GLIMPSES OF PARIS.

Go where you may, I defy you to find any scene more exhilarating than the Paris boulevards. Naples is not to be compared to them, although that Italian capital has advantages in bay, sky, landscape, and in the animation and loquacity of its streets, which Paris does not possess. But then Naples has its Vesuvius, which is continually intruding upon the feast of life with a *memento mori*. Now, the charm of Paris is, that on the boulevards life seems eternal. You remember the story of the brawny young English girl under sentence of death. Baring her arms and breast on the eve of her execution-day, and striking them with conscious health and strength, she exclaimed: "It is not possible I shall be a corpse to-morrow! I don't—I can't believe it!" This is the sort of feeling engendered on the boulevards. You cannot believe there that Death has entered the world. You could as easily expect people to tremble at a ghost story told in summer's noon. Life reigns there. Mammon is its god. In Paris you hear of nothing but earth. At funerals the dirges transport you to the opera-houses. There is nothing in the streets which challenges reflection. Vice floats as the malaria lurks above the Pontine marshes. You see nothing but objects of admiration—the lovely sky, the splendid houses, the broad avenues filled with idle animation.

There is no prettier sight in Paris, unless perhaps the Place de la Concorde should be excepted, than the Avenue de l'Observatoire. Southward lies the massive Observatory, preceded by an avenue of horse-chestnuts, so thickly planted one is chilled under them even in the dog-days. East is the new broad Boulevard du Port-Royal, with all that is left of the famous convent associated with memories of the great family of Arnauld, with Pascal, Racine, Nicole. It is now a lying-in hospital, and has the unenviable reputation of being the hospital of Paris with the greatest mortality. The boulevard is a gentle declivity to the river. West is the Boulevard Denfert Rochereau, ended by the colossal bronze Belfort Lion, and with the Foundling Hospital and Visitation Convent near its commencement at the Avenue de l'Observatoire. North lies Carpeaux's last public monument, at the end of the Luxembourg Garden; back of it are four lines of horse-chestnuts, with grass, flowers, statues, marble vases, marble pillars between them, all the walks animated by people seated, by people walking, by children at play,—a great public drawing-room in the open air, a garden-party given daily, an ever-changing, revolving kaleidoscope; all these sights, together with Carpeaux's fountain, madly tossing torrents of water in every direction till they break in silver spray, make this scene one of the prettiest in Paris. I have never admired the group which surmounts Carpeaux's fountain. The catalogue of the Fine Arts Exhibition of 1872 describes it as the four parts of earth upholding the sphere; but it is generally called the four seasons bearing the sphere, and is the only piece of sculpture in the world which represents women as beasts of burden.

Who has not seen an engraving of Rosa Bonheur's "Horse Market," the great mart at the corner of the Boulevards St. Marcel and de l'Hôpital? It is not as animated as it was when she depicted it. The better horses are taken to the French Tattersalls in the Rue de Ponthieu. Now, a buyer in broadcloth is rarely seen in the corner market; blue smock-shirts have it all to themselves. The scene, however, is still animated. Long strings of horses come and go, all with a wisp of straw under their tails (a sign they are to be sold),—these with orange, those with red, others with blue blankets, as the owner thinks this or that color best sets off his horse. Mules are rare. Donkeys and ponies are plenty. I have seen Newfoundland dogs larger than some of the ponies. Second-hand harness, saddlery, and vehicles of every description are also on sale. All this trade is in the hands of Normans, who are famed throughout France for sharpness.

Many people find Paris a labyrinth which makes no impression at first; but try to leave it! Wasn't it Madame de Staël who said: "Paris is of all places on earth the place where one can best do without happiness." Of course, Necker's daughter had money in her purse. There is no part of Paris which I pace with more delight than the out-of-the-way quarter east of the Rue Pascal, south of the Boulevard St. Marcel. It was still more picturesque before this boulevard came, sweeping away narrow, tortuous streets and their old houses, all wall on the street, save one or two windows with iron bars, and a thick oaken door with a *judas*, and a knocker which none but men strong enough to bear armor could lift. Is not the "judas" well named? It was designed to protect the in-

