

**The Project Gutenberg eBook of In Vanity Fair: A Tale of Frocks and
Femininity, by Eleanor Hoyt Brainerd**

This ebook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this ebook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you'll have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: In Vanity Fair: A Tale of Frocks and Femininity

Author: Eleanor Hoyt Brainerd

Release date: May 28, 2014 [EBook #45791]

Language: English

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK IN VANITY FAIR: A TALE OF FROCKS AND
FEMININITY ***

**E-text prepared by Giovanni Fini, Clarity,
and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team
(<http://www.pgdp.net>)
from page images generously made available by
Internet Archive/American Libraries
(<https://archive.org/details/americana>)**

Note: Images of the original pages are available through Internet Archive/American Libraries.
See <https://archive.org/details/invanityfairtale00brai>



IN VANITY FAIR



ELEANOR HOYT BRAINERD

IN VANITY FAIR



The Return from the Grand Prix

[Pg v]

IN VANITY FAIR

A TALE OF FROCKS
AND FEMININITY

BY

ELEANOR HOYT BRAINERD

Author of "The Misdemeanors of Nancy"

NEW YORK
MOFFAT, YARD & COMPANY
1906

COPYRIGHT, 1906, BY
MOFFAT, YARD & COMPANY
NEW YORK
Published, March, 1906

[Pg vi]

The Plimpton Press Norwood Mass. U.S.A.

[Pg vii]

PREFACE

The Parisienne, in her subtler phases, is a theme for a feminist of genius; and this little book does not venture upon the psychological deep seas.

Grave issues are tangled in the game of fashion-making; but the world through which My Lady of the Chiffons dances lightly to gay music reeks of frivolity, and the story of the fashionable Parisienne and of the haunts in which she obtains and displays her incomparable frocks must needs be a story of folly and extravagance, best told, perhaps, by snap-shots of the inner courts of Vanity Fair.

THE AUTHOR.

[Pg viii]
[Pg ix]

CONTENTS

IN VANITY FAIR

CHAPTER I

	PAGE
FROCKS AND FEMININITY	15
The Frenchwoman's creed; the science of being gay; feminine types in French society; the demi-monde of Paris; Parisian salons.	

CHAPTER II

THE TYRANTS OF THE RUE DE LA PAIX	28
Paris and the art of dress; Worth and the old masters; Paquin and the new school; the clientèles of the great men.	

CHAPTER III

THE FAMOUS ATELIERS	47
How the work is done; the saleswomen; the mannequins; the ouvrières; the system; the launching of the modes.	

CHAPTER IV

FIFI AND THE DUCHESS ON THE TURF	64
Racing near Paris; round the braziers of Auteuil; the day of the Grand Prix.	

CHAPTER V

LE SPORT IN PARIS	78
Motor mania; Parisian golf and French golfers; fashion and tennis at Puteaux; the motor-boat fad.	

CHAPTER VI

THE FINE ART OF DINING	97
Al fresco dining in the Bois; with le Roi galant at the Henri Quatre; where the Pompadour held sway; the restaurants of the town; Frederic, "King of the Ducks."	

	CHAPTER VII	
IN NORMANDY WITH MADAME		118
	Gay Trouville and chic Deauville; at the tables of the Hôtel de Paris; in the Casino; some inns and the motor.	
	CHAPTER VIII	
THE MERRY-GO-ROUND		140
	Winter in Paris; five o'clock tea and chiffons; the theatres of Paris; the Palais de Glace and its crowd; spring fêtes and follies.	
	CHAPTER IX	
THE HUNTING SEASON		163
	The Frenchman and la chasse; at the châteaux; venery new and old; with the hounds of the Duchesse d'Uzes.	
	CHAPTER X	
UNDER SOUTHERN SKIES		182
	Cannes and the world; Nice and the flesh; Monte Carlo and the devil.	
	CHAPTER XI	
LES AMERICAINES		210
	The French frock and the American woman; American buyers; feminine extravagance in America; some famous orders; the ready-made costume and its effect upon dress.	

[Pg xi]

ILLUSTRATIONS

THE RETURN FROM THE GRAND PRIX	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	PAGE
PLAYING AT COUNTRY LIFE	20
DOEUILLET PASSES JUDGMENT	40
BEER AND HIS MANNEQUINS	52
THE DAY OF THE DRAGS	66
AT LONGCHAMPS	72
THE FIRST SPORTSWOMAN OF FRANCE	84
FASHION'S FERRY	90
THE LATEST PLAYTHING OF THE DUCHESSE D'UZES	98
"GOSSIP STREET" AT TROUVILLE	120
IN THE CLUB GROUNDS AT DEAUVILLE	130
AT A ROTHSCHILD GARDEN PARTY	154
BARONNE HENRI DE ROTHSCHILD AT THE MEET	166
THE BLESSING OF THE HOUNDS AT BONNELLES	178
THE PALACE OF FOLLY—MONTE CARLO	186
THE CROWD AT MONTE CARLO	196

IN VANITY FAIR

CHAPTER I

FROCKS AND FEMININITY

Clothes and the woman we sing! Given the themes, Paris is obviously the only appropriate setting. Nowhere else do the kindred cults of frocks and femininity kindle such ardent devotion. Nowhere else are women so enthusiastically decorative. There are women more beautiful than the Parisiennes, there are women who spend as much money upon their clothes. Pouf! What is beauty unadorned? What is beauty adorned—provided it is not chic.

That crisp little monosyllable is sadly abused by our Anglo-Saxon saleswomen, but it is a master word for all that, a great word holding in solution the quintessence of things Parisian. It means a subtle something before which mere beauty is humble, and mere luxury is banal. It means coquetry, audacity, charm. It means a thing evanescent, impalpable, unmistakable, absurd, adorable, a thing deliciously feminine, a thing essentially of the world worldly.

That the word should be a French word with no exact equivalent in another tongue is as it should be. The Parisienne is the true "femme chic." She has the secret and she realizes its value, makes a fetich of it, devotes herself to it with a zeal that could flourish nowhere outside of Paris. There are charming women all over the world, but nowhere is femininity so conscientiously occupied in being charming as it is in Paris. [Pg 16]

Your true Parisienne begins her creed with, "I believe in coquetry"; and by coquetry she means not merely embryonic flirtation, but all that goes to make sophisticated charm. She is coquette from her cradle to her grave, from her first communion frock to her last cap and shawl. She does not depend upon her natural advantages, she is not unconscious, not simple. She is deliberately, insistently charming, and to gain that end she shows the infinite capacity for taking trouble which amounts to genius. The ill-natured call the result artificiality, and they are right; but the fine art of the artificiality is a thing to conjure with, and through its aid the Frenchwoman retains her charm long after youth and its bloom are fled. Wit wears better than complexion, and tact outlasts figure. Incidentally, much may be done to patch up complexion and figure if wit and tact are on hand to carry off the counterfeit.

To be sure there is something a trifle depressing about the faded ghosts of Parisian youth, the old ladies of Paris who refuse to admit defeat, and, painted, bejewelled, vivacious, defy the years.

Yes, there's a sadness in the struggle, a gentle melancholy such as serves poets for rondels and villanelles, but they are not sad, themselves, those old ladies of Paris. Bless your heart, no! They are gay, excessively gay. They flutter their fans and toss their curled heads and scatter wrinkled smiles and unwrinkled bon mots, and succeed, after a fashion, in their aim; for they are delightful, these faded, worldly belles. They keep their youthful hearts, their keen wits, their absorbing interest in men and things. They have not forgotten how to be amusing; and, under their cleverly applied rouge and powder and false hair and general artificiality, they are still sympathetic, still witty, still wise. Not one's ideal of placid old age, not, perhaps, the grandmothers one would choose for the family tree, but delightful companions still; coquettes who have outlived their youth but not their finesse. [Pg 17]

Perhaps the cult of coquetry which is the pervasive spirit of French society would be impossible outside the atmosphere in which it flourishes. It is a part of Parisian tradition, it colours Parisian values, determines Parisian standards. Insensibly the woman who lives in Paris surrenders to this spirit though she may have come of Puritan stock or of Roundhead ancestry. It is in the air of Paris. If one cannot breathe the air and assimilate the germs, one departs. That is all. One returns to Boston or Kansas City or Glasgow or Tewkesbury. Doubtless those women who flee from the insidious assault lead lives more estimable than those who succumb, but they do not learn the gentle art of coquetry in its Parisian form. So much the better for the quietude of Boston and Kansas City and Glasgow and Tewkesbury.

It is probable, highly probable, that the foreigner who recklessly remains in Paris and invites the spirit of the place will show her inevitable lapse from Puritanical grace first in her underwear. French lingerie is the sign and symbol of French femininity. It is the refinement of luxury, the quintessence of coquetry. [Pg 18]

To wear a fortune in a gown is something, but to wear a fortune in lace and handwork and cobweb linen hidden away under a frock demurely simple is more, and the Parisienne adores "le dessous." Jewels she may lack—though not for want of conscientious effort to obtain them—but dainty petticoats she will have, and, having them, she will wear them, and wearing them, she will show them. Why not contribute to the sum of humanity's simple joys?

An old lady from a little Missouri town strayed from a Cook's party one day, at the entrance to the Louvre; and, some hours later, a young countrywoman of hers found her occupying one of the Champs Elysées chairs and watching with fearful joy the stream of French womanhood picking its way along walks still wet from an all-night rain.

The old lady clutched the arm of her fellow American and turned a puzzled face away from the passing show.

"My dear, just look at those petticoats and stockings!" she gasped. "The creatures haven't any idea of hiding them. I've been watching for two mortal hours and there hasn't been a let-up yet. Some are finer than others, that's all. But they're all showy, and every single woman has her dress tucked up so you can't miss them. When I saw the first ones I thought I'd struck the French women you read about,—the ones who aren't proper, you know, and I was so interested; but then they kept coming so steadily that I got all mixed up. Hundreds have gone by, all holding their skirts like that and every one of them swishing silk or lace ruffles and showing silk stockings,—and it isn't humanly possible, even in Paris, that they're all bad, now is it?"

[Pg 19]

Bad? Not the least in the world. They were merely French. The petticoat of Pleasantville, Missouri, and the petticoat of Paris are two separate and distinct things, and the old lady had vaguely grasped an important fact not down upon the Cook's party schedule of information. The Parisienne is Paris. Incidentally there are picture galleries and museums.

The amount of money spent on the "dessous" by a Parisian woman of fashion is madly extravagant and entirely characteristic. It is but a detail of that religion of luxury whose high priests centre in the Rue de la Paix. The average Frenchwoman has a thrifty and frugal side, but the extravagant Frenchwoman spends her money with a light-hearted gaiety and a maximum of picturesque effect. The most prodigal patrons of the great dressmakers and jewellers in the Rue de la Paix are Americans, but the most brilliant figures in the fashionable Parisian world are French. The born Parisienne is the supreme coquette. She wears her clothes with an incomparable air. There is a touch of the actress in her, and in the matter of feminine fashion art can give points to nature, so the Frenchwoman wears with artfully artless grace and naturalness creations whose audacity would reduce a woman of any other nationality to an awkward self-consciousness that would ruin the effectiveness of the costume.

[Pg 20]

Even could one conceive of all the great French dressmakers transplanted to another land, only in Paris could the modes be successfully launched, for only there can monsieur find the women who are ready and able to carry off triumphantly even the most revolutionary of creations, who have the courage and confidence to exploit models strikingly novel—always provided those models have beauty and cachet to commend them. It is the Parisienne, too, who is willing to buy the most extravagantly fragile and perishable of frocks and who will wear them regardless of consequences; who will, moreover, smile most cheerfully when, having fulfilled its mission, the costly frock is crushed, drabbled, ruined.

"It had *un succès fou*, M'sieu!" she says blithely to the maker when she sees him next. That is quite enough. A great success on one occasion justifies any extravagance, and why allow a spoiled frock to obscure an agreeable memory?



Playing at Country Life

King Alfonso attended one of the famous race meetings near Paris one day last summer, and all the smart Parisian world turned out to do him honour. The display of frocks and millinery was a notable one. The pesage was crowded with women in the airiest and most elaborate of summer toilettes and, suddenly, the heavens opened and a torrent of rain poured down. Such a scurrying and twittering; such little moans and shrieks; such laughter and jesting! Bad temper? Not a bit of it. Things were quite bad enough without losing one's temper. So they chatted and joked and achieved bon mots that almost reconciled them to the facts that their rouge was streaked and their plumes were drabbed and their curls were straggling and their frocks were limp. The sun came out and the demoralized toilettes emerged from under cover, mere wrecks of their former beauty; but the wearers carried the situation off with a good-natured vivacity to which no other women would have been equal. The afternoon was a particularly gay one, and the prevailing philosophy was voiced by one little countess who was heard to say to a friend as they stood waiting for their automobiles:

[Pg 21]

"The frocks are spoiled, absolutely spoiled. C'est dommage,—but, ma chère, what an opportunity for the petticoats and the feet, n'est-ce pas? Me,—I found much consolation in the real lace in my white stockings and in my new shoe buckles,—Va! One sees, every day, the frocks. To-day, for the first time, I know intimately the ankles of all my friends."

Possibly the countess gave her maid a bad quarter hour after she reached home; but for the benefit of the public she stood there, insouciant, smiling, debonair, with her chiffon frock clinging forlornly to her shapely little figure, with her tulle hat gummed to a disarranged coiffure and its plumes drooping like funeral emblems over her left ear, but with her spirits intact. Not for nothing did she have some of the best blood of France in her veins. It is sporting blood,—that best blood of France.

[Pg 22]

Concerning the morals of French womankind, the serious may write,—and the less they know about Paris—provided they are Anglo-Saxon—the more fluently they will write; for intimate acquaintance with Parisian life and sentiment is sadly prejudicial to orthodox Anglo-Saxon standards, and it is difficult to be severe with the Parisienne if one knows her. One disapproves of her, in certain of her phases, perhaps, but one learns the tolerant shoulder shrug of her nation. She is so very amusing, and Paris is, first of all, "le monde où l'on s'amuse."

One may like Paris or not. One may choose to live in Paris or to live elsewhere, but one thing the fair-minded will all admit. This capital city of the kingdom of Vanity Fair is gay. The Parisians have reduced gaiety to a science, luxury to an art. There may be tragedy behind the curtain; but, before the public, life goes to a merry tune. It is quite possible that smart society, the world over, is as rotten as our novelists, dramatists, and preachers would have us believe; but, at least, in Paris it is not dull. Where American smart society is spectacular, French smart society is chic. Even in the half world the distinction holds. The demi-mondaine of New York—or the nearest approach to the demi-mondaine which New York furnishes, for our standards are uncompromising and we recognize no "half world"—is vulgar. The demi-mondaine of Paris is—

[Pg 23]

one can but have recourse once more to that untranslatable comprehensive word "chic."

Immorality, we are solemnly assured, is none the less immoral because it is not banal. Probably it is more deplorable in proportion as it takes on attractiveness; but we are not moralizing, merely stating facts, and the fascination of the great Parisian demi-mondaine is a well-established fact.

To begin with, she is the best dressed woman in the world. Any of the famous dressmakers of Paris, who are the world's arbiters of fashion, will tell you that. She has the money and the taste, and with her, even more than with the Parisienne of the beau monde, being charming is a metier. She supplements natural attractions with every resource of art. She is, as a rule, clever, tactful, witty. Often she is brilliant, and the nearest approach to the famous salons of old France are to be found to-day in the homes of certain Parisiennes who are frankly demi-mondaine or dwell in that middle world twixt "beau" and "demi" where, sometimes, the name "artiste" casts a broad mantle of charity over irregularity of life. There are countesses and princesses of the blood who play at salon making in Paris, and who would be in the seventh heaven could they once call under their roofs the famous men who flock to certain salons where mesdames of the beau monde may not follow. Great litterateurs, painters, sculptors, musicians, scientists gather at certain informal evenings, certain famous little dinners. And mark you, everything here is *comme il faut*—yes, indeed. Let the student of morals who associates the phrase demi-mondaine only with Tenderloin orgies revise his vocabulary. Orgies of the familiar kind he can find in Paris. They are easily found; but he will have considerable difficulty in gaining admittance to the salon of the great artiste whose life history has been, to put it mildly, unconventional, or to the salon of the famous demi-mondaine. Once admitted, he will need wit and worldly wisdom to hold his own. One hears of little dinners where the quantity of liquor drunk falls far below Tenderloin standards, but where the poet of the moment composes sonnets to his hostess's eyebrow; where the famous composer replies to Madame's "A new song, mon chère. I must have a song all my own," by sitting down at the piano and working out a chanson which all Paris will be whistling a few months later; where the petted tenor from the Opera sings street ballads, and the great diplomat chats international scandal, and the successful artist and feminist sketches portraits of his hostess upon the fly-leaf of the autograph copy of the academician's book which the author has just presented to her.

[Pg 24]

Yes; one hears of those happenings in the little house at Neuilly or in the mansion on the Boulevard Malesherbes, or wherever the rendezvous may be, and one struggles vainly to adjust one's vision to the Parisian perspective to understand the Parisian attitude toward life. It is disturbing to find impropriety so devoid of the lurid light in which melodrama pictures it. One's moral vertebra softens in Paris.

But there are Parisiennes and Parisiennes. There is the aristocrat of the St. Germain—and even aristocratic virtue is not dull in Paris. There is the wife of the millionaire tradesman. There are the women folk of the great banking house. There are the ladies of the diplomatic circle, there are exiled queens and resident grand duchesses. There are the Americans. There are the artistes. There are the demi-mondaines, the cocottes. And there is Mimi. She is not the worst of the group, this unimportant little Mimi, not the worst, and by no means the least coquette; but she is not a bird of fine feathers and does not belong in our story.

[Pg 25]

The great lady of Paris is grande dame to her finger-tips, whether she nurses the traditions of the old régime in her exclusive salon in the Faubourg St. Germain or follows after such new gods as "le sport" and broadens her visiting list to include the trades and arts,—provided always that the trade and the art have paid well enough to lift tradesman and artist above their metiers. France loves genius, but for social success, in Paris, genius is not enough.

One must have money, wit, and tact to succeed in smart French society without the prestige of aristocratic birth. If one has the birth in addition, so much the better.

