to pass just when Bryas is telling Hélène that all is finished between them (ibid., p.191).
should continually reappear at the head of the reactionary forces and Beaudouin at the head of the Communards virtually every time the two sides meet. Lesser characters such as Ecureuil, Racatel, Durand and Eugène Chopin are equally ubiquitous. Wherever the centre of action is, the situation is manipulated so that the same corps of characters may reappear. Vallès may intend them to be regarded as purely symbolic, but clearly this conflicts with the realistic framework.

This is the root cause too of several melodramatic scenes in which Vallès attempts to show the horrors of civil war within the microcosm of the family. In June 1848 Chauvelot father and son confront one another as captive and captor,¹ and in 1871 Vallès has the reactionary brute Landri unknowingly kill his own son,² only to be shot down in vengeance by his enraged wife.³

Finally, although Vallès' novels reveal a mastery of dramatic dialogue, he is unable to use this to his advantage here, for he has no experience of using dialogue as a tool of exposition, and his attempts to do so result in artificiality and a lack of dramatic motivation.⁴

He may have written from personal experience of the Commune. Bryas may be a reflection of himself, and other characters too may be drawn from reality.⁵ Yet the play is not realistic and has never been deemed worthy of performance. It demonstrates clearly Vallès' inability to invent and sustain a well-structured plot, or project a psychologically complex and consistent impression of more than one character at a time. He is so involved in writing that he cannot stand back and contemplate. In Bourget's

¹. O.C. XII, pp.50-51.
². ibid., p.297.
³. ibid., p.301.
⁴. See Durand's monologue (O.C. XII, pp.95-6) or Adèle and Racatel's conversation (ibid., pp.63-5).
⁵. Pierre Beaudouin, for example, is based on Jean Malézieux (see preface, ibid., p.17).
words, "Il ne peut pas se détacher de sa personne". He fails as a playwright, because he identifies too closely with individual figures to create an independent coherent vision with its own internal causation.

Earlier in his career, when he lived in the Latin Quarter with Louis Poupart-Davyl, Vallès had combined with him to compose two plays, "Le Neveu de Vautrin" and "Les Amours de Paille" (neither of which met with any success). He also collaborated with Edmond Massenet in writing a one-act comedy (which was no more successful). On several occasions during his exile he sought to persuade Arthur Arnould and Hector Malot to assist him in writing a play. In fact "La Commune de Paris" was written with the collaboration, however minimal, of Henri Bellenger. Vallès evidently did not feel equal to the task of composing a play alone. He was incapable of the impersonal approach demanded by the theatre and admitted to Malot, "Le théâtre se fait mieux à deux".

It is manifestly apparent then that Vallès' own writing illustrates the advantages of confining oneself solely to the autobiographical. Here his lack of imagination was relatively insignificant, for both the characters and the course of events were provided by reality. The chronological outline of his career provided a natural structure, particularly since, recalling events in retrospect, his memory lighted naturally on incidents most important to his development. In other works we have complained of shifts of emphasis, loose construction and a general

4. See O.C. IX, pp.75 and 256.
5. See M.-C. Bancquart's preface to the play, O.C. XII, p.9.
6. O.C. IX, p.75.
lack of structural imagination, but an element of spontaneity and carefree digression appears natural in the autobiographical context. Vingtras' process of composition is haphazard: "J'ai pris des morceaux de ma vie, et je les ai cousus aux morceaux de la vie des autres."\(^1\) Vallès' description of his process of recollection in "Le Testament d'un Blagueur" is very similar.\(^2\) However, in an autobiographical work, such disjointed episodes are united by the all-pervading presence of the first-person narrator.

So after many years' experience as a journalist, writing diaries or "chroniques" and freely expressing personal opinions and emotions, Vallès was evidently most at ease when writing in the first person. Those of his works which are written in the third person do not have the vitality and force of the trilogy. The narrative is either flat and stilted or else exaggeratedly enthusiastic or sentimental, whereas, when writing in the first person, he expresses himself naturally and humorously. There is no problem in bringing to life his central character in a sympathetic manner.

In the case of the trilogy, the personal autobiographical form had particular advantages for Vallès the Communard. As we have seen, he originally intended to write an impersonal historical document, but the adoption of a personal and often humorous approach softened the impact of his criticisms of society, thus rendering the work more acceptable in a sensitive, political climate.

One further advantage was that, whereas elsewhere Vallès' attempts to incorporate discussion of his favourite themes in his works at all costs may occasionally appear artificial and

1. O.C. III, p.42.
2. See LCD II, p.638.
misplaced, since these preoccupations originate in his own experience, it is within the autobiographical context that they find their most natural expression.

However, the example of Vallès' writing alone cannot prove the validity of his theoretical observations. The success of his autobiographical works indicates quite simply where his own strengths and weaknesses lie, and does not prove the relevance of his recommendations to anyone but himself. Moreover, though "Le Testament d'un Blagueur" and "L'Enfant", or "Le Bachelier", "Le Candidat des Pauvres" and "Souvenirs d'un Etudiant pauvre" may each be interesting in their own right, they are repetitious, for although there are various additions, omissions, and changes in emphasis, the central themes and characters are constant, and basically the same ground is covered. These are simply different versions of the same story. We noted above Vallès' remark: "Un homme si fort qu'il soit, porte-t-il en lui plus d'un livre?" The question is evidently pertinent in his own case. However, greater writers have produced more than one masterpiece.

Finally, lest anyone should question whether the merits of the trilogy "Le Candidat des Pauvres" and "Souvenirs d'un Etudiant pauvre" are really due to the adoption of the autobiographical form and not simply to Vallès' increased maturity and experience, let us look briefly at "La Dompteuse", serialized in "Le Citoyen de Paris" from 17 February to 17 May 1881, that

1. See above p.100.
2. LCD IV, pp.322-529.
is, after the completion of the greater part of the trilogy.\footnote{In a letter to Malot in 1881 (O.C. IX, p.379), Vallès indicates that "La Dompteuse" was based on the "feuilleton" "Les Désespérés" (originally entitled "Les Infaillibles") discussed in his correspondence of spring 1877 (see O.C. III, p.177; O.C. IX, p.211; and G. Delfau, op. cit., p.120 ff, and in particular p.150). This was not published at the time because of the collapse of "Le Radical", in which it was to be serialized, but by the summer of 1877, Vallès had evidently completed twenty of the hundred installments he had in mind (see G. Delfau, op. cit., p.132). The similarity of "Les Désespérés" and "La Dompteuse" is confirmed by Poncerot's discussion of the character Fanjat in the former (see G. Delfau, op. cit., p.131), obviously the predecessor of Fanjat in "La Dompteuse"; but it is obvious from Vallès' comments to Malot that he was working hard on the "feuilleton" in 1881 (see O.C. IX, p.379) and that though the earlier work may have formed the basis of the serial which finally appeared, "La Dompteuse" as such was written in 1881. (In fact only seventeen installments ever appeared ...)}

Announcing the "feuilleton" to the public on 13 February 1881,\footnote{"Lettre au directeur du Citoyen," Le Citoyen de Paris, 13 Feb. 1881.} Vallès promised a work of excitement and adventure in the popular style of Eugène Sue. Excitement of the most sensational kind is certainly provided in the form of abortion, murders, blackmail, mystery, and the figure of the hideous scoundrel Fanjat. Melodrama abounds. However, rather than fascinating the reader, the extremely involved plot simply perplexes him. Following the "feuilleton" is like reading a detective story in which one is continually conscious of being provided with clues, but is never able to piece them together. When publication of the serial was suddenly ceased, the reader was left with a whole series of unanswered question: Who killed Landry and La Bernade? What were the true relationships between the central characters? Was the title "La Dompteuse" chosen because Vallès intended to illustrate the tyrannical power of "La Misère", or was the circus figure of this name to have assumed a central rôle as the plot developed? Perhaps Vallès himself was unable to resolve these questions. He had been carried away by the exuberance of his imagination,\footnote{See Poncerot's comments to this effect in G. Delfau, op. cit., p.132.} and this was certainly the most mediocre and melodramatic product of his entire career! In 1919 Albert Callet paints a distraught
picture of Vallès' tormented efforts to produce a work from his imagination.

"Que de fois je l'ai vu, s'essayant à échafauder une oeuvre d'imagination, suant, peinant, mordant la barbe de sa plume, s'évertuant à rattacher les fils embrouillés de son intrigue!"1

This is precisely the image we have of the author of "La Dompteuse".

As yet our comments have been based purely on Vallès' creative writing, or what might loosely be described as "fiction", but our conclusions are confirmed by his success in journalism. As his statements of priority led us to expect, this is where the majority of his writing is to be found. He is known to have written over eight hundred articles in over forty different newspapers and reviews.2 Also many of his works published in volume-form, such as "Les Réfractaires" (1865), "La Rue" (1866), "Les Enfants du Peuple" (1879), "La Rue à Londres" (1884) and "Le Tableau de Paris" (1932) are composed of newspaper articles.3

Here, as in the more successful examples of his creative writing, Vallès' inspiration was essentially factual, for the journalist records and comments upon events which have actually taken place. Many of Vallès' articles were based on detailed documentation. For example, his notebooks from

2. In 1971 G. Delfau brought to light several articles written by Vallès in exile (see G. Delfau, op. cit., pp.351-98) which Gille had been unable to trace in 1941. It is possible that still more articles dating from this period are yet to be discovered.
3. "Les Enfants du Peuple" and "Le Tableau de Paris" differ from the other works mentioned, for neither was edited by Vallès himself. Julien Lemer published the former while Vallès was in exile (see correspondence on this subject G. Delfau, op. cit., pp.244-5), simply reproducing intact a selection of articles written between 1867 and 1870. (Full details are given by G. Gille, op. cit., Sources, bibliographie, iconographie, pp.15-16.) Vallès himself had drawn up a plan indicating how he intended to bring together the articles of "Le Tableau de Paris" but never carried this out. His plan was amongst the documents sold in May 1934 and has not been retraced. Therefore, except in the Gallimard edition of 1932, in which Bernard Lécache took it upon himself to edit and rearrange Vallès' articles, "Le Tableau de Paris" is simply an exact reproduction of the newspaper articles of this title in chronological order.
exile\textsuperscript{1} contain a wealth of information on the living and working
conditions of British workers, which he assembled in preparation
for "La Rue à Londres". His investigations included the collation
of statistics on such specific subjects as the average consumption
of alcohol and tobacco of the British worker. Similarly, in the
course of his research for "Le Tableau de Paris", he is known to
have visited prisons, asylums and fairgrounds etc. in order to
acquaint himself with the facts and collate information, for
example, on current costs, wages and prices in the fairground.\textsuperscript{2}

In such instances Vallès evidently regarded himself purely
as a factual reporter, who left nothing to the imagination. How­
ever, this was simply because he gave such a narrow interpretation
to the term "imagination", which he conceived of purely in terms
of fancy or fantasy, and in opposition to the factual and realistic.
There are, however, various forms of imagination. The Oxford
English Dictionary makes a distinction between the productive
imagination, conceiving of something new, and the reproductive
imagination, recollecting and reconstructing. Vallès may have
exercised the former very little, yet he drawn on his reproductive
imagination in virtually all his writing, for memory is his main
source of inspiration, not only in recalling recent news items,
but also in re-exploring and recreating continually the world of
his childhood.

He also overlooked the importance of the structural imagina­
tion, and this was, as we have seen, very much to the detriment
of his creative writing.

Similarly he failed to make a distinction between imagination
as a primary source of inspiration, and the manifestation of
imagination in expression and presentation. Although the articles
of "La Rue à Londres" are based on factual research, they are

\textsuperscript{1} These are now in the possession of L. Scheler.
\textsuperscript{2} See, for example, O.C. XIII, pp.93-8.
nonetheless imaginatively written. Kaczynski, who undertakes a comparison of "La Rue à Londres" and Taine's "Notes sur l'Angleterre" talks of "une différence comme entre une nouvelle et un protocole. Au lieu de froids syllogismes, il y a ... un monde d'images et de sensations, et non de raisonnements et de formules ..."1 Vallès' journalism is in fact blatantly subjective. In Kaczynski's words, "Vallès fait passer le monde visible et sensible à travers le prisme de son tempérament ..."2 His portraits are more than bald transcriptions of reality. His originality and effervescent personality are manifest in his choice of colourful detail, his humour and irony, and frequently one finds oneself less interested in the characters and events described than in the personality of Vallès the journalist. When describing other people's experiences, he often puts himself in their place, writing in the first person, and projecting a subjective viewpoint.3 His is a highly personalized and imaginative form of journalism, not simply impersonal factual reporting. We would be as blinkered and short-sighted as Vallès himself, were we to consider his success in journalism and the autobiographical as confirmation of the irrelevance of the imagination!

Certainly Vallès elaborated several projects which demonstrate his genuine desire to provide the public with purely factual information. Amongst the documents sold after Séverine's death in 1934 are his manuscripts for several "Petits manuels de la vie pratique: L'Enfant. La Femme. L'Homme. Les Métiers".4 He planned to publish a practical encyclopaedia which would help ordinary people in their daily lives, advising them on their social responsibilities, their

2. Loc. cit.
3. See the confessions of Fontan-Crusoé (O.C. VII, pp.46-65) or "le bachelier géant" (O.C. VII, pp.188-234).
legal rights, and so on. The Sales Catalogue of 1934 also mentions manuscripts for "Le Renseignement Mutuel", that is, Vallès' plan to set up a general information service, a sort of "Bottin mobile et universel", providing the public with addresses and details of tradesmen etc.¹ These projects have a strong practical orientation. It is significant that "L'Argent" too is above all a practical guidebook about investment and "La Bourse" rather than an abstract, economic treatise.

However, complex though his reasons may have been,² Vallès never took any pride in "L'Argent"; nor did he ever complete the projects outlined above. He was too impatient and temperamental to confine himself for long to systematically amassing and classifying information. Above all, however, one doubts whether he could have confined himself to the mundane task of transmitting this directly to the public, without imprinting upon it his own personal stamp, for although he described the realist as a self-effacing figure, this was not a rôle he ever assumed himself. He found in writing an outlet for his energies and frustrations, a medium of self-expression which satisfied his creative desire, and whatever illusions he himself may have had, all his successful writing bears the mark of a highly imaginative individual.

¹. See Catalogue Andrieux, p.114, No. 1270.
². See below p.282ff.
Indeed, before dismissing Vallès as a writer without imagination it is clearly necessary to devote some attention to study of his style. We saw in Part One his insistence that the realist should express himself in simple natural language, but does he do so himself?

In Chapter V of "L'Insurgé" Emile de Girardin refuses to employ Vingtras as a journalist, declaring him an "irrégulier" incapable of disguising his personality and opinions:

"Vos convictions? Elles doivent adopter la rhétorique courante, la mode de défense qui est dans l'air. Or, vous avez une langue à vous; vous ne vous l'arracherez pas de la bouche, alors même que vous l'essayeriez!"  

In fact there was no question of Vallès even attempting to curb his outspoken sincerity or originality of expression. His rebellious spirit is constantly apparent in his language itself, in brazen experimentation and innovation. Though his imagination may not be manifest in the creation of original plots or situations, it is apparent in his distinctive individual style and vision.

Léon Daudet claims that Vallès (and Léon Bloy) revitalized French literary language, for they "arrachent la phrase au ronron syntaxique". Vallès would have been flattered by this comment, for, as we saw in Part One, he was determined not to fall into traditional patterns of rhetoric. Ironically, however, he does not avoid this entirely. Barrès describes him as "rhéteur merveilleux" and compares him to Rousseau. Even Alexis, his faithful colleague, declares that his writing is sometimes as rhetorical as Hugo's! Students of Vallès:

3. See M-C. Bancquart's comments, LCD I, p.XLVIII. 
style observe in his work regular rhythms, symmetry and balanced ternary phrases; they trace the influence of his classical education in long, logical constructions. This may surprise readers of the trilogy, for these are features above all of Vallès' journalism. Here, powerful metaphors, antitheses and hyperbole are a regular part of his repertoire. He produces long well-balanced periods with beautiful rhythmic progressions, and persistent repetition to drive home his point. Despite himself, in his journalism at least, he resorts to traditional techniques of persuasion.

This may not be empty rhetoric, devoid of conviction, for he launches into passionate outbursts which convey his strength of feeling, and rather than lulling his readers into complacency with smooth regular lines ("le ronron syntaxique"), he provokes with brutal aggressive rhythms and savage verbal violence. Yet this is not the simple sincerity we were led to expect. There is an undeniable element of dramatic posture and forced exaggeration in much of his journalism. Lepelletier describes him as "fanfaron de brutalité", "outrancier factice", declaring,

"Son style se revêtait de tous les oripeaux les plus criards, de toutes les guenilles les plus voyantes. C'était tous les jours mardi-gras dans ses œuvres. Il ... saupoudrait sa phrase de mica pour la faire chatoyer davantage sous les yeux des naïfs."

As Lepelletier suggests, Vallès' bravado and showmanship were expressly designed to make an impact on the public. This was not simple natural self-expression. Colourful and energetic though his language may have been, it was a betrayal of his own ideals. Like those he criticized he himself had recourse to

2. Edmond Lepelletier, "Jules Vallès," L'Écho de Paris, 16 Feb. 1885. Similar descriptions are to be found in many other articles, as for example, that by Zola in L'Événement, 3 July 1866 (quoted in Pléiade I, pp.1475-6).
declamatory overstatement and magnification.

The genuine personal expression Vallès advocated is to be found, however, elsewhere in his journalism, and above all in the trilogy, where he had the opportunity to express himself most naturally and fully and to develop his own style. Here, within Vallès' "fiction" we become acutely conscious of his language, which is by no means the simple unassuming tool he spoke of, but is used rather in a highly imaginative and pointed way.

Jacques' father and mother argue about the latter's provincial dialect,¹ and from an early age Jacques is made aware of the social stigma attached to "deviant" language, and the pressures to conform. On occasions he himself makes fun of his mother's speech, translating her dialect into standard French for our benefit.² Elsewhere he mocks her prudery for she too is concerned to create a good impression, and is so dominated by her sense of propriety that she insists, for example, on his saying "'chose' de bouteille" in order to avoid the word "cul".³ His natural inclination, however, is to call a spade a spade or a "cul" a "cul". His schoolmaster says of him, "... c'est un garçon qui aimera toujours mieux écrire 'fusil' qu'arme qui vomit la mort."⁴

Indeed, at school too, language is a controversial issue. Jacques mocks the flowery language of a master who insists that he model his style on Boileau.⁵ He ridicules the Latin teacher who attempts to be eloquent and learned even when referring to the most mundane of matters, as for example, when he shouts at Jacques, "Ne portez pas vos extrémités digitales à vos cothurnes."⁶ We laugh at such pompous latinisms, implicitly acknowledging

2. ibid., p.174.
3. ibid., p.230.
4. ibid., p.286.
5. loc. cit.
6. ibid., p.253.
Vingtras' criticism, that the effect of classical studies is to distort natural expression and stifle spontaneity. In "Le Bachelier", when Jacques experiences difficulty in composing a letter, he is obliged to resort to Latin: "Si je faisais d'abord ma lettre en latin? Je 'pense' bien mieux en latin. Je traduirai après." Vallès' irony is pointed. Jacques may have learnt to juggle with words and structures but cannot express his thoughts logically and naturally. He himself is ashamed that his success both in classics and in French composition is achieved by piecing together elements from other writers' works, "par le retapage et le ressemelage, par le mensonge et le vol," but his history teacher, amazed by such scruples, reassures him, "Vous n'êtes au collège que pour cela, pour mâcher et remâcher ce qui a été mâché par les autres." Vallès ridicules this mindless regurgitation. In 1884, when ten million francs are approved for enlargement of the Sorbonne, he declares this wasted money for,

"Il n'en tombe rien, rien que des périodes banales, des périodes connues ... rien que des remâchages ou des redites, avec des citations toujours les mêmes ..."

His ambition is to express himself in a language he can call his own, rather than churning out such clichés and platitudes. In the trilogy his imaginative mimicry and mockery of other people's language is already a step in this direction, introducing humour and variety, and heightening the reader's critical consciousness of language in general.

In "L'Insuré" Vingtras claims he has achieved originality. He is not indebted to any literary predecessors, and has no fear of innovating or breaking with tradition:

"Je n'ai pas regardé, comme on l'enseigne à la Sorbonne, si ce que j'écrivais ressemblait à du Pascal ou à du Marmontel, à du Juvenal ou à du Paul-Louis Courier, à

2. O.C. I, p.256.
3. loc. cit.
How far is this assertion true of the trilogy?

Certainly in the place of smooth, composed literary periods, we find abrupt often breathless rhythms, as when Vingtras exclaims ecstatically:

"Je suis grand, je vais à l'école. Oh! la belle petite école! Oh! la belle rue! et si vivante, les jours de foire!"  

Indeed, not only in dialogue but throughout the entire narrative Vallès' language has the quality of direct oral communication. Casting off all literary artifice he writes as one would speak. His syntax is often primitive, as in this instance. Utterances trail off into nothingness (as they often do in conversation), or else it is evident that they have been completed by some action or gesture. Describing the style of his own letter-writing in 1879 Vallès remarks, "... je tiens une conversation et je fais des gestes plutôt que je n'écris."  

In the trilogy too his tone is conversational, and dashes, dots, italics and exclamation marks reproduce rhythm, emphasis and intonation.

Vingtras does not compose his autobiography then, but re-lives his experiences in anecdotal style. Rather than recalling past events in the past historic (and imperfect) in conventional fashion, he adopts the present indicative. Whereas the past tenses distance, contain and control events in ordered chronological and causal sequences, constant use of the present tense destroys this feeling of order and control, and the reader is subjected to an incessant and spontaneous flow of diverse impres-
sions which recreate rather the quality of experience. In practice as in theory then, composition and formal perfection are less important to Vallès than simplicity and immediacy.

His rapid series of short, simple sentences produce a light and lively narrative which is easy to read and which would, he hoped, help him to fulfil his desire to appeal to a wide public.\(^1\) Facts and actions are simply stated without complex whys and wherefores, and complex nominalization is avoided by the use of numerous simple sentences. Barrès describes this style as "une manière formée par simplification, par diminution successive,"\(^2\) and indeed, in her analysis of the different versions of "L'Enfant" published during Vallès' lifetime,\(^3\) Christiane Delforge traces a general trend towards simplification. She notes not only the cutting of inessential portraits and tirades, but also the systematic shortening of sentences through the replacement of relative clauses by phrases in apposition, infinitives and complements by single adjectives, verbal expressions by single nouns etc. There was clearly a conscious move to concision and simple syntax on Vallès' part. Where he had originally composed complex, sophisticated sentences, these are broken up. The sentence: "J'en fus malade à en mourir avec la fièvre" is modified to "J'en fus malade, j'en eus la fièvre."\(^4\) Simple juxtaposition replaces logical subordination, thus producing a more primitive sentence with a staccato rhythm. Many instances of the absence of logical subordination are to be found, as for example, when Vingtras recounts how he came to break a window in his lodgings in Paris:

1. This point will be further discussed below.
"J'étouffe de joie! j'ai besoin de boire de l'air et de fixer Paris. Je tends le cou vers ma croisée. Je la croyais ouverte; elle était fermée et je casse un carreau." I

Here the blunt contrast between expectations and reality, and the bald matter-of-fact manner in which Jacques records his misfortune provoke our laughter. He has no time for sentimentality and is happy to poke fun at himself. The rhythm of the lines themselves reflects this fact.

Similarly the general lack of linguistic sophistication in the trilogy reflects Vallès' lack of literary pretension. True to his rejection of the literary establishment, he shows no respect for traditional syntactical norms, and is evidently not concerned to produce well-polished prose. Sentences such as "Comme j'attends après lui," 2 and "Ce n'était pas pour de rire, du tout," 3 accurately convey the impression of familiar speech, but would no doubt horrify the purist! The desire for concision and familiarity also leads to frequent ellipsis, ellipsis of the article as in the expression "les buveurs faisaient tapage" 4 or "Il avait femme illégitime," 5 ellipsis too of the preposition, as in the sentence, "J'ai été triste huit grands jours." 6 Sentences often have no finite verbs, the copulas "avoir" and "être" being most commonly omitted, as in this portrait of Aunt Mariou's husband:

"Un beau laboureur blond, cinq pieds sept pouces, pas de barbe, mais des poils qui luissent sur son cou, un cou rond, gras, doré; ..." 7

Here Vallès' description is reduced to disjointed shorthand notation of significant detail. On occasions the narrative too is

1. O.C. II, p.54.
2. O.C. I, p.34.
3. ibid., p.35.
4. ibid., p.40.
5. O.C. III, p.320.
7. O.C. I, p.29.
reduced to equally cursory observations, as for example when Vingtras recounts his arrest on 18 July 1870: "Station au commissariat. - Interrogatoire, fouille, mise au violon!"¹ (Vallès the journalist manifests himself here in this telegraphic style!)

There are further examples of the primitive unconventional character of Vallès' writing. He evokes colourful and significant details, but is little concerned to present them in a skilfully composed literary narrative. Observations are jotted down with no concern for synthesis or integration, with no logical or explanatory links. Clauses are frequently linked merely with dashes. Vallès also has his own primitive device for setting a line in relief, that is, by isolating it physically on the page with blanks.² (This last feature is once again reminiscent of the techniques of journalism and was clearly not an accepted feature of literary prose). He thus made an impact in a very simple and direct manner.

Indeed, rather than cultivating style as an end in itself, Vallès demonstrates an ability to use language imaginatively, conveying realistically the speech of ordinary people, and also the excitable, spontaneous and changeable character of his "hero's" confessions, echoing his varying moods. Christiane Delforge talks of "l'interpenetration du style et de la pensee" in his works.³ At points of deep emotion the narrative moves from rapid sequences of short sentences to smooth fuller periods.⁴

Another feature of Vallès' style which illustrates his lack of constraint and his willingness to innovate is his verbal humour and wordplay. We noted above⁵ Vingtras' claim that he

¹ O.C. III, p.164.
² See the relief given to the line: "Je suis donc libre." (O. C. I, p.59).
³ C. Delforge, op. cit., p.114.
⁴ Several examples of this are to be found in the description of Louisette's death, O.C. I, p.248 ff.
⁵ See p.211.
was unaffected by traditional horror of tropes. This is manifest in his unrestrained use of puns. It is true that, as Walter Redfern argues in his article "Vallès and the existential pun", puns are not invented but are rather unearthed. Nevertheless a context must be found in which one can play on the dual meaning of a word to humorous effect, and great wit and imagination are required to produce the innumerable puns we find in the trilogy. (In "Le Bachelier" Jacques earns his living at one point by collecting puns for a publisher, and, as this detail is no doubt inspired by Jules' own experience, it is scarcely surprising that he has so plentiful a supply at his disposal.)

The pun is once again a device generally associated with the witticisms of journalists, rather than with the novel, but in Vallès' case, puns are more frequent in the trilogy than in his newspaper articles, for the latter are often earnest in tone, and are committed to specific social or political causes, whereas the trilogy is generally lighter and more humorous. As Redfern observes the pun often leaves the reader feeling uncomfortable, sometimes excruciatingly so, and this is particularly true in the context of the novel. The device not only serves Vallès' purpose in amusing the reader; it is also once again a sign of rebellion, and he delights in the reader's discomfort.