mates of a house from traitors who came in friendly disguise. A judas is a square iron lattice with such small spaces in the metal that no weapon could be thrust through them while the warder was reconnoitering the visitor. Some "judases" have a double lattice; all have an iron flap inside to keep inquisitive eyes from prying into the house and yard. In this part of Paris live all tanners and tawers and their kindred. Here, too, slink all of the shipwrecked who wish to hide from eyes which once saw them, all sails set, sailing on summer seas. Who visits those streets? Nobody who is anybody. There are the haunts of Italian models, itinerant musicians, monkey-masters, organ-grinders, chimney-sweeps. It is a picturesque sight to see them in winter, soon after nightfall, huddled around the fitful fires of some stithy (they are common in this quarter), now all aglow with the fanned coals, presently softened to shadows during the nap of the bellows. It is picturesque by day, looking for all the world like some nook of Venice or some corner of Amsterdam. Just behind the stone wall on the right, near which an Italian model is standing (her costume betrays nativity and calling) basking in the sun, and on which a laundress is resting as she chews the cud of sweet and bitter fancy,—just behind this wall sleeps the Bièvre "river," an open sewer about thirty inches wide filled with lazy slime, whose surface is all white with foam, save where larger bubbles of noxious gas drowsily float. There is no visible current. If there be no tanners or tawers, with long poles beating

A FOUNTAIN IN THE LUXEMBOURG.

measures of St. Vitus's dance and making the skins tied to those *bâtons* keep the frantic time, be sure the "river's" banks are filled with laundresses, sunken to the waist in stone holes or in wooden barrels, that their arms may be nearer the water's level. Presently we get a glimpse of the Panthéon, looming high above houses which rise terrace-like. It seems to fill all the north-western horizon. Here are no sidewalks. Vehicles never enter, except wagons with green hides, or tan-bark, or leather. In the street's middle is the kennel filled with inky water. Stone posts, such as are seen in our picture, keep vehicles at a respectful distance from houses. Though policemen now closely scan well-dressed men seen in this quarter, it had its days of splendor. The palace in which Queen Blanche lived and died is here, and is still standing,—a noble edifice, now divided into lodgings and let to tanners' clerks. It must be cold and damp, for it is sunless, as it faces north, and is at the back of a yard. Here and there are massive carved stone portals mantled with traditions of high-born lords and ladies and their revelries. Now it is the

HORSE-DEALERS.

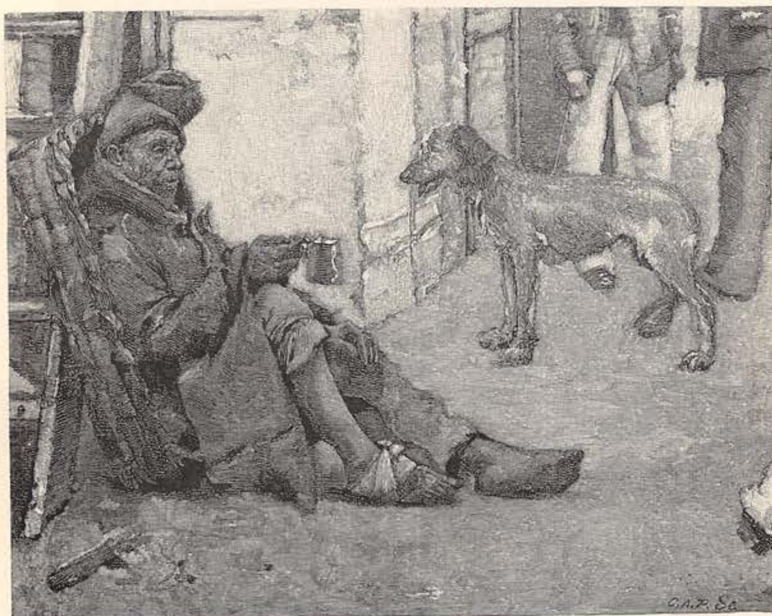
most savage quarter of Paris. The Faubourg St. Marcel is now what the Faubourg St. Antoine was in the first French Revolution. Nowhere was the fighting more merciless than here in the days of June and during the Commune. Their beau ideal of government is anarchy. Their model society is nihilism. While the Faubourg St. Marcel is full of poor people and of the working classes, it has not many beggars. It holds more men who would knock you down, more women who would throttle you, to strip you of watch and purse, than people who would outstretch a hand for alms. The latter abound in the Faubourg St. Antoine. Few beggars are to be met in Paris, except at church doors when a costly funeral or marriage is to take place within the sacred edifice. Fewer still are ill-dressed: a Frenchman's first thought is for show; substance comes afterward. Beggars of offensive appearance are rare. They are to be seen in the remoter quarters, in neighborhoods where the working classes live, and where charity is not roused unless some gong is sounded. Moans, like "out of work," "no bread at home," "illness in the house," find deaf ears in those neighborhoods, for there such trying times come often, and are not thought to warrant piteous cry and outstretched hand. But rags, hands which have lost their cunning, legs which refuse their office, melt hearts and loosen purse-strings in labor's haunts, for there all know that when toil ends wretchedness begins. The poor man's mite is rarely denied such woe as is represented in our woodcut, crouching under a door of the Rue du Faubourg St. Antoine, where nine-tenths of the Parisian cabinet-makers and upholsterers live and work, and to whom "Uncle" Lazarus's dumb-show is rarely a vain appeal.

