

EDWARDS HENRY SUTHERLAND

OLD AND NEW PARIS: ITS
HISTORY, ITS PEOPLE, AND
ITS PLACES, V. 1

Henry Edwards

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Its People, and Its Places, v. 1**

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H. Sutherland Edwards

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CHAPTER I

PARIS: A GENERAL GLANCE

“PARIS,” said Heinrich Heine, “is not simply the capital of France, but of the whole civilised world, and the rendezvous of its most brilliant intellects.” The art and literature of Europe were at that time represented in Paris by such men as Ary Scheffer, the Dutch painter, Rossini, the Italian composer, the cosmopolitan Meyerbeer, and Heine himself. Towards the close of the eighteenth century most of the European Courts, with those of Catherine II. and Frederick the Great prominent among them, were regularly supplied with letters on Parisian affairs by Grimm, Diderot, and other writers of the first distinction, who, in their serious moments, contributed articles to the *Encyclopédie*. At a much remoter period Paris was already one of the most famous literary capitals of Europe; nor was it renowned for its literature alone. Its art, pictorial and sculptural, was also celebrated, and still more so its art manufactures; while of recent years the country of Auber and Gounod, of Bizet, Massenet and Saint-Saëns, has played a leading part in the world of music. Paris, too, has from the earliest times been a centre of science and philosophy. Here Abélard lectured, and here the first hospitals were established. Then, again, Paris has a military history of singular interest and variety. It has been oftener torn within its walls by civic conflicts, and attacked from without by the invader, than any other European city; while none has undergone so many regular sieges as the capital of the country of which Frederick the Great used to say that, if he ruled it, not a shot should be fired in Europe without his permission.

Paris is at once the most ancient and the most modern capital in Europe. Great are the changes it has undergone since it first took form, eighteen centuries ago, as a fortress or walled town on an island in the middle of the Seine; and at every period of its history we find some chronicler dwelling on the disappearance of ancient landmarks. Whole quarters are known to have been pulled down and rebuilt under the second Empire. But ever since the Revolution of 1789, under each successive form of government and in almost every district, straggling lanes have been giving way gradually to wide streets and stately boulevards, and suburb after suburb has been merged into the great city.

The Chaussée d’Antin was at the end of the last century a chaussée in fact as well as in name: a mere high-road, that is to say; and there were people living under the government of Louis-Philippe who claimed to have shot rabbits on the now densely populated Boulevard Montmartre.

The greatest changes, however, in the general physiognomy of Paris date from the Revolution, when, in the first place, as if by way of symbol, the hated fortress was demolished in which so many victims of despotism had languished. “Athens,” says Victor Hugo, “built the Parthenon, but Paris destroyed the Bastille.” In the days when the great State prison was still standing, the broad, well-built Rue Saint-Antoine, in its immediate neighbourhood, used to be pointed to by antiquarians as covering the ground where King Henry II. was mortally wounded in a tournament by Montgomery, an officer in the Scottish Guard. It was there, too, that, after the death of their protector, the “minions” of Henry II. slaughtered one another.

The now thickly inhabited Place des Victoires, where stands the statue of Louis XIV., lasting monument of kingly pride and popular adulation, was at one time the most dangerous part of the capital. In the open space now enclosed by lordly mansions and commodious warehouses thieves and murderers held their nightly assemblies, or even in the face of day committed depredations on the

passers-by. “Could a better site have been chosen,” asks an historian of the last century, “for the effigy of that royal robber, born for the ruin of his subjects and the disturbance of Europe: who aimed at universal monarchy and sacrificed the wealth and happiness of a whole kingdom to pursue an empty shadow; who lived a tyrant and died an idiot?”

Not far distant, the Halles, or general markets, stand on the spot where Charles V. made a famous speech against Charles, surnamed the Mischievous, King of Navarre; when the former was hissed and hooted by the mob because he had neither the good looks, the eloquence, nor the reasoning power of his antagonist. It was here, too, that the first dramas were acted in France; and here, significantly enough, that Molière was born.

At the Butte Saint-Roch, now remembered chiefly by the church of the same name, the Maid of Orleans was wounded during the siege of Paris, then in the hands of the English. Joan of Arc was not at this time – not, at least, with the Parisians – the popular heroine she has since become. Detesting Charles VII. and all his supporters, they could not love the inspired girl whose example had restored the courage of the king’s troops. A Parisian of that day, who had witnessed the siege, describes her as a “fiend in woman’s guise.”

The bell may still be heard of Saint-Germain-l’Auxerrois; the very bell, it is asserted, that called the faithful to the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Near the church from which the tragic signal rang forth stands the palace from whose windows Charles IX. fired upon the unhappy Huguenots as they sought safety by swimming across the Seine; and close at hand used to be pointed out another window from which money was thrown to an agitated crowd in order to keep it from attending Molière’s funeral, at which the mob proposed, not to honour the remains of the illustrious dramatist, but to insult them.

It was in the old Rue du Temple that the Duke of Burgundy fell by the hand of his assassin, the Duke of Orleans, only brother of Charles VI., who, though a madman and an idiot, was suffered to remain on the throne; and it was in this same Rue du Temple that Louis XVI. and Marie-Antoinette were confined before being taken to the guillotine. What scenes has not the Place de Grève witnessed! from the burning of witches to the torture of Damiens, and from the atrocious cruelties inflicted upon this would-be regicide to the first executions under the Revolution, when the cry of “A la lanterne!” (to the lamp-post, that is to say, of the Place de Grève) was so frequently heard.

But the most revolutionary spot in this, the most revolutionary capital in the world, is to be found in the gardens of the Palais Royal; those gardens from whose trees Camille Desmoulins plucked the leaves which the besiegers of the Bastille were to have worn in their hats as rallying signals. Here, too, assembled the journeymen printers, who, their newspapers having been suppressed by Charles X., determined, under the guidance of the journalists – their natural leaders on such an occasion – to reply by force to the armed censorship of the Government. Again, in 1848, the Palais Royal Gardens witnessed the first manifestations of discontent, though it was a pistol-shot fired on a fashionable part of the boulevard that precipitated the collision between the insurgents and the troops. The next morning, at breakfast, Louis-Philippe was told that he had better abdicate; and an hour afterwards an old gentleman, with a portfolio under his arm, was seen to take a cab on the Place de la Concorde, and drive off in the direction of Saint-Cloud, whence he reached the coast of Normandy, and in due time the shores of England.

Paris possesses one of the most ancient and one of the most characteristically modern churches in Europe – the venerable Notre-Dame, and in sharp contrast, the fashionable Madeleine, celebrated for the splendour of its essentially mundane architecture, the luxurious attire of its female frequenters, the beauty of its music, and the eloquence of its preachers. The first stone of Notre-Dame was laid, as Victor Hugo puts it, by Tiberius, who, recognising the site of the future cathedral as well-fitted for a temple, began by erecting an altar “to the god Cerennos and to the bull Esus.” In like manner, on the hill of Sainte-Geneviève, where now stands the edifice known as the Pantheon, Mercury was at one time worshipped.

So rich is Paris in historical associations that often the same street, the same spot, recalls two widely different events. Thus the statue of Henri IV. on the Pont-Neuf commemorates the glory of the best and greatest of the French kings, and at the same time marks the very ground where, in the fourteenth century, Jacques de Molay, the Templar, was infamously burned. At No. 14 in the Rue de Béthisy Admiral Coligny died and Sophie Arnould was born. At a house in the Rue des Marais Racine wrote “Bajazet” and “Britannicus” in the room where, fifty years later, the Duchess de Bouillon is said to have poisoned Adrienne Lecouvreur. There was a time when, at the corner of the Rue du Marché des Innocents, a marble slab, inscribed with letters of gold, associated the important year of 1685 with three notable events: the arrival of an embassy from Siam, a visit from the Doge of Genoa, and the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. This strange record has disappeared, together with many other interesting memorials of various shapes and kinds: such, for example, as the iron cauldron in the Cour des Miracles, where, in the name of a whole series of kings who had played tricks with the national currency, and more than once produced national bankruptcy, coiners used to be boiled alive.

As we go further back in the history of Paris, lawlessness on the part of the inhabitants, and cruelty on that of the rulers, seem constantly to increase. Until the reign of Louis XI., Paris was without police, though laws were nominally in force, especially against stealing. Theft was punished much on the principle laid down in the inscription of the sixth century which adorned one of the walls of Lutetia, the Paris of the Romans: “If a thief is caught in the act he must, in the case of a noble, be brought to trial; in the case of a peasant, be hanged on the spot.” The capitular of Charlemagne forbade ecclesiastics to take human life: which did not prevent the abbés of different monasteries from besieging one another or crossing swords when, with their followers, they chanced to meet outside the fortified monasterial walls, whether in the plain or in the public street. The right of private warfare existed in France until 1235.

Paris has undergone atrocious sufferings through war, famine, pestilence, and calamities of all kinds. The Normans, after burning one half of Paris, allowed the remainder to be ransomed with an enormous sum of money. In one of the famines by which Paris in its early days was so often visited, people cast lots as to which should be eaten. The taxes were so excessive that many pretended to be lepers, in order to profit by the exemption accorded in such cases. But it was sometimes not well to be a leper, real or pretended; for it was proclaimed one day to the sound of horn and trumpet that lepers throughout the kingdom should be exterminated: “in consequence of a mixture of herbs and human blood, with which, rolling it up in a linen cloth and tying it to a stone, they poison the wells and rivers.”

How terrible, and often how ridiculous, were the proclamations issued in those days! In front of the Grand-Châtelet six heralds of France, clothed in white velvet, and rod in hand, were wont to announce after a plague, a war, or a famine that there was nothing more to be feared, and that the king would be graciously pleased to receive taxes as before. In the centre of the so-called “town” – Paris in general, that is to say, as distinct from the city – was “la Maubué” (derived, according to Victor Hugo, from *mauvaise fumée*), where Jews innumerable were roasted over fires of pitch and green wood to punish what a chronicler of the time terms their “anthropomancy”; and what the Counsellor de l’Ancre further describes as “the marvellous cruelty they have always shown towards Christians, their mode of life, their synagogue, so displeasing to God, their uncleanness, and their stench.” The unhappy Jews, however, were not the only victims. Close by, at the corner of the Rue du Gros-Chenet, was the place where sorcerers used to be burned. Torture, moreover, in its most hideous forms was practised upon criminals even until the time of the Revolution; which, while introducing the guillotine, abolished, in addition to a variety of other torments, breaking on the wheel, and the beating of criminals to death with the iron bar.

Many of the names, still extant, of the old Paris streets recall the ferocity and the superstition of past times. The Rue de l’Arbre Sec was the Street of the Gibbet, with “Dry Tree” as its familiar name. The Rue d’Enfer, or Hell Street, was so called from a belief that this thoroughfare on the outskirts of Paris, just beyond the Luxemburg Gardens, was haunted by the fiend. In order to put an end to the

scandal by which the whole neighbourhood was alarmed, it occurred to the authorities to make over the street to the Order of Capuchins who, they thought, would know how to deal with their inveterate enemy. The Capuchins accepted, with gratitude, the valuable trust; and thenceforth, whether as the result of some exorcising process or because public confidence had been restored, no more was heard of the visitor from below.

To get a complete idea of the vastness and variety of Paris, it should be seen from the towers of Notre-Dame, the Pantheon, the July Column of the Place de la Bastille, the tower of Saint-Jacques-de-la-Boucherie, the Vendôme Column, the Triumphal Arch, and, finally, the Eiffel Tower. From these different points panoramic views may be obtained which together would form a complete picture of Paris.

The shape of Paris is oval. The longest diameter – east to west – would be drawn from the Gate of Vincennes to the Gate of Auteuil; and the shorter – north to south – from the Gate of Clignancourt to the Gate of Italy.

Paris is divided longitudinally by the course of the Seine, whose windings are scarcely noticed by the observer taking a bird's-eye view. The river looks like a silver thread between two borders of green. These are the plantations of the quays, whose trees, during the last five-and-twenty years, have become as remarkable for their luxuriant growth as for their beauty of form. From the height of our observatory we see the Island of the City, looking like a ship at anchor, with its prow towards the west.

On all sides the summits of religious edifices present themselves: the towers of Notre-Dame, the dome of the Pantheon, the turrets of Saint-Sulpice, the steeple of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, the gilded cupola of the Invalides, and the lofty isolated belfry of Saint-Jacques-de-la-Boucherie.

Following the course of the Seine with careful eye, one may see its twenty-one “ports” – eleven on the right bank, and ten on the left – from Bercy to the Tuileries; also, like slender bars thrown across the river, the twenty-seven bridges connecting the two banks, from the Pont-National to the viaduct of the Point du Jour.

The double line of quays – quadruple, where the islands of St. Louis and of the City divide the river in two – presents an incomparable series of stately structures; such as the Hôtel de Ville, the Palais de Justice, the Louvre, the Mint, the Institute, the Palais Bourbon, and a number of magnificent private mansions.

From the Gothic steeple of the Sainte Chapelle the eye wanders to innumerable domes, built under the influence of the Renaissance; for while the domes have endured, the steeples, so numerous in ancient Paris, have, for the most part, succumbed either to fire or to the vandalism of the renovating architect. It must be remembered, too, that under the reign of Louis XIV. Gothic architecture was proscribed, as recalling “the age of barbarism.” Every new edifice was constructed in the Italian or Italo-Byzantine style. The finest, if not the most ancient, dome that Paris could ever boast was the one which crowned the central pavilion of the Tuileries Palace. The cupola of St. Peter's was the model adopted in the early part of the sixteenth century by all French architects who had studied in Italy, or Italian architects who had settled in France; and the masterpiece of Michael Angelo at Rome was not yet finished when the first stone of the impressive and picturesque Church of Saint-Eustace was laid in 1532 at Paris. Only a few years afterwards the French architect, Philibert de l'Orme, attached to the service of Pope Paul III., returned to Paris, and, beneath the delighted eyes of Queen Catherine de Medicis, worked out the designs which he had formed under the inspiration of Michael Angelo and of Bramante. The dome, however, of Philibert de l'Orme was destined to lose its beauty through the additions made to it by other architects.

Of late years it has been the rule in Paris not to destroy but to preserve the ancient architecture of the city. “Demolish the tower of Saint-Jacques-de-la-Boucherie?” asked Victor Hugo, when, during the reconstruction and prolongation of the Rue Rivoli, the question of keeping it standing or pulling it down was under general discussion: “Demolish the tower of Saint-Jacques-de-la-Boucherie? No! Demolish the architect who suggests such a thing? Yes!”

CHAPTER II

THE EXPANSION OF PARIS

Lutetia —*La Cité*— Lutetia taken by Labienus – The Visit of Julian the Apostate – Besieged by the Franks – The Norman Invasion – Gradual Expansion from the *Ile de la Cité* to the Outer Boulevards – M. Thiers's Line of Outworks.

LUTETIA, the ancient Paris, or Lutetia Parisiorum, as it was called by the Romans, stood in the midst of marshes. The name, derived, suggestively enough, from *lutum*, the Latin for mud, has been invested with a peculiar significance by those stern moralists who see in Paris nothing but a sink of iniquity. Balzac called it a “wen”; and Blucher, when some ferocious member of his staff suggested the destruction of Paris, exclaimed: “Leave it alone; Paris will destroy all France!” By a critic of less severe temperament Paris has been contemptuously described as “the tavern of Europe” —*le cabaret de l'Europe*. Lutetia, however, can afford to smile alike at the slurs of moralists and the sneers of cynics; and the etymology of her name need by no means alarm those of her admirers who will reflect that lilies may spring from mud, and that the richest corn is produced from the blackest soil.

The development of the Lutetia of Cæsar's time into the Paris of our own has occupied many eventful centuries; and the centre of the development may still be seen in that little island of the so-called City —*l'Ile de la Cité*— once known as the Island of Lutetia. As to the dimensions of the ancient Lutetia, neither historians nor geographers are wholly agreed. The germ of Paris is, in any case, to be found in that part of the French capital which has long been known as *la Cité*, and which is the dullest and sleepest part of Paris, just as inversely our “city,” distinctively so called, is the most active and energetic part of London.

The Parisians have always been given to insurrection; and their first rising was made against a ruler who was likely enough to put it down – Julius Cæsar, that is to say. Finding his power defied, Cæsar sent against the Parisians a body of troops, under the command of Labienus, who crushed the rebels in the first battle. Historians give different versions of the engagement, but modern writers are content for the most part to rely on a tradition related by an author of the fourteenth century, Raoul de Presles, who published a French version of Cæsar's account of the Battle of Paris, enriched by notes and comments from his own pen. Labienus, according to Cæsar and Raoul de Presles, was arrested in his first attack by an impassable marsh. Then, simulating a retreat along the left bank of the Seine, he was pursued by the Gauls, in spite of Camulogenes, their cautious leader; who, unable to restrain them, fell with them at last into an ambushade, in which chief and followers all perished.

Raoul de Presles gives some interesting details about the marsh which Labienus, on making his advance against Paris, was unable to cross. Some identify it with the Marshes of the Temple, which formed, on the north of Paris, a continuous semicircle; but Raoul de Presles seems to hold that the marsh which stopped the advance of Labienus protected Lutetia itself: that Lutetia of the Island which sprang from the mud as Venus sprang from the sea. The city of Lutetia was at that time so strong, so entirely shut in by water, that Julius Cæsar himself speaks of the difficulty of reaching it. “But since then,” says Raoul de Presles, “there has been much solidification through gravel, sand, and all kinds of rubbish being cast into it.”

After the victory of Labienus, Lutetia, which the conqueror had destroyed, was quickly rebuilt; and it was then governed as a Roman town. This, however, was in Cæsar's time; and the first description of Lutetia as a city was given by Strabo some fifty years later. Thus it may safely be said that of the original Lutetia nothing whatever is known.

It is certain, nevertheless, that in the new Lutetia, built by the Romans, the most important edifices stood at the western end of the island, including a palace, on whose site was afterwards to

be erected the Palace of the French Kings; while at the eastern end the most striking object was a Temple to Jupiter, in due time to be replaced by the Cathedral of Notre-Dame.

As early as the fourth century Lutetia found favour in the eyes of illustrious visitors; and the Emperor Julian, known as the “Apostate,” when, after defeating seven German kings near Strasburg, he retired to Lutetia for winter quarters, spoke of it, then and for ever afterwards, as his “dear Lutetia.”

“Lutetia lætitia!” – Paris is my joy! – he might, with a certain modern writer, have exclaimed.

Julian is not the only man who, going to Paris for a few months, has stayed there several years; and Julian’s winter quarters of the year 355 so much pleased him that he remained in them until 360. Encouraged, no doubt, by what Julian, in his enthusiasm, told them about the already attractive capital of Gaul, a whole series of Roman emperors visited the city, including Valentinian I., Valentinian II., and Gratian, who left Paris in 379, never to return.

From this date Paris ceased practically to form part of the Roman Empire.

More than a century before (in 245) St. Denis had undergone martyrdom on the banks of the Seine, walking about after decapitation with his head under his arm. This strange tradition had probably its origin in a picture by some simple-minded painter, who had represented St. Denis carrying his own head like a parcel, because he could think of no more ingenious way of indicating the fate that had befallen the first apostle of Christianity in Gaul; just as St. Bartholomew has often been painted with his skin hanging across his arm like a loose overcoat.

After the defeat and death of Gratian, the government of Lutetia passed into the hands of her bishops, who often defended the city against the incursions of the barbarians.

In 476 Lutetia was besieged by the Franks, when Childeric gained possession of it, and destroyed for ever all traces of the Roman power. It now became a Frank or French town; and, “Lutetia Parisiorum” being too long a name for the unlettered Goths, was shortened by them first into “Parisius,” and ultimately, by the suppression of the two last syllables, into “Paris.”

In the ninth century Paris underwent the usual Norman invasion, by which so many European countries, from Russia to England, and from England to Sicily – not to speak of the Norman or Varangian Guard of Constantinople – were sooner or later to be visited. The “hardy Norsemen” – or Norman pirates, as the unhappy Parisians doubtless called them – started from the island of Oissel, near Rouen, where they had established themselves in force; and, moving with a numerous fleet towards Paris, laid siege to it, and, on its surrender, first pillaged it and then burnt it to the ground. Three churches alone – those of Saint-Étienne, Saint-Germain-des-Prés, and Saint-Denis, near Paris – were saved, through the payment of a heavy ransom. Sixteen years later, after a sufficient interval to allow of a reconstruction, the Normans again returned, when once more the unhappy city was plundered and burnt. For twenty successive years Paris was the constant prey of the Norman pirates who held beneath their power the whole course of the Seine.

At last, however, a powerful fleet, led by a chief whom the French call “Siegfroi,” but whose real name was doubtless “Siegfried,” sustained a crushing defeat; and, simultaneously with the Norman invaders, the Carolingian Dynasty passed away.

With the advent of the Capet Dynasty a continuous history began for Paris – in due time to become the capital of all France. Ancient Paris was three times burnt to the ground: the Paris which dates from the ninth century has often been conquered, but never burnt.

Ancient Paris, the Lutetia of the Romans, was an island enclosed between two branches of the Seine. But the river overflowed north and south, and it became necessary to construct large ditches or moats, which at once widened the boundaries of the “city.” Gradually the population spread out in every direction; and when, under Louis XIV., the line of boulevards was traced, the extreme limits of the capital were marked by this new enclosure. Then under Louis XVI., the Farmers-General, levying dues (the so-called *octroi*) on imports into the town, established for their own convenience certain “barriers,” at which persons bringing in food or drink were stopped until they had acquitted

themselves of the appointed tax; and, connecting these “barriers,” they thus formed the line of outer boulevards.

Paris extended in time even to these outer boulevards. Then, under Louis-Philippe, at the instigation of his Minister, M. Thiers, a line of fortifications was constructed around Paris; which, proving insufficient in 1870 and 1871 to save the capital from bombardment, has in its turn been surrounded by a circle of outlying detached forts intercommunicating with one another.

The fortifications of Paris have had a strange history. At the time of their being planned, opinions in France were divided as to whether they were intended to oppose a foreign invasion or to control an internal revolt. In all probability they were meant, according to the occasion, to serve either purpose. They were not only designed by M. Thiers, but executed under his orders; and this statesman, who had made a careful study of military science, lived to see them powerless against the German army of investment, and successful against the Paris Commune.

Paris had been invaded and occupied in 1814, and again in 1815. On the other hand, domestic government had been upset in 1830 by a popular insurrection, which, with adequate military force to oppose it, might at once have been suppressed. Was it as patriot, people asked, or as minister of a would-be despotic king, that M. Thiers proposed to raise around Paris a new and formidable wall?

M. Thiers’s circular line of outworks played no part in connection with the successful insurrection of February, 1848, nor with the unsuccessful one of June in the same year. Nor was a single shot fired from the fortifications in connection with the *coup d’État* of 1851. They did not in 1871 prevent the French capital from falling into the hands of the Germans: but they delayed for a considerable time the fatal moment of surrender; and if the army of Metz could have held out a few weeks longer – if, above all, the inhabitants of the inactive south, who practically took no part in the war, had been prepared, to fight with something like the energy displayed by the Confederates against the Federals during the American Civil War – then the fortifications would have justified the views of those who had chiefly regarded them as a valuable defence against foreign invasion.

CHAPTER III

THE LEFT BANK AND THE RIGHT

Paris and London – The *Rive Gauche*– The *Quartier Latin*– The Pantheon
– The Luxemburg – The School of Medicine – The School of Fine Arts – The
Bohemia of Paris – The *Rive Droite*– Paris Proper – “The West End.”

AN effective contrast might be drawn between London and Paris. But, unlike as they are in so many features, physical, moral, and historical, they differ most widely, perhaps, by the relative parts they have played in the history of their respective countries.

The history of Paris is the history of France itself. The decisive battles which brought the great civil and religious wars of the country to an end were fought outside or in the very streets of Paris. It was in Paris that the massacre of St. Bartholomew – darkest blot on the French annals – was perpetrated. The Revolution of 1789, again, was prepared and accomplished in the French capital; and, thenceforth, all those revolutions and *coups d'état* by which the government of the country was periodically to be changed had Paris for their scene. In England, on the other hand, London had little or nothing to do with the battles of the great Rebellion, the Revolution, or the two insurrections by which the Revolution was followed.

But the English visitor to Paris is in the first place struck by external points of dissimilarity. As regards the difference in the structural physiognomy of the two great capitals (less pronounced now than at one time, though Paris is still loftily, and London for the most part dwarfishly, built), it was ingeniously remarked, some fifty years ago, that the architecture of one city seemed vertical, of the other horizontal.

To pass from the houses to their inhabitants, the population of Paris is as remarkable for variety as that of London for uniformity of costume. For in Paris almost every class has its own distinctive dress. In England, and especially in London, the employer and his workmen, the millionaire and the crossing-sweeper, wear coats of the same pattern. In London, again, every work-girl, every market-woman, wears a bonnet imitated more or less perfectly from those worn by ladies of fashion.

When Gavarni first visited London, he was astonished and amused to see an old woman in a bonnet carrying a flower-pot on her head, and made this grotesque figure the subject of a humorous design, with the following inscription beneath it: “*On porte cette année beaucoup de fleurs sur les chapeaux.*”

Shop-girls and work-girls in Paris wear neat white caps instead of ill-made, or, it may be, dilapidated bonnets; though the more aspiring among them reserve the right of appearing in a bonnet on Sundays and holidays. The French workman wears a blouse and a cap, and looks upon the hat as a sign, if not of superiority, at least of pretension.

“Car moi j’ai payé ma casquette,
Et toi, tu n’as pas payé ton chapeau!”

was the burden of a song very popular with the working classes during the revolutionary days of 1848 to 1851.

Owing to the varieties of dress already touched upon, a crowd in Paris presents a less gloomy, less monotonous appearance than the black-coated mobs of London; and in harmony with the greater relief afforded by the different colours of the costumes are the animated gestures of the persons composing the crowd. Observe, indeed, a mere group of persons conversing on no matter what commonplace subject, or idly chatting as they sip their coffee together on the boulevards, and they appear to be engaged in some violent dispute.

To mention yet another point on which Paris differs from London: the most interesting part of Paris lies on the right bank of the Seine, whereas all that is interesting in London lies on the left bank of the Thames.

The left bank of the Seine possesses, however, buildings and streets of historical interest. Here, too, is the quarter of the schools: the Quartier Latin, as it is still called, not by reason of its Roman antiquities, which, except at the Hotel Cluny, would be sought for in vain, but because, in the mediæval period whence the schools for the most part date, even to comparatively modern times, Latin was the language of the student. On the “left bank,” moreover, stand the Institute, the Pantheon or Church of Ste. Geneviève, as, according to the predominance of religion or irreligion, it is alternately called; the Ste. Geneviève Library, the Luxemburg Palace, with its magnificent picture gallery, the School of Medicine, and the School of Fine Arts. Many of the great painters, too, have their studios – often little academies in themselves – on the left bank of the river; while among the famous streets on the “left bank” is that Rue du Bac so often referred to in the chronicles and memoirs of the eighteenth century. The famous Café Procope, again, literary headquarters of the encyclopædists, stands on what is now considered the wrong side of the water. So too does the Odéon Theatre, once the Théâtre Français, where, in modern as well as ancient times, so many dramatic masterpieces have been produced.

On the other hand, there is scarcely on the left bank one good hotel: certainly not one that could put forward the slightest pretension to being fashionable. Nor, except in the case of professional men connected with the hospitals or the schools, would anyone mixing in fashionable society care to give his address anywhere on the left bank.

Jules Janin, one of the most distinguished writers of his time, and one of the most popular men in the great world of Paris from the reign of Louis Philippe until that of Napoleon III., did, it is true, live for years in a house close to the Luxemburg Gardens. But Janin possessed a certain originality, and thought more of what suited himself than of what pleased others. On one occasion, having engaged to fight a duel, he failed to put in an appearance by reason of the inclemency of the weather and his disinclination to get out of bed at the early hour for which the meeting had been fixed. Such a man would not be ashamed to live on the left bank if he happened to have found a place there which harmonised with his tastes.

Apart, however, from all question of inclination and fashion, it is really inconvenient to anyone who mingles in Parisian life to live on the left bank of the Seine, remote as it is from the boulevards, the Champs Élysées, the best hotels, the best restaurants, the best cafés, and the best theatres.

At the same time, no sort of comparison can be established between the transpontine districts of Paris and those of London. In London, no one who is anyone would dream of living “on the other side of the water,” where neither picture galleries, nor public gardens, nor artists’ studios, nor famous streets, nor great houses of business, nor even magnificent shops are to be met with. Even Jules Janin, had he been an Englishman, would have declined to live in the region of Blackfriars or the Waterloo Road.

On the right bank of the Seine – the Paris West End, and something more – we find much greater concentration than in the West End of London. Here, indeed, all that is most important in the artistic, financial, and fashionable life of the capital may be found within a small compass.

The Théâtre Français is close to the Bourse, and the Bourse to the Boulevard des Italiens, which leads to the Opera by a line along which stand the finest hotels, the best restaurants in Paris. From the Opera it is no far cry to the Champs Élysées, the Hyde Park of Paris; while, going along the boulevards in the opposite direction, one comes step by step to a seemingly endless series of famous theatres. All the best clubs, too, all the best book-shops and music-shops, are to be found on the most fashionable part of the boulevard, extending from the Boulevard des Italiens, past the Opera House, to the adjacent Church of the Madeleine: architecturally a repetition of the Bourse, as though commerce and religion demanded temples of the same character.