There are salons to which only those to the nobility born are eligible, but they are few, and modern French society is prone to go where it will be most skilfully amused, where it will find the most luxury, the greatest originality, the most volatile gaiety. The receptions of the Duchesse de Rohan are impressive, her invitations are in the nature of patents of nobility, but the Comtesse Pillet-Will's extravagantly original fêtes are more popular, and the average Parisian élégante would rather go ballooning with the exceedingly modern young Duchesse d'Uzes than talk politics in the salon of the Comtesse Jean de Castellane or listen to the excellent music which the Comtesse de Bearn provides for her guests. Not that one objects to politics and music. Music is "très chic" as furnished in the salons of the Comtesse de Bearn, the Marquise de Castrone, the Vicomtesse de Tredern, and the other society leaders who are noted for this especial variety of entertainment; and, though the great political salon is a thing of yesteryear, the Parisienne always takes an interest in politics. It is a game, and she adores games, especially games in which men are the counters. She is a born intrigante, and here is a field for legitimate intrigue. Moreover, many men are devoted to politics, and is not sympathy the corner-stone of the foundation of that power over men which is the breath of the Frenchwoman's nostrils?

[Pg 26]

So, many of the fair Parisiennes play at politics, but few play so charmingly as does the Comtesse Jean. Comtesse Boni de Castellane, too, has political pretensions, and shows a devotion to the royalist cause all the more vehement because grafted upon democratic birth and training; but it is when they pay forty thousand dollars for a week-end house party that the Boni de Castellanes loom large upon the Parisian horizon. Their salon is not epoch-making.

Parisian society dabbles in politics, music, art, spiritualism, amateur theatricals, and a host of other things, but it plunges bodily into racing. The Jockey Club of France, which controls the turf in France, is a gentleman's club, and its members are, with the exception of a few rich bourgeois, representatives of the most aristocratic houses of France. The Duc de Noailles, the Duc de

[Pg 27]

Dondeauville, Prince d'Arenberg, Duc de Fezensac, Comte Pillet-Will, Vicomte d'Harcourt and a host of other men as well known are on the list of membership, and it is natural enough that the great racing events near Paris should bring out the flower of Parisian society as well as the heterogeneous crowds common to race tracks.

"Le sport," too, imported from England and conscientiously fostered for a long time before it showed signs of taking firm root in French soil, is now a conspicuous feature of Parisian social life; and golf clubs, tennis clubs, polo clubs, etc., are the chic rendezvous even for that large percentage of Parisian society which, for all its vivacity, would not, under any suasion, lend itself to active exercise. One does not look well when one exercises too violently, and costumes suitable for golf and tennis are not nearly as fascinating as those that may be worn by lookers-on. Therefore, since looking one's best is a sacred duty, and since attractive frock wearing is the Parisienne's religion, Madame, as a rule, prefers to look on. She has sporting blood, but, as we have already said, she is, before all else, "coquette."

CHAPTER II

THE TYRANTS OF THE RUE DE LA PAIX

If one would write of Vanity Fair, one must write of the Rue de la Paix and the Place Vendôme; for the faithful worshippers of the vanities turn toward that quarter of Paris as devoutly as a Mohammedan toward Mecca. There the high priests of Fashion hold sway, and women the world over acknowledge with reverent salaams of spirit that there is no fashion but Paris fashion, though ideas as to Fashion's true prophets may differ.

Let no one speak lightly of the French frock. It has been a world power, and its story, if adequately written, would be a most absorbing and comprehensive one. Drama of all kinds has clung round its frills and furbelows. Revelations philosophical, historical, sociological, lurk in its shimmering folds. Men have died for it, women have sold youth and honour, husband, child, and lover, for it. It is Fashion's supreme expression, and, on the altar of Fashion all things precious have, first and last, been offered up.

Even the French scarcely realize the vital issues involved in the making of the Fashions, but they, at least, approach the matter with becoming gravity. Americans are said to be, next to the French, the best dressed women in the world; but there is a certain lamentable levity in the American attitude toward dress, while the French take everything pertaining to clothes seriously. One need only read a page from one of the best French fashion journals to grasp the national point of view.

[Pg 29]

Here is no mere curt chronicle of the modes. The writer's rhapsodies put our spring poets to shame. Called upon to describe a creation in pink taffeta, he dips his pen in May morning dew and invokes the muses. He soars upon the viewless wings of poesy, and, soaring, sings impassioned chants of praise; he culls his similes from all the realm of beauty, his adjectives glow with fervour, he quotes from the classics, he draws upon history and fable, he winds up with a fervid apostrophe to fair woman,—and not one of his French readers smiles. They see no extravagance in his periods. The pink taffeta was from Paquin. Upon what shrine could flowery tributes more fittingly be laid?

The artists of the French fashion journals approach their work in the same spirit. One uses the word artist advisedly, for they are really artists, those men who picture modish femininity for the Parisian fashion journals of the highest class. On this side of the water, fashion illustrators, with one or two exceptions, attempt nothing more than an accurate reproduction of the details of frock or wrap or hat. There their whole duty ends, and as for producing a clever and charming drawing,—perish the thought! The artist who can do that scorns fashion work; or, if he condescends to it, ranks it with his advertisements for soup or sapolio, and refuses to honour the pot boilers with his signature.

[Pg 30]

"They do these things better in France." There, a man may have studied seriously, may have seen his pictures given place on salon walls, and yet may take pride in being one of the foremost fashion illustrators in France. For example, there is Fournery. He is, perhaps, the most popular of the French fashion artists; he commands large prices, has more orders than he can fill, is independent to the last degree—and he loves the work, puts into it the best of the skill that he has acquired through earnest study, the skill that has won him a place in the salon, when he has taken time from his serious fashion work for such frivolous side issues.

He is a feminist, this artist. Everything that goes to make up feminine coquetry and charm interests him. He is willing to draw a picture of a fashionable frock, for the joy of drawing the woman who can successfully wear it. The "femme chic" is his chosen theme. If editors pay him large sums for gowning his women in certain costumes, so much the better.

A visit to Fournery and a study of his methods would suggest a new point of view to the American artist who thinks anything will do for a fashion sketch.

One finds a delightful studio, a vivacious and enthusiastic young man,—French to his fingertips.

"You want to know how I do my work? A la bonheur! It is quite simple, my method. I draw first the nude figure,—from life, bien entendu. One must have the perfect figure before one can display the frock at its best, n'est-ce pas? A wooden woman cannot show off a beautiful gown. The wearer must be graceful, supple, svelte, chic. When one has the woman one adjusts her lingerie. One corsets her—but why not? The corset is an abomination perhaps, but it is worn, and there are corsets and corsets. Since women must wear corsets, let them wear good ones. The fashionable figure is not that of the Venus de Milo, but what would you? It is the fashionable figure. The fashionable gown is made to go over it. Voilà! My woman must be perfectly corsetted upon the accepted lines, but with as little violence as possible to nature's grace. Then the gown! One fits it to the figure, one makes it cling where it should cling, flare where it should flare, bring the wearer's best points into view, as the wearer exhibits the best points of the frock. One introduces an interesting background. It must be cleverly drawn, that background, a line here, a line there, nothing to distract the eye from the figure but an appropriate setting,—a glimpse of the pesage at Auteuil, the terrace at Monte Carlo, a corner of the Café de Paris, a vista on the Avenue des Acacias.—There you have it, Madame, my fashion picture. Elle est gentille, n'est-ce pas, cette petite femme chic?"

[Pg 31]

She is most assuredly "gentille." So is the "femme chic" as Drian pictures her,—Drian the youthful, who might stand at the head of our conscientiously monotonous portrayers of pretty women, were he working in New York instead of Paris. Many of those same American exponents

of feminine types draw badly enough to shock the clever young Frenchman, but they would marvel at his pride in his fashion work,—for he is proud. He recognizes the importance of his metier.

[Pg 32]

It is this popular attitude toward things sartorial that has made Paris the centre of the dressmaking world. The great dressmaker may be born anywhere, but even a sartorial genius, born to dressmaking as the sparks fly upward, will not come into his artistic heritage outside of Paris. Your artistic temperament must have its sympathetic environment, and only in Paris is the artist dressmaker ranked with the immortals, only in Paris is dressmaking classed among the fine arts. Worth, the great, blushed unseen in the dark unfathomed caves of Birmingham; Beer wasted his sweetness on the desert air of Berlin; the Callot Sisters are from Provence and owe to the land of Tartarin their bold originality of invention; the Maison Drecol, famous in Paris and the foundation of Viennese fashion, was established by a Madame Wagner from Amsterdam. Once rooted in Parisian soil, these insignificant ones waxed great and famous, and their history is the history of fully two thirds of the well-known Paris dressmakers.

They are the truly great men of France, those famous dressmakers. Politicians, statesmen, generals, writers, musicians, strut across the public stage and play their rôles; but Paris could do without them. Given a grand cataclysm, and a possibility of saving some one famous man for the Republic, Paris would unhesitatingly rescue Paquin.

There has been a revolution in the type of the illustrious ones, during the last decade. Dressmaking has its Champs de Mars; but, in its case, the new men have almost driven the old salon to the wall.

[Pg 33]

Paris to-day has two distinct schools of great dressmakers, the new and the old, but the survivors of the old original type are few and far between. In the old days the phrase "creative genius" was not amiss when applied to the heads of the big French dressmaking establishments. To-day these great men are business men, but the men of the old school were artists, had creative talent—in a fashion sense—and cultivated that talent.

Wallès, an Englishman by birth, was an extreme example of this attitude on the part of the dressmaker toward his art, though his name is not so well known to the general public as many others. He was an artist *enragé*, a genius in colour combination and line. He was an avid student of colour, line, values, in the art galleries; he spent day after day in the woods noting the colour combinations of the autumn leaves; he drew upon flower and bird and insect and cloud for inspiration, and he achieved great results; but he had the ill-balanced temperament of genius and his career was brief.

Madame Roderigues, a Portuguese—and an exception to the rule that no great dressmaking talent has come from Spain, Portugal, or Italy—was a phenomenal artist of this same type, but ill health interfered with her spectacular success.

Other dressmakers, not such extremists as these two, ranked with the artist group, but Worth was practically the last of the old masters of dress.

[Pg 34]

The new men are of a different class. The work turned out from their ateliers is as good as that of their predecessors, but it is produced by different methods. The head of the establishment to-day is, first of all, a business man of extraordinary ability. He is also a man of phenomenally good taste—but he is not a creative genius. He does not lie awake wrestling with embryonic ideas concerning sleeve or flounce or collar, he does not roam woods and fields in search of inspiration. Not he. He buys the brains of lesser folk and launches the product of those brains for the edification of womankind and his own glory. Some little *ouvrière* in the workroom has a moment of inspiration. She goes to her employer with her idea. If he likes it, he buys it,—and she goes back to her work. Or perhaps some obscure dressmaker with more originality than reputation goes to one of the famous men and shows him models she has designed. If she has anything to offer which, in his judgment, has possibilities, he buys it—and at a generous figure. These men are always willing to pay liberally for ideas; but, once bought, the thing is theirs. The originator must not repeat it nor claim credit for it, though it may make the man who buys it famous, and set the fashionable world agog. Unfair? Not at all. The little dressmaker has not the ability to launch her idea. She makes more out of it by selling it to a well-known house than she could make in any other way. In course of time she may become the head of such an establishment, for the seats of the mighty are filled chiefly from her class; but, in the meantime, she is glad to find a market for her ideas.

[Pg 35]

The genius of the great dressmaker to-day consists in appreciation of the possibilities in an idea. He may not be able to conceive an original costume, but he knows instinctively what is good, has taste and judgment that are unerring. Out of a hundred models he will unhesitatingly choose the one that has a chance of success; and, having had the taste to select, he has the business ability to exploit and sell.

Then too, the ultimate development of the chosen ideas does rest in his hands. The seller of sketches or of crinoline models has given him suggestions. It is for him to bring forth from those suggestions creations that will dictate to all the fashionable world. Robed in a loose cloak of silk that will protect his ordinary clothing, puffing a cigar that consorts ill with his classic toga, the master sits in his workroom amid a chaos of materials and trimmings. Around him cluster his chief aids, exhibiting to him the experimental models turned out in the workroom. Jove-like, save for the great Havana tucked in a corner of his mouth, Monsieur lays down the law, criticises, suggests, alters, experiments. A fold is changed here, a frill is introduced there, materials are selected and harmonized, trimmings and linings are decided upon, names are given to the models at their birth. If the exact material or trimming needed to produce a desired effect is lacking, Monsieur does not allow that to worry him. He will merely tell the manufacturer to make what he wants—and the manufacturer will do it. The great dressmaker can make or mar a new fabric, and

[Pg 36]

it is wise for the maker of dress materials to humour the whims of the tyrant.

Under the régime of the old masters of fashion, the head of the establishment was a sacred personality—a being to be spoken of in hushed tones and approached with tremulous awe. He hedged himself about with mystery. He represented creative intellect at its highest; and, when the intellect settled down to its sacred function, nothing short of battle, murder, or sudden death would present a satisfactory excuse for an intrusion upon the privacy of the Master. Only a few privileged ones, elect because of the size of their bills, their superlative appreciation of true art or the worthiness of their faces and figures, were admitted to the Presence, and they accepted the honour in a spirit of true humility. If an ordinary mortal, daring as Icarus, asked to see Monsieur himself, Monsieur's representatives were tolerant, but pitying. See Him! Impossible! So might the priests of old have regarded a Cook's tourist, asking to be personally conducted through the Eleusinian Mysteries.

But Paquin and his followers have changed all that. Ordering gowns is no longer an awesome function. It is a soothing, delightful experience. One loses in religious exaltation but gains in beaming self-content.

Paquin was perhaps the first, as he is the best known, of the new school. Thirteen or fourteen years ago he was a clerk on the Bourse with no more knowledge of costuming than was to be gained by appreciative observation of *les belles Parisiennes*. Madame Paquin, who was not yet Madame Paquin, had a little dressmaking shop in an insignificant quarter. The two met, married. A rich patron opportunely turned up and furnished capital for an ambitious dressmaking enterprise. The young couple opened a shop on the Rue de la Paix. There was no sounding of trumpets nor beating of drums, but with the opening of that little shop Paris was well on the way toward another revolution.

[Pg 37]

To-day, Paquin stands at the head of the great dressmakers of Paris. His word is practically law. "Paquinesque" is the word coined to express all that there is of the most chic.

"An ugly costume," says the first Parisienne.

"But no, ma chère, it is of Paquin," protests the second.

"Oh, vraiment? But yes, I see. It has fine points. Ah, mon Dieu, yes, it is charming," gushes the first critic. So much for being the king who can do no wrong.

The success was, first and foremost, a success of personality. Monsieur Paquin is a handsome man. His manner is a thing to conjure with—and he has worked it to its conjuring limit. Madame Paquin is pretty, she is gifted, she is charming. Everyone is fond of Madame. From the first, this clever and ornamental young couple followed a new system. No haughty seclusion, no barred doors, at the Maison Paquin. Madame was probably met at the door by Monsieur Paquin himself, and to be met by Paquin was a treat. The most beautiful of Parisian *élégantes* and the homeliest old dowager received the same flattering welcome, the same tender interest. There was no servility in the manner. It was merely the perfection of courtesy. The customer was enveloped in an atmosphere that was soothing, delicious, promotive of deep self-esteem. Madame Paquin continued the treatment. The charming woman, the handsome man, both so deeply interested, both so deferential, both so intelligent! This was a new experience. The Parisienne smiled, purred, under the stroking, bought more than she had intended,—and came again.

[Pg 38]

Vanity is a lever stronger than awe. Paquin and his pretty wife understood that fact and built upon it. Feminine Paris chanted "The King is dead; long live the King!" The revolution was accomplished.

The sincerest flattery is imitation, and Paquin has been much flattered. A long line of more or less successful Adonises have followed in his footsteps. But DoeUILlet and Francis are perhaps the most important on the list.

Francis is young—in the early thirties. He is almost as good-looking as Paquin. His manners are a Parisian proverb and, personally, he is doubtless the most popular man in his class. His customers adore him. What is more surprising, his work people also adore him, and even the touchiest of mannequins, prone to decamp at a moment's notice, swears by Francis and refuses to leave or forsake him. Ten years ago Francis was a poor salesman. To-day he is rich. Tailor-made costumes, or the Parisian modification of the tailor-made, are his specialty, and his coats and cloaks are famous. DoeUILlet, too, has won fame and fortune within a few years. He, too, is young and handsome and ingratiating. Six feet tall, with the shoulders of an athlete and the face of a frank, honest boy, he, too, is a "lion among ladies." Mention DoeUILlet to a customer—she tells you of his eyes. "Such soft, honest eyes, ma chère. One would trust him anywhere, anywhere." The soft, honest eyes have been a valuable asset. DoeUILlet has the most gorgeous dressmaking establishment of all that cluster around the Place Vendôme. He caters to the ultra-extravagant, who do not care what they pay. His gowns are the elaborate ball gowns, the marvellous confections seen at Maxim's, at the races, at Monte Carlo.

[Pg 39]

Ernest is another of the men of the new school; but Armand is, figuratively speaking, the baby of the group. On the first of September, four or five years ago, a wealthy patron put an unknown young employee of a silk house into the dressmaking business. The young man was Armand. He had a modest atelier on a side street. On March first he moved into the famous Saye Palace on the Place Vendôme, the palace in which Napoleon and Eugénie met for the first time, and there, among the superb frescoes and splendid carvings, he installed his luxurious establishment. Success, wealth, in seven months! Verily, the dressmaking business has its opportunities for the young man who combines business ability and beaux yeux.

Paquin's income is estimated at from three hundred thousand to four hundred thousand dollars a year. DoeUILlet makes as much, and even without the Adonis characteristics, business talents may carry the Parisian dressmaker to wealth and fame. The list of rich dressmakers aside

[Pg 40]

from "those delightful young men" is a long one. The Callot Soeurs are possibly the most expensive firm in Paris. Doucet needs no introduction to Americans. Neither does Beer, who is considered by many the greatest creative artist in dress of our day. He has one of the historic palaces on the Place Vendôme, and his salons are rich in the eighteenth-century bibelots and furniture of which he is an enthusiastic collector. Flowers are everywhere throughout the rooms, and in the spring all of the many windows of the great palace are abloom with blossoms growing in window-boxes. Beer's mannequins, too, are vastly decorative, and this establishment is typical of the luxury and extravagance amid which the game of fashion-making is played.