Paris exercises its fascination still more on the French, even of the lower classes, than on the foreigner. The French are fond of company. You see this in a map of their country. It has more villages than any other land. Nobody lives in the champaign. Everybody is huddled in hamlets. The plowman plods miles to his furrow that both elbows may touch elbows when the hours of toil are ended. The stage directions Molière added to one of his plays exhibit his countrymen's opinion of the country: "The stage represents a rural scene, but nevertheless agreeable." This was the scene-painter's business. Paris is fascinating to the French because it offers a ceaseless round of company. Again, in Paris there are none of those social restrictions, vestiges of more aristocratic days, which chained the

working-girl to cap and woolen dress, the workman to smock-shirt and cap. In Paris the former may wear the coveted bonnet and silk dress, the latter may don what clothes his purse can provide, without challenging any emotion but envy. Besides, the see-saw of fortune, is observed by no eye, which is a great relief to vanity. Moreover, hospital and almonry open portal and purse with a facility which the provinces never know.

of dust out of the window upon the luckless servant of the first floor.

There is more unhappiness, less happiness, in Paris than in any other place on earth. There can be no happiness where houses are built as dove-cotes and families are huddled like pigeons. Did you ever read Dickens's description of a London rookery tenanted by Irish? It is a true picture of the incessant warfare waged in Paris houses.



ST. ANTOINE BEGGARS.

This fascination of Paris will be still greater to the French as the revolution of progress goes on. The Parisians themselves are getting tired of their many-storied houses.* The people of the provinces, and especially those of French Flanders and of the counties on the German and Swiss borders, say (it is a proverb with them): "A Paris house is a hell." Life is one long quarrel in most of them. Tenants must put up with a great many annoyances, if they would not be constantly in hot water. A Frenchman once told me that a servant of the story below him complained that his footman threw dust out of the window, and appealed to the hall-porter to stop it. The servants of the higher stories heard the complaint and resented it. All of them threw bushels

Frenchmen and Frenchwomen have a way of insulting people which makes chastisement impossible. One day, a well-dressed woman of eighteen entered the train for Versailles. The coach was two-thirds full of Frenchmen and Frenchwomen. I was the only foreigner. As the new-comer entered, a scrawny, brazen-faced, faded, ill-dressed woman, seated in the farthest corner of the coach, looked out of the window next her and said, in a very loud tone: "Another chick-weed seller!" Had she been taken to task for her insolence, she would have sworn by everything held sacred that her ejaculation was called forth by seeing a chick-weed seller walking on the farther side of the station, and that, so far from intending to apply it to the new-comer, she had not so much as seen the latter enter the coach. The Frenchmen and Frenchwomen giggled; it was a cowardly insult, just after their hearts, for it could not be avenged. Parisian streets are filled with decayed women, who, in the heyday of their prosperity, gave no heed to darker days

* "Everybody who has any talent of observation and any knowledge of Parisian manners and customs knows that now house-rent has become the greatest expense of wealthy people, in consequence of the general and *very moral* taste, which is daily become wider spread, for having a house of one's own, and with no tenants but one's own family."—"Journal des Débats," 8 Dec., 1878.

(their coming undreamt of), and who, at life's twilight, are obliged to sell chick-weed or to become rag-pickers to fill mouth and cover back till borne to the hospital for the last time. The insolent hag's meaning was that the new-comer was doomed to this fate, for she put all her money on her back. The cowardly shaft struck, and the poor young woman turned crimson. I left the train at Asnières. It was her destination, too. I gave her my hand as she alighted. When out of the station and in the street, she showed a green cushion, such as lace-makers use, held up the delicate "woven wind" on it, and said, in a voice still trembling with emotion: "As long as I have these lissome fingers I need fear no chick-weed basket!" Our wood-cut represents just such another scene. The hag on the left, a buyer of rabbit-skins and odds and ends (there is no cry of Paris so unintelligible to foreign ears as her *Peaudpain* for *Peaux de lapin*), coming from the Champs Elysées, as she crosses the Place de la Concorde meets a music-teacher on her way to the Faubourg St. Germain to give lessons. As is a red pennon to a bull, so is a tidy dress to a hag.