CHAPTER IV

NOTRE DAME

The Cathedral of Notre Dame, a Temple to Jupiter – Cæsar and Napoleon
– Relics in Notre Dame – Its History – Curious Legends – “The New Church” –
Remarkable Religious Ceremonies – The Place de Grève – The Days of Sorcery –
Monsieur de Paris – Dramatic Entertainments – Coronation of Napoleon

THERE is no monument of ancient Paris so interesting, by its architecture and its historical associations, as the Cathedral of Notre Dame; which, standing on the site of a Temple to Jupiter, carries us back to the time of the Roman domination and of Julius Cæsar. Here, eighteen centuries later, took place the most magnificent ceremony ever seen within the walls of the actual edifice: the coronation, that is to say, of the modern Cæsar, the conqueror who ascended the Imperial throne of France on the 2nd of December, 1804.

Meanwhile, the strangest as well as the most significant things have been witnessed inside the ancient metropolitan church of Paris.

Among the curious objects deposited from time to time on the altar of Notre Dame may be mentioned a wand which Louis VII. inscribed with the confession of a fault he was alleged to have committed against the Church. Journeying towards Paris, the king had been surprised by the darkness of night, and had supped and slept at Créteil, on the invitation of the inhabitants. The village, inhabitants and all, belonged to the Chapter of Notre Dame; and the canons were much irritated at the king's having presumed to accept hospitality indirectly at their cost. When, next day, Louis, arriving at Paris, went, after his custom, to the cathedral in order to render thanks for his safe journey, he was astonished to find the gates of Notre Dame closed. He asked for an explanation, whereupon the canons informed him that since, in defiance of the privileges and sacred traditions of the Church, he had dared at Créteil to sup, free of cost to himself and at the expense of the flock of Notre Dame, he must now consider himself outside the pale of Christianity. At this terrible announcement the king groaned, sighed, wept, and begged forgiveness, humbly protesting that but for the gloom of night and the spontaneous hospitality of the inhabitants – so courteous that a refusal on his part would have been most uncivil – he would never have touched that fatal supper. In vain did the bishop intercede on his behalf, offering to guarantee to the canons the execution of any promise which the king might make in expiation of his crime; it was not until the prelate placed in their hands a couple of silver candlesticks as a pledge of the monarch's sincerity that they would open to him the cathedral doors; and even then his Majesty had to pay the cost of his supper at Créteil, and by way of confession, to deposit on the altar of Notre Dame the now historical wand.

Louis XI., more devout even than the devout Louis VII., was equally unable to inspire his clergy with confidence. Before the discovery of printing, in 1421, manuscript books at Paris, as elsewhere, were so rare and so dear that students had much trouble in procuring even those which were absolutely necessary for their instruction. Accordingly, when Louis XI. wished to borrow from the Faculty of Medicine the writings of Rhases, an Arabian physician, he was required, before taking the book away, to deposit a considerable quantity of plate, besides the signature of a powerful nobleman, who bound himself to see that his Majesty restored the volume.

Among the many legends told in connection with Notre Dame is a peculiarly fantastic one, according to which the funeral service of a canon named Raimond Diocre, famed for his sanctity, was being celebrated by St. Bruno, when, at a point where the clergy chanted the words: *Responde mihi quantas habes iniquitates?* the dead man raised his head in the coffin, and replied: *Iusto Dei judicio accusatus sum.* At this utterance all present took flight, and the ceremony was not resumed till the next day, when for the second time the clergy chanted forth: *Responde mihi*, etc., on which the corpse again

raised its head, and this time answered: *Justo Dei judicio judicatus sum*. Once more there was a panic and general flight. The scene, with yet another variation, was repeated on the third day, when the dead, who had already declared himself to have been “accused” and “judged” by Heaven, announced that he had been condemned: *Justo Dei judicio condemnatus sum*. Witness of this terrible scene, St. Bruno renounced the world, did penance, became a monk, and founded the Order of Les Chartreux.

The incident has been depicted by Lesueur, who received a commission to record on canvas the principal events in the life of the saint.

It is looked upon as certain by the historians of Paris that the Cathedral of Notre Dame stands on the site formerly occupied by a heathen temple. But how and when the transformation took place is not known, though the period is marked more or less precisely by the date of the introduction of Christianity into France. Little confidence, however, is to be placed in those authors who declare that the Paris cathedral was founded in the middle of the third century by St. Denis, the first apostle of Christianity in France; for at the very time when St. Denis was preaching the Gospel to the Parisians the severest edicts were still in force against Christians. It cannot, then, be supposed that the officials of the Roman Empire would have tolerated the erection of a Christian church. It can be shown, however, that under the episcopacy of Bishop Marcellus, about the year 375, there already existed a Christian church in the city of Paris, on the borders of the Seine and on the eastern point of the island, where a Roman temple had formerly stood. Towards the end of the sixth century the cathedral was composed of two edifices, close together, but quite distinct. One of these was dedicated to the Virgin, the other to St. Stephen the Martyr. Gradually, however, the Church of our Lady was extended and developed until it touched and embraced the Church of St. Stephen. The Church of St. Mary, as many called it, was the admiration of its time. Its vaulted roofs were supported by columns of marble, and Venantius Fortunatus, Bishop of Poitiers, declares that this was the first church which received the rays of the sun through glass windows. More than once it is said to have been burnt during the incursions of the Normans. But this is a matter of mere tradition, and the destruction of the cathedral by fire, whether it ever occurred or not, is held in any case to have been only partial.

In the twelfth century Notre Dame was, it is true, known as the “New Church.” This appellation, however, served only to distinguish it from the smaller Church of St. Stephen (St. Etienne), which had been left in its original state, without addition or renovation.

The plan of the cathedral has, like that of other cathedrals, been changed from century to century; but in spite of innumerable modifications, the original plan asserts itself. From the fourteenth to the seventeenth century the Church of Notre Dame was left nearly untouched. Then, however, in obedience to the wishes of Louis XIII., it was subjected to a whole series of pretended embellishments, for which “mutilations” would be a fitter word. In the eighteenth century, between the years 1773 and 1787, damaging “improvements,” and “restorations” of the most destructive kind, were introduced; until at the time of the Revolution the idea was entertained of depriving the venerable edifice altogether of its religious character. The outside statues were first threatened, but Chaumette saved them by dwelling upon their supposed astronomical and mythological importance. He declared before the Council of the Commune that the astronomer Dupuis (author of “L’origine de tous les Cultes”) had founded his planetary system on the figures adorning one of the lateral doors of the church. In conformity with Chaumette’s representations, the Commune spared all those images to which a symbolic significance might be attached, but pulled down and condemned the statues of the French kings which ornamented the gallery and the principal façade. The cathedral at the same time lost its name. Temple of Reason it was now, until the re-establishment of public worship, to be called. Then new mutilations were constantly perpetrated, until at last, in 1845, the work of restoring the cathedral was placed in competent hands, when, thanks to the learning, the labour, and the taste of MM. Lassus and Viollet-Leduc, Notre Dame was made what it still remains – one of the most magnificent specimens of mediæval architecture to be found in Europe. Why describe the ancient monument,

when it is so much simpler to represent through drawings and engravings its most characteristic features?

Some of the most interesting, most curious facts of its history may, however, be appropriately related. The Count of Toulouse, Raymond VII., accused of having supported the Albigenses by his arms and of sharing their errors, was absolved in Notre Dame from the crime of heresy after he had formally done penance in his shirt, with naked arms and feet, before the altar.

An attempt was made by a thief to steal from the altar of Notre Dame its candlesticks. After concealing himself in the roof, the man, aided by other members of his band, let down ropes, and, encircling the silver ornaments, drew them upwards to his hiding-place. In performing this exploit, however, he set fire to the hangings of the church, by which much damage was caused.

The interior of Notre Dame has in different centuries been turned to the most diverse purposes. Here at one time, in view of Church festivals, vendors of fruits and flowers held market. At other times religious mysteries, and even mundane plays, have been performed; while in the thirteenth century the Paris cathedral was the recognised asylum of all who suffered in mind or body.

A particular part of the building was reserved for patients, who were attended by physicians in holy orders. It was provided by a special edict that this hospital within a church should be kept lighted at night by ten lamps. All attempts, however, to keep order were in vain; and in consequence of the noise made by the invalids while religious service was going on, they were, one and all, excluded from the cathedral.

During the troubles caused by the captivity of King John the citizens of Paris made a vow to offer every year to Our Lady a wax candle as long as the boundary-line of the city. Every year the municipal body carried the winding taper, with much pomp, to the Church of Notre Dame, where it was received by the bishop and the canons in solemn assembly. The pious vow was kept for five hundred and fifty years, but ceased to be fulfilled at the time of the religious wars and of the League. In 1603 Paris had gained such dimensions that the ancient vow could scarcely be renewed, and in place of it, François Miron, the celebrated Provost of the Merchants, offered a silver lamp, made in the form of a ship (principal object in the arms of Paris), which he pledged himself to keep burning night and day. In Notre Dame, too, were suspended the principal flags taken from the enemy, though it was only during war time that they were thus exhibited. When peace returned, the flags were put carefully out of sight. Notre Dame, while honouring peace, was itself the scene of frequent disturbances, caused by quarrels between high religious functionaries on questions of precedence. These disputes often occurred when the representatives of foreign Powers wished to take a higher position than in the opinion of their hosts was due to them. It must be noted, too, that at Notre Dame King Henry VI. of England, then ten years old, was crowned King of France.

Under the Regency the cathedral of Paris was the scene of one of the most daring exploits performed by Cartouche's too audacious band. A number of the robbers had entered the church in the early morning, and had succeeded in climbing up and concealing themselves behind the tapestry of the roof. Their pockets were filled with stones, and at a pre-concerted signal, just as the priest began to read the first verse of the second Psalm in the service of Vespers, they shouted in a loud voice, threw their missiles among the congregation, and cried out that the roof was falling in. A frightful panic ensued, during which the confederates of the thieves overhead helped themselves to watches, purses, and whatever valuables they could find on the persons of the terrified worshippers.

It was at Notre Dame, on the 10th of November, 1793, that the Feast of Reason was celebrated, the Goddess of Reason being impersonated by a well-known actress, the beautiful Mlle. Maillard.

The space in front of Notre Dame was at one time the scene of as many executions as the Place de Grève, which afterwards became and for some centuries remained the recognised execution ground of the French capital.

It was on the Place de Grève that Victor Hugo's heroine, the charming Esmeralda, suffered death, while the odious monk, Claude Frollo, gazed upon her with cruel delight, till the bell-ringer,

Quasimodo, who, in his own humbler and purer way, loved the unhappy gipsy girl, seized him with his powerful arms, and flung him down headlong to the flags at the foot of the cathedral.

In 1587, under the reign of Henry IV., Dominique Miraille, an Italian, and a lady of Étampes, his mother-in-law, were condemned to be hanged and afterwards burnt in front of Notre Dame for the crime of magic. The Parisians were astonished at the execution: “for,” says L’Étoile, in his *Journal*, “this sort of vermin have always remained free and without punishment, especially at the Court, where those who dabble in magic are called philosophers and astrologers.” With such impunity was the black art practised at this period, that Paris contained in 1572, according to the confession of their chief, some 30,000 magicians.

The popularity of sorcery in Paris towards the end of the sixteenth century is easily accounted for by the fact that kings, queens, and nobles habitually consulted astrologers. Catherine de Medicis was one of the chief believers in all kinds of superstitious practices; and a column used to be shown in the flower-market from which she observed at night the course of the stars. This credulous and cruel queen wore round her waist a skin of vellum, or, as some maintained, the skin of a child, inscribed with figures, letters, and other characters in different colours, as well as a talisman, prepared for her by the astrologer Regnier, an engraving of which may be found in the *Journal of Henry III*. By this talisman, composed as it was of human blood, goats’ blood, and several kinds of metals melted and mixed together, under certain constellations associated with her birth, Catherine imagined that she could rule the present and foresee the future.

Magic was employed not only for self-preservation, but with the most murderous intentions. When it was used to destroy an enemy, his effigy was prepared in wax; and the thrusts and stabs inflicted upon the figure were supposed to be felt by the original. A gentleman named Lamalle, having been executed on the Place de Grève in 1574, and a wax image, made by the magician Cosmo Ruggieri, having been found upon him, Catherine de Medicis, who patronised this charlatan, feared that the wax figure might have been designed against the life of Charles IX., and that Ruggieri would therefore be condemned to death. Lamalle had maintained that the figure was meant to represent the “Great Princess”: Queen Marguerite, that is to say. But Cosmo Ruggieri was condemned, all the same, to the galleys; though his sentence – thanks, no doubt, to the personal influence of Catherine de Medicis – was never executed. Nicholas Pasquier, who gives a long account of Ruggieri in his *Public Letters*, declares that he died “a very wicked man, an atheist, and a great magician,” adding that he made another wax figure, on which he poured all kinds of venoms and poisons in order to bring about the death of “our great Henry.” But he was unable to attain his end; and the king, “in his sweet clemency, forgave him.”

When, after the Barricades, Henry III. left Paris, the priests of the League erased his name from the prayers of the Church, and framed new prayers for those princes who had become chiefs of the League. They prepared at the same time images of wax, which they placed on many of the altars of Paris, and then celebrated forty masses during forty hours. At each successive mass the priest, uttering certain mystic words, pricked the wax image, until finally, at the fortieth mass, he pierced it to the heart, in order to bring about the death of the king. Thirteen years later, under the reign of Henry IV., the Duke de Biron, who had his head cut off in the Bastille, publicly accused Laffin, his confidant and denunciator, of being in league with the devil, and of possessing wax figures which spoke. Marie de Medicis employed, even whilst in exile, a magician named Fabroni, much hated by Richelieu, for whom Fabroni had predicted a speedy death.

It was in front of Notre Dame that by order of the princes, dukes, peers, and marshals of France, assembled in the Grand Chamber of Parliament, Damien was condemned to do penance before being tortured and torn to pieces. He was to be tormented, by methods no matter how barbarous, until he revealed his accomplices, and was also required to make the *amende honorable* before the principal door of Notre Dame. Thither, in his shirt, he was conveyed on a sledge, with a lighted wax candle in his hand weighing two pounds; and there he went down on his knees, and confessed that

“wickedly and traitorously he had perpetrated the most detestable act of wounding the king in the right side with the stab of a knife”; that he repented of the deed, and asked pardon for it of God, of the king, and of justice. After this he was to be carried on the sledge to the Place de Grève, where, on the scaffold, he was to undergo a variety of tortures, copied from those appointed for the punishment of Ravillac. Finally, his goods were to be confiscated, the house where he was born pulled down, and his name stigmatised as infamous, and for ever forbidden thenceforth, under the severest penalties, to be borne by any French subject.

Damiens had been educated far above his rank. His moral character, however, was peculiarly bad. His life had been one perpetual oscillation between debauchery and fanaticism. His changeableness of disposition was noticed during his imprisonment at Versailles. Sometimes he seemed thoroughly composed, as though he had suffered nothing and had nothing to suffer; at other times he burst into sudden and vehement passions, and attempted to kill himself against the walls of his dungeon or with the chains on his feet. As in one of his furious fits he had tried to bite off his tongue, his teeth were all drawn, in accordance with an official order.

When the sentence was read to him, Damiens simply remarked, “La journée sera rude.” Every kind of torture was applied to him to extort confessions. His guards remained at his side night and day, taking note of the cries and exclamations which escaped him in the midst of his sufferings. But Damiens had nothing to confess, and on the 28th of January he was carried, with his flesh lacerated and charred by fire, his bones broken, to the place of execution.

Immediately after his self-accusation in front of Notre Dame he was taken to the Place de Grève, where the hand which had held the knife was burnt with the flames of sulphur. Then he was torn with pincers in the arms and legs, the thighs and the breast, and into his wounds were poured red hot lead and boiling oil, with pitch, wax, and sulphur melted and mixed. The sufferer endured these tortures with surprising energy. He cried out from time to time, “Lord, give me patience and strength.” “But he did not blaspheme,” says Barbier, in his narrative of the scene, “nor mention any names.”

The end of the hideous tragedy was the dismemberment. The four traditional horses were not enough. Two more were added, and still the operation did not advance. Then the executioner, filled with horror, went to the neighbouring Hôtel de Ville to ask permission to use “the axe at the joints.” He was, according to Barbier, sharply rebuked by the king’s attendants, though in an account of the tragedy contributed at the time to the *Gentleman’s Magazine* (and derived from the gazettes published in Holland, where there was no censorship), the executioner was blamed for having delayed the employment of the axe so long.

There are conflicting accounts, too, as to the burning of the prisoner’s calves. It was said on the one hand that the *garde des sceaux*, Machault, caused red hot pincers to be applied in his presence to Damiens’ legs at the preliminary examination; but another version declares this to be a mistake, and ascribes the burning of his legs to the king’s attendants, who, seeing their master stabbed, are represented as punishing the assassin by the unlikely method of applying torches to his calves.

The torture of Damiens lasted many hours, and it was not till midnight, when both his legs and one of his arms had been torn off, that his remaining arm was dragged from the socket. The life of the poor wretch could scarcely have lasted so long as did the execution of the sentence passed upon him. A report of the trial was published by the Registrar of the Parliament; but the original record being destroyed, it is impossible to test the authenticity of this report. It fills four small volumes, and is entitled “Pièces Originales et Procèdes du Procès fait à Robert François Damiens, Paris, 1757.”

Ivan the Terrible, when his digestion was out of order, and he felt unequal to the effort of breakfasting, used to revive his jaded appetite by visiting the prisons and seeing criminals tortured. George Selwyn claimed to have made amends for his want of feeling in attending to see Lord Lovat’s head cut off by going to the undertaker’s to see it sewn on again, when, in presence of the decapitated corpse, he exclaimed with strange humour, and in imitation of the voice and manner of the Lord Chancellor at the trial: – “My Lord Lovat, your lordship may rise.” This dilettante in the sufferings

of others is known to have paid a visit to Paris for the express purpose of seeing Damiens torn in pieces. On the day of the execution, according to Mr. Jesse ("George Augustus Selwyn and his contemporaries"), "he mingled with the crowd in a plain undress and bob wig," when a French nobleman, observing the deep interest he took in the scene, and supposing from the simplicity of his attire that he was a person of the humbler ranks in life, chose to imagine that the stranger must infallibly be an executioner. "Eh, bien, monsieur," he said, "êtes-vous arrivé pour voir ce spectacle?" "Oui, monsieur." "Vous êtes bourreau?" "Non, non, monsieur, je n'ai pas cet honneur; je ne suis qu'un amateur."

Wraxall tells the story somewhat differently. "Selwyn's nervous irritability," he says, "and anxious curiosity to observe the effect of dissolution on men, exposed him to much ridicule, not unaccompanied with censure. He was accused of attending all executions, disguised sometimes, to elude notice, in female attire. I have been assured that in 1756 (or 1757) he went over to Paris expressly for the purpose of witnessing the last moments of Damiens, who expired in the most acute tortures for having attempted the life of Louis XV. Being among the crowd, and attempting to approach too near the scaffold, he was at first repulsed by one of the executioners, but having explained that he had made the journey from London solely with a view to be present at the punishment and death of Damiens, the man immediately caused the people to make way, exclaiming at the same time: – 'Faites place pour monsieur; c'est un Anglais et un amateur.'"

According to yet another story on this doleful subject, for which Horace Walpole is answerable, the Paris executioner, styled "Monsieur de Paris," was surrounded by a number of provincial executioners, "Monsieur de Rouen," "Monsieur de Bordeaux," and so on. Selwyn joined the group, and on explaining to the Paris functionary that he was from London, was saluted with the exclamation, "Ah, monsieur de Londres!"

Among the minor celebrations of which the interior of Notre Dame has been the scene may be mentioned a mass said some twenty years before the Revolution for the broken arm of the famous dancer, Madeleine Guimard. One evening, when the fascinating Madeleine was performing in *Les fêtes de l'Hymen et de l'Amour*, a heavy cloud fell from the theatrical heavens upon one of her slender arms and broke it. Then it was that the services of the Church were invoked on behalf of the popular ballerina.

The interesting and graceful, though far from beautiful, Madeleine, was justly esteemed by the clergy; for during the severe winter of 1768 she had given to every destitute family in her neighbourhood enough to live on for a year, at the same time paying personal visits to each of them. "Not yet Magdalen repentant, but already Magdalen charitable!" exclaimed a famous preacher, in reference to Madeleine Guimard's good action. "The hand," he added, "which knows so well how to give alms will not be rejected by St. Peter when it knocks at the gate of Paradise."

The Paris Cathedral has, strangely enough, been the scene, both in ancient and modern times, of dramatic performances. There, in the olden days, "Mysteries" were represented; and there, in 1790, a melodrama was played, entitled "The Taking of the Bastille," and described as "specially written for Notre Dame." This performance was followed by a grand Te Deum, sung by members of the Opera, though one of the first effects of the Revolution was to drive the best singers away from Paris. Soon afterwards, music, history, and religion were once more to be intermingled. This was in August, 1792. when the last day of the French Monarchy (August 10) was at hand.

The most imposing ceremony ever witnessed within the walls of Notre Dame was, as before said, the Coronation of Napoleon Bonaparte, at the hands of the Pope, on Sunday, the 2nd December, 1804. The Holy Father set out with his retinue at ten o'clock in the morning, and much earlier than the Emperor, in order that the ecclesiastical and royal processions should not clash. He was accompanied by a numerous body of clergy, gorgeously attired and resplendently ornamented, whilst his escort consisted of detachments of the Imperial Guard. A richly decorated portico had been erected all around the Place Notre Dame to receive on their descent from the royal carriages the sovereigns and

princes who were to proceed to the ancient basilica. Already, when the Pope entered the church, there were assembled within it the deputies of the towns, the representatives of the magistracy and the army, the sixty bishops, with their clergy, the Senate, the Legislative Body, the Council of State, the Princes of Nassau, Hesse, and Baden, the Arch-Chancellor of the Germanic Empire, and the ministers of the different European Powers. The great door of Notre Dame had been closed, because the back of the Imperial throne was placed against it. The church, therefore, was entered by the side doors, situated at the two extremities of the transept. When the Pope, preceded by the cross and by the insignia of his office, appeared, the whole assembly rose from their seats, and a body of five hundred instrumentalists and vocalists gave forth with sublime effect the sacred chant, *Tu es Petrus*. The Pope walked slowly towards the altar, before which he knelt, and then took his place on a throne that had been prepared for him to the right of the altar. The sixty prelates of the French Church presented themselves in succession to salute him, and the arrival of the Imperial family was now awaited.

The cathedral had been magnificently adorned. Hangings of velvet, sprinkled with golden bees, descended from roof to pavement. At the foot of the altar stood two plain arm-chairs which the Emperor and Empress were to occupy before the ceremony of crowning. At the western extremity of the church, and just opposite the altar, raised upon a staircase of twenty-four steps and placed between imposing columns, stood an immense throne – an edifice within an edifice – on which the Emperor and Empress were to seat themselves when crowned.

The Emperor did not arrive until considerably after the hour appointed, and the position of the Pope was a painful one during this long delay, which was due to the excessive precautions taken to prevent the two processions from getting mixed. The Emperor set out from the Tuileries in a carriage which seemed entirely made of glass, and which was surmounted by gilt genii bearing a crown. He was attired in a costume designed expressly for the occasion, in the style of the sixteenth century. He wore a plumed hat and a short mantle. He was not to assume the Imperial robes until he had entered the cathedral. Escorted by his marshals on horseback, he advanced slowly along the Rue St. Honoré, the Quays of the Seine, and the Place Notre Dame, amidst the acclamations of immense crowds, delighted to see their favourite general at last invested with Imperial power. On reaching the portico, already spoken of, Napoleon alighted from his carriage and walked towards the cathedral. Beside him was borne the grand crown, in the form of a tiara, modelled after that of Charlemagne. Up to this point Napoleon had worn only the crown of the Cæsars: a simple golden laurel. Having entered the church to the sound of solemn music, he knelt, and then passed on to the chair which he was to occupy before taking possession of the throne.

The ceremony then began. The sceptre, the sword, and the Imperial robe had been placed on the altar. The Pope anointed the Emperor on the forehead, the arms, and the hands; then blessed the sword, with which he girded him, and the sceptre, which he placed in his hand; and finally proposed to take up the crown. Napoleon, however, saved him all possible trouble in the matter by crowning himself.

“This action,” says M. Thiers, in his description of the ceremony, “was perfectly appreciated by all present, and produced an indescribable effect,” though it may be doubted whether in crowning himself Napoleon departed from the traditional practice at Imperial coronations. We have at all events in our own time seen, at several coronations, emperors, and even kings, assert the autocratic principle by taking the crown from the hands of the officiating prelate to place it on their own head without his aid.

Napoleon, taking the crown of the Empress, now approached Josephine, and as she knelt before him, placed it with visible tenderness upon her head, whereupon she burst into tears.

He next proceeded towards the grand throne, and, as he ascended it, was followed by his brothers, bearing the train of his robe. Then the Pope, according to custom, advanced to the foot of the throne to bless the new sovereign, and to chant the very words which greeted Charlemagne in the basilica of St. Peter, when the Roman clergy suddenly proclaimed him Emperor of the West:

“Vivat in æternum semper Augustus!” At this chant shouts of “Vive l’Empereur!” resounded through the arches of Notre Dame, while the thunder of cannon announced to all Paris the solemn moment of Napoleon’s consecration.

The coronation of Napoleon has been made the subject of a masterpiece by David, whose work may be seen, and with interest studied, in the galleries of Versailles. The moment chosen by the painter is that at which the Emperor, after crowning himself with his own hands, is about to place the crown on the head of Josephine, in presence of the Pope, the cardinals, the prelates, the princes, the princesses, and the great dignitaries of the Empire. There are no less than 150 figures in this composition, and the portraits, conscientiously painted, are, for the most part, very like. The two principal figures occupy the centre of the picture. Napoleon is standing up on one of the steps of the altar, clad in a long tunic of white satin and a heavy cloak of crimson velvet sprinkled with golden bees. His hands are raised in the air, holding the crown which he is about to place on the head of the Empress. Josephine is kneeling on a cushion of violet velvet, attired in a white dress, above which she wears a crimson cloak sprinkled with bees, held up by Mme. de la Rochefoucauld, and Mme. de Lavalette, both in white dresses. Behind the Emperor is the Pope, seated in an arm-chair and holding up his right hand in sign of blessing.

David had originally represented Pius VII. with his hands on his knees, as if taking no part in the solemn scene. Napoleon, however, insisted on the painter giving him the attitude just described. “I did not bring him here from such a distance to do nothing!” he exclaimed.

“In his picture of the coronation,” says M. Arsène Houssaye, “David, carried away by his enthusiasm, has reached the inaccessible summits of the ideal. His Napoleon is radiant with health, strength, and genius. The face of Josephine beams with conjugal tenderness and exquisite grace. The group formed by the Pope and the clergy is exceedingly fine.”

The execution of this picture occupied David four years. When it was finished Napoleon went to see it, not, by any means, for the first time, and said to the painter: “Very good; very good indeed, David. You have exactly seized my idea. You have made me a French knight. I am obliged to you for transmitting to future ages the proof of an affection I wished to give to her who shares with me the responsibilities of government.”

When the picture was exhibited a friendly critic pointed out to the painter that he had made the Empress younger and prettier than she really was. “Go and tell her so!” was the reply.

CHAPTER V

ST. – GERMAIN-L'AUXERROIS

The Massacre of St. Bartholomew – The Events that preceded it – Catherine de Medicis – Admiral Coligny – “The King-Slayer” – The Signal for the Massacre – Marriage of the Duc de Joyeuse and Marguerite of Lorraine.

ONE of the oldest and most interesting churches in Paris is that of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, which, dating from the last days of Lutetia, before the name of Parisius, or Paris, had been finally adopted for the gradually expanding city, is closely associated with the most terrible event in French history. Still, at the present time, in a perfect state of preservation, it was built about the year 572; and just one thousand years afterwards, in 1572, the signal for the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day was sounded from its belfry. Philip II., King of Spain, Pope Pius IV., and the Guises, especially Cardinal de Lorraine, were the authors of the massacre. Catherine de Medicis and her son Charles IX., King of France, were but accomplices and executants in the atrocious plot. Before speaking of the principal incidents of this ghastly day, a glance is necessary at the events which preceded it. Charles IX. and his sister Elizabeth, wife of Philip II., had brought together at Bayonne, in 1565, all the most distinguished members of the French Court. But the dominating figure of the assembly was the too famous Duke of Alva, worthy confidant and adviser of Philip II. Catherine de Medicis had frequent conferences with the duke, and in spite of the secrecy with which they were conducted, certain words reached the ear of the Prince of Béarn, afterwards Henry IV., whose extreme youth disarmed all suspicion, but who perceived, nevertheless, that the object of these conversations was to determine the best method of destroying the Protestants in France. The young prince hastened to tell the Queen of Navarre, his mother, and she informed the Prince de Condé and Admiral de Coligny, chiefs of the Protestant party, who at once took counsel as to how the blow with which they were threatened could be averted.

The next year, in 1566, the assembly at Moulins furnished an opportunity for bringing about a reconciliation between the Catholic house of Guise and the Protestant house of Châtillon. But so little sincerity was there in the compact of peace, that just after the assembly had broken up Coligny was apprised that a plot had been formed for his assassination. He complained to the king, and was now more than ever on his guard.