La Ferrière has the most exclusive English trade as well as Parisian vogue, and is Paris dressmaker, by royal warrant, to Queen Alexandra. Madame Havet, Blanche Lebouvier, Sara Meyer, Mademoiselle Corné, are famous and wealthy. Rouff belongs near the head of the list and is a lineal descendant of the old school. In his establishment many of the traditions of the great old men survive. M. Rouff is not always in evidence as are the meteoric young men. To have an interview with him is an honour, and he will refuse to see even the most illustrious if his whim prompts him to do so. The ordinary customer meets only his representatives. Perhaps, during the interview, the curtains of the door will part. A thin, dark, rather wild-eyed face will appear for an instant and vanish. That is Rouff.



Doeuillet passes Judgment

Worth has a splendid trade, but it is largely a serious one. The great English and French dowagers go there; and Jean Worth, the present active head of the house, wears, more or less comfortably, the halo of his illustrious grandfather.

The dowager calls him a charming boy and says to him, "M'sieu Jean, when your famous grandpapa was alive, he made for me a light blue brocade that was most becoming. I would like something of that kind"—and M'sieu Jean repeats for age the light blue brocade of youth. He creates an extremely beautiful light blue brocade too, and he charges for it a price that would have surprised his famous grandpapa. He is old school by heredity, but he has modern commercial instincts, this charming boy.

The prices of the average French frock have gone up under the new régime, though extravagant sums were always paid for particularly original creations. There is practically no limit to the expense of dress to-day, and spectacular prices are paid for spectacular costumes; but the price of the great bulk of the gowns sold by the famous makers ranges from one hundred and twenty-five dollars to five hundred dollars, with the greatest sales between one hundred and seventy-five and three hundred. Certain firms refuse to make even the simplest frock for less than one hundred and fifty dollars, and turn out few costing less than five hundred. Small wonder that in Paris the great dressmaker is a personage, belonging to the swell clubs, in evidence everywhere save in society's exclusive circles, owning a superb country place up the Seine, a seashore home in Normandy, a villa on the Riviera, buying—as did one of the group this year—whole blocks of houses in the most expensive quarter of Paris, spending—as did another of the guild—twenty thousand dollars upon one day's entertainment of a few chosen friends, running handsome automobiles, driving and racing fine horses, and, from his vantage point, watching the flood of fashions which he has set flowing.

Yet the expenses of a big dressmaking firm are large, as well as the profits. Few of the autocrats are themselves practical dressmakers. They must hire work-folk capable of carrying out, in perfection, the ideas they wish to exploit, and expert cutters, fitters, sleeve hands, skirt hands, etc., command high wages. Exclusive material and trimmings are required in such an establishment; nothing is skimped, nothing is omitted that would add to the beauty of the frock and so sustain the reputation of the house. Success, not economy, is the watchword. A small army of employees is required in one of the great houses, and the place is a veritable beehive of systematized industry; but the patrons see only the "front," and of the wheels within wheels even of that smooth-running front, they have small idea.

Each dressmaker has his loyal and devoted clientèle, and it is upon this faithful band that he counts for his greatest profits, although the large floating trade, too, brings in immense returns. Some women famed for their taste and extravagance in dress refuse to confine themselves to any one artist, claiming that each dressmaker has his specialty and that it is wise to go for each frock to the maker most successful in the creation of frocks of exactly the type desired. The idea seems reasonable, but there is much to be said against it. For the woman with whom Parisian frocks are an incidental and fluctuating supply, the system may work well enough, but the woman who season after season buys lavish outfits from French dressmakers will do well to put herself in the hands of some one of the great men, establish a thorough understanding with him, allow him to study her personality, her needs, her possibilities. It is in such study that the artist dressmaker proves his title clear to the name "artist," and to achieve artistic triumphs in dress it is not enough that one wears a beautiful gown, one must wear a beautiful gown perfectly adapted to one's individuality, a gown in which one is at one's best. There are some women who know instinctively their own requirements, but these women are few, and even they can carry out their ideas only through the sympathetic understanding of a dressmaker who is master of his art. The average woman must trust to the dressmaker for the desired results, and to do this confidently and with a surety of obtaining his best efforts, his most serious consideration, his most masterly comprehension, she must be among his tried and valued customers, must have given him opportunity to know her well, to understand perfectly her needs.

[Pg 43]

All are fish who come to the dressmaker's net, and the woman who will pay the price may have the clothes; but the woman who can pay the price and display the clothes to the best advantage is the beloved of the Parisian artist in dress. "One does one's best, of course, even with the woman of no figure and of homely face," says Monsieur, with a shrug of resignation, "but when a customer is slender, graceful, beautiful, and knows the art of wearing a frock—then it is a joy to clothe her, then one puts one's heart into the work, then one is inspired to flights. Ah, mon Dieu, yes, there are women for whom one would make clothes without pay, were it not necessary to divorce sentiment and business."

[Pg 44]

Many American women are upon this list of ideal customers. In fact les Americaines divide the honours with the famous demi-mondaines of Paris. Do not shudder, Madame of the impeccable reputation. The comparison extends only to the province of clothes, and as we have said before, the great demi-mondaine of Paris is the best dressed woman in the world. One of the tyrants of the Place Vendôme put the matter clearly in a recent interview:

"Our best customers—best because they spend most freely and because they show our creations to the best advantage, are the famous demi-mondaines of Paris. You must not confuse the demi-mondaine with the grande cocotte. La grande cocotte is another thing. She dresses gorgeously, she spends money like water, when she has it, but she is seldom well dressed. She is merely spectacular. The perfection of extravagant simplicity, the apotheosis of artistic taste,—that is for the great demi-mondaine. She makes no mistake. Her costumes do not jump at the eyes. They are perfection. C'est tout. There are French society leaders who dress as well, but they are few, and for that matter, the demi-mondaines belonging to the class of which I have been speaking are also few. One can count them on the fingers of the hands, those demi-mondaines who really influence the fashions."

[Pg 45]

"And the Americans?" queried the interviewer.

"Oh, they are charming, les Americaines. We depend upon them. They cut more figure with us than any other dames et demoiselles convenables—respectable matrons and maids—on our books. Some are bizarre. Yes, of course. There are parvenues in America as elsewhere, more there, perhaps, because there are more quickly made fortunes in America. But many of the Americans have a genius for dress, and the money to indulge their tastes. They appreciate good clothes and wear them well. Me, I adore les Americaines."

His ardour was heartfelt, as it might well be, for millions of dollars had been poured into his coffers by American customers. One of these women, whose fortune is American, though its possessor elects to live in Europe, orders, on an average, from one hundred to one hundred and fifty gowns a year, the prices running from one hundred and twenty-five dollars to two thousand dollars. Even the great man lowered his voice when he mentioned these figures. "Voilà une cliente précieuse. Voilà, certes, une cliente précieuse," he murmured reverently.

From all over Europe, and from farther afield, women flock to the dressmakers of Paris. The Hungarian and Polish and Viennese women of fashion have a reputation for dress, and some of the Russians spend fabulous sums upon the Rue de la Paix. Many English women of fashion buy almost all of their frocks in Paris, and within the last few years the German trade has assumed unprecedented importance in the dressmaking establishments of Paris, but neither the English nor the Germans as a class have a talent for dress, and the English or German woman who attains the effect to which the French apply the comprehensive term "chic" is the exception rather than the rule.

[Pg 46]

CHAPTER III

THE FAMOUS ATELIERS

The dressmaker of Paris is an artist. Granted that, it is quite natural that his workroom should be an atelier. Your true artist works in a studio, not in a shop; and when one speaks of the famous ateliers of the Parisian dressmaking world, one but gives the work done in these establishments its due recognition.

But they are "magasins" as well as ateliers, those establishments in which fashions are made, and business plays quite as important a part in them as does art, though even the business in some of its phases approximates the dignity of a fine art.

The saleswoman of the great dressmaking establishment is certainly an artist in her line, and perhaps it would not be speaking extravagantly to call her the shrewdest business woman in the world. She is the chief figure in that department of the establishment which meets the public eye and which is designated as the front. Upon her depends the successful disposal of the creations which are tediously evolved behind the closed doors, and her work calls for no ordinary ability. Her knowledge of things Parisian is equalled only by her knowledge of human nature, her suavity is equalled only by her diplomacy. Her siren song would make the mermaid's melodies sound like a hurdy-gurdy. She could sell a ten-thousand-dollar sable coat to the savage owner of a hut on the equator—provided she knew that the savage would be good for the ten thousand dollars. And she *would* know. That's the amazing thing about her. She always does know, or if she doesn't, she finds out by some lightning quick process painless to the customer. She makes no mistakes, this soft-voiced, smiling, carefully groomed, persuasive woman, and yet there is such opportunity for mistake in Paris. It is not only a question of knowing the financial rating of the husband of Madame A, or of the Countess B. The credit system of a Parisian dressmaking house is a more complicated thing than that. When Mademoiselle Blanche of the Scala, at fifty francs a week, drives up in a luxurious carriage, with coachman, footman, maid, and poodle all in attendance, sweeps into the show rooms and begins talking of five-thousand-franc gowns, the saleswoman shows no surprise. She only wonders and then adroitly institutes a search for the explanation. The chances are that she can get the story from Blanche herself, by dint of diplomatic wheedling and flattery. If not—well, there are other ways of finding out before the material is cut.

[Pg 48]

And when everyone knows that the Grand Duke has loved and ridden away from Antoinette of the Folies Bergère, yet Antoinette turns up smiling and places extravagant orders, one must not be too hasty. A grand duke may be succeeded by a rich banker. Even if there is no visible guarantee of the bills, the little woman should not be angered. The future may hold other grand dukes.

[Pg 49]

Not highly moral, these calculations, but supremely Parisian. Business is business, and Parisian business is adapted to Parisian conditions. The dressmaker does not concern himself about the source from which the money floods his tills, so long as the money is forthcoming, and tainted money scruples would sadly demoralize the business prosperity of the Rue de la Paix.

There are black books in the great dressmaking establishments and queer things are entered in them, items of information that would furnish spicy running commentary upon Parisian life. The incomes of Monsieur's customers are so often fluctuating things. Even in the beau monde there may be circumstances not generally understood, and, where no touch of scandal enters into the calculations, still there is room for mistake. Fortunes may rest on tottering foundations, appearances are often misleading. Yes, there is much to confide to the black book, and the dressmakers interchange statistics in right comradelike fashion. There are men employed whose business it is to investigate all matters having a bearing upon the financial condition of the women who make up the clientèle of the famous dressmakers, and it might surprise some of the gay butterflies that flutter into the luxurious salons of the dressmaking establishments to know how thoroughly informed concerning their private affairs are the saleswomen who wait upon them and the "master" who caters to their whims.

The saleswoman is as clever in dealing with Miss Millions from Chicago as with the irrepressible Toinette. She flatters so subtly, influences so insensibly, makes herself so indispensable. Madame must never be made to feel that her own taste is bad, but she must, if possible, be guided to wise selection, persuaded to believe that she herself has decided upon the frock she finally chooses. It is to the interest of the house that every woman who buys her frocks there should look her best. Moreover, the woman whose friends praise her clothes will hold fast to her dressmaker, so the saleswoman does her best, and unless the customer is very obstinate, that best is surprisingly good. If necessary, with an old and valued customer the diplomat can be firm, suavely, politely firm.

[Pg 50]

"Why have I no black gown on the list?" asks Madame, after studying the plan of her season's outfit as made out by Mademoiselle Thérèse.

Mademoiselle smiles, a deprecatory little smile, but her reply is prompt.

"We find that this year Madame is not of an age to wear black," she says simply, sweetly, but with a finality in her tones.

Madame colours, looks resentful, Mademoiselle busies herself with orders to a mannequin. The pause is ended by a sigh of resignation.

"Oui, c'est vrai," admits Madame. "There is an age, and there is again an age, but in between—eh, bien, it is true. We must now be careful, Thérèse."

The successful saleswoman gains the confidence of her customers, holds them, brings millions of francs' worth of business to her employer, and receives a commission on all sales. One saleswoman, among the best in her class, makes as much as fifteen thousand dollars a year out of her commissions, and, though this is exceptional, all earn good incomes.

[Pg 51]

The mannequins or models are the secondary features of the "front"; but they are of little importance compared with the saleswomen; and while it is a difficult thing to replace a good saleswoman, satisfactory mannequins may be had for the asking.

They are usually recruited from the ranks of the errand girls who swarm in all of the large dressmaking establishments, and are a sharp-witted, precocious set of gamins wise in the gossip of the atelier which is the gossip of all Paris. One of these girls grows up into a good-looking young woman with an admirable figure, a forty-four-inch skirt length, a twenty-one-inch waist, and a soaring ambition. She attracts the attention of the powers that be and is transplanted from her inconspicuous place behind the scenes to the full glare of the front. No more trotting about in pursuit of elusive colours and materials, no more delivering messages and frocks at all hours and in all weathers, no more being a shabby little atom of humanity at everyone's beck and call. Henceforward it is her sole duty to be chic, to wear with an air that will lend cachet to the creations any frocks or wraps which the saleswoman wishes to show.

Much of the talk concerning the transcendent charms of the Paris mannequins is great nonsense, and the sensational tales of these humble beauties and their spectacular marriages—or "arrangements," are, as a rule, pure fabrication. There are handsome girls among them, and one and all they have the French talent for wearing smart clothes; but their good looks are largely a matter of make-up and of those same smart clothes. A more ordinary looking group of girls than the mannequins of a house, when they arrive in the morning, it would be hard to find, but a half hour in a toilet room works a transformation, and when Mademoiselle, perfectly corsetted, skilfully made up as to complexion, eyes, and brows, with her hair dressed in the latest fashion, her hands and nails beautifully cared for, her feet clad in dainty high-heeled slippers, sweeps across the show room wearing a frock that is a dream of beauty—then one understands how the traditions concerning her have arisen. She is not beautiful perhaps, but one forgets it, for she is excessively chic, and being that she fulfils the French law and gospel.

[Pg 52]



Beer and his Mannequins

A few mannequins have developed into saleswomen, a few have married well, a few have become notorious cocottes; one became a favourite attendant of Queen Victoria, and finally drifted over to New York to end her days there. A number have found unimportant places upon the French stage, but, in the main, the mannequins are very ordinary young women whose history is but the history of the average Parisian working girl. Perhaps it is demoralizing, this constant masquerading in costly finery meant for others. One cultivates a taste for luxury under such conditions, and when six o'clock comes the rôle of grub must seem hard to the girl who has been the most gorgeous of butterflies all through the day. One works hard and lives shabbily and is virtuous—but among the customers for whom one trails silken draperies up and down, up and down, there are so many who have the fine clothes for their own, who live luxuriously, gaily, and who do not trouble about that tiresome virtue. Bernard Shaw is right. It is ill paid in a worldly sense, the virtue, and if the mannequin has that fact forced upon her by the show that passes before her—well, it is but one of the lessons of Vanity Fair. As we have said before, French frocks will have much to answer for when accounts are summed up.

[Pg 53]

The mannequins' ball gives to the mannequin at least one opportunity during the year for playing her rôle of *élégante* outside the establishment in which she is employed. For the truly great houses there is little object in furnishing costumes for this ball, save only the giving of pleasure to favourite employees, but gorgeous confections are provided for the occasion, and the spirit of rivalry twixt the different ateliers runs high.

Sometimes, too, pretty mannequins are commissioned to wear model frocks at the great racing events or on other occasions when all the fashionable Parisian world turns out to see and be seen; but as a general thing, Mademoiselle's sphere of usefulness is limited to the salons of the firm that employs her. The days are not so dull even there. All sorts and conditions of women, save only the women without money, pass in and out. One sees the famous beauties, the most notorious demi-mondaines, the most celebrated artistes, the princesses and grand duchesses and queens, the wives of the rich bankers and manufacturers, the heroine of the latest scandal, the newest love of a crown prince, the American of fabulous millions,—the mannequin knows them all, so does the saleswoman, so does the page who opens the door, and the procession is an amusing one for onlookers who have the key to its humours. Ah, the very walls are saturated with

[Pg 54]

gossip in the salons where Fashion makes her headquarters, and when an old customer disappears, when a new luminary arises, even the curtains flutter with interest and conjecture.

Stars of a certain type rise and set swiftly in Paris. Of a sudden, there is a new sensation. Some woman by force of beauty, wit, diablerie, sheer audacity, has caught the public eye. All Paris talks of her, men pour fortunes into her grasping little hands. She eats and drinks and is exceedingly merry. Her jewels are a proverb, her costumes beggar description, her sables would do credit to an empress. She has her handsome house, her horses, her carriages, her servants. Wherever she goes she is the cynosure of all eyes, and then—Pouf! she is with the snows of yesteryear. Paris has a new sensation. La belle Margot? Oh, yes; she had *un succès fou*, but that was yesterday.

"Where is Felise?" asked an American who had not been in Paris since the season two years earlier, when Felise was the lionne of the day. The Frenchman to whom he spoke shrugged his shoulders.

"Ah, mon ami, how can one tell?—picking rags for aught I know,—but have you seen Suzanne? Ravissante, mon chère! Paris is at her feet."

[Pg 55]

They are good customers of the dressmaker when they are on the crest of the wave—these creatures of a day, whom the French misname "filles de joie." When their day is over and their credit is gone there is an entry in the black book. The familiar carriage appears no more at the door—but there are other carriages, other customers to take the vacant place. The performance is a continuous one in Vanity Fair.

There are fine distinctions made in regard to the customers who flock to the famous dressmaking establishments. Not for everyone are the choicest models brought to light. These are for the delectation of the elect, for known and cherished customers, for others whose custom is a thing greatly to be desired.

Not until she is sure that the visitor is worthy of the lure does the saleswoman order the mannequin to show these exclusive models. She is eternally vigilant and can recognize a dressmaker in search of ideas rather than of frocks, or a woman moved by curiosity rather than by a desire to buy, as far as she can see her. There are many such visitors and they are treated civilly, but they see little for their pains and they are not encouraged to linger.

