

**The Marmot with the Collar
Diary of a Philosopher**

by

Eugène Rambert

Translated from the French

by

Richard L. Hewitt

2020

Appendix VIII

M's Garden of Roses

M.001

I make today the vow to devote myself entirely to Philosophy and to the study of the mystery of our existence.

M.003

Learned Marmots are becoming fewer day by day... Our fathers' fathers had learned from the elders of their time that Marmots once constituted a powerful people, the friend of knowledge and the pleasures of the intellect.

M.007

But to fall asleep in one's own Burrow and to wake up in another country, among Men, and not to know how one made the journey: this is what confounds all imagination.

M.010

The wood was hard, but Marmots have good teeth.

M.015

Now are days that are truly beautiful, days that are worthy of the Dry Moon and such as Marmots love... They know not that our life contains a mystery, and they play. I, who know the mystery, play no longer.

M.018

I am only a weak Marmot; but there isn't a Man who could boast that it has compelled me to take a pawstep voluntarily.

M.023

But the Golden Clover, with succulent leaves, the Lovage, whose umbel cracks and bursts under the tooth, the Cinquefoil, the Saxifrages, the Orchid with its voluptuous perfumes, the Daisy with its blue gleam, the slender Fleabanes, the Yarrow with its bitter and fortifying scent, and the Wormwood whose aroma intoxicates: this is the menu of a Marmot luncheon... Never did a coarse eater think delicately.

M.028

Deceit and illusion reign everywhere. It is not by hearsay but experience that one discovers the truth.

M.034

The eyes of Men speak always two things at once.

M.036

If it please the Gods, this Unhappy Moon will prove the happiest of my life.

M.037

O Marmots, Marmots, it is to you and not to Men that I owe the darkest hours of my life! Even so, it is for you that I labour.

M.040

How I pity you, common Marmots, you for whom nothing relieves either your pleasures or your cares!... Sacred and glorious study! Can one still be alive if one does not live for study?

M.041

Blessed be my ungrateful children! Blessed my captivity! Blessed the hands of Men who violated the sanctuary of my Burrow!

M.059

One thought alone saved me. I told myself or rather I heard a voice that told me: "This is a lesson; learn from it".

M.062

Nature used to amuse me; today I contemplate her.

M.066

It is not enough to say: I will not sleep! One must remain awake.

M.069

To browse on the Snowbell, at dawn, when its little bell, turned toward the earth, is still wet with dew: this is a pleasure that heaven, fair at least this once, has reserved for the race of Marmots alone.

M.072

Wisdom consists in seeing things as they are, not in moulding them to our whims and fancies.

M.076

Her husband is a happy-go-lucky young fellow, who seems always to be standing agape, awkward, shy, distracted. My neighbour will correct him of these distractions.

M.090

What is all this glory to me? There is no more Spring for me. Why did I not hold fast during the Long Night! Why did I not keep vigil while the others slept! This would have been my Spring.

M.093

I am determined to undertake a little journey.

M.095

Gods, how vast is the sky! and the world!

M.096(a)

Accordingly, the earth is divided into three zones, that of Men, that of Marmots, and the Upper Desert. The fairest is the second.

M.096(b)

But what can one expect of a race that persecutes its philosophers?

M.097

Why has Nature deprived Marmot country of these delicate wonders? For whom does she make them bloom in these fierce and solitary places? Is it perhaps for the Vultures? No, it is for us, so that we go to seek them out. She reserves this surprise for the curiosity of those who love Wisdom.

M.098

Perhaps each peak has its own flower, blue or pink. I suspect that Nature is inexhaustible... Let us start by concluding the great problem, after which we leap from peak to peak and from torrent to torrent.

M.105

Marmots, you are no more than a crowd. When will you be a people?

M.108

To browse, to scrape the earth, and to multiply – is that, then, the whole of life?

M.109

The odour of Man follows me everywhere... it is like the curse of the universe. Everything that this execrable race touches is cursed forthwith.

M.110

Other Marmots have their ladies and their little ones; I have a friend.

M.113

The Dogs again! Life is a school of patience.

M.115

It is evidently the design of Nature that we should be white like the Snow. But it seems that she has too much to do to succeed in everything that she undertakes. She makes a start and not an end. Look closely, and in most of her works you will discover the black spot at the tips of the ears.