The whole of the Protestant party became filled with mistrust; and observing this, Catherine de Medicis determined to strike her blow at once. It was difficult, of course, to raise troops without alarming the Huguenots. But it so chanced that an army sent by the King of Spain to the Low Countries was then marching along the French frontiers. As if apprehensive for the safety of her dominions, Catherine raised 6,000 Swiss troops, and after the Spaniards had passed towards their destination, marched them to the centre of the kingdom. Everything seemed to favour Catherine's designs. But someone having informed the Calvinists of the peril which threatened them, they assembled in the house of the admiral at Châtillon, and there resolved to seize upon the Court, which was enjoying the fine weather at Monceaux, in Brie, without the least precaution for its own safety; as though it had nothing to fear from that body of men whose destruction it notoriously meditated. The design of the Protestants was to drive away the Guises, and place the king and queen at the head of their own party. The attempt, however, failed through the firm attitude of the Swiss troops, who repulsed the attack of Andelot and La Rochefoucauld, and brought the king from Meaux to Paris surrounded by a strong battalion.

The war began again, and the Calvinists, commanded by the Prince de Condé, were defeated, the prince himself being slain, or rather assassinated, during the conflict. He had just surrendered to

Dargence, when Montesquieu, captain of the Duke of Anjou's guard, on learning who he was, shot him in the head, exclaiming, "Tuez! Tuez, Mordieu!"

The Prince of Béarn now became the chief of the Protestant party, and as such, directed their forces at the Battle of Jarnac, with Coligny as second in command. The result of this engagement was a temporary peace, by which certain privileges were granted to the Protestants: not to be enjoyed, but simply to inspire a false confidence. It was not so easy to deceive Admiral Coligny, who, observing that the Guises had lost nothing of the influence they exercised over the king and queen, resolved to remain still upon his guard. At last, however, Catherine de Medicis succeeded in enticing him to the Court, and with him the Queen of Navarre, the Prince of Béarn, and the foremost chiefs of the Protestant party. Catherine spoke in a confiding tone to the old admiral about the war she pretended to contemplate against Flanders, and the king said to him, with a familiar slap on the shoulder: "I have you now, and don't intend to let you go." Flattered by these attentions, he felt secure, though many of his friends still doubted the sincerity of the king and queen. Their suspicions were confirmed by the sudden death of the Queen of Navarre, which was attributed to poison. Vainly, however, did they attempt to awaken the brave old admiral to his danger. He had, by express permission of the king, made a journey to Châtillon, and many of the Protestant chiefs warned and entreated him on no account to return to the Court. One of them, Langoiran by name, asked the admiral's permission to quit his service. "Why?" said Coligny, in astonishment. "Because," replied Langoiran, "they are loading us with caresses, and I would rather fly like a dog than die like a dupe." Nothing, however, could disturb the confidence of the admiral, who returned to Paris only to throw himself into the arms of his assassins.

The young King of Navarre, the future Henry IV., was about to be married to the sister of the King of France, and the ceremony was to be made the occasion of all kinds of entertainments and festivities. The enemies of the Protestants were meanwhile preparing their massacre; and in the first place the death of Coligny was resolved upon.

When Richard III., in Shakespeare's play, says to one of his pages, "Know'st thou a murderer?" the ingenuous youth replies —

"I know a ruined gentleman
Whose humble means match not his haughty tastes."

A gentleman of this sort (and it was precisely from such material during the Renaissance that murderers were formed) presented himself in La Brie, the favourite country of witchery and bedevilment. He was called Maurevel, and surnamed, for no obvious reason, "the King-slayer." Hired for the purpose, he concealed himself in a house in the Rue des Fossés Saint Germain l'Auxerrois, whence, just as Coligny passed by, on his way from the Louvre to dine at his house in Rue Béthizi, he fired at him with an arquebus, wounding him severely in the left arm and cutting off the forefinger of his left hand. Without showing much emotion, Coligny pointed to the house from which the shots had proceeded (the arquebus was loaded with several bullets), and tried to get the assassin arrested; but he had already fled. Then, leaning on his servants, he finished the journey to his own house on foot.

The king was playing at tennis when the news of the infamous act was brought to him. "Shall I never have any peace?" he exclaimed, as he threw down his racquet. The admiral's friends resolved to complain at once to the king, and to demand justice. For this purpose Henry, King of Navarre, accompanied by the Prince de Condé, went to the palace, when Charles replied, with an oath, that he would inflict punishment. It was evident, he added, that a crime of this kind was a threat against the life of the king himself, and that no one would henceforth be safe if it were left unavenged.

The king, profanely as he spoke, was sincere; nor had the remotest thought of a massacre yet entered his head. The very day of the attack on Coligny he paid a visit of sympathy to the wounded admiral, accompanied by his mother, the Duke of Anjou, and a brilliant suite. He called him the

bravest general in the kingdom, and assured him that his assailant should be terribly punished, and the edict in favour of Protestants in France absolutely obeyed.

Hitherto the queen had not dared to breathe to the king a word of her murderous designs, fearing an explosion of indignation on his part; and Charles's first bursts of passion were always terrible. But as they were returning to the Louvre from their visit to the admiral she succeeded in frightening her royal son by hinting at the dark and foul projects which she attributed to the admiral. So enraged was the king that she could now fearlessly own to him that everything had taken place by her orders and those of the Dukes of Anjou and Guise.

The too credulous Charles vowed that in face of such nefarious plots on the part of the Protestants, Coligny should die, and the Huguenots be put wholesale to the sword, so that not one should survive to reproach him with the act.

The massacre being thus decided upon, it now only remained to put the infamous project into execution. In a conference at the Tuileries between the king, the Duke of Anjou, the Duke of Nevers, the Count of Angoulême, illegitimate brother of the king, the keeper of the seals, Birague, Marshal de Tavanne and Count de Retz, the slaughter was fixed for Sunday, August 24th, 1572, the day of the Feast of St. Bartholomew. There was a difference of opinion as to whether the King of Navarre, the Prince de Condé, and the Montmorencys should be included in the massacre. Then Tavanne summoned Jean Charron, provost of the merchants, and in the king's presence ordered him to arm the Citizen Companies, and to march them at midnight to the Hôtel de Ville for active service.

The ferocious impatience of the Duke of Guise, who had undertaken the murder of Coligny, did not allow him to await the signal agreed upon for the massacre. He hurried, at two o'clock in the morning, to the house of the admiral, and ordered the gates to be opened in the name of the king. An officer, commanding the guard stationed in the court-yard to protect the admiral's person, turned traitor, and admitted the assassins with a deferential salute. Three colonels in the French army, Petrucci, Siennois, and Besme; a German, a native of Picardy named Attin, Sarlaboux, and a few other gentlemen, rushed up the staircase, shouting, "Death to him!" At these words Coligny, understanding that his life was as good as lost, got up, and leaning against the wall, was saying his prayers, when the assassins broke into his room. Besme advanced towards him. "Are you Coligny?" he asked, with the point of his sword at the old man's throat. "I am," he replied with calmness; "but will you not respect my age?" Besme plunged his sword into the admiral's body, drew it out smoking, and then struck his victim several times in the face. The admiral fell, and Besme, hastening to the window, cried out to the Catholic noblemen who were waiting in the court-yard, "It is done!" "M. d'Angoulême will not believe it till he sees the corpse at his feet," replied the Duke of Guise. Sarlaboux and Besme seized the body and threw it into the court-yard. The Duke of Angoulême wiped the admiral's face with his handkerchief; Guise said, "It is really he"; and both of them, after kicking the body with ferocious delight, leaped on horseback, and exclaimed, "Courage, soldiers! we have begun well; let us now see to the others. By order of the King!"

This crime had scarcely been consummated when the great bell of St. – Germain-l'Auxerrois gave the signal for the massacre, which soon became general. At the cries and shrieks raised round them, the Calvinists came out of their houses, half-naked and without arms, to be slain by the troops of the Duke of Guise, who himself ran along the streets, shouting "To arms!" and inciting the people to massacre. The butchery was universal and indiscriminate, without distinction of age or sex. The air resounded with the yells of the assassins and the groans of their victims. When daylight broke upon the hideous picture, bodies bathed in gore were everywhere to be seen. Dead and dying were collected, and thrown promiscuously into the Seine. Within the precincts of the palace, the royal guards, drawn up in two lines, killed with battle-axes unhappy wretches who were brought to them unarmed and thrust beneath their very weapons. Some fell without a murmur; others protested with their last breath against the treachery of the king, who had sworn to defend them. At daybreak the king went to the window of his bedroom, and seeing some unfortunate Protestants making a frantic

attempt to escape by swimming across the river, seized an arquebus and fired upon them, exclaiming, "Die, you wretches!"

Marsillac, Count de la Rochefoucauld, one of the king's favourites, had passed a portion of the night with him, when Charles, who had some thought of saving his life, advised him to sleep in the Louvre. But he at last let him go, and Marsillac was stabbed as he went out.

Antoine of Clermont Renel, running away in his shirt, was massacred by his cousin, Bussy d'Amboise. Count Teligni, who, ten months before, had married Admiral de Coligny's daughter, possessed such an agreeable countenance and such gentle manners that the first assassins who entered his house could not make up their minds to strike him. But they were followed by others less scrupulous, who at once put the young man to death. An advocate named Taverny, assisted by one servant, resisted at his house a siege which lasted nine hours; though, after exhausting every means of defence, he was at last slain. Several noblemen attached to the King of Navarre were assassinated in his abode. The prince himself and Condé, his cousin, were arrested, and threatened with death. Charles IX., however, spared them on their abjuring Calvinism.

A few days before the massacre Caumont de la Force had bought some horses of a dealer, who, chancing to be in the immediate neighbourhood when Admiral de Coligny was assassinated, hastened to inform his customer, well known as one of the Protestant leaders, of what had taken place. This nobleman and his two sons lived in the Faubourg St. – Germain, which was not yet connected with the right bank by any bridge. The horse-dealer, therefore, swam across the Seine to warn La Force, who, however, had already effected his escape. But as his children were not following him, he returned to save them, and had scarcely set foot in his house when the assassins were upon him. Their leader, a man named Martin, entered his room, disarmed both father and sons, and told them they must die. La Force offered the would-be murderers a ransom of 2,000 crowns, payable in two days. The chief accepted, and told La Force and his children to place in their hats paper crosses, and to turn back their right sleeves to the shoulder: such being the signs of immunity among the slaughterers. Thus prepared, Martin conveyed them to his house in the Rue des Petits Champs, and made La Force swear that neither he nor his children would leave the place until the 2,000 crowns were paid. For additional security, he placed some Swiss soldiers on guard, when one of them, touched with compassion, offered to let the prisoners escape. La Force, however, refused, preferring, he said, to die rather than fail in his word. An aunt of La Force's furnished him with the 2,000 crowns, and he was about to count them out to Martin, when a French nobleman came to inform La Force that the Duke of Anjou wished to speak to him. On this pretext the emissary conducted both father and sons from the house without their caps: with nothing, that is to say, to distinguish them from the victims of assassination. They were at once set upon. La Force's eldest son fell, crying out "*Je suis mort.*" The father, pierced to the heart, uttered a similar exclamation; on which the youngest La Force had the presence of mind to throw himself to the ground as if dead. Supposed to be a corpse, he was gradually stripped of his clothes, until a man who intended to steal from him a pair of woollen stockings, of which he had not yet been divested, could not restrain, as he looked upon the boy's pallid face, some expression of sympathy. Seeing that the stranger had taken pity on him, young La Force whispered that he was not dead. He was told to keep quiet; and the man with a taste for woollen stockings wrapped him up in his cloak and carried him away. "What have you there?" asked an assassin. "My nephew," replied the man. "He went out last night and got dead drunk, and I mean, as soon as I get him home, to give him a good thrashing." Young La Force made his preserver a present of thirty crowns, and had himself conveyed in safety to the Arsenal, of which his uncle, Marshal de Biron, was governor.

The most famous, or rather infamous, of those who took part in the massacre as leaders or principal agents were Jean Férrier, an advocate, and at that time captain of his quarter, Peyou, a butcher, and Curcé, a goldsmith, who, with upturned sleeves and bloody arms, boasted that 400 Huguenots had died beneath his blade. The massacre lasted in Paris with diminishing fury for a whole month. It was enacted, moreover, in nearly all the large towns; though in some few the governors

refused to execute the orders transmitted to them. At Lyons 4,000 were killed. Here the governor, Mandelot by name, finding after several days' massacre that there were still a number of Huguenots to slay, ordered the executioner to despatch them; on which that functionary replied that it was his duty to execute criminals convicted of violating the laws of State, but that he was not an assassin, and would not do assassins' work. This spirited reply recalls Joseph de Maistre's celebrated paradox about the executioner and the soldier: the former putting to death only the worst offenders in virtue of a legal mandate, yet universally loathed; the latter plunging his sword into the body of anyone he is told to slay, yet universally honoured. The explanation of the ingenious paradox is, after all, simple enough. The executioner kills in cold blood, without danger to himself; the soldier risks his life in the performance of his duty.

A Lyons butcher, less scrupulous than the executioner, killed so many Huguenots that, according to Dulaure, in his *Singularités Historiques*, he was invited to dinner by the Pope's Legate, passing through Lyons on his way to Paris. The number of Huguenots massacred throughout France was estimated at 60,000. Though the murders were generally due to fanaticism, many persons were put to death for purely private reasons. Heirs killed those from whom they expected to inherit, lovers their rivals, candidates for public offices those whom they wished to replace. On the third day of the massacre Charles IX. went to Parliament, and avowed that the slaughter of the Huguenots had taken place by his command, and in order to anticipate an intended Huguenot rising organised by Coligny. The Parliament accepted this announcement with approval; and despite the absence of all evidence against the admiral, it was decreed that his body should be dragged through the streets on a hurdle, then exhibited in the Place de Grève, and ultimately hung by the heels on a gibbet at Montfaucon. His house was at the same time to be destroyed, the trees in his garden cut down, and the members of his family reduced to the condition of plebeians, or *roturiers*, and declared unable to hold any public office; which, however, did not prevent Coligny's daughter from becoming soon afterwards the wife of the Prince of Orange.

Not many years after the massacre of St. Bartholomew, the Church of St. – Germain-l'Auxerrois, in September, 1581, was the starting-point of a very different series of performances. "On Monday, September 18th," says the writer of a contemporary account, "the Duc de Joyeuse (Henry III.'s favourite 'minion') and Marguerite of Lorraine, daughter of Nicholas de Vaudemont, and sister of the queen, were betrothed in the Queen's Chamber, and the following Sunday were married at three o'clock in the afternoon at the parish church of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois. The king led the bride, followed by the queen, the princesses, and other ladies in such superb attire that no one recollects to have seen anything like it in France so rich and so sumptuous. The dresses of the king and of the bridegroom were the same, and were so covered with embroidery, pearls, and precious stones, that it was impossible to estimate their value. Such an accoutrement had, for instance, cost ten thousand crowns in the making; and at the seventeen feasts which were now from day to day given by the king to the princes and lords related to the bride, and by other great persons of the Court, the guests appeared each time in some new costume, gorgeous with embroidery, gold, silver, and diamonds. The expense was so great, what with tournaments, masquerades, presents, devices, music, and liveries, that it was said the king would not be quit for twelve hundred thousand crowns. On Tuesday, October 16th, the Cardinal de Bourbon gave his feast in the palace attached to his abbey, St. – Germain-des-Prés, and caused to be constructed on the Seine a superb barque in the form of a triumphal car, which was to convey the king, princes, princesses, and the newly married pair from the Louvre to the Pré-aux-Clercs in solemn pomp. This stately vehicle was to be drawn on the water by smaller boats disguised as sea-horses, Tritons, dolphins, whales, and other marine monsters, to the number of twenty-four. In front, concealed in the belly of the said monsters, were a number of skilled musicians, with trumpets, clarions, cornets, violins, and hautboys, besides even some firework-makers, who, at dusk, were to afford pastime not only to the king, but to fifty thousand persons on the banks." The piece, however, was not well played, and it was impossible to make the animals advance

as was intended, so that the king, after having from four o'clock in the afternoon till seven watched at the Tuileries the movements and workings of these animals without perceiving any effect, said sarcastically, "Ce sont des bêtes qui commandent à d'autres bêtes," and drove away with the queen in his coach, to be present at the cardinal's feast, which was the most magnificent of all. Among other entertainments, his Eminence gave that of an artificial garden, luxuriant with growing flowers and fruits, as if it had been May or August.

On Sunday, the 15th, the queen gave her feast at the Louvre, and after the feast the ballet of "Circe and her Nymphs." This work, otherwise entitled "Ballet Comique de la Reine," was represented in the large Salle de Bourbon by the queen, the princes, the princesses, and the great nobles of the Court. It began at ten o'clock in the evening, and did not finish till three the next morning. The queen and the princesses, who represented the Naiads and the Nereids, terminated the ballet by a distribution of presents to the princes and nobles, who, in the shape of Tritons, had danced with them. For each Triton there was a gold medal with a suitable inscription; and the composer, Baltazarini – or Beaujoyeux, as he was now called – received flattering compliments at the end of the representation from the whole Court. His genius was extolled and his glory celebrated in verses which hailed him as one who "from the ashes of Greece had revived a new art," who with "divine wit" had composed a ballet, and who had so placed it on the stage that he surpassed himself in the character of "inventive geometrician."

On the evening of Monday, the 16th, at eight o'clock, the garden of the Louvre was the scene of a torch-lit combat between Fourteen Whites and Fourteen Yellows. On Tuesday, the 17th, there were conflicts with the pike, the sword, and the butt end of the lance, on foot and on horseback. On Thursday, the 19th, took place the Ballet of the Horses, in which Spanish steeds, race-horses, and others met in hostile fashion, retired, and turned round to the sound of trumpets and clarions, having been trained to it five months beforehand. "All this," says the chronicler, "was beautiful and agreeable, but the finest feature of Tuesday and Thursday was the music of voices and instruments, being the most harmonious and most delicate that was ever heard. There were also fireworks, which sparkled and burst, to the fright and joy of everyone, and without injury to any."

It was in the Church of St. – Germain-l'Auxerrois, too, three centuries earlier, that a priest astonished his congregation – and afterwards, when the incident was reported, the whole of Europe – by his mode of pronouncing the excommunication decreed by Pope Innocent IV. against the Emperor Frederick II. "Hearken to me, my brethren," he said. "I am ordered to pronounce a terrible anathema against the Emperor Frederick to the accompaniment of bells and lighted candles. I am ignorant of the reasons on which this judgment is based. All I know is that discord and hatred exist between the Pope and the Emperor, and that they are accustomed to overwhelm each other with insults. Therefore I excommunicate, as far as lies in my power, the oppressor, and I absolve the one who is suffering a persecution so pernicious to the Christian religion." It has been said that a report of this strange excommunication found its way all over Europe. The priest, as might have been expected, was rewarded by the Emperor and punished by the Pope.

CHAPTER VI

THE PONT-NEUF AND THE STATUE OF HENRI IV

The Oldest Bridge in Paris – Henri IV. – His Assassination by Ravaillac. –
Marguerite de Valois – The Statue of Henri IV. – The Institute – The Place de Grève.

PARIS in 1886 contained, according to the census of that year, 2,344,550 inhabitants, of whom 1,714,956 (or 73.15 per cent.) lived on the right bank of the Seine. So much more important indeed by the number of its population as well as by its manifestations of life in every form is the right bank than the left, that a man might live all his life in the former division of Paris and, without ever having crossed the Seine, be held to know the French capital thoroughly. One may indeed be a thorough Parisian without ever having quitted the Boulevards.

Ancient Paris, as represented by the “Cité” of to-day, the Paris of the left bank, and the Paris of the right bank are bound together by the Pont-Neuf: the one structure which they have all three in common. The Pont-Neuf may, therefore, be made a convenient starting-point from which to approach the right bank, the left bank, and finally the “City.”

The Pont-Neuf is, in spite of its name, the oldest bridge in Paris; and it is almost the only one which retains without alteration its original form. From time to time it has been partially repaired, but the lines on which it was originally constructed were never changed. Parisians have for the last three centuries regarded the Pont-Neuf as the type of solidity; and a Parisian who does not aspire to originality in conversation will not hesitate, even to this day, when asked how he is, to reply that he is “as strong as the Pont-Neuf.” The first stone of the bridge was laid on Saturday, May 31, 1578, by King Henri III., in presence of his mother, Queen Catherine de Medicis, his wife, Queen Louise, and the principal officials of the kingdom. As the king had just been assisting at the obsequies of his favourites, Quélus and Maugiron, killed in a duel, he was very melancholy, and the bridge acquired everywhere the name of the Bridge of Tears. The idea of connecting the left bank with the island and the island with the right bank had been entertained by King Henri II. Henri III. undertook to defray the cost of construction. But this he did only in a theoretical way; for three years after his death, in 1592, the chief builder of the bridge, Guillaume Marchand, was still unpaid. The work, meanwhile, was far from complete, interrupted as it had been by the troubles of the League; and it was not until Henri IV. had established his power at Paris and throughout France that, in May, 1598, it was resumed. Three arches of the principal arm had yet to be reared, and it was only in 1603 that the king was able to perform the ceremony of crossing the bridge from left bank to right; part of the journey even then having to be made on a temporary plank, so insecurely fixed that it was by a mere piece of royal luck that the venturesome monarch did not go over into the Seine. In undertaking the hazardous passage, he indicated to the friends who tried to dissuade him his belief in the “divinity that doth hedge a king;” and he, in any case, failed on this perilous occasion either to break his neck or drown. The builder of the Pont-Neuf, Guillaume Marchand, was also its architect: so, at least, asserts his epitaph in the Church of St. Gervais: “The celebrated architect,” he is called, “who created two admirable works: the Royal Castle of St. Germain and the Pont-Neuf of Paris.” Marchand, however, died in 1604, so that although the bridge may have been originally planned by him, it is quite possible that the design may have been completed by another hand, and that the official title of “architect to the bridge” may have belonged to Baptiste du Cerceau, for whom it is often claimed.

What is called the Pont-Neuf consists really of two bridges: one connecting the left bank with the island, the other stretching from the opposite side of the island shore to the right bank. According to its original plan, the Pont-Neuf, like all the old Paris bridges, was to support a number of houses for which cellars had been constructed beforehand among the piles on which the bridge rested. Henri IV., however, refused to allow the intended houses to be built, determined not to spoil the view of

the Louvre, which he had just constructed. Many years afterwards, however, in the reign of Louis XV., a number of little shops were raised on the Pont-Neuf, occupied by match-sellers, sellers of hot and cold drinks, dog-shearers, second-hand booksellers, chestnut-roasters, makers of pancakes and apple fritters, shoeblacks, quacks, and musicians more or less blind. These shops and stalls were maintained until the first days of the Second Empire, when they disappeared.

Henri IV. was determined to proclaim to future ages his connection with the bridge of which he considered himself in some sense the author; and on its completion he adorned it with an equestrian statue of himself in bronze which is almost as celebrated as the bridge itself. The statue stands on the promontory of the island between the two spans of the structure; and from this point a magnificent view may be obtained of the course of the Seine above and below bridge. The original statue was the work of Jean de Bologne, and of his pupil, Pierre Tacca. It was unveiled on August 23rd, 1613, at which time the corners of the pedestal were adorned by four slaves, since removed, but still preserved in the museum of the Louvre. Three years later the populace dragged to the Pont-Neuf the maimed and lacerated body of Marshal d'Ancre, and having cut it into pieces, burnt it before the statue. The so-called Marshal d'Ancre – Concini, by his family name – had come to Paris in the suite of Marie de Medicis, wife of Henri IV. He married one of the queen's attendants, and by intrigues and speculations of every kind succeeded in gaining a position of great influence, together with enormous wealth. He was known to be guilty of all sorts of abuses, and was suspected of having been privy to some of the attempts made upon the life of Henri IV. On the accession of Louis XIII., after the assassination of Henri IV. by Ravaillac, an ambush, not without the knowledge of Louis XIII., was laid for the marshal; and, to the delight of the people of Paris, he fell into it. According to a legend of the period, his heart, after he had been slain, was cut out, roasted, and eaten!

Henri IV., the first of the royal house of Bourbon, was the greatest of all the French kings, and at least the best of the kings of the Bourbon line. Such faults as undoubtedly belonged to him seem to have had no effect but to increase his popularity; perhaps because, in a degree, they belonged also to the great mass of his subjects.

This doubtful husband, good friend, and excellent ruler, beloved with warmth by his subjects, was nevertheless made the object of numerous attempts at assassination, the last of which proved fatal. His would-be murderers were for the most part religious fanatics – as dangerous in that day as the fanatics of revolution in ours; and to this class belonged Ravaillac, at whose hands Henri was destined to perish.

Francis Ravaillac, the son of an advocate, was born and educated at Angoulême. When very young, he lived with one Rosières, also a lawyer, whom he served as clerk and valet. He afterwards lived with other legal practitioners, and at length, on the death of his last master, conducted lawsuits for himself. This profession he continued for several years, but to such small advantage that he finally quitted it, and gained his living by teaching. At this time his father and mother lived apart, and were so indigent that both subsisted chiefly on alms. Ravaillac, now thirty years old, and unmarried, lodged with his mother, and, becoming insolvent, was thrown into prison for debt.

He was naturally of a gloomy disposition, and while under the depression of trouble was subject to the strangest hallucinations. In prison he often believed himself surrounded with fire, sulphur, and incense; and such fancies continued after he was released. He asserted that on the Saturday night after Christmas, 1609, having made his meditations, as he was wont, in bed, with his hands clasped and his feet crossed, he felt his mouth and face covered by some invisible agent, and was at the same time urged by an irresistible impulse to sing the Psalms of David. He therefore chanted the psalms "Dixit Dominus," "Miserere," and "De profundis" quite through, and declared that he seemed to have a trumpet in his mouth, which made his voice as shrill and loud as that instrument in war.

Whilst his mind was thus unhinged by fanaticism, he often reflected on the king's breach of promise in not compelling the Huguenots to return to the Catholic Church, and determined to go to Paris to admonish him to neglect this duty no longer. Arrived at Paris, he went frequently to the

Louvre, and in vain begged many persons to introduce him to his Majesty. One of those applied to was Father Daubigny, a Jesuit, whom he informed not only of his desire to speak to the king, but of his wish to join the famous Order. Daubigny advised him to dismiss all these thoughts from his mind and to confine himself to bead-telling and prayer; but Ravaillac profited little by the counsel, and, under the conviction that Henri ought to make war on the Huguenots, took to loitering constantly about the Court, in hope of a chance interview with his Majesty.

Some days later he happened to meet the king driving in a coach near St. Innocents' Church. His desire to speak to him grew more ardent at the prospect of success, and he ran up to the coach, exclaiming, "Sire, I address you in the name of our Lord Jesus and of the Blessed Virgin." But the king put him back with his stick, and would not hear him. After this repulse, despairing of being able to influence his Majesty by admonition, he determined to kill him. But he could come to no decision as to the mode of executing his design, and after a time returned to Angoulême.

He continued in a state of intense anxiety, sometimes considering his project of assassination as praiseworthy, sometimes as unlawful. Shortly afterwards he attended Mass in the monastery of the Franciscan Friars at Angoulême, and going afterwards to confession, admitted, among other things, an intention to murder, though without saying that Henri was the proposed victim. Nor did the confessor inquire as to the details of the crime. Still restless and disturbed, Ravaillac went back to Paris, and on entering the city, found his desire to kill the king intensified. He took lodgings close to the Louvre: but not liking his rooms, went to an inn in the neighbourhood to see if accommodation could be had there. The inn was full; but whilst Ravaillac conversed with the landlord, his eye happened to be attracted by a knife, sharp-pointed and double-edged, that lay on the table; and it occurred to him that here was a fit instrument for his purpose. He accordingly took occasion to convey it away under his doublet, and having had a new handle made for it, carried it about in his pocket.

But he faltered in his resolution, and abandoning it once more, set out on his way home. As he went along he somehow broke the point of his knife. At an inn where he stopped for refreshment he heard some soldiers talking about a design on the part of the king to make war against the Pope, and to transfer the Holy See to Paris. On this, his determination returned strong upon him and going out of the inn, he gave his knife a fresh point by rubbing it against a stone, and then turned his face towards Paris.

Arrived at the capital a third time, he felt an inclination to make a full confession of his design to a priest; and would have done so had he not been aware that the Church is obliged to divulge any secrets which concern the State.

Henceforth he never once relinquished his purpose. But he still felt such doubts as to whether it were not sinful that he would no longer receive the Sacrament, lest, harbouring his project all the while, he should unworthily eat.

Without hope of gaining admission to the king in his palace, he now waited for him with unwearied assiduity at the gates. At last, on the 17th of May, 1610, he saw him come out in a coach, and followed him for some distance, until the vehicle was stopped by two carts, which happened to get in the way. Here, as the king was leaning his head to speak to M. d'Epernon, who sat beside him, Ravaillac, in a frenzy, fancied he heard a voice say to him, "Now is the time; hasten, or it will be too late!" Instantly he rushed up to the coach, and standing on a spoke of the wheel, drew his knife and struck the king in the side. Finding, however, the knife impeded by one of the king's ribs, he gave him another – and this time a fatal – blow near the same place.

The king cried out that he was slain, and Ravaillac was seized by a retired soldier of the guard. When searched, he was found to have upon him a paper painted with the arms of France, and with a lion on each side, one holding a key, the other a sword. Above he had written these words: "The name of God shall not be profaned in my presence." There was also discovered a rosary and a piece of a certain root in the shape of a heart, which he had obtained as a charm against fever from the

Capuchins, who assured him that it had inside it a piece of the real cross of the Saviour. “This, however,” says an ingenuous chronicler, “when the heart was broken, proved to be false.”

