

Classic Poetry Series

**Jean Francois Casimir
Delavigne
- poems -**

**Publication Date:
2012**

Publisher:

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Jean Francois Casimir Delavigne(4 April 1793 – 11 December 1843)

Jean-François Casimir Delavigne was a French poet and dramatist.

Biography

Delavigne was born at Le Havre, but was sent to Paris to be educated at the Lycée Napoleon. He read extensively. When, on 20 March 1811 the empress Marie Louise gave birth to a son, named in his cradle as king of Rome, the event was celebrated by Delavigne in a Dithyrambe sur la naissance du roi de Rome, which obtained him a sinecure in the revenue office.

About this time he competed twice for an academy prize, but without success. Inspired by the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, he wrote two impassioned poems, the first entitled Waterloo, the second, Devastation du muse, both written in the heat of patriotic enthusiasm, and teeming with popular political allusions. A third, less successful poem, Sur le besoin de s'unir après le départ des étrangers, was afterwards added. These stirring pieces, termed by him Messéniennes, found an echo in the hearts of the French people.

Twenty-five thousand copies were sold; Delavigne was famous. He was appointed to an honorary librarianship, with no duties to discharge. In 1819 his play Les Vêpres Siciliennes was performed at the Odéon, then just rebuilt; it had previously been refused for the Théâtre Français. On the night of the first representation, which was warmly received, Picard, the manager, is said to have exclaimed, "You have saved us! You are the founder of the second French Theatre."

This success was followed up by the production of the Comédiens (1820), an inferior play, with little plot, and the Paria (1821), which contained some well-written choruses. The latter piece obtained a longer lease of life than its intrinsic literary merits warranted, on account of the popularity of the political opinions freely expressed in it: so freely expressed, indeed, that the displeasure of the king was incurred, and Delavigne lost his post. But Louis-Philippe of France, willing to gain the people's good wishes by complimenting their favourite, wrote to him as follows:

"The thunder has descended on your house; I offer you an apartment in mine."

Accordingly Delavigne became librarian at the Palais Royal, a position he retained for the rest of his life. It was here that he wrote the *École des vieillards* (1823), his best comedy, which gained his election to the Académie Française in 1825. To this period also belong *La Princesse Aurilie* (1828), and *Marino Faliero* (1829), a drama in the romantic style.

For his success as a writer Delavigne was largely indebted to the nature of the times in which he lived. The *Messéniennes* had their origin in the excitement resulting from the occupation of France by the allies in 1815. Another crisis in his life and in the history of his country, the revolution of 1830, stimulated him to the production of a second masterpiece, *La Parisienne*. This song, set to music by Daniel Auber, was on the lips of every Frenchman, and rivalled in popularity the *Marseillaise*. A companion piece, *La Varsovienne*, was written for the Poles, by whom it was sung on the march to battle. Other works of Delavigne followed each other in rapid succession:

- * *Louis XI* (1832)
- * *Les Enfants d'Édouard* (1833)
- * *Don Juan d'Autriche* (1835)
- * *Une Famille au temps du Luther* (1836)
- * *La Popularité* (1838)
- * *La Fille du Cid* (1839)
- * *Le Conseiller rapporteur* (1840)
- * *Charles VI* (1843), an opera partly written by his brother Germain, music by Fromental Halévy

In 1843 he left Paris to seek in Italy the health his labors had cost him. At Lyons his strength altogether gave way, and he died on 11 December.

By many of his own time Delavigne was looked upon as unsurpassed and unsurpassable. Every one bought and read his works. But the applause of the moment was gained at the sacrifice of lasting fame. As a writer he had many excellences. He expressed himself in a terse and vigorous style. The poet of reason rather than of imagination, he recognized his own province, and was rarely tempted to flights of fancy beyond his powers. He wrote always as he would have spoken, from sincere conviction.