Puns are only one form of word play. The many instances of syllepsis to be found in his work may be equally amusing and disconcerting, as in the following examples:

2. See O.C. II, p.349.
3. Significantly it is in "Le Bachelier" that puns are most frequent, for here Vallès mocks the "larks, ritual games" and "verbal jousts" (see W. Redfern, op. cit., p.28) of his student days (as Balzac does those of the students in the Pension Vauquer). This conscious self-mockery perhaps helps account for those puns which appear to be in particularly bad taste.
"Je prends mon courage à deux mains et ma malle par l'anse."¹

"J'ai perdu mon chapeau ... et la voix aussi."²

Vallès also derives bizarre effects from intermingling the literal and the metaphorical:

"Ma mère a toujours la main sur le gigot et un pied dans la tombe à propos de cette bonne,"³

or the abstract and the concrete:

"L'autorité veille dans le corsage de la bonne comme dans la culotte de l'enfant."⁴

Puns often hinge on the literal and metaphorical use of the same word. Similarly Vallès creates humorous effects through the literal interpretation of metaphors or idioms, as when he declares,

"... il faut saisir cette occasion aux cheveux, dussent des perruques être mécontentes ..."⁵

No-one and nothing are sacred to him. He opens an article about Georges Cavalier (well-known for having led the booers at "Henriette Maréchal") in grandiose style, quoting from Bossuet's "Oraisons funèbres" and glorifying "Celui qui règne au 'Paradis' ..."⁶ He gaily deforms well-known sayings, as when writing in "L'Evénement" he quips, "Tout est donc pour le mieux dans le meilleur des journaux possibles."⁷ As Redfern observes, the domain of famous quotes, proverbs, idioms and all such "congealed forms of language" provides a "fertile terrain"⁸ for his wit and imagination. In fact his adaptations are not always aimed at comic effect. In his description of the Noir brothers in "L'Insurgé", after Victor's death, the effect of his alteration is to heighten the emotional intensity of the occasion:

1. O.C. II, p.29.
4. ibid., p.226.
6. LCD IV, p.851.
"Ils se ressemblaient comme deux gouttes de sang."\(^1\)

Whatever the specific effects of individual instances of wordplay, however, in each case Vallès exercises his imagination in rejuvenating and liberating fixed expressions, and exploiting fully the resources of language.

As well as "punning", he also delights in verbal patterns and in many instances the two features are combined, as in the line: "Nous parviendrons ... à obtenir ... des cours de reprise, à la reprise des cours."\(^2\) He enjoys playing with effects of balance and antithesis, as in "L'Enfant" when Jacques comments "Ma jeunesse s'éveille, ma mère dort ... Ma jeunesse s'éteint, ma mère est éveillée!"\(^3\) or later in "L'Insurgé", "... je viens de finir mon heure et de commencer ma vie!"\(^4\) In both examples the pattern of similarity but contrast accentuates the significance of the line, causing us to dwell upon it. This is the effect too of his startling, apparently paradoxical assertions. "... Rien n'est bavard comme un sourd-muet"\(^5\) he declares, or "Votre fils vous reviendrait des humanités ignorant comme une carpe ..."\(^6\) We are shocked into thinking about such assertions. This is in essence the effect of many of the devices discussed above, for rather than proceeding in a smooth reassuring flow, Vallès' language itself, with its abrupt rhythms and disconcerting devices, constantly disrupts our thoughts and prompts us to reflect. Wordplay is a source of amusement, but also a symbol and instrument of revolt.\(^7\)

1. O.C. III, p.142.
5. O.C. I, p. 29.
7. Vallès certainly acquired the reputation of rebel in the literary as in the political sphere. During the Commune he was appointed to the Commission for Education and rumour has it that he seriously proposed the abolition of conventional spelling. Gaston Gille (op. cit., pp.257-8) dismisses this as legend, and no doubt with justification, but the credence given to this rumour is an indication of Vallès' reputation.
This revolt is further illustrated by Vallès' reaction against "la peur des néologismes" mentioned above. Innumerable neologisms are to be found in his work illustrating once again his inventive playfulness with language. Linguists have traditionally divided neologisms into two groups, those necessitated by the evolution of new concepts, and those which may be considered as a conscious literary creation with clear aesthetic aims, but as Bozil Nikolov points out, many of Vallès' neologisms do not fall into either category. They arise from natural and apparently unconscious reactions, according to processes of analogy and association. They are a result of spontaneous linguistic expression and are formed naturally in the process of writing. Most people at some time in their life have been on the point of using a word, and have suddenly stopped to check whether it "really existed" or was their own invention. To Vallès it was immaterial whether the word was to be found in standard dictionaries or not! Nikolov lists many of his neologisms, noting details of their first appearance. Few appear in his early writing, but they become ever more frequent from 1866 onwards. Nikolov's list includes more from "Le Bachelier" than "L'Enfant" and more from "L'Insurgé" than "Le Bachelier". As he gained in confidence, Vallès evidently felt less restrained by conventional norms. It is significant that many of the neologisms in Nikolov's index make their first appearance in "Le Proscrit", in Vallès' correspondence with Arthur Arnould, for Vallès and Arnould were close friends and chatted freely, this confirming that many of Vallès' neologisms were born of natural spontaneous expression.

Also, the neologism, like the pun, is a device of economy.

1. See above p.211.
3. W. Redfern observes, "The pun saves space and labour and conserves energy: it is a device of economy." (op. cit., p.30).
4. Nikolov illustrates how a neologism may embrace both a basic concept and a qualification of that concept, a verb plus a qualification of that verb. (op. cit. pp.24-5).
and, as we have seen, Vallès wasted no energy on superfluous expression, but sought to limit himself to notation of the essential. Where others scratched their heads trying to find the "mot juste" or resorted to lengthy paraphrase, he glibly coined a new word.

Admittedly some of his neologisms are coined partly so as to express new concepts or perspectives, as when he describes the crime of eating an egg as "coquicide." Nikolov finds that sixty-three per cent of his neologisms appear in his journalism, where he is discussing current affairs, and many are inspired by contemporary themes, for example, "ammistiard", "capitulard", "encommunarder." However, even from these examples, we may perceive that his most common reason for coining a new term was to express a pejorative nuance. Nikolov presents several groups illustrating this, for example, expressions conveying his criticisms of religion: "bondieusard", "bondieuserie", "religiosiste", "religiosâtre" etc.; those centring on literature and literary criticism: "critiquaillere", "litterailleur", "parnassiculeur" etc.; those expressing his contempt for the educational system: "grécaillerie", "latinage", "latinasser", "pionnage" etc. and so on.

Inevitably a great proportion of these neologisms expressing sarcasm and disdain are formed along similar lines, by the addition of certain recurrent suffixes, for example, "députasserie", "latinasserie", "philosophasserie", "phrasasserie", or "gouvernementaillerie", "grécaillerie", "municipaillerie", "politiquaille- rie". Indeed, although Vallès rebels against systemization, and makes much of his hostility to words ending in "-isme" (for

1. O.C. I, p.32.
2. See B. Nikolov, op. cit., p.23.
example, "parlementarisme", "militarisme", "libéralisme", "l'opportunisme") coining many of his own terms on this model (such as "l'Ossianisme", "le Byronisme" and "l'Hugotisme"), it may be argued that his repeated formation of such neologisms along similar lines finally becomes systematized and monotonous, that this becomes a habitual "tic" rather than spontaneous creation.

However, his neologisms do not occur in such great density as a detailed study inevitably appears to suggest. Also there remains something utterly refreshing about the boldness of his innovation. He plays frivolously with proper names inventing the nouns "Daudeterie" and "Daudetlinage", and the verbs "ronsardiser" and "de-banvilliser". Also he experiments with the jingly assonance of expressions such as "chouannerie chouannante", "Parisien parisiennant" or "Journaliste journalisant" for the sheer joy of their sound. Moreover he does not even confine himself to expressing himself in clearly defined lexical items. Rather than engaging in lengthy descriptions or using elaborate analogies to describe sounds, he reproduces them immediately by a sort of phonetic notation, recreating quality and rhythm in onomatopoeic expressions. There is the thin metallic note of the coppersmith's hammer "qui fait dzine, dzine"\(^1\) or the low and high notes of Mme. Brignolin playing the piano: "Boum, boum, hi, hi!"\(^2\) He notes the noise and movement of a horse trotting along in similar fashion: "La bête va l'amble ta ta ta, ta ta ta,"\(^3\) and so too the unusual sounds of Vingtras reciting Greek with a cold: "Benin, aeide! - atchiou! theia Beleiadeo, - atchiou! Je traîne dans le ridicule le vieil Hobere!"\(^4\) Here once again Vallès employs unsophisticated yet highly effective means of expression, evolving his own personal language.

1. O.C. I, p.60.
3. ibid., p.37.
4. ibid., p.258.
Another innovation in the realm of vocabulary was his wholesale introduction of the vocabulary of ordinary people "le lexique populaire" into a literary genre.\textsuperscript{1} French language in general underwent many transformations in the nineteenth century, thanks to population movements and also to increased contact between different social classes. Also, as newspapers multiplied and expanded, literary language was considerably influenced by that of journalism, which stands half way between literary language and speech. As features of speech were used repeatedly in journalism, so gradually they gained acceptance in other literary forms. Here once again the habits of Vallès the journalist are manifest throughout his writing. Admittedly he was not the first to introduce the vocabulary of ordinary speech in his novels - Hugo, Balzac and Sue had already set the trend. But Vallès can nonetheless be considered a pioneer in this field, particularly as he drew upon such vocabulary not only in dialogue, but (like Zola) throughout the narrative. From a comparison between articles as they appeared originally in "L'Evénement" in 1876-77, and their final form in "La Rue à Londres", Nikolov shows how he repeatedly replaced literary terms with items of "le lexique populaire".\textsuperscript{2} Similarly Christiane Delforge's studies of Vallès' alterations to "L'Enfant" reveal the introduction of colloquial expressions and slang in the place of accepted literary terms.\textsuperscript{3}

The use of such language (as of the primitive syntax, the unsophisticated neologisms and the phonetic notation mentioned above) illustrates Vallès' genuine attempt to carry out the ideas outlined in Part One and produce literature accessible to all. Also it increases the impression of realism, as do the changes

\textsuperscript{2} ibid., p.155, note 10.
\textsuperscript{3} See C. Delforge, op. cit., pp.26-7.
in Vallès' vocabulary in the trilogy as Vingtras grows up. We have already noted Vallès' childlike notation of sounds\(^1\) - this is particularly common in the early part of the trilogy as is schoolboy, and a little later, student jargon. In "L'Insurgé" when Vingtras is mixing with ordinary workers this is replaced by slang and familiar expressions of increasing frequency. Thus, rather than limiting himself to a constant literary vocabulary, Vallès varies his means of expression, asserting his freedom and introducing greater realism. Popular language in general includes many fascinating imaged expressions, as the following declarations illustrate:

"... j'ai rincé le bec à des chevaliers d'industrie."\(^2\)

"... je me suis payé une bosse de franchise, une vraie tranche de dédain!"\(^3\)

Such expressions contribute greatly to the colourfulness and variety of the narrative.

It may seem surprising then that Vallès has been criticized for the limits of his vocabulary. Edmond de Goncourt and Emile Bergerat both recall Castagnary's having bet Vallès that, if he deprived him of the seventeen basic words in his vocabulary, he would not be able to write anything at all (although Bergerat at least accorded him a vocabulary of a hundred words)\(^4\) As Gille notes,\(^5\) however, this wager dates from before Vallès' exile and his writing of the trilogy. It is unlikely that the criticism was inspired by "Les Réfractaires" which was enthusiastically acclaimed by the critics including the Goncourt brothers, who

1. See above p.220. C. Delforge (op. cit., pp.93-5) and J. Dubois (Révolte et ferveur, p.42) both discuss aspects of Vallès' language which are naïve and childlike in character.
2. O.C. III, p.74.
3. ibid., p.75.
expressed their admiration for the crude realism of Vallès' language.  

More probably Vallès' early newspaper articles incurred this criticism. Castagnary suggests that he overworked terms such as "travailleur, miséreux, pognon," and Daudet, who criticizes his early writing on similar grounds, mentions "drapéaux, guenilles, baïonnettes". Undoubtedly, in his many articles about the miserable condition of the working classes and the social combat, Vallès used these terms so frequently that their impact was dulled, but it may be that he was limiting himself consciously to simple, striking, emotive terms. In any event we may recall that although Vallès' neologisms and his exploitation of "le lexique populaire" are limited in his early writing, both increase rapidly in his later work, where he expands his vocabulary considerably. (The fact that he treated so limited a number of themes no doubt intensified his urge to innovate and vary their presentation.)

The conclusion Christiane Delforge draws from her study of Vallès' style is that his vocabulary is limited but that this is justified since he is describing the daily life of ordinary people, often reproducing their speech. Moreover, she finds that he is never at a loss to find adequate expression for his ideas and exploits the resources of everyday language to the full: "Il ne jongle pas avec les mots rares et précieux, et extrait des mots les plus simples, toute leur signification." Jacques Dubois reiterates Delforge's argument concluding "Simplicité n'est pas pauvreté." Although ultimately these comments are not negative, I find them surprising in so far as they are based on study of

1. Their praise is quoted by René Lacôte in his preface to "Les Réfractaires," O.C. VII, p.15.
2. Quoted by G. Gille, op. cit., p.500.
4. This point is argued by G. Gille, op. cit., p.501.
5. C. Delforge, op. cit., p.68.
6. J. Dubois, Révolte et ferveur, p.44.
the trilogy, for whereas the vocabulary of Vallès' journalism is indeed limited, in my opinion, this is not true of the trilogy. Here he may avoid the vague, complex or abstract, but his vocabulary is never dull. It would be less surprising were he to be accused of verbal diarrhoea! In "L'Enfant" Vingtras recalls his mother's blows in the following terms: "... elle m'a travaillé dans tous les sens, pincé, balafré, tamponné, bourré, souffleté, frotté, cardé et tanné ..." The accumulation of -er verbs itself conveys the impression of relentless battering and Jacques' resourcefulness matches his mother's, as he finds verb after verb to add a new image and nuance to this central impression. He delights in experimenting with variations on a theme, as for example when he describes an assistant master's weakness for brandy as "son péché mignon, sa marotte humide, son dada jaune." Such inventive repetition is a source of humour, colour and vitality, and certainly does not constitute a "weakness" on his part!

A glance at Delforge's analysis of the different versions of "L'Enfant" attracts our attention to the colourfulness of the final version. The expression "ouvrir sa chemise" is replaced by "se dépouitrailler", "passer" by "trottiner", "manger" by "becqueter" and so on. Neutral terms are replaced by emotive expressions: the verb "mourir" is inserted in the line "Je regarde s'en aller la nuit", "voler" in "... ils me prennent ce bout de soie ...", "piocher" in "faisant mes devoirs". Delforge lists many such examples, illustrating in full the suggestive power and emotive force of Vallès' language. Also as she and Dubois assert, Vallès' greatest virtue is his ability to make the very most of the expressions he does use. On the opening page of "L'Enfant" Vingtras declares, "Je ne me rappelle pas une

2. ibid., p.113.
caresse du temps où j'étais tout petit; je n'ai pas été dorloté, tapoté, baisotté; j'ai été beaucoup fouetté'. Here Vallès' repeated diminutives suggest the tenderness and intimacy of a normal relationship between mother and child, and the balanced sequence of three trisyllabic words, each with the lilting final syllable reinforces the impression of tender caressing. The onset of a new clause breaks the rhythm, presenting a bald, abrupt contrast to its predecessor. The starkness of the single verb in contrast to the cadence of three, and the discordant modification of the final syllable of the verb reflect the striking contrast expressed at the semantic level. This is one of many examples which illustrate not simply the ability to select the "mot juste", but more important still perhaps, the ability to set words in a rhythmic context which brings out their full significance.

In the trilogy in particular, however, Vallès' originality lies not in language alone but in his whole angle of vision. In "L'Enfant" we find Vingtras amusing himself examining his grandmother's curtains from every possible angle, for example, with his head between his legs, in order to see what different shapes he can identify in the pattern.\(^1\) On many occasions relatively normal situations are presented in an unusual perspective. Evoking an incident when he almost bumps into a waiter in a restaurant, Vingtras tells us: "Il m'arrive deux ou trois fois de m'opposer au passage d'une sole et d'un œuf sur le plat."\(^2\) In this instance the situation is in itself potentially hilarious, as Vingtras desperately tries to avoid the waiter, who is piled high with dishes. However, the comedy is underlined by the bizarre depersonalized manner in which Vingtras describes the incident. The waiter is not even mentioned! Many similar examples are to be found. Vallès delights in defying normal con-

1. See O.C. I, p.31.
2. ibid., p.302.
straints, animating the inanimate and dehumanizing the human. Frequently he dissociates parts of the body from the individuals to whom they belong, as in the following comic lines:

"On a amené cette bosse chez le proviseur."¹

"... il nous vient beaucoup d'estomac à la maison."²

The effect is undoubtedly bizarre and is often difficult to visualize, but this is not out of place in a world where Vingtras himself experiences the sensation of being detached from parts of his body, after his mother's thorough syringing of his nose:

"... il me semble qu'on m'a vidé et que ma tête tient à mon cou comme un ballon rose à un fil; le vent la balance. J'y porte la main. 'Où est-elle? - Ah! la voilà!'

Il n'y a que le nez qui comte... moi-même.

Je m'y attache, je le prends par le bout,... et je me conduis comme cela, sans me brusquer, jusqu'à mon pupitre..."³

Vallès' imagery too often suggests rather odd parallels. Vingtras compares his own awkward gait to the movement of "un ressort rouillé qui se déroule mal,"⁴ or, collapsing under the weight of a pile of luggage, and turning helplessly, not knowing which way to go, he says he looks like "un télescope qu'on ferme."⁵

Although hilariously apt in their own way, these are not the first parallels which spring to mind! Vallès has an eye for the bizarre. As his description of great Aunt Agnès reveals, he has a vivid imagination and delights in grotesque visual detail:

"... la barbe grise, un bouquet de poils ici, une petite mèche qui frisotte par là, et de tous côtés des poireaux comme des groseilles qui ont l'air de bouillir sur sa figure.

Pour mieux dire, sa tête rappelle, par le haut, à cause du serre-tête noir, une pomme de terre brûlée, et par le bas, une pomme de terre germée..."⁶

Imagery is in general an area in which a writer displays his imagination and here Vallès is no exception. However, bold and

1. O.C. I, p.70.
2. ibid., p.228.
3. ibid., p.258.
4. ibid., p.79.
5. ibid., p.119.
6. ibid., p.30.
original though such comic parallels may be, their basis is immediately obvious. Otherwise they would fail to produce their immediate reaction of laughter. Indeed on the whole Vallès' imagery does not tax our imagination greatly. He confines himself to simple, direct analogies sought in the immediate environment, as in his description of the peasants he so loved: "... ils ont la peau comme de l'écorce et les veines comme des racines d'arbres." In the trilogy in his description of Vingtras' everyday life, his images are drawn from familiar realms of experience, the most common referential fields being rustic imagery centring on animals, poultry, vegetables etc., household objects, images of the circus, fairground or theatre, maritime imagery, and images of imprisonment, combat, disease and death. These spheres correspond closely to Vingtras' interests and experience. As the trilogy progresses, images of animals, food and household objects give way to those of combat, disease and death. The images are not superficial, distracting embellishments but an integral part of the text, "images internes". They underline the narrator's current attitudes and obsessions.

Similarly the most recurrent metaphors of Vallès' political journalism are those of storms and shipwreck, of aggressive confrontation, barricades, flags, daggers and dynamite. They are drawn from the immediate realities of the social combat, and rather than escaping to another sphere of experience, they intensify Vallès' expression of the grim mood of the oppressed struggling for freedom.

The easy classification of Valles' images might seem to suggest a lack of originality, for there are few images which are not accounted for by the categories outlined above. The metaphors

1. O.C. I, p.67.
2. Detailed study of Vallès' imagery is to be found in both Delforge's and Dubois' theses.
of Vallès' journalism are almost stereotyped features of militant journalism of the day, even though he is able to inspire them with particular force. Elsewhere his images are often almost archetypal, as in his description of human behaviour in terms of animal species - the slimy, subversive eel, sharp cunning rodents, the faithful and obedient dog, the blood-thirsty hyena. However other images are bold and unusual. (I think particularly of the repugnant poultry images we encounter in the trilogy.) Nevertheless these are not the highly imaginative creations of a great poet expanding infinitely the suggestions of language. But this was intentional, for, as we have seen, Vallès hoped to appeal to all classes and was wary of alienating ordinary people. There is no more subtlety or delicacy in his images than in his puns and neologisms, but this does not exclude the possibility of strikingly unexpected and original parallels. Many of his images are characterized by an exaggerated caricatural quality, as in the description of Aunt Agnès quoted above, or in his evocation of the awkward feverish movements of the eccentric Picard: "... sa caboche vire sur son corps de pingouin avec des fébrilités d'oiseau-mouche." Gaston Gille has commented on the importance of the illustrations provided by Courbet, Pilotell, André Gill and other artists in Vallès' newspaper "La Rue". Evidently Vallès was much influenced by these artists. His images are marked by their high degree of concretization and their strong pictorial qualities. In Paul Bourget's eyes, this is an indication of Vallès' immaturity and his inability to communicate in abstract intellectual terms, but I would agree

2. ibid., p.80.
3. ibid., p.184.
4. ibid., p.322.
5. ibid., p.124.
rather with Maurice Nadeau, who argues that Vallès purposely avoids sophisticated abstractions and in his desire for simple realism focuses his attention on ordinary objects of the material world. The function of his imagery is both to amuse and to elucidate. He translates abstract ideas and attitudes into concrete physical terms. For example, criticizing the opportunism of Vacherot, Laboulaye, Littré and others, he writes:

"Ils ont toujours été avec le soldat et le prêtre, quand le soldat et le prêtre ont été triomphants, eux qui avaient montré le poing aux casernes et leur postérieur à l'église."  

This is a typical example of caricatural exaggeration which not only amuses but also simplifies and underlines his point. In his political journalism in particular Vallès often expresses himself in terms of simple emblematic images, as in the following instances:

"Qu'on laisse la feuille de trèfle verdir au front de l'Irlande libre, si l'on veut que la rose de Lancastre ne soit pas fauchée toujours par une invisible mitraille."  

"Traître celui qui laisse dans les filets de l'ennemi l'alouette gauloise, la chanson française."  

Here he simply elaborates on conventional symbols, bringing them to life. Indeed his gift lies not in discovering "recherché" images, but rather in visualizing ideas or situations colourfully and clearly in pictorial terms of fable-like simplicity. It would be a mistake to conclude that because his images are not subtle, complex or tantalizingly elusive, this is an indication of limited imagination on his part (though it may indicate his limited poetic sensitivity). The mood of the entire trilogy is bold and brazen. There is no room for subtleties - Vingtras is constantly confronted with the harshness of reality. Finally,

as for the criticism that Valles' imagery is childlike in its bald simplicity\(^1\) (a comment undoubtedly inspired primarily by "L'Enfant") to this we must reply: is this not an indication that Vallès successfully projects a child's vision of the world? Also, it is surely this childlike clarity and simplicity which lends his writing its refreshing youthful and envigourating quality.

To what extent then does Vallès succeed in evolving a new and personal form of language? He certainly demonstrates an irrepressible desire for innovation and spontaneity, yet one can never free oneself entirely from one's cultural heritage. His writing, "fiction" and journalism alike, is littered with cultural allusions inaccessible to the uneducated. Admittedly the function of references to the Ancient World is often to parody classical education,\(^2\) but this is not always the case, and the contribution of many references is so limited that their presence is difficult to justify, particularly as they frequently demand a detailed and extensive knowledge of the classics. Evidently, however, Vallès was so versed in the classics that they sprang naturally to mind. In a letter to Albert Rogat, editor of "Le Nord", printed in "Le Nain Jaune", 24 February 1867,\(^3\) Vallès argues that classical sculpture, Mount Olympus, the Iliad and the Bible are of no interest to the vast uneducated majority of the population, yet a few lines later he himself makes several classical allusions. These are no doubt tinged with an element of irony and self-mockery, for he refers to a capon rather than a goose of the Capitol! However, the perception of this irony

2. This point is made by G. Gille (op. cit., p.503), by Jacques Dubois (Révolte et ferveur, p.129) and by Pierre Pillu (preface to La Rue, U.C. X, p.17).
itself hinges on initial understanding of the allusion and this is the prerogative of an educated elite. Similarly when Vallès includes the occasional Latin phrase such as "spes patriae",1 although uncomplicated, this must remain a mystery to the uninitiated, as must his many comparisons drawn from his wide reading of French literature. It is also possible that the rather unusual syntax and disconcerting verbal devices commented on above may pose problems for the less able reader. Vallès was a highly educated individual who used language in a most sophisticated manner, and he could not disguise this fact. Indeed at times one is bound to question how far he genuinely tried to do so.

Also although he rejected his cultural heritage he remained indebted to it in so far as it gave him something to rebel against. Moreover, his education gave him a mastery of the French language without which he could never have experimented so freely, evolving his own style.

In conclusion, Vallès' writing was evidently far more than the simple unassuming transcription of reality suggested in Part One. In discussion of his education, Vallès emphasizes the importance he was forced to attach to style,2 and this was something which marked him for life. He may not have cultivated a polished style but nevertheless he paid much attention to expression. The language of the trilogy appears natural and spontaneous, but this effect was only achieved as a result of a careful process of correction and improvement.3 The marked lack of sophistication was the product of a conscious effort. As Faguet says of Vallès, "... il avait le goût du style et la passion de s'en donner un qui le satisfît."4 When misprints appeared in

1. O.C. X, p.35.
3. See C. Delforge's analyses of the successive versions of "L'Enfant" (op.cit., pp.1-30) and also J.J. Goblot's article, "Vallès et la conscience professionnelle," Les Lettres Françaises, 2 April 1959.
his articles, he was intensely annoyed, for every detail, he claimed, was essential to their impact: "Ils (mes courriers) ne sont intéressants, s'ils le sont, que par leur franchise d'allure, et mon style, c'est moi." He acknowledged then that it was his style which lent his work its distinctive quality, and that this style was in essence a manifestation of his personality. This is certainly the case, although it is not quite what one would expect after reading his definition of realism and his insistence that the writer be modest and self-effacing. Contemporaries such as Edmond Magnier commented on Vallès' "puissantes qualités de style." Albert Dubrujeaud and Emile Faguet both described him as "artiste en style". Similarly in her lecture on Vallès in Cairo in 1948, Mme. Jeanne Marquès declared that his writing was "une des plus belles leçons de style". In "L'Insurgé" Vingtras may comment,

"J'ai plutôt honte de moi, par moments, quand c'est seulement le styliste que la critique signale et louange." Yet paradoxically it is Vallès' style which is often declared to be his greatest achievement. This paradox is elucidated by Antoine Albalat's comment on his writing: "On peut dire que le style consiste à n'en pas avoir." In his avoidance of smooth literary prose and his search for the simplicity, spontaneity and naturalness necessary to democratic literature, Vallès evolved a highly distinctive style, in place of the dull uninteresting narrative we might have anticipated, (and which the average man would no doubt have produced on simply following his precepts.

2. See Magnier's Letter to Vallès, 30 April 1877 (reproduced by G. Delfau, op. cit., pp.119-120).
6. O.C. III, p.60.
7. A. Albalat, L'art d'écrire, p.218.
for realism). As he himself suggests\textsuperscript{1} in his case, Buffon's statement "le style est l'homme même" is clearly true. He might claim that he was simply expressing himself naturally and sincerely as he had recommended that others should, but his attitude of revolt and his fervent enthusiasm make him a fascinating personality. His tremendous sense of humour, his wit and imagination are such that he could never have been a dull storyteller. Unfortunately the same is not true of everyone. His recipe for realism allowed him to produce three very compelling novels, but one can imagine many confessions which would not make such interesting reading.

3. See his assertion: "mon style, c'est moi" (quoted above p.232.)
CHAPTER XI. VALLES REALIST?

Our comments so far have focused very much on the rôle of the imagination in Vallès' work, but we must consider too how far his works meet other criteria of his definition of realism. Also whether or not he practised what he preached is only one aspect of an assessment of his realism, and this must be discussed in the light of our own and others' judgements of his work.

On the publication of "Les Réfractaires" in 1865 Vallès was congratulated for his stark realism even by a critic such as Paul de Saint-Victor (who turned against him after the Commune): "Il y a du sang et de la bile dans la couleur de M. Vallès; son eau-forte mord comme du vitriol."\(^1\) Saint-Victor remarked approvingly "Evidemment ce livre a été vécu."\(^2\) The Goncourts, who likewise turned against Vallès later,\(^3\) were equally complimentary at this stage:

"Vous avez l'observation qui va au coeur; vous avez le superbe mot cru de la vérité nouvelle et moderne ... Vous avez le souffle et la fièvre de ce temps-ci."\(^4\)

Armand de Pontmartin for his part praised Vallès' style, "style naturel qui n'abuse pas de l'image et ne donne pas de distractions. Vallès had thus received open acknowledgement of all he set out to achieve: searching incisive realism based on personal experience; modernism; and a simple natural style. The critics were agreed that no prospective bohemian would be left with any illusions after reading his accounts of the lives of "irréguliers".