M.118

The Hare is sufficient unto himself in Winter. A philosophical recluse, he is, in Winter, king of the mountain. Disturb him not, people of Burrows; weigh him not down with ill judged questions.

M.121

A White Hare dreams that there is a Winter, that the Sun rises, that he sees it rise; a Marmot dreams that there is a long night, during which strange things happen. A White Hare dreams that he is awake, whereas I dream that I sleep.

M.127

Divine Providence, thus is it ever that you have exercised justice! Innocents are born only to make sinners fat.

M.128

May your soul rest in peace, my friend, you who are the only being in the world who, since my misfortune, shewed me any goodwill, who could have been the confidant of my most secret thoughts, the companion of all my labours, my guide, perhaps, in the paths of knowledge!

M.134(a)

He is hungry, and he hunts after animals, just as we do after flowers. He requires Marmots or Hares, just as we do Clover or Snowbells. He drinks the blood of his victims, just as we drink the dew in the cups of the Gentian or in the goblets of the Lady's-mantle... Happy are the barren, happy the wives who never gave suck, because it is for the Vulture that forms and Burrows are filled!

M.134(b)

The least whiff of Hare or Marmot makes him start suddenly and fills him with a fierce rapture. Then he lurches forward and pursues the spoor with all the speed of his long and slender legs, baying savagely. He has a peculiar cry when he hunts, a sort of music, compounded of frenzy and pleasure. He knows not fatigue. In the remotest deserts, under the most blazing Sun, on Snow or on bare rock, no matter, he runs for hours, for days, panting, his tongue lolling horribly, weary, his paws bloody, but running away. When his powers fail him, desire sustains him still.

M.135(a)

If I were a fierce beast, I would eat lots of Men.

M.135(b)

But one thing is certain, Man increases, Marmots dwindle... Unless the world has been created for the triumph of his iniquity, Man and his glory will pass.

M.135(c)

Man is the greatest mystery of Nature – after the Marmot.

M.137

All Marmots are taught, in their tenderest youth, that there exists a Providence, that the Gods exercise justice on earth and in the heavens, that they favour the designs of the just and are sure to punish the guilty.

M.138

The moment has come to take courage. The season is advancing. One must either renounce Philosophy or make preparation for the vigil of the Long Night.

M.148

I began today my harvest of hay. I cut grasses and moss, which I laid out in the Sun, under the rock.

M.151

I wish to be warm, very warm.

M.162

Nothing will be merrier, on my return, than to send a frozen Marmot sliding down the slope.

M.163

The sky is magnificent, absolutely cloudless; the air is calm, the Snow settles; but it is not especially cold. I feel in good cheer, full of ardour and of hope... This is the appointed hour. May the Gods assist me!

M.164

My path was simply one of constant enchantment; it was sown with flashes, beams, sparkled, coloured lights, iridescent spangles, Stars that scintillated magically, golden or azure.

M.167

The world is out of joint. Of two alternatives one must be true: either life is too short, or the path of Wisdom is too long.

M.168

All is decadence today. Perhaps I am the last philosophical Marmot?

M.176

There will be mysteries in Nature still when I have penetrated that of Marmots and the Long Night.

M.177

The world allures me.

M.181

But the real question is to know whether it is better to philosophize with a friend or with a wife.

M.183

The most important of all the principles of Wisdom is to observe the hierarchy of affections.

M.197

There is more Philosophy in two ideas, deeply investigated, weighed up, confronted with reality, than in a hundred ideas, dreamed up and thrown to the wind by these games of fantasy.

M.206

I am the unhappiest of husbands. I have a wife who loves me too much.

M.207

If the Gods wish that my tribulations should be known to them, they will reveal the way to the Cave with the Crystals of Violet.

M.214

It is one Moon ago today that I married an adored wife; I adore her still, she loves me, and we are not happy.

M.220

Strange divorce between life and thought!... Well then, let us live, since we must... But I feel that I will die from it.

E. Rambert: La marmotte au collier (1889)

trans. R. L. Hewitt: The Marmot with the Collar (2020)

**The Marmot with the Collar
A Trilingual Edition**

Appendix VIII

**Richard L. Hewitt
Kamuzu Academy, Malawi**

2020 – 2022

**<http://eugene-rambert.snakeshead.org>
<http://philosophical-marmot.snakeshead.org>**