Ravaillac was first examined by the President of the Parliament and several commissioners as to his motives for committing the crime, and as to whether he had accomplices. During the interrogation he often wept, and said that though at the time he believed the assassination to be a meritorious action, he now felt convinced that this was a delusion into which he had been suffered to fall as a punishment for his sins. He expressed the deepest contrition for his offence, and implored the Almighty to give him grace to continue till death in firm faith, lively hope, and perfect charity.

He denied that he had any confederate, and on being requested to say at whose instigation he did the deed, replied indignantly that it originated entirely with himself, and that for no reward would he have slain his king. He answered all other questions with great calmness and humility, and when he signed his confession, wrote beneath the signature these lines: —

“Que toujours en mon cœur
Jésus soit le vainqueur.”

In spite, however, of Ravaillac’s protests, at this and at a subsequent examination, that he was quite without advisers, abettors, or accomplices, the examiners would not believe him, and he was ordered to be put to the torture of the *brodequin*, or boot. This instrument, like its English counterpart, was a strong wooden box, made in the form of a boot, just big enough to contain both the legs of the criminal. When his legs had been enclosed, a wedge was driven in with a mallet between the knees; and after this had been forced quite through, a second, and even a third wedge was employed in the same way.

Ravaillac, having been sworn, was placed on a wooden bench, when the *brodequin* was fitted to his legs. On the first wedge being driven in, he cried out: “God have mercy upon my soul and pardon the crime I have committed; I never disclosed my intention to anyone.” When the second wedge was applied he uttered horrid cries and shrieks, and exclaimed: “I am a sinner: I know no more than I have declared. I beseech the Court not to drive my soul to despair. Oh God! accept these torments in satisfaction for my sins.” A third wedge was then driven in lower, near his feet, on which his whole body broke into a sweat. Being now quite speechless, he was released, water was thrown in his face, and wine forced down his throat. He soon recovered by these means, and was then conducted to chapel by the executioner. But religious exhortation only caused him to repeat once more that he had no associate of any kind in connection with his crime.

At three in the afternoon of the 27th of May, 1610, he was brought from the chapel and put into a tumbril, the crowd in all directions being so great that it was with the utmost difficulty that the archers forced a passage. As soon as the prisoner appeared before the public gaze he was loaded with execrations from every side.

After he had ascended the scaffold he was urged by two spiritual advisers to think of his salvation while there was time, and to confess all he knew; but he answered precisely as before. As there seemed to be a prospect of the murderer getting absolution from the Church, a great outcry was raised, and many persons cried out that he belonged to the tribe of Judas, and must not be forgiven either in this world or the next. Ravaillac argued the point thus raised, maintaining that having made his confession he was entitled to absolution, and that the priest was bound by his office to give it. The priest replied that the confession had been incomplete, and, therefore, insincere, and that absolution must be refused until Ravaillac named his accomplices. The criminal declared once more that he had no accomplices; and it was at last arranged that he should be absolved on certain conditions.

“Give me absolution,” he said: “at least conditionally, in case what I say should be true.”

“I will,” replied the confessor, “on this stipulation: that in case it is not true your soul, on quitting this life – as it must shortly do – goes straight to hell and the devil, which I announce to you on the part of God as certain and infallible.”

“I accept and believe it,” he said, “on that condition.”

Fire and brimstone were then applied to his right hand, in which he had held the knife used for the assassination, and at the same time his breast and other fleshy parts of his body were torn by red-hot pincers. Afterwards, at intervals, melted lead and scalding oil were poured into his wounds. During the whole time he uttered piteous cries and prayers.

Finally, he was pulled in different directions for half-an-hour by four horses, though without being dismembered. The multitude, impatient to see the murderer in pieces, threw themselves upon him, and with swords, knives, sticks, and other weapons, tore, mangled, and finally severed his limbs, which they dragged through the streets, and then burned in different parts of the city. Some of these wretches went so far as to cut off portions of the flesh, which they took home to burn quietly by their firesides.

Apart from his own violent death, more than one tragic story is connected with the memory of Henri IV. Close to the Hôtel de Ville stands the Hôtel de Sens, where, in December, 1605, lived Marguerite de Valois, the divorced wife of Henri IV. Already in her fifty-fifth year, this lady had by no means abandoned the levity of her youth. She had two lovers, both of whom were infatuated with her. The one she preferred, Saint-Julien by name, had a rival in the person of a mere boy of eighteen, named Vermond, who had been brought up beneath the queen’s eyes. On the 5th of April, 1606, Marguerite, returning from Mass, drove up to the Hôtel de Sens at the very moment when Vermond and Saint-Julien were quarrelling about her. Saint-Julien rushed to open the carriage door, when Vermond drew a pistol and shot him dead. The queen “roared,” according to a contemporary account, “like a lioness.” “Kill him!” she cried. “If you have no arms, take my garter and strangle him.” The people whom her Majesty was addressing contented themselves with pinioning the young man. The next morning a scaffold was raised before the Hôtel de Sens, and Vermond had his head cut off in the presence of Marguerite, who, from one of the windows of her mansion, looked on at the execution. Then her strength gave way, and she fainted. The same evening she quitted the Hôtel de Sens, never to return to it.

At the time of the Revolution the mob attacked the statue of Henri IV. on the Pont-Neuf, overturned it from its pedestal, and virtually destroyed it. The present monument was erected by public subscription after the Restoration in 1814, and on the 25th of August, 1818, was inaugurated by Louis XVIII. In the pedestal is enclosed a magnificent copy of Voltaire’s epic “La Henriade.” The low reliefs which adorn the pedestal of this admirable equestrian statue represent, on the southern side, Henri IV. distributing provisions in the besieged city of Paris; on the northern side, the victorious king proclaiming peace from the steps of Notre-Dame.

It has been said that the Pont-Neuf is traditionally famous for its solidity. In spite of this doubtless well-deserved reputation, the ancient bridge seemed, in 1805, on the point of giving way. Changes in the bed of the river had led to a partial subsidence of two of the arches supporting the smaller arm of the bridge. The necessary repairs, however, were executed, and the bridge’s reputation for strength permanently restored.

Among the many interesting stories told in connection with the Pont-Neuf may be mentioned one in which a famous actress of the early part of this century, Mlle. Contat, plays a part. She happened to be out in her carriage, and after a fashion then prevalent among the ladies of Paris, was driving herself, when, holding the reins with more grace than skill, she nearly ran over a pedestrian who was crossing the bridge at the same time as herself. In those days, when side-walks for pedestrians were unknown, the whole of the street being given up to people with carriages, it was easy enough to get run over; and Mercier, in his “Tableau de Paris,” speaks again and again of the accidents that occurred through the haughty negligence and recklessness of carriage folk, and even of hirers of

hackney coaches. A sufferer in these rather one-sided collisions was generally held to be in the wrong, and Mlle. Contat reproached her victim with having deliberately attempted to throw himself under her horses' feet. The pedestrian took the blame gallantly upon himself, bowed to the ground, offered the lady an apology, paid her a graceful compliment, and disappeared. Scarcely had he done so when the actress felt convinced, from his courtly manners and distinguished air, that she must have been on the point of mangling some personage of high rank, and for a long time she felt extremely curious to know who he could be. One night, about a month after the incident, when she was at the theatre, a letter from the gentleman whom she had accused of getting in the way of her horses was delivered to her. He proved to be not merely a person of high quality, as she had guessed, but a real live prince: Prince Henry, brother of the King of Prussia. He was a friend, moreover, of the drama; and he had written to beg "the modern *Athalie*" to do him the honour to preside at the rehearsal of a new piece in which he was interested. Partly for the sake of the piece, but principally for that of the man whom she was so near running over, Mlle. Contat complied with the prince's request. The piece was a comedy, with airs written by Baron Ernest von Manteuffel, and set to music by a composer of the day. The subject was extremely interesting, and Mlle. Contat saw that this musical comedy might prove an immense success at the Théâtre Français, where, being duly produced, it fully realised the actress's anticipations. "Les deux Pages" it was called; and the author, Prussian as he was, had written it in the French language, with which at that time the Court and aristocracy of Prussia were more familiar than with their own tongue. It will be remembered that Frederick the Great (who, by the way, was the leading personage in "Les deux Pages") wrote the whole of his very voluminous works in French.

Mercier, in his "Tableau de Paris," published at London in 1780 (its publication would not have been permitted at Paris), gives an interesting account of the Pont-Neuf as it existed in his time. "This," he says, "is the greatest thoroughfare in Paris. If you are in quest of anyone, native or foreigner, there is a moral certainty of your meeting with him there in the space of two hours, at the outside. The police-runners are convinced of this truth; here they lurk for their prey, and if, after a few days' look-out, they do not find it, they conclude with a certainty nearly equal to evidence that the bird is flown. The most remarkable monument of popular gratitude may be seen on this bridge – the statue of Henri IV. And if the French cannot boast of having in reality a good prince, they may comfort themselves in contemplating the effigy of a monarch whose like they will never see again. At the foot of the bridge, a large phalanx of crimps – commonly called dealers in human flesh – have established their quarters, recruiting for their colonels, who sell the victims wholesale to the king. They formerly had recourse to violent means, but are now only permitted to use a little artifice, such as the employment of soldiers' trulls for their decoy-ducks, and plying with liquors those youngsters who are fond of the juice of the grape. Sometimes, especially at Martinmas and on Shrove Tuesday, which are sacred in a peculiar manner to gluttony and drunkenness, they parade about the avenues leading to the bridge, some with long strings of partridges, hares, etc.; others jingling sacks full of half-crowns to tickle the ears of the gaping multitude; the poor dupes are ensnared, and, under the delusion that they are going to sit down to a sumptuous dinner, are in reality hastening to the slaughter-house. Such are the heroes picked out to be the support and pillars of the State; and these future great men – a world of conquerors in embryo – are purchased at the trifling price of five crowns a head."

Among the remarkable incidents which the Pont-Neuf has witnessed during its three centuries of existence must be mentioned certain amateur robberies, committed by gentlemen of the highest position. The Duke of Orleans is said to have set the fashion, which, one stormy night, after prolonged libations, was imitated by the Chevalier de Rieux, the Count de Rochefort, and a number of friends more unscrupulous than themselves. The count and the chevalier, though the only ones of the party who got arrested, played the mild part of lookers-on, taking their seats on Henri IV.'s bronze horse, while the actual work of highway robbery was being done by their companions. In due time, however, after several of the passers-by had been plundered of their cloaks, the watch was called, when the active robbers took to flight, whereas their passive accomplices, unable to get down all at once from

the back of the bronze horse, were made prisoners, and kept for some time in confinement. Mazarin, indeed, was so glad to have his enemy, the Count de Rochefort, in his power, that he could scarcely be prevailed upon to let him out at all.

On the left bank of the Seine, at the very foot of the Pont-Neuf, stands the Institute of France, with its various academies, of which the most famous is that devoted to literature, the Académie Française, where, said Piron, “there are forty members who have as much learning as four.” “This establishment,” writes Mercier somewhat bitterly, but with much truth, “was set on foot by Richelieu, whose every undertaking constantly tended to despotism. Nor has he in this institution deviated from the rule, for the Academy is manifestly a monarchical establishment. Men of letters have been enticed to the capital like the grandees, and with the same object: namely, to keep a better watch over them. The consequence is fatal to the progress of knowledge, because every writer aspiring to a seat in that modern Areopagus knows that his success depends on Court favour, and therefore does everything to merit this by sacrificing to the Goddess of Flattery, and preferring mean adulation that brings him academical honours to the useful, manly, and legitimate employment of his talents in the instruction of mankind. Hence the Academy enjoys no manner of consideration either at home or abroad. Paris is the only place where it can support any kind of dignity, though it is even there sorely badgered by the wits of the capital, who, expecting from it neither favour nor friendship, point all their epigrammatical batteries against its members. There is, in fact, but too much room for pleasantry and keen sarcasm. Is it not extremely ridiculous that forty men, two-thirds of whom owe their admission to intrigue or fawning, should be by patent created arbiters of taste in literature, and enjoy the exclusive privilege of judging for the rest of their countrymen? But their principal function has been to circulate and suppress new-coined words; regulating the pronunciation, orthography, and idioms of the French language. Is this a service or injury to the language? I should think the latter.

“Instead of becoming, as they ought to do, the oracle of the age and their nation, our men of letters content themselves with being the echo of that dread tribunal; hence the abject state of literature in the capital. We have some, however, who boldly think for themselves, trust to the judgment of the public, and laugh at the award of the Academy. Nothing can better mark the contempt in which a few spirited writers hold the decrees of the forty forestallers of French wit and refinement than the following epitaph which the author above cited, the terror of Voltaire, the scourge of witlings, Piron, ordered to be engraved on his tombstone: —

“Cy gît Piron, qui ne fut rien,
Pas même Académicien.”

Many very distinguished writers have, in every generation since the birth of the Academy, been included among its members. Very few, however, of the forty members have at any one time been men of genuine literary distinction; a duke who has written a pamphlet, an ambassador who has published a volume, having always had a better chance of election than a popular novelist or dramatist. M. Arsène Houssaye has written a book entitled “The Forty-first Chair,” which is intended to show, and does show, that the greatest writer of each successive period, from Molière to Balzac, has always been left out of the Academy: has occupied, that is to say, “the forty-first chair.” M. Alphonse Daudet, to judge by his brilliant novel “L’Immortel,” has no better opinion of the French Academy than had Arsène Houssaye some forty years ago, when his ingenious indirect attack upon the Academy was first published.

The Pont-Neuf was, for a considerable time after its first construction, the most important highway in Paris. It connected Paris of the left bank with Paris of the right, and old Paris, the so-called Cité, with both. It was the only bridge of importance; and what is now the greatest thoroughfare of Paris – the line of boulevards – was not yet in existence. The Pont-Neuf dates from the reign of Henri IV.; the boulevards from that of Louis XIV. Long, moreover, after it had ceased to be fashionable,

the Pont-Neuf remained popular by reason of the vast stream of passengers perpetually crossing it in either direction. It was much in favour with itinerant dealers of all kinds, and equally so with beggars. Even in our own time it was on the Pont-Neuf that *Les deux Aveugles* of Offenbach deceived the public and exchanged confidences with one another. The plague of beggars is nothing, however, in these days, compared with what it was before the Revolution. “Who,” asks a writer of the latter part of the eighteenth century, “seeing the populace of Paris ever merry, and the rich glittering in all the gaudy pomp of luxury, would believe that the streets of the metropolis are infested with swarms of beggars, were not the eye at every turn of the street shocked with some distressing spectacle, truly disgusting to the sight of every stranger who is not lost to all sense of humanity? Nothing has yet been done to remove this evil, and the methods hitherto practised have proved to be remedies worse than the disease. Amongst the ancients there was a class of people that might be called poor, but none reduced to absolute indigence. The very slaves were clothed, fed, had their friends; nor does any historian say that the towns and streets were full of those wretched, disgusting objects which either excite pity or freeze charity itself: wretches covered with vermin did not then go about the streets uttering groans that reach the very heart, and exhibiting wounds that frighten the eye of every passenger.

“This abuse springs from the nature of the legislation itself – more ready to preserve large fortunes than small. Let our new schemers say what they will, great proprietors are a nuisance in the State. They cover the lands with forests and stock them with fawns and deer; they lay out pleasure-gardens; and thus the oppression and luxury of the great is daily crushing the most unfortunate part of the community. In the year 1769 not only beggars, but even the poorer class of citizens were treated with much savage barbarity by secret orders from the Government. In the very dead of night old men, women, and children were suddenly seized upon, deprived of their liberty, and thrown into loathsome gaols, without the assignment of any cause for so cruel a treatment. The pretence was that indigence is the parent of crimes, that seditions generally begin among that class of people who, having nothing to lose, have nought to fear. The ministers who then wished to establish the corn-law dreaded the effect it would have on that world of indigent wretches, driven to despair, as they would be, by the advanced price of bread which was then to be imposed. Their oppressors said: ‘They must be smothered;’ and they were. As this was the most effectual method of silencing them, the Government never took the trouble to devise any other. When we cast an eye abroad, it is then we are convinced of the forlorn condition in which our lower sort of people drag out their miserable life. The Spaniard can cheaply provide himself with food and raiment. Wrapped up in his cloak, the earth is his bed; he sleeps soundly, and wakes without anxiety for his next meal. The Italians work little, and are in no want of the necessities, or even luxuries, of life. The English, well fed, strong and hale, happy and free, reap and enjoy undisturbed the fruits of their industry. The Swede is content with his glass of brandy. The Russian, whom no foresight disturbs, finds abundance in the bosom of slavery; but the Parisians, poor and helpless, sinking under the burden of unremitting toils and fatigue, ever at the mercy of the great, who crush them like vile insects whenever they attempt to raise their voice, earn, at the sweat of their brow, a scanty subsistence, which only serves to lengthen their lives, without leaving them anything to look forward to in their old age but indigence, or, what is worse, part of a bed in the hospital.”

The Pont-Neuf was always crowded when anything was coming off on the neighbouring Place de Grève, where Ravallac was tortured and torn to pieces, and where, in the next century, like horrors were perpetrated upon the body of Damiens, who had attacked Louis XV. with a pen-knife and inflicted upon him a slight scratch. The Place de Grève has now lost its old historic name, and is called the Place de l’Hôtel-de-Ville. In the open space where Ravallac and Damiens were subjected to such abominable cruelty, and where so many criminals of various kinds and classes were afterwards to be broken and beaten to death, the guillotine was at a later date set up.

“The executioner in Paris,” says Mercier (writing just before the Revolution of 1789), “enjoys a revenue of no less than 18,000 livres (£720). His figure is perfectly well known to the populace; he is for them the greatest tragedian. Whenever he exhibits they crowd round his temporary stage: our very

women, even those whom rank and education should inspire with the mildest sentiments, are not the last to share in the horrid spectacles he provides. I have seen some of these delicate creatures, whose fibres are so tender, so easily shaken, who faint at the sight of a spider, look unconcerned upon the execution of Damiens, being the last to avert their eyes from the most dreadful punishment that ever was devised to avenge an offended monarch. The *bourreau*, although his employment brands him with infamy, has no badge to distinguish him from the rest of the citizens; and this is a great mistake on the part of the Government, particularly noticeable when he executes the dreadful commands of the law. It is not only ridiculous: it is shocking in the extreme, to see him ascend the ladder, his head dressed and profusely powdered; with a laced coat, silk stockings, and a pair of as elegant pumps as ever set off the foot of the most refined *petit-maître*. Should he not be clad in garments more suitable to the minister of death? What is the consequence of so gross an absurdity? A populace not overburdened with the sense of sympathy are all taken up with admiration for the handsome clothes and person of our Breakbones. Their attention is engrossed by the elegant behaviour and appearance of this deputy of the King of Terrors; they have hardly a thought to bestow upon the malefactor, and not one on his sufferings. Of course, then, the intention of the law is frustrated. The dreadful example meant to frighten vice from its criminal course has no effect on the mind of the spectator, much more attentive to the point ruffles and the rich clothes of the man whose appearance should concur in adding to the solemnity than to the awful memento set up by a dire necessity to enforce the practice of virtue by showing that he who lives in crime must die in infamy. The executioner, from the stigma inherent to his profession, and of course to himself, cannot hope to form alliances among the other ranks of citizens. The very populace, though as well versed in the history of the hangman and the malefactors as the upper classes are in that of the sovereigns of Europe and their ministers, would think it a disgrace to intermarry with his family to the latest generation. It is not many years since the Bourreau of Paris publicly advertised that he was ready to bestow the hand of his daughter, with a portion of one hundred thousand crowns, on any native Frenchman who would accept it, and agree to succeed him in business. The latter clause would have staggered avarice itself; but the executioner of Paris was obliged to follow the practice of his predecessors in office, and marry his heiress to a provincial executioner. These gentlemen, in humble imitation of our bishops, take their surnames from the cities where they are settled, and among themselves it is ‘Monsieur de Paris,’ ‘Monsieur de Rouen,’ etc. etc.”

Besides breaking the bones of the criminals entrusted to his charge, torturing them in various ways, and ultimately putting them to death, the executioner, under the old régime, had sometimes to perform upon books, which he solemnly burnt on the Place de Grève. Russia, Turkey, and the Roman Court are now the only Powers in Europe which maintain a censorship over books. But the custom of burning objectionable volumes, instead of simply pronouncing against them and forbidding their circulation, belongs altogether to the past. Plenty of books were forbidden in France under the First and Second Empire; and when the infamous Marquis de Sade sent Napoleon one of his disgraceful works, the emperor replied by ordering the man to be arrested and confined in a lunatic asylum. Under the Restoration many a volume was proscribed; but since the great Revolution of 1789 no Government in France has ventured to restore the custom of having a condemned book burnt by the executioner. When, in connection with the contest on the subject of the Church’s relationship with the stage, a very able pamphlet was published, proving by the laws of France that the excommunication levelled against the stage was an illegal and scandalous imposition, it got condemned to be burnt in the Place de Grève by the executioner. Whereupon Voltaire, indignant at the barbarity of such a punishment, brought out, anonymously, another pamphlet in defence of the cremated one, when this, in its turn, was sentenced to the flames. Doubtless the writer foresaw the fate of his little volume, for the tract in question contained the suggestive remark that, “if the executioner were presented with a complimentary copy of every work he was ordered to burn, he would soon possess a handsome and very valuable library.”

“Monsieur de Paris” was accustomed in his best days to burn live witches as well as newly-published books; and the cremation of these unhappy wretches gave him at times much occupation.

Without by any means introducing magic into France, Catherine de Medicis did her best to encourage magical practices; and in succeeding reigns the very people who, under her auspices, had cultivated relations with the fiend were punished for their tamperings with the supernatural. Catherine patronised astrologers and sorcerers of all kinds; and she was accused of holding in the woods *levées* of magicians, who arrived at the place of meeting on flying goats, winged horses, or even simple broomsticks. The assembly, according to popular rumour, began at night, and ended with cock-crow. The place selected for the “Sabbath” was lighted by a single lamp, which cast a melancholy light, and intensified rather than dispelled the prevailing darkness. The president of the “Sabbath” was the fiend in person, who took his seat on a high throne, clad with the skin of a goat or of an immense black poodle. On his right was the solitary lamp, on his left a man or woman who had charge of the powders or ointments which it was customary to distribute among those present. The ointments were supposed to enable the members of these strange associations to recognise one another by the smell. But there is so much that is evidently false and so little that is apparently true in the accounts transmitted to us of these witches’ Sabbaths, that the only thing worth noting in connection with them is that they possessed the privilege of interesting Catherine de Medicis. The secret meetings of the Templars, the Anabaptists, and the Albigenses have all been represented as assemblies of sorcerers. In the “History of Artois,” by Dom de Vienne, it is said that the Inquisition established in the province caused many unfortunate Waldenses to be burnt alive in consequence of diabolical practices, “to which,” as the Inquisition declared, “they themselves confessed.”

It may well be that the severity of the tortures inflicted on the accused, and the promise held out to them of forgiveness in case of avowal, induced many of them to admit the truth of charges without basis. The province of La Brie would seem during the magical times of Catherine de Medicis to have been inhabited almost entirely by sorcerers – by people, that is to say, who either considered themselves such or were so considered. The shepherds and herdsmen of the province possessed, it was said, the power of putting to death the sheep and cattle of their neighbours by burying various kinds of enchantments beneath the paths along which the animals were sure to pass. Some of these wonder-working shepherds were taken and prosecuted, when they confessed in many cases that they had exercised various kinds of bedevilments on the beasts of certain farmers. They made known the composition of their infernal preparations, but refused to state where they were buried, declaring that if they were dug up the person who had deposited them would immediately die. Whether the reputed sorcerers possessed the secret of some chemical mixtures which had really an injurious effect on cattle, or whether they were merely actuated by vain fancies, it would be impossible at the present time to say. But many shepherds and herdsmen of La Brie were, towards the end of the seventeenth century, condemned and executed for magical practices. Thus two shepherds, named Biaule and Lavaux, were sentenced by the same judge to be hanged and burnt; and the sentence, after being confirmed by the Parliament of Paris, was put into effect on the 18th of December, 1691.

Magical practices have been denounced by more than one Church council; nor were incantations and witchcraft supposed by any means to be confined to the ignorant classes. Pharamond passed for the son of an incubus; and the mother of Clovis for a witch. Frédégonde accused Clovis, son of her husband Chilpéric and a former wife, of sorcery; and it was not until the reign of Charlemagne that any endeavour was made to destroy the popular belief in magic. After Charlemagne’s death witchcraft took a greater hold on the public mind than ever; and ridiculous historians wrote that Queen Berthe had given birth to a gosling and that Bertrade was a witch. Philip the Bold consulted a sorceress. The madness of Charles VI. and the influence exercised upon him by Valentine of Milan were ascribed to magic; and it was as a witch that the Maid of Orleans was burnt.

CHAPTER VII

THE BOULEVARDS

From the Bastille to the Madeleine – Boulevard Beaumarchais –
Beaumarchais – The *Marriage of Figaro* – The Bastille – The Drama in Paris –
Adrienne Lecouvreur – Vincennes – The Duc d'Enghien – Duelling – Louis XVI.

THE most important, the most interesting, the most absorbing thoroughfare on the right bank of the Seine, and, therefore, in Paris generally is that of the boulevards, in which the whole of the gay capital may be said to be concentrated. Numbers of Parisians pass almost the whole of their life on the Boulevard des Italiens; or between the Boulevard Montmartre to the east, and the Boulevard de la Madeleine to the west of what, to the fashionable Parisian, is the central boulevard. Nothing can be easier than to breakfast and dine on the boulevards; and it is along their length or in their immediate neighbourhood that not only the best restaurants, but the finest theatres are to be found. Stroll about the boulevards for a few hours – an occupation of which the true boulevardier seems never to get tired – and you will meet everyone you know in Paris.

If, moreover, the upper boulevards, those of the Madeleine, the Capucines, and the Italiens, represent fashionable Paris, the lower boulevards, from the Boulevard Montmartre to the Boulevard Beaumarchais, represent the Paris of commerce and of industry; so that the line of boulevards, as a whole, from the Madeleine to the Bastille, gives a fair epitome of the French capital.

The poorest of the boulevards are at the eastern end of the line, and the richest at the western; and the difference in character between the inhabitants of these opposite extremes is shown by a military regulation instituted under the Second Empire. Neither the district inhabited by the needy workmen of the east nor the western district, where dwelt the richest class of shop-keepers, was allowed to furnish the usual contingent of National Guards. The artisans were too turbulent to be entrusted with arms, while the tradespeople were equally unreliable, because from timidity they allowed their arms to be taken from them.

Beginning at what most visitors to Paris will consider the wrong end of the line of boulevards, we find that on the Boulevard Beaumarchais Paris has a very different physiognomy from that which she presents on the Boulevard de la Madeleine, which the visitor may reach by omnibus, though it is more interesting to travel in some hired vehicle which may now and then be stopped, and more interesting still to make the whole of the three-mile journey on foot.

At either end of the line of boulevards is a *Place*, or open space, which, for want of a better word, may be called a square: Place de la Bastille to the east, Place de la Madeleine to the west. The omnibuses which ply between the two extremities bear the inscription “Madeleine – Bastille”; and, beginning at the Bastille, the traveller passes eleven different boulevards, or, rather, one boulevard bearing in succession eleven different names: Beaumarchais, des Filles du Calvaire, du Temple, Saint-Martin, Saint-Denis, Bonne-Nouvelle, Poissonnière, Montmartre, des Italiens, des Capucines, and de la Madeleine.

Advancing from the Bastille to the Madeleine, we find the appearance of the shops constantly improving, until, from poor at one end, they become magnificent at the other. What the military authorities of Germany call “necessary luxuries” (such as coffee, tea, and sugar), as well as luxuries in a more absolute sense (such as costly articles of attire, sweetmeats, and champagne), are sold all along the line. But at the Bastille end one notices here and there a little sacrifice to the useful and the indispensable. Indeed, on the lower boulevards grocers’ shops are to be found, though nothing so commonplace offends the eye on the boulevards to which the name of “upper” is given.

In like manner, the importance of the theatres increases as you proceed from the Bastille westward. Nearly half the playhouses of Paris are on the boulevards: ten on the north side, and three

on the south. Many other theatres, if not entered direct from the boulevards, are in their close vicinity. The theatre nearest the Madeleine is the new Opera House; that nearest the Place de la Bastille is the Théâtre Beaumarchais. The Boulevard Beaumarchais owes its name to the brilliant dramatist who, among other works, wrote the *Barber of Seville* and the *Marriage of Figaro*, still familiar to all Europe in their musical form. From 1760 to 1831 what is now called the Boulevard Beaumarchais was known as the Boulevard St. – Antoine. In the last-named year, however, under the government of Louis Philippe, it was determined to render homage to the author of the best comedies in the French language after those of Molière by naming a boulevard after him.