Since 1865 many others have paid tribute to Vallès' realism. In 1951, for example, Jean Varloot said of him, "Il

2. loc. cit.
5. loc. cit.
However, I have some reservations over describing him simply as a realist, and this not simply because, as I have argued in Chapter XI, he does not always maintain the simple natural style that Pontmartin accords him.

In Part One we noted Vallès' comment that Balzac portrayed characters larger than life, but he too, like Balzac and Dickens, had a tendency to exaggerate and caricature. The eccentric bohemians of "Les Réfractaires", although inspired by reality, are described in so impassioned a manner that they appear incredible bizarre and fantastic. Also this collection of portraits hardly reflects the broad cross-section of society which Vallès recommended. As Lukács argues in his criticism of Zola's "scientific realism", an accumulation of descriptions based on reality does not necessarily reflect an objective overall view, for the author selects only those aspects of reality he wishes to portray, and also his own attitudes are manifest in the composition of his work. Vallès may have met and studied his "irréguliers", but they constitute a narrow unrepresentative class of social misfits: each is a "bachelier" who has rejected a traditional professional career; each is marked by some physical abnormality; each owes his misery partly to political circumstances. Vallès remains so bent on exploration of a plight similar to his own and on expression of his own discontent that his portraits become stereotyped and limited in relevance. In Barbey d'Aurevilly's words,

"Les réfractaires de M. Jules Vallès n'appartiennent pas à la grande nature humaine. Ils sont aussi

2. See above pp.86-7.
particuliers et locaux à leur manière que les plus corrompus, les plus dépravés des Chinois à la leur."

Vallès accused Féval of creating a "mythologie du ruisseau" but he himself was to create his own "mythologie du réfractaire."

In defence of his work "Les Excentriques" which, as its title suggests, reveals a similar fascination for the grotesque and eccentric, Champfleury argued that, ill-advised though this may be, inexperienced youth is inevitably attracted above all by the extraordinary. Vallès, however, cannot offer this excuse for, although his interest in the exceptional is perhaps most apparent in his early work "Les Réfractaires", it is manifest too in "Pierre Moras" and "La Dompteuse", and in his numerous articles on "saltimbanques" and circusfolk. Frequently his is a distorted one-sided vision of reality, which, like much of Balzac's and Dickens' work, owes as much to romanticism as to realism. Not only "Les Réfractaires" but, as we saw in Chapter IX, his entire work is self-centred. He does not present a comprehensive view of society, though, as we noted in Part One, this was an unattainable ideal if the writer was to draw only on his own experience. This point seems relevant too when we note that, although Vallès praised and encouraged those who portrayed the working classes, he rarely did so himself, but concentrated rather on the middle-class or even upper-class misfit (as in "Un Gentilhomme"). In his portrayal of the factory employee Pierre Beaudouin in "La Commune de Paris", Vallès comes nearer to presenting an ordinary worker than anywhere else in his writing, but Beaudouin's distinguished revolutionary career itself reveals his exceptional qualities. The only extended picture of the lower classes Vallès

3. See above p.97.
paints is not a portrait of a dignified hard-working section of the community, but rather that of the sordid criminal underworld of "La Dompteuse". Although he talked of producing his own "Comédie Humaine" what he actually achieves is a self-centred subjective view of only a very narrow section of society.

In the trilogy he is successful in producing the analytical educative literature of which he spoke in so far as Vingtras' revolt and his participation in the Commune of 1871 are shown to be the inevitable result of years of repression and frustration. Yet although Vallès is successful in tracing the psychological motivation of one individual (as he had urged Uchard to), in so doing he does not satisfactorily explain the mass uprising of 1871, for Vingtras is hardly average or typical. Vallès' thesis is that repression must provoke revolt and that the events of 1871 were a direct result of 1848, 1851 and the oppression of the Second Empire. However, this ineluctable historical process emerges more convincingly in "La Commune de Paris", where attention is not focused so exclusively on one person. On the other hand it is also more obvious here that Vallès' main aim was to illustrate this thesis, and that realism for him was, as he maintained, a literature of ideas with all the dangers that this entails. In "La Commune de Paris" political intentions dominate from the outset, rather than truths emerging from a detailed study of sociological and psychological processes. Vallès led us to expect detailed analyses of chains of cause and effect, but what we in fact find is a rather simplified personal interpretation of history.

Indeed, although Vallès accused romantic writers of idealizing

1. O.C. IX, pp.139 and 147.
2. See above pp.112-4.
3. See above pp.112-3.
4. Whether or not "L'Insurgé" and "La Commune de Paris" are partisan is discussed below, pp.272-6.
and distorting reality, he erred to some extent in this direction himself. He idealizes both in his portrayal of the simple peasant life and in his evocation of revolution. In "La Commune de Paris" the Communards are courageous and heroic, their opponents base and selfish. The contrast is not so accentuated in "L'Insurgé" but, particularly towards the end of the novel, Vallès is guilty of underplaying the horrors of revolution, as he is carried away by the glory of this ecstatic cathartic experience. In his later journalism too, the theme of revolution is evoked continually as the universal panacea, a romantic ideal.

"Romantic realism" then perhaps seems to describe Vallès' work more aptly than the term "realism" alone. The trilogy is an exaltation of individualism and independence. Not only is it romantic in temperament, oscillating from outbursts of indignation to tender moving sentiment, but it is also dominated by Vingtras' accentuated individual style and personality. In newspaper articles too it was not analytical argument but Vallès' humour and passionate conviction which won his readers. Like Balzac and Dickens he did not merely reproduce facts, but produced an impassioned personal vision. Hence Léon Daudet's description of him as "le pont entre le romantisme révolutionnaire des 'Misérables' et le réalisme truculent de Zola et d'Huysmans première manière."

Despite Vallès' attempts to dissociate himself from the Naturalists, Edouard Rod, Leon Séché, Charles Beuchat and Ferdinand Fabre all refer to him as such. Some sections of his

1. See below p.272ff.
work remind one of Zola's writing, as for example when he describes
the smells and atmosphere of a country inn:

"Il y a ... une odeur chaude de fumier et de bêtes en sueur,
qui avance, comme une buée, de l'écurie ... Il y a aussi les
émanations fortes du fromage bleu,"1

or the squalor of the streets of Paris:

"Il faisait chaud. Le soleil cuisait l'ordure à la bouche
des égouts et pourrissait les épluchures de choux dans le
ruisseau."2

Yet it is important to note how this passage continues:

"Il montait de cette rue piétinée et bordée de fritures une
odeur de vase et de graisse qui me prenait au coeur."

The narrator's own reactions to the scene are an integral part
of his description. This is what distinguishes Vallès' work
from that of the Naturalists. We noted in Part One the importance
he attached to the emotional appeal of realism and his dislike
of the Naturalists' impassivity.3 We have already commented on
the personal romantic qualities of his writing - in his work we
are always conscious of the author's attitudes and emotions.4

Vallès considered that the Goncourts lacked the love of life
necessary to realism,5 but he himself is not found wanting on
this count. Michel-Léon Hirsch describes him as the first French
writer to examine the problems of the poor with sustained sym-
pathy and identification.6 Hirsch's use of the superlative is
questionable, for as Daudet's comment implies, Hugo and other
Social Romantics were Vallès' predecessor in this respect.7 Also,
as far as Vallès' "fictional" writing is concerned, we are tempted
to talk rather of certain sections of the poor. However it is

2. O.C. II, p.36.
4. In this respect he resembled his idols Balzac and Dickens
rather than the Naturalists.
5. See R. Bellet, "Quatre écrivains, quatre réalistes, une
7. Hirsch argues, however, that Hugo is not able to maintain
constant sympathy in "Les Misérables", and, although he pities
the people's plight in 1832, he feels their revolt must be
suppressed.
easy to understand how Hirsch came to make such a statement for Vallès' work is imbued with warmth and life. In describing his intentions in his paper "La Rue" he writes,

"Elle 'La Rue' donnera à la fois la physionomie du monde extérieur et saillant, et le secret de la vie intime et familière, ne se contentant pas de dessiner la charpente ou les traits, mais regardant les fibres saigner et écoutant se tordre et se casser les cordes ..."¹

This is an ideal which is fulfilled. Whereas Zola, for example, undertakes detailed descriptions of great impersonal entities, such as mines, railways and battlefields, in Vallès' work objects come to life poetically only in so far as they are related to the lives of individual human beings, their destinies and passions.² Vallès was as conscientious as the Naturalists in his documentation. While planning "Histoire de vingt ans" and in particular "Les Hommes de Juin" he consulted Raspail, Blanqui and other socialists who had been involved in the fighting in June 1848 in order to hear their first-hand account of events. Similarly, when preparing to write about the Commune he interviewed his fellow Communards in exile to find out about their experiences. He also studied various newspapers and historical works in the British Museum. However, although he undertook this ground work, its fruits are not always immediately apparent in his writing.

In a comparison of Alphonse Daudet and Vallès, Pierre Pillu observes that for Daudet the major part of his task was collecting information, whereas for Vallès this was only a beginning, a sound basis simply from which to work.³ Vallès the novelist does not parade, notebook in hand - this is Vallès the

1. "Notre premier numéro," La Rue, 8 June 1867, Pléiade I, p.941.
2. See Vallès' comment, "Je ne suis point grandement intéressé par les choses - Il est besoin que l'homme paraîsse pour que j'éprouve une émotion." ("Causerie," L'Époque, 13 Sept. 1865).
journalist.¹ In his "fiction", forewarned by what he considered to be the Naturalists' excessively detailed and pulverized rendering of reality, he rarely draws directly on the information he has accumulated, but focuses rather on the emotions and actions of the man, projecting only an impression of his environment through the evocation of significant detail.

Vallès' elliptical style and his shorthand notation of detail have already been discussed in Chapter X. He is able to capture characters in a swift deft outline. Théodore de Banville finds "traits à la Daumier" in his work,² whilst Léon Daudet describes him as "aquafortiste" and compares him to Méryon.³ However, in such lightning sketches Vallès is depicting characters rather than the physical scene. The latter is never described in depth. He evokes only those details which reflect the moral mood and atmosphere. His vision of Paris is, in Pillu's words, "ville humaine (donc) et non ville de pierre."⁴ We never follow a detailed itinerary through the city, or enjoy a panoramic view, but, in the trilogy, for example, receive a fragmentary impression of hotels, restaurants and streets, reflecting Vingtras search for food and lodging.

Finally, though the manner in which Vingtras is conditioned by his "milieu" and progresses ineluctably towards revolt, might seem to smack of the determinist philosophy of the Naturalists, one is confident of Vingtras' ability to accept or reject his environment. Vallès had faith in mankind's ability to determine its fate, faith in the individual, and the overall mood of the work is optimistic, in contrast to the gloom of much naturalist literature.

¹. Detailed facts and figures are only incorporated in newspaper articles, such as those of "Le Tableau de Paris."
The fragmentary quality of Vallès' writing and the lightning sketches mentioned above have given rise to a further classification of his work, that is, as impressionist. Jacques Dubois studies Vallès in his thesis "La Tendance impressionniste dans le roman français au XIXe siècle" (1960-61) and in his later work "Romanciers français de l'Instantané au XIXe siècle" (1963). He classes him alongside the Goncourts, Alphonse Daudet and Pierre Loti, none of whom, in his opinion, can be satisfactorily described as realist or naturalist, but earn rather the description "impressionist". He argues that they all rely on personal experience rather than the imagination, on feeling rather than impartial documentation. They place less emphasis on plot and structure than on the recreation of the intensity of an experience, this resulting in subjective chronology and the replacement of the traditional "récit" by loosely linked episodes. All these features are readily observed in Vallès' writing, particularly in the trilogy. As we have seen, both at the level of plot and within individual descriptions he subjects the reader to a series of impressions which make their impact by a process of accumulation rather than logical ordering. Traditional divisions of narrative and description are abandoned. So too are formal introductions. As at the beginning of "L'Enfant" we are plunged "in medias res". Shorthand notation, brutal juxtaposition and rudimentary syntax contribute to the creation of a general impression rather than unfolding a full and explicit description. The oral language too with its short phrases and numerous dislocations due to exclamations, questions and parentheses increases the impression of fragmentation.

Dubois' work is invaluable. The similarities he suggests between these five writers are occasionally tenuous, for, as he admits, there are also important points of difference. Certainly, however, in Vallès' case, the term "impressionist" is more
revealing than "realist" in so far as it hints at many of the original characteristics of his work unaccounted for by the latter. Vallès' own comments seem to confirm the aptness of this description when, on introducing "Le Testament d'un Blagueur", he writes:

"Il avait déposé là ses souvenirs par tranches et miettes ... Ce sont des pages curieuses, comme toutes les pages des Mémoires où l'homme a noté les minutes décisives de sa vie, minutes joyeuses, minutes tristes, moments solennels ou bizarres." ¹

This introduction suggests the haphazard and fragmentary nature of his work, and also the relief given to particular moments of intense experience. When writing to Léon Millot Vallès confessed that he was not concerned to enumerate all the logical links in a development: "Je crois à peine à ces nécessités d'enchâinement." ² He sought to convey an effective overall impression.

This is an important point to note in the light of his call for critical "scientific" literature, analyzing reality and enlightening the reader. As suggested earlier in this chapter, ³ one might assume from some of Vallès' statements that he intended to examine very thoroughly certain causal relationships. In fact, however, these are not spelled out but are merely fleetingly suggested, and it is the reader who exercises his intelligence in forging the necessary links himself. As I shall argue below, ⁴ such an approach fulfills Vallès' ideals in prompting the reader to think for himself and in avoiding the didactic, but it also makes excessive demands of the less experienced reader.

Finally a brief comparison between Vallès and Balzac (both of whom might be described as romantic realists) emphasizes the value of the description "impressionist". Whereas Balzac presents

¹. Pléiade I, p.1098.
³. See above p.237.
⁴. See below p.274.
a broad vision of society dominated by a strong centrifugal force, Vallès' vision is subjective, episodic and disjointed. The term "impressionist" focuses attention on these essential differences. In fact, although Vallès looked to Balzac as his master, one might consider that his work constitutes a retrogressive step in relation to Balzac's in so far as, in a historical novel such as "L'Insurgé" for example, he never rises above the anecdotal.¹ He has not Balzac's commanding visionary power. On the other hand, he is true to his own ideals in assuming a more modest rôle. He lays no claim to omniscience but presents a purely personal view, producing literature which gives greater place to the individual.

¹ See J-J. Goblot's criticisms, "Jules Vallès et Balzac," p.27.
SECTION B. VALLES' CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIAL AND POLITICAL AWARENESS

Having discussed various aspects of how far Vallès deserves the title "realist", we must now examine whether or not he himself was able to make the valuable social and political contribution he expected of the realist writer. As he had clear views on the differing potential of different "genres" in this respect, we shall consider this issue in conjunction with an assessment of how far his literary production reflects the hierarchy sketched in Part One. It seems fitting, therefore, to start with discussion of his journalism, to move on to his "fictional" writing, and finally to draw some of the threads together in examining the doubts raised by several critics as to the genuineness of his political commitment.

CHAPTER XII. THE JOURNALIST

As we saw in Part One, Vallès felt that a critical commentary of contemporary society could best be achieved through journalism, and this is in fact where the greater part of his writing is to be found and where he achieved his greatest successes in his own lifetime. The reason for this was partly that, in practice as in theory, he was more concerned to air social and political issues than to seek literary prestige, and partly that his own talents were particularly suited to journalism.

The bold uncompromising attitudes which led to his exclusion from literary circles made him attractive to the more courageous newspaper editors, and his brash aggressive style and irrepressible effervescence, immediately captured the public's attention. Elsewhere he indulged in rambling digressions because he had not clearly identified a central theme, but in individual newspaper articles he was most often preoccupied with one issue, on which he sought to express his opinions with maximum impact, and, as

1. See above p.203.
is clear from his letters to Emile Gautier,¹ he recognized the importance of careful construction in order to achieve this. Some of his articles are loosely constructed, as when he takes up a topical subject simply to attract attention, and then digresses to matters he considers more interesting, but on political issues in particular he produced many tightly constructed articles with forceful and incisive arguments. Whereas, impulsive and changeable as he was, he had difficulty in sustaining momentum in lengthy works, he could channel his emotional outbursts into short but passionate articles of great impact (and when he did digress, this seemed more acceptable in the context of the newspaper than it did in plays and novels, which we tend to regard rather as the perfected product of the writer).

His success in journalism made him reluctant to experiment with other literary forms, and it was only when clashes with censors or editors excluded him from journalism that he in fact did so (this illustrating his lack of concern for literary prestige). It was only when he was obliged to resign from "La Liberté" on account of his daring article on General Yusuf, 26 March 1866, and was having difficulty placing articles that he promised Achille Faure the novel "Les Aventuriers de la Seine". (He had so alienated the censors that "Le Figaro" and "L'Evénement" also deemed it wiser to dispense with his services, and when, in September, he tried to join the "Petit Journal", this too was in vain.) Subsequently a drawn-out dispute with Villemessant caused him to abandon his novel in favour of journalism, and he set off to Lyons and Saint-Étienne to write a couple of articles for "Le Figaro"² in order to appease the

². See "Lettres de province: au fond d'une mine," Le Figaro, 16 and 17 Nov. 1866, Pléiade I, pp.907-16.
His cherished plans for a great historical novel "Histoire de Vingt ans" (1848-68) did not materialize either, and for similar reasons. Gille\(^1\) was sure that part of the work was completed, as the forthcoming publication of the first section "Bataille de Juin" was announced in "Le Peuple", 8 February 1869, and again in "La Marseillaise", January 1870, under the title "Les Vaincus". In "La Rue" too, 13 April 1870, readers were promised that publication of the "feuilleton" would begin the following week, but the collapse of "La Rue" and the Franco-Prussian war intervened. Vallès' secretary, Edouard Legentil, recalls Vallès reading a few chapters of the work to him in November 1870,\(^2\) but nothing more was heard of it, and the manuscripts were probably lost in the troubles of 1871. Gille talks of Vallès' tenacity in pursuing this project, yet Vallès' newspapers "Le Peuple" (1869), "Le Réfractaire" (1869) and "La Rue" (1870) all lived and died,\(^3\) and he fought an election campaign against Jules Simon, whilst the novel remained uncompleted. Moreover, after the collapse of "La Rue" there were no openings for Vallès in journalism until February 1871, and had he been less involved in political activities, he would have had ample time to complete his novel. Clearly, this was not his first priority.

When in exile Vallès found newspaper editors very suspicious of articles by an ex-Communard. Nonetheless he persisted in pursuing journalistic projects, and through Malot, Zola and Gill, tried to win round newspaper editors. He had few articles published before 1876, yet was slow to turn his attention to other forms of literature. The only work he completed during this

---

2. Recounted by G. Gille, loc. cit.
3. "Le Peuple" was published 4-18 Feb. 1869, "Le Réfractaire" 10-12 May 1869, and "La Rue" 17 March – 16 April 1870.
period was "La Commune de Paris". Not until 1875 did he begin to talk of his plans for a novel in terms which prefigured the trilogy.\(^1\) He was easily depressed and needed to be able to identify immediate aims:

"Ma nature est de celles qui ont besoin de voir le but à portée de la main ... si le but s'éloigne, si l'on déplace la cible ... le dégoût vient."\(^2\)

We mentioned above his belief in the need for contact with one's audience. Also he was reluctant to write without assurance of publication and insisted, "j'ai soif d'écrire et besoin d'être publié".\(^3\) For these reasons he turned to journalism, yet on the other hand, his proximity to death in the Commune and the frustrations of his present inactivity inspired him with the desire to create something of lasting value, "Écrire une oeuvre, laisser quelque chose!"\(^4\) Once he had received promises of publication and had embarked upon the novel, it soon took priority even over his journalism. However, his new priorities were forced upon him by external circumstances and his refusal to compromise his passionate political beliefs, in producing innocuous trivial journalism. Even in a novel he feared he would have difficulty in suppressing all traces of the personality he had developed in his militant journalism:

"... je ne veux faire que du roman ou de l'humour, de la chronique pittoresque ou des histoires de sentiment et de lutte intime - point de la prose militante. Je veux cela. Le pourrai-je?"\(^5\)

He insisted repeatedly that he wanted to be "RIEN QUE ROMANCIER"\(^6\) this suggesting the great effort he had to make to convince both himself and Malot and the publishers that this was possible.

In fact, as the trilogy illustrates, he could never be apolitical,

1. See O.C. IX, p.60.
4. ibid., p.69.
5. ibid., p.251.
6. ibid., pp.260 and 282.
nor could he long resist the temptations of journalism. In the last years of his exile, now that the political situation was more relaxed, he wrote very many newspaper articles. On 29 November 1879, long before the amnesty, he was already deeply involved in journalism once again, directing "La Rue" (a literary paper) from Brussels with the help of Albert Callet. Evidently he himself sensed that if he had not completed his more substantial literary projects by the time he returned to France, renewed possibilities in journalism would prevent him from doing so. In a letter to Gabriel Ranvier in 1877 he wrote:

"Tôt ou tard, on me prendra, on me commandera une Histoire de la Commune, peut-être même la paiera-t-on cher. Mais, à ce moment-là, j'aurai sans doute le droit de lancer des articles et je préférerais cette joie du cri poussé dans le journal au travail à la loupe de l'historien. C'est maintenant dans le silence de l'exil et de la patrie que je devais écrire ce livre." \(^1\)

This history of the Commune was realized in "L'Insurgé" and precisely what he predicted actually occurred. On his return to France in July 1880 he immersed himself in journalism and on 28 October 1883 with the financial assistance of Séverine's companion Dr. Guebhard he was able to re-establish "Le Cri du Peuple". The first version of "L'Insurgé" had appeared in Juliette Adam's periodical, "La Nouvelle Revue", from 1 August to 15 September 1882, but, poorly written as yet, had been unfavourably received. Vallès recognized the need for much rewriting before it could be published in volume-form, and in September 1882 reassured the publisher Charpentier that the necessary alterations would be complete within a fortnight. \(^2\) However, they were not. His time was so taken up with articles for "Gil Blas", "Le Réveil", "La France", "Le Cri du Peuple" and "Le Matin" that "L'Insurgé" was

neglected, and we are indebted to Séverine for its completion.1

The trilogy was sacrificed to his passion for journalism, and were it not for his enforced exile, it might never have been written at all.

It is unquestionable then that journalism was the first priority for Vallès the writer. What we must now establish is whether in fact in his journalism he made a significant contribution to public awareness of social and political problems.

The majority of his articles demonstrate his serious intentions, focusing on misery, injustice and oppression, as do for example his early studies of suffering minority groups of "réfractaires" and "saltimbanques". Also the themes of freedom and servitude run throughout his work, explored time and time again, in every aspect and context (in relation to education, religion, literature and the arts, political action, industrial relations, authority, law-enforcement etc.).

Moreover, Vallès' repeated clashes with the censors demonstrate his unfailing determination to make his views on such subjects known. In January 1865 his bold lecture on the revolutionary character of Balzac's writing2 led to his dismissal from his post at the Mairie de Vaugirard. On 13 April 1865, when an entire issue of "Le Figaro" was given over to "Les Irréguliers de Paris",3 sales were banned at public kiosks because of the outrageously daring character of these portraits of injustice and discontent. In 1866, as mentioned above, he was obliged to leave "La Liberté" after mocking the recently deceased and much respected General Yusuf, whom he described as "un barbare égaré dans la civilisation".4 Yet undeterred by all reprisals, he

continued to speak out, and thus he undoubtedly deserves to be classed himself amongst his "francs-parleurs".

Nonetheless he was restricted by the censors, particularly under the Second Empire when many of the papers for which he wrote were not licensed to treat political subjects. In his early contributions to "Le Présent" (1857) and "La Chronique Parisienn" (1858) for example, we detect no clear sense of purpose or commitment. Yet even when thus restricted, he held to his resolve not to indulge in idle gossip and scandal-mongering, and contrived to slip a subversive rebellious note into apparently uncontrovertial discussions. On reporting a fire at the library of "Le Moniteur" in 1857, he suggested that nineteenth century art might benefit, were the ancient monuments of Paris to be destroyed in like manner. In November 1857 he noted with regret that he was not allowed to express his view of the recently deceased General Cavaignac and then proceeded to do precisely that. He avoided forthright statements of disapproval but his condemnation was transparent nonetheless. Needless to say, the paper dismissed him.

Clearly, despite Vallès' horror of compromise, the political situation demanded that he make some concessions. Were all his articles to have been forthright and inflammatory, he would simply have destroyed his chances of earning a living as a journalist. What he learned to do was to exploit to the full the limited freedom granted him. As literary critic for "Le Progrès de Lyon" he was quick to express his approval of the rebellious Julien Savignac in Ferdinand Fabre's novel of this title. Similarly his review of Antoine-Augustin Cournot's study of French

educational institutions gave him the chance to voice his criticisms of the over-centralized "Université" and the servility of the teaching profession. Although many of his articles of the 1860's were not political, he rarely let an opportunity pass to comment on restrictions of freedom, often in a personal non-political context. He refused to resign himself to the rôle of petty entertainer, and ultimately repression became for him a fruitful provocation, prompting him to develop a skilfully ambiguous style, in which his attacks were disguised with biting irony, "un poignard à manche joli". In "L'Insurgé" Vingtras comments,

"... dans mes bouquets du samedi je glisse toujours un géranium sanglant, une immortelle rouge, mais perdue sous les roses et les œillets."4

As suggested above, articles on topical events were sometimes a cover for digressions on more controversial themes. Elsewhere, as we have seen, he mocked or criticized but avoided all possible reproach by denying that he was in fact doing so. On other occasions, seeking relief from this exhausting tight-rope walking, yet unwilling to compromise himself in superficial chit-chat, he was thrown in upon himself and indulged in the lyrical personal recollections we find, for example, in "Souvenirs" in "La Rue". However, he could not restrict himself for long to nostalgic evocation of his youth in the countryside for he was confronted daily with the realities of city life and a repressive regime whose actions he could not allow to pass uncommented. Prévost-

Paradol observed that the efficiency of the censorship of the Second Empire lay in the fact that journalists were never sure how much freedom they were allowed. Repeatedly Vallès found himself punished for exceeding its limits.

It was in the hope of freeing himself at least from editorial control that on 1 June 1867 he founded his own paper "La Rue", but almost immediately, on 6 July, the censors forbade sales of the paper in the streets. However, he was not discouraged. On 30 November in "Cochons Vendus" he launched a savage attack on compromise and prostitution, denouncing in particular intellectuals who compromised themselves daily by their conformist acquiescence. The paper was seized on the presses. Vallès wanted to fight on, but few printers were as willing as he to risk their livelihood. On 18 January 1868 the last number of the paper (defiantly devoted to Proudhon) was in turn confiscated.

Throughout 1868 Vallès clashed repeatedly with the censors. As a result of his "Courrier de Paris" in "Le Globe", 11 February 1868, he was found guilty of "une diatribe violente, acerbe, outrageante contre l'administration de la police", was fined 500 francs and condemned to a month's imprisonment in Sainte-Pélagie. The account he gave of Louis Napoleon's rise to power in 1851 in "Un Chapitre inédit de l'histoire du deux décembre" in the "Courrier de l'Intérieur", 8 September 1868, likewise brought about his conviction for inciting ill-feeling against the government, and he was fined 2000 francs and sentenced this time to two months' imprisonment. Despite the threat of such penalties, even in prison he would not remain silent but set up the "Journal de Sainte-Pélagie" to be distributed as a supplement to Henri de

2. Père Isaac, pp.1014-17.
3. ibid., pp.1039-43.
4. O.C. VI, pp.443-60.
Pène's newspaper "Paris". The attempt was shortlived on account of the indignation of the regular provincial readers of the paper, but still Vallès persisted in his efforts to provide outspoken journalism, critical of the regime. His newspapers "Le Peuple" and "Le Réfractaire" followed in 1869, and on 17 March 1870 "La Rue" was revived. Each paper in turn addressed itself to ordinary working people, exposing misery and suffering and exalting liberty, but each in turn succumbed to the censors. Nonetheless Vallès continued his bold campaign, sacrificing personal ambition and financial gain to the cause of Truth and Revolution. Brunetière may accuse him of negativity, claiming that he took pleasure in making others unhappy with their lot. However, during the Second Empire there was just cause for dissatisfaction. Also the effect of the barrage of criticisms from Vallès and other opposition journalists was ultimately positive (in the eyes of the socialist revolutionary), for in undermining the official government press and forcing the authorities to resort to repressive measures, they exposed the true nature of the regime, thus contributing to its collapse, and ultimately to the advent of the Commune.