Then there is the woman of one frock, the casual tourist who is seeing the sights of Paris and feels that she will not have completed her programme satisfactorily unless she takes at least one French frock home with her. She is not received with effusion, rather with a good-natured tolerance, yet the saleswoman's manner toward her is far warmer than that accorded to the visitor with no intention of buying. In the course of the year, these small orders, a vast majority of which are placed by Americans, foot up to an imposing sum total, and the saleswoman is too shrewd a business woman to underestimate the importance of small things.

[Pg 56]

What does Madame want? An evening gown, a dinner gown, a visiting gown, a street frock? Madame, somewhat embarrassed, thinks she would like a nice all-around dress, something dressy, but not too dressy, a dress to wear to luncheon or afternoon tea or theatre or—

"Parfaitement,—a gown utile. Marie, the grey crêpe; Elise, put on the black and white silk."

"Too youthful? But no, Madame. It is of a sobriety that grey crêpe. Madame is even too young for so serious a costume, but—since she does not wish anything conspicuous—The grey suits Madame's complexion and figure to perfection. It will serve for occasions of all kinds, and it is chic, très chic. The friends of Madame will recognize at once that it is of Paris. The sleeve is all that there is of the latest, and the skirt—Madame will observe how the skirt hangs. It is our newest skirt. Madame will be satisfied—oh, of a surety."

And Madame buys the frock or orders one made like the model. She has been shown little else, but then the saleswoman is clever enough to have brought out at the start something that would actually be suitable and becoming, so, though overawed and robbed of self-assertion, the unimportant customer probably fares better than if she had been shown many models and left to her own devices.

[Pg 57]

Then, of a sudden, there is a stir in the entry, the door opens, a woman elegantly gowned, aristocratic of air, sweeps into the salon. The saleswoman's face is wreathed in smiles of welcome, her air is eager, deferential. Madame la Princesse wishes to see Monsieur? But, certainly. He shall be called. In the meantime, if there is anything one can show?

Mannequins are sent flying for the best models and a long file of the young women promenades through the room wearing frocks in which the illustrious customer may be interested. Monsieur comes out from the inner fastnesses and declares himself enchanted, honoured; materials are brought out and displayed, trimmings are suggested. The interview is a very serious one. No smallest word of the Princess is treated lightly. A beggarly dozen of frocks, all extravagant in price, are planned. A few costly furs are thrown in for good measure. The Princess rises languidly. Monsieur himself accompanies her to the door, and in the hall she passes La Petite Fleurette, who has danced herself into notoriety and into the heart of the Prince whose name and title Madame la Princesse bears. Evidently this is to be an expensive day for his Royal Highness.

Fleurette, too, is received with smiles, with effusive greetings. The credit of his Royal Highness is excellent. Monsieur stops on his way to his private rooms and returns to greet the danseuse. His manner to her is not what it was to the Princess. Quite as cordial, yes; but more familiar. The grave deference has disappeared. The saleswoman, too, is familiar. She calls the customer "ma chère" and "ma petite," flatters her openly, jests with her. The best in the cases is brought out for Fleurette as for the Princess, but it is a best of a more striking type, and the master artist's suggestions are not those he made to the Princess. One is always an artist, but

[Pg 58]

one caters to the individual. Where Madame la Princesse has ordered a dozen gowns, la petite Fleurette orders a score, and when she goes Monsieur accompanies her also to the door, but as he turns he shrugs his shoulders.

"Oh la, la!" says the saleswoman, vulgarly, expressively, as she meets his eyes, and a buzz of conversation sounds from the corner where the mannequins are gathered.

The popular danseuse, chanteuse, diseuse, of the Fleurette type is usually a more profitable customer in her private capacity than is the great actress. She is the fad, the sensation of the moment, and her money comes easily and plentifully. No ambitious productions, no expensive theatrical experiments, eat up her income. Her art is not of the kind that absorbs her thoughts and hopes and dreams. It is a means to an end, and that end is gay and luxurious living. So la petite Fleurette spends her money prodigally in self-indulgence, and much of it goes to swell the profits of those alluring establishments on the Rue de la Paix and the Place Vendôme. Other chanteuses and diseuses there are in Paris who take their art as seriously as Bernhardt takes hers, and who make it, in its own way, as truly an art; but here again one finds women too deeply interested in their work to take an absorbing interest in chiffons. They may dress well, but not extravagantly well; and beside the splendours of Fleurette their mild sartorial radiance will seem dim indeed.

[Pg 59]

Of the actresses who stand at the head of their profession in Paris, Réjane is probably the best dressed, spends the most money for her personal and unofficial adornment. She loves pretty frocks and she wears them well, off the stage as on it; but even she does not rival in her toilettes certain lesser lights of the stage, for whom, in her capacity as artiste, she may well feel a good-natured contempt.

It is when the famous actress appears in a new play that she becomes important in the dressmaking world. Then, if you please, she is extravagant, exacting, full of whims. Then she and her chosen dressmaker have long and strenuous conferences, at which the most able assistants of the master artist are present with suggestion and advice. The play must be gravely, exhaustively considered. If it deals with some historic period, the fashions of that period must be studied down to their merest detail and adapted to present needs. The physical characteristics of the actress must have due attention. She must be made to look her best,—but the psychological subtleties of her rôle must also be taken into account in the planning of her costumes. Oh they are grave, very grave, the preliminary consultations concerning the costumes for a new and important rôle. Day after day, Réjane drives up to the door, behind her white mules, and is closeted with the master and his chosen aids. There are sketches, crinoline models, materials to be viewed and discussed, high converse to be held concerning points upon which artiste and artist are not at one. Then come fittings by the dozen, with Monsieur looking on, and the heads of the departments called in to receive orders or suggest improvements. The skirt drapery does not fall as it should. Madame shakes her head. Monsieur knits his brows.

[Pg 60]

"Ask Renoir to come here." The chief skirt hand appears.

"Tu vois, Renoir, ça ne va pas. It is a horror, that drapery. I have the air of a femme des Halles, n'est-ce pas?"

Renoir goes down upon her knees, rips a stitch here and there, gathers the material up in her quick fingers. A touch, a fold, a lifting here, a dropping there, while everyone watches anxiously.

The skirt takes on new lines, Madame looks over her shoulder at her reflection in the mirror, and her frown melts into a smile.

"Mais oui, c'est ça."

Monsieur smooths his furrowed brow, and the skirtmaker endeavours to look modest as she hurries back to the workroom, but she is proud, extremely proud. It is something to surmount serious difficulties under the eye of the master.

[Pg 61]

There is perhaps a miniature stage in one of the fitting-rooms,—a tiny stage, but large enough for a solitary figure in sweeping draperies, and lighted by footlights as is a real stage. So much depends upon those footlights. They may ruin totally the effect of a frock lovely under ordinary light, just as they will make the most perfect natural complexion look cadaverous, and the stage costume must be planned with reference to this problem of lighting.

Many dressmakers care little for the theatrical custom and seldom make stage costumes save when a modern society play is in question, but other houses cater largely to the stage trade. Doucet makes more of the costumes worn on the Parisian stage than any other one maker, but Redfern has had great success in that line, and Drecoll, too, has costumed some famous rôles, while, when it comes to the modern society play, actresses turn to any one of the autocrats who finds most favour with them.

The première of an important production always brings out, if not the great dressmakers themselves, at least their official representatives, whose task it is to garner fashion ideas wherever they are to be found. Even a period play may furnish some idea in colour, line, or detail that may be adapted to modern dress and inspire a new mode, and the elaborately costumed modern play is always interesting to students of the modes. Sometimes an actress wears a new and original frock that catches the fancy of Parisiennes and launches a mode, but, in general, the stage frock's influence is limited to the inspiring of ideas for modes rather than to the setting of fashions, and the stage trade is not of great importance in the great game of fashion-making.

[Pg 62]

Professional buyers fill the salons at certain seasons of the year, and are to be reckoned with seriously in the business calculations of Monsieur.

In early spring and late summer dressmakers and buyers from all parts of the world set their faces toward Paris, but by far the largest element of the pilgrimage is American. Every dressmaker of pretensions to-day makes her trips to Paris at least twice a year, views the

advance season models, buys as many of them as she can, lays in a supply of exclusive materials and trimmings, and fills her note-book with ideas to be used for the benefit of her home customers. Often during her summer trip she takes a run to Trouville and to other Normandy resorts where the tide of fashion is at its highest as the summer draws to a close; and, in the late winter or early spring, the Riviera is a famous hunting-ground for fashions.

Before March brings the Auteuil races, Paris is, in the eyes of the ultra-chic, a wilderness. Women charmingly gowned may be there. The uninitiated may believe that the latest creations of the French dressmakers' art are on view. The elect know better. They understand that the gowns being worn in Paris before March are the gowns of yesteryear. They understand, too, that, all through the Paris winter, spring modes are having their trial, but that this trial is going on in far-away summer lands. The women who launch the modes, the exclusive few who set the fashion, are already wearing toilettes that will serve as models to the general public when spring comes, but they are wearing them at the winter resorts, each of which has its distinct season for the European smart set, and it is not until Auteuil calls fashionable folk back to Paris that the stay-at-homes know what is upon Fashion's spring programme.

[Pg 63]

[Pg 64]

CHAPTER IV

FIFI AND THE DUCHESS ON THE TURF

For fashionable Paris, the season begins with Auteuil. The first of the races calls all of the wanderers back to the heart of Vanity Fair. It is the famous rally, the great spring opening, the first important toilette display of the season. The meeting is held as soon as winter shows the smallest sign of relenting, and is never later than March, sometimes as early as February; but whenever it comes it marks the *début* of spring upon the Parisian calendar.

The weather may be bitterly cold, but that makes no difference to the Parisienne. She has prepared a costume for Auteuil and she wears it.

"Elise, what is the weather?"

"But of a coldness, Madame. It is to freeze!"

"Eh bien, bring me my fur coat."

Change the frock? The idea doesn't even occur to her. That is her Auteuil frock.

And so Auteuil usually offers a spectacle as picturesque as it is incongruous. The day is bright and cold, or—more probable supposition—the sky is lowering, and there is a flurry of snow in the air. The grand stand and pesage are not yet gay with blossoming plants. Tall braziers are set at intervals along the front of the stand, and near them hover swarms of women drawing sable coats together over frocks of chiffon and lace, showing faces a trifle blue with cold beneath flower-laden hats. They hold their chilled hands out to the flames, these forced blossoms of spring, and they shiver daintily and jest at their own discomfort and are altogether gay and inconsequent and absurd. Here and there the furs are thrown back to afford a deserving public glimpses of a toilette well worth seeing; and it is around the braziers that all Paris first gains an idea of the fashions that are to dominate spring and summer.

[Pg 65]

Feminine Paris appreciates and improves the opportunity. Nowhere in the world do races draw so large, so mixed, and so enthusiastic a crowd of women as do the races in "Parisi"—which, slangily speaking, implies the district round about Paris, and takes in all of the famous courses upon which the spring races are run,—Auteuil, Longchamps, St. Cloud, St. Ouen, Massons, Lafitte, and Chantilly.

It is a queer mixture, that feminine crowd. The Royalist Duchess, Fifi of the Variétés, the rich banker's wife, the stable boy's sweetheart, the famous actress, the little milliner, the tourist, the great manufacturers' women folk,—all are there, dressed in their best, gay, excited, conferring with jockeys and touts and illustrious members of the Jockey Club, quite impartially, in their quest for tips, betting eagerly, coquetting still more eagerly, showing their own frocks and studying those of their neighbours.

Verily, on the turf and under the turf all women as well as all men are equal, but nowhere is the *mélange* more amazing than at the Paris race courses. "A feminine *pousse café* melting into a cocktail," commented one irreverent and thirsty American as he watched the throng at the Grand Prix last year, and the description was apt if inelegant. Fifi and the Duchess come nearer meeting on equal terms in the pesage than they do in any other one place. They are beautiful women in beautiful gowns, vying with each other for the approbation of the crowd. The Duchess would not admit that, but the fact remains, and it is a fact, too, that the honours frequently rest with Fifi.

[Pg 66]

During the last few years there has been a tentative effort in the smart Parisian set toward simplicity of dress for the races. The *demi-mondaines* having chosen these occasions for reckless extravagance in dress, the social elect said, "Let us mark a distinction by disdaining rivalry in chiffons. Let us be chic, but with a difference, with a severity."

The movement has perhaps had some slight effect; but, on the whole, the cause is a lost one. It demands abnegation of too strenuous a type. Madame may sacrifice much to a principle, but not an opportunity of displaying her most charming costumes where their merits will find wide and enthusiastic recognition; and the racing events are the ideal opportunities for such display.



The Day of the Drags

The setting is in itself a delectable one, for all of the courses near Paris are attractive. The grand-stands are all ablaze with flowers. Women trail their gowns over velvety turf and under

[Pg 67]

shadowing boughs, or stroll along wide promenades between high banks of blossoming shrubs. Given sunshine and warm weather, a great day at any one of the courses is a surpassingly gay sight, all colour and motion and sparkle.

The grande Militaire, a steeplechase with gentlemen riders up, is one of the most popular of the Auteuil events, for the horses are ridden by officers from the neighbouring garrisons, and both Fifi and the Duchess "aiment le Militaire." The Day of the Drags, or coaching parade, is another chic event, and the occasion for a phenomenal toilette exhibit. One is so delightfully in evidence upon the box seat of a coach that one's most charming frock and hat will not be wasted there. Moreover, the competition in dress is more limited than it is in the pesage or the Tribune, and, naturally, is all the keener for the concentration. Seats upon the coaches, which are tooled out to the race track by their famous owners and greeted with traditional and impressive ceremony, are eagerly coveted, and many a mode has been launched from the top of a coach, many a new belle has entered into her kingdom behind four curvetting horses on the Day of the Drags.

But the day of days for the Parisienne who follows the races—and what true Parisienne does not?—is the day of the Grand Prix. The Grand Prix is the dramatic conclusion of the season to which Auteuil was the triumphal introduction. It is the climax to which St. Cloud and St. Ouen and Chantilly and the rest have led.

Auteuil is likely to be stormy. One expects that, but bad weather for the Grand Prix is a tragedy. For weeks, dressmakers and milliners have been at work upon Grand Prix toilettes, and certain women, famed for their beauty and the inimitable grace with which they wear their clothes, might have the choicest products of the ultra-swell ateliers merely for the wearing at the Grand Prix, did they but choose to accept the favours and organize themselves into advertising agencies. Every woman with money to spend, spends as much of it as she can spare upon her toilette for this one occasion. She will blossom out gorgeously for Grand Prix, if she goes shabby during the rest of the year.

[Pg 68]

Oh the heartburnings, the jealousies, the opera bouffe dramas that are woven round those Grand Prix gowns,—the solemn conferences with the great dressmakers, the whispers and rumours about the frocks of rival beauties, the eager interest of all the Parisian world! In the ateliers nothing is talked of save the coming event. From the smallest errand girl to the master artist, all have the interests of the establishment at heart and are curious regarding the achievements in other workrooms. To have turned out a majority of the frocks which create a sensation at the Grand Prix,—that is a triumph surpassed only by the winning of the Grand Prix itself.

So the dressmakers outdo themselves in aspiration and effort, and when the great day comes they go to Longchamps to sit in judgment upon their own creations and those of their rivals. They bet upon the horses, yes; but they realize that the race is run in the Tribune and the pesage, not upon the track, and as for the two-hundred-thousand-franc purse that goes to the owner of the winning horse—two hundred thousand francs would carry Madame but a little way on her race for fashionable prominence. Ten thousand dollars' worth of lace went into one frock worn at the Grand Prix last June and the ropes of pearls worn over the lace were worth a prince's ransom, yet the toilette was a quiet one. Only the initiated could appraise its value—but, fortunately for the wearer, in the matter of clothes, Paris is a city of initiates.

[Pg 69]

There are strenuous times in the boudoirs of Paris on the morning of the Grand Prix. Both Fifi and the Duchess are hard to satisfy, and their maids walk on tiptoe and breathe but lightly until the last rebellious lock is brought into subjection, the last sustaining pin is thrust through the tip-tilted hat, the last touch of powder is applied to the pretty nose, the last fold of the veil is coquettishly adjusted.

Madame surveys herself conscientiously, exhaustively. Not a detail escapes her, and, if all is well, she sighs,—a sigh of supreme content. She has done what she could. Dressmaker, milliner, and maid have done what they could. Le bon Dieu also has had a share in the satisfactory tout ensemble. Mentally, Madame includes all in a sweeping vote of thanks, but the maid is nearest at hand.

"Celeste, you may have the blue silk frock you like—the one with the embroidery. Yes; and the blue parasol also."

[Pg 70]

She is gone, in a flutter of laces and chiffon and plumes, and the exhausted maid stops only long enough to appropriate the blue silk, before hurrying out to the Bois where she may see the passing show, or joining Jacques and setting forth—she also—for Longchamps.

The parade to the Grand Prix is well worth seeing, even if one cannot see the race itself. Out the broad avenue of the Champs Elysées streams the procession, coaches, automobiles, smart traps of all kinds, hired fiacres, high-stepping horses, dapper drivers, exquisitely gowned women, merry-makers of all types.

Past the Place de l'Etoile they go, where the avenues, radiating in all directions, pour tributary streams of humanity into the already swollen tide. Out along the Avenue du Bois and through the gates, past Armenonville, past the cascades, on to Longchamps!

There is the smooth green stretch, there is the pesage already crowded with fashionable men and women, jockeys, sports, gee-gees (as the French bookies are called). There is the Tribune, closely packed and glowing like a Dutch tulip-garden with colour. Groups of women, arrayed with a subtlety of elegance of which Sheba's queen never dreamed, are clustered under the lindens, everywhere flutter the colours of the various starters,—which are the colours of the great families of France; for the Grand Prix is run under the auspices of the Jockey Club of France, and the Jockey Club, as has been said before, is the gentlemen's racing club par excellence.

[Pg 71]

Perhaps it is because the horses belong, as it were, in her own set, perhaps because she and her world follow the racing season so closely, that the average Frenchwoman of society knows more about the horses than her American or English sister, and places her bets right cannily; but the Parisienne at large is quite as eager over racing, and puts up her money with quite as much zest as does my lady of legitimate Jockey Club connections. She is a born gambler, the little Parisienne, born to gambling as to all forms of excitement, to all that is recklessly, feverishly, uncalculatingly gay; and she bets upon the Grand Prix, if not again through the year. She may wager louis or francs, but she places her stake with smiling audacity, and takes her losses or gains sportily.

