

Tucholsky Wagner Zola Scott  
Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydon Freud Schlegel  
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen  
Weber Freiligrath Frey  
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel  
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas  
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliasberg Eliot Zweig Ebner Eschenbach  
Feuerbach Maximilian I. von Habsburg Fock Ewald Vergil  
Goethe Elisabeth von Österreich London  
Mendelssohn Balzac Shakespeare Lichtenberg Rathenau Dostojewski Ganghofer  
Trackl Stevenson Lenz Hambroch Doyle Gjellerup  
Mommssen Thoma Tolstoi Hanrieder Droste-Hülshoff  
Dach Thoma Verne Hägele Hauptmann Humboldt  
Karrillon Reuter Rousseau Hagen Hauff Baudelaire Gautier  
Garschin Defoe Hebbel Hegel Kussmaul Herder  
Damaschke Descartes Schopenhauer Bebel Proust  
Wolfram von Eschenbach Darwin Dickens Grimm Jerome Rilke George  
Bronner Campe Horváth Aristoteles Voltaire Federer Herodot  
Bismarck Vigny Gengenbach Barlach Heine Grillparzer Georgy  
Storm Casanova Lessing Langbein Gilm Gryphius  
Chamberlain Schiller Lafontaine Iffland Sokrates  
Brentano Strachwitz Katharina II. von Rußland Bellamy Schilling Kralik Gibbon Tschchow  
Löns Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Wilde Gleim Vulpius  
Luther Heym Hofmannsthal Klee Hölty Morgenstern Goedicke  
Roth Heyse Klopstock Puschkin Homer Kleist Mörike Musil  
Luxemburg La Roche Horaz Kraus  
Machiavelli Kierkegaard Kraft Kraus  
Navarra Aurel Musset Lamprecht Kind Kirchhoff Hugo Moltke  
Nestroy Marie de France  
Nietzsche Nansen Laotse Ipsen Liebknecht Ringelnatz  
Marx Lassalle Gorki Klett Leibniz  
von Ossietzky May vom Stein Lawrence Irving  
Petalozzi Platon Pückler Michelangelo Knigge Kock Kafka  
Sachs Poe Liebermann Kock Korolenko  
de Sade Praetorius Mistral Zetkin



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# **Zibeline –Volume 1**

Philippe, marquis de Massa

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# **ZIBELINE**

By  
PHILIPPE DE MASSA

Translated

by  
D. KNOWLTON RANOUS



## ALEXANDRE-PHILIPPE-REGNIER DE MASSA

MARQUIS DE MASSA, soldier, composer, and French dramatist, was born in Paris, December 5, 1831. He selected the military career and received a commission in the cavalry after leaving the school of St. Cyr. He served in the Imperial Guards, took part in the Italian and Franco-German Wars and was promoted Chief of Squadron, Fifth Regiment, Chasseurs a Cheval, September 10, 1871. Having tendered his resignation from active service, he was appointed a lieutenant-colonel in the territorial army February 3, 1880. He has been decorated with the Legion of Honor.

The Marquis de Massa is known as a composer of music and as a dramatic author and novelist. At the Opera Comique there was represented in 1861 *Royal-Cravate*, written by him. Fragments of two operas by him were performed at the Paris Conservatory of Music in 1865, and in 1868. The list of his principal plays follows: *Le Service en campagne*, comedy (1882); *La Cicatrice*, comedy (1885); *Au Mont Ida*, *Fronsac a La Bastille*, and *La Coeur de Paris*, all in 1887; *La Czarine* and *Brouille depuis Magenta* (1888), and *La Bonne Aventure*—all comedies—1889. Together with Petipa he also wrote a ballet *Le Roi d'Yvetot* (1866); music by Charles Labarre. He further wrote *Zibeline*, a most brilliant romance (1892) with an Introduction by Jules Claretie; crowned by the Academie Francaise. This odd and dainty little story has a heroine of striking originality, in character and exploits. Her real name is Valentine de Vermont, and she is the daughter of a fabulously wealthy French-American dealer in furs, and when, after his death, she goes to Paris to spend her colossal fortune, and to make restitution to the man from whom her father won at play the large sum that became the foundation of his wealth, certain lively Parisian ladies, envying her her rich furs, gave her the name of *Zibeline*, that of a very rare, almost extinct, wild animal. *Zibeline's* American unconventionality, her audacity, her wealth, and generosity, set all Paris by the ears. There are fascinating glimpses into the drawing-rooms of the most exclusive Parisian society, and also into the historic greenroom of the Comedie

Francaise, on a brilliant "first night." The man to whom she makes graceful restitution of his fortune is a hero of the Franco-Mexican and Franco-Prussian wars, and when she gives him back his property, she throws her heart in with the gift. The story is an interesting study of a brilliant and unconventional American girl as seen by the eyes of a clever Frenchman.