1870 and 1871 brought Vallès the opportunity to demonstrate his commitment to the people's cause both as member of the "Comité central républicain des vingt arrondissements de Paris" and elected representative of the Commune, and also through his newspaper "Le Cri du Peuple" (established 22 February 1871). Here he strove to fire the people of Paris with enthusiasm for the revolutionary ideal, to keep their spirits up (and also to moderate their excesses). He himself was clearly not to be defeated.

1. Only two issues were published, on 26 Dec. 1868 and 2 Jan. 1869.
2. F. Brunetière, La Confession d'un Réfractaire, pp. 214 ff and 22
3. Details of his activities during the Commune are given by L. Scheler and J. Dautry, Le Comité Central républicain des vingt arrondissements de Paris, Editions Sociales, 1960.
When Vinoy suppressed "Le Cri du Peuple"\(^1\) he simply set up "Le Drapeau" in its place (on 19 March). This was then immediately banned, but, undeterred, on 21 March he brought out "Le Cri du Peuple" once again.

The vicissitudes of Vallès' journalistic career up to and including 1871 demonstrate his determination to voice his views at all costs. Risks to his career as a writer, and in 1871 to his life, did not deter him from defending the cause of freedom and justice, or tempt him to retreat and feather his own nest. The impact and popularity of his journalism is also illustrated by "Le Cri du Peuple" which became the most popular paper of the Commune, printing up to one hundred thousand copies per day. This was, on Vallès' confession, the fulfillment of his life's ambition.\(^2\)

After the Commune, as we have seen, Vallès attempted against all odds to pursue a career in journalism, and it was most reluctantly that he eventually began to think in terms of literary and artistic reviews rather than political journalism:

"De l'art pur: je fais comme un forçat enchaîné qui garde l'orgueil de son 'crime' et cisèle des noyaux de cerise."\(^3\)

As soon as the declaration of an amnesty appeared imminent, he returned to political journalism, and on 10 February 1879 "La Révolution française" (a rallying point for ex-Communards and revolutionaries) printed his open letter to Jules Grévy\(^4\) in which he challenged the president to declare an amnesty, introduce greater freedom, and reform the social institutions which necessitated revolt. This outrageous challenge brought about the collapse of the paper! In the calm of the intervening years

1. Vinoy's order of suppression was dated 11 March 1871, but the last number of the paper appeared on 12 March.
3. Ibid., p.46.
Vallès had not been idle, and had produced some very well-written interesting articles in the series "La Rue à Londres" in "L'Événement" 1876-77 and "Notes d'un absent" in "Le Voltaire" 1878-79. In the former he presented portraits of varied aspects of British life in Soho, Covent Garden, Drury Lane, Billingsgate, the workhouse and the docks etc. Such articles could not be politically controversial in France, yet he found the opportunity to comment on instances of poverty, inequality and oppression in the English context,¹ which obviously had their parallels in other countries. Indeed he prompted the reader to draw comparisons with the French situation and form his own conclusions.² His articles constitute a most fascinating and penetrating sociological study, broadening the horizons of his French contemporaries, and also providing useful insights for the social historian today.

This was a vein Vallès was to exploit again after his return from exile. His rights were now restored to him. Also the institution of a republic had removed to some degree the grounds for his savage outbursts. The political situation was more relaxed and censorship less restrictive, and he was no longer constantly at loggerheads with the censors. His articles became more mature and constructive. In his series "Le Tableau de Paris" he now undertook a detailed study of different aspects of Parisian life. This is by no means comprehensive. He never presented portraits of a broad spectrum of workers as he had long intended to.³ Nonetheless these well-documented descriptive articles, like his earlier portraits of "réfractaires" and "saltimbanques",⁴ highlighted the injustices suffered by different social groups, and questioned their "raison d'être". Even where

¹. See, for example, "Les Docks", O.C. V, pp.144-57.
². See his comments, for example, O.C. V, p.288.
⁴. See O.C. X, pp.127-220.
the need for change was not spelt out, it was implicit in his
criticisms and in his reaction of horror and distress at the
conditions he described. In many of his articles, however,
particularly in his extensive studies of the treatment of pri-
soners and the mentally ill, he did actually offer considered
and constructive criticisms of the penal and legal systems which
sweep away the ground from under the feet of those who accuse
him of nihilism. He also recommended specific reforms of the
police and army. These were positive practical contributions
to the defence of liberty and justice.

This was typical of Vallès' activities in this period. In
"Le Cri du Peuple" he instituted a section "Avis, Offres et
Demandes" in which employment vacancies were advertised free of
charge. There was also a column where any trade union or
socialist group could publicize their meetings and resolutions.
In 1867 in "La Rue" Vallès had called for public participation
in the production of the paper. This ideal now became a reality.
Correspondence columns played an important rôle in "Le Cri du
Peuple" which became, in Henri Feller's words, "boîte à lettres
des organisations socialistes et syndicales". A. Goullé presen-
ted a column entitled "Ateliers et magasins" in which workers were
invited to discuss their conditions of employment and expose
abuses. Hundreds of complaints were published here, and Goullé
actually gave the names and addresses of guilty employers. His
threat of exposure was undoubtedly a more effective weapon than
general abstract discussion of social exploitation. There was

1. See, for example, O.C. XIII, pp.58-75 and 154-90.
2. He sought the abolition of the permanent professional army,
and military service, recommending a decentralized citizens' police force, a Home Guard (cf. "Le Tableau de Paris," La France,
30 March 1883 and "Ces bons sergots," "Fonction à tuer, ""Loi militaire," and "Le Général" in Le Cri du Peuple, 30 Jan., 5
April, 2 June and 2 July 1884 respectively).
4. H. Feller, "Physionomie d'un quotidien: Le Cri du Peuple,
also a column entitled "Les Victimes du Capital" where accidents at work were denounced, and one entitled "Cris du Soldat" where soldiers might voice their complaints. One section of the paper was set aside specifically for "La Ligue pour l'Abolition de l'Armée". Thus Vallès gave ordinary citizens the opportunity to air their grievances and bring pressure to bear on their oppressors.

In his own articles he continued long-standing campaigns, reiterating, for example, his opposition to war. In 1870 he had condemned the war against Prussia. Now he rallied opposition to the war in the Far East. Also he provided a regular commentary on issues currently under discussion in the Chamber, but without boring his public with the dry approach of official newspapers. Factual reports were always a prelude to the expression of his viewpoint, and here, as in the trilogy, he succeeded in bringing political affairs down to the level of the individual. True to his ideals, he did not participate in intellectual or ideological debate but concerned himself with the effects of specific decisions on the lives of ordinary people. The priorities of the paper and Vallès' articles in particular were social and humanitarian rather than narrowly political. He condemned the lack of investment which had led to the slump in the building trade, and the consequent reduction of wages for masons. He opposed a pay rise for teachers. He discussed

1. For earlier statement of his views see "Causerie," L'Époque, 27 July 1865.
2. See his articles in Le Cri du Peuple, 30 and 31 Oct., 1, 2 and 3 Nov. 1883. N.B. Thanks perhaps to his exile and also to the growth of international socialism, he now took more interest in foreign policy, showing concern for the achievement of freedom and justice for all men everywhere.
3. Although political journalists such as Jules Guesde wrote for the paper, Vallès did not allow it to become a vehicle of party propaganda.
4. See "Le Bâtiment" and "Un sou de l'heure," 12 and 15 Nov. 1883 respectively.
5. See "Les Instituteurs," 4 March 1884.
at length the current economic depression and widespread unemployment,\(^1\) and warned of the drastic effects of a prefectoral order forbidding scavenging.\(^2\) He dwelt on the fate of a starving school teacher\(^3\) or a martyred child.\(^4\) Throughout his articles there ran the constant spirit of denunciation. Maximum capital was made out of the most insignificant news items in the interests of the socialist revolutionary cause.

Indeed although Vallès' journalism of this period may seem far more positive than his militant journalism of the Second Empire, this was not because his revolutionary zeal had ebbed. In 1884 special illustrated numbers of "Le Cri du Peuple" were devoted to the anniversaries of the Commune and the 1848 revolution, and in 1884 and 1885\(^5\) to 14 July 1789. Thus Vallès kept alive the hope of revolution, its powerful threat and promise, for he believed that revolution alone would open the way for the reforms he was recommending.

Vallès' importance as a journalist is undeniable. The number of articles he wrote for major newspapers over the years, and the success of his own socialist paper "Le Cri du Peuple" both during the Commune and in the 1880's\(^6\) testify to his popularity. The attention accorded him by the censors likewise suggests the influence they attributed to him.

Under the Second Empire particularly he acted as watchdog, alerting the public to the danger of the erosion of civil liberties and government excesses, and stirring people from their apathy by challenging prevailing conformism and traditionalism in art, literature, education and politics. His shock tactics, his dramatic exaggeration, his searing irony, puns and neologisms

---

2. See "Pots-de-vin, pots-de-sang," 18 Jan. 1884.
5. Owing to Vallès' death, 15 Feb. 1885, Séverine had taken control of the paper by this time.
6. H. Feller (op. cit.) describes "Le Cri du Peuple" of the 1880's as the first truly popular socialist newspaper.
were all means of attracting attention to the issues under dis-
cussion. Court appearances, fines and prison-sentences likewise
brought his views publicity.

Apart from setting this example of defiance, as we have seen,
he also played a more sober rôle, providing the reader with well-
documented studies, the fruits of detailed investigation and
mature reflection, examining aspects of life in areas of society
such as the prison or asylum, which were of concern to all, yet
into which the majority of the public were not otherwise likely
to gain an insight. Here as in the denunciations of "Le Cri du
Peuple" he was communicating information liable to promote
change. One of his most important contributions was to attract
attention to the fate of the underdog, the unemployed "bachelier",
the grotesque and lonely circus-figure, the rag-picker, the
prisoner etc. His portraits were inspired with such sympathy
and so strong a feeling of identification that he had (and must
still have) considerable impact on the public.\(^1\) His conviction
is compelling. The persistence with which he continually re-
explores cherished themes (such as education and the rights of
the child\(^2\)) in itself brings him credibility and commands
attention.

Indeed in Vallès' journalism (as M. Perrot observes with
respect to "Le Cri du Peuple" in general) we note "la priorité
du social sur le politique, du sentiment sur l'argument, de la
fièvre sur le calcul."\(^3\) He may have called for literature
appealing to the critical faculties. He may have developed a

1. Reactions to his work have always been extreme, never luke-
warm. See, for example, the reactions to "Les Réfractaires"
2. See "Chers Parents," La Rue, 5 Oct. 1867, "L'Education des
Le Reveil, 9 Jan. and 6 Feb. 1892 respectively (to name but a few).
3. See introduction to H. Feller's article, op. cit., p.69.
lucid incisive style. Yet inconsistencies and contradictions abound in his work, and often he states his attitudes ipso facto without attempting to substantiate them with rational argument. What prevails in practice in his journalism is the emotional appeal to which he attached such importance. In fervent passionate tones he appeals to our basic instincts and thus makes a much deeper impression on the majority of the public than he would by a more systematic, intellectual approach.

Surprising though it may be despite all his cutting remarks on the subject Vallès confessed to having written over ten thousand lines of verse in his youth in Paris. In "Le Candidat des Pauvres" Vingtras claims that once fully aware of the irrelevance of his poetry to the ordinary worker, he held to his decision never to write another line of verse,\(^1\) but in Vallès' case this is not true, for though he destroyed most of his poetry in disgust, amongst the poems still with us today are several dating from the seventies, long after his attacks on the "genre".

Few of his poems were published and one has a sneaking suspicion that his reaction against poetry may have stemmed from resentment of the success of his rivals. Those of his poems which were published were never the subject of much attention. "L'Habit Vert" appeared in Étienne Carjat's paper "Le Boulevard", 26 January 1862, and was later incorporated in "Les Réfractaires",\(^2\) but despite Gille's complimentary comments on the poem,\(^3\) it is uninspired and unremarkable. One is surprised to find Richepin, so critical of Vallès in other respects,\(^4\) remarking that his poetry was as good as any written in the previous twenty years,\(^5\) but at least he went on to admit, "Qu'on puisse y trouver l'étoffe d'un grand poète, il faudrait être partial pour le dire."\(^6\) The poem "À la Colonne"\(^7\) which appeared in "La Liberté" in Brussels, October 1871 is also Vallès' work, though he can have received little credit for it, as it was unsigned. The only other poems published during his lifetime were "Bas les Coeurs"

---

4. See above p.126 n.2 and p.156 and below p.280.
6. ibid., p.46.
7. This and other poems are reproduced LCD IV, pp.1569-78.
(written shortly after December 1851) and "Vingt-huit mai" (1871), which he reproduced himself in his article "Des mots ... Des mots! ..." in "Le Réveil", 27 March 1882, as illustrations of the rhetorical declamatory poetry he rejected.

Further verses have been published posthumously: "L'Ange de l'Orgueil" (written in 1854), "A Carjet" (c. 1865) and a chorus to a drinking song about Napoleon (1869), and these are all to be found in the Livre Club Diderot edition of Vallès' works. Also in 1971 Lucien Scheler introduced the public to the previously unpublished poem "Heures d'exil", and gave details of an uncompleted poem "La Bibliothèque" and a sketch of a poem about Napoleon and Marie-Louise which Vallès is thought to have written as a schoolboy.¹

The existence of such poems would not be surprising were they to illustrate the "poésie populaire" he so admired, for as we have seen, his condemnation of poetry was not all-embracing. However, this is far from the case. "A Carjet" and the chorus about Napoleon are frivolous, innocuous verses, which do not warrant serious discussion. "L'Habit Vert" is more substantial, but its status is perplexing. It appears to be romantic and sentimental, with many details, those of clothing, for example, reminding us of Werther and the hero of romantic novels, but one is never certain whether to take the poem seriously or whether Vallès is mocking his "hero". In any event the subject is strictly personal. "Bas les Coeurs", "L'Ange de l'Orgueil", and "Vingt-huit mai" on the other hand are serious poems inspired by political events, but, as Vallès recognized, they are fine samples of grandiose rhetoric (apart from a lyrical interlude in "Vingt-huit mai", when Vallès writes in the first person, and the lines flow more naturally, and suggestive language replaces trite imagery).

¹ See L. Scheler, "Un poème inédit de Jules Vallès. 'Heures d'exil'," Europe, April-May 1971, pp.75-80.
"A la Colonne" manifests democratic sentiments, taking up the people's cause, but inhibited by his rhyming schema, Vallès expresses himself awkwardly, and the poem lacks emotional cohesion and impact. In fact it is only in his evocation of his love for an English woman in "Heures d'exil" that he succeeds in expressing deep and genuine emotions. Here his choice of alexandrines (rather than a shorter, more restrictive line), his use of the first person and treatment of a personal subject allow him to express himself simply and naturally. Once again, in his own case, his observations prove valid: the restrictions of verse-form lead to distortion and encourage rhetoric and declamation, and only when they are relaxed can he express himself simply and sincerely. In the light of this, one can well understand his resistance to poetry! Indeed, though he praised Pottier's poetry in 1881,¹ he never made any serious attempt to imitate him, for he had evidently recognized by this time that, whatever the political potential of such poetry, it was not his natural medium of expression.

He was no more successful in producing the democratic popular theatre of which he had spoken with such enthusiasm. We have mentioned the failure of his early dramatic efforts.² The manuscripts of these plays are lost and so we cannot judge them for ourselves, but they were evidently comic, sensational plays, typical of the superficial literature of the Second Empire, rather than examples of socially conscious theatre. Vallès' projects of the post-Commune era, however, reveal a significant change in attitude. His aim in writing "La Commune de Paris" was clearly political: he sought to justify the action of the Communards and defend them against the calumny of the right-wing backlash. He

¹. See above p.154.
². See above p.199.
stresses the integrity, solidarity and unselfish spirit of the ordinary Parisian workers, pooling their limited resources and indignant at the suggestion of pillaging. They are portrayed as courageous, merciful and restrained. He emphasizes the lack of crime, theft and murder in Paris during the Commune, contrasting this with the situation described in Versailles newspapers. Also one episode centres on the burning of property in the face of the advance of the Versailles forces, this being presented as a reluctant last resort not a vindictive measure - one of the incendiaries risks his life to save a child from the blaze. Furthermore Vallès presents a revolutionary movement with its roots in the working population, thus illustrating his view that revolutions are not led and controlled by political agitators, but arise spontaneously from the grievances of the masses, and are carried onward by an irresistible, uncontrollable force. He thus demonstrates how misguided it was to blame individual members of the Commune for the disasters of May 1871.

In evoking recent political events of interest to all Frenchmen, and focusing attention on the action of ordinary folk rather than politicians, Vallès clearly made an attempt to produce political theatre of and for the people. As we commented above, Pierre Beaudouin is more of an ordinary worker than any other figure in his work. However, though Vallès had great hopes of the play and intended that it should be performed before English and American audiences until it was politically possible to stage a performance in France, his expectations were

2. Ibid., p.206.
3. Ibid., p.220.
4. Ibid., p.211.
5. Ibid., p.212.
7. See below p.272.
8. See above p.236.
never fulfilled owing to the play's basic weaknesses. It has never been performed and was not even published until 1970. Even though it may have a significant contribution to make to our understanding of history and popular revolt, this potential has not been realized.

Vallès' next play, which he started to write in 1879, was to be entitled "La Baraque" or "La Dompteuse". It is described by Alexis as "pièce à grand spectacle, avec parades, cage de dompteuse, bêtes féroces - peignant le monde des saltimbanques ...". Vallès hoped to persuade Sarah Bernhardt, his beloved "Irrégulière", to take a leading rôle. However, from his correspondence with Séverine it is apparent that the two of them were still writing the play as late as the summer of 1881, and as the manuscripts reveal, it was never completed. Were Vallès to have avoided the sensationalism of the "feuilleton" of the same name, he might well have presented a valuable portrait of the circus world, a sphere he described so realistically in "Les Réfractaires", "La Rue", and "Le Tableau de Paris". However, uncompleted projects can exert no influence.

Alexis also describes another dramatic project which Vallès was working on in 1881:

"Un sujet le tente plus encore que les irréguliers: c'est la misère en habit noir - bien autrement sinistre - des faux heureux, des gens arrivés en apparence, combles de réputation, d'argent et d'honneur, montés au pinacle, et qui, torturés pourtant par des souffrances secrètes se font sauter la tête comme Prévost-Paradol, comme le peintre Marchal ... Titre: 'Les réguliers'. C'est-à-dire l'opposé des 'Réfractaires'."

Here again Vallès proposed a portrait of a less obvious aspect of the suffering rife in contemporary society, but this was not

1. See above p.197ff.
completed either.

Thus, although in all his dramatic projects of the post-Commune era he set out to treat subjects of immense social and political significance, stamina and creative talent failed him. This is clearly a basic problem arising from his subordination of the literary to the political. The literary work must stand in its own right before it can exert political influence.

Finally we must assess the potential influence of Vallès' "feuilletons" or novels. We noted above the faith he placed in the "primauté démocratique du roman" and also the importance he attached to "feuilletons". This is reflected in the fact that, quite apart from the three parts of the trilogy which were initially serialized in newspapers, he also had seven other "feuilletons" published.

In his early "feuilletons", as in early plays and poems, he seems above all to be attempting to come to terms with the "genre" and social issues are not to the fore, but the more autobiographical his works become, the more his own preoccupations emerge. Already in "Un Gentilhomme" we are aware of his strong class consciousness, his critical attitude towards the aristocracy and the Church, his faith in work and the workers. Here, and more obviously still in "Pierre Moras" he expresses his horror at the empty wasted lives of many "bacheliers". Indeed, though in early "feuilletons" Vallès' central themes may not be so clearly pointed as in the trilogy, the impression we receive of nineteenth century French society is one of exploitation, suffering and strife, and a deep discontent with the status quo. Vallès' vision is pessimistic: Jean Delbenne is condemned to prison and Laure goes mad. The protagonists of "Un Gentilhomme"

1. See above p.165.
2. Ibid., p.170.
3. Details given above in Chapter IX.
destroy one another, but for Mlle. de Laubanil who flees to a convent. Maurice commits suicide in despair. Pierre Moras too takes his life, abandoning his father, Rose and child (and his mother, who is also reduced to fleeing to a convent!) "Le Testament d'un Blagueur", as its title suggests, is once again an explanation for suicide. Idealistic ambitions are seen to be thwarted by parental and social pressures, this resulting in disillusionment, degradation and ultimate disaster. Vallès' portrayal of Parisian society in "Pierre Moras" (and "La Dompteuse") is particularly grim, as he exposes the hypocrisy, deceit and ruthless ambition of the middle and upper classes, and on the other hand, the misery, depravity and vice of the underworld.

However, as suggested above, Vallès' "feuilletons" of the pre-Commune era lack direction. Themes of social discontent are nascent but not until after 1871 do they emerge in full force. "Les Blouses" (1880) focuses openly on problems of revolt, and even in the incredible hotch-potch of "La Dompteuse" (1881) criticisms of contemporary society rise above the confusion. In presenting the "Institution Gournichal" Vallès focuses attention on attitudes to education and parental responsibility, and when Gilbert is first confronted with Parisian society, we experience with him the great class divisions, and the warmth and harmony of the working classes in contrast to the disarray of the bourgeoisie. Vallès' declared intention in the "feuilleton" is to expose "les mystères d'une race, une race finie, qui s'appelle la Bourgeoisie". Certainly it is a degenerate picture he paints with stories of adultery, illegitimate children, abortion, prison, murder and blackmail, and, worst of all, the

1. See LCD IV, pp.367-82.
confinement of the grief-stricken but sane Monsieur D'Elbène to a lunatic asylum thanks to the cunning of the scoundrel Fanjat and the collusion of his own "respectable" wife! This is without doubt a portrayal of French society which points the need for change!

The trilogy does so more clearly still. Considering this as an "oeuvre de devoir", Vallès sets out to present his view of the last twenty-five years of French history, declaring "je n'écris ce livre que pour défendre mes idées et dire mes prières d'athée sur nos morts."¹ "L'Enfant" he describes as "le procès de la famille". In the following volumes his intention is to present "celui de la religion, de la patrie, de la propriété et du succès",² The particular theme of "Le Bachelier" is implied in its title and dedication. Vallès writes of it to Malot,

"J'ai essayé de mettre en relief une idée ... C'est farce et sottise, on n'est qu'un blagueur et un fou d'espérer VIVRE SUR SON EDUCATION."³

He gives expression here to the central themes of his journalism, his criticisms of parental tyranny and of the education system, his reaction against romanticism and the glorification of war, his rejection of class-society and his longing for freedom and equality (for these themes stem from personal experience). Those who comment on the personal spite illustrated by his attacks on parents and schoolmasters⁴ have missed the point, for his motives are clearly social and political. Our impression of Vingtras is of a humorous and sympathetic personality, but he is deprived and humiliated in his youth, and is positively hindered by his outdated futile education. Disillusioned by the imposition of a repressive regime, his talent, enthusiasm and

¹. O.C. IX, p.147.
². Ibid., p.116.
³. Ibid., p.348.
courage thwarted and rejected, he is reduced to poverty and isolation. One of Vallès' main intentions in the trilogy was to explain "pourquoi il y a eu tant de bohèmes et d'insurgés". This is illustrated through Vlingtras. His frustrations and humiliation are seen to culminate inevitably in the revolt of 1871, this underlining Vallès' critical view of society with an ominous threat. This is revolutionary realism taken a step farther than in Balzac. Not only are weaknesses in the basic structure of society exposed, but in living through the Commune we experience the bloody revolution in which social discontent must (according to Vallès) result.

"Le Candidat des Pauvres" and "Souvenirs d'un Etudiant pauvre" are similar to "Le Bachelier" in so far as each work reflects Vallès' general disillusionment and disorientation under the Second Empire, but it is only when as in the trilogy, his frustrations are seen in the context of his life as a whole and particularly in relation to the Commune that their full significance is appreciated. In 1871, for the first time in his life, Vlingtras feels a sense of purpose and achievement as he joins the Communards in their call for dignity, equality and solidarity. It is the theme of inevitable progression and fatality that gives the trilogy its unity, direction and poignancy.

Although the Commune was shortlived, after 1871, Vallès' horizon was no longer grey and pessimistic. "L'Insurgé" ends on a note of defiant achievement, determination and hope:

"Ils ne m'auront pas! Et je pourrai être avec le peuple encore, si le peuple est rejeté dans la bataille.
Je regarde le ciel du côté où je sens Paris.
Il est d'un bleu cru, avec des nuées rouges.
On dirait une grande blouse inondée de sang." 2

The energetic colouring seems to herald future glory. Vlingtras

1. O.C. IX, p.63.
escapes to carry on the fight, as do Bryas and Jeanne in "La Commune de Paris", where the play ends with daylight dawning and Kermadeuc and Beaudouin exclaiming in turn, "Vive le peuple!" "Vive la Commune!"1

This determination and optimism parallel the increasingly positive character of Vallès' journalism in later years, but here they do not seem fully justified. Vingtras and his colleagues have long since resigned themselves to defeat.2 Victory is irrelevant; they determine simply to make the most of their last stand.3 Vingtras mocks the little old man who seeks to die gloriously in the explosion of the Panthéon,4 but he himself exclaims ecstatically,

"Oh! il faudrait que la mort vint me prendre, qu'une balle me tuât dans cet épanouissement de la résurrection!"5

Obviously Vallès could not turn back the wheels of history - the Commune did end in defeat6 - yet, as suggested above,7 the ideal of revolution which emerges from the novel seems romantic and impractical. We linger over Vallès' last lines and their suggestion of glory, but also that of the horror of bloodshed.

Not surprisingly, when the trilogy was first published readers were outraged, and not only by "L'Insurgé" but also by the relatively apolitical "L'Enfant"8 and Vingtras' attacks on his family. In attacking this and later the Church and University, he was undermining sacred pillars of society. As the trilogy progresses, however, it becomes increasingly political, as

1. O.C. XII, p.377.
3. Ibid., p.262.
4. Ibid., p.310 and 313.
5. Ibid., p.254.
6. Vallès confesses to Arnould that he never had any hope of victory, O.C. IV, p.220.
7. See above p.238.
Vingtras openly voices his political protests and not only condones but also participates in the controversial revolt of 1871. So we must tackle the question raised in Part One in discussion of Zola's and Vallès' attitudes to political commitment: does the open expression of Vallès' political beliefs limit the value of his work?

In order to answer this, it is useful to draw some comparisons between "La Commune de Paris" and "L'Insurgé". In both works, as mentioned above, Vallès sought to show that the events of 1871 were a direct result of the repression of 1848 and 1851. "La Commune de Paris" begins with a prologue entitled "Le Peuple vaincu (juin 1848)", and we know that Vallès planned a great impersonal history of an entire generation, before he lighted upon the final form of the trilogy. (This was also, apparently, his main theme in "Le Candidat des Pauvres", and in many newspaper articles too he reiterates the claim that repression provokes revolt.) Describing to Malot his plans for a novel on the Commune, Vallès wrote:

"Je veux avec ce roman prouver sinon l'innocence au moins l'irresponsabilité, oui l'irresponsabilité des maudits de la Commune! ... je voulais montrer comment le sang des otages a été versé par la fatalité, et dire que les incendies n'étaient que la flamme d'un volcan."4

Certainly in both works he succeeds in presenting the Commune in a positive sympathetic light, conveying the impression of a popular patriotic movement. However, "La Commune de Paris" is more one-sided than "L'Insurgé". The virtues of the Communards5

1. See above p.237.
2. See Vallès' declaration in a letter to Tony Révillon, 22 Nov. 1879: "Je veux, pour les récits simples, naturellement, amener le lecteur à cette conclusion que fatalement la fierté et la misère devaient amener des bataillons d'hommes, redingotiers ou blousiers, aux barricades de la Commune", ("Quelques lettres inédites de Jules Vallès," Mercure de France, 1 Nov. 1913, p.52.)
5. See above p.265.
are contrasted with the dishonest, presumptuous and unjust behaviour of supposed defenders of law and order,¹ who are insensitive, vindictive and cowardly, and are motivated purely by the desire for personal reward. They shoot down innocent womenfolk,² and abuse and mistreat their prisoners.³ The leader of the Communards is "Papa Beaudouin, la perle des braves",⁴ "le brave des braves".⁵ His virtues are recognized even by those of different political views, by Dubray-Froschlin and Durand.⁶ His colleagues are simple, loyal family men. In contrast, Landri, a member of the reactionary forces, has deserted wife and family, while Bonnal, his leader, is a brute who takes advantage of the virtuous Jeanne Beaudouin.⁷ It is an idealized black and white picture of the Commune, clearly constructed so as to make political points, and it is so grossly one-sided and propagandist that the average reader is likely to be on the defensive. Racatel who tries and condemns the Communards is himself disgusted at his own behaviour.⁸ Admittedly in the final scenes Hélène, Dubray-Floschlin and even Bonnal himself demonstrate their generosity, but one has the impression that this is the effect of their contact with the worthy self-sacrificing Communards.