His *Poésies* and his *Théâtre* were published in 1863. His *Œuvres complètes* (new edition, 1855) contains a biographical notice by his brother, Germain Delavigne, who is best known as a librettist in opera. See also Sainte-Beuve, *Portraits littéraires*, vol. v.; A Favrot, *Étude sur Casimir Delavigne* (1894); and F Vuacheux, *Casimir Delavigne* (1893).

À Napoléon

Jean Francois Casimir Delavigne

Adieu À La Madeleine

Jean Francois Casimir Delavigne

Adieux À Rome

Jean Francois Casimir Delavigne

Du Besoin De S'Unir Après Le Départ Des Étrangers

Jean Francois Casimir Delavigne

Hymne À Vénus

Jean Francois Casimir Delavigne

La Bataille De Waterloo

Jean Francois Casimir Delavigne

La Brigantine

Jean Francois Casimir Delavigne

La Dévastation Du Musée

Jean Francois Casimir Delavigne

La Dévastation Du Musée Et Des Monumens

Jean Francois Casimir Delavigne

La Mort De Jeanne D'Arc

Jean Francois Casimir Delavigne

La Parisienne

Gallant nation ! now before you
Freedom, beckoning onward, stands !
Let no tyrant's sway be o'er you, —
Wrest the sceptre from his hands !
Paris gave the general cry :
Glory, Fame, and Liberty !
Speed, warriors, speed,
Though thousands bleed,
Pierced by the leaden ball, or crushed by thundering steed !
Conquest waits, — your foemen die !

Keep your serried ranks in order;
Sons of France, your country calls !
Gory hecatombs accord her, —
Well she merits each who falls !
Happy day ! the general cry
Echoed naught but Liberty !
Speed, warriors, speed,
Though thousands bleed,
Pierced by the leaden ball, or crushed by thundering steed !
Conquest waits, — your foemen die !

Vain the shot may sweep along you,
Ranks of warriors now displayed !
Youthful generals are among you,
By the great occasion made !
Happy day ! the general cry
Echoed naught but Liberty !
Speed, warriors, speed,
Though thousands bleed,
Pierced by the leaden ball, or crushed by thundering steed !
Conquest waits, — your foemen die !

Foremost, who the Carlist lancee
With the banner-staff has met ?
Freedom's votary advances,
Venerable Lafayette !
Happy day ! the general cry
Echoed naught but Liberty !

Speed, warriors, speed,
Though thousands bleed,
Pierced by the leaden ball, or crushed by thundering steed !
Conquest waits, — your foemen die !

Triple dyes again combining,
See the squadrons onward go !
In the country's heaven shining,
Mark the various-colored bow !
Happy day ! the general cry
Echoed naught but Liberty !
Speed, warriors, speed,
Though thousands bleed,
Pierced by the leaden ball, or crushed by thundering steed !
Conquest waits, — your foemen die !

Heroes of that banner gleaming,
Ye, who bore it in the fray, —
Orleans' troops ! your blood was streaming
Freely on that fatal day !
From the page of history
We have learned the general cry !
Speed, warriors, speed,
Though thousands bleed,
Pierced by the leaden ball, or crushed by thundering steed !
Conquest waits, — your foemen die !

Muffled drum, thy music lonely
Answers to the mourner's sighs !
Laurels, for the valiant only,
Ornament their obsequies !
Sacred fane of Liberty,
Let their memories never die !
Bear to his grave
Each warrior brave
Who fell in Freedom's cause, his country's rights to save,
Crowned with fame and victory !

Jean Francois Casimir Delavigne

La Sybille

Jean Francois Casimir Delavigne

La Vie De Jeanne D'Arc

Jean Francois Casimir Delavigne

L'Âme Du Purgatoire

Jean Francois Casimir Delavigne

Le Départ

Jean Francois Casimir Delavigne

Le Voyageur

Jean Francois Casimir Delavigne

Les Troyennes

Jean Francois Casimir Delavigne

Promenade Au Lido

Jean Francois Casimir Delavigne

Trois Jours De Christophe Colomb

Jean Francois Casimir Delavigne