Later came 'La Revue quand meme, comedy, (1894); Souvenirs et Impressions (1897); La Revue retrospective, comedy (1899); and Sonnets<sup>1</sup> the same year.

PAUL HERVIEU de l'Academe Francaise.

## LETTER FROM JULES CLARETIE TO THE AUTHOR

### MY DEAR FRIEND:

I have often declared that I never would write prefaces! But how can one resist a fine fellow who brings one an attractive manuscript, signed with a name popular among all his friends, who asks of one, in the most engaging way, an opinion on the same—then a word, a simple word of introduction, like a signal to saddle?

I have read your *Zibeline*, my dear friend, and this romance—your first—has given me a very keen pleasure. You told me once that you felt a certain timidity in publishing it. Reassure yourself immediately. A man can not be regarded as a novice when he has known, as you have, all the Parisian literary world so long; or rather, perhaps, I may more accurately say, he is always a novice when he tastes for the first time the intoxication of printer's ink.

You have the quickest of wits and the least possible affectation of gravity, and you have made as well known in Mexico as in Paris your couplets on the end of the Mexican conflict with France. 'Tout Mexico y passera!' Where are they, the 'tol-de-rols' of autumn?

Yesterday I found, in a volume of dramatic criticism by that terrible and charming Jules Barbey d'Aurevilly, an appreciation of one of your comedies which bears a title very appropriate to yourself: 'Honor.' "And this play does him honor," said Barbey d'Aurevilly, "because it is charming, light, and supple, written in flowing verse, the correctness of which does not rob it of its grace."

That which the critic said of your comedy I will say of your romance. It is a pretty fairy-story—all about Parisian fairies, for a great many fairies live in Paris! In fact, more are to be found there than anywhere else! There are good fairies and bad fairies among them. Your own particular fairy is good and she is charming. I am tempted to ask whether you have drawn your characters from life. That is a question which was frequently put to me recently, after I had

published 'L'Americaine.' The public longs to possess keys to our books. It is not sufficient for them that a romance is interesting; it must possess also a spice of scandal.

Portraits? You have not drawn any—neither in the drawing-rooms where Zibeline scintillates, nor in the foyer of the Comedie Francaise, where for so long a time you have felt yourself at home. Your women are visions and not studies from life—and I do not believe that you will object to my saying this.

You should not dislike the "romantic romance," which every one in these days advises us to write—as if that style did not begin as far back as the birth of romance itself: as if the Princess of Cleves had not written, and as if Balzac himself, the great realist, had not invented, the finest "romantic romances" that can be found—for example, the amorous adventure of General de Montriveau and the Duchesse de Langlais!

Apropos, in your charming story there is a General who pleases me very much. How was it that you did not take, after the fashion of Paul de Molenes, a dashing cavalry officer for your hero?—you, for whom the literary cavalier has all the attractions of a gentleman and a soldier?

Nothing could be more piquant, alert, chivalrous—in short, worthy of a Frenchman—than the departure of your hero for the war after that dramatic card-party, which was also a battle—and what a battle!—where, at the end of the conflict, he left his all upon the green cloth. That is an attractive sketch of the amiable comedienne, who wishes for fair weather and a smooth sea for the soldier lover who is going so far away. It seems to me that I have actually known that pretty girl at some time or another! That chapter is full of the perfume of pearl powder and iris! It is only a story, of course, but it is a magnificent story, which will please many readers.

The public will ask you to write others, be sure of that; and you will do well, my dear friend, for your own sake and for ours, to follow the precept of Denis Diderot: "My friends, write stories; while one writes them he amuses himself, and the story of life goes on, and that is less gay than the stories we can tell."

I do not know precisely whether these last words, which are slightly pessimistic, are those of the good Diderot himself. But they are those of a Parisian of 1892, who has been able to forget his cares and annoyances in reading the story that you have told so charmingly.

With much affection to you, and wishing good luck to Zibeline, I am

Your friend,

JULES CLARETIE  
de l'Academie Francaise.