In "L'Insurgé" too Vallès' Communards are sensitive family men,⁹ but here the opposition is an unknown quantity and we are spared so bald and unrealistic a contrast. Vingtras' political sympathies are made clear to us, yet his view of the Communards themselves is not unadulteratedly positive. We are shown petty disputes, lunatic extremism¹⁰ and bloodthirsty vengefulness.¹¹

¹. See O.C. XII, pp.41-3.
². Ibid., p.35.
³. Ibid., p.318.
⁴. Ibid., p.60.
⁵. Ibid., p.33.
⁶. Ibid., pp.71 and 95 respectively.
⁷. Ibid., p.160.
⁸. Ibid., p.335 ff.
⁹. See O.C. III, p.106.
¹⁰. See O.C. III, Ch. XXXII, Les Incendies, pp.304-13, and in particular Vallès' presentation of Totole.
We gain a clear insight into the weaknesses of the Communards and the cause of their failure. Vingtras pokes fun at himself and his colleagues, joking, for example, about the apparent incongruity of having semi-illiterate workers as ministers. Yet though he indulges in gentle mockery, he nonetheless affirms his respect for such men.

In "L'Insurgé" the reader sees things from Vingtras' point of view, but never feels that this view is forced upon him in a partisan or didactic manner as in "La Commune de Paris", where, although events are presented from the outside, the view we receive is far from objective. Although essentially subjective, "L'Insurgé" is more open-ended thanks to its loose structure. Also Vingtras never claims to do more than describe his own experiences. There is no preaching or moralizing, although the impression of our reliving Vingtras' experiences with him is destroyed at times by Vallès' overt attempts to defend the actions of the Communards. It is apparent that he is writing with hindsight when he suggests how particular actions might later be interpreted (as they in fact were). His description of the burning of certain quarters of Paris is pointedly a justification of his and others' actions, and in such instances his political intentions are obtrusive. Yet contrary to Joseph Pinatel's suggestions, it is a novel he produces not a political pamphlet.

In 1376, when Vallès had not yet conceived of the trilogy as such,

1. O.C. III, Ch. XXVII, Les Nouveaux Ministres, pp.256-63.
2. Writing to Malot (24 June 1875) of his plans for his "roman-memoire" Vallès describes it as "l'une des pages du grand livre de notre temps" (O.C. IX, p.66). As we commented above, for him to have fulfilled his ambition of presenting the history of an entire generation, this would have had to be supplemented with the experiences of many other individuals.
3. See, for example, O.C. III, pp.217, 228 and 250.
he envisaged his historical novel as "le couronnement de ma vie de blagueur et de convaincu, une oeuvre saignante d'originalité."\(^1\) It is in fact the fusion of original personal and humorous elements with the political that makes the trilogy both entertaining and yet serious literature, and prevents it from becoming didactic. Unfortunately the former elements are lacking in "La Commune de Paris".

Obviously many of Vallès' contemporaries must have considered "L'Insurgé" partisan. Zola took a more sympathetic attitude to the Commune than many other liberals yet his work "Jacques Damour" published in August 1880, provides a strong contrast to "L'Insurgé". Rather than portraying the Communards fighting courageously, Zola has them idling around playing cards, all words and no action. Jacques himself is not a fervent idealist but a simpleton who is carried away in the heat of the moment by the agitator Berru, the devil's advocate, a parasitical opportunist. Jacques looks upon the Commune naively as "l'âge d'or annoncé, le commencement de la félicité universelle". He, the innocent victim is deported, whilst leaders like Berru escape from Paris before the entry of the Versailles troops. The leaders suffer little from their exile but Jacques returns from Nouméa much the worse for wear to find his wife remarried to a prosperous butcher! Old and dejected he is taken in by his daughter Louise, a wealthy courtesan. Zola makes a total mockery of his revolutionary ideals. After supposedly aspiring to freedom and equality he resigns himself to accepting his daughter's charity, and treats her gentlemen lovers with deference. He dotes upon her possessions, enjoys her good food and lives in comfortable anonymity, unconcerned even to assert his civil rights. He and Berru read anarchist newspapers and talk of exterminating the

bourgeoisie, whilst leading a comfortable bourgeois life. The revolutionary ideal is seen to be an empty utopian dream which bears no relevance to their life-style.

Zola portrays the Commune as the product of political agitators, whilst Vallès is at pains to stress that this was not the case and that it was a spontaneous mass movement. The attitude of the fairer sex in the two novels acts as a yardstick of the authors' attitudes. In "L'Insurgé" the womenfolk support their husbands in resisting the Versailles troops, but in Zola's novel, Jacques' wife, Félicie, who is presented as a balanced, humane individual, condemns the revolt from the outset.

Probably neither view is objective. Clearly, however, Vallès had more at stake. The trilogy was his political apology (although the passage of time enabled him to be more dispassionate here than in "La Commune de Paris"). Zola's view was more acceptable to the vast majority of Frenchmen of the period. It was also less controversial in so far as he described fictional characters, whereas Vingtras was immediately identifiable as Vallès and other political figures too were referred to by name. However, even though Zola detaches himself from recent political events by writing in the third person and in the past tense, whereas Vallès voices his protests in the first person and adopts the present tense, their attitudes to political events are equally apparent. Despite their disagreement over the place of politics in the novel, actual differences in practice were only surface-deep. Vallès' work was more controversial not because it was in essence any more political, but because he voiced a minority view, and did so more directly.

For the twentieth century reader, removed from the events described, if he does not warm to "L'Insurgé", this is very likely not because of Vallès' political views. The novel is so fragmented and impressionistic that it is difficult to follow
unless one has a good knowledge of the events of 1870 and 1871. Also there are references to and portraits of numerous journalists, politicians and Communards, which cannot be fully appreciated by the uninitiated. One may be fascinated by Vallès' art of description, but his fleeting glimpses of innumerable unfamiliar figures are merely disorientating. Also his widespread use of "le lexique populaire" although colourful and realistic, poses problems for the present-day reader and limits once again the novel's appeal (this being quite the opposite of what he intended). "L'Insurgé" stands less readily as an independent novel than either of the other two volumes of the trilogy, because it requires a general understanding of the historical context in which it is set, because it is more readily appreciated if one has read the preceding volumes and is familiar with Vingtras, and finally because, although we are still involved here in the personality and fate of Vingtras, he becomes submerged in political events as his personal aspirations are seen to fuse with those of the masses.

Until the 1930's and 1940's for many years little attention was paid to Vallès' work because of political prejudice against Vallès the Communard. (His alienation of the literary establishment by his attacks on respected writers and literary circles in general, and his unconventional unpolished style did nothing to

1. See Pinatel's comments to this effect: "Pris un à un les incidents ou les personnages sont vraisemblables. C'est leur juxtaposition et leur accumulation qui semblent un excès de réussite dans le malheur." (op. cit.).
2. See the detailed notes on historical figures which modern editors consider it necessary to supply.
3. See Pinatel's comments on the political character of "L'Insurgé": "Ce caractère le rend plus séduisant pour des partisans ou pour des historiens. La plupart des lecteurs se réfugieront dans l'art plus serein des deux premières parties, où la passion certes n'est pas absente, mais où les événements sont dominés par l'humour et l'ironie," (loc. cit.) Irony is not absent in "L'Insurgé" but it is caustic. Vallès' humour is rarely light-hearted.
4. See Huguette le Gall's panorama of the changing attitudes of critics towards Vallès from 1860 to the present day, op. cit., pp.2-70.
However, now that interest in his work has been regenerated, admittedly in the main by left-wing writers and critics, the trilogy is appreciated by many readers who would not class themselves as socialist revolutionaries. Whereas "La Commune de Paris" focuses narrowly on the particular events of the Paris Commune and is of limited interest to all but historians and revolutionaries, and whereas "Les Blouses" portrays a popular uprising and centres virtually exclusively on the strategic problems of revolt, political issues are only one aspect of the trilogy. It is Jacques Vingtras who holds our attention, and regardless of political inclinations we sympathize with his suffering and laugh at his jokes. Moreover, the relevance of his revolt is not limited to his own historical situation. Many French students in 1968 identified with his protest and rebellion, for in his writing they found echoes of their own frustration with the empty promises of liberal politicians, their own criticisms of the highly centralized and archaic University and the lack of "débouchés" for qualified students, their own hostility to police and army, the instruments of repression. But Vingtras' aspirations have greater relevance even than this. His ideals of liberty and equality, of freedom from repression and from poverty are basic human ideals which inspire men of every country and every age. "La Commune de Paris" may fulfil our worst fears as to the dangers of expressing political views in a literary work, for it lacks the lighthearted note, the spontaneity, humour and self-mockery, which prevent the trilogy from becoming didactic. It has not the breadth, the literary qualities, nor the same personal appeal. In the trilogy, however, Vallès strikes a balance between the personal and the collective, and between the aimless wandering and discontent of early "feuilletons" and the oversimplification of "La Commune de Paris". The overall structure of the trilogy is a simple linear progression, but at
any stage in this development there is always room for light-hearted digressions. Here alone Vallès succeeds in integrating his faith and knowledge of revolution in a literary work in a balanced, palatable and positive manner. ("L'Insurgé" may be inferior to the preceding volumes, but this is due less, I think, to its political content, than to the fact that Vallès never made time to complete the work to his own satisfaction.)

Apart from occasions when his work was particularly severely scrutinized by the censors and apart from a few works from the early years of his career, all Vallès' writing demonstrates his preoccupation with social and political issues and his commitment to the socialist cause. The theme of utility and serving the interests of the community remained uppermost in his mind. Undoubtedly it was through his journalism that he exerted his most significant influence on his contemporaries, but it is the trilogy, this work produced almost despite himself, which has exerted the greatest long-term influence. Here he fully realizes his ideal of revolutionary realism exposing not only the grievances of the discontented but also the conflagration in which they result. It is a work which though rooted in history is not limited by time. It is more popular today than ever before, and no doubt this popularity will continue to grow for many years to come.
CHAPTER XIV. GENUINE SOCIALIST OR OPPORTUNIST?

Not every critic, however, has been convinced that Vallès' apparent commitment to socialism was totally honest, and so before concluding we should perhaps give some consideration to the doubts raised by Blanpain (1871) and Brunetière (1885) on this matter. They accused Vallès of personal ambition, opportunism and material greed, and maintained that he loved money and the rich but despised the poor. Had he succeeded in making money himself, they claimed, he would never have become a socialist.

Such hypotheses seem to me rather pointless anyway, but if money was all that Vallès wanted, then he would surely have earned more, had he spent less time enraging censors, editors and printers alike. If it was simply attention for himself that he sought, then there were less dangerous and exhausting ways to attract it. Blanpain's and Brunetière's comments are clearly inspired by hatred of Vallès the Communard. Yet we cannot dismiss them out of hand when we find them echoed by Jean Richepin, himself a socialist greatly influenced by Vallès. In his biography "Les Etapes d'un Réfractaire" Richepin changes his opinion continually as to whether Vallès was kind-hearted or selfish, a nihilist or a conservative, yet he too maintains that it was only need and suffering which made him a socialist, and that this also made him cynical, greedy and ambitious.

Certainly Vallès talks a lot about money in his writing. In "Le Bachelier" pecuniary difficulties plague Vingtras, for this had been Vallès' own experience in his adolescence. In 1852 he had inherited 13,000 francs from his childhood protectress Mlle. Balandreau, and this had helped him out in his early years

1. See Gille's discussion of Vallès' influence on Richepin (op. cit., pp.524-30), and my comments on their relationship (p.156).
in Paris, but hard times were to follow when his father refused to pay him an allowance any more, because he was no longer studying seriously.1 After his father's death, his mother was left in straitened circumstances and could not support him.2 However, despite real hardship Vallès is able to joke lightheartedly about his attempts to earn a living as a journalist.3 In return for an article written for "Le Pierrot", a paper owned by the company "100,000 paletots", Vingtras is presented with a short indoor jacket. If he continues to write for the paper, he may even earn a winter overcoat! Similarly his payment for an article in the "Journal de la Cordonnerie" is a pair of shoes! In such accounts it is possible at times to detect a very gentle hint of bitterness, but never the deep cynicism and resentment to which Blanpain and Brunetière refer.

Vallès' exile was another period of hardship. To begin with he had some money to fall back on, thanks to the success of "Le Cri du Peuple", but his savings were limited. Consequently his letters during this period reveal an almost obsessional pre-occupation with financial matters. One subject which caused him great concern was the sum of 36,000 francs left to him by a Monsieur Caillebotte-Lavente who died during the siege of Paris, but despite continual efforts, he was never able to secure the entire sum.4 As his letters to Malot indicate, he was obliged to consider all sorts of activities lest he be deprived of his scanty income from journalism.5 His reluctance to write the trilogy without obtaining advanced payment6 may seem suspect in

1. See Vallès' moving letter of 14 July 1854 to Mme. Voilquin (mother of two schoolfriends and acquaintance of his parents) whom he begs to try and persuade his father to relieve his destitute (reproduced LCD IV, pp.1385-6).
2. See problems over granting of her widow's pension, G. Gille, op. cit., pp.94-6.
3. See O.C. II, Ch. XXVI, Journaliste.
4. See Delfau op. cit., pp.52-6 for details.
5. See his suggestions for an Art shop! (O.C. IX, pp.52-4).
6. See O.C. IX, p.68.
the light of his condemnation of commercial literature, but we must also take into account his unwillingness to spend his time writing something which the public might never read, for, as we have stressed, he wrote not out of a belief in art, but in order to communicate his viewpoint. Also the fear of destitution should not be confused with material greed. When one has no money, it is bound to become a subject of great importance. In fact there was never any question of Vallès compromising his integrity for financial ends except perhaps in "L'Argent".

Indeed it is "L'Argent" (1857) with its study of La Bourse, the nerve-centre of capitalism, and also its dedication to the financier Jules Mirès, which is undoubtedly responsible for casting this slur upon his reputation. Not surprisingly Vallès never openly admitted to having written the work. (However, although not mentioned by name, it is clearly the work he is referring to when he recounts Vingtras' literary exploits in "Le Candidat des Pauvres".) With exclamations such as "Qu'on le sache donc, il ne peut y avoir de vertueux, d'aimable et de distingué que les gens riches!" he appears to betray his ideals in expressing contempt for the poor. However, such comments are ambiguous. Maybe he compromised himself in laying himself open

1. See above p.114-5.
2. I am referring here to Vallès' literary production, but accusations of criminal dishonesty have also been brought against him. The suggestion that he was bribed to fight Jules Simon in the elections in 1869 has been convincingly disproved (see J. Richepin, op. cit., pp.72-4; U. Rouchon, op. cit., II, p.44 ff; H. Guillemin, "Le dossier Vallès aux archives de la police," Europe, April-May 1966, pp.138-9 etc.) but not the accusation that in the summer of 1872 he embezzled the funds of the "Cercle d'Etudes Sociales" in London (H. Guillemin, op. cit., p.145 and G. Delfau, op. cit., p.57).
3. See notes on genesis and authorship of "L'Argent", Pléiade I, pp.115-63, and M. Kaczynski's article "Vallès est-il auteur de "L'Argent"?," Kwartalnik Neofilologiczny Warsawa, 13, 1966, pp. 431-3. It is widely accepted that Vallès wrote the work. The only issue difficult to resolve is how much of the technical text provided by the expert Dervin he produced intact, and how much he rewrote the remainder.
5. Pléiade I, p.5.
to misinterpretation, but he certainly had a valid point to make: if one is destitute, then it is difficult to lead an exemplary life. There is no virtue in poverty, as some artists and intellectuals would like to think. To be able to make money is in itself an indication of enterprise and mental ability, whilst poverty is likely to lead to bitterness and suffering. Also money frees the individual so that he need not prostitute himself. It is sheer romanticism to shut one's eyes to financial considerations; one must face up to the realities of capitalist society, and recognize that money can in fact do good:

"... celui-là fait preuve d'esprit qui s'enrichit, preuve de coeur même, car il peut laisser tomber dans le verre vide du pauvre le vin pur de la charité".1

In describing La Bourse he was describing an important reality of French society, for, socialist or not, one cannot live on ideals alone. However, he certainly did not mean to exalt money as an end in itself or as a source of personal power. The very last words of his preface to the work reveal that he was writing partly tongue-in-cheek:

"Faisons de l'argent, morbleu! gagnons de quoi venger le passé triste, de quoi faire le lendemain joyeux, de quoi acheter de l'amour, des chevaux et des hommes."2

Far from condoning financiers, he stressed the importance of money as an instrument of independence and a means of countering the capitalist threat of exploitation. He showed how ill-informed small-time investors were robbed of their money because of their ignorance of business-affairs. As noted above,3 he sought to provide the masses with the information necessary to protect their own interests. Although he was unrealistic in imagining that a detailed technical study on such a subject

might capture their attention, he was nonetheless genuinely seeking to contribute to their enlightenment and emancipation.

After the success of "L'Argent" he was hired by Villemessant to write a column on the stock exchange in "Le Figaro", but he was unable to disguise the fact that he found the subject boring. Much of his column was irrelevant, and finally he was dismissed after revealing sentiments scarcely to be expected of a financial correspondent (or a gold-digger):

"Mais ces malheureux millionnaires! Ils sont prisonniers dans leurs caisses, entassant des colonnes de chiffres, comptant les billets de banque, loin des fleurs et loin du soleil! Affreux métier que le métier de millionnaire!"

However, in any event it would be unwise to attach much importance either to "L'Argent" or such articles, as Vallès was at the beginning of his career, and was still trying to discover his own niche and make his name known to editors and publishers.

As the rest of his writing illustrates, it is a wilful distortion of his character and aspirations to accuse him of despising the poor and the working classes. Throughout his writing and particularly in the trilogy we are shown the dignity and simple joys of manual work. We witness Vallès' sense of alienation from the middle classes to which he belonged by birth, and his desire for solidarity with the masses. However, some clarification of this point is demanded since Michel Ragon too (who has no axe to grind) talks of his condescending attitude to the lower classes. Certainly Vallès was painfully aware that he was not fully accepted into their ranks even during the Commune. He was conscious too of adapting his style so as to appeal to them. In discussing how Tony Révillon might attract a larger public to his "Journal d'un sou", he suggests, "Voulez-vous que

1. Vallès' five articles appeared between 4 April and 13 May 1858.
2. "Figaro à la Bourse," Le Figaro, 13 May 1858.
j'essaie ma note plébéienne?" But to him plebeian was not a derogatory term. He knew that his education and background set him apart from the working classes, but respected them rather than looked down on them. He was, as Ragon recognized "l'allié du peuple", but not "écrivain ouvrier" for the simple reason that he was never employed as a manual worker himself, and wrote very little about the average worker. The names and dedications of "La Rue", "Le Peuple" and "Le Cri du Peuple" indicate his desire to portray the lives and defend the rights of those he describes as "le peuple", but the term has vague and changing implications in his writing. Sometimes it is used in the sense of working class and in opposition to the bourgeoisie. Yet in "La Rue" (1867), which was dedicated to evoking "les mémoires du peuple" and of which he wrote "Elle représente le peuple", he called upon men of all classes and all political persuasions to make their contribution:

"Nous comptons sur tous et sur toutes. Hommes de salon et gens de peu, flâneurs de Paris, exilés de province, femmes rêvées, marchands robustes, légitimistes, philippistes, impérialistes, républicains, vous saurez écrire pour nous." He also declared his intention to portray "les grands comme les petits, les respectés comme les misérables". His definition of "le peuple" is not confined to those engaged in manual work, but seems rather to refer to the dispossessed and discontented in general:

"... le peuple où se coudoient et se mêlent tous les déplacés: gentilshommes qui sont descendus, bourgeois minés, travailleurs qui montent ..."

2. See "La Rue. Le seizième numéro," La Rue, 14 Sept. 1867.
3. "La Rue," La Rue, 1 June 1867, Pléiade I, p.936.
4. Similarly in Le Citoyen de Paris, 13 Feb. 1881, he equates 'le peuple' with 'tout le monde'.
5. "La Rue," La Rue, 1 June 1867, Pléiade I, pp.937-8.
6. Ibid., p.939.
7. See "La Rue. Le seizième numéro," La Rue, 14 Sept. 1867.
It is a classless concept, but one which implies the notion of revolt. In his editorial in "Le Cri du Peuple", 28 October 1883, Vallès claimed that all those who fought on the barricades during the Commune belonged to "le peuple" whatever their social origins. The following year he asserted:

"Les classes se sont mêlées dans la lutte ou la misère. Légitimistes, bourgeois, aristocrates, marchands, ouvriers, combien se trouvent côte à côte sur le pavé! Souvent la redingote est plus sale que la blouse, et le noble miné, le commerçant failli, sont plus pauvres que le travailleur qui a sa paie ... Voilà maintenant le Peuple nouveau!"

Frustrated himself by class divisions which separated men with the same aspirations at heart, he extended his definition of "le peuple" to the poor of all classes, and to all those ready to fight for social justice. Poverty and revolt not class warfare per se are the themes which inspire the titles "Le Candidat des Pauvres", "Souvenirs d'un Etudiant pauvre", "Les Réfractaires", "Mémoires d'un Révolté", "L'Insurgé" and also various alternatives suggested for "Le Candidat des Pauvres": "Les Combattants", "La Vie de Combat", "Les Insoumis". Significantly Jean Malzieux whom Vallès exalted as symbol of "Le Peuple" was not an average worker, but had distinguished himself by his longstanding devotion to the revolutionary cause.

Contrary to first appearances then, Vallès never intended his newspapers to become organs of the working classes alone. He set his prices as low as possible so as to reach a wide public, but recognizing the impossibility of reaching the most deprived.

1. See O.C. VI, p.314.
4. See "Jean Malzieux," Le Réveil, 13 March 1882, O.C. VI, pp.250-54. He also inspires Vallès in "La Commune de Paris" (cf. O.C. XII, p.17) and is mentioned in "L'Insurgé" (O.C. III, p.317).
5. See "Aux Lecteurs," Le Cri du Peuple, 13 Jan. 1884, where he explains his motives in reducing the price of the paper from ten to five centimes.
members of society, admitted that he would appeal mainly to those who, like himself, sympathised with their plight. He was "journaliste du peuple" in the broadest sense of the term. Yet broad though his concept was, it was with great pride that he claimed the right for himself and other "bourgeois" to be described by this term. Under no circumstances can we accept Brunetière's claim: "... peu de gens ont eu le mépris du peuple au même degré que ce déclassé."^2

As for the suggestion that Vallès simply sought to make a name for himself in espousing the socialist cause, this too is easily disproved. Although he never dissociated himself from politics and played an active part in the Commune, he showed no great thirst for political office. On the contrary when he agreed to stand for election against Jules Simon in 1869 he knew that he was bound to suffer defeat but agreed nonetheless so as to have the opportunity to voice his belief that Simon was not truly the ally of ordinary people. In "L'Insurgé" Vingtras resigns his office as commander of a battalion of the National Guard, claiming that he prefers being on the same level as everyone else (though there is the suggestion that his unpopularity also prompted this action).^3 Finally, in 1881, when asked again to stand for election to the Chamber, Vallès declined the invitation.^4 He remained an "irrégulier", better suited to the rôle of freelance "sniper" than that of statesman or politician.

Nonetheless he was a political figure and as such was liable

1. See his comments in discussing the price of "La Rue" (20 centimes): "... c'est cher pour les pauvres ... mais en attendant que nous abaissions le prix ... nous pourrons agir sur ceux qui les aiment, ces pauvres; sur ces jeunes hommes qui tiennent au peuple par leur origine, à la bourgeoisie par leur éducation et qui forment notre vrai public". ("La Rue. Le seizième numéro," La Rue, 14 Sept. 1867).
3. See O.C. III, Ch. XX, Démissionnaire, pp.201-5.
to be the object of malicious rumours, the butt of empty criticisms. The fact that Blanpain and Brunetièrè were reduced to attacking his motives suggests that they could not fault his actions. In fact their claims are as impossible to prove as to disprove. We must judge for ourselves. Vallès may occasionally have contradicted himself over details, but the central themes of freedom, justice and equality recur throughout his work with almost monotonous consistency and frequency. The personality we perceive in his writing may be temperamental and changeable, yet he is always ruthlessly frank, never devious or two-faced. Though one might question both his literary and his political judgements, it seems to me that the one thing one cannot honestly doubt is the passionate sincerity of his political beliefs.
CONCLUSION

In conclusion we shall evaluate how far the image we have of Vallès' work corresponds to that which we would anticipate from our knowledge of his attitudes to literature.

We have discussed how both in descriptive articles such as those of "Les Réfractaires" and "La Rue à Londres", and also in the trilogy he proved his qualities as a realist, though his was realism tinged with romanticism. We have seen how his most successful work, the trilogy, was a presentation of personal memoirs, as he had recommended, though it is doubtful whether, at the time when he made this recommendation, he fully appreciated how well this format would suit his own talents and weaknesses. His declared preference for journalism and also his faith in the novel are reflected in his literary production, though he was not able to exploit the potential he saw in the popular theatre. It is also clear that in accordance with his declared priorities he was less concerned to fulfil accepted literary conventions and cultivate a literary style than he was to express his ideas forcefully and clearly, but ironically it is as a stylist that he has often been praised. Similarly although he diminishes the importance of the imagination, it is his imaginative style and vision which make the trilogy so lively and fascinating.

