PARISIAN NOOKS AND NOTABLES.

By Mrs. Emily Crawford.

Illustrated by James Greig.

“OLD as the hills,” “vieux comme les rues”; what street north of the alps has an older history than the Rue St. Jacques? Yet it bears no strong marks of antiquity, though most picturesque to an impressionable eye. This street is an ancient stage on which the scenery has been often changed in the course of ages and brought up to date. Still, what to-day *is* comes in unbroken descent from what *was* in the night of the Druidical time.

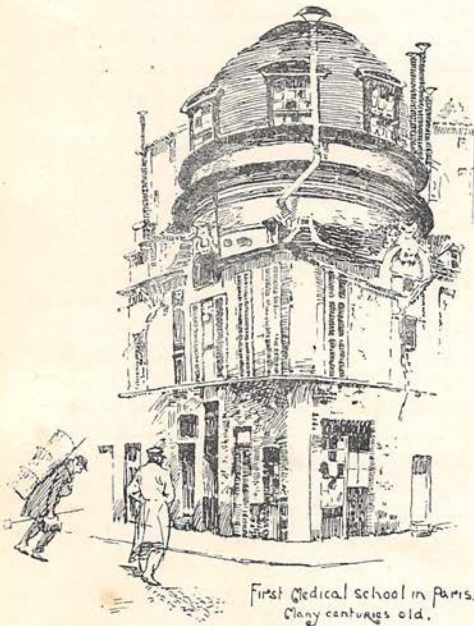
The Rue and Faubourg St. Jacques, and their continuation the Rue and Faubourg St. Martin, were on one of those Celtic tracks

that ran from end to end of Gaul and crossed between the Seine, Marne and Oise, on and near where Paris now spreads out. The site of the future city was close to the land of Chartres, where the Druids held their general yearly assemblies. As Gaul fell under Roman sway the tracks became roads, and in the city of Lutitia, as in other Gallo-Roman towns, busy streets. The Rue St. Jacques was a main street leading to the great waterway which the Parisii had long used for their extensive carrying trade. The Faubourg St. Jacques, between quarries, became an Appian Way. Christianity was to spring in Gaul, as in Rome, out of the catacombs, which had furnished stones to build Lutitia. An imperial palace, with a fair garden at the Pont Neuf end and a forum and hall of justice in front, arose on the west side of l'Isle de la Cité. A temple to Jove, the hearty, the kindly, to Mercury and Vulcan, stood on the east side. The centre was given up to changers of money and river trade. The Rue St. Jacques ended in the bridge connecting the island with the left bank of the Seine. What must not its importance have been when Gaul had assimilated Roman civilisation, and its bright and clever people passed through the schools which it was the Roman policy to found wherever there was a population? There were gratis schools for all, and as much for the servile as for the free class. Intellect and manual skill were extremely valuable in slaves—a reason why Rome so rapidly educated and polished Gallic barbarians. There must have been a strong flush of higher life in and around the Rue St. Jacques when the Cæsars took up their abode in Lutitia. Another palace, erroneously called after Julien, had sprung up beside that thoroughfare. Its erection was probably ordered by Hadrian. A temple to Bacchus stood over the way. There was an arena across the hill on which the Pantheon now stands. Hostelries were as ill-famed as the inns of students, or colleges, in the same street in the mediæval time. Strangers of any consequence brought letters of introduction and were received on visits. But endless must have been the adventurers, place-hunters, petitioners, delators, slave merchants, and small traders who lodged at the hostelries near palaces and forum. A Roman knight, in a letter describing “lovely Lutitia,” in the third century, speaks of sights he saw in a street that may be identified as the Rue St. Jacques. He met a band of beautiful youths, golden haired and white of skin, going to the slave market. They were taken prisoners in Caledonia. There were poets and philosophers about, and intellectual activity everywhere.