**APRIL 26, 1892.**



# ZIBELINE

## BOOK 1

### CHAPTER I

#### LES FRERES-PROVENCAUX

In the days of the Second Empire, the Restaurant des Freres-Provencaux still enjoyed a wide renown to which its fifty years of existence had contributed more than a little to heighten its fame.

This celebrated establishment was situated near the Beaujolais Gallery of the Palais-Royal, close to the narrow street leading to the Rue Vivienne, and it had been the rendezvous of epicures, either residents of Paris or birds of passage, since the day it was opened.

On the ground floor was the general dining-room, the gathering-place for honest folk from the provinces or from other lands; the next floor had been divided into a succession of private rooms, comfortably furnished, where, screened behind thick curtains, dined somewhat "irregular" patrons: lovers who were in either the dawn, the zenith, or the decline of their often ephemeral fancies. On the top floor, spacious salons, richly decorated, were used for large and elaborate receptions of various kinds.

At times the members of certain social clubs gave in these rooms subscription balls of anacreontic tendencies, the feminine element of which was recruited among the popular gay favorites of the period. Occasionally, also, young fellows about town, of different social rank, but brought together by a pursuit of amusement in common, met here on neutral ground, where, after a certain hour, the supper-table was turned into a gaming-table, enlivened by the clinking of glasses and the rattle of the croupier's rake, and where to the excitement of good cheer was added that of high play, with its alternations of unexpected gains and disastrous losses.

It was at a reunion of this kind, on the last evening in the month of May, 1862, that the salons on the top floor were brilliantly illuminated. A table had been laid for twenty persons, who were to join in a banquet in honor of the winner of the great military steeplechase at La Marche, which had taken place a few days before. The victorious gentleman-rider was, strange to say, an officer of infantry—an unprecedented thing in the annals of this sport.

Heir to a seigneurial estate, which had been elevated to a marquisate in the reign of Louis XII, son of a father who had the strictest notions as to the preservation of pure blood, Henri de Prerolles, early initiated into the practice of the breaking and training of horses, was at eighteen as bold and dashing a rider as he was accomplished in other physical exercises; and although, three years later, at his debut at St. Cyr, he expressed no preference for entering the cavalry service, for which his early training and rare aptitude fitted him, it was because, in the long line of his ancestors—which included a marshal of France and a goodly number of lieutenants-general—all, without exception, from Ravenna to Fontenoy, had won renown as commanders of infantry.

At the outbreak of the French Revolution, Henri's grandfather, who had distinguished himself in the American War for Independence, left his native land only when he was in the last extremity. As soon as circumstances permitted, he reentered France with his son, upon whom Napoleon conferred a brevet rank, which the recipient accepted of his free will. He began his military experience in Spain, returned safe and well from the retreat from Russia, and fought valiantly at Bautzen and at Dresden. The Restoration—by which time he had become chief of his battalion—could not fail to advance his career; and the line was about to have another lieutenant-general added to its roll, when the events of 1830 decided Field-Marshal the Marquis de Prerolles to sheathe his sword forever, and to withdraw to his own estate, near the forest of l'Ile- d'Adam, where hunting and efforts toward the improvement of the equine race occupied his latter years.

He died in 1860, a widower, leaving two children: Jeanne, recently married to the Duc de Montgeron, and his son Henri, then a pupil in a military school, who found himself, on reaching his majori-

ty, in possession of the chateau and domains of Prerolles, the value of which was from fifteen to eighteen hundred thousand francs.

Having been made sub-lieutenant by promotion on the first day of October, 1861, the young Marquis, already the head of his house and a military leader, asked and obtained the favor of being incorporated with a battalion of chasseurs garrisoned at Vincennes.

Exact in the performance of his military duties, and at the same time ardent in the pursuit of pleasure, he was able, thanks to his robust health, to conciliate the exigencies of the one with the fatigues of the other.

Unfortunately, Henri was fond of gaming, and his natural impetuosity, which showed itself by an emulation of high standards in his military duties, degenerated into recklessness before the baccarat-table. At the end of eighteen months, play, and an expensive liaison with an actress, had absorbed half his fortune, and his paternal inheritance had been mortgaged as well. The actress was a favorite in certain circles and had been very much courted; and this other form of rivalry, springing from the glitter of the footlights, added so much the more fuel to the prodigalities of the inflammable young officer.

Affairs were in this situation when, immediately after Henri's triumph at the race-track, a bettor on the opposite side paid one of his wagers by offering to the victor a grand dinner at the Freres-Provencaux.