Each year, after Grand Prix, the air of Paris is full of stories of feminine plunging, and many of the stories would make spicy reading could they be told with the names attached.

There, for instance, was the American actress who lost the ten thousand dollars borrowed for her new production, and could not get her ordered gowns out of the hands of her dressmaker until she had made a flying trip to New York and succeeded in raising money enough to pay for them.

There was the French danseuse who, through a jealous rival, obtained a tip that was pure fabrication, but purported to be a sure thing emanating from a distinguished source. She did what she was expected to do, staked every franc she could get together upon a horse quite out of the running, and was the only one not surprised when she found herself one of the handful who had backed a winner, and provided with money to throw to the birds. And there was the story of the little Countess of high degree who pawned the family diamonds for money to risk on a sure tip from a famous jockey, and who came a cropper that was offset only by the spectacular winnings of her husband's bonne amie on the same race.

Yes, the air is full of such stories and the scandal-mongers whisper them, chuckling; but they are hardly pleasant stories, and sometimes tragedy looms grim in the aftermath of the Grand Prix. For that matter, tragedy lurks always just beneath the surface of Parisian life, but on the surface there is such gaiety, such insouciance, such a glitter and a fanfare, that one forgets. It is absurd to be haunted in Paris. The ghosts are themselves Parisian; and, recognizing the absurdity of their metier, allow themselves to be decently laid while the tide of life swirls over them and around them. Or, if they do walk between the hydrangea clumps of Auteuil, or under the lindens of Longchamps, or steal through the corridors of the Grand Condé at Chantilly, they are well-behaved, unobtrusive ghosts, unnoticed in the whirl of brilliant colourful life.

[Pg 72]



At Longchamps

Down in the pesage at Longchamps there is no question of ghosts on Grand Prix day. Sunshine, laughter, life at its merriest, rule the day. The Parisienne's grand passion is for diverting herself and others. She is the queen of luxury and of gaiety, and she plays her rôle royally at the Grand Prix. "Parisienne," one says, but one means the woman of Paris, not the woman born in Paris; for Paris is cosmopolis. The over-elaboration of all civilization centres there. Her women are the women from all lands, women of all types, resembling each other only in sex and in their ready assimilation of the best that civilization has to offer to the senses. The spell of Paris, the witch city, is over them all.

In the paddock at Longchamps, one will see all the well-known women of Paris, and not only of Paris but of Europe. Homburg empties its cosmopolitan smart set into Paris for the Grand Prix, St. Petersburg always sends a large contingent, the racing folk of England are out in full force, Americans are numerous; but perhaps most notable of all are the Viennese. The Viennese women are marvels. They can meet Parisiennes on their own ground and at least share the honours. They have superb figures, attractive faces, a talent for dress, and, with all that, a certain vivacity, dash, vivid charm, that makes them, in the estimation of many critics, the most fascinating women of Europe, though they lack the subtle tact and finesse, the swift wit and ready adaptability, of the Frenchwoman.

There are grave faces in the crowd that waits for its carriages and motors outside the pelouse after the race is over, but they are the exception. If one has lost—well, one must pay or must make someone else pay, and meanwhile the great day is not over. The horse has played his part, one has lost or won, the sun is dropping low in the west; but if one has lost, one can drown regret; if one has gained, one must celebrate the victory. The long night lies beyond the sunset, and Paris is at its best under artificial light.

So the tide sets back toward Paris, along the channels by which it came, and once more the green silence of the Bois is shattered by the beat of hoofs, the roll of wheels, the "teuf-teuf" of

[Pg 73]

[Pg 74]

automobiles, the laughter and chatter of a multitude. It has seen many sights, this famous Bois, since the days when it was the quiet old forêt de Rouvray, and, if the little green leaves could but speak—but the budget of gossip is large enough in Paris without such an avalanche of new items as the leaves could supply.

For weeks beforehand every table in the fashionable restaurants has been reserved for the evening of the Grand Prix. Armenonville is crowded to its limits. The Madrid, not so cosmopolitan but popular with the French, has not a vacant seat. The Pavilion Royal, the Cascade, and the other Bois restaurants are filled with folk whose swellness is in proportion to the standing of the place.

Down in the city, the Café de Paris has the crowd corresponding to that at Armenonville, in the Bois. Durand's, Paillard's, Voisins, the Ritz, the Elysées—all have their quota of the patronage, and a host of restaurants less famed in social annals accommodate the lesser folk of the Grand Prix multitude. Everywhere there is eating, drinking, and making merry, and one gives no thought to dying on the morrow. The hours go lightly to the accompaniment of music and laughter and the clink of coin, and when, after the dinner, the diners move on to the theatres, no serious drama is likely to claim them. Glitter, gaiety, and frivolity are the keynotes of this June day from start to finish, and the staid Comédie Française is left high and dry, while all the "tingle-tangles" are packed to suffocation.

[Pg 75]

Les Variétés, Les Nouveautés, Le Mathurins and the other Boulevard resorts, Les Ambassadeurs, l'Horloge and places of similar type—these are the after-dinner rendezvous for Grand Prix night, and every famous café chantant in the city reaps a harvest. Then, when theatre is over, a large percentage of the celebrating world brings up at Maxim's. Folk who go there at no other time drift in on that one night, and the crowd is a motley one, a conglomeration of types, the concentrated distillation of the variety, the extravagance, the gaiety of Paris—reckless, feverish, pleasure-mad Paris.

So Grand Prix day ends; and, with it, according to tradition, ends the Paris season. In the old days this was true. The morrow of the Grand Prix saw the fashionables packing trunks for the country, Brittany, Normandy,—anywhere, everywhere, away from Paris; but the flight was one of convention. Paris is at its best in June, and the enjoyable weather is likely to last on into July. The mad rush of social engagements is over, so that one may relax and enjoy one's self in leisurely fashion, may assume a social déshabille, go where one will, do what one will. And Parisiennes have gradually taken to lingering after Grand Prix. Until the second or third week in July one may see famous mondaines at the restaurants, the theatres, and the open-air clubs, which are a recent Parisian fad, may pass them driving in the Bois, or notice their equipages drawn up before the shops of the Rue de la Paix or the dressmaking palaces of the Place Vendôme. After that time, however, though to the casual visitor Paris may seem as animated and as crowded as ever, he who knows la Ville Lumière realizes that for the moment it is a social desert. The smart world is out round the Normandy circuit in the wake of the horses, is flirting and lounging and frivolling in seashore villas and casinos, is taking the baths and playing high at popular spas, or is motoring frantically over the face of Europe, with intervals for all of these occupations. It is the most restless class in the world, this Parisian smart set,—a class curiously compact of nerves and intellect, though the intellect is perhaps oddly applied to the purposes of life; and though a wealth of poetical similes has first and last been applied to la belle Parisienne, the one truthful if not poetic which would suit her best is the human peg-top. It spins to brave music, this peg-top, but its metier is to spin.

[Pg 76]

Fifi and the Duchess take leave of the horses on the day of the Grand Prix, but they are on hand to cheer them at Caen, and the Normandy racing circuit is, in its way, quite as gay, quite as popular, as the racing season in Paris. The greater part of the fashionable Parisian world is in Normandy for the summer season and within easy motoring distance of all of the great races. Those who are not so located come from wherever they may be summering to attend the opening of the circuit at Caen or the "grande semaine" at Deauville, Trouville. A multitude of humbler Parisians is also having its summer outing on the Normandy coast, and is quite as much devoted to racing as its social betters. And then Paris itself is but a few hours away, a short journey whether by train or motor, and folk city-bound may run up to the coast for the great racing days.

[Pg 77]

So history repeats itself at Caen, at Houlgate, at Deauville, at Dieppe, at Ostend. It is the old story of Auteuil and Longchamps over again, with a different setting;—the same horses, the same owners, the same jockeys, the same onlookers. Only the women's frocks are new and Paris is hours away, while white sands and blue sea are close at hand. There is a short fall racing season round about Paris, crowded in twixt summer outings and the time of dog and gun. Then Fifi and the Duchess tuck their betting books away until after the Riviera season. Perhaps they foot up their gains and losses. Much more probably they do nothing of the kind. Why bother with what Mr. Mantalini would call "the demn'd total." The races have served their purpose. They have furnished amusement and excitement, have fed the avid nerves. One has danced and has paid the piper—or has persuaded someone else to pay him. Now one must give one's mind to toilettes for the Riviera. The racing season is past, and with the Parisienne the past—be it but the yesterday—is buried deep.

[Pg 78]

CHAPTER V

LE SPORT IN PARIS

Parisian society is not given over wholly to racing during those weeks that lie between the March winds and braziers of Auteuil and the sunshine and flowers of Grand Prix. Smart social functions of all kinds are packed closely into the sunshiny days and the balmy nights, and the daytime reunions have increased and multiplied during recent years; for the Parisienne has taken up "le sport."

It is a tyrant, le sport. It exacts the surrender of many of the self-indulgent habits of Madame. It demands of her more violent exercise than is agreeable to the true Frenchwoman; it forces her into short frocks for which she has no love; it endangers her carefully protected complexion; it interferes with her siesta; it even gets her up early in the morning after a night of dancing and merry-making—but it is chic, *tr-r-r-ès* chic, le sport, and so the Parisienne accepts it with the verve which characterizes all she does.

The English and Americans are responsible for the rise of sports in Paris, and neither Frenchmen nor Frenchwomen will ever, as a class, go in for tennis, golf, hockey, polo, etc., with the genuine energy and enjoyment displayed by their transatlantic and trans-channel cousins; but they go through the motions and they have the most ornate and attractive of installations for each separate sport, and there is a small French element which actually distinguishes itself in outdoor athletics. The English and American residents in Paris do the rest, and so le sport flourishes mightily round about the city on the Seine.

[Pg 79]

To certain forms of sport, the Parisian takes as naturally as does a duck to water. He loves excitement, danger, swift motion. He will take, with a reckless audacity, sporting risks at which an Englishman or American might hesitate; but ask him to work hard at a game, to lame his muscles and blister his feet and hands, and earn his golf score or tennis score or hockey score by the sweat of his brow, and, as a rule, he will beg to be excused. What is true of the Parisian is true of the Parisienne. Both combine a certain sensuous indolence of body with a wild energy of nerves and brain. They do not like exercise, but they adore excitement; and it is only in the sports that cater to their nervous excitability that they excel.

The automobile whirled its way straight into the hearts of the French. From the first it was extravagantly popular in Paris. Here was a sport that suited perfectly the French temperament. There was danger in it, excitement in it, piquancy in it. It afforded exhilaration. It provided the swift changes and sudden contrasts so dear to the restless and dramatic temperament. With an automobile as slave of the lamp, one could range far afield even in one short day, and the possibilities held in solution within the twenty-four hours were multiplied astonishingly when the motor made its *début* in Parisian society. Small wonder that it was greeted with acclaim.

[Pg 80]

One might fancy that the difficulty of looking well in motor costume would prejudice the Parisienne against the machine, for with her, the most important thing connected with taking up a new sport is the excuse offered for a new and piquant costume. But the difficulties in the way of the motor woman merely added zest to the adoption of the fad.

Madame flew to her dressmaker.

"Tiens, M'sieu. I have bought three automobiles. What shall I wear?"

And Monsieur brought his brows together in his most effective and judicial fashion, led the fair motor woman to an inner room where the conference might have the quiet demanded by such weighty consultations, and set himself to planning methods of leaping this sartorial hurdle.

Some of the experimental stages of the Parisian motor costume were fearful and wonderful, and even now our importers bring over spectacular motor outfits to which are attached the names of famous makers; but, on the whole, the Parisienne has mastered the problem of motor dress.

For her electric brougham and victoria and the other luxurious, smooth-running electric vehicles in which she speeds over the asphalt and takes her afternoon outing in the Bois, no special costume is required. Perhaps, if she is her own chauffeuse, she wears a trim tailor frock and hat, but no eccentricity enters into her attire even then, and, as a rule, she wears what she might wear were the carriage drawn by horses instead of being propelled by electricity.

[Pg 81]

If she is going farther afield—out to the Henri Quatre for luncheon, to the Reservoir for dinner—she wears an all-enveloping dust cloak to protect her delicate frock, a veil or perhaps a hood to cover her fragile hat and shield her face and hair from dust, but beneath this outer wrapping she is as exquisite, as elaborate as ever. When it comes to longer runs, or to genuine touring, the Parisienne promptly abandons all effort to look well on the road. To be comfortable, to be suitably dressed, to be immaculate at the journey's end,—all these aims demand the setting aside of a desire to be beautiful; and, since she may not be beautiful, the quick-witted Madame seizes upon the possibility of being piquant and goes to the extreme of attaining the hideous in pursuit of the practical. She hides figure, hair, face. Even her sparkling eyes are eclipsed behind goggles or dimmed by masks, and she consoles herself for the ugliness by thought of the dramatic effect with which she may flutter from the cocoon when her butterfly moment arrives.

One sees these transformations by the score at such a rendezvous as Chantilly at the time of the "Derby," for it is the mode to motor to Chantilly on the eve of the important day and put up over night at the Grand Condé, or to arrive in time for luncheon before the races. Machine after machine dashes up to the hotel, discharges its freight of grotesque figures and wheezes away to the garage. Madame, carrying a hat box, and cloaked, hooded, masked, powdered with dust,

[Pg 82]

hurries to the chamber reserved for her. In a twinkling there trips from the room which swallowed the awesome enigma a charming woman, fresh, dainty, smiling, gowned in the airiest and most delicate of confections. Or perhaps there is not even the moment of seclusion. A toot, a whir, a quick reversing of levers! The automobile has stopped. A dusty, shrouded, shapeless figure springs lightly to the step, while the idlers look on curiously. A swift movement of the hands and the hood falls back; another, and the cloak slips from the shoulders. There is Fifi, a Dresden china figure all fluttering frills and laces and ribbon and flowers, a smile on her lips, a challenge in her eyes.

"C'est chic, ça," comments the old Marquis over his Burgundy. "All that there is of the most modern, mon garçon!"

Paris is the city of automobiles, and France is the motor tourist's paradise. The roads are good, the inns are excellent and are rapidly improving under the influence of the motor touring, and on every hand are picturesque towns and picturesque scenery, not too rugged for the peace of mind of the average chauffeur.

Many inns known to history, but fallen from their high estate in later years, are looking up again since the motor took the road. At any hour, a gay crowd of folk, masquerading in dust coats and goggles and hoods, may appear at the door demanding luncheon or dinner. They know a good wine and a good sauce, these travellers, and they scatter gold in a fashion that recalls stories of the days when the great men of old France and their retinues took their ease in this same inn. Mine host's heart warms to the devil wagon and its Parisian freight. He brings long hoarded bottles covered with cobwebs up from the cellars, he sacrifices his choicest chickens, he goes into the kitchen himself to prepare the fish and the sauces, he scolds his wife and bullies the cook and embraces the maid, all from pure excitement, and beams upon the world in general and the motorists in particular; for he sees the dawn of a new day and hears the clink of coin in his long empty tills.

[Pg 83]

He gives to the party of his best; and, when they whirl away, he stands at his door watching the cloud of dust that envelopes them. Then he draws a long breath, sniffs ecstatically at the gasoline-laden air.

"Que j'aime cette odeur là!" he says with fervour. The automobile has an ardent friend in mine host of the country inn.

With the restaurant keeper at Paris, the story is a different one. It is so easy to run away from the city for luncheon or dinner since the motor car is at one's service, and the wandering has an effect upon the receipts in the town restaurant. Moreover,—one smiles at this, but it is told in all seriousness and with lively grief by the proprietors of certain cafés, and echoed dolefully by women accustomed to late suppers and carousals in those rendezvous,—the automobile has been a reforming agent. It has interfered with the long established habits of the gilded youth and more heavily gilded age, wont to furnish the late suppers and the wherewithal for carousal.

[Pg 84]

"It makes a difference, the automobile, a great difference," confides the discreet waiter. "Monsieur now rises early. Before, he was up early, also, but with a difference. Now he is to make a day's run in his car. The programme requires that he shall start with the sunrise. It demands steady nerves, the automobiling. One needs sleep,—and Monsieur goes to bed early. *Oui, c'est dommage. Ça dérange les choses*, but he will not stay. No; he is devoted to the automobile. He will even sleep for it. It will pass, perhaps, this mania. They pass always, the manias. Then again we will have the old crowd, and in the meantime there are, fortunately, those who do not own the machines."

Of places furnishing the motive for short automobile trips from Paris there is no end, and the roads running out of the city swarm with cars. There are quiet-loving country folk who protest, futilely, but even the country horse and the excitable barnyard fowl of France have become accustomed to the snort of the motor and the onward rush of the demon, and are, like Pet Marjorie's turkey, "more than usual calm" as the great machine speeds past.



The First Sportswoman of France

One meets them everywhere, these automobiles. Out in the Forest of Fontainebleau the mosses are still green and gold where the sunshine filters to them through the interlacing branches of the great trees. The rocks are still covered with grey and green and faint purple lichens. Little wood creatures rustle among the ferns and heather. Bird-notes sound from the branches overhead and from the thicket depths. The forest is still the grey-green, gold-green, brown and violet forest beloved of French artists, but one cannot walk for ten minutes along the woodland paths without hearing the blast of a Gabriel horn and seeing a huge automobile plunge by, its occupants blind to the light and shadow and colour, deaf to the rustle in the brake and the music from the bough, absorbed simply and solely in the breathless speed of their pace and in the skill with which the chauffeur swings round corners, dodges boulders, and avoids climbing trees, for to the motor maniac, Fontainebleau means the Hôtel d'Angleterre and luncheon. To the impotent rage of the artist clan, the motor has invaded Barbizon as well, and is to be found by the dozen, puffing and panting outside the inn sacred to the Bohemians of the Latin Quarter and Montmartre. "C'est très gentil, Barbizon—très chic," says Madame with an approving nod of her hooded head, as she climbs into the auto, after her luncheon. Shades of Millet and Corot and Rousseau! Barbizon has lived to be called "très chic" by a Parisian Duchess in a blue silk hood.