In fact in several respects his achievement differs significantly from his intentions, though the relationship between the two is never straightforward, as he never confronted and evaluated potentially contradictory statements. (He called for simple natural language and for genuine expression of the individual's personality, without conceiving of the possibility that these might prove incompatible!) On the one hand he declared his admiration for Courbet as symbol of independent self-fulfillment, inveighed against the stifling of genius by majority tyranny and deplored commercial literature, yet on the other hand he
stressed the importance of catering to the public's needs. One might assume that this was a distinction he made between journalism and less transient forms of literature, but this is never clearly stated. In the first instance he was independent rebel, in the second, a journalist seeking popularity. Henri Feller demonstrates the importance of sensational news items and melodramatic popular "feuilletons" in Vallès' and Séverine's "Le Cri du Peuple", attributing the popularity of the paper to the combination of light-hearted amusement and serious social and political commentary which it provided.\(^1\) Vallès had recognized the importance of providing both amusement and instruction, as we see in the trilogy. However, he himself was not at his best when consciously catering to popular taste. In his introduction to "La Dompteuse" in "Le Citoyen de Paris" in 1881 he expressed his sympathy for the working man who simply sought light relief in his reading and declared:

"Il y a quelqu'un qui a plus d'esprit que les états-majors de la littérature, de la politique et du reste, c'est 'tout le monde'. ... Si les lecteurs à un sou ne lisent qu'à condition que le roman soit machiné, eh bien! il faut machiner le roman ..."\(^2\)

But the result of this was a severe degeneration in the quality of his work. Ironically "La Dompteuse" was not popular! Though the strong social criticisms of the "feuilleton" demonstrate that Vallès did not betray his political priorities, he had departed significantly from his ideal of self-fulfillment. In fact, despite his insistence on the importance of being in contact with the reading public, and aware of their needs and responses, it was in isolation in England that he produced his greatest work, the trilogy. Our comparisons between "La Commune de Paris" and "L'Insurgé" reveal the benefits of Vallès' 

increased detachment from the events he described, and though he grumbled incessantly about the torments of writing in a vacuum, he was evidently partly aware of these benefits. In his letter to Hector Malot, 24 June 1875, he wrote:

"J'ai bien fait d'être paresseux jusqu'à présent, si je puis écrire ce livre maintenant comme je le sens. Je n'eusse pas dû l'écrire avant. Trop de passion ou trop d'art. J'ai la note saine aujourd'hui."^2

Despite himself he came to appreciate the tranquillity of exile, and as we saw, he anticipated that he would have difficulty in completing the trilogy once he returned to France. In 1882 recalling his disagreement with André Gill over the conclusion of "Le Testament d'un Blagueur", he looked back appreciatively on the freedom he had enjoyed in exile, freedom to write as he wished and to discover the literary form which allowed him to express himself most fully and naturally.3 Ironically in 1882 in "Journal d'Arthur Vingtras" we find Vallès who had always thrived in the bustle of the city and decried the monotony of the provinces, praising the value of a period away from Paris from time to time in order to achieve "la distance nécessaire pour voir juste".4 His years in exile had in fact proved to be the most productive period of his career as far as his literary (as opposed to journalistic) output was concerned, for he wrote "La Commune de Paris", the greater part of the trilogy, "Le Candidat des Pauvres", "Les Blouses" and also his first drafts for "La Dompteuse" (quite apart from his newspaper articles in "L'Evénement" which were to form the basis of "La Rue à Londres"). Flaubert, the Goncourts and Zola all held that a writer cannot be both actor and spectator and that he must be removed from the

1. He is referring to his plan to write a novel based on his own memoirs, as outlined in the preceding letter to Malot, O.C. IX, pp.59-64.
2. O.C. IX, p.67. See also Vingtras' comments on his attempts to write a novel, O.C. III, p.66.
events he describes. On 17 May 1857 the Concourt noted in their
diary:

"On ne conçoit que dans le silence et comme dans le
sommeil et le repos de l'activité morale. Les émotions
sont contraires à la gestation des œuvres. Ceux qui
imaginent ne doivent pas vivre."1

As we have seen, Vallès disputed this, stressing the need for
emotions and stimulation, yet this is disproved by his own work.
He suggests that his journalism benefited from the excitement
of newspaper offices and the rush to meet deadlines,2 but though
many of his articles written in such conditions are inspired by
a passionate "élan", the less political articles of his years in
London have compensating virtues - mellowness, reflection and
humour,3 and, like the trilogy, are of greater general interest.

In several respects the success of the trilogy is a happy
accident. Not only would it perhaps never have been written
but for Vallès' exile, but also the work as it was finally
realized was quite different from what Vallès had originally
envisaged. He had often spoken of his plan to present an
impersonal historical work covering the period from 1848
onwards, but partly because of political circumstances, partly
because of his natural inclination to write in the first person,
this was finally realized in the form of the trilogy. At the
time Vallès deeply resented having to play down the political
aspect of his work,4 but this has no doubt contributed to its
long-term durability, as criticisms were veiled by irony and
greater play was given to Vallès' sense of humour.

It is ironic too that whereas Vallès claimed that his
aspirations were social and political not literary, as we have
seen,5 he has often been acclaimed primarily as stylist and

1. See entry in their Journal, 17 May 1857.
3. See particularly his series "La Rue à Londres" and "Notes
d'un absent."
5. See above p.232.
literary figure. In 1896 Antoine Albalat refused to accept
that he was sincere in his attitude to Homer and others and
asserted, "Puisqu'il n'y a en lui qu'un écrivain, examinons
donc l'écrivain". His achievement was as a writer alone:

"Il a méprisé l'art, et c'est l'art qui le fait valoir.
Il n'est quelqu'un que par la littérature qu'il a
dédaignée."\(^1\)

Bourget too comments on this "supreme contradiction".\(^2\) Even
Gille, and one could not be more sympathetic to Vallès than he
is, declares:

"... la gloire vallésienne réside dans les qualités
originales de l'écrivain, et non pas dans l'activité
discutable du politicien",\(^3\)

and "... c'est l'écrivain, plutôt que le Révolté, qui
durera dans la mémoire des hommes ..."\(^4\)

Albalat's study and the theses of Christiane Delforge and Jacques
Dubois, as also the linguistic analyses of Bozil Nikolov, con­
firm that one of the main subjects of interest in research on
Vallès has been his style and language. However, the "Vallès
revival" has been closely related to research into the Commune,\(^5\)
and celebration of its hundredth anniversary. Support for the
concept of "littérature engagée" in the forties also stimulated
this revival. Moreover it is left-wing critics and writers who
are responsible for his newly acquired popularity.\(^6\) In 1950 it
was the left-wing "Editeurs Français Réunis" who began to publish
his complete works for the first time. Thus it is undeniable that
the political significance of his writing has been an important
factor in this revival. The literary and political aspects of

1. A. Albalat, L'art d'écrire. Ouvriers et procédés, Paris,
G. Havard fils, 1896, pp.214 and 228.
3. G. Gille, op. cit., Préface, p.XVIII.
5. See H. le Gall, op. cit., p.35 ff.
6. It is to be noted that the trilogy was translated into
Russian in the 1930's (cf. G. Gille, op. cit. II Sources, bibli­
ographie, iconographie, pp.20-21), whereas it was not until 1971
that Sandy Petrey's translation "The Insurrectionist" was pub­
lished by Prentice-Hall, Inc.
his writing are not easily separable, for his political revolt is the source of his literary inspiration, and this revolt is manifest both in style and content. It is true that his reputation lives on through his writing, rather than his being remembered as a political figure, for he was only one of many Communards. Also it is inevitable that there is greater interest in the trilogy today than in his journalism. However, the spirit of rebellion is essential to his success as a writer, and many have been inspired by his political attitudes as was evident in Paris, May 1968.

As to whether his writing has reached the public he had in mind, this is a more complex issue. When he spoke of appealing to "le peuple" rather than a literary elite, he was obviously thinking in terms of a broad cross-section of the public.  

"La Rue" of 1867-68 may not have had this wide appeal, for Vallès was still very much a product of the Latin Quarter, and wrote a great deal about the University and artistic and academic matters, but "Le Cri du Peuple" appears to have become a truly popular paper, the socialist equivalent of Millaud's "Petit Journal". However, Vallès' other works, his play, "feuilletons" and novels have not the same popular appeal. His heroes, Jean, Maurice, Pierre, Ernest and Jacques are all educated members of the middle classes. It is not without justification that Victor Brombert includes a chapter on Vallès in his book "The Intellectual Hero", for Brombert's comments apply equally to Vallès and the heroes of his works. An idle and futile student life, attendance at famous lectures, political debate and conspiracy, duels, meetings with important newspaper editors, these features of Vallès' life, portrayed in the trilogy, are far removed from the experiences of the simple working family man, and are subjects liable to be

of little interest to him. Moreover, Vallès neglected his feminine public. It is a narrow life he describes, centring generally on experiences which were to influence his political attitudes. There are few women in Vingtras' life apart from his mother. Also Vallès' essentially autobiographical "feuilletons", those of the trilogy, "Le Candidat des Pauvres" and "Souvenirs d'un Etudiant pauvre" do not include the measure of action and excitement one generally found in a popular "feuilleton". Tony Revillon wrote of "Le Candidat des Pauvres":

"Votre roman n'est pas, en effet, un de ces romans où l'on se jette à l'eau à la fin du feuilleton, pour être repêché au début du feuilleton suivant, et il plaira plus aux lettrés qu'aux concérges ..."¹

This is true of each of these "feuilletons" (but as we have seen, Vallès was unsuccessful in the more popular genre). In the trilogy, his many references to journalists and political figures and his cultural allusions are liable to perplex the less educated reader. Even though he uses simple sentence structures and imagery, and familiar vocabulary, the very unusualness of his disjointed narrative may be disconcerting. As Thibaudet comments,

"Vallès, si justement admiré des lettrés, et l'un des créateurs littéraires les plus originaux de son temps, était justement trop original pour former à son image et sous son influence une grande classe de lecteurs moyens".²

Ironically, although Vallès was happy to alienate the literary establishment and sought to reach a mass reading public, the very originality with which he defied the establishment has ultimately won the respect of many of its members, whilst discouraging those he hoped to attract. Unwittingly, it seems, Gille, who was so familiar with Vallès' intentions, assesses his achievement in terms which would have made him shudder:

"... il jouit d'un prestige incontesté auprès d'une élite

¹. See G. Delfau, op. cit., p.301.
However, as this second quotation anticipates, since Gaston Gille's thesis in 1941, interest in Vallès has snowballed. His works may not be the most popular reading matter of the French working classes, for this is an unrealistic expectation, particularly for a writer intent on exploring serious political themes, but recently there has been an escalation in new editions of his work. The "Oeuvres complètes" published by Les Editeurs Français Réunis have been followed by the Livre Club Diderot and, more recently the Bibliothèque de la Pléiade editions. The trilogy is also available in a variety of paperbacks (Livre de Poche, Garnier-Flammarion and Collection Folio) and so one can assume that Vallès has achieved a fair degree of popularity. But, if students and academics still constitute an elite today (and they surely do), then there is no doubt still some truth in Gille's comments.

2. As yet only the first volume of the Pléiade edition has been published.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Full details of the manuscripts of Vallès' works, published and unpublished, and of his letters and notebooks are to be found in Catalogue Andrieux de la Vente Séverine, 17 May 1934, and in Gaston Gille's work Jules Vallès, sources, bibliographie, iconographie, Paris, Flammarion, 1941, 191p.

Further information may be obtained from Lucien Scheler who has now reassembled most of the documents sold and dispersed in May 1934 in his own private collection.

Main works published in Vallès' lifetime:

(Where these appeared under a pseudonym, this is given in capital letters.)


(reproduced in O.C. VIII).


1879 Mémoires d'un Révolté (early version of "Le Bachelier") signed JEAN LA RUE, serialized in La Révolution française, 13 Jan. - 13 May.

1875 Jacques Vingtras by JEAN LA RUE, Paris, Charpentier, 396p..

1879 Le Candidat des Pauvres signed JEAN LA RUE, serialized in Le Journal
À un sou, 7 Dec. 1879 - 12 Feb. 1880 (reproduced in O.C. XIV).

1880 Les Blouses serialized in La Justice, 21 June - 28 July (reproduced
in O.C. VIII).

1881 L'Enfant, Paris, Charpentier, 396p..

1881 La Doppteuse serialized in Le Citoyen de Paris, 13 Feb. - 13 May
(reproduced in LCD IV, pp.322-529).

1881 Le Bachelier, Paris, Charpentier, 434p..

1882 L'Insurgé serialized in La Nouvelle Revue, 1 Aug. - 15 Sept. (and,
after some alteration, again in Le Cri du Peuple, 1883-4).

1884 Souvenirs d'un Etudiant pauvre serialized in Le Cri du Peuple, 8 Jan. -
5 March (reproduced in O.C. XIV).

1884 La Rue À Londres, Paris, Charpentier (reproduced O.C.V).


1884 Les Grandes Jours de l'Année Terrible, single issue of "feuilleton" in
Le Cri du Peuple, 12 March.

Important posthumous publications:

1896 L'Insurgé (prepared for publication by Séverine), Paris, Charpentier,
376p. (reproduced O.C. III).


Since 1950 the various editions of Vallès' "Oeuvres complètes" (mentioned
above pp.3-4) have not only made many of Vallès' newspaper articles (see below)
readily accessible to the general public, but also manuscripts and collections
of letters previously unpublished. The most significant new contributions are
as follows:

1950 Le Progrès, Correspondance avec Arthur Arnould, 1852-1899, preface

1955 Le Bachelier augmented with sections from the manuscripts omitted in the 1881 edition, notes by I. Scheler, preface by F. Jourdain (O.C. II).

1968 Correspondance avec Hector Malot, preface and notes by M.C. Bancquart (O.C. IX).

1969 Excellent selection of letters, prefaces, essays and poems published in LCD IV, pp. 1377-1578.


1972 Séverine Correspondance, preface and notes by L. Scheler (O.C. XV).

Other correspondence not incorporated in any edition of the "Oeuvres complètes" but published in earlier newspapers and reviews:

- Three letters to an unnamed addressee reproduced by Henri de Villemessant in L'Autoportrait, Paris, 1871-2, pp. 34, 86 and 166.


- Letters to Aurélien Scholl in L'Echo de Paris, 18 - 26 Feb. 1885 (introduced by Scholl).


This also contains newspaper articles previously untraced (see below pp. 302-3).
Gaston Gille (1941) sets out details of Vallès' journalism in full, but I too shall list his articles, since Gille makes several errors in dating. Also since 1941 many of Vallès' articles have been included in new editions of his works, and so it is useful to indicate to the reader those which may now be consulted in volume-form. Furthermore, while recognizing that some of Vallès' articles are so diffuse that they cannot be summarized in a few words, I feel that Gille's notes on subject matter are sometimes grossly misleading and in need of correction. Also it may be helpful for the reader to have some indication of the subject of many articles of which Gille gives no description (although this is clearly unnecessary when reference may be made to the location of the article in Vallès' complete works).

My notes are not comprehensive. In particular I have not explored in detail the relationship between Vallès' articles in "L'Événement" 1876-77, which form the basis of "La Rue à Londres", and the final text of this work. Also, although I have indicated that many of Vallès' articles in "Le Cri du Peuple" in the 1880s are simply modified versions of earlier articles, I am aware that there is more room for research in this area. This, however, will no doubt have been undertaken by Roger Bellet in preparation for the second volume of the Pléiade edition of Vallès' works and for his thesis "Jules Vallès journaliste (1857-1885)" which is to be published shortly. In my bibliography, as in Gille's, several articles in "Le Cri du Peuple" are marked as repeats of articles published previously in "Le Matin" and "Le Matin français", but many more, though presented under new titles, treat the same subjects again and in familiar terms. Preferring to err on the side of caution rather than risking the presentation of inaccurate information, where I have not undertaken a detailed comparison of the articles in question, I have not marked them as repeats.

Finally Gille was unable to trace several articles from Vallès'
period in exile which Gérard Delfau has since unearthed, and of which I shall give details.

N.B. Where the abbreviation cf. precedes a page reference indicating the location of an article in a volume of Vallès' works, this indicates that the article is not reproduced exactly, but forms the basis of the text, as in the case of newspaper articles adapted to form "Les Réfractaires" and "La Rue". (This abbreviation will not be used when an extract is reproduced, for this is generally acknowledged)

1857


1858

*La Chronique parisienne* (handwritten review): Five chatty and rather superficial articles without titles and signed MAX, one in each of the five and only numbers of the paper. The first two numbers are undated, but the following three appeared on 5, 14 and 21 March. Although Henri Rochefort was named as "directeur-propriétaire" of the paper, Vallès appears to have been the sole author of its entire contents.

*Le Figaro*: Five witty articles under the rubric "Figaro à la Bourse" on 4, 11, 18 and 25 April, and 13 May (selected articles in Pléiade I, pp.118-125).

1860

*Le Temps*: 15 July - "Le Quartier latin"
15 Aug. - "Le Quartier latin"

*Le Figaro*: 1 Nov. - "Le dimanche d'un jeune homme pauvre ou le septième jour d'un condamné" (cf. O.C. VII, pp.163-182)

1861

*Le Figaro*: 14 July - "Les Réfractaires" (cf. O.C. VII, pp.22-42)
3 Nov. - "Les Morts" (cf. O.C. VII, pp.95-103)
302

Le Figaro: 7 Nov. - "Lettre de Junius" signed LA CASAQUE BLANCHE. (This is one in a series of five "Lettres de Junius" published by Henri de Villemessant in "Le Figaro" between Nov. 1861 and Jan. 1862, and sent to him apparently anonymously by five regular contributors to his paper, Vellès, Barbey d'Aurevilly, Alphonse Duchêne, Charles Monselet and Aurélien Scholl, all concealing their identity beneath different coloured cassocks.) (Pléiade I, pp.129-135)

Le Boulevard: 26 Jan. - "L'Habit vert" (poem later included in "Les Réfractaires", O.C. VII, pp. 246-9)


1863


1864

Le Progrès de Lyon: Series of literary reviews under the rubric "Variétés", most of which are reproduced in Pléiade I, pp.323-501. (Note the titles of individual articles, which differ occasionally from those given by Gille.)

14 Feb. - "Les Romans nouveaux"
28 Feb. - " "
14 March - " "
30 March - " "
19 April - " " (Note confusion over dating of this article in Gille's bibliography p.25, in O.C. XI, p.81 and in LCD IV, p.547.)
13 May - "Les Romans nouveaux".


Le Progrès de Lyon: 18 Aug. - "Les Romans nouveaux" (Gille gives 13 Aug., but this is the date given at the bottom of the article rather than the date of the number of the paper in which it appears.)

23 Aug. - "Les Livres nouveaux"
6 Sept.- " "
12 Sept.- " "
19 Sept.- " "
26 Sept.- " "


Le Progrès de Lyon: 3 Oct. - "Les Livres nouveaux"
10 Oct. - " "
17 Oct. - " "
24 Oct. - "Les Poètes nouveaux"
Le Progrès de Lyon : 31 Oct. - "Les Poètes nouveaux"

Le Figaro : 13 Nov. - "Tournoi du Figaro" - a letter to Alphonse Duchêne.

Le Progrès de Lyon : 14 Nov. - "Les Droits de la Pensée"
21 Nov. - "Les Livres nouveaux"
29 Nov. - " "
6 Dec. - " "
12 Dec. - " "
19 Dec. - " "
28 Dec. - " "

1865

Le Progrès de Lyon : 3 Jan. - "Les Livres nouveaux"
16 Jan. - " "

26 Jan. - Note on a lecture on the theatre by Francisque Sarcey, signed J.V..

Le Progrès de Lyon : 30 Jan. - "Les Livres nouveaux"

La Presse : 6 Feb. - Note signed J.V., praising Asseline's lecture on the contemporary novel and popular literature.

Le Courrier du Dimanche :
12 Feb. - "Les Cours libres" (Pléiade I, pp.501-5)
19 Feb. - " " (Pléiade I, pp.505-10)

Le Figaro : 13 April - "Les Irréguliers de Paris" - entire issue of the paper written by Vallès, apart from advertisements (cf. O.C. VII, pp.43-92).

L'Époque : 14 April - "Courrier de Paris" - introductory statement of intentions, & views on restrictions of freedom (cf. O.C. X, pp.257ff and 269-78)
21 April - "Courrier de Paris" (Pléiade I, pp.513-20)
28 April - "Courrier de Paris" (cf. O.C. X, pp.129-40)
6 May - "A travers champs" (cf. O.C. X, pp.93-8)

Le Figaro : 7 May - "Lignes oubliées"

L'Époque : 12 May - "Courrier de l'Hôtel-Dieu" (cf. O.C. X, pp.89-93)
19 May - "Courrier de Paris" (cf. O.C. X, pp.362-71)
26 May - "Causerie. Les Dompteurs" (cf. O.C. X, pp.212-20)
1 June - "Lettre d'un mourant qui a la douleur extrême de laisser inédites treize œuvres variées qui rendraient de 21 à 22 volumes".
8 June - "Causerie. A propos de Proudhon" (cf. O.C. X, pp.273-89)
16 June - "Causerie"
22 June - "Causerie" (cf. O.C. X, pp.177-89)
29 June - "Causerie. Monsieur Prudhomme et Maitre Pet-de-Loup" (LCD IV, pp.843-51)
6 July - "Causerie" (cf. O.C. X, pp.257-68)
L'Epoque : 13 July - "Causerie. Un excentrique déterré" (Pléiade I, pp.520-527)
19 July - "Causerie" (cf. O.C. X, pp.337-346)

Le Figaro : 20 July - "La Banque et les Banquistes I" (Pléiade I, pp.527-538)

L'Epoque : 27 July - "Causerie" (cf. O.C. X, pp.223-232)
 2 Aug. - " (cf. O.C. X, pp.233-238)
 9 Aug. - " (cf. O.C. X, pp.239-252)

Le Figaro : 17 Aug. - "La Banque et les Banquistes II" (cf. O.C. X, pp.141-152)

23 Aug. - " - contrasts between the French and English.
30 Aug. - " - English life, poverty, crime and the police.
6 Sept. - " - horse-racing, betting and English despair and resignation.
13 Sept. - " - visits to "The Times" and the assizes.


L'Epoque : 20 Sept. - "Causerie" (cf. O.C. X, pp.190-98)
28 Sept. - " - from London, the Fenians, liberty and revolt etc.


19 Oct. - " - Anthony de Menou and Cressot.
25 Oct. - " (Pléiade I, pp.559-66)
5 Nov. - " - aspects of English life.

Le Figaro : 2 Nov. - "Les Chancons des Rues et des Bois" (O.C. XI, pp.182-92)

L'Événement : 13 Nov. - "La Rue" (O.C. XI, pp.193-98)
16 Nov. - "Tom Sayers" (cf. O.C. X, pp.199-202)
22 Nov. - "Les Passeurs" (Pléiade I, pp.579-82)

Le Figaro : 23 Nov. - "La Caricature" (O.C. XI, pp.199-203)

L'Événement : 27 Nov. - "La Rue" (cf. O.C. X, pp.25-31)
 2 Dec. - " (cf. O.C. X, pp.32-6)
 6 Dec. - " (cf. O.C. X, pp.69-76)
11 Dec. - "Les Environ du Luxembourg" (cf. O.C. X, pp.46-51)

Le Figaro : 14 Dec. - "La Mort sans phrases" (O.C. XI, pp.209-216)

L'Événement : 14 Dec. - "La Rue. L'Homme orange" (cf. O.C. X, pp.52-6)
19 Dec. - "Le Lion du Jour" (Pléiade I, pp.594-8)

L'Epoque : 25 Dec. - "Variétés. La Sainte-Bible"

1866


Le Figaro : 7 Jan.  "Le plus beau jour de l'année"


Le Figaro : 21 Jan.  "Timothée Trimm et Thérésa" (Pléiade I, pp.603-10)

L'Événement : 23 Jan.  "La Rue" (cf. O.C. X, pp.57-63)


5 Feb.  "Les Exercices du Corps"


8 Feb.  "Paris" (cf. O.C. X, pp.372-5)


(N.B. Gille notes that the article of 8th Feb. is about Bonvin, but this is treated on the 9th, and "Le condamné à mort" on the 8th.)


12 Feb.  " (Pléiade I, pp.610-14)


15 Feb.  "Paris. La Mère Hasard" - recollections of meeting with one of Napoleon's canteen-keepers.


21 Feb.  "L'Enseigne"


23 Feb.  " (O.C. XI, pp.236-8)

24 Feb.  " (O.C. XI, pp.239-44)

25 Feb.  " - dispute amongst staff of "La Presse".

26 Feb.  " (O.C. XI, pp.245-51)

27 Feb.  " - Léon Gozlan and "Aristide Froissart".


1 March - "Paris. Le Tirage au sort" (cf. O.C. X, pp.107-111)

2 March - "Paris. La Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève"

3 March - "Paris" - Emile de Girardin and "La Liberté".

4 March - " - assessment of articles in series so far.

5 March - " (cf. O.C. X, pp.121-26)

6 March - " - "la Société des Gens de Lettres".

8 March - " - criticisms of Amédée Holland's play "Les Chanteurs Ambulants".

9 March - "Paris" (cf. O.C. X, pp.99-110)

10 March - " (O.C. XI, pp.252-58)

11 March - " (O.C. XI, pp.259-65)

12 March - " - news items.

13 March - " - readers' vote on the future of his articles.

14 March - " (Pléiade I, pp.628-32)

15 March - " - Thérésa, Pèris and "café-concert".

16 March - "Au hasard. A une provinciale" - reply to comments on his rôle in the paper.
17 March - "Paris" (cf. O.C. X, pp.331-36)

17 March - "Les Livres" - about Louis Ulbach.

18 March - "Au hasard. L'homme aux fraises" - publicity for Feval's story about "le père Gerbet".

20 March - "Paris" - Easter eggs.

21 March - "Au hasard" - readers' letters, and comments on unpublished verse by Ponsard (not Ronsard, as noted by Gille).

22 March - "Paris" - about Al. Glais-Bizoin's play "Le Vrai Courage".

22 March - "Les Livres" - "Un assassin" by Jules Claretie.

23 March - "Au hasard" - about Amédée Achard.

23 March - "Paris" - "Académiciens".

25 March - "Au hasard" - "le rameau béné".

26 March - "Courrier de la Semaine" (Pléiade I, pp.632-7)

27 March - "Paris" (O.C. XI, pp.266-71)

28 March - "Au hasard" - Sainte-Barbe college.

28 March - "Les Livres" - Balzac.

1 April - Letter of resignation addressed to director Charles Muller, dated 31 March (Pléiade I, p.1466).

7 April - "Les Ciseliers" (N.B. Gille also attributes to Vallès "Hier, aujourd'hui, demain" of 16 April, and "Paris, au jour le jour" of 20 May, but I can find no justification for this. The former is signed Georges Maillard. The latter is unsigned and is a detailed, factual article, uncharacteristic of Vallès, in which, moreover, he himself is referred to impersonally.)

12 April - "Monographie du Cochon" (Pléiade I, pp.637-40)

20 May - "L'art populaire" (O.C. XI, pp.272-9)

3 June - "Le Salon I" (Pléiade I, pp.285-90)

17 June - "Le Salon II" (Pléiade I, pp.290-94)

1 July - "Les Statues" (O.C. XI, pp.280-82)

15 July - "La Gloire" (Pléiade I, pp.896-7)


26 Aug. - "Moeurs et portraits littéraires" (O.C. XI, pp.290-296)

9 Sept. - "Théâtres" - "Le Nouveau Cid" by M. de Chilly.

10 Oct. - Letter to M. le Marquis du Hallay on subject of dispute between A.Arnould and C.Duvernois, signed by Borde, Ranc, Junca and Vallès.

Le Figaro:  16 Nov. - "Lettres de province: au fond d'une mine"  
           (Pléiade I, pp.907-II)  
17 Nov. - ibid. (Pléiade I, pp.911-16)  

1867  

Le Nain jaune:  
14 Feb. - "Hier-Demain" - letter to Grégory Ganesco, director  
of the paper (Pléiade I, pp.916-20)  
24 Feb. - "Michel-Ange, Covielle et Rigolo" - letter to Covielle,  
in reality Albert Rogat, editor of "Le Nord" (Pléiade  
pp.920-23)  
7 March - "Le Châtiment" (Pléiade I, pp.924-9)  
14 March - "Une Nuit blanche" (Pléiade I, pp.930-36)  

La Rue - Paris pittoresque et populaire.  
Weekly paper; small format; price: 20 centimes.  
Director - Daniel Lévy.  
Editor - Jules Vallès.  
1 June - "La Rue" (Pléiade I, pp.936-9)  
8 June - "Notre premier numéro" (Pléiade I, pp.939-42)  
           - "Le Quartier latin"  
15 June - "Hazas" (O.C. VI, pp.436-42)  
22 June - "Les Duellistes"  
29 June - "Hermani" (O.C. XI, pp.297-303)  
6 July - Brief note about trouble caused by A. Arnould's article  
           "Peuver Garçon" in previous number.  
13 July - "A propos de M. Sainte-Beuve" (O.C. XI, pp.304-10)  
27 July - Note on article planned on "le Congrès international  
           des Batignolles" which he was not allowed to write.  
3 Aug. - ""La Rue! se vend de nouveau sur la voie publique" - 
           encouragement to readers to take out regular  
           subscription.  
           - Note on Vermorel's reaction to charges brought against  
           him by Granier de Cassagnac.  
17 Aug. - "Le Concours des Beaux-Arts" (O.C. XI, pp.311-15)  

La Situation:  
20 Aug. - "Notes de voyage. Trois heures en ballon. Un jour à  
           Provins" (Pléiade I, pp.957-63)  
24 Aug. - ibid. (Pléiade I, pp.963-70)  

La Rue:  
24 Aug. - "La Rue" - announcement of new premises and new  
           director, M. Mercier.  
31 Aug. - "Assez!..." (O.C. XI, pp.316-21) N.B. Draws on sections  
           of article in "Le Courrier Français", 20 May 1866.  