The *Marriage of Figaro* was played in public for the first time on April 27th, 1784. “The description of the first performance is,” says M. de Loménie, “in every history of the period”; for which insufficient reason M. de Loménie omits it in his own history of “Beaumarchais and his Times.” For at least two years before the *Marriage of Figaro* was played in public the work must have been well known in the aristocratic and literary circles of Paris. The brilliant comedy, which was not to be brought out until April, 1784, had been accepted at the Théâtre Français in October, 1781. “As soon as the actors,” writes Beaumarchais, “had received, by acclamation, my poor *Marriage*, which has since had so many opponents, I begged M. Lenoir (the Lieutenant of Police) to appoint a censor; at the same time asking him, as a special favour, that the piece might be examined by no one else: which he readily promised; assuring me that neither secretary nor clerk should touch the manuscript, and that the play should be read in his own cabinet. It was so read by M. Coqueley, advocate, and I begged M. Lenoir to notify what he retrenched, objected to, or approved. Six weeks afterwards I learnt in society that my piece had been read at all the soirées of Versailles, and I was in despair at this complaisance – perhaps forced – of the magistrate in regard to a work which still belonged to me; for such was certainly not the austere, discreet, and loyal course which belongs to the serious duty of a censor. Well or ill read – perhaps maliciously mutilated – the piece was pronounced detestable; and not knowing in what respect I had sinned (for according to custom nothing was specified), I stood before the inquisition obliged to guess my crimes, but aware, nevertheless, that I was already tacitly proscribed. As, however, this proscription by the court only irritated the curiosity of the town, I was condemned to readings without number. Whenever one party was discovered, another would immediately be formed.”

At the beginning of 1782 it was already a question who could obtain the privilege of hearing the play read by Beaumarchais – an admirable reciter – whether at his own house or in some brilliant *salon*. “Every day,” writes Madame Campan, “persons were heard to say: ‘I was present, or I shall be present, at a reading of Beaumarchais’s piece.’”

The first performance of the *Marriage of Figaro* was thus described by a competent judge. “Never,” says Grimm, in one of the letters addressed by him and by Diderot to the Grand Duke of Saxe-Gotha, “never did a piece attract such crowds to the Théâtre Français. All Paris wished to see this famous ‘marriage,’ and the house was crammed almost the very moment the doors were opened to the public. Scarcely half of those who had besieged the doors since eight in the morning succeeded in finding places. Most persons got in by force or by throwing money to the porters. It is impossible to be more humble, more audacious, more eager in view of obtaining a favour from the Court than were all our young lords to ensure themselves a place at the first representation of *Figaro*. More than one duchess considered herself too happy that day to find in the balconies, where ladies are seldom seen, a wretched stool side by side with Madame Duthé, Carline, and company.”

Ladies of the highest rank dined in the actresses’ rooms, in order to be sure of places. “Cordons bleus,” says Bachaumont, “mixed up in the crowd, elbowing with Savoyards – the guard being dispersed, and the iron gates broken by the efforts of the assailants.” La Harpe, in one of his series of letters to the Grand Duke Paul of Russia and Count Schouvaloff, declares that three porters were killed; being “one more than were killed at the production of Scudéry’s last piece.” “On the stage, when the curtain was raised, there was seen,” says De Loménie, “perhaps the most splendid

assemblage of talent that was ever contained within the walls of the Théâtre Français, employed in promoting the success of a comedy which sparkled with wit, which carried the audience along by its dramatic movement and audacity, and which, if it shocked or startled some of the private boxes, excited and enchanted, inflamed and electrified the pit.”

All the parts were entrusted to performers of the first merit. Mademoiselle Sainval, who was the tragic actress then in vogue, had, at the urgent request of Beaumarchais, accepted the part of the Countess Almaviva, in which she displayed a talent the more striking from being quite unexpected. Mademoiselle Contat enchanted the public in the character of Susanna by her grace, the refinement of her acting, and the charms of her beauty and her voice. A very young and pretty actress, destined soon afterwards, at the age of eighteen, to be nipped in the bud by death – Mademoiselle Olivier, whose talent, says a contemporary, “was as naïve and fresh as her face” – lent her *naïveté* and her freshness to the seemingly ingenuous character of Cherubino. Molè acted the part of Count Almaviva with the elegance and dignity which distinguished him. Dazincourt represented Figaro with all his wit, and relieved the character from any appearance of vulgarity. Old Prévile, who was not less successful in the part of Bridoison, gave it up after a few days to Dugazon, who interpreted it with more power and equal intelligence. Delessarts, with his rich humour, gave relief to the personage of Bartholo, which is thrown somewhat into the background. The secondary parts of Basil and Antonio were equally well played by Vanhove and Bellemont. Finally, through a singular caprice, a somewhat celebrated tragedian, Larive, not wishing tragedy to be represented in the piece by Mademoiselle Sainval alone, asked for the insignificant little part of Grippe-soleil.

“The success of this Aristophanic comedy,” writes De Loménie, “while it filled some persons with anxiety and alarm, naturally roused the curious crowd, who are never wanting, particularly when a successful person takes a pleasure in spreading his fame abroad – and this foible of Beaumarchais is well known. It was in the midst of a fire of epigrams in prose and verse that the author of the *Marriage of Figaro* pursued his career, pouring out on his enemies not torrents of fire and light, but torrents of liveliness and fun.”

Beaumarchais, on the famous first night, sat in a *loge grillée* – a private box, that is to say, with lattice-work in front – between two abbés, with whom he had been dining, and whose presence seemed indispensable to him, in order, as he said, that they might administer to him *des secours très spirituels* in case of death.

The *Marriage of Figaro* was represented sixty-eight times in succession, and each time with the greatest possible success. In eight months, from April 27th, 1784, till January 10th, 1785, the piece brought the Théâtre Français, without counting the fiftieth representation (which, at Beaumarchais’s request, was given for the poor), no less than 346,197 livres or francs; an immense sum for that period. When all expenses had been paid, there remained a profit of 293,755 livres for division amongst the actors, after the deduction from it of Beaumarchais’s share as author, amounting to 41,469 livres.

All sorts of anecdotes were told in connection with the success of the work. A gentleman – whom gossip transformed into a duke – wrote to Beaumarchais, asking for a *loge grillée* for himself and two ladies who wished to see the piece without being seen. Beaumarchais replied that he had no sympathy with persons who wished to combine “the honours of virtue with the pleasures of vice”; and, moreover, that his comedy was not a work which honourable persons need be ashamed to see.

The Boulevard Beaumarchais of the present day was (as already mentioned) called, until some fifty years after the Revolution, Boulevard St. – Antoine; where, until 1789, the year of its destruction, stood the celebrated fortress and prison of the Bastille. The destruction of the Bastille was the first event in the French Revolution; and many have asked why the fury of the crowd was particularly directed against a building which, monument of tyranny though it was, had never been employed against the people at large, but almost always against members of the aristocracy, on whose behalf the Revolutionists were certainly not fighting. But although the dungeons of the Bastille were for the

most part filled with political offenders, persons of every station in life did, from time to time, find themselves enclosed within its walls.

The too celebrated fortress was originally built to protect the east of Paris, as the Louvre was constructed to guard the west. It stood on the south side of the boulevard now known by the name of Beaumarchais, and consisted of eight towers, four of which looked towards the town – that is to say, the Rue St. – Antoine – and four towards the country – that is to say, the Faubourg St. – Antoine.

Above the shop of the wine-seller who inhabits No. 232 in the Rue St. – Antoine, at the corner of the newly-built Rue Jacques-Cœur, a marble tablet sets forth that the house in question occupies the site of the outlying building into which the assailants, on the 14th of July, 1789, made their way before storming the fortress itself. The café which stands at the corner of the street and of the square bears for its sign, “The Cannon of the Bastille.”

It was less as a fortress than as a State prison that the Bastille was known, and by the nation at large execrated. Prisoners were taken to the Bastille on a simple *lettre de cachet*: a sealed order or warrant, which was sometimes given out blank, so that the favoured recipient might make whatever use of it he pleased, against no matter whom. The victims were introduced secretly into the fortress; and the soldiers on guard had instructions to turn aside when any prisoner was being brought in, so that they might not afterwards recognise him. Once inside the dungeon, he was liable to undergo frequent interrogations without even knowing on what charge, or even suspicion, he had been arrested. The treatment in prison depended absolutely on the will of the governor. Those under detention were kept in solitary confinement, without anyone outside being able to obtain news as to whether they even existed. They were not allowed to receive letters from their family or friends. The internal regulations of the Bastille are sufficiently well known to us by the numerous chronicles and memoirs published in connection with it, including, in particular, those of Linguet. “During the seven years that I passed in the Bastille,” says M. Pelissery, quoted by Linguet, “I had no air even in fine weather, and in winter they gave me nothing in the way of fuel except wood just taken from the river. My bed was intolerable, and the bedclothes dirty and worm-eaten. I drank, or rather poisoned myself with, foul stagnant water. What food they brought me! Famished dogs would not have touched it. Accordingly, my body was soon covered with pustules, my legs gave way beneath me, I spat blood, and became scorbutic. The dungeons received neither light nor air, except by one narrow window pierced in a wall nearly five metres thick, and traversed by a triple row of bars, between which there were intervals of only five centimetres. Even on the most beautiful days the prisoners received but feeble rays of light. In the winter these fatal caves resembled ice-houses, being sufficiently raised for the cold to penetrate; while in summer they were like damp stoves, in which it was difficult not to be stifled, since the walls are so thick as to keep out the heat necessary for drying the interior. There are some rooms – and mine was one of them – which look out directly upon the moat into which flows the great sewer of the Rue St. – Antoine. Thence ascends a pestilential exhalation, which, when once it has entered these rooms, can only with much difficulty be got out again. It is in such an atmosphere that the prisoner has to breathe. There, not to be absolutely stifled, he is obliged to pass his nights and days glued to the inside bars of the little window in the door, through which a glimmer of light and a breath of air may reach him.”

“The history of the Bastille as a State prison,” says Mongin, “might almost be said to include everything intellectual and political in France. Into its dungeons were thrown, one after the other, Hugues; Aubriot, who himself founded the Bastille, and who expiated by perpetual imprisonment his alleged heresy and his love relations with a Jewess; Jacques d’Armagnac, Duke of Nemours, in 1475; with many high and powerful noblemen in the time of Louis XI. and Richelieu. Here also were confined Marshal de Biron and Fouquet, the Superintendent of Finances, besides more than one officer of distinction under Louis XIV.”

When the Bastille had done its work on the last remains of feudalism and on the Court aristocracy, the turn came of the people – the precursors of the Republic, the martyrs of the

Revolution. After the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, the Bastille was filled with Protestants. Here were shut up the Jansenists and the fanatics known as the Convulsionnaires. Here, too, suffered, until he was taken to the scaffold, the brave Governor of India under the French domination, Lally, who had given offence to the Court rather than to the sovereign. Voltaire, Mirabeau, Linguet (who, after making his escape, published in London his eloquent account of the cruelties to which prisoners in the Bastille were subjected), Latude, and numberless other men distinguished in different walks of life.

The 14th of July, 1789, saw the first blow struck by the Revolutionists against that monument which, to them, symbolised all that was hateful in the ancient monarchy. War had already virtually been declared between the two sides. Everything seemed in favour of the king, the Court, the nobility, and the monarchical party generally. "If Paris must be burnt," one of the Ministers had said, "we will burn it."

Paris was, indeed, surrounded with foreign troops; and whatever might be the attitude of the French regiments, commanded by officers some of whom were Royalists and others Republicans, it was certain that the popular movement would have to count with the Swiss, Austrian, and German troops stationed at Charenton, Sèvres, Versailles, at the Military School, and elsewhere in the immediate neighbourhood of the capital.

On the 8th of July the National Assembly had, on the motion of Mirabeau, demanded from the king the removal of the foreign troops. The king's only reply, a few days afterwards, was to dismiss Necker, the popular Minister. The news of this tyrannical step fell upon Paris on Sunday, July 12th, like a spark on a barrel of gunpowder. The Palais Royal, which might be regarded as the headquarters of the Revolution, became violently agitated. It was twelve o'clock on a hot summer's day when suddenly the midday cannon, with its lens above the touch-hole, was fired by the blazing sun.

A superstitious importance was attached to the familiar incident; and the Revolutionists, with the people around them, saw in the ordinary explosion of a midday gun, intended only to interest the public by marking the time, the signal for an uprising against the ancient monarchy. A young man of twenty, then absolutely unknown, but who was afterwards to be remembered as Camille Desmoulins, rushed out of the Café Foy, sprang upon a table just outside, and in impassioned language addressed the crowd. "Citizens," he cried, "there is not a moment to lose! I have just come from Versailles. Necker is dismissed, and his dismissal is the signal for a new massacre of St. Bartholomew. This evening all the Swiss and German battalions will march from the Champ-de-Mars to put to death every patriot. We have but one resource: to rise to arms, after assuming cockades by which we may recognise each other. What colours do you prefer – green, the colour of hope, or the blue of Cincinnatus, the colour of American liberty and of democracy?"

"Green, green!" cried the crowd.

"Friends," continued the young man, in a sonorous voice, "the signal is already given. I see staring me in the face the spies and satellites of the police. But I will not fall alive into their hands. Let every citizen follow my example." He waved in the air two pistols, fastened a green ribbon to his hat, and descending from his chair, urged those present to take, as signs of recognition, leaves from the trees around them. Soon the trees of the Palais Royal garden were stripped. The excitement and enthusiasm spread in every direction. Arms were seized wherever they could be found. The busts of Necker and of the Duke of Orleans, idols of the moment, were carried through the streets veiled with black crape. More than one detachment of the French Guards joined the crowd. In the Tuileries Gardens several persons were killed by a cavalry charge under the command of Prince de Lambesc, of which the chief effect was to exasperate the insurgents to the utmost. Partial engagements now took place at various points. At the gates of Paris, the barriers where a tax was levied on provisions brought into the city were set in flames. Towards evening committees were formed in all the districts of the capital "for preventing tumult." The shops were now everywhere closed, and the theatres gave no performances. During the night the district assemblies held a general meeting, at which it was resolved to urge all who possessed arms to bring them to district head-quarters, that militia companies, to be

promptly formed for the occasion, might be furnished therewith in a regular manner. These militia bands were intended to act on behalf of the nation; if necessary, against the populace. But the general excitement was too great to allow of such formal measures being taken as the well-to-do citizens of the hurriedly constituted district assemblies thought advisable. To all recommendations of prudence there was but one reply: "To Arms!" The Provost of the Paris merchants, De Flesselles by name, who had been elected president of the district assemblies, endeavoured to stay the spirit of revolution, now spreading so widely; but to no purpose. The Hôtel de Ville, from which he held forth, was now occupied in every corner by armed men, who had no intention of giving their weapons up for the equipment of any imaginary militia company; and as yet these companies were unformed. An order to evacuate the Hôtel de Ville met with no attention, and deliberations were now carried on beneath the eyes and under the pressure of the enraged mob.

In place of the green colour adopted in the first instance by the insurgents of the Palais Royal, which the day afterwards was rejected as the family colour of the Counts of Artois, the tricolour had now been assumed: blue, in the new flag, being held to signify hope; red, the blood of sacrifice; and white, the ancient monarchy, against which war had not yet been declared. It was against the abuses of the ancient system, and in view of a thorough reform, that the people were rising.

Camille Desmoulins had begun the Revolution on Sunday, the 12th of July, at noon. On the morning of Monday, July 13th, the alarm bell was rung in every church, and the drum beaten in every street. Bands were now formed, without much system, under the names of Volunteers of the Palais Royal, of the Tuileries, etc. Women were everywhere making blue and red cockades – the white was not absolutely essential; the blacksmiths were forging arms; and it has been calculated that in thirty-six hours fifty thousand pikes were made. Tumultuous meetings were held in the churches, with a view to some regular organisation of the movement. A Government dépôt of arms was invaded, and plundered of its contents. The Place de la Grève became an important centre to which arms taken from gunsmiths' shops or from Government stores, sacks of wheat and flour (stopped at the barriers), and even herds of cattle and flocks of sheep, were brought. Paris was being turned into a camp. The citizens of the district assemblies, carried away by the ardour of the people whose impetuosity they had sought to restrain, the students of the various schools, the clerks of the public offices, the workmen of the faubourgs: all hurried to the Hôtel de Ville, swearing to conquer or to die. The fact that Paris was threatened by Swiss, German, and various kinds of Austrian troops could not but awaken the patriotism of Frenchmen generally. The first enemy to be fought was the army of foreigners waiting to swoop down on the city. An important collection of arms, formed by those who had obeyed the first recommendations of the district assemblies, was reported to exist at the Invalides; and an enormous quantity of powder which was being sent out of Paris by way of the River Seine, apparently under the orders of the timid citizens composing the aforesaid assemblies, was seized, carried to the Hôtel de Ville, and partially distributed.

No movement, meanwhile, had been made by the foreign troops, who were for the most part encamped or quartered in the École Militaire; the inaction being attributable to divided counsels among the king's ministers, and to hesitation on the part of the king himself. The one thing decided upon was to stop the entrance of provisions into Paris: a sure means, it was thought, of reducing the tumult, which at the outset was scarcely looked upon as serious. The National Assembly was behaving, meanwhile, in the most heroic manner. Threatened with dissolution and arrest, and quite at the mercy of the foreign troops, it voted an expression of regret at the dismissal of Necker, a demand that the foreign troops be forthwith sent away from Paris, and a declaration that the king's ministers, whatever their rank, would be held personally responsible for any misfortunes that might result from the present condition of things.

On the morning of the 14th of July Paris was surrounded at all points by foreign troops, and was at the same time threatened with famine. But one course was open to the insurgents: that of immediate action. There was a general feeling that an attack must be made, and the object unanimously chosen

for the first assault was the Bastille: symbol of everything hateful in the government it was proposed to overturn. “*A la Bastille!*” was now the universal cry. But a dearth of muskets retarded the impulse, and it was determined in the first instance to attack the Hôtel des Invalides, where arms in large numbers were known to be stored away. Thirty thousand men hurried to the asylum of aged soldiers; when, without much time being wasted in parleying with the governor, the sentinels were seized and the place entered by force. In the cellars twenty-eight thousand muskets were discovered concealed beneath hay and straw; and with these the invaders, whose numbers had gradually increased, hastened to arm themselves. Five years before, the king, on consenting to the liberation of Latude, had promised that henceforth no one should be sent to the Bastille except for a definite period, and after formal conviction on a positive charge. But this engagement had not been kept; people had been arrested, and incarcerated (as at the present time in Russia) on the simple denunciation of police officers and spies; sometimes on mere suspicion, at others without even suspicion, and simply for the gratification of private malice. The terrible *lettre de cachet*, on the strength of which arrests were made without further explanation, had indeed become a purchasable thing, with a fixed price, like any other article of commerce. It was doubtless, however, the memory of a long course of ancient wrongs that, above all, animated the people in their rage against the Bastille. There was, moreover, however, a strategical reason. As a fortress, the Bastille commanded the Rue St. – Antoine and the adjoining faubourg, and indeed dominated all Paris. To destroy it, therefore, was considered at once a good moral and a good military act.

The governor, De Launay, had already prepared his defence; and in addition to the guns of position in the towers, he had placed a number in the interior courtyard. The gates and the outer walls had been loopholed and armed with wall-pieces, and a quantity of paving-stones, cannon-balls, and lumps of iron had been carried up to the towers, in order to be hurled down upon the heads of the expected assailants.

The garrison consisted only of 114 men, 32 of whom were Swiss, while the other 82 were old pensioners. The defenders, indeed, were nearly all of them aged, but experienced, soldiers. Their material appliances and the strength of their position were such that the governor looked upon the fortress as impregnable against a mob of people who had neither the art nor the time to undertake regular siege operations. With his powerful batteries, De Launay could lay the whole quarter in ruins; and foreseeing this possibility, the committee of the Hôtel de Ville sent a deputation to the governor, promising not to attack him if he would withdraw the cannon, and promise not on his side to begin hostilities. A man of more energy, Thuriot de la Rozière, called, in the name of his district, upon the governor, and demanded the surrender of the fortress. His account of what was taking place in Paris astonished De Launay, and gained the sympathy of the French portion of the garrison. His final demand was that the Bastille should be occupied by some of the newly-formed bands conjointly with troops of the regular army. But this proposition, though more advanced than the feeble one made by the committee of the Hôtel de Ville, was by no means on a level with popular demands; and Thuriot, on leaving the Bastille, was threatened by the armed bands assembled outside, who demanded, not the occupation of the Bastille, but its destruction.

A few brave men got into the outer yard through the roof of the guard-house, and at once destroyed with hatchets the chains of the drawbridge leading to the inner yard. They were followed by others, and soon the outer gates were forced. A terrible fire had been opened on the crowd of assailants, and it was resolved once more to approach De Launay by means of a deputation, which, however, was unable to reach him. At this moment the besiegers set fire to several carts of hay and manure, in order to burn the buildings which masked the fortress and to smoke out the defenders. At the same time, a constant fire was kept up from the windows and roofs of the neighbouring houses. All this, however, had but little effect on the garrison. A new deputation was now sent forward, bearing a white flag. A white flag was displayed in reply from the Bastille, and the soldiers reversed their muskets. An officer of the Swiss troops passed forward a note, by means of a crane, with these words:

“We have twenty thousand pounds of powder, and we will blow up the fortress and the whole of the neighbourhood unless you accept a capitulation.”

The Commissaries of the Hôtel de Ville, believing in the pacific demonstrations of the garrison, were already urging the people to retire, when suddenly there was a discharge of musketry from the fortress, which laid low a good number of the insurgents. It was apparently the Swiss who had fired, heedless of the conciliatory attitude assumed by the French portion of the defending force. The whole garrison was held responsible for this act of treachery. The exasperation of the people had now gone beyond all bounds, and there was but one cry heard: “Down with the Bastille!” A number of the French guards seized five of the guns which had been brought from the Invalides, and pointed them at the fortress. The fire of the artillery proved more effective than that of the musketry, and the drawbridge was now swept by cannon-balls.

Meanwhile, the garrison was divided against itself. The pensioners wished the contest, of which the end could now be foreseen, to cease, whereas the Swiss mercenaries, careless about the effusion of French blood (and, it must be admitted, full of a more youthful courage), were determined to resist to the last.

There was another reason which made it inadvisable to prolong the defence. The fortress contained abundance of ammunition, but little or no food; and the numbers, constantly increasing, of the besiegers rendered it impossible to renew the supply. It was evident that all Paris demanded the fall of the Bastille. The Swiss, however, would hear of no surrender. As for De Launay, he felt that he was personally detested, not only for the blood he was uselessly shedding, but even more for his persecution of the prisoners under his charge. The *Memoirs* of Linguet and other revelations had made his name odious throughout Europe. Thus the vengeful cries of the people seemed directed against himself personally. Wild with terror, he seized a match, and was about to explode his powder magazine, when two non-commissioned officers drove him back at point of bayonet. Outside, a sort of organisation had now established itself. Many bands of volunteers had been moving together since the first uprising, with the volunteers of the Palais Royal, under Camille Desmoulins, among them. These bands were under the command of officers of the French Guards, or of energetic men who were afterwards to distinguish themselves in the military career.

According to some accounts, the surrender of the fortress took place immediately after the episode of the note thrust forward on a crane, or, according to another version, pushed through a loophole. The moment in any case arrived when, promised by some of the French Guards that their lives should be spared, the garrison agreed formally to surrender. The drawbridges were now lowered, and the Bastille was occupied in force. On being recognised, De Launay was arrested and led off towards the Hôtel de Ville. Hulin, afterwards one of Napoleon’s generals and nobles, took charge of the prisoner, and, forming an escort, did his best to convey him safely through the infuriated mob, which, with execrations, pressed towards him from all sides. More than once De Launay was thrown down. Having lost his hat, he was now an easier mark than ever for the assaults of the crowd. That he might not so readily be distinguished, Hulin gave him his own hat, thus running the risk of being himself mistaken for the odious governor. At last Hulin and several members of the escort were thrown together to the ground; and when Hulin managed to rise, the head of the hated governor was being carried aloft on the point of a pike.

Within the Bastille the invaders were, meanwhile, breaking open the dungeons. Only seven prisoners, however, were found, two of whom had become insane. One of the latter had a long white beard falling to his waist, and fancied himself still under the reign of Louis XV., who had been dead fifteen years. Instruments of torture were discovered. Shocking as this detail may be to a reader of the present day, it should be remembered that under the old monarchy torture was constantly employed in criminal process. It is only just to add that it was formally abolished a few years before the Revolution, and not afterwards, as is generally supposed.

The archives of the prison were in part destroyed. All that was preserved of them was afterwards published, in order once more to throw light on the iniquity of the system under which such an institution as the Bastille could exist.

The taking of the Bastille cost the assailants eighty-three killed on the spot, and fifteen who died from their injuries, besides sixty-three wounded. The garrison, on their side, protected by the walls of the fortress, lost but one killed and one wounded during a struggle which lasted five hours.

The major of the garrison, De Losme, shared the fate of the governor, except that, instead of being put to death summarily by an enraged mob, he was taken deliberately to the famous *lanterne*, or lamp of the Place de la Grève, and hanged. Two of the pensioners, accused, like the major, of having pointed the guns of the fortress against the people, were also strung up. These were the first victims of the cry “*À la lanterne!*” afterwards to be heard so often in the streets of Paris. The *lanterne* in question was attached to an iron gibbet; and it was on this gibbet that the victims of popular fury were hoisted aloft.

The lives of all the other defenders were spared. They were set at liberty and a subscription opened for them, as they had now no means of earning an honest penny.

The news of the capture of the Bastille caused great excitement at Versailles, where Louis XVI., in his habitual state of indecision, seemed unable to give an order of any kind. He had gone to bed at his usual hour, but was awakened early the next morning by the Duke de Liancourt, who enjoyed the privilege of entering the royal bedchamber at any time. The Duke informed his sovereign of what was taking place at Paris, and impressed upon him the necessity of putting himself in accord with the nation and with the Assembly.

“Is it a revolt, then?” asked Louis XVI., with his eyes half open. “No, Sire,” replied the duke; “it is a revolution.” In these words, destined to become celebrated, the astonished king was informed that the ancient monarchy was at an end.

The Bastille was now pulled down: partly in the natural course of things, partly in virtue of a formal resolution. The stones were broken up into little pieces, and worn by ladies as jewellery; ornaments and playthings were also made from the remains of the detested edifice.

The conquerors of the Bastille formed a special corps, which had its recognised place in all public ceremonies. A medal was struck in their honour, and each of them was commissioned with an office. During the Revolution the ground on which the Bastille stood became a favourite place for public meetings. The Bronze Column which now lifts its head in the Place de la Bastille was erected under the reign of Louis Philippe, in memory of the Revolution of 1789 and of the lesser revolt of 1830.

Although the Revolution began in Paris, the revolutionary spirit spread rapidly to the provinces. This is clearly set forth in Arthur Young’s account of what took place at Strasburg, where he had just arrived when news of the Revolution reached him.

“I arrived there,” he writes, “at a critical moment, which I thought would have broken my neck: a detachment of horse, with their trumpets, on one side, a party of infantry, with their drums beating, on the other, and a great mob hallooing, frightened my French mare, and I could scarcely keep her from trampling on Messrs. the *tiers état*. On arriving at the inn, one heard the interesting news of the revolt of Paris; the *Garde Française* joining the people; the unreliability of the rest of the troops; the taking of the Bastille; and the institution of the *milice bourgeoise*— in a word, the absolute overthrow of the old government. Everything being now decided, and the kingdom absolutely in the hands of the Assembly, they have the power to make a new constitution such as they think proper; and it will be a spectacle for the world to view in this enlightened age the representatives of twenty-five millions of people sitting on the construction of a new and better fabric of liberty than Europe has yet offered. It will now be seen whether they will copy the constitution of England, freed from its faults, or attempt from theory to frame something absolutely speculative. In the former case they will prove a blessing to their country; in the latter they will probably involve it in inextricable confusion and civil wars:

perhaps not immediately, but certainly in the future. I hear nothing of their removing from Versailles. If they stay there under the control of an armed mob, they must make a government that will please the mob; but they will, I suppose, be wise enough to move to some central town – Tours, Blois, or Orleans, where their deliberations may be free. But the Parisian spirit of commotion spreads rapidly; it is here; the troops that were near breaking my neck are employed to keep an eye on the people who show signs of an intended revolt. They have broken the windows of some magistrates who are no favourites; and a great mob of them is at this moment assembled, demanding clamorously to have meat at five sous a pound. They have a cry among them that will conduct them to good lengths: ‘*Point d’impôt et vivent les états!*’ I have spent some time at the *Cabinet Littéraire* reading the gazettes and journals that give an account of the transactions at Paris; and I have had some conversation with several sensible and intelligent men in the present revolution. The spirit of revolt is gone forth into various parts of the kingdom; the price of bread has prepared the populace everywhere for all sorts of violence; at Lyons there have been commotions as furious as at Paris, and likewise at a great many other places. Dauphiné is in arms, and Bretagne in absolute rebellion. The idea is that hunger will drive the people to revolt, and that when once they find any other means of subsistence than honest labour everything will have to be feared. Of such consequence it is to a country to have a policy on the subject of corn: one that shall, by securing a high price to the farmer, encourage his culture sufficiently to secure the people from famine. I have been witness to a scene curious to a foreigner, but dreadful to those Frenchmen who consider. Passing through the square of the *Hôtel de Ville*, the mob were breaking the windows with stones, notwithstanding that an officer and a detachment of horse were on the spot. Observing not only that their numbers increased, but that they grew bolder and bolder every moment, I thought it worth staying to see how the thing would end, and clambered on to the roof of a row of low stalls opposite the building against which their malice was directed. Here I could view the whole scene. Perceiving that the troops would not attack them except in words and menaces, they grew more violent, and furiously attempted to beat the door in pieces with iron crows, placing ladders to the windows. In about a quarter of an hour, which gave time for the assembled magistrates to escape by a back door, they burst everything open, and entered like a torrent, amid a universal shout of triumph. From that minute a medley of casements, sashes, shutters, chairs, tables, sofas, books, papers, pictures, etc., rained down incessantly from all the windows of the house, which is seventy or eighty feet long; this being succeeded by a shower of tiles, skirting-boards, banisters, framework, and whatever parts of the building force could detach. The troops, both horse and foot, were quiet spectators. They were at first too few to interpose, and when they became more numerous the mischief was too far advanced to admit of any other course than that of guarding every avenue around, permitting no fresh arrivals on the scene of action, but letting everyone that pleased retire with his plunder; guards at the same time being placed at the doors of the churches and all public buildings. I was for two hours a spectator of this scene: secure myself from the falling furniture, but near enough to see a fine lad of about fourteen crushed to death by some object as he was handing plunder to a woman – I suppose his mother, from the horror pictured in her countenance. I remarked several common soldiers with their white cockades among the plunderers, and instigating the mob even in sight of the officers of the detachment. Mixed in the crowd, there were people so decently dressed that I regarded them with no small surprise. The public archives were destroyed, and the streets for some way around strewn with papers. This was a wanton mischief, for it will be the ruin of many families unconnected with the magistrates.”