[Pg 85]

Wherever historic memories and associations cluster most thickly, where ghosts walk in the greatest numbers, there the automobile roars and rattles and toots and puffs its consummately modern way. Many Parisians are for the first time discovering France since motor touring came into vogue. Even Fifi talks French history and folk-lore. She has invoked the sunken city of Y's as she sped through Brittany in her Panhard. She has a speaking acquaintance with all Normandy. She has motored down through old Provence on her gay way to Monte Carlo. If she remembers stopping places rather by what she had to eat there than by historic associations—still she has enlarged her horizon. Even gastronomic voyaging is educational.

[Pg 86]

Close to Paris there are popular restaurants, within driving distance and almost too near at hand to please those who seek luncheon or dinner in motor cars. The Henri Quatre at St. Germain is frequented more than ever by Parisian diners, since motoring eliminated distance. The Reservoir at Versailles, the Bellevue at Meudon, the Cadran Bleu at St. Cloud—all have their motoring contingents, and at luncheon and dinner hours there is a host of machines waiting before these country restaurants, where one may have the luxury of Paris and the beauty and seclusion of nature, provided one has the money to pay for the abnormal combination—which comes high.

One goes to the golf links, too, in one's automobile, unless one prefers driving out—for the motor has not yet entirely undermined the Parisian's love for a smart trap and good pair of horses.

There are various links near Paris, all more or less frequented by devotees of le sport, but the links at La Boulié, near Versailles, are, with the exception of those at Deauville, the finest in France. All the smart set of Paris goes to la Boulié to flirt, to gossip, to drink and smoke and play cards and meet friends. Incidentally golf is played, and real golfers, enjoying the beautiful course and the perfect greens, bless the day when golf became a Parisian fad, and look tolerantly at the

[Pg 87]

goodly collection of dukes and counts and princes and bankers and diplomats who sit in the shade of the big bungalow during the long golden afternoon, drinking Scotch whiskey and soda,—as a concession to the *genius loci*,—and watching with a certain amused wonder the scattered figures toiling around the links in the glare of the sun.

"After all, they stood for the thing," says Willy, as he picks his ball out of the last hole and turns toward the indolent groups around the club-house.

That is just it. They stood for it all; and if a majority of the men do not play—well, tastes differ. It is a charming place to "five-o'clocker," is *la Boulié*.

The Parisienne and her admirers admit that, from one point of view, golf has profound merit. As an excuse for a prolonged promenade à deux it is admirable and "le flirt" thrives famously on the links. One is willing to make sacrifices in the interests of flirtation; but that one should golf for the love of golfing, should play from sun up to sun down alone or with another man,—"*Ça, c'est trop*," says Monsieur with a shrug of his shapely shoulders, and, having imbibed whiskey and soda for the sake of the golfing unities, he orders a vermouth by way of relaxation. Even assisting at le sport is exacting, very exacting. One becomes fatigued.

And yet there are Frenchmen who love the game and play it well, and if one covets the privilege of familiarly shouting "fore" at a Russian Grand Duke, or an Italian Prince, or an Austrian Baron, *la Boulié* is the place in which to gratify that heart's desire. The visitor to Paris may have the entrée to the club by virtue of one dollar a day and introductions from two of the club members; but though the dollar may be procurable, the casual tourist is not likely to enjoy the acquaintance of two members of the *la Boulié* set, and the chances are that he does his Parisian golfing at *l'Hermitage*, where any respectable introduction is an open sesame.

Some of the smartest of Parisiennes have gone in for golf and play fairly well, but they golf in costumes that would fill the Scotch and English lassies of the famous scores with frank amazement.

"You have seen Lady L—," whispers Madame of the Rue de la Paix golfing costume. "She is English, yes. It is wonderful how she plays golf—and without a corset! But yes, vraiment, quite without a corset. *C'est incroyable ça*. One has the lines of a poplar."

It all depends upon the point of view. One sacrifices one's game or one's curves. Either way, the choice has its compensations.

L'Hermitage is not so chic as *la Boulié*, but there are true golfers, even among the social elect, who enjoy playing on the *Hermitage* links and like the democratic geniality of the less exclusive club; so the membership list has its sprinkling of notable names.

The course lies out near St. Germain, on the old farm of M. Jean Bousod, and neither the links nor the house will compare with *la Boulié* in point of art and costliness; but there is a charm in the cluster of old-fashioned cottages over which the vines and roses clamber, in the raftered dining-room, in the old fruit trees under which tea is served, in the stately poplars which stand sentinel over the place, and in the informality which makes even the tourist stranger feel less far from Ardsley and Baltusrol.

There are good links at Compiègne, too, but Compiègne is too far from Paris for the ordinary golfer, unless he is going away for a week-end of the sport, and only in hot weather do the Parisians stray so far from the boulevards in pursuit of the royal game.

For tennis, the Parisienne has more love than for golf. The game is an older friend, and then, though it does not furnish, as does golf, ample pretext for prolonged solitude à deux, it does have a dramatic quality, a certain swift dash and spirit which appeal to Madame's temperament and are lacking in the more protracted and leisurely game. There are good tennis courts at the golf clubs and in various parts of the Bois, but it is at the Cercle de l'Île de Puteaux that one finds tennis at its best and most picturesque. It is one of the most fashionable and most exclusive clubs of Paris, this club on the little island of Puteaux, in the Seine. One sees there no one who is not of the elect, and the little ferry that carries the chosen spirits to these Elysian fields is thronged with the beauty and fashion of Paris, day after day, during the season. Such a gay freight the little ferry carries when Puteaux is especially en fête, such charming women, such ravishing gowns, such bewitching hats, such coquettish parasols, such admiring cavaliers! A veritable "embarquement pour Cythère!" The ferry should be guided by flutterings loves, à la Fragonard, instead of by the most prosaic Charon who fills the position and regards, unmoved, the carnival of the vanities.

They play tennis at Puteaux, but they play at the making of love and of epigrams and of fashion more earnestly still. One may see all the fashion leaders of the beau monde drinking tea there on a bright spring afternoon,—the lovable young Duchesse d'Uzes, with her excessive modernity grafted upon her ancient lineage and traditions; the beautiful Madame Letellier, who is one of the best dressed women of Paris; the blonde and chic Vicomtesse Foy, the popular Mrs. Ridgway, the wealthy Baronne Henri de Rothschild, Baronne Seillière. These are some of the women who set the fashions, but the complete list is a long one, and Puteaux brings together all these orchids of Paris.

There have been memorable evening fêtes at Puteaux when the island was converted into a fairyland of gleaming lights and mysterious shadows of flowers and music, and all that modern luxury which is pagan in its prodigality; and cotillions are given there regularly during a part of the season. But the island is at its best when the sun is shining on it and touching to vividness the pretty frocks of the tennis players in the courts, when vivacious women in wonderful gowns and hats are gossiping over their tea in the shade or flirting under their parasols of chiffon and lace. It belongs to the open-air phase of French society, does Puteaux, for, oddly enough, the Parisienne of the scented boudoir and the hot-house associations has a passion for plein air.

[Pg 88]

[Pg 89]

[Pg 90]



Fashion's Ferry

Out in the Bois there are open-air clubs and to spare, the Polo Club and the Tir au Pigeon being those most frequented by the fashionable set during spring and summer, while the club des Patineurs is the smart skating club and one of the most attractive social rendezvous of winter Paris. The Parisienne loves skating. Here is a sport that lends itself amiably to coquetry, a sport for which one may plan the most piquant of costumes. Furs are becoming and extravagant, and looking well at an extravagant cost is the fashionable Parisienne's chief aim in life. So Madame orders her skating costumes of fur and cloth and velvet, buys an assortment of skating boas more ornamental than practical, and plays in her skating as in all her sports a rôle vastly ornamental, impressively dramatic. Yachting, too, is dear to the heart of our Lady of the Chiffons, though her yachting consists chiefly in dressing the part. Scoffers say that the French have a flourishing yacht club but no yachts, and while this statement is more amusing than accurate, the actual facts do suggest some such comic-opera situation, for though there is a yacht club of France, extremely swell and of large membership, and though several wealthy Frenchmen own superb yachts, there is little serious French yachting. Boating of one sort or another is indulged in along the Seine, and a large flotilla of small private launches and yachts lies in the basin of Deauville during the Normandy season, but the yachting races of the Regatta week at Havre are given over almost wholly to foreigners, French entries being extremely rare.

[Pg 91]

[Pg 92]

Not until within the past year did the fashionable folk of Paris take up with ardour any form of water sport. The motor boat has brought about the revolution and has the distinction of being the latest Parisian fad. It is easy to understand why this most modern form of boating has caught the Parisian fancy. Like the automobile, it appeals irresistibly to the French temperament. It demands no active exercise and it offers exhilaration, swift travel, danger, novelty. Last summer there was a race for motor boats from Paris to the sea; and, while the little boats were scudding along the river, the society folk interested in them were spinning along the road from Paris to Trouville in their automobiles, making calls at the châteaux en route, and reaching Trouville-Deauville, in time to see the up-to-date little boats follow up their three days' race to Havre by racing for the Menier cup in Trouville Bay. The motor boat came into its own that day, and next summer it will rival the horse and the automobile in the affections of sporting Paris.

Already a number of Parisiennes have adopted the dangerous playthings. Madame du Gast, upon whom some judges bestow the title of "first sportswoman of France," is an ardent devotee of motor boating as she has been of automobiling. She has all the daring of her race associated with an easy nonchalance and imperturbable self-control which never deserts her even under the most trying circumstances; and no pastime is too dangerous, no risk too hazardous for her, provided only that there is amusement connected with the danger and hazard. She has made a record in automobile races and ballooning, and she hailed the motor boat with joy at its first appearance; but her sporting enthusiasm had of course its Parisian side. There was the costume to be considered—always the costume is the starting-point of a Parisienne's sport. The motor boat is a treacherous plaything. It upsets, blows up, sinks,—and when one starts out in a promenade à bateau, one is likely to swim home, so petticoats and chiffons are not for motor boating. Madame du Gast wears what looks much like swimming tights, save that the one-piece garment is high of neck, long of sleeve, and at the knee tucks into trim high boots that may be kicked off if occasion demands. Over this practical attire goes a loose, handsome coat of sporting allure which quite hides the tights and falls over the tops of the well-fitted boots; a becoming cap warranted to stay on without attention from its wearer—and there you have the owner of the Camille as she looks when she enters a race. When she had the Turquoise built for the Monaco races, Madame du Gast indulged in a bit of drama characteristically French. S. A. R. the Prince of Monaco stood sponsor for the slim little craft. There was a ceremony, with great sheaves of flowers nodding over the bow of the boat and bedewed with the christening champagne, with gaily attired friends looking on, and with the canon from a neighbouring church in gorgeous vestments solemnly bestowing baptism and the blessing of the church upon the nautical infant. Roses and champagne and smart frocks, and the owner of Monte Carlo, and the church—all joining in the launching of the racing boat of a charming sportswoman in swimming tights and top boots! There you have a snapshot of le sport as it is sometimes played in France.

[Pg 93]

[Pg 94]

The Camille, named for Madame du Gast herself, and a motor boat more pretentious than the Turquoise, entered, with owner aboard, the famous and foolhardy high seas race from Tangiers to Toulon, and though strong winds and rough seas played havoc with all of the tiny craft, and the Camille and her owner were rescued at the eleventh hour by her escorting yacht, Madame did

not lose for a moment her sporting nerve. She was obtaining excitement in large blocks and the thrill was well worth the danger.

It goes without saying that the young Duchesse d'Uzes has taken up motor boating.

When has she ever passed by a new sport, a new chance for diversion, this gay little Duchess, who is the typical fine flower of modern French civilization, the most piquant and perhaps the most popular figure in French society to-day.

She was born to social eminence, daughter of the great and ancient family of de Luynes, sister of the ninth Duke of Chaulnes and Pecquinguy, rich in her own name, good to look at, keen of wit, exquisite of taste, and stranger to fear. As if this were not enough, she must needs marry Louis Emmanuel, fourteenth Duke d'Uzes, and add his prestige and wealth to hers.

The dowager Duchesse d'Uzes, she who came so near mounting Boulanger on the back of France, is of the old régime, strong, keen, autocratic still, but surrounding herself with the old customs, the old traditions, refusing to admit that the world has moved and France with it.

[Pg 95]

But the young Duchess—she is all that there is of the most modern, the most representative type of the motoring, racing, golfing, hunting, hockey-playing Parisienne. She is all restlessness, all nerves. There is nothing new that she has not tried, and she is always reaching out for something more novel, more exciting, more audacious. And yet with it all she is grande dame, the little pleasure-seeking Duchess, and she wears her title right royally in spite of her vagaries. She has the traditions of her race, too, behind her modern caprices. She is *devôte*, has her private chaplain, is heart and soul in sympathy with the church party as opposed to state, she loves politics and ranges herself with her class. Not for nothing is one of de Luynes and d'Uzes. She was in the heart of the turmoil on the Place de la Concorde, at the meeting of protest against the state's measures concerning the nuns, and she was taken by the troops, this hot-headed little Duchess, though it was the dowager Duchess who was arrested and fined. She would go to the scaffold humming a tune and wearing her smartest Paquin frock, were she called upon to tread the path many of her ancestors trod, but, since scaffolds are out of date, she runs a motor boat and speeds an automobile, and dances a cake walk, and plays an extraordinary game of billiards, and is one of the best shots in France, and plays tennis and hockey and golf, and rides cross country, and swims like a fish, and has made ballooning the fashion. She is one of the prettiest, the most amusing, the cleverest and the best dressed women of Paris, and she, beyond all of her set, is the champion of le sport.

[Pg 96]

[Pg 97]

CHAPTER VI

THE FINE ART OF DINING

Paris is full of restaurants, but the list of those at which one may enjoy both a supremely chic fashion exhibit and a dinner worthy to be associated with the clothes are comparatively few. Indeed, where the frocks are up to an epicurean standard the food is sometimes far below, and there are cafés in Paris where a gourmet will find possibilities of ecstatic moments, but where no swish of petticoats will break in upon his rapt silences.

Not that the average viveur of Paris objects to association of pâté and petticoat. Far from it. He will follow the petticoat even to the Ritz where the pâté is fairly sure to be poor,—but he will occupy his leisure intervals by enjoying a meal at the Café Voisin, or testing the famous cellars at the Café Anglais.

As for Madame,—she is a bit of a gourmande, of course. One does not live in Paris for years without learning the proper attitude toward a dinner, and the Parisienne thinks more about her food than is consistent with traditions of the fragile and ethereal feminine. When a poetic vision in vaporous mousseline and lace knits her beautiful brows and pouts her curving lips and waxes vastly indignant because an entrée has not the right flavour or because a wine is not of the vintage indicated by the label on the bottle, there is an uneasy stirring in the mental pigeonhole where the observer keeps his illusions; but, after all, the Parisienne, though knowing in matters gastronomic, does not allow that knowledge to destroy her sense of proportion. She may like a good sauce and a good wine, but she insists first of all that a dinner shall be well seasoned with gaiety. She wants to dine where she may wear her smartest frock and see the smartest frock of her dearest foe, where she may see and be seen. She is coquette before she is gourmande, and the restaurants where she can combine both rôles are those to which she accords most enthusiastic favour.

[Pg 98]

Go out to the Bois on a fine night in June, if pâtés and petticoats divide your allegiance, and eat your dinner in the courtyard of the Château de Madrid or on the terrace at Armenonville. If you are a stranger in Paris the latter will probably be your choice. The fame of Armenonville has travelled far, and it stands for all that Paris means to the visitor who has gained his knowledge of the sorceress city from reading and hearsay. It is in the Bois, this famous restaurant where all the mad, merry world of Europe has dined at one time or another, and, though rivals have come and gone, though restaurants more elaborate and cuisines more perfect have wooed the luxury-loving crowd, Armenonville has held its own, has kept its place as the most brilliantly popular café of Paris—and the most cosmopolitan.



The latest Plaything of the Duchesse d'Uzes

Frankly speaking, the café retains its vogue by favour of the demi-mondaine of Paris. Long ago she chose Armenonville for her own, and she has remained loyal to her choice. This is not saying that for the beau-monde the restaurant is taboo. Everybody goes to Armenonville, but there, as to no other café, flock the high-class demi-mondaines with their elaborate toilettes, their superb jewels, their consummately sensuous allure; and, as always, in their wake comes a reckless, prodigal crowd. Terrace, verandahs, and inner rooms are thronged night after night, and the throng is the incarnation of the spirit that has made Paris the hub of the frivolous world, has drawn from all countries folk devoted to the worship of the vanities, has stamped the money-spending set of Paris as the most consistently volatile, the most systematically extravagant class of Vanity Fair.

[Pg 99]

The leisure class of France is unreservedly a leisure class. The Frenchman of wealth, rank, and leisure is likely to give himself up to what someone has called "the science of not making a living." He does not have the vast business interests that usually claim the wealthy American, he does not go in for public life as does the average Englishman of a corresponding class; and, though exceptions to this rule are many, the chances are that he concentrates his energies upon amusing himself and assiduously cultivates every taste that will open an avenue to pleasurable sensation.

He is, for instance, connoisseur of food and wine, but he is epicure not glutton. Your true gourmet has with much effort and at considerable cost trained his palate to an appreciation of

[Pg 100]

subtle distinctions, of vague, elusive flavours. Eating and drinking are serious matters with him. He eats not to kill his appetite but to tickle his senses, and he values his capacity for epicurean joys too highly to endanger it by riotous indulgence. The Parisian *viveur* devotes to his meals an extravagant amount of consideration. They are to him sacred rites, mystic, unfathomable to the uninitiated. The dishes are planned and arranged with reference to their relation to one another, are harmonized, blended, resolved into wonderful, sense-satisfying gastronomic chords. A succession of flavours leads subtly and cumulatively to a gastronomic climax, drinks are not absorbed with blithe impartiality, but run a faultless scale of stimulation and form a fitting accompaniment to the progressive harmony of the food.

It is with other pleasures as with eating and drinking. The Parisian takes his gaiety with profound seriousness, and the foreigner, as well as the Parisian, if he stays long in Paris, adapts himself to the epicurean point of view.