IN THE STREET.

She vents her spite by whispering an insult. The music-teacher casts an indignant glance at her; nothing more can be done. Who can touch pitch and not be defiled?

The Place de la Concorde is one of the most beautiful squares of Paris. The reader sees in front of him the Rue Royale, with the Madeleine Church in the distance; on the right corner of the Rue Royale is the Navy Department; on the left, its very counterpart, let out as lodgings. On the right is the Tuileries Garden; on the left, the Champs Elysées. The Place de la Concorde itself is beautiful, with its fountains, obelisk, allegorical statues of chief French cities, rostral and other lamp-posts, on which gilding has been lavished, its

throng of promenaders and greater throng of vehicles. At night it fairly glows, so many are its lighted lamps.

Would you know to whom we owe a great part of this beauty? Glance at the engraving on page 80. It represents "a fairy." The lovely arrangement of trees, the incessant round of flowers which delight us from one year's end to another, their skillful grouping, the wonderful or beautiful mosaic of plants with colored leaves, the well-trimmed lawns, broken only by Pampas grass in tufts,—all these pleasures we owe to the gardener. He is seated on a marble bench in what was once the private garden of the Tuileries. He forgets the beds of monthly roses, the violets, rhododendrons, and other floral wealth of this garden. He is gazing on the workmen busy in tearing down the palace of the Tuileries and the vehicles passing along the street, for a broad street has been made through the private garden.

A TYPE.

There have always been in Paris many more houses occupied by only one family than foreigners commonly suppose. Again, many other families are housed substantially as if they were the only tenants under the roof which covers them. Shop-keepers, for instance, who live on the ground-floor, with the half-floor above as lodgings and the cellar below for wine-vault and coal-cellar, are as completely independent as if the whole house were tenanted by them alone. They go, they come, they receive whom they please, without attracting anybody's attention. A great many artists enjoy similar independence. Their studio occupies two-thirds of the space rented. Their lodgings are back of it. The studio is so high-pitched it reaches to the ceiling of the half-floor above; back of the studio the artist has kitchen and dining-room on the ground-floor, bed-chambers on the half-floor above. These studios, like shops, are rented on condition that six months' rent be paid in advance, and subsequent quarters' rent on the usual rent days, as collateral security that the tenant will not disappear with all his household goods some dark night. In all the uncommercial streets the ground-floor is let for lodgings. These have no door on the street (as shops and studios have); their windows are grated; so there is no danger of the tenants' disappearance against the landlord's will; hence, their rent is not paid in advance. Their tenants are almost as independent as if they were sole occupants of the house of six stories.

The number of private houses tenanted by one family is also much greater than foreigners imagine. These houses are of all classes, from the mansions of the Faubourg St. Germain and avenues near the Triumphal Arch to the cozy Anglo-American houses (planned by Napoleon III.) of the Rue de l'Elysée, down to the petty lodges in the Rue Bézout and its neighborhood. I have been offered a house of the latter class for $160 a year. The house has a yard, plentiful water, excellent cellars, a ground-floor, a "first" floor, and a garret,—really a very snug abode, within two minutes of Montparnasse station, where pass five lines of tramways and innumerable omnibuses.

Railways and tramways, which now reach almost every suburban village, have led a great many people to move to the country. Here a whole cottage may be had for less than the cost of lodgings in Paris. Families where children are numerous are almost goaded to these suburban villages, for Parisian landlords are most inhospitable to infants. One is constantly told as one negotiates for lodgings: "If you have a dog, or a cat, or a bird, or a piano, or children, or a sewing-machine, we cannot let to you." Grass asks no questions.

Another way to secure almost all the independence enjoyed in our American houses is to take lodgings in a small house. There are thousands of houses which contain only three families; and as these houses are sought by

THE "FAIRY" OF THE TUILERIES GARDEN.

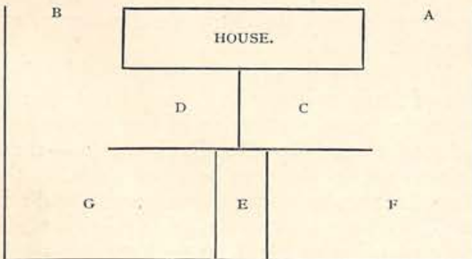
people fond of a quiet and independent life, they are noiseless. Moreover, being small in every way, no large family can live in them. I have for years lived in a house where we were only six persons all told. These small houses are really like clubs. Their tenants rarely change. My lodgings, for instance, have had only two tenants in forty years. My predecessor took them when the house was built, and quitted them solely because the landlord doubled the rent. In these small houses tenants have known each other for years, and show a forbearance toward each other never found in larger houses, where every three months somebody leaves and a new neighbor comes. Again, this union of tenants makes them all-powerful in the house, and keeps the hall-porter their very humble servant; he holds office at their good-will and pleasure.