## CHAPTER II

### BIRDS OF PREY

The hero of the night was seated at the middle of one side of the table, in the place of honor. For his 'vis-a-vis' he had his lively friend Fanny Dorville, star of the Palais Royal, while at his right sat Heloise Virot, the "first old woman," or duenna, of the same theatre, whose well known jests and eccentricities added their own piquancy to gay life in Paris. The two artists, being compelled to appear in the after-piece at their theatre that evening, had come to the dinner made up and in full stage costume, ready to appear behind the foot-lights at the summons of the call-boy.

The other guests were young men accustomed to the surroundings of the weighing-stand and the betting-room, at a time when betting had not yet become a practice of the masses; and most of them felt highly honored to rub elbows with a nobleman of ancient lineage, as was Henri de Prerolles.

Among these persons was Andre Desvanneaux, whose father, a churchwarden at Ste.-Clotilde, had attained a certain social prestige by his good works, and Paul Landry, in his licentiate in a large banking house in Paris. The last named was the son of a ship-owner at Havre, and his character was ambitious and calculating. He cherished, under a quiet demeanor, a strong hope of being able to supply, by the rapid acquisition of a fortune, the deficiencies of his inferior birth, from which his secret vanity suffered severely. Being an expert in all games of chance, he had already accumulated, while waiting for some brilliant coup, enough to lead a life of comparative elegance, thus giving a certain satisfaction to his instincts. He and Henri de Prerolles never yet had played cards together, but the occasion was sure to come some day, and Paul Landry had desired it a long time.

The company, a little silent at first, was becoming somewhat more animated, when a head-waiter, correct, and full of a sense of his own importance, entered the salon, holding out before him with

both hands a large tray covered with slender glasses filled with a beverage called "the cardinal's drink," composed of champagne, Bordeaux, and slices of pineapple. The method of blending these materials was a professional secret of the Freres-Provencaux.

Instantly the guests were on their feet, and Heloise, who had been served first, proposed that they should drink the health of the Marquis, but, prompted by one of her facetious impulses, instead of lifting the glass to her own lips, she presented it to those of the waiter, and, raising her arm, compelled him to swallow the contents. Encouraged by laughter and applause, she presented to him a second glass, then a third; and the unhappy man drank obediently, not being able to push away the glasses without endangering the safety of the tray he carried.

Fanny Dorville interceded in vain for the victim; the inexorable duenna had already seized a fourth glass, and the final catastrophe would have been infallibly brought about, had not providence intervened in the person of the call-boy, who, thrusting his head through the half-open doorway, cried, shrilly:

"Ladies, they are about to begin!"

The two actresses hastened away, escorted by Andre Desvanneaux, a modern Tartufe, who, though married, was seen everywhere, as much at home behind the scenes as in church.

Coffee and liqueurs were then served in a salon adjoining the large dining-room, which gave the effect of a private club-room to this part of the restaurant.

Cigars were lighted, and conversation soon turned on feminine charms and the performances of various horses, particularly those of Franc-Comtois, the winner of the military steeplechase. This animal was one of the products of the Prerolles stud, and was ordinary enough on flat ground, but a jumper of the first rank.

At last the clock struck the half hour after eleven, and some of the guests had already manifested their intention to depart, when Paul Landry, who had been rather silent until then, said, carelessly:

"You expect to sleep to-night in Paris, no doubt, Monsieur de Prerolles?"

"Oh, no," Henri replied, "I am on duty this week, and am obliged to return to Vincennes early in the morning. So I shall stay here until it is time for me to go."

"In that case, might we not have a game of cards?" proposed Captain Constantin Lenaieff, military attache to the suite of the Russian ambassador.

"As you please," said Henri.

This proposal decided every one to remain. The company returned to the large dining-room, which, in the mean time, had been again transformed into a gaming-hall, with the usual accessories: a frame for the tally-sheet, a metal bowl to hold rejected playing-cards set in one end of the table, and, placed at intervals around it, were tablets on which the punter registered the amount of the stakes.

On reentering this apartment, Henri de Prerolles approached a sort of counter, and, drawing from his pocket thirty thousand francs in bank-notes, he exchanged them for their value in mother-of-pearl "chips" of different sizes, representing sums from one to five, ten, twenty-five, or a hundred louis. Paul Landry took twenty-five thousand francs' worth; Constantin Unaieff, fifteen thousand; the others, less fortunate or more prudent, took smaller sums; and about midnight the game began.