The pottery offered for sale in stalls was exquisite. It was Samos ware, worked upon by Gallic fancy. Tiny statuettes in terra cotta were charming in their delicate finish and grace. One saw the artist modelling

them. He made native divinities for some, Latin for others. Everyone was transported with the beauty and originality of a little Venus, in a semicircular and shell-crowned grotto, engaged in wringing the sea water from her hair. Sometimes, says the knight, the street beside the palace resounded with the cry of, "To the arena!" and the noise of the multitude hurrying thither. They were sure to be following soldiers who had caught Frankish freebooters pillaging villas on the Senlis road, and were taking them to be flung to the wild beasts of the circus at a great civic function.

Julien, as a military captain, lived six years in the palace on the isle. Whenever



First Medical school in Paris. Many centuries old.

the barbarians over the Rhine let him, he gave himself up to the society of savants and literati. This was the first French Academy. As emperor, Julien lived in the palace overlooking the Rue St. Jacques. There, on his summons, met a synod of bishops. He brought them together to bridge over the Arian split in the Church; but St. Hilary, who had Greek grace and the stilted cothurnes of Gaul, so triumphed over the Arian Saturnus as to make the division far wider. Julien only was interested in their quarrel, because the German barbarians were pressing forward, and he wanted to show them an unbroken front. The company he kept and the synod he called helped to shape the destinies of Paris left of the Seine. The Druids first, philosophers, and the bishops next, sowed seeds that germinated and grew into a university and the greatest theological school in Christendom. Students flocked from all parts of Europe, even as they still flock, but in far greater numbers. Before the Renaissance there were forty colleges in and around the Rue St. Jacques. It was then the main artery of the Latin Quarter—so called because Latin was its language. The Dominicans, whose greatest convent was in that street, took in four hundred scholars, who came to Paris from all parts to attend schools. The Franciscans were more hospitable. All these monasteries and colleges became disorderly, dilapidated, and filled with starvelings. Well-to-do youths went to private lodging-houses. Because fond of the sunshine of Fortune they were called martinets, or young swallows, or *galoches*—as, when the streets were miry, they wore over-shoes. Sometimes rare jewels were fashioned in these scholastic abodes of misery. Ignatius Loyola spent four years in the poorest of all the colleges. It was where the Ste. Geneviève Library now is. The food was in these colleges exclusively vegetarian. He entered at the age of thirty-eight, and was so deformed with lameness as to make him a mark for small boys fond of pelting stones. Next door, at the Fortet College, Calvin was forming his mind and rigid character. The inauguration of the order of the Jesuits by Loyola in the crypt of St. Denis, at Montmartre, coincided with the flight of Calvin to Switzerland, to avoid death by the estarpede. Curious that the two extreme poles of Catholic and Protestant theology should have met in the Rue St. Jacques. It was in a college there that Danté realised his hot and icy-cold hells, and first won fame by a thesis written for his master's degree. The part of the Rue St. Jacques where colleges and theological schools were most thickly studded is now devoted to secular learning. Renan could see from his windows in the College of France (most illustrious feature of the Rue St. Jacques) the site where, at the Emperor Julien's call, the irreconcilable St. Hilary and Saturnin met in synod. There is but one chair of Christian theology at the Sorbonne opposite, and it is devoted to the broadest Protestant theology. The ever-widening spiral history moves in is here exemplified, since things have come to the point at which Julien wanted to leave them. Save in respect to theology, Scotch university towns are very like the Latin Quarter, of which they are the daughters; Oxford and Cambridge are only collaterals.

PARISIAN CHARACTERS

The don behind his time is equally unknown in France and Scotland. Every teacher at the Sorbonne and College of France has to

face a keenly critical public. This puts him on his mettle. His salary is hardly comfortable. He must therefore so shape his lectures as to bear the test of the book market, and thus make up for the meagreness of the pay he draws from the State.

It was as professors of the great schools of the Rue St. Jacques that Guizot, Michelet, Jules Simon, Quinet, Havet, Caro, Renan, built up their reputations.

