

The Various Cities

IN NO city in the world, is there a greater sense of movement than in Paris. For this, the French temperament no less than the appalling speed of Parisian vehicles, is responsible. All the medley of noise, tin-horn tootings, grinding of brakes, sharp interchange of incivilities—all the miniature importance that the French relish, produce a confusion of movement that strains the most placid nervous system to the point of breaking. Although, your Frenchman usually spends two hours over *déjeuner* (12 noon to 2 p.m.) and an entire evening over dinner, apparently doing nothing, his jaws, tongue, eyes, eyebrows, hands, arms and fingers will be working furiously; and so will his brain. "The languid grace of a London ballroom," so ably described by Ouida, has no place in the life of Paris.

Speaking of the taxis, there are said to be twenty thousand in the French capital. It is my honest conviction that I have inspected all of them . . . they seem to gather in close-formed ranks at almost any busy circle . . . at the *Etoile*, or *L'Opera*, for example . . . and Russians, Germans, Hungarians, Swiss, Riffs (and raffs, in many cases) I have seen at the helm. But in all the army of drivers, there is just one woman. How she may be regarded by her competitors, I do not say. But capability lies in her gloveless hands, and resolution squares her swarthy jaw. I hazard the opinion that what she does not know about an opponent's genealogy, she can invent!

For all their speed, however, there are fewer motor accidents in Paris than in other metropolitan cities, possibly because pedestrians have been disciplined to keep a sharper look-out for danger than in our centres, where traffic regulations are apt to favor walkers; even those who, mooning about the streets, step blandly under the wheels of an on-coming car. But let the timid take warning and remain in their Parisian hotels. Otherwise, they must prepare to scuttle from one refuge to another (marked *Pietons*) or sit rigid in a car, bearing in mind a facetious command that adorns a rock at the entrance to the C.P.R. Lake Superior country, and which reads: "Fold back your ears," referring to the lean proportions of the tunnel.



Here, will be found the last stand of the popping opera hat

Pleading for caution does no whit of good when policemen swing their little white batons and impatiently urge the drivers to go faster! Timorous visitors equipped with a few words of French invariably beg, "*Allez lentement, mais tres lentement, s'il vous plait,*" and are favored, invariably, with this response—if any, "*Soyez tranquille, madame, avec moi, vous n'avez pas sujet d'avoir peur.*" But as for driving slowly . . . la la! The driver did not halt the flight of his car, when unequal to the jolts and bumps occasioned by high speed, a spring gave way, terrifying an English passenger, who cried:

"*Cochon . . . cochon,*" (no taxi-driver of whom I've heard, has become reconciled to being called a pig), *arretez tres vite! Le printemps de la voiture est fractuee!*"

Speaking of the unfortunate confusion between *cocher* and *cochon* recalls the story of the Englishman, who kept addressing his cicerone by the latter term, with utmost friendliness. Finally, on the outskirts of Paris, the driver brought his vehicle to a stop and on being asked the reason, replied that he was waiting for *Les Anglais* to pass. Looking out of the window, his passenger was confronted by a drove of pigs!

THERE are, *en effet*, several cities called Paris.

They have the same shops and houses, boulevards and museums; the same gray skies in winter and the same radiant sunshine in the spring; the same stations spew out their streams of tourists and the same horse-chestnuts wave their tassels over all. But, spiritually, these cities are as unlike as the poles. One is the Paris of the transient, one, of the voluntary expatriate, and another is that almost unknown city, the Paris, where exclusive and aristocratic Parisians live. The city which is common to all is a gay place, in which the commercial spirit largely predominates. Every English-speaking person is classified as American, and every American is presumptively a millionaire . . . This is especially true of the half mile triangle whose apex is *L'Opera*.

Within this area the foreigner is courteously, but none the less efficiently separated from his dollars. Along the *rue de Rivoli*, the *rue de la*



Last areas of uncovered humanity
breathe towering heights of swaying
plumes...

Paix and the rich circle of the *Place Vendome* he drifts—"he" meaning for the most part "she"—craving mountains and paying expensively for mole-hills. This type of tourist goes once to the opera, which is produced in one of the most ornately beautiful buildings on the continent. It was built, so to say, in France's *giltiest* period. Here, will be found the last stand of the popping opera hat. Imagination can scarcely picture the number. Sooner, I do believe, would a gentleman leave off his red ribbon than this funeral adornment. In each *entr'acte* when the marble corridors and foyers are thronged, black hats surmounting practically every male head bob above the beautifully-dressed coiffures of the women. Oh, certainly, they are worn within the building! Also, in the little bar where all manner of drinks and *santitas* are served. It is quite proper for ladies to patronize this bar without an escort.

WHEN the sacrifice to highbrowism has been made, then the average transient fetches a relieved sigh and says, "Now for a bit of life." Then she—"she" meaning equally often "he"—looks up the night clubs and an occasional cafe. The best known among the former, I think, lie in *Montmartre*. Interesting cafes are situated all