(änätō' fräNs), pseud. of Jacques Anatole Thibault (zhäk, tēbō'), 1844–1924, French writer. He was probably the most prominent French man of letters of his time. Among his best-remembered works is L’Île des pingouins (1908, tr. Penguin Island, 1909), an allegorical novel satirizing French history. His early fiction was characterized by a somewhat sentimental charm—e.g., Le Crime de Sylvestre Bonnard (1881, tr. 1906), his first successful novel, and Le Livre de mon ami (1885, tr. My Friend’s Book, 1913), the first of a series of autobiographical novels. Half his work appeared in periodicals and newspapers. After the Dreyfus Affair (in which he supported Zola) his work was slanted more to political satire. The elegance and subtle irony of his style are displayed in Thaïs (1890, tr. 1909), Le Lys rouge (1894, tr. The Red Lily, 1908), Les Dieux ont soif (1912, tr. The Gods Are Athirst, 1913), and La Révolte des anges (1914, tr. The Revolt of the Angels, 1914). His liaison with Mme de Caillavet, lasting 27 years, had a profound influence on his work; she spurred his ambition and saved him from material concern. In 1896 he was elected to the French Academy, and he was awarded the 1921 Nobel Prize in Literature.

See biographies by J. J. Brousson (tr. 1925) and D. Tylden-Wright (1967); Cerf, B., Anatole France: The Degeneration of a Great Artist (1926); Ségur, N., Conversations with Anatole France (tr. 1926); Pouquet, J. M., The Last Salon (tr. 1927).
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