Although at the critical moment the first object of the revolutionists’ attack was the Bastille, that hateful building did not, according to Mercier, inspire the common people with any peculiar indignation. It will be seen from his own words that he was in this particular a less keen-sighted observer than he is generally reputed to have been. Writing just before the Revolution, Mercier saw well that his fellow-countrymen were oppressed, but believed they were too much inured to this oppression ever to rise against it.

“I have already observed,” he writes, “that the Parisians in general are totally indifferent as to their political interest; nor is this to be wondered at in a place where a man is hardly allowed to think for himself. A coercive silence, imposed upon every Frenchman from the hour of his birth on whatever regards the affairs of government, grows with him into a habit which the fear of the Bastille and his natural indolence daily strengthen, till the man is totally lost in the slave. Kingly prerogative knows no bounds, because no one ever dared to resist the monarch’s despotic commands. It is true that at times, in the words of the proverb, the galled horse has winced. The Parisians have at times attempted to withstand tyranny; but popular commotions amongst them have had very much the air of a boyish mutiny at school; a rod with the latter, the butt end of a firelock with the former, quiets all, because neither act with the spirit and resolution of *men* who assert their natural rights. What would cost the minister his life in those unhappy countries where self-denial and passive obedience are unknown is done off in Paris by a witty epigram, a smart song, etc.; the authors of which, however, take the greatest care to remain concealed, having continually the fear of ministerial runners before their eyes; nor has a *bon mot* unfrequently occasioned the captivity of its author.”

Mercier at the same time points out that never since the days of Henri IV. had France been so mildly governed as under Louis XVI. One of the last acts of Louis XV. had been to cast into the Bastille all the volumes of the Encyclopædia. One of the first acts of Louis XVI. was to liberate from the Bastille all prisoners who had not been guilty of serious, recognisable offences.

“At the accession of his present Majesty,” writes Mercier, “his new ministers, actuated by humanity, signalled the beginning of their administration with an act of justice and mercy, ordering the registers of the Bastille to be laid before them, when a great number of prisoners were set at large.” Among those liberated was a man of whom Mercier tells the same story that was afterwards to be told of one of the seven prisoners who were freed at the taking of the Bastille.

“Their number included a venerable old man, who for forty-seven years had remained shut up between four walls. Hardened by adversity, which steels the heart when it does not break it, he had supported his long and tedious captivity with unexampled constancy and fortitude; and he thought no more of liberty. The day is come. The door of his tomb turns upon its rusty hinges, it opens not ajar, as usual, but wide, for liberty, and an unknown voice acquaints him that he may now depart. He thinks himself in a dream; he hesitates, and at last ventures out with trembling steps; wonders at everything; thinks to have travelled a great way before he reaches the outward gate. Here he stops a while; his feeble eyes, long deprived of the sun’s cheering beams, can hardly support its first light. A coach waits for him in the streets; he gets into it, desires to be carried to a certain street, but unable to support the motion of the coach, he is set down, and by the assistance of two men at length he reaches the quarter where he formerly dwelt; but the spot is altered, and his house is no more. His wandering eye seems to interrogate every passenger, saying with heartrending accents of despondency: ‘Where shall I find my wife? Where are my children?’ All in vain; the oldest man hardly remembers to have heard his name. At last a poor old decrepit porter is brought to him. This man had served in his family, but knew him not. Questioned by the late prisoner, he replied, with all the indifference which accompanies the recollection of events long passed, that his wife had died above thirty years before in the utmost misery, and that his children were gone into foreign countries, nothing having been heard of them for many years. Struck with grief and astonishment, the old gentleman, his eyes riveted to the ground, remains for some time motionless; a few tears would have eased his deeply wounded heart, but he could not weep. At last, recovering from his trance, he hastens to the minister to whose humanity he was indebted for a liberty now grown burdensome. ‘Sir,’ he says to him, ‘send me back to my dungeon! Who is it that can survive his friends, his relations, nay, a whole generation? Who can hear of the death of all he held dear and precious, and not wish to die? All these losses, which happen to other men by gradation, and one by one, have fallen upon me in an instant. Ah, sir! it is not dreadful to die; but it is to be last survivor.’ The minister sympathised with this truly unfortunate man. Care was taken of him, and the old porter assigned to him for his servant, as he could speak with this

man of his wife and children: the only comfort now left for the aged son of sorrow, who lived some time retired, though in the midst of the noise and confusion of the capital. Nothing, however, could reconcile him to a world quite new for him, and to which he resolved to remain a perfect stranger; and friendly death at last came to his relief and closed his eyes in peace.”

Although, as frigid historians have pointed out, the Bastille never did any harm to the common people, it was sometimes made use of to punish actresses who were much admired by the populace. Mlle. Clairon, a distinguished actress and excellent woman, on quitting the stage from religious scruples – or rather because, contrary to her own views on the subject, she found the profession of actress condemned absolutely by the Church – was sent to the Bastille on the ground that, being a paid servant of the king, she refused to do her duty. “The case of this lady,” said a writer of the time, “is indeed hard. The king sends her to prison if she does not act, and the Church sends her to perdition if she does.” Mlle. Clairon was much troubled at the view taken of her profession by the clergy; and after consulting her confessor, she came to the conclusion that so long as she remained on the stage she could have no hope of salvation. It was then that she refused any longer to act, and determined to retire altogether from the stage. So indignant had Mlle. Clairon become on learning for the first time under what severe condemnation the stage lay, that she raised a strong party with the view of removing so great a scandal. Much was written and said in favour of the comedians, but all to no purpose. The priests stood firm to their text, and, in the words of a French writer, would by no means give up “their ancient and pious privilege of consigning to eternal punishment everyone who had anything to do with the stage.”

Mlle. Clairon’s retirement threw her manager into the greatest confusion. She was by far the best actress of the day, and such a favourite that it was almost impossible to do without her. The theatre was soon deserted by the public, and still Mlle. Clairon refused to act. Then it was that by royal mandate she was imprisoned. She had not, however, been long in the Bastille, when an order came from the Court for the players to go to Versailles to perform before the king. Mlle. Clairon was released, and commanded to make her appearance with the rest of the company. Being already very tired of the Bastille, she decided to obey, and performing at Court with immense success, and finding that all attempts to gain even the toleration of the Church were in vain, she resigned herself to her fate and went on acting as usual. Some years previously, Mlle. Clairon, accused of organising a cabal against a rival, had been sent to another State prison, Fort l’Évêque, where, instead of pining, as at the Bastille, she held high court, receiving visits from all kinds of illustrious people, whose carriages are said to have made the approach to the prison impassable.

Besides the Bastille and Fort l’Évêque, there was yet another prison, La Force, to which recalcitrant actresses used to be sent in the strange days of the ancient *régime*. Thus Mlle. Gavaudin, a singer at the Opera, having refused the part assigned to her in a piece called the “Golden Fleece,” was sent to La Force, where she enjoyed herself so much, that she was warned as to the possibility of her being punished by solitary confinement in a genuine dungeon. On this, she agreed to appear in the character which she had at first rejected. When, however, an official came to the prison to set her at liberty, in order that she might play her part that very evening, she told him that for the present she would remain where she was, that she had ordered an excellent dinner, and meant to eat it. The official charged with her liberation insisted, however, on setting her free, telling her that after he had once got her into the street she might go wherever she chose. She simply returned to the prison, where she dined copiously, with a due allowance of wine. “Then,” says a narrator of these incidents, “she went to the Opera, had a furious scene with the stage-manager, who, during her imprisonment, had given her dressing-room to another singer, and after a quarter of an hour of violent language calmed down, dressed herself for the part of Calliope, and sang very charmingly.” It may be mentioned that before she was consigned to the Bastille, Mlle. Clairon’s case interested greatly some of the best writers of the day, including Voltaire, who published an eloquent defence of the stage against the overbearing pretensions of the Church.

It seems strange that in France, where the drama is cultivated with more interest and with more success than in any other country, actors and actresses should so long have been regarded as beyond the pale of Christianity. Happily, this is no longer the case. But the traditional view of the French Church in regard to actors and actresses was, until within a comparatively recent time, that they were, by the mere fact of exercising their profession, in the position of excommunicated persons. This is sufficiently shown not only by the case of Mlle. Clairon in connection with the Bastille, but also by the circumstances attending the burial of Molière in the seventeenth, of Adrienne Lecouvreur in the eighteenth, and of Mlle. Raucourt in the nineteenth century. Acting in *Le Malade Imaginaire*, Molière broke a blood-vessel, and was carried home to die. He was attended in his last moments by a priest of his acquaintance; he expired in presence of two nuns whom he frequently entertained, and who had come to visit him on that very day. Funeral rites were denied him, all the same, by the Archbishop of Paris; and when Mme. Molière appealed in person to Louis XIV., the king took offence at her audacious mode of address, and threw the whole responsibility on the Archbishop of Paris – to whom, nevertheless, he sent a private message. As a result of the king's interference – not a very authoritative one – a priest was allowed to accompany Molière's body to its otherwise unhonoured grave. The great comedy-writer was buried at midnight in unconsecrated ground; and of course, therefore, without any religious service.

Adrienne Lecouvreur, who, more than a century after her death, was to be made the heroine of Scribe and Legouvé's famous drama, is known to all playgoers as the life-long friend of Marshal Saxe, whom she furnished with money for his famous expedition to Courland. Voltaire entertained the greatest regard for her, and was never so happy as when he had persuaded her to undertake a part in one of his plays. Adrienne died in Voltaire's arms, and no sooner was she dead than public opinion accused her rival, the Duchess de Bouillon, of having poisoned her from jealousy and hatred; for the duchess had conceived a passion for Marshal Saxe to which that gallant warrior could not bring himself to respond. The clergy refused to bury Adrienne, as in the previous century they had refused to bury Molière. Her body was taken possession of by the police, who buried it at midnight, without witnesses, on the banks of the Seine. "In France," said Voltaire, "actresses are adored when they are beautiful, and thrown into the gutter when they are dead."

Nearly a hundred years after the death of Adrienne Lecouvreur died another great actress, Mlle. Raucourt, who, like Adrienne Lecouvreur and like Molière, was refused Christian burial. This was in 1815, just after the Restoration, at a time when the clergy, so long deprived of power, were beginning once more to exercise it in earnest. The Curé of St. – Roch refused to admit the body of the actress into his church. An indignant crowd assembled, and became so riotous that the troops had to be called out. At last King Louis XVIII. ordered the church doors to be opened, and with the tact which distinguished him, commissioned his private chaplain to perform the service. In such horror was the stage held by the French clergy (if not by the Catholic clergy throughout Europe) so late as the beginning of the present century, that money offered to the Church by actors and actresses for charitable purposes, although accepted, was at the same time looked upon as contaminating. Thus, when Mlle. Contat gave performances for the starving poor of Paris, and handed the proceeds to the clergy of her parish for distribution, they refused to touch the money until it had been "purified" by passing through the hands of the police, to whom it was paid in by the stage, and by whom it was afterwards paid out to the Church.

The Place de la Bastille was formed in virtue of a decree of the First Consul, but it was not completed until after the establishment of the Empire. The principal ornament of the square was to be a triumphal arch to the glory of the Grand Army. But after taking the opinion of the Academy of Fine Arts, the emperor altered his views; and the triumphal arch was reserved for the place it now occupies at the top of the Champs Élysées. Oddly enough, too, a massive object, intended originally for the spot now occupied by the Arc de l'Étoile, was carried to the Bastille in the form of an elephant, whose trunk, according to the fantastic design, was to give forth a column of water large enough to

feed a triumphal fountain, which was inaugurated December 2nd, 1808. The wooden model of the elephant, covered with plaster, was seventeen metres long and fifteen metres high, counting the tower which the animal bore on its back. Set up for a time on the western bank of the Canal de l'Ourcq, the plastered elephant was afterwards abandoned, like the project in which it played a preliminary part, and its wooden carcase became a refuge for innumerable rats. The remains of the elephant were not removed until just before the completion of the bronze column which now stands in the centre of the Place de la Bastille, in memory of the victims of the Revolutions of 1789 and 1830.

The first stone of this monument was laid by King Louis Philippe on the 27th of July, 1831. It was finished at the beginning of 1843; and on the 28th of July of that year were placed, in the vaults constructed beneath the column for their reception, the remains of the insurgents of 1830, which for ten years had been lying buried in all parts of Paris, but particularly in the neighbourhood of the markets and at the foot of the Colonnade of the Louvre, where the relics reposed side by side with those of the Swiss soldiers who had died in protecting the palace. The figure lightly poised on the ball at the top of the column represents the Genius of Liberty.

At a short distance from the Place de la Bastille, and easily accessible by train, is Vincennes: known by its wood, at one time the favourite resort of duellists; by its military establishment, to which the famous Chasseurs de Vincennes owed their name when, after the downfall of Louis Philippe, it was thought desirable to get rid of their former designation – that of Chasseurs d'Orléans; and for its castle, in whose ditch the ill-fated Duke d'Enghien was shot, after a mock trial, on an all but groundless accusation.

The Duke d'Enghien, who, according to one of his biographers, had no fault but the one common to all the Bourbons – that of being “too easily influenced by beautiful eyes” – was living on the German side of the Rhine, nearly opposite Strasburg, with his wife, a Princess de Rohan-Rochefort, to whom he had been secretly married. As a royalist and a member of the royal family, he was naturally the enemy of Napoleon and the Napoleonic *régime*. But he had taken no part in any conspiracy, unless the League of Sovereigns and States formed against Napoleon could be so considered. The duke frequently crossed over from the right or German bank, especially at Binfelden, where the Prince de Rohan-Rochefort, his wife's father, had taken apartments at the local inn. It became known, moreover, to the French authorities that the Prefect of Strasburg had for some time past been sending various agents to the German side. The princess received at this time from an officer of the Strasburg garrison, who had been formerly attached to the Rohan family, secret intelligence that inquiries were being made in regard to the Duke d'Enghien. Soon afterwards a small body of troops crossed the Rhine, surrounded the little castle or Gothic villa where the duke was living at Ettenheim, seized him, and brought him over to Strasburg. He was permitted to write, and lost no time in sending a note to the princess, who, from the windows of the house, had followed in painful anxiety all the events of the alarming drama acted before her eyes.

“They have promised me,” wrote the duke from the citadel of Strasburg, “that this letter shall be delivered to you intact. This is the first opportunity I have had of reassuring you as to my present condition, and I do so now without losing a moment. Will you, in your turn, reassure those who are attached to me in your neighbourhood? My own fear is that this letter may find you no longer at Ettenheim, but on the way to this place. The pleasure of seeing you, however, would not be nearly so great as the fear I should have of your sharing my fate... You know, from the number of men employed, that all resistance would have been useless. There was nothing to be done against such overpowering forces.

“I am treated with attention and politeness. I may say, except as regards my liberty (for I am not allowed to leave my room), that I am as well off as could be. If some of the officers sleep in my chamber, that is because I desired it. We occupy one of the commandant's apartments, but another room is being prepared for me, which I am to take possession of to-morrow, and where I shall be

better off still. The papers found on me, and which were sealed at once with my seal, are to be examined this morning in my presence.”

The first letters written by the young man from Strasburg to his wife (they are still preserved in the French Archives) showed no apprehension of danger; nothing could be proved against him except what was known beforehand, that he was a Bourbon and an enemy of Napoleon. “As far as I remember,” wrote the duke to his wife, “they will find letters from my relations and from the king, together with copies of some of mine. In all these, as you know, there is nothing that can compromise me, any more than my name and mode of thinking would have done during the whole course of the Revolution. All the papers will, I believe, be sent to Paris, and it is thought, according to what I hear, that in a short time I shall be free; God grant it! They were looking for Dumouriez, who was thought to be in our neighbourhood. It seems to have been supposed that we had had conferences together, and apparently he is implicated in the conspiracy against the life of the First Consul. My ignorance of this makes me hope that I shall obtain my liberty, but we must not flatter ourselves too soon. The attachment of my people draws tears from my eyes at every moment. They might have escaped; no one forced them to follow me. They came of their own accord... I have seen nobody this morning except the commandant, who seems to me an honest, kind-hearted man, but at the same time strict in the fulfilment of his duty. I am expecting the colonel of gendarmes who arrested me, and who is to open my papers before me.”

Transferred to Vincennes, the duke was tried summarily by court-martial, sentenced to death, and shot in the moat of the fortress on the 21st of March, 1804. Immediately before the execution he asked for a pair of scissors, cut off a lock of his hair, wrapped it up in a piece of paper, with a gold ring and a letter, and gave the packet to Lieut. Noirod, begging him to send it to the Princess Charlotte de Rohan-Rochefort. Lieut. Noirod forwarded the packet to General Hulin, who transmitted it to an official named Réal, together with the following letter: —

“Paris, 30th Ventôse, Year 12 of the French Republic. – P. Hulin, General of Brigade commanding the Grenadiers on Foot of the Consular Guard, to Citizen Réal, Councillor of State charged with the conduct of affairs relating to the internal tranquillity and security of the Republic. I have the honour, Councillor of State, to address you a packet found on the former Duke d’Enghien. I have the honour to salute you. (Signed) P. HULIN.”

The receipt of the package was thus acknowledged by Citizen Réal: —

“Paris, 2 Germinal, Year 12 of the Republic. – The Councillor of State, especially charged with the conduct of all affairs relating to the internal tranquillity and security of the Republic, has received from the General of Brigade, Hulin, commanding the Grenadiers on Foot of the Guard, a small packet, containing hair, a gold ring, and a letter; this small packet bearing the following inscription: ‘To be forwarded to the Princess de Rohan from the former Duke d’Enghien.’
“(Signed) RÉAL.”

The last wishes of the unfortunate duke were not carried out. The packet was never forwarded to his wife. She may have received the letter, but the ring, the lock of hair, and some fifteen epistles, written in German, from the princess to the duke, and found upon him after his death, remained, without the duke’s letter, in the Archives of the Prefecture of Police. A fortnight after the duke’s execution, his widow addressed from Ettenheim, on the 16th of July, 1804, the following letter to the Countess d’Ecquevilly: —

“Since I still exist, dear Countess, it is certain that grief does not kill. Great God! for what frightful calamity was I reserved? In the most cruel torments, the most painful anxiety, never once did the horrible fear present itself to my mind

that they might take his life. But, alas! it is only too true that the unhappy man has been made their victim: that this unjust sentence, this atrocious sentence, to which my whole being refused to lend credence, was pronounced and thereupon executed. I have not the courage to enter into details of this frightful event; but there is not one of them which is not heartrending, not one that would not paralyze with terror – I do not say every kind-hearted person, but anyone who has not lost all feeling of humanity. Alone, without support, without succour, without defence, oppressed with anxiety, worn out with fatigue, denied one moment of the repose demanded by Nature after his painful journey, he heard his death-sentence hurriedly pronounced, during which the unhappy man sank four times into unconsciousness. What barbarity! Great God! And when the end came he was abandoned on all sides, without sympathy or consolation, without one affectionate hand to wipe away his tears or close his eyelids.

“Ah! I have not the cruel reproach to make to myself of not having done everything to follow him. Heaven knows that I would have risked my life with joy, I do not say to save him, but to soften the last moments of his life. Alas! they envied me this sad delight. Prayers, entreaties, were all in vain; I could not share his fate. They preferred to leave me to this wretched existence, condemned to eternal regret, eternal sorrow.”

Princess Charlotte died at Paris in 1841; and quite recently a note on the subject of her last wishes appeared in the Paris *Intermédiaire*, the French equivalent of our *Notes and Queries*. It was as follows: – “After the death of the Princess Charlotte, there was found among her papers a sealed packet, of which the superscription directed that it should be opened by the President of the Tribunal – at that time M. de Balli. This magistrate opened the packet and examined its contents. He found the whole correspondence of Bonaparte’s victim with ‘his friend,’ as the worthy magistrate put it: *avec son amie*. The president gave the packet to the family notary after re-closing it, saying that the letters were very touching, very interesting, but that they must be burnt; which was in fact done.”

The marriage of the Duke d’Enghien to the Princess de Rohan had been informal; the informality consisting solely in its having been celebrated without some necessary sanction: probably that of the king, Louis XVI. The ceremony was performed by Cardinal de Rohan, the bride’s uncle; and it is evident from her first letters that she was regarded by her nearest friends and relatives as the duke’s lawful wife.

Let us now, passing from political to private executions, say a few words about some of the famous duels of which Vincennes, or rather the wood of Vincennes, has from time to time been the scene.

Duels in France are generally fought with swords; and as it depends upon the combatants to strike or not to strike at a mortal part, a hostile meeting is by no means always attended with serious consequences. It is a mistake, however, to assume, as Englishmen frequently do, that a duel in France fought for grave reasons is not itself a grave affair. Plenty of sword duels have placed the worsted combatant in imminent danger of his life; though it is undeniable that the pistol, being a more hazardous weapon, proves, as a rule, deadlier than the sword. When M. Paolo Fiorentino, blackballed at the Society of Men of Letters, on the ground that he had accepted bribes, undertook to fight every member of the association, beginning with M. Amédée Achard, whose name, thanks to its two A’s, headed the alphabetical list, the Italian critic and bravo ran his first opponent through the body, and all but killed him. M. Henri de Pène received like treatment at the hands of an officer by reason of his having described the unseemly conduct of officers generally, as shown at a ball of which the École Militaire was the scene. Both Achard and Pène, however, recovered. Not so the unfortunate Armand Carrel, one of the boldest and most brilliant writers that the Republican Press of France possessed. Armand Carrel and his antagonist, Émile de Girardin, another famous journalist of Louis

Philippe's reign, fought with pistols in that Bois de Vincennes whose name at once suggests crossed rapiers or whizzing bullets.

M. de Girardin was the inventor of the cheap press, not only in France, but in Europe. To reduce the price of the newspaper, and thus increase the number of subscribers, while covering any possible loss on the sale by the enlarged revenue from advertisements, which would flow in more and more rapidly as the circulation widened: such was Girardin's plan. According, however, to his enemies, he proposed to "enlarge the portion hitherto allotted in newspapers to mendacious announcements to the self-commendations of quackery and imposture, at the sacrifice of space which should be devoted to philosophy, history, literature, the arts, and whatever else elevates or delights the mind of man."

The proposed change was really one which Democrats and Republicans should have hailed with delight; for it promised to extend a knowledge of public affairs to readers who had hitherto been prevented from becoming acquainted with them by the high price of the newspapers, which, apart from their own articles on political affairs, published long accounts of the debates in the Chamber.

M. de Girardin, however, found his innovation attacked as the device of a charlatan. He was accused of converting journalism into the most sordid of trades: of making it "a speaking-trumpet of the money-grabber and the speculator." Some of M. de Girardin's opponents went so far as to hint that he was not working in good faith, and that the losses to which the diminution of price must expose his journal were to be made good by a secret subsidy. Armand Carrel, as editor of the *National*, entered into the quarrel, and took part against Girardin, who, on his side, wrote a bitter attack upon Carrel. No sooner had Carrel read the scathing article than he called upon its author, demanding either retraction or personal satisfaction. He entered Girardin's room, accompanied by M. Adolphe Thibaudau, holding open in his hand the journal which contained the offensive lines. Girardin asked Carrel to wait until he also could have a friend present. M. Lautour-Mézeray was sent for; but pending that gentleman's arrival some sharp words were interchanged.

Armand Carrel conceived that he was justified in regarding the course adopted by M. de Girardin as indicating an intention to bring the matter to a duel, and on his suggesting as much, M. de Girardin replied, "A duel with such a man as you, sir, would be quite a *bonne fortune*." "Sir," replied Carrel, "I can never regard a duel as a *bonne fortune*." A few moments afterwards M. Lautour-Mézeray arrived. His presence served to give the discussion a more conciliatory tone, and it was ultimately agreed that a few words of explanation should be published in both journals. On M. de Girardin's proposing to draw up the note at once, "You may rely upon me, sir," said Armand Carrel, with dignity. The quarrel seemed almost at an end; but an incident reanimated it. M. de Girardin required that the publication of the note should take place simultaneously in the two journals. Carrel, on the contrary, held that it ought to appear first in the *Presse*, Girardin's paper; but he experienced on this point the most determined resistance. It was then that, carried away with indignation, wounded to the quick, utterly unable to adhere any longer to the moderation which, by a determined effort, he had hitherto enforced upon himself, Carrel rose and exclaimed, "I am the offended person; I choose the pistol!"

It was early on the morning of Friday, July 22, 1836, that Armand Carrel and M. de Girardin found themselves face to face in the Bois de Vincennes.

While the pistols were being loaded, Carrel said to M. de Girardin, "Should chance be against me and you should afterwards write my life, you will, in all honour, adhere strictly and simply to the facts?" "Rest assured," replied his adversary. The seconds had measured a distance of forty paces; the combatants were to advance within twenty of each other. Armand Carrel immediately took his place and advanced, presenting, despite the urgent entreaties of M. Ambert that he would show less front, the whole breadth of his person to his adversary's aim. M. de Girardin having also advanced some paces, both parties fired nearly at the same instant, and both fell wounded, the one in the leg, the other in the groin.

“I saw him,” wrote Louis Blanc some time afterwards, “as he lay; his pale features expressing passion in repose. His attitude was firm, inflexible, martial, like that of a soldier who slumbers on the eve of battle.”

M. de Girardin was profoundly grieved at the result of the duel, and he made a vow never to fight again. Many years afterwards, under the Republic of 1848, he visited the grave of the man he had killed, to express his regret and ask for pardon in the name of the form of Government to which he had now become a convert, and which Carrel had always placed above every other.

The duelling chronicles of the Bois de Vincennes would lead us far away from the Paris of to-day. It may be mentioned, however, that in this wood Alexandre Dumas the elder fought his famous duel with a *collaborateur*, who claimed to have written the whole of the *Tour de Nesle* and who, undoubtedly, supplied to the skilful dramatist the framework of the piece.

Dumas was in all truth a skilful dramatist, though one may hesitate to give him the title of dramatic poet, which he loved to claim. “What are you?” said the judge of the Rouen Tribunal to the author of so many clever pieces, who had to give evidence in a certain case. “If I were not in the city of Corneille,” answered Alexander the Great, “I should call myself a dramatic poet.” “There are degrees in everything,” replied the judge. Alexandre Dumas was, all the same, a great inventor, and he possessed an extraordinary talent for putting dramatic things into shape. When, therefore, the future editor of the *Courier des États-Unis* claimed to have written all that was important in the *Tour de Nesle*, he doubtless declared what from a literary point of view was false. Dumas not only rejected his contention, but declined to allow his own name to appear in the bill side by side with that of his *collaborateur*. Hence angry words and a duel: once more a serious one, and with pistols, not swords.

With a calm desire to kill his man, of which, were he not his own accuser, one would refuse to suspect him, Dumas tells us, in his *Memoirs*, how, when he appeared on the ground, he examined his adversary’s costume, and, while thinking it excellent as a “make-up,” was sorry to find that it offered no salient mark for a pistol-shot. M. Gaillardet was dressed entirely in black; his trousers, his buttoned-up coat, his cravat were all as inky as Hamlet’s cloak, and according to the Parisian fashion of the time, he wore no shirt-collar. “Impossible to see the man,” said Dumas to himself; “there is no point about him to aim at.” He at the same time made a mental note of the costume, which he afterwards reproduced in the duel scene of the “Corsican Brothers.” At last he noticed a little speck of white in his adversary’s ear: simply a small piece of cotton-wool. “I will hit him in the ear,” said Dumas to himself; and on his confiding the amiable intention to one of his seconds, the latter promised to watch carefully the effect of the shot, inasmuch as he was anxious to see whether a man hit with a bullet through the head turned round a little before falling or fell straight to the ground. Dumas’s pistol, however, missed fire. The delightful experiment contemplated could not, therefore, be tried; and the encounter was bloodless.

At Vincennes was confined for a few days, just before his expulsion from France, the Young Pretender, or “Charles Edward,” as the French called him. The Duke de Biron had been ordered to see to his arrest; and one evening when it was known that he intended to visit the Opera, Biron surrounded the building with twelve hundred guards as soon as the prince had entered it. He was arrested, taken to Vincennes, and kept there four days; then to be liberated and expelled from France, in accordance with the treaty of 1748, so humiliating to the French arms. The servants of the Young Pretender, and with them one of the retinue of the Princess de Talmont, whose antiquated charms had detained him at Paris, were conveyed to the Bastille; upon which the princess wrote the following letter to M. de Maurepas, the minister: “The king, sir, has just covered himself with immortal glory by arresting Prince Edward. I have no doubt but that his Majesty will order a *Te Deum* to be sung to thank God for so brilliant a victory. But as Placide, my lacquey, taken captive in this memorable expedition, can add nothing to his Majesty’s laurels, I beg you to send him back to me.” “The only Englishman the regiment of French guards has taken throughout the war!” exclaimed the Princess de Conti, when she heard of the arrest.