La Situation:  

La Rue:  
7 Sept. - "Charles Baudelaire" - repeat.  
14 Sept. - "La Rue. Le seizième numéro" - the paper's aims and  
           achievements.  
21 Sept. - "Les Criminels"  

La Situation:  
22 Sept. - "Chronique parisienne. A Antoine Grenier, directeur"  
           (Pléiade I, pp.976-80)
La Rue : 23 Sept. - "Causerie" - admiration for Ferdinand de Lesseps and Suez project.

La Situation : 29 Sept. - "Chronique parisienne" (Pléiade I, pp.891-5)

La Rue : 5 Oct. - "Chers Parents" (Pléiade I, pp.985-8)


La Rue : 12 Oct. - Note encouraging contributions to the paper.
- "Antony" - the dangers of adultery.

La Situation: 13 Oct. - "Chronique parisienne" - memories of the Latin Quarter and student restaurants.

La Rue : 19 Oct. - "Les mineurs de Saint-Etienne" (Pléiade I, pp.998-91)


La Rue: 26 Oct. - "Rome" (Pléiade I, pp.991-4)

La Situation : 27 Oct. - "Chronique parisienne" (Pléiade I, pp. 994-8)

La Rue : 2 Nov. - "Les Mercenaires" (Pléiade I, pp.998-1000)

N.B. not 3 Nov., as noted by Gille.

La Situation : 3 Nov. - "Chronique parisienne" (Pléiade I, pp.1000-1004)

La Rue : 3 Nov. - "Au Figaro" - condemnation of de Villemessant's publication of Alfred d'Aumay's letter revealing accusations made against the journalist, Sol, in his youth.

La Situation : 10 Nov. - "Chronique parisienne" - biography and career of Concourt brothers.

L'auvergnat: 14 Nov. - "Mon pays" - reproduction of article in "La Situation" on 22 Sept. 1867.

La Rue : 16 Nov. - "Au public" (Pléiade I, pp.1004-7)

La Situation : 17 Nov. - "Chronique parisienne" (Pléiade I, pp.1007-1011)

La Rue : 23 Nov. - "La Tribune" (Pléiade I, pp.1011-13)


La Rue : 30 Nov. - "Cochons vendus" (Pléiade I, pp.1014-17)

La Situation : 1 Dec. - "Chronique parisienne" (Pléiade I, pp.1017-22)

Le Philosophe : 7 Dec. - "Causerie" (Pléiade I, pp.1022-25)

La Rue: 7 Dec. - "Explications" - reasons why paper had not appeared on 30 Nov, when suppressed by authorities, because of Gustave Haroteau's drawing of a man awaiting execution.

La Situation : 8 Dec. - "Chronique parisienne" - Parisian gambling dens.

La Rue : 14 Dec. - "Gulliver" (O.C. XI, pp.331-5)
La Situation : 15 Dec. - "Chronique parisienne" - fire at the Belleville theatre and elsewhere.

La Rue : 21 Dec. - "La Société des Gens de Lettres" (O.C. XI, pp.336-340)


La Rue : 28 Dec. - "Les Étrennes utiles"

1868

La Rue : 4 Jan. - "1867" - discussion of suppression of Vallès' review of year's events. "La Rue" will fight.

II Jan. - "À lire" - paper condemned but will continue to fight.

La Situation : 12 Jan. - "Chronique parisienne" - about Feydeau and Balzac and the place of money in literature.

La Rue : 16 Jan. - last and rare issue of the paper, which was seized on the presses, devoted to Proudhon.

La Situation : 19 Jan. - "Chronique parisienne" - attack on "Société des Gens de Lettres"

26 Jan. - "Chronique parisienne" (Pléiade I, pp.1031-5)

Le Globe : 28 Jan. - "Courrier de Paris" - the fate of the child of the famous prostitute "la Schumacher".

4 Feb. - "Courrier de Paris" - the "Société des Gens de Lettres".

II Feb. - "Courrier de Paris" (Pléiade I, pp.1039-43)


16 May - "Lettres d'un Irrégulier. A Monsieur Henri Rochefort, rédacteur en chef de 'La Lanterne'" (Pléiade I, pp.1049-53)

23 May - "Lettres d'un Irrégulier. A Monsieur Sainte-Beuve, sénateur" (O.C. XI, pp.348-53)

29 May - "Lettre de Jules Vallès" inserted by G. Maillard.

L'Art : 29 May - "Deux mots sur la sculpture" (Pléiade I, pp.1057-61)

Le Figaro : 30 May - "Les Acclamés" (LCD IV, pp.663-7)

7 June - "Lettres d'un Irrégulier. À Ferragus" (O.C. XI, pp.354-60)

L'Art : 11 June - "Pas de récompenses! À M. G. Puissant" - opposition to system of formal recognition of artistic merit via awards.

Le Figaro : 20 June - "Lettre d'un Diffamé" - reply to Alexandre de Stamir who accused Vallès of deceiving public with story of imaginary duel.

Le Courrier de l'Intérieur : 8 Sept. - "Un Chapitre inédit de l'Histoire du deux décembre" (O.C. VI, pp.443-60)
Journal de Sainte-Pélagie, handwritten facsimile, inserted in Henri de Pène's newspaper "Paris".

Editor: Jules Vallès.

26 Dec. - Introductory article by Vallès (Pléiade I, pp.1079-80)
(Although dated 26 Dec., this was inserted in "Paris" on 28 Dec.)

1868

Journal de Sainte-Pélagie:

2 Jan. - Open letter addressed to Jules Favre and Eugène Pelletan (Pléiade I, pp.1080-82)

Le Peuple, single sheet of paper; price: 5 centimes.

Editor: Jules Vallès.

4 Feb. - Editorial (O.C. VI, pp.27-8)
5 Feb. - "Le chien coupable" - Lockroy's dog not allowed to join him in Sainte-Pélagie.
6 Feb. - Note by Vallès on the unexpected success of the paper.
8 Feb. - "Comment un journal se fonde" - the hasty production of "Le Peuple". Most of the article is reproduced in Pléiade I, pp.1721-22.
12 Feb. - "Pompe funèbre" - Vallès does not mourn the death of Admiral Dupetit-Thouars.
16 Feb. - "L'Assassinat du vieux pouilleux"

Le Réfractaire, single sheet of paper; no illustration; price: 10 centimes.

Editor: Jules Vallès.

Administrator: Passendouet.

10 May - "Une profession de foi" - justification for attitude of revolt.
11 May - "La Tribune" - modified version of article in "La Rue", 23 Nov. 1867.
12 May - "Le Peuple au Salon" - modified version of article in "La Rue", 31 Aug. 1867.

Le Corsaire, literary paper; small format; price: 10 centimes.

Managing director: Gustave Richardet.
Editorial secretary: Paul de Trottignon.
Chief editor: Jules Vallès.

N.B. From 13 Nov. onwards, the paper is headed: "Ancienne Rédaction du Peuple et de la Rue".

13 Nov. - Letter from Vallès to Gustave Richardet, together with brief note indicating his desire to make way for the contributions of exiles.
27 Nov. - "" - Both articles are part of a campaign to raise money for exiles wishing to return to France. On 16 October "Le Corsaire" publishes Pyat's letter of thanks for the paper's efforts.

La Parodie: 12 Dec. - "La Belle Césarine ou la Vénus au râble" and "Françoise" - further eccentrics to add to the paper's series "Les Princes du Pavé".
1870

La Marseillaise:
2 Jan. - "Les Étrennes de la République" (Pléiade I, pp.1139-42)
8 Jan. - "Lettres républicaines. Le Terme" (Pléiade I, pp.1143-6)

La Rue - Daily paper; small format; one folded sheet of paper; price: 5 centimes.
Editor: Jules Vallès.
Director: Charles Dacosta.

17 March - "Arthur Arnould, rédacteur de "La Marseillaise"
(Pléiade I, pp.II47-9)
- Editorial note.

18 March - "La petite fille de Belleville" - the mistreatment of an orphan.
19 March - "Chef de famille!" - sentimental tale of young man obliged to leave his two sisters to fend for themselves.

21 March - "Procès de Tours etc. Comment il devint journaliste"
23 March - "Victor Noir. III. Détails inédits et particuliers"
25 March - "Victor Noir. IV"
26 March - "Procès de Tours"
29 March - "Il neige au Creusot" (Pléiade I, pp.II49-50)
30 March - Note from Vallès introducing Jean Plébéiot.

9 and 10 April - "Notre Plébiscite" (Pléiade I, pp.II50-52)
(special number)

12 April - "Fouettez - le!" - attack on Pascal Duprat, who had just resigned from "Le Citoyen". Surprise that he dared appear publicly after his action in 1848.

13 April - "Les Femmes des condamnés" (correction of Gille) - sympathy for families of condemned strikers at Le Creusot.
by Gille

16 April - "La Fosse commune" signed "La Rédaction". Gille does not mention this article, but it is reproduced by Bellet (Pléiade I, pp.II53-4), who argues on sound grounds that Vallès must have participated in its composition.

1871

La Caricature politique:
8 Feb. - "Froudhon" - unsigned front-page article clearly to be attributed to Vallès.

Le Cri du Peuple - Political daily; price: 5 centimes.
Editor: Jules Vallès.

22 Feb. - "Paris vendu" (O.C. VI, pp.29-36)
23 Feb. - "Les Républicains devant les Conseils de guerre" (O.C. VI, pp.37-41)
24 Feb. - "Les Charlatans politiques" (O.C. VI, pp.42-6)
25 Feb. - "Le 24 février" (O.C. VI, pp.47-50)
26 Feb. - "La Passion politique" (O.C. VI, pp.51-4)
27 Feb. - "Le Parlement en blouse" (O.C. VI, pp.55-9)
28 Feb. - "L'Entrée des Frussiens" (O.C. VI, pp.59-62)
1 March - "Quand ils seront là" (O.C. VI, pp.63-5)
4 March - "Bravo Paris" (O.C. VI, pp.66-9)
5 March - "La Paix" (O.C. VI, pp.70-72)
6 March - "La Garde nationale de Paris" (O.C. VI, pp.73-6)
7 March - "Ceignez vos écharpes" (O.C. VI, pp.77-6)
8 March - "La Grève du loyer" (O.C. VI, pp.81-6)
9 March - "Le Drapeau rouge" (O.C. VI, pp.87-90)
10 March - "La Haine en accusation" (O.C. VI, pp.91-5)

Le Drapeau - Political daily; continuation of "Le Cri du Peuple"
19 March - "Le 18 mars 1871" (O.C. VI, pp.96-7) Although omitted in Gille's bibliography, this unsigned declaration is clearly Vallès' work.
- "Un Criminel de Belleville" (O.C. VI, pp.98-102)

Le Cri du Peuple :
21 March - "Au Peuple de Paris" (O.C. VI, pp.103-5)
22 March - "Paris, ville libre" (O.C. VI, pp.106-9)
23 March - "Les Elections" (O.C. VI, pp.111-4)
24 March - "Le 26 mars" (O.C. VI, pp.117-8)
25 March - "Le Scrutin" (O.C. VI, p.119)
30 March - "La Fête" signed "Le Cri du Peuple" (O.C. VI, pp.120-22)
31 March - Note on secrecy of discussions in Assembly (O.C. VI, p.122).
3 April - "Décidez-vous" (O.C. VI, pp.123-5)
6 April - "Il faut choisir" (O.C. VI, pp.126-9)
7 April - "Les Nôtres" (O.C. VI, pp.130-33)
8 April - "Les Hors" (O.C. VI, pp.134-5)
10 April - "Les Elections" (O.C. VI, p.136)
19 April - "Est-ce vrai?" (O.C. VI, pp.139-40)

1872
25 March - "Lettres de l'exil : Londres" signed X.

1874
Articles recently located and attributed to Vallès by G. Delfau, and reinterpreted (retranslated where necessary into French) in his book "Jules Vallès, l'exil à Londres, 1871-1880", pp.251-75.

The Examiner : 7 March - "Quatrevingt-Treize" - in English, signed by Vallès.
(London)

Revue Anglo-Française :
(Brighton) April - "Quatrevingt-Treize par V. Hugo" signed LOUIS COLOMB, French version of same article.

The Coming P- : The articles in this paper are not signed, but Delfau establishes Vallès' authorship on the basis of information culled from his correspondence, and on grounds of style, interests and attitude. Vallès is thought to have written the articles in French and to have had them translated into English by a journalist named Jerrold, son of the better known W.B. Jerrold. The fact that they appear in translation makes it difficult to say definitely whether they are his work or not.

7 Nov. - "The Coming P-
- "The Last Lord Mayor"
- "Poverty Pair" - announcement of forthcoming "feuilleton"
- "The Ninth of November. The Coming P- to the Coming K-"

This number also includes an article on "Newspaper Readers", a humorous series of dictionary definitions under the title "Johnson's (Junior) Dictionary", a sarcastic poem "A Rubens", and three amusing miscellaneous paragraphs filling up odd spaces, which could possibly be Vallès' work too, though Delfau does not attribute them to him on grounds of caution.
The Coming People: (second and last issue of same paper)

21 Nov. - "Two Kings"
- "Mr Henry Irving"
- "Poverty Fair. Chapter the first. A Vagabond" - this first and only installment of the "feuilleton" is characteristic of Vallès, with its description of the shabby and embarrassing clothing of the young bohemian.
- "Our Letter Box" - synthetic correspondence column.

The only items in this number (apart from advertisements) which Delfau does not attribute to Vallès are a short paragraph on the Arminia Case, and a play "Unredeemed Pledges. A very modern idyll" - a skit on the superficiality of love affairs in upper class society.

1876

L'Événement: 27 Aug. - "La Rue à Londres" signed Z (as are all the following articles in this series).

16 Sept. - "La Rue à Londres"
23 Sept. - " "
30 Sept. - " "
7 Oct. - " "
14 Oct. - " "
22 Oct. - " "
28 Oct. - " "
4 Nov. - " "
11 Nov. - " "
18 Nov. - " "
25 Nov. - " "
2 Dec. - " "
10 Dec. - " "
16 Dec. - " "
23 Dec. - " "
31 Dec. - " "

1877

L'Événement: 13 Jan. - "La Rue à Londres"
20 Jan. - " "
27 Jan. - " "

Le Radical: 27 Feb. - "1843" signed JEAN LA RUE, as are following articles in this series.

L'Événement: 3 March - "La Rue à Londres"

Le Radical: 6 March - "Lyon"

L'Événement: 10 March - "La Rue à Londres"

Le Radical: 13 March - Letter from Vallès complaining about alterations made to his articles.

L'Événement: 17 March - "Robert Macaire" - about pantomime of this name, performed in London.
L'Événement:
- 31 March - "Lettre de Londres"
- 10 April - "  
- 15 April - "  
- 23 April - "  
- 1 May - "  

Le Radical:
- 11 May - "Paris à Londres"

L'Événement:
- 13 May - "Lettre de Londres"
- 26 May - "  

N.B. Vallès' thirty articles in "L'Événement" between 27 August 1876 and 26 May 1877 are reproduced, with modifications and additions, in "La Rue à Londres" (O.C. V).

1878

Le Réveil:
- 6 Jan. - "Courbet" signed JEAN LA RUE, as are the following articles in this series (O.C. VI, pp.143-6)

N.B. As Lucien Scheler argues (O.C. VI, p.146 n.I), it is unlikely that the account of Courbet's funeral given in "Le Réveil" on 7th January, under the title "Enterrement de Courbet", was written by Vallès, as Gille assumes, for Vallès was in England at the time.

- 10 Jan. - "Vieux de la Plaine" (O.C. VI, pp.143-52)
- 13 Jan. - "Vive la République" (O.C. VI, pp.153-5)
- 19 Jan. - "Nous acceptons"
- 21 Jan. - "Un oubli" (O.C. VI, pp.157-62)

Two further articles discovered and reproduced by Delfau (op. cit., pp.377-393), retranslated into French:

Slovo:
- March - "La Situation actuelle de l'Angleterre" signed PASCAL.
- April - "Le Mouvement social à Londres" signed PASCAL.

La Marseillaise:
- 17 July - "Les processions républicaines" signed JEAN LA RUE, as are the following articles in this paper (O.C. VI, pp.163-70).

Le Voltaire:
- 21 July - "Courrier de Londres" signed UN REFRATAIRE, as are the following articles in this paper - the English working classes and Lord Beaconsfield.

La Marseillaise:
- 22 July - "Du pain ou la mort"
- 26 July - "Les Mères devant les soldats" (O.C. VI, pp.171-5)

Le Voltaire:
- 1 Aug. - "Notes d'un absent" - suicide of Maurice Joly, who had been condemned by "conseil de guerre" after Commune.
- 8 Aug. - "Notes d'un absent" - recollections of school prize-giving, with references to Prévost-Paradol, Léonidas Requin and Eugène Sue.
- 15 Aug. - "Notes d'un absent" - the poet, and the individual's social responsibility.
- 22 Aug. - "Notes d'un absent" signed UN FRANÇAIS, not UN REFRATAIRE, as noted by Gille - trip to Jersey.
N.B. There is no article by Vallès on 23 August, as suggested by Gille.

Le Voltaire : 30 Aug. – "Notes d'un absent" signed UN REFRACTAIRE once again – the silence of Jersey.

7 Sept. – "Notes d'un absent" – recollections of life as a 'pion'.

(not on 6 Sept., as noted by Gille)

14 Sept. – "Notes d'un absent" – reflections on capitalism, prompted by the sinking of the Princess Alice.

21 Sept. – "Notes d'un absent" – the English postal system.


18 Oct. – "" – Eugène Vermersch (O.C. VI, pp.176-82)

24 Oct. – "" – Babou.

(not 28 Oct., as noted by Gille)

31 Oct. – "" – Georges Cavaillé (extract in O.C. VI, pp.153-4)

7 Nov. – "" – All Saints' Day and the dead.

14 Nov. – "" – the Lord Mayor's parade.

22 Nov. – "" – fourth anniversary of "The Coming P."


N.B. There is no article by Vallès on 31 Dec., as suggested by Gille.

1879

Le Voltaire : 3 Jan. – "Notes d'un absent" – miners' strike.


La Révolution française :
Director and editor: Sigismond Lacroix.
Co-editor: Jules Vallès.

N.B. Gille was not fully aware of Vallès' rôle in the institution and direction of this paper as outlined by Delfau (op. cit., pp.316-8 and 321-2), and does not mention those articles below, which are marked with asterisks, and which Delfau (p.406) attributes on sound grounds to Vallès. Nor was he aware of the two articles in "Le Coup d'œil" listed below.

(not 21 Jan., as noted)

O.C. XI, p.190)

23 Jan. – "Le mot d'un mort" – Varlin (O.C. VI, pp.185-90)

10 Feb. – "au Président de la République" – to Jules Grévy (O.C. VI, pp.191-8)

14 Feb. – "Les responsabilités" *

Le Coup d'œil :
La Révolution française: 18 Feb. — "Mœurs républicaines"*
24 Feb. — "Explications" - letter to A. Callet, explaining the events of the May elections in 1869.
25 Feb. — "Le vrai débat" *


13 March — "La préfecture de police" *
17 March — "Calomnies! Calomnies!" *
25 March — "Le jour de la foule" *
26 March — "Le projet de loi Ferry" *
29 March — "Le vingt-huit mars"*— incorporating extract from his article in "Le Cri du Peuple", 28 March 1871, reproduced in O.C. III, Ch.XXVI, pp.252-3 and O.C. VI, pp.117-118.
30 March — "L'enterrement d'un proscrit" *
2 April — "Paris et Versailles" *
8 April — "Les collets verts" *

La Vie moderne: 25 Oct. — "Lettres de Belgique" signed JACQUES VINCTRAS.

28 Nov. — "Après la Bataille" signed VINCTRAS— freedom prevents revolt.

Le Rue - Weekly paper; larger format than previously; price: 30 centimes.
Editor: JACQUES VINCTRAS.
Editorial secretary: Albert Callet.
29 Nov. — "Lettre d'un fusillé" signed JACQUES VINCTRAS, as are his other articles in this paper. (O.C. VI, pp.199-202)

Le Voltaire: 3 Dec. — "Après la Bataille. Anniversaire - Deux Décembre"

Le Rue: 7 Dec. — "Les Boulevardiers" (O.C. VI, pp.203-10)
14 Dec. — "Elysée Méridian" (C.D. IV, pp.867-73)

1860

La Voltaire: II Jan. — "Notes d'un absent. Devant l'almanach" signed VINCTRAS, as are further articles in this series - longevity, fatalism and naturalness.
4 Feb. — "Notes d'un absent" - Taine.
11 Feb. — "Notes d'un absent. Dickens et Zola" (O.C. XI, pp.391-7)

N.B. Gille also mentions an article in "Le Voltaire illustré", 15 February, on André Gill, but this is rather an article by Gill on Vallès!
Le Voltaire:
22 Feb. - "Notes d'un absent. M. de la Rounat" - about the director of the Odéon.
4 March - "Notes d'un absent. Le Fauteuil de pied de cochon" - Gustave Planche.
12 March - "Notes d'un absent. Le Droit d'asile en Angleterre".
19 March - "Notes d'un absent. A propos de l'article 7".
25 March - "Notes d'un absent" - objections to cutting of his articles, and to repression in general.
13 April - "Notes d'un absent" - the librarian, Henri de Bouvier, and libraries.
29 April - "Notes d'un absent" - Sarah Bernhardt and the "Comédie Française".
4 June - "Les Fêtes de Bruxelles".
19 June - "Les Élections en Belgique".

La Vie moderne:
II Sept. - "De Dieppe à Newhaven".
2 Oct. - "Londres. Les Music-Halls".
9 Oct. - "La Rue. A la fête foraine du XVe arrondissement" signed J. VINGTRAS.
16 Oct. - "Londres. Un coin de Wapping".
6 Nov. - "Notes et Souvenirs" signed J. VINGTRAS - diverse reports, including tribute to Offenbach, comments on trips to U.S.A. by Coquelin and Bernhardt, and life at the Vaugirard town-hall.
27 Nov. - "Notes et Souvenirs" signed J. VINGTRAS - comments on Xavier Aubreyet and Charly; preference for Labiche rather than Molière.

Le Citoyen de Paris:
13 Feb. - "Lettre au directeur du 'Citoyen'" - introduction to first installment of "La Dompteuse".
15 Feb. - "Normaliens. M. J-J. Weiss".
22 Feb. - "L'Éducation des Enfants".
1 March - "La Poésie populaire" (O.C. VI, pp.213-7).
8 March - "La Proposition Raspail" (O.C. VI, pp.218-22).
19 March - "Saisie d'un journal" - reproduction of text of "Le Drapeau", 19 March 1871 (O.C. VI, pp.96-102), when few copies of the paper had escaped seizure by the authorities.
21 March - "Nos poursuites. Réponse à l'assignation" - affirmation of approval of assassination of Emperor of Russia.
22 March - "Gustave Karoteau" (O.C. VI, pp.223-6).
5 April - "Un mot sur Gounod" (LCD IV, pp.873-7).
16 May - "En réponse aux calomniateurs" (O.C. VI, p.227).
5 Aug. - "Le député des fusillés" (O.C. VI, pp.228-30).

Le Réveil:

N.B. Gille notes that the paper has now changed its name to "Le Citoyen français" but this does not take place until 29 August 1881.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Article/Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14 Nov.</td>
<td>&quot;Chronique&quot; - about &quot;lycées&quot; for girls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Nov.</td>
<td>&quot;Proudhon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 Nov.</td>
<td>&quot;Gambetta.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Dec.</td>
<td>&quot;lectures at the Sorbonne and the Collège de France.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Jan.</td>
<td>&quot;Chronique&quot; - variety of topics, including punishment of crime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Jan.</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 Jan.</td>
<td>&quot;Le Tableau de Paris&quot; (O.C. XIII, pp.23-34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Feb.</td>
<td>&quot;Journal d'Arthur Vingtras&quot; - discusses his reputation as &quot;incendiaire&quot; etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Feb.</td>
<td>&quot;Le Tableau de Paris - II. Boulevard Montmartre&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Feb.</td>
<td>&quot;Journal d'Arthur Vingtras&quot; - theatre criticisms; revolt, and his time in Mazas and other prisons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Feb.</td>
<td>&quot;Le Tableau de Paris - III. Boulevard des Italiens&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Feb.</td>
<td>&quot;Auguste Barbier&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 Feb.</td>
<td>&quot;Les Kerangal&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 March</td>
<td>&quot;Le Tableau de Paris - IV. Du Boulevard des Capucines à la Madeleine&quot; (O.C. XIII, pp.51-7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 March</td>
<td>&quot;Chair à Police&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 March</td>
<td>&quot;Journal d'Arthur Vingtras&quot; (O.C. VI, pp.247-3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 March</td>
<td>&quot;Le Tableau de Paris - Sainte-Anna&quot; (O.C. XIII, pp.55-63)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13 March - "Jean Malzieux" (O.C. VI, pp.250-54)

14 March - "Journal d'Arthur Vingtras" - imposters of Vingtras.
16 March - "Le Tableau de Paris - Sainte-Anne II, les Agités" (O.C. XIII, pp.63-8)

20 March - "Il y a onze ans" (O.C. VI, pp.255-7)

21 March - "Journal d'Arthur Vingtras" - schooldays in Paris, the Lycée Bonaparte and Taine.
23 March - "Le Tableau de Paris - Sainte-Anne. Quartier des hommes" (O.C. XIII, pp.68-75)

27 March - "Des mots... Des mots!..." - views on poetry.

28 March - "Journal d'Arthur Vingtras" (O.C. VI, pp.258-64)
30 March - "Le Tableau de Paris - L'Assommoir des chifonniers" (O.C. XIII, pp.76-82)

3 April - "Le supplicié" - punishment of crime; death penalty; need for medical care in some cases.
4 April - "Journal d'Arthur Vingtras" - tales invented about Vallès.
6 April - "Le Tableau de Paris - I. Les Foires" (O.C. XIII, pp.83-6)

10 April - "La Vie de Bohème" - attack on Chabrillart's romanticization.

11 April - "Journal d'Arthur Vingtras" - memories of college, Nantes, Caen etc.
13 April - "Le Tableau de Paris - II. Les Foires" (O.C. XIII, pp.86-90)
18 April - "Journal d'Arthur Vingtras" (O.C. XI, pp.410-13)

19 April - "La Congrégation des Sociétés savantes"

20 April - "Le Tableau de Paris - III. Les Foires" (O.C. XIII, pp.91-8)

24 April - "Giffard et Darwin" (LCD IV, pp.682-4)

25 April - "Journal d'Arthur Vingtras" - various encounters; mentions A. Dumas fils and Courbet.
27 April - "Le Tableau de Paris - IV. Les Foires" (O.C. XIII, pp.93-103)

1 May - "L'Académie" - with particular reference to Pasteur and Renan.

2 May - "Journal d'Arthur Vingtras" - lighthearted account of reception at Salon.
4 May - "Le Tableau de Paris - Le Petit Mazas" (O.C. XIII, pp.104-110)

8 May - "Pst! Pst! ..." - Emile Pouvillon, Léon Cladel and the Academy.

9 May - "Journal d'Arthur Vingtras" - Courbet (O.C. VI, pp. 265-6)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>France Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 May</td>
<td>&quot;La Salonnerie I&quot; - attack on traditional and commercial art.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 May</td>
<td>&quot;Notes et Croquis&quot; - to Emile Blemont, on the rôle of art critics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 May</td>
<td>&quot;Notes et Croquis&quot; (O.C. VI, pp.267-73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 June</td>
<td>&quot;La Salonnerie II&quot; - call for art of contemporary relevance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 June</td>
<td>&quot;Les liens du mariage&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 June</td>
<td>&quot;Le Tableau de Paris&quot; (O.C. XIII, pp.III-I6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 June</td>
<td>&quot;Vieux Jeu&quot; - anti-militarism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 June</td>
<td>&quot;Le Tableau de Paris - Liberté&quot; (O.C. XIII, pp.II6-22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 June</td>
<td>&quot;Notes et Croquis&quot; (O.C. VI, pp.274-6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 June</td>
<td>&quot;Le Tableau de Paris - Egalité&quot; (O.C. XIII, pp.I23-8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 July</td>
<td>&quot;Les Dix&quot; (O.C. XI, pp.414-17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 July</td>
<td>&quot;Le Tableau de Paris - Fraternité&quot; (O.C. XIII, pp.I29-32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 July</td>
<td>&quot;L'Ecreuill du Dés honneur&quot; - one of Vallès' early plays.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 July</td>
<td>&quot;Le Tableau de Paris - La Fête&quot; (O.C. XIII, pp.I33-8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 July</td>
<td>&quot;Michelet&quot; (O.C. XI, pp.418-22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 July</td>
<td>&quot;La Révolution littéraire&quot; (O.C. XI, pp.423-8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 July</td>
<td>&quot;Le Tableau de Paris - Mazas II&quot; (O.C. XIII, pp.I43-6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Aug.</td>
<td>&quot;Ingrats&quot; (O.C. XI, pp.429-36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Aug.</td>
<td>&quot;Au travail&quot; - advice to the young as they start their holidays.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

La France : 1 Sept. - "Le Tableau de Paris - Le Dépôt IV" (O.C. XIII, pp.169-74)

Le Réveil : 4 Sept. - "Notes et croquis" (O.C. VI, pp.277-82)

La France : 8 Sept. - "Le Tableau de Paris - La Roquette I" (O.C. XIII, pp.175-9)

Le Réveil : 11 Sept. - "Courbet"

La France : 15 Sept. - "Le Tableau de Paris - La Roquette II" (O.C. XIII, pp.179-84)

Le Réveil : 19 Sept. - "Le théâtre nouveau : Henri Becque I" (O.C. XI, pp.437-43)

N.B. The following five articles are not mentioned by Gille:

La France : 22 Sept. - "Le Tableau de Paris - Sainte-Pélagie" (O.C. XIII, pp.185-90)
29 Sept. - "Le Tableau de Paris - Une autre prison" (O.C. XIII, pp.191-5)
7 Oct. - "Le Tableau de Paris" (O.C. XIII, pp.196-200)
13 Oct. - "Le Tableau de Paris - La Cour d'Assises" (O.C. XIII, pp.201-6)
20 Oct. - "Les Condamned à mort" (O.C. XIII, pp.207-12)


La France : 27 Oct. - "Le Tableau de Paris" (O.C. XIII, pp.213-7)

Le Réveil : 31 Oct. - "Comédiens" - about an article by Octave Mirbeau.