Out at Armenonville, one comes into an understanding of that modern paganism which lies at the heart of Vanity Fair, though the scene does not represent the most subtly æsthetic expression of the cult, for the place is overcrowded, and there is a hurrying and bustling of waiters, the laughter is a trifle too loud, the perfumes are a trifle too heavy, the jewels a trifle too resplendent. There is a burning fever in the pulse of Armenonville, a strain of coarseness in the gaiety. The Vanity worshippers go about their devotions with finer art over among the great trees of the courtyard of Madrid.

[Pg 101]

But Armenonville is—Armenonville. One must take it as one finds it, and one is likely to find it amusing.

The flowers and napery and service of the little tables on the terrace—more popular on a summer night than the tables within doors—glow with a roseate bloom under the shaded lights. Vivid ruby and topaz gleam in the wine-glasses, the air is throbbing with the wild, passionate music of the Tziganes. Men of all types and from all quarters of the globe lean to look into the eyes of women marvellously gowned, magnificently jewelled, flushed under the influence of music and wine and admiration and conscious power. Laughter, wit, the tinkle of glasses, the hum of voices talking gossip in all the languages of Europe, delicately cooked dishes, rare wines, colour, perfume, melody,—everywhere an appeal to the senses, an effort to meet the demands of a class with tastes trained to appreciate the fine flower of all things material, and with money to pay for the gratification of its desires! Nothing in old Rome was in spirit more essentially pagan and prodigal than this, but latter-day civilization has brought its refinements. The Roman orgy has been translated into polite French.

If one sits long enough at one of the terrace tables, familiar faces are likely to float within one's range of vision, for all the world pays tribute to Armenonville, and public characters are many in the crowd. Opera singers, theatrical folk, famous writers and painters, professional beauties, diplomats,—all the celebrities whose pictures are most often in the papers are among the diners. Over there at the end table, Tod Sloan is sitting opposite a radiant being in cerise and silver. At the next table the Prime Minister of England is dining with an American Duchess and her English Duke. Beyond her Grace, little Polaire of "Claudine" fame is keeping a tableful of men in a gale of laughter. An American millionaire is host to a group of theatrical folk of whom Maxine Elliott is bright particular star, and close at hand the Newstraten, who owes her notoriety to the favour of another millionaire, is vis-à-vis to a well-known Russian nobleman. Réjane, the ever-youthful, is exchanging good French for bad with an English theatrical manager. Leopold, King of the Belgians, boulevardier, dear friend of Parisian cocottes, is in evidence. A Turkish pasha with several members of his suite is back to back with the greatest brewer of England. London's latest Maharajah is having a royal occidental time in company with several pretty and titled English women. Mrs. Clarence Mackay and several other members of the New York smart set are among the elaborately gowned diners—but Madame Stanley and Margyl and the beautiful Cavalieri are gowned as well and more bejewelled. The crowd is never the same, yet always the same, and all through the year the show goes on, though cold weather drives the diners from the terrace to over-heated and over-lighted rooms.

[Pg 102]

Over at the Madrid, too, there is picturesque dining—but with a difference. The old château lies on the edge of the Bois, an unimposing building promising little, and, so far as the building itself is concerned, fulfilling its promises. One does not go to the Madrid in winter. The rooms are small and stuffy, and poorly adapted to restaurant purposes, but during the season of *al fresco* dining, the Madrid is all that there is of the most modish, a gathering place for the most exclusive society folk of Paris. One drives boldly up to the château and into an archway that leads through the building and brings one out upon the edge of a big courtyard picturesquely set with fine old forest trees under which men and women are dining at little tables. Beyond the court are the stables and, though a high, thick hedge intervenes, a muffled stamping of hoofs, the jingle of silver chains, sometimes furnishes a subdued accompaniment to the music of the Tziganes, an element hardly discordant and suggesting vaguely ideas of mettled horses, of luxurious carriages, of all that goes to the self-indulgence of such diners as those beneath the trees.

[Pg 103]

Things are more tranquil here than at Armenonville—gay, sense-satisfying, artificial, wordly, but of a finer flavour. Here one finds the most aristocratic of Parisian *mondaines*, the clique of the Polo Club and la Boulié and Puteaux. Many nationalities are represented among the diners, but the French are in the majority and the Parisienne of the best type may be found under the great trees of Madrid. She may be no more perfectly dressed, this *mondaine*, than her demi-*mondaine* sister of Armenonville. Their frocks and hats come from the same makers, their jewels were bought at the same shop on the Rue de la Paix, the grande dame of Madrid has perhaps not so liberal a share of good looks as the lionne of Armenonville, and may be made up quite as conscientiously—for artificiality is beloved of the Parisienne, is a part of her creed—but my lady

[Pg 104]

of Madrid has the something which sets her apart, the impress of race, of blood, of class. Even the veriest stranger within Parisian gates who might wander from one café to the other would realize at first impression that the two were separated by more than the green stretches of the Bois. As to which café he would prefer, that depends upon his tastes—and to some extent upon his mood. One who does not "belong" at Madrid may feel himself a lonely outsider. No one is on the outside at Armenonville save the bankrupt.

There are other cafés in the Bois whose fortunes have risen and fallen, but none rank with Armenonville and Madrid, though quite recently the Café de Lac has taken a fresh lease of life and begun to find favour with the smart Parisian crowd.

Report has it, however, that there is to be a new restaurant in the Bois, one that will totally eclipse the two reigning cafés, and will set a new standard for the world. A syndicate with unlimited capital has the project in hand, and it is said that the new pleasure palace will rise on the site of the old Pre Catalan,—Arcadian little farm where a herd of mild-eyed cows furnishes fresh milk for children, and a little café supplies drinks of less Arcadian simplicity to anyone who asks for them. For years the popular duelling ground of Paris was just behind the buildings of the Pre Catalan. There is a little ruined theatre, too, behind the restaurant, and all the smart world of Paris has upon occasion gone out there to see the actors of the Théâtre Français and the Odeon give classical plays upon the sylvan stage. Such piquant incongruities are dear to the French heart.

[Pg 105]

But it is in the middle of the afternoon that the Pre Catalan is charming. Carriages full of children, with their quaintly costumed bonnes or their fashionably dressed mammas, roll up, one after another, and deposit their loads, until the place is all abloom with babies and musical with pattering feet and babbling tongues. They have come to drink the fresh milk, these pretty, overdressed children. Even the babies lead a life chic, in Paris.

And when the babies are all snugly asleep in their beds, the Pre Catalan often has other visitors. Late diners who have made a night of it in town cafés, and then driven about the Bois singing romantic ballads and growing more maudlin moment by moment, drive up to the Pre Catalan in the grey dawn, and weep upon the shoulder of the waiter who brings them their glasses of fresh milk. It is milk they want. They are in a state of exuberant sentimentality—of dramatic remorse. They have renounced Bacchus and all his crew. They are beginning new lives. The world is a weariness and a delusion, full of headaches and profound melancholy—Fifi goes back to nature at the Pre Catalan in such a mood,—but midnight finds her at the Café de Paris once more.

[Pg 106]

It is in this place of duels and babies and tipsy penitents that the new restaurant is to shine resplendent, if plans do not miscarry. Whether with all its grandeurs it will attract the crowd remains to be seen. A restaurant's success is not always in proportion to the money spent in equipping it. There, for example, was the Café des Fleurs. It was the prettiest café in Paris. The men behind it were so wealthy that they did not care whether the place paid or not. They lavished money upon the decorations, the cuisine, the cellars. They hired the best Tzigane orchestra in Paris—and the fashionable crowd stayed away. Why? No one knows why. "The women would not come," says the promoter, with a shrug. "There is no accounting for the whims of the women. There was everything to attract them and they would not come,—c'était finis."

Cafés by the score have had this same history, or have had a brief brilliant success and a failure sudden and complete. There was Cubats on the Champs Elysées, superbly installed in a house where had lived the mistress of Louis Napoleon. For a little while everyone went to Cubats. The place had enormous success, and then, all of a sudden, the crowd stopped going. Cubats did not exist. Perhaps the diners grew tired of being robbed. Parisians of the high-living class do not object to spending money. It is their metier, but the prices at Cubats were monumental and the proprietor in other and less humdrum times would have been a bold buccaneer or a bandit chief. One night a diner ordered a melon with his dinner. The waiter reported that melons were out of season. The patron growled, the waiter murmured that he would call Monsieur. Monsieur came, bland, imperturbable, and listened to the growling.

[Pg 107]

M'sieu wished absolutely to have a melon? But certainly. One could get it. It would be for after the dinner instead of before the dinner, however. That would be satisfactory?

The diner, mollified, signified his willingness to eat his melon after his sweet, and when the appointed time arrived, the melon arrived with it. Later, the bill arrived in its turn. One item read: "Melon—250 francs." There was a storm and the matter went to the courts, but the restaurateur remained imperturbable. The melon was expensive—he admitted as much to the judge sorrowfully—but M'sieu would have it. When one orders horses and carriage and sends a special messenger post-haste through the night for many miles in order to gratify a patron's whim, one must be paid for one's trouble. The judge appreciated the point and the bill was paid,—but in time Cubats closed its doors.

Outside of Paris there are many restaurants to which Parisians drive or motor for dinner when they are tired of the Bois, yet want to escape from city walls. The Reservoir at Versailles, and the Henri Quatre at St. Germain, are the oldest, the most famous of the list, and though for a time their prestige declined in so far as the truly fashionable diners were concerned, both have taken on new popularity since the automobile brought about a mania for dining out of town. At the Reservoir one is in the midst of historic associations. The place, with its decorations and furnishings in pure Louis XVI style, was already famous when Marie Antoinette played at farming in the Petit Trianon, near by. The place has seen many notable dinners, harboured many illustrious personages, and its ancient grandeur clings about it like a garment, though it caters now to the most mixed and modern of fashionable crowds.

[Pg 108]

Historic memories swarm thickly about the Henri Quatre too. Louis the XIV was born in the

building which is now a restaurant, and a cradle marks the café silver. From the terrace and the windows one looks over miles of fertile valley, and at the tables one finds, save upon Sunday, a particularly chic crowd. On Sunday the bourgeoisie invade the place, but during the week it is very much the thing to run out to the Henri Quatre for luncheon or dinner.

It is a pity le Roi galant cannot come back to his own for at least one summer night. He had ever an eye for a pretty woman, and it would warm even his ghost to watch the women who flutter from automobile or carriage to the pavilion that bears his name. He would smile approval too at the woman of the golf or tennis costume, for this hot-headed Henry was catholic in his tastes. Perhaps it is the tolerance of his spirit that has made possible at the Henri Quatre what would be shocking at the Bellevue, where the Pompadour is presiding genius. La Grande Marquise was not a marvel of morality, but upon etiquette she stood firm. One must be in grande toilette for Bellevue, but for the Henri Quatre—that is as one chooses.

[Pg 109]

Pretty women in ravishing toilettes flock to the tables of the glass-enclosed verandahs; but, side by side with the woman of the trailing chiffon and lace, of the wonderful driving cloak, of the picture hat, is the woman who has been playing golf or tennis at some one of the clubs round about St. Germain. The chances are that, being French, she has not played violently enough to disarrange her costume. It is as immaculate, as perfect in its way as the dinner toilette of the woman who has driven out from town, but she adores le sport, and she chatters about it enthusiastically over her truffles and champagne, looking, the while, like a Dresden china image of a golf girl.

High above the bank of the Seine at Meudon stands the Bellevue, a restaurant de luxe, which was built only a few years ago, and has had a considerable vogue, but has suffered since the day of the automobile arrived, because it is hardly far enough from Paris to afford a good motor spin, though too far to be as convenient as the restaurants of the Bois.

The Pompadour once had a villa where the picturesque white building now stands far above the river and overlooking all the country round, and in point of elegance the modern belles who dine on the terrace or in the white arched dining-rooms live up to the traditions of the place where the Grande Marquise held butterfly court; for one dons one's smartest frock for Bellevue. From the river a funicular leads up to the broad terraces in front of the Pavilion. Behind the restaurant the wooded hill climbs on up toward the sky, and on its top Flammarion's observatory is perched. There is a little hotel in the woods, an unimportant place, where Bellevue parties may stay over night if they do not care to go back to the city after a late dinner or supper,—and it is not always easy to get back to town if one has come out to Bellevue in plebeian fashion by train or boat, and lingered late in defiance of boat and railway time-tables. A party of Americans were stranded that way one night last summer. No train, no boat,—and no knowledge of the little hotel in the woods. No carriage to be had, unless les messieurs could wait indefinitely. Les messieurs, being New Yorkers, were not fond of waiting. They tucked the mesdames under their arms, and went out to reconnoitre. In the court stood a magnificent big touring-car, in charge of a liveried and stately chauffeur. One of the Americans boldly approached the imposing personage.

[Pg 110]

"My man," he said in French that was intelligible if scarcely academic, "I want you to take us into town."

The Frenchman stared in amazement.

"But, Monsieur, this is a private automobile. M. le baron is having supper in there with—eh bien, with a lady."

"Exactly," said the man from New York. "But you are going to take us to town. The baron will never know you're gone. I saw the lady."

[Pg 111]

The chauffeur lapsed into what Mark Twain would call "a profound French calm." He wrung his hands and rolled his eyes and shrugged his shoulders and called the gods to witness that the baron would eat him alive if he dared to consider such a proposition.

The man from New York listened with interest; and, when the conversationalist paused for breath, ran his hand into his pocket and brought forth something that clinked musically.

"It's worth one hundred francs to me to go to town in the baron's car," he said.

The chauffeur looked at the open hand, at the car, at the restaurant door. His conscience struggled within him and was silenced.

"Voyons, M'sieu, we will consider." He tiptoed to a window, looked into the dining-room, and returned with the air of a comic opera conspirator.

"C'est bien, M'sieu. They arrive at the salad. There is always the dessert, the coffee, the cigar, the liqueur. One can do it, but it is to be hoped that M'sieu and his friends do not object to speed."

That was a wild ride to Paris,—up hill and down, at top speed, with never a slackening for corners or for foot passengers. The Americans were dropped where they could take cabs and the hundred francs changed hands.

"Much obliged. Good luck to you," said the man from New York.

The chauffeur consulted his watch. "Provided always that they have not quarrelled," he murmured anxiously—and the machine shot away into the night.

[Pg 112]

Down in the heart of Paris, the Café de Paris, the Café Paillard, and the Ritz are the restaurants in which one may best study purple and fine linen. There are other cafés famed for cuisine and cellars, but my Lady of the Chiffons finds them dull, and in the creed of a Parisienne dulness heads the list of mortal sins.

Americans and English are the mainstay of the Ritz, save during the tea hour, when the crowd becomes cosmopolitan. At the Café Paillard one finds the diners of the Madrid a clique

aristocratic, mondain, and chiefly French. The Café de Paris repeats the story of Armenonville, though without the picturesque woodland setting and the attractive al fresco features. The two cafés have the same clientèle, the same atmosphere,—even the same proprietor. He is a subject for congratulation, this proprietor. The famous old Café Foyot, under the shadow of the Luxembourg, is his too, and the Café de Paris of Trouville, and the Helder at Nice,—all, save the Foyot, tremendously popular with the crowd vowed to extravagance and folly, and, as a result of that popularity, all phenomenally successful from a financial point of view. The Foyot also has a success, but of a different kind.

Naturally, the man who manages these restaurants is rich. His private establishments are handsome, he spends money lavishly, but—and here is the secret of his success—he is first of all a restaurateur, eternally vigilant, neglecting no detail, proud of his metier, glorying in his triumphs. He could buy, twice over, many of his patrons, yet one will see him moving about among his hurrying waiters, suggesting, prompting, reprimanding, seeing all things, adjusting all difficulties, pouring oil on all troubled waters.

He stops for a moment beside an old patron.

"Ah, Comte X—, bon soir."

His eyes rest upon the fish that has been placed before the count, and his face clouds. A motion of his hand brings an alarmed waiter.

"You serve the sole so, to Monsieur le Comte? You think perhaps that the sole au vin blanc should have that air? Take it away."

"Pardon, M'sieu. You understand,—a moment more or less and a sauce is spoiled. I am grieved that you should wait, but one dines well or one has not dined at all. In a moment you shall have a fish that will be as it should be. You have always the same burgundy, yes? I, too, am of your opinion. It is the best in our cellars."

He hurries away, soft-stepping, alert, diplomatic, napkin over arm, bowing deferentially here and there. A millionaire they say—but certainly a restaurant-keeper who knows his business, such a one as France can produce and Paris can appreciate.

There is another restaurateur in Paris whose name should not be left out of any discussion of Parisian dining. A few years ago he would have had no right to a place in this frivolous chapter, for though his restaurant was famous it was not smart. The gourmet might dine there—or rather lunch there—but the woman of fashion never found her way down to the little old building whose battered sign of a silver tower proclaimed that here was the Tour d'Argent, the café over which presided the inimitable Frederic, Roi des Canards, last of the old school of French cooks and hosts.

Even now the modish Parisienne does not go to the Tour d'Argent, but Americans have taken up the old café, and pretty women and elegant frocks are now no strangers in the Tour d'Argent, though one could not call the place fashionable.

The wine merchants of the Halles des Vins could swear that, fine frocks or no fine frocks, Frederic deserves a place in any chapter devoted to the fine art of dining; for Frederic belongs to a school of cooking which made the cuisine a fine art, and if the rooms of the little tavern down behind the morgue offer no appeal to the senses in the form of music and flowers and jewels and chiffons, they offer eating and drinking good enough to offset many omissions.

The Tour d'Argent has been a restaurant for three hundred years, and looking out from its windows over the cité patrons have been able to see most of the great events of Paris taking place, but M. Frederic is considerably less old than his café.

The Halles des Vins stand only a little way below the restaurant, and the wine merchants learned to go to Frederic's for luncheon. They were a high-living, exacting group of gourmets, patrons to appreciate good cooking and put a cook upon his mettle. Incidentally they knew a thing or two about wines, and through their friendly advice and favour the cellars of Frederic became, in the opinion of many connoisseurs, the best in Paris.

Others beside the wine-merchants found their way to the sign of the silver tower. The fame of Frederic spread through Paris and beyond. Last year in Nice, a New York man asked the chef of a noted hotel to prepare for him a "canneton à la presse." "Cook it for me just as Frederic does it," said the American. The chef shrugged his shoulders, smiled, and shook his head.