“Besides the Bastille and the Castle of Vincennes, which are the privileged places of confinement for State prisoners, there are others,” says an old chronicler, “which may be called the last strongholds of tyranny. The minister by his private *lettre de cachet* sends an objectionable individual to Bicêtre or Charenton. The latter place, indeed, is for lunatics; but a minister who deprives a citizen of his liberty because he so wills it may make him pass for what he pleases; and if the person taken up is not at that time, he will in a few months be, entirely out of his senses, so that at worst it is only a kind of ministerial anticipation. Upon any complaint laid by the parents or other relations, a young man is sent to St. – Lazare, where sometimes he will remain till the death of the complainants; and Heaven knows how fervently this is prayed for by the captive!”

Under the reign of Charles VII. there stood in the Wood of Vincennes a castle which the King named Château de Beauté, and presented to Agnes Sorel. Of this abode the royal favourite duly took possession. Charles was by no means popular with his subjects, whom he taxed severely; and they were scandalised by the way in which Agnes Sorel squandered money, by her undisguised relations with the king, and by the kindness with which she was apparently treated even by the queen. Far, then, from rendering honours to “the beautiful Agnes,” the Parisians murmured at her prodigality and arrogance; and the favourite, indignant to find herself so ill received in Paris, departed, saying that the Parisians were churls, and that if she had suspected they would render her such insufficient honour she would never have set foot in their city: “which,” says a contemporary writer, “would have been a pity, but not a great one.”

After saying so much against Agnes Sorel, it is only fair to add that, according to many historians, it was she who roused Charles VII. from his habitual lethargy, and inspired him with the idea of driving the English out of France.

Vincennes is a military station, where a considerable body of troops is maintained. Hence, as already mentioned, the once famous Chasseurs derived their name. Each division has now its own battalion of Chasseurs. It may be added that special corps of infantry, such as Chasseurs de Vincennes, Zouaves, Turcos, together with the Chasseurs d’Afrique and other kinds of ornamental cavalry, have been abolished: to the detriment of the picturesqueness, if not the practical efficiency, of the French army.

The infantry regiments are all armed and dressed absolutely alike, with the exception of the battalions of “chasseurs” (corresponding to the “schützen” battalions of the German Army), whose tunics are of a lighter blue than those of the line regiments. The Germans, by the way, have only one battalion of sharpshooters to each army corps, whereas the French have two, one to each division. As the French are adopting as much as possible the principle of uniformity in their army, it seems strange that they should have made any distinction between chasseurs and infantry of the line; that, in short, they should have retained chasseurs in their army at all. Formerly sharp-shooters carried rifles and were supposed to be particularly good shots; whereas infantry of the line were armed with smooth-bore muskets, and if they could pull the trigger, could certainly not aim straight. Now every infantry soldier is supposed, more or less correctly, to be a good marksman; and linesmen and chasseurs are armed alike.

Lancers exist no more; and the French cavalry, but for differences of uniform, would all be of the same medium pattern, neither “light” nor “heavy,” but presumably fit for duties of all kinds. Some cavalry regiments are uniformed as dragoons, some as chasseurs, some as hussars; and every army corps has attached to it, or rather included in its integral force, four cavalry regiments of one of these three descriptions.

The Recruitment Bill of 1872 and the Organisation Bill of 1873 form a net which, with the additions since made to them, takes at one sweep everybody whom the military authorities can possibly want. Even seminarists and students of theology are no longer exempted.

Postmen, policemen of all kinds, workmen in Government factories, students of a certain age in Government schools and in all educational establishments private or public, members of the custom

house and octroi service, firemen, Government engineers, clerks and workmen in the Department of Woods, Bridges, and Mines, scavengers, lighthouse-keepers, coast-guardsmen, engine-drivers, stokers, guards, pointsmen, station-masters, signalmen and clerks of the railway service, all persons employed in the telegraph service, all seamen not already on the lists of the navy, and generally all members of bodies having some recognised constitution in time of peace, may in time of war be formed into special corps in order to serve either with the active army or with the “territorial army” – as the French equivalent to the German Landwehr is called. “The formation of these special corps,” says the text of the Law on the General Organisation of the French Army, “is authorised by decree. They are subject to all the obligations of military service, enjoy all the rights of belligerents, and are bound by the rules of the law of nations.”

For private gentlemen going out in plain clothes to shoot at invaders from behind hedges no provision is made; and such persons, whether called “francs-tireurs” or by any other name, would, if caught by the enemy, evidently be left to their fate. The franc-tireur, in fact, though still popular with the sort of people who delight in stories of brigands and highwaymen, is not looked back to with admiration even by his own Government. “These articles,” says the report on the Law of Military Organisation in reference to the clause above cited, “are introduced in order to prevent the return of such unhappy misunderstandings as occurred in the last war, during which it is said that National Guards and francs-tireurs were shot by the enemy because our military laws had not given them the rights of belligerents.” The rules under which these bodies of armed civilians, temporarily endowed with the military character, may be organised are strictly defined, so that the country may at no future time be troubled by “the formation of bands of foreign adventurers who have during all the worst epochs of our history fallen upon France, and, under pretext of defending her, have often subjected her to devastation and pillage.” This is, of course, meant for the bands of Garibaldians. They were, nevertheless, regularly organised under officers bearing commissions from the Minister of War, and, apart from the question of “devastation and pillage,” were the only bodies of partisans who showed any aptitude for guerilla warfare.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BOULEVARDS (*continued*)

Hôtel Carnavalet. – Hôtel Lamoignon. – Place Royale. – Boulevard du Temple. – The Temple. – Louis XVII. – The Theatres. – Astley's Circus. – Attempted Assassination of Louis Philippe. – Trial of Fieschi. – The Café Turc. – The Cafés. – The Folies Dramatiques. – Louis XVI. and the Opera. – Murder of the Duke of Berri.

LET us return now from Vincennes to the Place de la Bastille and the Boulevard Beaumarchais.

Perhaps the most interesting house on this boulevard is number twenty-three, which was built by Mansard, the famous architect, for his own occupation. One set of rooms in the house was occupied by the celebrated Ninon de Lenclos, who died there October 17, 1703, at the age of eighty-nine, preserving, according to tradition, her remarkable beauty to the very last. Here Voltaire, then in his twelfth year, was presented to her; nor did she forget to assign to him in her will 2,000 francs for the purchase of books.

Next door to the house of Mansard and Ninon de Lenclos is the little Beaumarchais theatre, which, constructed in forty-three days, was opened on the 3rd of December, 1835, under the style of Théâtre de la Porte St. – Antoine. In 1842 it was re-named Théâtre Beaumarchais. Then at different periods it bore the titles of Opéra Bouffe Français, and Fantaisies Parisiennes, until at length, in 1888, when it was entirely rebuilt, it became once more the Théâtre Beaumarchais.

The Government of 1830 did right in giving the name of Beaumarchais to the boulevard on which he at one time lived, and where he possessed a certain amount of property. During the stormy years that immediately preceded the Revolution of 1789 Beaumarchais was an important figure; and the effect of the “Marriage of Figaro” on the public mind was in a good measure to prepare it for the general overthrow then imminent. The King, the Queen, the Ministers, were all, in the first instance, afraid of the “Marriage of Figaro”; and we have seen that to get it produced Beaumarchais displayed as much diplomacy and energy as would suffice in the present day to upset a Cabinet.

While living at his mansion near the Porte St. – Antoine, Beaumarchais built close at hand the Théâtre du Marais, where, after letting it to a manager, he brought out, in 1792, his “Mère Coupable” – the third part of his Figaro Trilogy, in which the Count and Countess Almaviva, Figaro and Susannah, are shown in their old age. The “guilty mother” is the Countess herself; the charming and, as one had hoped, innocent Rosina of the “Barber of Seville.” The male offender is Chérubin, better known under his operatic name of Cherubino, who after saying in the French comedy, with a mixture of timidity and audacity, “Si j’osais oser!” ends by daring too much. “La Mère Coupable” obtained but little success, and deserved none. Closed by Imperial order in 1807, the Théâtre du Marais existed only for fifteen years. It must not be confounded with the ancient theatre of the same name where in 1636 Corneille produced his famous tragedy “Le Cid.”

The Marais or marsh, whose name recalls the early history of Paris, when Lutetia was defended by marshes as by a broad impassable moat, has long been known as the favourite abode of small pensioners and fundholders, who in this remote quarter found food and shelter at inexpensive rates.

The Marais, however, has had, like most other parts of Paris, its illustrious residents; and when about the middle of the eighteenth century the immortal actress Mlle. Clairon lived there she was the third famous inmate of the tenement in which she had taken up her abode. “I was told of a small house in the Rue du Marais,” she writes in her memoirs, “which I could have for two hundred francs, where Racine was said to have lived forty years with his family. I was informed that it was there he had composed his imperishable works and there that he died; and that afterwards it had been occupied by the tender Lecouvreur, who had ended her days in it. ‘The walls of the house,’ I reflected, ‘will

be alone sufficient to make me feel the sublimity of the author and develop the talents of the actress. In this sanctuary then I will live and die!”

Close to the Rue du Marais, in the Rue de Sévigné, stands the Musée Carnavalet, established in the former Hôtel Carnavalet, where Mme. de Sévigné, author of the famous Letters, lived from 1677 to 1698. It was restored in 1867 by Baron Haussmann, who converted it into a museum for preserving various monuments, statues, inscriptions, tombstones, ornaments, and objects of various kinds, proceeding from the wholesale demolition to which sundry streets and even whole quarters of Paris were at that time being subjected, under the orders of Baron Haussmann himself in his capacity of Prefect of the Seine.

Another remarkable mansion in the same street is the Hôtel Lamoignon, now occupied by different manufacturers, especially of chemical products, but which, in its earliest days, had highly aristocratic and even royal occupants. Begun by Diana of France, legitimatised daughter of Henri II., the Hôtel Lamoignon was bought and finished in 1581 for Charles de Valois, Duke of Angoulême, natural son of Charles IX., who, according to Tallemant des Réaux, would have been “the best fellow in the world if he could only have got rid of his swindling propensities.” When his servants asked him for money, he would reply to them: “My house has three outlets into the street; take whichever of them you like best.” The architecture of the Hôtel Lamoignon is that of an ancient fortress, though its walls and façades are ornamented with crescents, hunting horns, and the heads of stags and dogs; the whole in allusion to the Diana for whom the building was originally planned.

Having once left the upper boulevard to enter the adjacent Marais, we cannot but go on towards the Place des Vosges, better known as the Place Royale, where, in 1559, Henri II. took a fancy one day for trying his powers at tilting against Montgomery, captain in the Scotch Guard; when the shock was so violent that a splinter from Montgomery’s lance penetrated the king’s eye through the broken visor of his helmet. The king was carried to the Hôtel des Tournelles, where, without having regained consciousness, he died on the 15th of July, 1559. The hotel or palace where the king breathed his last was thenceforth abandoned as a fatal and accursed place. In the course of four years it fell into a ruinous condition, and Charles IX. ordered it to be pulled down. The park belonging to the old palace was turned into a horse market, which was the scene in 1578 of the famous encounter between the favourite courtiers of Henri III. known as the Mignons and the partisans of the Duke of Guise. Four combatants, Maugiron, Schomberg, Riberac, and Quélus, lost their lives in this affair. The horse market, or Place Royale as it afterwards became, witnessed many sanguinary duels, until at last Richelieu determined to put an end to a fashion which was depriving France of some of her bravest men. With this view he cut off the head of Montmorency-Bouteville and of Count des Chapelles, his second in the duel which cost Bussy d’Amboise his life. In 1613 the Cardinal erected in the centre of the Place Royale an equestrian statue of his royal master Louis XIII. The Place Royale was at that time the favourite quarter of the French nobility, and the rendezvous of all that was witty, gallant, and distinguished in France.

The house number six on the Place Royale is particularly interesting as having been inhabited in Richelieu’s time by the brilliant and too celebrated Marion de Lorme, and two centuries later by Victor Hugo, who, in the very room that Marion de Lorme had occupied, wrote, at the age of twenty-five, the splendid tragedy of which she is the heroine.

The statue of Louis XIII. which Richelieu had raised was overturned and broken to pieces in 1792, when the most critical period of the Revolution was at hand. It was replaced after the Restoration, under the reign of Charles X., by the present statue.

The Boulevard du Temple owes its name to a building which was first occupied by the Order of Templars, and which, towards the close of the last century, enjoyed a sad celebrity as the prison where Louis XVI., Marie Antoinette, and the young Dauphin were confined.

No less than forty-eight works are said to have been written on the imprisonment of Louis XVII., and matters connected with it, including the histories of some dozen “claimants,” asserting, in

his name, their right to the French throne. Most of these pretenders, with Naundorff – who had been the Dauphin's valet in the Temple – prominent among them, had no difficulty in finding enthusiasts and dupes to further their designs; and even in France one of them caused himself to be described on his tombstone as “Louis de France.” The Emperor Napoleon III. took, however, the liberty of ordering the inscription to be effaced.

Soon after the death of the Count de Chambord, M. de Chantelauze published in the *Illustration* an account of Louis XVII.'s life in the Temple, and of his last illness, death, and post-mortem examination, together with certificates which leave no doubt as to the young prince having really died in his prison. Simon, the gaoler, according to M. de Chantelauze's view, was, like so many other bad men, not wholly bad; while his wife was for the most part good, the appearance of badness or roughness which she manifested when the child confided to her care was visited by members of the Commune being assumed in order to inspire her employers with confidence. The task assigned to Simon was not, as has often been supposed, to reduce the young prince, by ill-treatment, to such a point that he would at last be attacked by illness and carried off, but simply to get from him evidence against his mother, the Queen, with respect to her complicity in the Varennes plot, and the various plans formed for effecting the escape of the child. The evidence having been obtained by the simple process of first putting it into the child's mouth, and afterwards taking it out, the special work assigned to the Simons was at an end, and the young prince experienced from them nothing but kindness. If he ultimately fell ill and died, his confinement and the bad air he breathed may well have been the cause.

The life of Louis XVII., from the departure of the Simons until his death, can be made out continuously; and the evidence of his having died in the Temple is quite conclusive. Nevertheless, Louis XVIII., in view of the pretension constantly springing up, instituted for his own satisfaction an inquiry into the whole matter; and the proofs adduced in the course of it as to the identity of the “child in the Temple” with the son of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette seem decisive.

M. Nauroy, however, author of “*Les Secrets des Bourbons*,” is convinced that the true Louis XVII. was carried out of the Temple in a bundle of linen, and that by like means the child who ultimately died there was substituted for him. M. Nauroy finds in support of his belief abundant evidence, positive and negative, which he derives from a variety of sources, and sometimes discovers in the most unexpected places.

The appearance of a long succession of impostors claiming to be Louis XVII. proves nothing, and will pass for what it is worth in the native land of Arthur Orton. It is remarkable, however, that Royalists and Republicans, including eminent personages on both sides, have agreed in maintaining that the child who died in the Temple was not Louis XVII. Louis Blanc favours this view in his “*History of the Revolution*.” Nor does he do so without taking a calm, judicial survey of all the evidence in the case. He may consciously or unconsciously have been influenced by party spirit; and the moral he draws from the whole matter is that there is danger in the principle of “divine right” when, through a variety of accidents, it may be impossible to show on whom this questionable right has devolved.

Those Royalists who deny that Louis XVII. died in the Temple, explain the announcement of his death and the proclamation of Louis XVIII. in the Royalist camp, first, by the inconvenience of bringing forward as King of France a child of tender years; secondly, by the difficulty of producing this child; and, thirdly, by the danger, when Louis XVIII. had once gained acceptance with the party, of dividing it by a revelation of the fact that his nephew, son of Louis XVI., was still alive.

M. Nauroy, as already hinted, sees proofs of his favourite theory where no one else would perceive them. When, for instance, the Duke of Berri, dying from the stroke of an assassin, had some final words to whisper to his brother, the Duke of Angoulême – “What,” asks M. Nauroy, “could this have been but the truth in regard to Louis XVII.?” When, again, one of the doctors who made the post-mortem examination of the supposed Louis XVII. offered to Louis XVIII. the heart which he had concealed and preserved, and the king declined the present – “Why,” asks M. Nauroy, “should

he have accepted the heart which he knew was not that of Louis XVII., but that of the child by whom the young prince was replaced in his prison?”

Meanwhile, that some of the great Royalist families believed Louis XVII. to have been replaced in the Temple by another child and himself carried to La Vendée is beyond doubt; and a letter on the subject, addressed, December 4, 1838, to the *Times*, shows that this view of the matter was held by at least a section (probably a very small one) of the Royalist party.

On January 19th the cobbler Simon ceased to do duty as gaoler. At that time there were, as M. Nauroy sets forth, only four persons in the Temple – the Dauphin, Simon, his wife, and the Princess Elizabeth, afterwards Duchess of Angoulême. Simon died on the scaffold six months afterwards, on the 28th of July. The Princess Elizabeth, confined in a room apart from her brother, never saw him again, and consequently knew nothing of him except by hearsay. From January 19th to July 28th there was no warder at the Temple. The child was watched by Commissaries, who were relieved from day to day, and of whom not one could establish his identity. When regular gaolers were appointed, not one of them had ever seen the Dauphin. If, then, after the departure of Simon, another child could have been substituted for Louis XVII., there was no one to notice the change when it had once been accomplished. The Dauphin was in perfect health at the time when Simon and his wife left him. But the child in the Temple fell ill immediately afterwards; and on the 6th of May, 1795, Dr. Desault, summoned to attend the “Dauphin,” declared his little patient to be some other child. He had visited the Dauphin’s brother in 1789, and on that occasion had seen the Dauphin himself at the Tuileries. If, as M. Nauroy asserts, Dr. Desault drew up a report on the subject, that report has disappeared. Indirect evidence, however, as to Dr. Desault’s conviction that the child he attended in the Temple could not be the Dauphin, was given fifty years afterwards in a letter written and signed by the widow of P. A. Thouvenin, Dr. Desault’s nephew, who claimed to remember what his uncle had frequently said on the subject.

Whether or not Louis XVII. escaped to La Vendée to be cherished by the Vendean chiefs even when, in the Royalist army which was invading France from Germany, Louis XVIII. had been proclaimed, he is now in any case no more. The eighteenth Louis was ten years old when the child of the Temple is supposed to have died in prison; and according to the most convinced, not to say credulous, of those writers who maintain that Louis XVII. escaped, to live for years afterwards, he breathed his last in 1872 at Saveney (Loire Inférieure), under the name of Laroche, at the age of eighty-seven. The numerous impostors who with more or less success personated the unhappy prince had died much earlier. But the descendants of Naundorff, his valet, the most famous of all these pretenders, claim still to be of the blood royal, and on the occasion of the Count de Chambord’s death they displayed a proud consciousness of their rights by publishing somewhere in Holland a manifesto asserting gravely the title of the chief of the family to the throne of France.

Another prisoner in the Temple of whom mention must be made is Sir Sidney Smith, whose friends were making every effort for his liberation, when a Royalist officer in the French army, named Boisgerard (who under the Revolution had quitted military life to become ballet-master at the Opera), effected his escape. With this view he had obtained an impression of the seal of the Directorial Government, which he affixed to an order, forged by his own hand, for the delivery of Sir Sidney Smith into his care. Accompanied by a friend, disguised, like himself, in the uniform of an officer of the revolutionary army, he did not scruple personally to present the fictitious document to the keeper of the Temple, who, opening a small closet, took thence some original document, with the writing and seal of which he carefully compared the forged order. Desiring the adventurers to wait a few minutes, he then withdrew and locked the door after him. Giving themselves up for lost, the confederates determined to resist, sword in hand, any attempt made to secure them. Highly interesting is Boisgerard’s own description of the period of horrible suspense he now passed through. Under the dread that each successive moment might be attended by a discovery involving the safety of his life, the acuteness of his organs of sense was heightened to painfulness; the least noise thrilled through his

brain, and the gloomy apartment in which he sat seemed filled with strange images. Both he and his companion, however, retained self-possession, and after the lapse of a few minutes their anxiety was terminated by the re-appearance of the gaoler, with his captive, who was delivered to Boisgerard. But here a new and unexpected difficulty occurred. Sir Sidney Smith, not knowing Boisgerard, refused for some time to quit the prison; and considerable address was required on the part of his deliverers to overcome his scruples. At last the precincts of the Temple were cleared. The fugitives rode a short distance in a fiacre, then walked, then entered another carriage, and in this way so successfully baffled pursuit that they ultimately got to Havre, where Sir Sidney was put on board an English vessel. Boisgerard, on his return to Paris, was a thousand times in dread of detection and had a succession of narrow escapes until his visit to England, which took place after the peace of Amiens. A pension had been granted to Sir Sidney Smith by the English Government for his meritorious services; and on Boisgerard's arrival here a reward of a similar nature was bestowed on him through the influence of Sir Sidney, who took every opportunity of testifying his gratitude.

If the prison of the unfortunate king and queen who were to suffer for the sins of their predecessors was at the eastern end of the line of boulevards, as marked by the Boulevard du Temple, their place of execution on the Place Louis XV., now known as Place de la Concorde, was at the western extremity, which in due time we shall explore.

Meanwhile from one end of the boulevards to the other, from the tiny Théâtre Beaumarchais to the magnificent Opéra, there is a long series of playhouses. Close to the Beaumarchais Theatre stands the Cirque d'Hiver, opened in 1852 under the title of Cirque Napoléon, which seats 3,800 persons. It occupies the site of the first circus that was ever established in Paris. In 1785 the Astleys, father and son, came to Paris and there opened a circus exactly like the one they had just founded in London. Under their direction this theatre, situated at number twenty-four Rue du Faubourg du Temple, and measuring twenty metres in diameter, was lighted by 2,000 lamps and furnished with two rows of boxes. The price of the seats varied from twelve sous to three francs. Astley junior is said to have possessed a remarkably fine figure; and, in the words of a contemporary writer, "his beauty was sculptural." Bachaumont, in his memoirs of the time, speaks of the numerous passions inspired by the young equestrian in too susceptible feminine hearts. The tricks of the circus, now so familiar, that in England, at least, no one cares to see them, were at that time new, and the sight of a man attitudinising on the back of a horse at full gallop excited the greatest wonder.

Astley's Circus in Paris possessed, as so many operatic theatres have done, a sort of international character. Engagements were made for it by diplomatists abroad. It can be shown, indeed, that diplomatists have long and almost from time immemorial been in the habit of doing agency work for artists and managers of good position. Operatic celebrities have been particularly favoured in this respect. A great Minister of State, Cardinal Mazarin, introduced, or aided powerfully in introducing, opera into France. The engagement of Cambert as director of music at the Court of Charles II. was effected by diplomatic means. Gluck, more than a century later, was induced to visit Paris through the representations of a secretary of the French Embassy at Vienna – that M. du Rollet who arranged for Gluck, on the basis of Racine's *Iphigénie*, the libretto of *Iphigénie en Aulide*; and Piccini, at the instigation of Madame du Barry, was secured at Paris as opposition composer through the instrumentality of Baron de Breteuil, French Ambassador at Rome, working in co-operation with the Marquis Carraccioli, Neapolitan Ambassador at Paris.

The great Montesquieu, moreover, when he was in England, had not thought it unbecoming to interest himself in the welfare of the French artists who occasionally arrived in England with recommendations addressed to him. Nor did the illustrious Locke occupy himself so exclusively with the "human understanding" as to have no time to bestow on the material interests of foreign *danseuses*. Locke was not indeed one of those practically Epicurean philosophers of whom M. Arsène Houssaye discourses so agreeably in his "Philosophes et Comédiennes." He had no general taste either for the public performances or for the private society of *ballerines*; but a certain Mlle. Subligny having come

to him with a letter of introduction from the Abbé Dubois, he is known to have made himself useful, and therefore, no doubt, agreeable, to her during her stay in England.

Locke, it is true, was a metaphysician, and had nothing whatever to do with diplomacy. But his friend Montesquieu was a personage of political importance, and in his anxiety to assist French artists in London he even went so far as to bring to their performances as many of the English nobility as were willing to attend. About the same time, at the suggestion of the Regent of Orleans, a Minister of State, M. de Maurepas, made overtures to Handel concerning a series of representations which it was proposed that his celebrated company should give at the Académie Royale of Paris. M. de Maurepas wished, like Mr. Washburne at a later day, to secure for Paris the best available talent; and he looked to Handel's opera-house for singers, as Mr. Washburne looked to the circuses of the United States for "bare-back riders."

On this subject Ebers's "Seven Years of the King's Theatre" shows that immediately after the peace of 1815 all the offers of engagements to artists of the Paris opera were made through the medium of the English Embassy to the Court of France, or by special missions with which diplomatists of distinction were glad to be entrusted. The committee of noblemen who aided Ebers in his management treated, through the English Ambassador at Paris, with the Director of the Academy, or with the Minister of Fine Arts; though, as a matter of fact, they failed to secure by these elaborate means the services of artists who, in the present day, would be engaged through an exchange of telegrams.

The outbreak of the Revolution was the signal for the Astleys and their company to recross the Channel, and the Astley Circus remained unoccupied until 1791. Then a company calling themselves "The Comedians without a Title" (*Les Comédiens sans titre*) opened it as a theatre on Thursday, March 20th, and closed it on the 23rd. Finally Franconi took it over, and achieved a triumphal success, his management being destined to last many years. In 1801 he moved his enterprise to the Garden of the Capucines, which had become a public promenade in the heart of Paris, subsequently transferring it to the theatre in the Rue du Mont-Thabor. In 1819 he returned with his company to the circus of the Faubourg du Temple, reconstructed by the architect Dubois, but doomed, on the night of March 15th, 1826, to be burnt to the ground. The destruction of the circus by fire excited much sympathy. Public subscriptions were opened, and public representations given for the benefit of the sufferers, the result being so satisfactory that the theatre was at once reconstructed, this time on the Boulevard du Temple, with a magnificent façade, and Franconi once more threw open his doors, about a year after the fire, on the 31st of March, 1827. The stage, which in the old building was an accessory, became in the new one of the first importance. It was now possible to perform military manoeuvres on a large scale. At the restored circus was represented during the last years of the reign of Charles X. the *Siege of Saragossa*; and under Louis Philippe a number of military pieces founded on incidents in the history of the Republic and the Empire.

Every Government in France since the first Napoleon has had victories of its own, important or unimportant, to celebrate. The martial triumphs of Louis XIV. seem, by common consent, to have been forgotten, either because French history dates for the immense majority of the population from the time of the Revolution, or because the battles won under the old Monarchy are now too remote to stir the national pride. The reign of Napoleon I., however, was a series of brilliant victories. Under the Restoration a campaign was undertaken in Spain, the incidents of which so lent themselves to dramatic treatment that playwrights reproduced them on the stage and in the arena of the circus. The reign of Louis Philippe, too, had its military glories; first in Belgium, in connection with the War of Independence undertaken in 1830 by the Belgians, with the assistance of France and England, against the Dutch. It was in Africa, however, and in the neighbourhood of Algiers, that Louis Philippe's army played for many years so active a part. The war against the Dey of Algiers was begun by Charles X., whose consul had been insulted by that potentate; Louis Philippe continued it, chiefly, it was thought, in order to keep open for discontented spirits a field of activity at a safe distance from France. Many

restless adventurers sought distinction and found it in the Algerian campaigns; and Algeria was the principal training-ground for those generals who were afterwards to aid Prince Louis Napoleon in executing his *coup d'État*. It was under Louis Philippe that those picturesque troops, the Chasseurs d'Orléans and Chasseurs d'Afrique, were created, not to mention the Zouaves and the Spahis.

According to the criticisms of German officers, the laxity of discipline in the Algerian campaigns had a considerable effect in producing, or at least hastening, the long series of military defeats to which France was subjected in the war of 1870. The news of victories gained in Africa was, all the same, constantly reaching France; and each successive triumph was made the subject of a new dramatic spectacle at the circus or hippodrome. Abd-el-Kader became a familiar theatrical figure, and his famous interview with General Bugeaud was represented in more than one equestrian piece.

Abd-el-Kader had by the most violent means been prevailed upon to make peace; and an interview was arranged at which the Arab chief and Bugeaud, the French commander, were to ratify it by a personal interchange of promises. Abd-el-Kader did not, however, keep his appointment, and seems, indeed, to have studiously missed it. The French general, in a fit of impatience, left his room, and went forward with a small escort, military and civil, towards the quarters of the unpunctual Arab chief, in order to stir him up. On reaching the advanced posts, the French general called a chieftain of one of the tribes, who pointed out to him the hill-side where the emir lay encamped. "It is unbecoming of your chief," said Bugeaud to this Arab, "to bring me so far, and then make me wait so long;" whereupon he continued resolutely to advance. The emir's escort now appeared. The Arab chieftains, most of them young and handsome, were magnificently mounted, and made a gallant display of their finery. Presently from their ranks a horseman advanced dressed in a coarse burnoose, with a camel-hair cord, and without any outward sign of distinction, except that his black horse, which he sat most elegantly, was surrounded by Arabs holding the bridle and the stirrups. This was Abd-el-Kader. The French general held out his hand; the other grasped it twice, then threw himself quickly from his horse, and sat down. General Bugeaud took his place beside him, and the conversation began. The emir was of small stature; his face serious and pale, with delicate features slightly marked by time, and a keen sparkling eye. His hands, which were beautifully formed, played with a chaplet that hung round his neck. He spoke gently, but there was on his lips and in the expression of countenance a certain affectation of disdain. The conversation turned, of course, upon the peace which had just been concluded, and Abd-el-Kader spoke of the cessation of hostilities with elaborate and feigned indifference. When the French general, after pointing out to him that the treaty could not be put into force until it was ratified, observed that the truce, meanwhile, was favourable to the Arabs, since it would save their crops from destruction so long as it lasted, the chief replied: "You may destroy the crops this moment, and I will give you a written authority to do so, if you like. The Arabs are not in want of corn."