A great many of these small houses are rented by two families. I have time and again been asked to join another tenant as co-tenant of one of these houses. The arrangement would have added only $60 a year to my house-rent. The hall-porter is discarded. A common letter-box is added to the front door. Each tenant has his own door-bell. One may live very cheaply and comfortably in this way.

One now constantly sees in Paris newspapers this advertisement: "To be let, a large set of rooms on the first floor, forming a private mansion; five large bed-chambers, five dressing-rooms, a smoking-room, a dining-room, two drawing-rooms, ball-room, stable,

STREET IN OLD PARIS.

coach-house, cellars, water, gas, private yard, for \$1200 a year." This privacy is secured by a very simple artifice, which may be indicated roughly as follows, though not in the proper proportions:



A Carriage-way and street door of first floor.
B Carriage-way and street door common to all other floors.
C Staircase to first floor with hall-porter's lodge.
D Common staircase and common hall-porter's lodge.
E First floor's stable and coach-house.
F First floor's private yard. G Common yard.

By this arrangement, all ground-floor, *entresol*, and first-floor lodgings are substantially as private as if they were respectively so many private houses.

In mansions, each floor is a complete house in itself. Each floor contains two or three drawing-rooms, many bed-chambers (each with its own dressing-room), a billiard-room, a study, a dining-room, a bath-room, a kitchen, a state staircase and a servants' staircase (these are common to the whole house). Breakfast is invariably served in the bed-chamber. All the members of the family meet only at lunch and at dinner.

When I came to observe the conditions of Paris life, I was amazed at the better air and greater privacy the rich enjoy here. The wealthier classes of New York possess no such advantages. I could mention street after street where householders (by which I mean tenants on each floor) may throw front and back windows wide open without fear of peering eyes opposite.

In front of these houses is a large yard with buildings (stables, offices, coach-houses) a story and a half high. The houses on the other side of the street have similar yards and buildings in front of them. The houses on each side of the street are so far removed

from this thoroughfare, that the low buildings in the front yard completely intercept the view. The carriage-way is always closed by massive doors eighteen or twenty feet high. It is impossible to conceive how completely neath them, rarely grass, still more rarely flowers. You see nothing but sodden earth covered with weeds.

This quiet and privacy are pleasing. You seem to be buried in some rural park. And

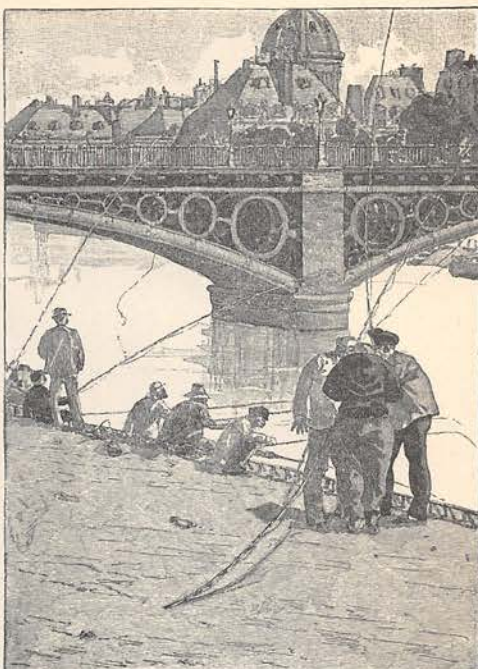
PUBLIC BENCHES.

all street noises are shut out by this arrangement. The streets where these mansions are to be found are not noisy; but even in the Bibliothèque Nationale, when the Rue Richelieu was twenty times more noisy than it now is (then the Avenue de l'Opéra was unopened), I have often been astonished at the rural quiet students enjoyed in its reading-room. There was not heard the least rumble of the street's ceaseless traffic. Marshal Von Moltke, in his recently published letters to his wife, makes a similar remark about the quiet of the Tuileries.

Back of all houses in the Faubourg St. Germain, garden abuts on garden on three sides. I ought rather to say grove than garden. There is nothing but trees. They are planted as thickly as they can be. They are put there not for shade or for ornament, but simply as screens. There is rarely a walk beneath yet the operas, theaters, museums, libraries, boulevards, and the Bois de Boulogne, are near by.

