



The Journey of Martin Nadaud: A Life and Turbulent Times

Gillian Tindall

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An exceptional work of miniaturist history, *The Journey of Martin Nadaud* reconstructs the experiences of an ordinary man who rose to meet the challenges posed by extraordinary times. Through the life of a little known French political figure, Gillian Tindall recreates the world of France's master stone masons-builders of the Pantheon and the Louvre-and brings to life the turbulent atmospheres of Paris and London during the 19th century.

Born into a poor family in the rocky heart of France, tramping hundreds of miles to Paris to find work at age 14, Martin Nadaud became a stone mason, a revolutionary, and a Member of Parliament. After the failure of the 1848 Revolution, he was forced into long and lonely exile in England. Nadaud found work on the building sites of Victorian London and eventually, under an assumed name, became a schoolmaster in Wimbeldon. He made his final triumphant return to his homeland in 1870, as France sat poised on the brink of humiliation, bloodshed, and rebirth.

Publicly, his was a life finally crowned with success. But on a private level Nadaud suffered griefs and losses would leave lasting marks on the man. Examining family letters and personal papers that have lain unread for the last hundred years, Gillian Tindall has constructed a moving and compelling portrait of a working man and his colorful times.

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