La France : 3 Nov. - "Le Tableau de Paris - Les Morts" (O.C. XIII, pp.218-22)

Le Réveil : 6 Nov. - "Une thèse en Sorbonne"

La France : 10 Nov. - "Le Tableau de Paris" (O.C. XIII, pp.223-7)

Le Réveil : 13 Nov. - "Polignac" - about young writer who set fire to his home; need for second string to one's bow.

La France : 17 Nov. - "Le Tableau de Paris - Le Faubourg Saint-Antoine I" (O.C. XIII, pp.228-33)

Le Réveil : 21 Nov. - "Le gagne-pain"

La France : 24 Nov. - "Le Tableau de Paris - Le Faubourg Saint-Antoine II" (O.C. XIII, pp.233-8)

Le Réveil : 26 Nov. - "Mon gosse" (LCD IV, pp.762-6)

La France : 1 Dec. - "Le Tableau de Paris - Le Faubourg Saint-Antoine III" (O.C. XIII, pp.238-42)

La France : 8 Dec. - "Le Tableau de Paris - Le Quartier Latin I" (O.C. XIII, pp.243-7)
Le Réveil : 12 Dec. - "Lachaud" - satire on lawyers.
La France : 15 Dec. - "Le Tableau de Paris - Le Quartier Latin II" (O.C. XIII, pp.247-51)
Le Réveil : 18 Dec. - "Les souhaits"
La France : 22 Dec. - "Le Tableau de Paris - Le Quartier Latin III" (O.C. XIII, pp.251-6)
29 Dec. - "Le Tableau de Paris" (O.C. XIII, pp.257-62)

1883
Le Réveil : 8 Jan. - "Gambetta"
La France : 12 Jan. - "Le Tableau de Paris" (O.C. XIII, pp.263-9)
Le Réveil : 15 Jan. - "Une Campagne"
La France : 19 Jan. - "Le Tableau de Paris" (O.C. XIII, pp.269-73)
Le Réveil : 22 Jan. - "Une honte" - reaction to sentencing of anarchists in Lyon.
La France : 3 Feb. - "Le Tableau de Paris - Le Théâtre. Les Premières II" (O.C. XIII, pp.279-84)
La France : 16 Feb. - "Le Tableau de Paris - Le Théâtre IV" (O.C. XIII, pp.289-93)
Le Réveil : 19 Feb. - "Amnistie"
Le Réveil : 27 Feb. - "Hector Malot" (O.C. XII, pp.449-56)
La France : 2 March - "Le Tableau de Paris - Les Cénacles I" (O.C. XIII, pp.239-304)
9 March - "Le Tableau de Paris - Les Cénacles II" (O.C. XIII, pp.305-9)
16 March - "Le Tableau de Paris" (O.C. XIII, pp.310-14)
23 March - "" (O.C. XIII, pp.315-9)
La France :

30 March - "Le Tableau de Paris" (O.C. XIII, pp.320-24)

6 April - "Le Tableau de Paris - Le Luxembourg" (O.C. XIII, pp.325-9)

13 April - "Le Tableau de Paris" (O.C. XIII, pp.330-35)

20 April - "Le Tableau de Paris - Les Champs-Elysées" (O.C. XIII, pp.336-41)

27 April - "Le Tableau de Paris - Le Cirque d'Été" (O.C. XIII, pp.342-7)

4 May - "Le Tableau de Paris" (O.C. XIII, pp.348-53)

11 May - "Le Tableau de Paris" (O.C. XIII, pp.354-8)

18 May - "Le Tableau de Paris - Le Dimanche, I" (O.C. XIII, pp.359-63)

25 May - "Le Tableau de Paris - Le Dimanche, II" (O.C. XIII, pp.364-8)

1 June - "Le Tableau de Paris - L'Incendie" (O.C. XIII, pp.369-73)

8 June - "Le Tableau de Paris" (O.C. XIII, pp.374-8)

15 June - "Le Tableau de Paris - La Foire de Neuilly" (O.C. XIII, pp.379-83)

22 June - "Le Tableau de Paris" (O.C. XIII, pp.384-8)

29 June - "" (O.C. XIII, pp.389-92)

6 July - "" (O.C. XIII, pp.393-7)

15 July - "Le Tableau de Paris - Londres, I" (O.C. XIII, pp.398-402)

21 July - "Le Tableau de Paris - Londres, II, Anglaise et Parisienne" (O.C. XIII, pp.403-6)

27 July - "Le Tableau de Paris" (O.C. XIII, pp.407-12)

5 Aug. - "Le Tableau de Paris - Les Bibliothèques" (O.C. XIII, pp.413-7)

10 Aug. - "Le Tableau de Paris" (O.C. XIII, pp.418-21)

Le Cri du Peuple - Daily paper, large format, four pages; price: 10 centimes.

Editor: Jules Vallès.

Editorial secretary: M.E. Massard.

Administrator: M. Lalanne.

28 Oct. - "Le Cri du Peuple" (O.C. VI, pp.313-4)

29 Oct. - "Au secrétaire de rédaction" - accuses Massard of excessive editing.

30 Oct. - "Le rattachement" - Ferry and the war in Indo-China.

31 Oct. - "Garde à vous!" - "" (not 1 Nov., as noted by Gille)

1 Nov. - "Leur avenir!" - "" (article omitted by Gille)

2 Nov. - "Prends ton sac" (O.C. VI, pp.315-7)

3 Nov. - "Le ralliement" - opposition to the war.

4 Nov. - "L'Illustre Delobelle" - mocks Challemel-Lacour.

5 Nov. - "La Rentrée" - attack on judiciary.

6 Nov. - "La statue du père" (O.C. XI, pp.465-7)

7 Nov. - "Le buste du fils" (O.C. VI, pp.318-21)

8 Nov. - "Un nouveau" - Sigismond Lacroix, newly elected to the Chambre des Députés.

9 Nov. - "au troupeau" - call for decentralization of army.

11 Nov. - "Un avorton" - distrust of young Waldeck-Rousseau.

12 Nov. - "Le Bâtiment" - Martin Nadaud, and slump in building trade.

13 Nov. - "Pas d'aumône" - on the status of the city of Paris.

14 Nov. - "A l'ami Paul Alexis" (O.C. XI, pp.472-6)

15 Nov. - "Un sou de l'heure" - masons' wages.

16 Nov. - "Une Victime" - death of a young schoolteacher.

18 Nov. - "Voleurs et Compagnies" - scandal of nationalized railways.
Le Cri du Peuple:

19 Nov. - "Les Belliqueux" - prospect of war; the army.
20 Nov. - "Les Sénateurs de Paris" - various portraits.
21 Nov. - "Le Meurtre politique" - assassination is counterproductive.
23 Nov. - "Un Deux Décembre en Serbie"
25 Nov. - "Les Universitaires à la Chambre" - critical portraits.
26 Nov. - "Notes sur Delascluze" (O.C. VI, pp.322-5)
27 Nov. - "La Sociale en marche"

(not 28, as noted by Gille)

29 Nov. - "La Poésie populaire" (O.C. XI, pp.477-9)
30 Nov. - "Une journée au Palais"
2 Dec. - "Les Décimés" - industrial exploitation.
4 Dec. - "Souvenirs du Deux Décembre 51"
9 Dec. - (identical article, because Vallès is ill)
11 Dec. - "Niais ou coquins" (O.C. VI, pp.326-9)
28 Dec. - "Les Reculards" - lack of commitment in contemporary literature.
29 Dec. - "La succession Grévy"
30 Dec. - "La Rés" - defence of freedom of press, in response to student demonstrations against the paper's criticisms of bourgeois students of the day.

---

Le Cri du Peuple:

7 Jan. - "L'Affiche rouge" (O.C. VI, pp.329-33)
10 Jan. - "Le Fond du Sac" - Gambetta's aphorisms.
13 Jan. - "aux Lecteurs" - price of the newspaper reduced to five centimes to attract workers.
14 Jan. - "Tous les mêmes!" - disenchantment with bourgeois politicians.
16 Jan. - "Une force nouvelle" - the power of the workers.
18 Jan. - "Pots-de-vin, pots-de-sang" - condemnation of prefectorial order prohibiting rag-picking.
20 Jan. - "Du Travail!" - protest against unemployment.
21 Jan. - "Le petit Mazas I" - extract from his article in "Gil Blas", 4 May 1882.
23 Jan. - "Le petit Mazas II" - further extracts from "Gil Blas", 4 May 1882.
24 Jan. - "Le petit Mazas III" - final part of article in "Gil Blas", 4 May 1882.
27 Jan. - "Théoriciens" (O.C. VI, pp.334-7)
29 Jan. - "Brisson la Bégueule" - protest against Brisson's attack on Brialon's coarse language.
31 Jan. - "L'Amnistie" - plea to free political prisoners at time of economic crisis.
3 Feb. - "Les Charlatans de popularité" - rejects Ferry's suggestion that left-wing popularity dependent on rhetoric.
5 Feb. - "Rouher" - review of his career, and his empty eloquence.
8 Feb. - "L'Education" - Michelet's childhood.
Le Cri du Peuple: 11 Feb. - "Les Cris séditieux" — protest against new repressive measures.

12 Feb. - "Cochons vendus" — repeat of article in "La Rue" 30 Nov. 1837, which Vallès considers as relevant to the Republic as to the Second Empire.

17 Feb. - "Insurgés en Chambre" — views on republican revolt of 1877.


20 Feb. - "Un Potentat" — attack on power of police and judiciary.


25 Feb. - "Le 24 Février" (O.C. VI, pp.338-41)

Le Matin: 26 Feb. - "Lettre au rédacteur en chef du 'Matin' " (O.C. VI, p.342)

Le Cri du Peuple: 23 Feb. - "Jusqu'au bout" (O.C. VI, pp.343-6)

Le Matin: 29 Feb. - "Le Mur"  

Le Cri du Peuple: 1 March - "Un Tragique" — Emmanuel Barthélémy's political involvement in 1848, and his later life (N.B. O.C. VI, p.344, n.1).

4 March - "Les instituteurs" — teachers' pay.

Le Matin: 5 March - "La Prison"

Le Cri du Peuple: 7 March - "Pierre Malzieux" — referred to elsewhere as Jean Malzieux (cf. O.C. VI, pp.250-54); tribute to him on anniversary of his death.

9 March - "Le Terme" — power of rent strike by those suffering hardship.

11 March - "Un Complot royaliste" — workers' revolt and government repression more likely than royalist plot.

Le Matin: 12 March - "Armes données"

Le Cri du Peuple: 13 March - "Un Anniversaire" — memories of suppression of "Le Cri du Peuple" in 1871; reproduction of his article in "Le Drapeau", 19 March 1871.


19 March - "La Fête" — reproduction of article in "Le Cri du Peuple", 30 March 1871.

Le Matin: 19 March - "Le 18 Mars" (O.C. VI, pp.352-6)

Le Cri du Peuple: 21 March - "Les Banquets" (O.C. VI, pp.357-61)


25 March - "Le Feu" — edited version of article in "La France", 1 June 1883.

Le Matin: 26 March - "Rignon"

Le Cri du Peuple: 27 March - "Le Système pénitentiaire" — modified version of article in "La France", 21 July 1883.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Article/Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29 March</td>
<td>Le Cri du Peuple</td>
<td>&quot;Le Condamné à Mort&quot; - modified version of article in &quot;La France&quot;, 20 Oct. 1882.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 April</td>
<td>Le Cri du Peuple</td>
<td>&quot;Les Voisins de Campi&quot; - modified version of article in &quot;La France&quot;, 8 Sept. 1882.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 April</td>
<td>Le Matin</td>
<td>&quot;L'Arbitre&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 April</td>
<td>Le Cri du Peuple</td>
<td>&quot;Rêve d'Avril&quot; - modified version of article in &quot;La France&quot;, 23 March 1883.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 April</td>
<td>Le Cri du Peuple</td>
<td>&quot;Fonction à tuer&quot; - draws extensively from articles in &quot;La France&quot;, 20 Aug. 1882 and 30 March 1883.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 April</td>
<td>Le Cri du Peuple</td>
<td>&quot;Les Dimanches du Peuple&quot; - modified version of article in &quot;La France&quot;, 18 May 1883.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 April</td>
<td>Le Matin</td>
<td>&quot;Loi militaire&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 April</td>
<td>Le Cri du Peuple</td>
<td>&quot;La Littérature sociale&quot; - modified version of article in &quot;Le Réveil&quot;, 24 July 1882.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 April</td>
<td>Le Cri du Peuple</td>
<td>&quot;L'Autre Caserne&quot; - modified version of article in &quot;La France&quot;, 4 Aug. 1882.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 April</td>
<td>Le Matin</td>
<td>&quot;Jésuitaille&quot; (LCD IV, pp.895-8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 April</td>
<td>Le Cri du Peuple</td>
<td>&quot;Dix millions&quot; - opposition to money voted for enlargement of Sorbonne.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 April</td>
<td>Le Cri du Peuple</td>
<td>&quot;Le Congrès des Sociétés savantes&quot; - mockery of pretentious conformist scholars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 April</td>
<td>Le Cri du Peuple</td>
<td>&quot;Des Spectacles&quot; - modified version of articles in &quot;La France&quot;, 6 and 13 April 1882.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 April</td>
<td>Le Matin</td>
<td>&quot;Jacquerie&quot; - apolitical revolutionary character of peasants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 April</td>
<td>Le Cri du Peuple</td>
<td>&quot;L'Union foraine&quot; - modified version of article in &quot;La France&quot;, 11 May 1883.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 April</td>
<td>Le Cri du Peuple</td>
<td>&quot;Les Ruines&quot; - modified version of article in &quot;La France&quot;, 10 Nov. 1882.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 April</td>
<td>Le Cri du Peuple</td>
<td>&quot;La Guillotine&quot; - modified version of article in &quot;La France&quot;, 15 Sept. 1882.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 May</td>
<td>Le Cri du Peuple</td>
<td>&quot;Le Salon I&quot; - modified version of article in &quot;Le Réveil&quot;, 15 May 1882.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 May</td>
<td>Le Matin</td>
<td>&quot;L'Hôtel-de-Ville&quot; - local elections; confidence that &quot;Conseil de l'Hôtel-de-Ville&quot; will represent ordinary working people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 May</td>
<td>Le Cri du Peuple</td>
<td>&quot;L'Hôtel-de-Ville&quot; - repeat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 May</td>
<td>Le Cri du Peuple</td>
<td>&quot;Le Ballottage&quot; - need for left-wing factions to unite in the face of elections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 May</td>
<td>Le Matin</td>
<td>&quot;L'Armée sociale&quot; (O.C. VI, pp.366-9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 May</td>
<td>Le Matin</td>
<td>&quot;Salle Graffard&quot; - Béraud's painting of this title; need for honest portrayal of &quot;peuple&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 May</td>
<td>Le Matin</td>
<td>&quot;Le Matin&quot; - not signed by Vallès, but attributed to him by Gille.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Le Cri du Peuple: 17 May - "Une médaille" - modified version of article in "Le Réveil", 6 June 1882.
21 May - "Salle Graffard" - repeat of article of 14 May.

Le Matin: 21 May - "La Chambre" - influence of Church and Army on oratory in "Chambre des Députés".

Le Cri du Peuple: 24 May - "Le Legs de Varlin" - memories of May 1871 and Varlin's faith in Communards.
26 May - "La Commune" (O.C. VI, pp.370-72)
28 May - "Hors du bagne" - modified version of article in "La France", 8 June 1883.

Le Matin: 28 May - "Nos Forts" - Belleville and Montmartre, strongholds of socialism.

Le Cri du Peuple: 30 May - "La Chambre" - repeat.
31 May - "Nos Forts" - repeat.
2 June - "Loi militaire" - protest against exemption of students from military service.

Le Matin: 4 June - "La Dynamite" - the Fenians, Ireland and Catholicism.

Le Cri du Peuple: 4 June - "L'Amnistie" - call for amnesty for political prisoners.
6 June - "Le Conseil municipal" (O.C. VI, pp.373-5)
10 June - "Le Grand Prix" - Longchamps and the Derby (large sections similar to passages in "La Rue à Londres", cf. O.C. V, pp.235-8).
11 June - "La Dynamite" - repeat.

Le Matin: 11 June - "La Barre de Fer" - authoritarian exploitation.

Le Cri du Peuple: 13 June - "" - repeat.
16 June - "Les Artisses (sic)" - criticism of Salon, art-galleries and contemporary artists.
18 June - "Les Enfants martyrs" - attack on tyrannical power given by law to parents.
21 June - "La Fête prochaine" - need for celebration; possibility of amnesty on 14 July
23 June - "Juin 1848" (O.C. VI, pp.376-80)
25 June - "La Distribution des Récompenses au Salon"


30 June - "Le Paysan" - need to give peasantry political education.
2 July - "Le Général" - dangers of permanent army.

Le Matin: 2 July - "La Justice" - criticism of legal procedures.

Le Cri du Peuple: 5 July - "" - repeat.
7 July - "Les Condamnés de Lyon" - plea for amnesty.

Le Matin: 9 July - "Un Suicide"
Le Cri du Peuple: 10 July - "La Prisonnière" - Louise Michel (draws from article in "La France", 29 June 1883).
14 July - "La Cocarde verte" - special illustrated issue (O.C. VI, pp.381-3).
16 July - "Un sou" - price of the newspaper reduced to five centimes in the provinces too.

Le Matin: 16 July - "Fenêtres noires" - social evils not removed by 14 July 1789.

Le Cri du Peuple: 19 July - "Les Fenêtres noires" - repeat.
21 July - "Paris"
23 July - "Un meeting anglais"

Le Matin: 23 July - "Le Dénouement" - lessons to be learned from cholera outbreak.

Le Cri du Peuple: 26 July - "Le Dénouement" - repeat.
28 July - "Centenaires et Statues" - education for future, not glorification of past.

Le Matin: 30 July - "Discipuli" - against classical education.

Le Cri du Peuple: 1 Aug. - "Le Boulevard"
3 Aug. - "Des Recrues" - ill-fated students of the Sorbonne.
6 Aug. - "Les Affiches"


Le Matin français: 13 Aug. - "Satory"


Le Matin français: 20 Aug. - "Les Légendes"


Le Matin français: 27 Aug. - "A la cloche" - modified version of article in "La France", 8 June 1883.

Le Cri du Peuple: 1 Sept. - "En province" - Le Puy and childhood memories.

Le Matin français: 3 Sept. - "Notes et souvenirs" - recounts his escape in 1671 to fellow countrymen.

Le Cri du Peuple: 8 Sept. - "Notes et souvenirs" (O.C. VI, pp.391-4)

Le Matin français: 10 Sept. - "Notes et souvenirs"

14 Sept. - "Notes et souvenirs" (O.C. VI, pp.395-7)
15 Sept. - "Notes et souvenirs" (O.C. VI, pp.398-401)
Le Matin français : 17 Sept. - "Un Soldat" - anti-colonial wars; danger of standing army in civil war.

                22 Sept. - "Le Livre d'un mort" - Gustave Maroteau.


Le Cri du Peuple : 26 Sept. - "Le Coup de Jarnac" -
                29 Sept. - "Les Immortels" - elections to the Academy; Gustave Flanche. (Draws from article in "Le Voltaire", 4 March 1880.)


Le Matin français : 8 Oct. - "La Crise" - industrial disputes; possible revolt.

                13 Oct. - "Le Gagne-pain".

Le Matin français : 15 Oct. - "Un Monopole" - protest against unique right of lawyers to present case for defence.


Le Matin : 23 Oct. - "Parlottiers"


Le Matin : 29 Oct. - "Stratèges"

                3 Nov. - "Les Morts" - modified version of article in "La France", 3 Nov. 1882.

Le Matin : 5 Nov. - "La Messe rouge" - attack on legal system and lawyers.

Le Cri du Peuple : 7 Nov. - "La Messe rouge" - repeat.
                11 Nov. - "Les Villes révolutionnaires, II. Lyon" - continuation.

Le Matin : 12 Nov. - "L'Exposition" - protest over resources allocated to 1889 exhibition rather than alleviation of hardship.

Le Cri du Peuple : 14 Nov. - "L'Exposition" - repeat.
                17 Nov. - "Hector Malot" - publicity for his works.
Le Matin : 19 Nov. - "La Retraite" - argues for withdrawal from Tonkin.

Le Cri du Peuple : 21 Nov. - "La Retraite" - repeat.
24 Nov. - "Les Chefs révolutionnaires" (LCD IV, pp.888-91)

Le Matin : 26 Nov. - "Les Véhéments" - unemployment and possible revolt.


Le Matin : 3 Dec. - "Le Droit de tuer" - united revolt preferable to personal vendettas (eg. that caused by Morin's calumny of Clovis Hugues).

Le Cri du Peuple : 5 Dec. - "Le Droit de tuer" - repeat.
8 Dec. - "Le Workhouse" - contrast between British resignation to misery and French revolt, drawing on "La Rue à Londres" (O.C. V, pp.165-78).

Le Matin : 10 Dec. - "Les Otages"

Le Cri du Peuple : 12 Dec. - "Deux Fusillés" (O.C. VI, pp.407-10)


22 Dec. - "Mes Souhaits" - call for teaching of practical skills within school curriculum.

Le Matin : 24 Dec. - "Le Défilé des Résignés"

Le Cri du Peuple : 26 Dec. - "Les Étrennes"- similar to previous articles on this subject, as in "La Rue", 28 Dec. 1857.

Le Matin : 31 Dec. - "Parias dodus"

1885

5 Jan. - "Le Théâtre du Jour de l'An" - similar to previous articles on Christmas entertainment, as in "Le Voltaire", 12 Dec. 1878.

Le Matin : 7 Jan. - "Amnistie"

12 Jan. - "Victor Noir"
19 Jan. - "La Préfecture de Police" (O.C. VI, pp.425-8).

N.B. See also posthumous article "Le Champ de bataille de Waterloo" in La Revue Universelle, 22 June 1901 (Pléiade I, pp.1063-95), written originally for Pierre Larousse's "Grand Dictionnaire universel du XIXe siècle" in 1889, but not accepted for publication.
ACHOUR Christiane

La révolte de Jules Vallès, de l'enfance rebelle à l'exil solitaire, Nice, Thèse 3e cycle, 1969, 325pp.

ALBALAT Antoine


ALEXIS Paul


ARVIN Neil C.


BANCQUART Marie-Claire


"Un homme sur les barricades - Ecrivain de tempérament," Le Monde des Livres, 3 May 1969, p.V.


BANCQUART Marie-Claire


BARBEY D'AUREVILLY Jules


BARRÈS Maurice


"La Leçon d'un insurgé," Le Voltaire, 11 June 1886.


BELLET Roger


"Vallès à la recherche de son vocabulaire politique, 1848-1871," *Europe*, June - Aug. 1968, pp.112-35.


BRUNETIÈRE Ferdinand


CANPROUX Charles

CANTONI Elda

CHIABOY Bianca
La 'Bohème' à la moitié du siècle, Münger et Vallès, 1837-61, Milan, Universita commerciale Luigi Bocconi, 1957-58, 96pp.

CORNU Marcel

DAUDET Leon


DELPAT Gérard


DELAYE Christiane

DUBOIS Jacques


DUBOIS M.

EDMONDS Barbara P.

EMMANUEL Pierre


FABRE P.-E

FAGUET Emile

de FALLOIS Bernard

FEILLER Henri

FRANÇON Marcel

GILL André

GILLET Gaston

GOLOT J-J.
"Vallès et la conscience professionnelle," Les Lettres françaises, 2 April 1959.

GUILLEMIN Henri
"Le dossier Vallès aux archives de la police," Europe, April-May 1966, pp.135-54.

GUILOUX Louis

HANNAERT Louis

HEINTZE Horst

HIRSCH Michel Léon

JACQUEMIN Georges

JUTRIN M.

KACZYNISKI Mieczyslaw
"Vallès, écrivain politique; ses idées," Roczniki humanistyczne VI, 3, 1957, pp.95-128.

LABAYE Christian
MELLOT Jean  "L'autre 'Petit chose'," Les Humanités, April 1963, pp.22-5.
RSIS Joseph

RICHEPIN Jean
"Le Bachelier," Gil Blas, 1 June 1881.

ROD Édouard

ROUCHON Ulysse

ROY Claude

SAINT VICTOR Paul de
Barbares et Bandits : La Prusse et la Commune, Paris, Michel Lévy, 1872, 284pp. (see Ch. XVII, l'Orgie rouge, p.246).

SCHOELER Lucien
"Un poème inédit de Jules Vallès. 'Heures d'exil',' Europe, pp.75-80.

SCHLER Lucien (and Dautry Jean)

SCHOLL Aurélien

SECHE Léon

SEVERINE

STEPHANOVA Ludmila

THIERCELIN Jules

VARLOOT Jean
"Vallès vivant, leçon de réalisme et de critique par un compagnon de route," La Pensee, March - April 1951, pp.48-58.

WAGNER Jean

WUMISER Andre

ZAVASSE Alexandre


ZOLA Emile
"Livres d'aujourd'hui et de demain," L'Événement, 26 June 1866.
GENERAL WORKS

BELLET Roger  

BESCHAT Charles  

BRUJAT J., DAUTRY J., and TERSEN E.,  

CARANASCHI Enzo  

CHAMPILBURY [HUSSEY Jules François Félix]  

DESCOTES Maurice  

DURANTY Edmond  


Europe, Numéro spécial : La Commune, 29e année, no 64-65, April-May 1951.

EVANS David Owen  

GERBOD Paul  

CONCOURT Edmond and Jules de  

HEMMING F.W.J.  

HUNT H.J.  

IKINAYAN Marguerite  

LIDSKY Paul  

LUKÁCS Georg  


MARTINO Pierre  

MICHELST Jules  


Proudhon Pierre-Joseph  

WOOD J.S.  