Few people imagine the wealth and splendor of Paris mansions. I should not like to estimate the market value of the two marble palaces owned by the Rothschilds,—these palaces are in the very heart of Paris, in the Rue Laffitte, have large front yards, and still larger gardens,—or of the late Duke de Galliera's mansion in the Rue de Varenne, familiar to Americans as the residence of one of our ministers here, and of Colonel Thorne years afterward. But I do know that the Baroness de Pontalba spent a million of dollars on her mansion forty years ago, and every year added something to its beauty. At her death, which recently occurred, the Baron Gustave de Rothschild gave a million of dollars for it, and has spent $300,-

000 more in fitting it for habitation. When the late Mr. Hope bought his mansion, forty-five years ago (now well known as the Princess de Sagan's home), the "Black Band" made sure of getting it, and subscribed $50,-000 among themselves to strip the house of its works of art and keep them in their hands for speculation. The "Black Band" were a set of speculators who clubbed together to buy valuable houses throughout France, strip them of every work of art, then sell the houses and divide the works of art among themselves for resale. Baron Seillière bought this mansion at Mr. Hope's death; it is understood he gave $800,000 for it, and got it at a bargain at this price; even the floors of that mansion are works of art. Mme. Lehon paid $27,000 for the paving of the yard of her mansion in the Rond-Point des Champs Elysées (it is now the Italian embassy). Mme. de Païva spent above a million on her mansion in the same neighborhood. In her house, every door-knob, window-knob, each banister of the staircase, is of bronze, designed especially for her, and the mold broken after the piece was cast. The stairs and mantel-pieces of this house are of malachite.



ANGLERS.

It is extremely interesting to wander among these splendid mansions, built at different periods of time, and to note the changes which civilization has made in their arrangements. The older houses reveal the insecurity of the age in which they were built. A man's house is now his castle much more truly than when it was defended by battlements and protected by moat and portcullis. Isaac of York now puts his valuables behind plate glass, under a gas-jet.

I saw with pleasure the hospitable stone benches let into the wall on each side of the portal of nearly all of these houses. 'Tis something to give the weary rest. 'Tis a beginning of hospitality—or, may be, the last vestige left of an earlier hospitality when every door was open, a chamber for silk, offices for rags, and a hall with endless, generous board for all.

In the newer and "improved" parts of Paris, iron railings now bar these antique seats from the wayfarer. The Rothschilds' mansions alone give the olden hospitality. Elsewhere, the public provide for the public. Free seats are everywhere to be found. They are always full. Nothing in Paris astonishes a stranger more than the number of idlers, of both sexes, found at every turn. One expects to see soldiers sauntering everywhere; for, despite Prince von Schwartzenberg's warning to Louis Napoleon when the latter made his *coup d'état*, "You can do everything with bayonets but sit upon them," no Continental government has yet been able to make for itself any other than this very expensive and extremely uncomfortable seat. But the other idlers must eat, at least sometimes; must lodge, even though in garret; must cover themselves with smock-shirt and trowsers if with nothing else. Garret, food, and clothes cost money; and even nickels cannot be had without labor. How do all these idlers live? Many of them are thieves. Nine-tenths of Parisian workmen ply their trades only four or five of the days of the week, just enough to earn a scanty support. Hence it has been found that the enormous increase of wages of Parisian workmen (it is at least fifty per cent.) has in no manner bettered their condition. On the contrary, they are worse off. The larger their daily pay, the fewer days they work; idleness lessens their skill; toil becomes distasteful; expensive habits are contracted; home, wife, and children are deserted; the hospital is reckoned on in illness, the poor-house in old age. Many a Frenchman's ideal of earthly bliss is to be idle, to stroll the streets. During the siege, in 1871, the Parisians led their ideal life. They had no rent to pay; they had eighteen cents a day and no work to do. When the war was ended, and it became necessary to pay house-rent and to set to work, they flew to arms rather than accept the harsh alternative. Our illustration represents one of these idlers. She is a maid-

LE CONCIERGE.