The first medical school in Paris brings us back to the reign of Henry V of Lancaster. The year the treaty of Troyes was signed, and Katherine married Henry, one Robert Poitevin, graduate of Montpelier, was named a canon of Notre Dame. He quitted his canon's stall on leave of absence in 1428 to attend as doctor the young Queen, Marie of Anjou. The Faculty of Medicine of Paris sent him as its delegate, in 1435, to the Congress of Arras, where the Duke of Burgundy dropped his English ally. Poitevin was probably deputed to watch how the wind might blow at Arras. When Paris was regained by Charles VII, three years later, the Canon was called on to prescribe for the Queen, her Scotch daughter-in-law, the dauphiness, and for Agnes Sorel. This interesting patient named him her executor. He doctored the Duc and Duchesse of Orleans, treated Charles VII for melancholia, was handsomely paid for his prescriptions, had wealth and influence, and was glad to use them in helping Desprat, D.D. and M.D., to found the first school of medicine at the corner of the Rue des Rats and the Rue de la Bucherie, then, as now, a slummy place, which the river often flooded. This school was, first and foremost, provided with a chapel and opened to pupils in 1477. Louis XI gave it a garden for the study of botany. The amphitheatre under the dome at the corner dates from 1744. The first rector, aided by his brother doctors of the school, performed the first vivisection ever heard of in Paris, and on a human subject. Many persons of condition suffered from the disease of which Napoleon III died. The doctors, not daring to try their operative skill on them, asked the king's leave to operate on an archer of the guard condemned to be hung for theft. He might as well die under the knife as by Tristan's rope. Louis decided on the experiment. It was made publicly—the school not being finished—in the charnel-house of St. Severins. The archer recovered in a fortnight, had a full pardon, and was given a sum of money.

The Moulin de la Galette at Montmartre is an old holiday resort. Hundreds of school children are taken there on Thursdays to be treated to crisp galette cakes. They find swings and merry-go-rounds in the garden and can look down on Paris from the top of the windmill. At night there are wild dances, but less fast and furious than at the Moulin Rouge below.

"An old house" with the projecting turret is nicer to look at than to live in. The old walls are so full of saltpetre as to seem like melting ice in damp weather. That forged iron crook to which

a lamp hangs reminds one of the time when crowds, to the cry of "À la lanterne!" lynched malefactors.

"A Louis XV doorway" was once that of a noble residence, now a mayoralty. Marriages are solemnised there; births, deaths, conscripts and electors are registered, doles given out to the poor, and vaccinations from the calf made gratis. Every mayoralty is between an undertaker's office and a flower shop. The flowers are for hearses and graves. A mourning shop is sure to be near. The smart girl with the bandbox may be going from one on an errand.

The ill-braced, shivering "commissionaire and shoeblack" suffers from the competition of telephones, cycling messengers, pneumatic postal tubes, and from alcohol. He would be chilly in July. The wife patches his trousers—you see that at the knees. Buttons are not wanting at the waistcoat, but his unsteady fingers cannot get them into the buttonholes. The utter breakdown of volition due to alcoholism is shown in the clothes and their wearer. He will be swept off by the first hard winter or epidemic.

"A book hunter" is a sober, hard-brained old Frenchman, perhaps a retired tradesman. It interests him to hunt for rare books on stands. Acquisitiveness is called into play, so is the critical faculty. He is a philosopher, indifferent to what neighbours think of him. You see indifference to their opinion and his thrift in the smoking-cap and trousers made short by frequent repairs. His coat pockets are receptacles for secondhand books like those of M. X. Marmier, the Academician. The book-hunter is at a bookstand on a quay-wall of Paris. He may be the father or father-in-law of a great orator, artist, author, doctor or statesman. M. Anatole France is the son of a small secondhand bookseller of the Quai Voltaire. Such is Republican France.

"A workman" has made his pile and married off well *sa demoiselle*. He is comfortably fed, is snug, tidy, has an easy mind and a palate—too nice a palate to quite like that glass of beer. But he may get on the downward alcoholic grade. Alcohol spoils the palate, and thirst comes with drinking.

"A journalist" is ready to defend his honour with sword or pistol in a duel, to back up a Cabinet Minister, pretender or company promoter—or blackmail him. He may praise gratis once, but not twice. He has learned from experience not to expect gratitude from anyone whom he has helped to lift to name or fame. Every fair theatrical or operatic star is to his mind *une rosse*, every artist a *mufle*. His rule is *donnant, donnant*. One often sees him in the lobby of the Chamber of Deputies.

Old doorway (Louis XV)