The conversation at an end, General Bugeaud stood up, and the emir remained seated; whereupon the former, stung to the quick, seized the emir's hand and jerked it, saying "Come, get up." The French were delighted at this characteristic act of an imperious and intrepid nature, and the Arabs could not conceal their astonishment. As for the emir, seized with an involuntary confusion, he turned round without uttering a word, sprang on his horse and rode back to his own people; his return being a signal for enthusiastic cries of "God preserve the Sultan!" which echoed from hill to hill. A violent thunder-burst added to the effect of this strange scene, and the Arabs vanished among the mountain gorges.

Until 1860 the Boulevard du Temple was noted for a number of little theatres, where marionettes might be seen dancing on the tight-rope, or where pantomimes in the Italian style were performed. Then there was the cabinet of wax figures, together with other little shows, difficult to class: all destined in that year to disappear. The reconstruction of this portion of Paris caused the removal of many theatres, which were built again at other points. The site of the former circus was now occupied by the Imperial Theatre of the Châtelet. The circus reappeared, for winter performances,

in the Boulevard des Filles de Calvaire, for the summer season in the Champs Élysées. In connection with the winter circus the Popular Concerts started by the late Padeloup must not be forgotten. Here the finest symphonic music of the French and other composers, chiefly modern, was performed in admirable style. Here the French public were familiarised with the works of Berlioz, and, in spite of a certain opposition at the outset, with selections from some of the operas of Wagner. Padeloup, who after thirty years' unremitting work died in poverty, used to find worthy imitators and successors in M. Colonne and M. Lamoureux, both renowned among the musical conductors of the period.

Number forty-two of the Boulevard du Temple marks the house, formerly number fifty, whence the notorious Fieschi, on the 28th of July, 1835, exploded his infernal machine which was intended to kill Louis Philippe and his sons, and which, in fact, struck down by their side one of the veterans of the Empire, Marshal Mortier, Duc de Trévise, and several other superior officers.

Not even in Russia have so many sovereigns been assailed by their subjects as in France. Since, indeed, the murder of Henri III. by Jacques Clément, it has been the rule, rather than the exception, with royal personages in France to be struck by the assassin or the executioner; or, if spared in body, to be brought all the same to some tragic end. Henri IV. fell by the hand of Ravallac. No such fate awaited Louis XIII., Henri IV.'s immediate successor; but Louis XV. was stabbed by Damiens, Louis XVI. was guillotined, Louis XVII., imprisoned in the Temple, died one scarcely knows how or where. The Duke of Enghien was shot by order of Napoleon. Louis XVIII. had to fly from Paris at the approach of Napoleon returning from Elba; the Duke of Berri was assassinated by Louvel; Charles X. lost his crown by the Revolution which brought Louis Philippe to the throne; and Louis Philippe, who was ultimately to disappear in a hackney cab before the popular rising which led to the establishment of the Second Republic, and soon afterwards of the Second Empire, was meanwhile made the object of some half-dozen murderous attacks, the most formidable being the one planned and executed by Fieschi, otherwise Gérard. What, it may be asked, had a quiet, peaceful, and eminently respectable monarch like Louis Philippe done to provoke repeated attempts upon his life? The explanation is simple. Charles X. had been driven away in 1830 by the Republicans, not that another king might be appointed in his stead, but that the Republic might be established. Louis Philippe was, from their point of view, an interloper who must, at all hazards, be removed.

Fieschi's experiment with his infernal machine created a sensation all over Europe; and the papers for some time afterwards were full of particulars, more or less authentic, of the diabolical attempt upon King Louis Philippe's life. The Revolutionists, whose action against Charles X. had led to the establishment, not of a Republic, but of a Monarchy – hateful to them in whatever form – had evidently sworn that he should die. It was ascertained by M. Thiers, the First Minister, that on the occasion of a journey which the King intended to make from Neuilly to Paris certain conspirators had arranged to throw a lighted projectile into the royal carriage; and His Majesty, therefore, was requested to let the royal carriage proceed on its way, at the appointed time, without him, and occupied simply by his aides-de-camp, no previous announcement being made as to the absence of the King. Louis Philippe having protested against this suggestion as unfair to the aides-de-camp: "Sire," replied M. Thiers, "it is their duty to expose themselves for the safety of your person, and they surely will not complain when they find the Minister of the Interior by their side in the threatened carriage." The King, however, rejected this proposition, declaring that he had resolved on the journey, and, hazardous as it might be, would undertake it. His resolution having been combated in vain by M. Thiers, the preparations for departure were ordered. Just as the King was about to get into the carriage, the Queen and the princesses suddenly presented themselves in an agony of terror and of tears. "It is impossible," says M. Louis Blanc, "to say whether a skilful indiscretion on the part of the Minister had initiated them into the secret of what had taken place, or whether they had received no other intimation than that supplied by the instincts of the heart." However this may have been, the Queen, finding that Louis Philippe would not abandon his intention, insisted on accompanying him, and it was quite impossible to prevent her from doing so. M. Thiers then begged the honour of a seat in the

threatened carriage, and the journey was risked. The attack apprehended was not, however, on this occasion to be made; and it was as long afterwards as the 28th of July, 1835, on the occasion when Louis Philippe drove through Paris in memory of the “Three Days” of July, 1830, that Fieschi put his murderous project into execution. “On the 28th of July,” says M. Louis Blanc, “the sun rose upon the city, already perplexed with fears and doubts. The drum which summoned the National Guards early in the morning beat for some time in vain: a heavy apathy, in which there mingled a sort of morbid distrust, weighed upon everyone. At ten o’clock, however, the legions of the Garde Nationale stretched in an immense line along the boulevards, facing 40,000 of the regular troops, horse and foot. The Boulevard du Temple having been pointed out by rumour as the scene of the contemplated crime, the police had orders to parade it with particular watchfulness, and to keep a close eye upon the windows.” On the previous evening M. Thiers had a number of houses in this quarter searched. But the remonstrances of the inhabitants became so violent, that his original intention of examining every building on the boulevard had to be abandoned.

The clock of the château was striking ten when the King issued from the Tuileries on horseback. He was accompanied by his sons, the Dukes of Orleans, Nemours, and Joinville; by Marshals Mortier and Lobau; by his ministers; and by a numerous body of generals and other superior officers and high functionaries. Along the whole line which he traversed there prevailed a dead silence, broken only at intervals by the *ex officio* acclamations of the soldiers. At a few minutes past twelve the royal *cortège* arrived in front of the Eighth Legion, which was stationed along the Boulevard du Temple. Here, near the end of the Jardin Turc, as the King was leaning forward to receive a petition from the hands of a National Guardsman, a sound was heard like the fire of a well-sustained platoon. In an instant the ground was strewn with the dead and dying. Marshal Mortier and General Lachasse de Verigny, wounded in the head, fell bathed in their blood. A young captain of Artillery, M. de Villaté, slid from his horse, his arms extended at full length, as though they had been nailed to a cross; he had been shot in the head, and expired ere he touched the ground. Among the other victims were the colonel of gendarmerie, Raffé; M. Rieussec, lieutenant-colonel of the Eighth Legion; the National Guardsmen Prudhomme, Benetter, Ricard, and Léger; an old man upwards of seventy years of age, M. Lebrouste; a poor fringe-maker named Langeray; and a girl of scarcely fourteen, Sophie Remy. The king was not wounded, but in the confusion his horse reared and he sustained a violent shock in the left arm. The Duke of Orleans had a slight contusion on the thigh. A ball grazed the croup of the Duke of Joinville’s horse.

Thus the odious attempt failed in its object; the royal family was saved. No language can express the utter horror which this frightful and cowardly attack created in the minds of the assembled multitudes. An aide-de-camp immediately galloped off to reassure the Queen, and the King continued his progress amidst manifestations of the deepest sympathy and the most enthusiastic loyalty.

As a striking exemplification of the *sang-froid* of Louis Philippe it has been gravely related, on the alleged authority of Marshal Maison, that immediately after the fatal occurrence, and while all around were overwhelmed with dismay and grief, the King’s mind rapidly glanced over all the possible advantages which might be drawn from the event, and that he exclaimed, “Ah, now we are sure to get the appanages!” But this anecdote, in itself improbable, must be received with more than the usual grain of salt.

Meantime, at the moment of the explosion, clouds of smoke were seen to issue from a window on the third floor of the house number fifty. A man got out of this window, and seizing a double rope which was fastened inside, slid down it on to the roof of a lower building. He was but half-dressed, and his face streamed with blood. A flower-pot which was caught in the movement of the rope after he quitted hold of it fell to the pavement, and the noise attracted the attention of an agent of police who had been posted in the courtyard of the house. “There is the assassin escaping on the roof!” he exclaimed; and one of the National Guards at once called upon the fugitive to surrender, threatening to fire if he refused. But the man, wiping away with his hand the veil of blood which

obscured his sight, dashed on and made his way through an open window into an adjoining house. A track of blood indicated his route, as though his own crime pursued him. He reached the courtyard too late to escape unobserved, and was at once taken into custody.

In the room whence he had fled were found the smoking remains of his death-dealing machine. It was raised upon a sort of scaffolding on four square legs connected together by strong oak cross-pieces. Twenty-five musket barrels were fastened by the breech upon the cross-piece at the back, which was higher than the front traverse by about eight inches. The ends of the barrels rested in notches cut in the lower traverse. The touch-holes were exactly in a line, so as to take fire simultaneously by means of a long train of gunpowder. The guns had been placed so as to receive the procession slantingly, embracing a large range, and rising from the legs of the horses to the heads of the riders. The charge in each barrel was a quadruple one. Fortunately, the calculations of the assassin were frustrated. Two of the barrels did not go off, four of them burst; and to these chances the King doubtless owed his life.

Fieschi was found, on inquiry, to have lodged in the house for several months. He stated himself to be a machinist. The porter had never been inside Fieschi's room since he had occupied it. There had been but one man to see Fieschi, whom he represented as his uncle, and three women, who, he said, were his mistresses. On the morning of the 28th he had been noticed to go in and out, up and down, in a visible state of agitation, and once, though habitually abstemious, he went into a neighbouring cafe to drink a glass of brandy. At the military post where he was taken upon his arrest, a National Guard having asked him who he was, "What's that to you?" he replied, "I shall answer such questions when they are put by the proper people." Some gunpowder having been found upon his person, he was asked what it was for. "For glory!" he exclaimed.

The trial of Fieschi and his accomplices took place on the 30th of January, 1836, before the Court of Peers assembled in the palace of the Luxembourg. In the body of the court, in front of the clerk's table, were displayed, among other proofs against the prisoners, a machine supporting a number of guns in an inclined position, an extinguished firebrand, a dagger, a shot belt with a quantity of bullets in it, an iron gauntlet, and a bloodstained rope.

Fieschi, the chief conspirator, is described by Louis Blanc as "endowed with an energy and shrewdness which merely served to promote the aims of an inveterate and grovelling turpitude. Vain to a degree which almost approached insanity, this man had stained his life with every infamy. A Corsican by birth, he had fought bravely in the service of Napoleon. After the peace, however, he had launched upon a career of vice and crime. He had invented the so-called infernal machine (which was simply a battery of guns so arranged that they could be discharged from a window), not from any political or personal hatred of Louis Philippe, but simply as the hireling of a band of Republican and Revolutionary conspirators."

Fieschi and his accomplices were duly guillotined. Other attempts had been made and were still to be made on the life of Louis Philippe. The ferocious exploit, however, of Fieschi remains the most notorious one of this reign. At last the Citizen King lost his nerve; and in February, 1848, disappeared in face of a danger not more formidable, if firmly met at the outset, than the one which he had despised thirteen years previously, in 1835.

Fieschi was simply guillotined; and he was the first regicide or would-be regicide in France who escaped torture. The horrible cruelties inflicted on the assassins of French kings may make many persons less sensitive than they otherwise would be to the misfortunes reserved for the successors of these princes. The only possible excuse for the diabolical punishments devised for regicides under the old French Monarchy is that such barbarity was of the age. The torture of Damiens was imitated in every detail from the torture of Ravallac, which had for precedent the torture of Gérard, the assassin of the Prince of Orange. An ingenious French writer attempted to decide whether Ravallac's torments were greater than those of Gérard. It is certain in any case that the latter suffered with

much greater constancy. Ravailac shrieked out in a terrible manner, whereas Balthasar Gérard never uttered a groan.

In this connection it is curious that, from the middle of the eighteenth century until the time of the French Revolution, the name of Damiens, or Damian, at present venerated throughout the civilised world, was in France, its country of origin, one of such opprobrium that nobody ventured to bear it. No Frenchman, indeed, would have dared to do so; for after the attempt upon the life of Louis XV. the name of Damiens, or D'Amiens, his would-be murderer, with all names of similar sound or spelling were, by a special edict, absolutely proscribed. To go by the name of D'Amiens, Damiens, or Damian, was to proclaim oneself affiliated nearly or remotely to the unspeakable being – the regicide, the parricide – who had lifted his hand against the Lord's anointed. Time has its revenges. The name associated a century and a half ago with villainy and crime is now suggestive only of heroism and virtue. Everyone knows by what glorious acts of self-sacrifice Damien, enthusiast and martyr, has brought honour to a once unutterable name.

The French Revolution, which was separated from the torture of Damiens by only thirty-eight years, is associated with a number of sanguinary deeds. But it at least put an end to torture. No such horrors as had been perpetrated under the French Monarchy were ever to take place under the French Republic. Even in the case of ordinary criminals not specially condemned to torture, death, under the old Monarchy, was inflicted in the cruellest fashion. "After a prisoner has seen death under so many forms," says a writer of the time of Louis XVI., "when his soul is in a manner withered, his spirit exhausted, and life is grown a burthen, the sentence that ends his sufferings should be welcome to him – and it would be so were not our laws more calculated to torture the body than simply to punish the criminal. A man who pays the forfeit of his life to the injured laws of his country has, in the eyes of reason, more than sufficiently atoned for his crime; but here industrious cruelty has devised the most barbarous means of avenging the wrongs done to society; and the breaking the bones of a wretch on a cross, twisting his mangled body round the circumference of a wheel, are inventions worthy of the fertile brains of a Phalaris, and show to the utmost that such inhuman laws were more levelled against the man than the crime for which he is doomed to suffer."

Opposite the house on the Boulevard du Temple associated with the outrage of Fieschi stood formerly the Café Turc, which offered to the generation of its day a shady retreat and varied amusements. Here the celebrated Jullien, better known in London than even in Paris, gave in the early years of Louis Philippe's reign orchestral pieces of his own composition adorned with fireworks and emphasized by the booming of cannon. Little by little the Café Turc was to disappear; and now repeated alterations have reduced it to a beer-house, or *brasserie*.

The Café Turc was the first of the French cafés-concerts or music halls; for, like so many of our dramatic entertainments, the music hall is an adaptation from the French. The English music hall differs, however, from the French café-concert about as much as an English farce differs from a French vaudeville. The café-concert may be looked upon either as a café at which there is singing, or as a concert where refreshments are served between the pieces and "consumed" during the performance. But whether you enter the place for the sake of art or with the view of sustaining nature, it is equally necessary that you should "consume"; and that there may be no mistake on this point, a curtain is at some establishments let down from time to time with "*On est prié de renouveler sa consommation*," and, at the side, in English, "One is prayed to renew his consumption," inscribed on it. The renewal of one's consumption is often a very costly proceeding.

To avoid being classed with theatres, and, as a legal consequence, taxed for the benefit of the poor, no charge for admission is made at the doors of the café-concert. But at those where such stars as the once celebrated Thérèse are engaged, the proprietor finds it necessary to attach extravagant prices to refreshments of the most ordinary kind, so that a bottle of lemonade may be quoted in the tariff at three francs, a cup of coffee at a franc and a half, and even the humble glass of water at fifty centimes. In England the music hall proprietor would be often glad to obtain a dramatic

licence. He has no fear of the poor before his eyes, and would be only too happy to combine with the profits of musical publican those of the regular theatrical manager. Why he should or should not be so favoured has been argued at length before the magistrates and duly reported in the columns of the newspapers. The result has been that, as a rule, the London music hall proprietor does not give theatrical performances, though he often ventures upon duologues and sometimes risks a dramatic trio. The argument of London managers against music hall proprietors may thus concisely be stated: the manager cannot by the terms of his licence allow the audience to smoke and drink in presence of a dramatic performance; and, correlatively, the music hall proprietor ought not to be allowed to give dramatic performances while smoking and drinking are going on.

Paris is celebrated above all the capitals of Europe for its cafés; and the beverage which gives its name to these establishments seems to have been known earlier in France than in any other European country. Coffee was introduced into central Europe in 1683, the year of the battle of Vienna; and from the Austrian capital the use of coffee spread rapidly to all parts of Germany. The circumstances under which the Austrians first became acquainted with it were somewhat curious.

The Turks had brought with them to Vienna an imposing siege train. No European power possessed such formidable artillery; and their stone balls of sixty pounds each were not only the largest projectiles ever fired, but were regarded as the largest which by any possible means could be fired. According to the ingenious, but incorrect, view of one of Sobieski's biographers (the Abbé Coyer), the amount of powder requisite for the discharge of a missile of greater weight would be so enormous as not to give time for the whole of it to become ignited before the ball left the cannon.

Kara Mustapha, the Turkish general, had also brought with him a number of archers; and when a letter from Sobieski to the Duke of Lorraine was intercepted by a Turkish patrol, the document was attached to an arrow and shot into the town, accompanied by a note in the Latin language to the effect that all further resistance was out of the question, and that the Vienna garrison had now nothing to do but accept its fate. The Turks, moreover, brought to Vienna an immense number of women, whose throats, when the Turkish army was forced to retire in headlong flight, they unscrupulously cut. The stone cannon balls of prodigious weight, the arrows, and the women could all be accounted for. But the Turks left behind them a large number of bags containing white berries, of which nothing could be made. Of these berries, however, after duly roasting and pounding them, an Austrian soldier, who had been a prisoner in Turkey, made coffee; and as he had distinguished himself during the battle, the Emperor granted him permission to open a shop in Vienna for the sale of the Turkish beverage which he had learned under such interesting circumstances to prepare.

According to another less authentic anecdote, the use of the mysterious white berries found among the stores of the defeated Turks was first pointed out by a Turkish soldier who had been working in the trenches before the besieged city, and had so fatigued himself by his ceaseless toil, that he fell asleep and slumbered on throughout the whole of the battle, undisturbed by the cavalry charges, the musketry fire, and the explosions of the artillery with its terrible sixty-pounders. When at last, after sleep had done its restorative work, the exhausted soldier woke up to find himself in the hands of the Christians, he was terribly alarmed. But his life was spared, and in return for this clemency on the part of his enemies he taught them how to make coffee.

Parisians, however, pride themselves on having known coffee fourteen years earlier than the Viennese. It is said, indeed, that an enterprising Levantine started a coffee-house at Paris in the very middle of the seventeenth century, and not later than the year 1650. The name of the stimulating beverage that he offered for sale was, as he wrote it, *cahoue*. But the unhappy man had not taken the necessary steps for getting his new importation spoken of beforehand in good society; and, no one knowing what to make of the strange liquor he wished to dispense – hot, black, and bitter – the founder of the first coffee-house or café became bankrupt.

The French, however, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were sworn friends of the Turks, whose power they played off on every occasion against that of the hated Empire. Vienna

might, indeed, on two occasions have been captured, plundered, and burnt by the infidels for all France cared to do towards saving it. France, on her side, was viewed with favour by the Turks; and in 1669 an ambassador, Soliman Aga by name, was sent by the Porte on a mission to Louis XIV., at whose court he made known the virtues of the berry which long previously the Arabs had introduced throughout the East.

Properly presented, coffee met in Paris with a success which elsewhere it had failed to attain, and before long it became the rage in fashionable society. When it was at the height of its first popularity, however, Madame de Sévigné condemned it, saying that the taste for coffee, like the taste for Racine, would pass away. Racine, in spite of the beauty of his at once tender and epigrammatic lines, is not much read in the present day, and is scarcely ever acted. Coffee, on the other hand, is as popular now as in the days when Pope wrote his couplet on

“Coffee, which makes the politician wise,
And see through all things with his half-shut eyes.”

“There are in this capital,” wrote the author of the “Tableau de Paris” more than a hundred years ago, “between six and seven hundred coffee-houses, the common refuge of idleness and poverty, where the latter is warmed without any expense for fuel, and the former entertained by a view of the crowds who make their entrance and exit by turns. In other countries, where liberty is more than an empty name, a coffee-house is the rendez-vous of politicians who freely canvass the conduct of the Minister, or debate on matters of State. Not so here! I have already given a very good reason why the Parisians are sparing of their political reflections. If they speak at all on State matters it is to extol the power of their sovereign, and the wisdom of his counsellors. A half-starved author, with all his wardrobe and movables on his back, dining at these restaurants on a dish of coffee and a halfpenny roll, talks big of the immense resources of France, and the abundance she offers of every necessary of life; whilst his only supper is the steam arising from the rich man’s kitchen, as he returns to his empty garret.”

The writer goes on to show that the coffee-houses were haunted by cliques of critics, literary and artistic, and his description sometimes reminds one of Button’s, in the days of Addison and Steele. “Those,” he says, “who have just entered the lists of literature stand in dread of this awful tribunal, where a dozen of grim-looking judges, whilst they sip and sip, deal out reputation by wholesale. Woe to the young poet, to the new actor or actress! They are often sentenced here without trial. Catcalls, destined to grate their affrighted ears, are here manufactured over a dish of coffee.”

The writer then proceeds to lament the absence of sociability at the coffee-house, and the gloomy countenances of its frequenters, as contrasted with the convivial faces of those “brave ancestors” of his generation who used to pass their leisure, not at coffee-houses, but at taverns. One cause of the difference he finds in the change of beverage. “Our forefathers,” he explains, “drank that mirth-inspiring liquor with which Burgundy and Champaign supplied them. This gave life to their meetings. Ours are more sober, no doubt, but is this sobriety the companion of health? By no means. For generous wine we have substituted a black beverage, bad in itself, but worse by the manner in which it is made in all the coffee-houses of this fashionable metropolis. The good Parisians, however, are very careless in the matter; they drink off whatever is put before them, and swallow this baneful wash, which in its turn is driven down by more deadly poisons, mistakenly called cordials.”

Since the above was written, coffee, far from dying out, has become more and more popular, and musical cafés, theatrical cafés, and literary cafés have been everywhere established in Paris. There are financial cafés, too, chiefly, of course, in the region of the Bourse; and among the cafés by which the Bourse is partly surrounded used to be one which owed its notoriety to the fact that Fieschi’s mistress – in the character of “dame du comptoir” – was exhibited there to the public.

Two days after the execution of the would-be regicide and actual maker of the famous infernal machine, a crowd of people might have been seen struggling towards the doors of a café on the Place de la Bourse, which was already as full as it could hold. "Those," says an eye-witness, "who performed the feat of gaining admission, saw, gravely seated at a counter, adorned with costly draperies, an ordinary-looking woman, blind of one eye, and possessing in fact no external merit but that of youth: It was Nina Sassave. There she was, her forehead radiant, her lip quivering with delight, her whole expression that of unmingled pride and pleasure at the eager homage thus offered to her celebrity. A circumstance eminently characteristic of the epoch! Here had a creature, only known to the world as a base and treacherous informer, as the mistress of an assassin, been caught up for a show by a shrewd speculator. And what is more remarkably characteristic still, the public took it all as a perfect matter of course, and amply justified the speculator in his calculations."

On the same side as the Café Turc, but further on towards the Rue du Temple, stood the tennis ground of the Count d'Artois (afterwards Charles X.), built by the architect Belanger, one of the most intimate and faithful friends of the famous Sophie Arnould.

On the site of the Count d'Artois' tennis ground was erected, at the beginning of the Second Empire, a theatre, called in the first instance Folies-Meyer, but which, after various changes of title, became at last the Théâtre Déjazet, under the direction of the celebrated actress of that name, already seventy years of age, or nearly so, but still lively and graceful. For this theatre in 1860 Victorien Sardou wrote his first successful piece, "M. Garat," in which Déjazet herself played the principal part, supported by Dupuis, who was afterwards to become famous in opera-bouffe as the associate of Mademoiselle Schneider.

The line of boulevards here presents an enormous gap, in the centre of which, between two fountains, stands a monument to the glory of the Republic. The rest of the open space serves twice a week as a flower market, the largest in Paris. At the beginning of the century La Place du Château d'Eau, as the open space in question is called, did not exist. The fountain which gave its name to the Place was constructed under the First Napoleon in the year 1811, but this fountain was replaced in 1869 by a finer one inaugurated by Napoleon III. The later fountain was itself, however, to disappear, soon afterwards to be replaced by the aforesaid monument to the Republic. Behind one of the large depots on the north side of the Place du Château d'Eau, looking out upon the Rue de Malte, was constructed in 1866 the Circus of the Prince Imperial, afterwards called the Theatre of the Château d'Eau, where at one time dramas, at another operas, have been given, never with success. Ill-luck seems to hang over the establishment, which, with its 2,400 seats, must be reckoned among the largest theatres in Paris. In Paris, however, as in London, theatres have often the reputation of being unlucky when, to succeed, all they require is a good piece with good actors to play in it.

The Boulevard du Temple had at one time its famous restaurants, like other boulevards in the present day. Here stood the celebrated Cadran Bleu and the equally celebrated Banquet d'Anacréon. The last of the great restaurants on this boulevard was the one kept by Bonvalet, who, during the siege of Paris, was generous enough to supply additional provisions to unfortunate actors and actresses who found themselves reduced to the limited rations distributed by the Municipal Council.

The Rue de Bondi, running out of the Boulevard Saint-Martin, brings us once more to a group of theatres. The Folies Dramatiques stands at number forty. This theatre was started in 1830 by M. Alaux, previously manager of the Dramatic Parnassus on the Boulevard du Temple. It was opened on January 22nd, 1831, under the direction of M. Léopold, who produced at this house a long series of successful pieces. Among these may be mentioned "Robert Macaire" with Frédéric Lemaître in the leading part. When, amidst demolitions and reconstructions, the original Folies Dramatiques came down, the company was transferred to the new building which now stands in the Rue de Bondi. Here were brought out Hervé's "Œil Crevé" and "Petit Faust," Lecoq's "Fille de Madame Angot," Planquette's "Cloches de Corneville," and other works which were soon to become known all over Europe. Vaudevilles are now played at this theatre alternately with operettas. The house contains

1,600 seats. The Ambigu-Comique, built on a sort of promontory which dominates the Boulevard Saint-Martin and the Rue de Bondi, was opened in 1829, in place of the original Ambigu, burnt to the ground two years previously. The new house, which contains 1,600 seats, was inaugurated in presence of the Duchess of Berri, widow of the unhappy nobleman who a few years before was stabbed by Louvois on the steps of the Opera House. In 1837 this theatre was entirely rebuilt under the direction of M. Rochart. Untrue, like so many theatres, to its original name, the Ambigu-Comique was to become associated with nothing in the way of ambiguity, nothing in the way of comedy, but with melodramas, often of a most blood-curdling kind. Here, it is true, was produced the “Auberge des Adrêts,” which, in the hands of Frédéric Lemaître, was to be transformed from a serious drama into a wild piece of buffoonery; so that the author of the work, too nervous to attend the performance himself, was almost driven mad when his trusted servant returned home and reported to him the bursts of laughter with which the work had been received. At the Ambigu were brought out some of the best pieces of Alexandre Dumas the elder, Frédéric Soulié, Adolphe Dennery, and Paul Feval.

Immediately adjacent to the Ambigu stand the Porte Saint-Martin and Renaissance Theatres, covering the triangle formed by the Boulevard Saint-Martin, the Rue de Bondi, and the Place de la Porte Saint-Martin. The Porte Saint-Martin Theatre has a long and interesting history, dating from June 8, 1781, when it was opened as an Opera House after the destruction by fire of the one in the Rue Saint-Honoré. A performance was going on at the time, and the singers had to fly in their operatic dresses from the stage to the street. In the midst of the general consternation, the musical director, Rey by name, whose “Coronis” was the opera of the night, startled those around him, already sufficiently terrified, by exclaiming, “Save my child! Oh, Heaven, save my child!” As Rey was not known in the character of a family man, his friends thought he had gone mad. But it was the creature of his brain that was troubling him; and after heroic struggles, the score of “Coronis” was rescued from the flames. The fascinating Madeleine Guiniard had on this occasion a narrow escape of her life. She was in her dressing-room, and had just divested herself of her costume when inquiries were made for her, and it was found that, like Brunhilda in the legend, she was enveloped on all sides by flames. A Siegfried, however, was found in the person of a stage carpenter, who, making his way through the ring of fire, reached the unhappy valkyrie, wrapped her up in a blanket, and brought her out in safety, though he himself, in his second passage through the flames, was somewhat scorched.

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