of-all-work who has retired from service. If she have twenty cents a day to live on, she is more than satisfied. She lives in a garret closet without a chimney, with sky-light for a window, which she gets cheap in some old house in a narrow street of the Latin Quarter. She is her own laundress. She buys her clothes, even her shoes and stockings, second-hand. She breakfasts on bread and cheese, buys a few cents' worth of beef-tea in which she soaks bread for dinner, eats dry bread rubbed with garlic or onion, and followed by two cents' worth of fire-water as corrosive as modern chemistry can make it, and consents to vegetate in this wretched way that she may live in idleness, sitting all day long on a public bench of the Luxembourg Garden if the weather be fair, or in a chair of some church or chapel if the day be inclement. She might still get occupation, have chamber free, a plenty of good food and wine; but she would have to work for them. She prefers to starve in idleness. The river's banks, too, are lined with idlers. They are not on the bank alone. If you think a patient Frenchman is not to be found, go to the river and use your eyes. You will find there in mid-stream bipeds with long hoes scraping up river sand, to gather from it gleanings of all the objects crime or accident or flood tosses into the stream. There are shops in the Quai de l'Horloge where these objects may be seen and bought. There are some of them in the Hôtel de Cluny; more in the Hôtel Carnavalet. You will find on the river's banks gatherers of corks, which are always found in eddies; these corks are recut and made to do duty again. But of all the patient Frenchmen to be seen, there are none so patient as the fishermen represented in our wood-cut. They are at the foot of the Louvre, half-way between the Pont Neuf and Pont des Arts (the bridge seen in our wood-cut, with the Palais de l'Institut across the river beyond it). There they stand all day, though the only object which sinks their bob be floating weed. Fish they never catch. What fish could live in those polluted waters? Nevertheless they are happy, for they are idle.

Old architects sacrificed everything to security. The value of sun and air was unknown. Science has let light and pure air into all these abodes, where the lattice had

more lead than glass, where not a casement opened save on a court, and no draught changed the air on the court. See the mediæval houses on streets narrower than lanes, with the well in the central court (the sole supply of water), receiving with the aid of wind and rain all the refuse of roof and yard, and with their ground-floor rooms chilling in August, and you will not wonder at the story of the plague; your wonder will be that people could have lived amid all these foes to life.

But even now the full value of sun and air is unknown to Frenchmen. You are made very sensible of this when you go hunting lodgings. The first question asked is invariably, "What is the rent?" And you may ask what question you please, the hall-porter always answers, "The rent is so much a year"; until you let him know that the price suits your purse, it is vain for you to ply him with queries. The reason is plain. In Paris, lodging is a mere episode of life. The epic is dress. The necessaries of life are marshaled in this order: Dress, Dress, Dress, Theaters, Cafés, Eating, Lodgings. And do you suppose that "plaster-wipers" appreciate the full value of sun and pure air? "Plaster-wipers" are people who have discovered the art of living in Paris rent-free. The Italians have a saying: "When I build a house, the first year after its completion I give it to my enemy; I rent it to my friend the second year; I myself tenant it the third year." The first year after a house has been built the dampness and drying of the walls make it fatal to the tenant; a twelvemonths' habitation, with fires all winter, open windows all summer, greatly lessens its dangers; in twenty-four months all peril has disappeared. The French hold the same opinion. People who care or who can afford to care for their health shun new houses. So a new house cannot be let except to "plaster-wipers." They flock wherever they see a new house built. They have no furniture, except the objects which the law exonerates from levy of distress warrant. No inquiries are made about them. While a bill for rent is sent to them on quarter-day, it is rather to assert authority than with hope of payment. When the third quarter comes around, notice to quit is served on them, but never enforced until a tenant appears who wants the lodgings they occupy. Then adieu! No rent is expected of them. They have done all that was asked of them: they have wiped the plaster dry; they have given the house an inhabited look; they have decoyed to it respectable tenants. At what cost to themselves! They are lucky if they have only rheumatism, and have lost only teeth and hair. Diseases of the throat and chest decimate them. But they can pay rent with life easier than with money, for they can lay down life; they cannot lay down coin.

How lenient Paris is to these tall houses built to be rented! Paris refuses to admit that there is a single house within its walls more than five stories high. What knowledge of human nature it reveals in the nomenclature of stories! Here is "the level-with-the-street." No story, mind you! Above it, is "the between-ground" (and first floor understood). Then when you are fairly three stories above ground comes the first floor. Next—second, third, fourth, fifth. Here the stories end. If the landlord's purse is buoyant enough to bear the tenant up still higher, he reaches the *mansarde*, or, higher still, *combles*. If you have a poor acquaintance perched half-way to Uranus, call on him and ask the hall-porter to direct your ascent. The hall-porter will not use even these words, but will say, "Go to the fifth floor, turn to your left, and then *mount!*" If you ask, "Mansard?" "Attic?" he will notice no other reply. They lie beyond Hercules' Pillars.

Our wood-cut shows the hall-porter, his family, and his lodge. He is a tailor. This trade is preferred to the shoemaker's as being less noisy. But the lodge is not quiet. Frenchmen cannot live without noise. Bird in cage, infant in arms, child old enough to play letter-carrier to the household, and especially Madame Cerbère, supply all necessary noise. According to tradition, when Hugh Cape determined to make La Cité his home, somewhere nigh a thousand years ago, he added two immense buildings to the palace. One of these wings was (and is to this day) called *Conciergerie*, and served both for barracks and for jail. The command and management of the Conciergerie were confided to a captain of noble birth, who received the title (from which the building took its name) of Comte des Cierges (the Earl of Wax-Tapers), and was invested with many prerogatives and privileges. It continued to be an office of lucre and importance even so late as 1712, when it was shorn of its judicial powers.

It has not been many years since the hall-porters of Paris assumed the venerable title of Comte des Cierges. When Sterne visited Paris they were called Suisses. The familiar proverb, "*Point d'argent, point de Suisse*," means, "If you be penniless, you can't have a hall-porter"; or, in other words, "If you be penniless, you yourself must answer the door-bell."

The Swiss were for centuries, indeed down to July, 1830, the king's body-guard. The Swiss nearly monopolized the places of hall-

porters, messengers, and bank-collectors. They owed this monopoly to their sterling integrity of character. Down to the revolution of 1848, ninety-seven of every hundred collectors of the Bank of France were Swiss. During those stormy days a mob insisted that the Bank of France should employ none but Frenchmen, and the Bank was obliged to discard its Swiss until quieter times returned. The lesson was not lost on the Bank. As the Swiss collectors died or retired, Frenchmen were appointed to the vacancies. In the English embassy, and in some of the old noble mansions of the Faubourg St. Germain, you may still see the direction over the hall-porter's lodge, "Speak to the Swiss!" The beadle in churches is still called the Swiss. In new houses the old direction has been discarded for "Speak to the *concierge*," and the tendency now is to omit everything except the word *concierge*. After Swiss went out of use, *portier* came into vogue; but its favor was ephemeral, and it is now to be seen only in some of the older houses near the great markets, and even here I have noticed it only on two or three lodges. The more aristocratic term, *Comte des Cierges*, is now generally in currency, having been corrupted into *concierge*, just as *Chère Reine Croix* has become Charing-Cross.

Most travelers tell how, in Paris, one may live for years in a house without knowing anything about neighbors. These travelers could not have spoken French. I am not, I believe, very inquisitive, and find little charm in gossip. Nevertheless, I not only have never lived in a Paris house without knowing the name, history, and occupation of each tenant and his family, but the same information about everybody in the neighborhood. The more secluded, the more retired a street is, the less seclusion the inhabitants enjoy.

The hall-porter's lodge is the place where the skeletons that haunt the families overhead are kept. He knows all their secrets,—butcher, baker, coal-dealer, tailor, milliner, mantua-maker, servants, all tell their tales to him. A thousand stealthy figures come and go over his threshold, asking a thousand questions, and by these very questions throwing a flood of light on his tenants' history. There, creditors obtain, by palm-crossing, inklings of their debtor's true position. There, tenants in debt, by still more generous palm-crossing, throw dust into creditors' eyes. There, the police ascertain the hours when their prey may be caught and carried to jail. Arrests usually take place between 2 and 3 o'clock A. M., the only hour of the four-and-twenty when the tides of Paris life know slack water. You hear the door-bell sharply rung. The portal is no sooner suddenly closed with a slam, which makes the whole house quiver, than the law's intruders strike a light. The short, abrupt questions, the heavy, imperious tread on the staircase, confirm your suspicion that they are the police. The door they seek is reached—its bell is jerked till answered. A woman's shriek is followed by hasty steps on the staircase. A door is slammed—a carriage driven rapidly away. The staircase is filled with the sobs and shrieks of a woman. Another incident is added to the hall-porter's store of gossip.

J. D. Osborne.

THOUGHT-FALL.

WHEN south-winds are richest with wealth of the rose,
And sweetness increases, each breath that blows;
When that human obscure of the sky bends above me
Like a dark eye saying its silent "I love thee!"
When his music sings on tho' the bird be at rest,
And there's light on the lily and none in the west;
When the star and the hill have gone under cover,
To the dwelling of dreams, like loved one and lover;
When passionate earth has her will with the sky,
And the black clouds stop tho' the brooks go by,—
There's a falling of thought like drops from the eaves,
And it rests in my heart like the rain in the leaves.

John Vance Cheney.