"I shall be charmed to cook the duck for Monsieur, but to cook it as le Roi des Canards cooks it?—Non, I have not the skill."

Tribute from a rival is tribute indeed. Frederic is King of the Ducks, and he sits alone upon his throne.

You will probably find the king in the little ante-room to his restaurant if you go down to the Tour d'Argent early enough to have a talk with its autocrat. There in the little ante-room are displayed game, meats, delicacies, dozens of things a patron might like to order for his meal, and there stands Frederic, a typical French host, with his long grey frock-coat clinging lovingly to his portly body, his side whiskers framing his ruddy, beaming face, his napkin or towel over his arm.

If he has seen you before he will know you. If he has seen you twice, you and he are old friends.

His face takes on more luminous cheer as he catches sight of you, and he bows profoundly, with a dramatic flourish of the napkin.

"Ah, bon soir, M'sieu. Tout va toujours bien?—et Madame?—et le petit?"

He leads you into the restaurant and finds a table for you. The important matter of the dinner is settled, and then, if you are of the favoured, Frederic will talk to you of his art, and you will hear of refinements and subtleties of cookery which will make you smile until Frederic has

[Pg 113]

[Pg 114]

[Pg 115]

[Pg 116]

proved to you that they are not poetic fancy but substantial fact. Your quail, for example, must be cooked before a grape-vine fire. Nothing but grape-vine will do the trick. Frederic is very positive on that point, and if you are skeptic, he may perhaps take you out and show you the grape-vine fire. Afterward you eat the quail and skepticism melts away into unquestioning faith.

That is only one of the mysteries of Frederic's cuisine. The man loves his art, goes to all lengths to achieve the results he desires, would rather invent a successful sauce than inherit a million, is as proud of his *canneton à la presse* as is a painter or poet of his masterpiece. On the whole, a majority of the public would probably prefer the masterpiece of Frederic to that of the poet or the painter, and in the chef's own mind there would be no doubt as to the comparative excellence of poem, picture, and duck.

It takes three ducks to supply one duck to a patron at Frederic's. The two extra birds give up their juices for the sauce that is served with the bird—that wonderful sauce which Frederic makes himself in the double brazier or chafing-dish which he sets on a side table near the diner. [Pg 117]

It is a treat to watch the making of that sauce, from the moment when, after touching a match to the first brazier burner, Monsieur daintily takes up some of the flame between his forefinger and thumb and deposits it upon the other burner, to the final moment when with an air of triumph the artist announces his complete success.

It is a treat too to see Frederic come and serve the duck. You are not getting your money's worth if he does not do it himself.

And it is a treat, beyond the telling, to eat the duck and the sauce which *le Roi des Canards* has prepared.

Small wonder that there are smart folk mingled with the *marchands des vins* at the *Tour d'Argent* nowadays, and that the birds of passage flitting through Paris go to Frederic's for a dinner or a luncheon.

Marguery is another of the chefs of the old French school, but he has become business man rather than chef, as have most of the restaurateurs of Paris. Only Frederic devotes himself passionately to his art, lives for his cuisine, burns his grape-vine fires, and makes a religious rite of preparing his sauces.

He is not only *Roi des Canards*, but the last of a royal line.

CHAPTER VII

ROUND THE NORMANDY CIRCUIT WITH MADAME

A slight hush falls upon the fashionable Parisian world after Grand Prix has rung down the curtain upon the Paris season. The élégantes pause to draw breath before plunging into the swirling tide of the summer circuit, but the breathing time is short. A few leisurely days, a few final visits to dressmakers and milliners, a closing of town houses, and then, ho for Trouville.

There are many popular resorts on the Normandy coast, but Trouville is queen of them all in so far as smart Parisian society is concerned. Madame follows the races and is in evidence at every fashionable racing event of the Normandy circuit, from the opening at Caen to the close at Ostend—or at least to the last of the French courses at Dieppe; but she is merely a bird of passage at the shifting rendezvous. Her summer nest is at Trouville-Deauville.

They are practically one resort, these two places of hyphenated association. Familiars even shorten the name to Trou-Deauville; but the little ferry that crosses the river Tuch between the two towns, and is heavily freighted with holiday-making folk from morning until night, traverses a gulf wider than the casual traveller would imagine. Trouville has the Casino, the promenade des planches, the Rue de Paris, the famous Hôtel de Paris; but Deauville has the race course, the hyperswell club, the villas of the ultra-chic. All the world is eligible to the pleasures of Trouville—or at least such share of the world as has the price at which Trouville pleasures are rated—but Deauville is for the favoured few, for the crowd of Puteaux and la Boulié, and the Polo Club of the Bois. The races draw the human potpourri of Trouville across the ferry; but after the races, the ferry carries the crowd back, while the social elect move on to the exclusive club grounds for polo or tennis or tea. A small distinction when put into mere words, but a mighty matter as viewed by the Parisienne, and there are many women whose whole ambition but compasses the crossing of that expressive hyphen in Trouville-Deauville.

[Pg 119]

The seashore season opens on the first of July, and from that time on to the first of September the villas and hotels of Trou-Deauville are filled with the most fashionable folk of Europe, though there is much skurrying about the coast in automobile, coach, or train, and constant interchange of social courtesies with the owners of villas in neighbouring resorts. The Normandy shore line is crowded with picturesque little villages of more or less ancient fame and more or less fashionable repute, and there are Parisians who deliberately choose villas at these smaller resorts, even when they might have the entrée at Deauville, did they elect to join the crowd there. Life at the little place is better for the children than life at Trouville, and it is possible for the elders to relax slightly in the quieter atmosphere, though they can easily find feverish gaiety within motoring distance when they care to go in search of it.

[Pg 120]

They are charming, these little Normandy towns, but it would be difficult for a town not to be charming on the Normandy coast. To be sure the average seashore villa of France is a blot on the landscape, but there are exceptions to the rule,—quaint modern houses of true Norman type,—and there are, too, old timbered farmhouses and picturesque châteaux which have been invaded by the tide of Parisian modernity. Even the ugliest of the villas is likely to have a delightful little garden, and over many of the architectural horrors charitable roses clamber riotously, softening the hideous outlines and bringing the dissonant notes into harmony with the melody round about. Green fields and fruitful orchards run down to meet the sea, and smooth white poplar-fringed roads that are the joy of the automobilist run away in every direction through the smiling fertile country. Broad shining beaches stretch along beside the sunlit waves and are dotted with gay striped tents under which children play in the sand and grown-ups idle away the hours. Perhaps a mediæval church and a quaint market-place form a background for the summer settlement, and sturdy Norman fisher folk come and go among the holiday aliens.



"Gossip Street" at Trouville

Yes, they are charming, these little places, and they are, too, more exclusively French than most of the larger resorts,—but not more French than Trouville. Nothing could be more French than Trouville. Dieppe has a tremendous American, English, Austrian, German, Russian contingent that elbows the French element; Boulogne is given over largely to bank-holiday crowds from England; Ostend is more cosmopolitan than French; but Trouville is of the French Frenchy, and to know Trouville is to know the Parisienne in her gayest summer rôle.

[Pg 121]

A popular French seashore resort must be seen to be appreciated, and no American whose

theories of seaside customs is limited to an acquaintance with the shore resorts of Jersey, Long Island, Massachusetts, etc., can have the slightest conception of seaside life in a French translation. There is, in the latter, a spice, a colour, an audacity, lacking in the Anglo-Saxon version. An English or American imitation of Trouville would be hopelessly vulgar, but Trouville—well, it *is* Trouville. It is all bubble, sparkle, brilliancy, extravagance, folly. It is Paris with an added *laissez aller*, Paris set to a new tune. There is much to shock the sober-minded as there is in Paris, but the sober-minded should not go to Trouville. It is the refuge of the light-hearted, the buoyant, the volatile; and soberness has no place in its scheme. What would electrify Newport, Bar Harbor, even Narragansett Pier, will not create even a ripple of excitement at Trouville. Someone has said that the difference between smart society in New York and in Paris is the difference between the immoral and the unmoral. French seashore life in its most exaggerated phase is distinctly unmoral, but like Paris life, it is also distinctly picturesque. The most shocking thing about Gallic impropriety is the fact that it fails to shock.

[Pg 122]

But when one talks of morals, one is taking Trouville seriously, and to take Trouville seriously is altogether out of the question. It is all froth and effervescence, all laughter and irresponsibility. Beau monde, bourgeoisie, actresses, dressmakers, milliners, cocottes, titled folk and millionaires from all over the world, gamblers, racing touts, English polo players, American yacht owners—all jostle each other on the promenade, in the Casino, at the Hôtel de Paris; for the exclusive set of Deauville does not cling to its own select haunts but crosses the ferry often in search of diversion less monotonously *comme il faut*.

The Rue de Paris is the great meeting-place for this class during the morning hours, and on a bright August morning one may find the most noted social celebrities of Europe grouped before the doors of the little shops that line the crooked street.

The jewellers and dressmakers of Paris have branch establishments here, and around their thresholds flutter the women who are the best patrons of those Paris tradesfolk, met to flirt and gossip and show in their frocks and jewels what may be achieved with the assistance of the firms whose names are written large above the open doors. It is called La Potinière, the gossip rendezvous, this little Rue de Paris, and there is gossip enough abroad there on any morning to justify the name. There is so much excuse for gossip at Trouville.

Eleven o'clock is the magic hour that really opens the ball at Trouville. Before that, there may possibly have been a private pigeon shoot, but that calls out only a small clique and takes in one of the most exclusive sets of Europe. No entrance here for the rank and file even of the fashionable world, and no open sesame for women whom the haughty dames of the French aristocracy do not put upon their visiting list. If Monsieur and Madame appear together anywhere at Trouville it is likely to be at the pigeon shoot.

[Pg 123]

But it is at eleven that the doors of the villas and hotels fly open. Out flock all of the somebodies and a choice assortment of nobodies, and every path to the beach is filled with the gay throng. Not that all of the Trouville world takes a dip in the surf. No indeed,—the truly smart folk scorn sea bathing, but they go to the beach to meet each other, to watch the throng, to promenade, to show their pretty morning frocks, to put in the time until *déjeuner*, and their decorative value in the bathing hour scene is tremendous.

Those women who do intend to go into the water, or to wear fetching bathing costumes at a safe distance from the waves, dress in their own rooms, if they live anywhere near the beach, and issue cloaked, hatted, and followed by maids. The maid is an essential feature of the scenic effect. She carries anything that may be needed, and she gives *cachet* to her mistress. There is a theory, too, that she represents the proprieties. It is quite improper to go to the beach without a maid, and so the Parisienne, no matter how lurid her reputation nor how startling her attire, goes beachward with her maid trotting demurely at her heels.

[Pg 124]

The bathing at Trouville is not particularly picturesque, though much imaginative description of its startling features has been written, and conditions at the resort seem favourable for a spectacular display of sea nymphs. Trouville is the summer paradise of Parisian cocottes, and the average Parisian cocotte is not as a rule strikingly averse to conspicuous rôles; but Narragansett Pier can show, during one fine summer day, more audacious bathing costumes than will be seen at Trouville in a week; and though little chorus girls up from Paris for a holiday may tumble about in the waves, among a crowd of bathers that but repeats the bathing types familiar the world over, the notorious "filles" do not go into the water any more than do the great ladies of Deauville.

There are some piquant and attractive bathing costumes worn on the sands by women who do not go in for serious bathing, but the Trouville show at the bathing hour is under the gay striped tents or on the promenade, where women in Paris frocks and hats chat lightly with men in informal summer attire, and where the grande dame of the Faubourg St. Germain touches elbows with the cocotte of the Boulevards.

After the bathing hour the crowd scatters again to the hotels and villas, and though in the afternoon there is an immense and amusing crowd on the promenade, the very smart set is not seen there again until the next morning.

It is so very busy, this smart set. The days are not long enough for the goings and comings that must be crowded into them. The fashionable women make elaborate toilettes for *déjeuner* at café or club or villa, and after the *déjeuner* they pour out upon the terraces, arrayed in their most ravishing costumes. Automobiles, coaches, smart traps of all kinds, are in waiting. Madame enters the one that is to have the honour of harbouring her mousseline and silk and lace, lifts her exquisite sunshade, scatters smiles and gay jests among her friends, and is off to the races.

[Pg 125]

Not even at Auteuil, Chantilly, or the Grand Prix can one see more superb and extravagant costuming than in the Tribune or the *pesage* at Trouville. The crowd is less mixed than at the

Paris races and there is more uniform elegance of dress, while the beautiful pesage with its velvety turf, its masses of bloom, its shaded paths, offers the most delightful of settings in which to display the latest creation of Paquin, or a daring but successful innovation from Reboux.

The club of Deauville provides a scenic arrangement even more perfectly adapted to the great show of frocks and mondaines, than is the pesage, and here is the centre of that exclusive social life of which the outsider can form but a vague idea, though the other side of Trouville may afford him most enjoyable entertainment. The golf course of the club is said to be the finest on the continent, the tennis courts are always full, polo is played there by the crack players of all Europe, and there is never a time when there is not something amusing on the club tapis.

Perhaps, instead of races or club events, a garden party at one of the Deauville villas claims the fashionables. Or perhaps the garden party is in some nearby resort such as Houlgate or Villers, and the clean white road leading to the rendezvous is crowded with automobiles and traps as the appointed hour approaches. The automobile has added much to the gaiety of the Normandy season. It has brought the resorts closer together, has made intimate social intercourse between them more possible. For great social events, the clans gather from every direction, coming even from far-away spas and châteaux. Wherever the races are in progress, there a host of automobiles makes its appearance, each machine laden with a jolly party from some one of the innumerable Normandy resorts. There is much motoring, too, in quest of luncheon or dinner. Madame and her friends forsake the Parisian cuisine of the Trouville hotel and motor merrily along the wonderful road to Caen, where in one of the quaint old restaurants that huddle near the market-place, one may have the best of Norman cooking and enjoy—or at least sample—one of the tripe dinners for which the restaurant is famed. A vulgar dish, tripe—but not tripe à la mode de Caen. The chef will tell you proudly that there are fifty Norman ways of cooking tripe, each more masterly than the other, and he will prove to you that the ordinary domestic tripe is to the tripe of Caen as the fried egg of the Bowery restaurant to the *œufs sur le plat* of the Café Foyot,—or to the omelette of Madame Poulard.

[Pg 126]

The omelette of Madame Poulard is another excuse for a motor pilgrimage from Trouville. One goes all the way to Mont St. Michel for it, but the run is a beautiful one and the omelette would be well worth even a journey over a corduroy road. Rural Normandy and Brittany still make pilgrimages to the shrine of the Archangel St. Michel, but even the pious pilgrims make their obeisance to the famous omelette as well as to the worthy saint, and the motor parties from Trouville know more about omelette than shrine. They are not profoundly pious, ces gens là, but they see the beauty of the sacred mountain where it towers between sea and sky, and they appreciate the omelette which Madame, with due ceremony, makes in a great casserole over the glowing logs in her cavernous fireplace.

[Pg 127]

And then there is Dives, with its ancient hostellerie Guillaume le Conquerant, whose praises have been sung so often and so eloquently that even a mere mention of its charms seems rank plagiarism. All the Trouville crowd motors over to Dives for luncheon or for dinner, and divides the tables with other motor parties from Paris and from all the country round; for it is famous, this inn of William the Conqueror, the most picturesque and popular of the provincial taverns of France.

The great William himself saw to the building of the inn when he chose Dives as the most convenient place in which to build the boats needed for his little excursion to England; and since that far day a multitude of famous personages has found shelter there, though the place has not always been used for an inn. Kings and queens of France have slept under the low roof, Madame de Sévigné and other great ladies of her day dined in the feudal dining-room and chatted in the Salle des Marmousets.

[Pg 128]

But the rooms were not, in Madame de Sévigné's time, what they are now. Monsieur Paul has made of his old Norman inn a treasure-house. He is artist, antiquary, and inn-keeper, this quiet M. Le Remois, and his inn is his hobby as collecting is his passion. He has ransacked the hidden places of Europe for rare and wonderful things that would add beauty and interest to the three low-raftered rooms in which he serves private dinners and luncheons and suppers, and his collection has overflowed into every corner of the inn. Fourteenth-century glass gleams like jewel mosaic in some of the windows; marvellous old tapestries, rare antique carvings, embroideries, brasses, ivories, laces, porcelains are everywhere, yet all are disposed with an eye to artistic effect and the result is a harmonious interior, not a museum jumble of curios. Even in the kitchen, antiquity holds sway; the carved cupboards and walls are rich in old Normandy brasses and in porcelains and pottery that would drive a collector wild with covetousness. Up in the sleeping-rooms that open from a vine-embowered gallery are old carved bedsteads and presses and dressing-tables, quaint chintzes, ewers and basins and bric-à-brac and candelabra of a far-away time. They are named for illustrious visitors who have slept in them, these chambers along the rambling galleries. One, with seventeenth-century coquetry, is sacred to Madame de Sévigné. Another bears the name of Dumas; for Dumas and all the other famous writers, artists, bohemians of France have at one time or another frequented the inn at Dives. From the galleries one looks down upon a courtyard surrounded by the timbered, gable-roofed, many-winged old building. It is all abloom with flowers, this court. Doves flutter and coo about the low eaves and the niches in which stand queer, stiff, archaic images. Flamingoes and herons and peacocks pick their way over the cobblestones. Cockatoos swing from mullioned windows.

[Pg 129]

And into this place of mediæval memories come the worldly moderns of Trouville and Paris. They flutter about the courtyard scattering the doves, and rivalling the peacocks and flamingoes in brilliance of plumage. They make their toilettes in the low-ceilinged rooms off the vine-draped galleries, they lunch and dine in the Salle des Marmousets, or the Chambre de la Pucelle, among the marvellous carvings and tapestries and bibelots.

An American millionaire once offered M. Paul five hundred thousand dollars for the feudal dining-room just as it stood, woodwork, fireplace, glass, furnishings and all. Doubtless he had visions of sensational New York dinners framed in such setting, but the dream was a vain one. Sell a part of the inn? M. Paul would sell as readily his head or heart, but millionaires do not always understand the artist temperament.

The meals served in the treasure rooms are worthy of their setting, for the artist is a prince of inn-keepers as well as a connoisseur of parts; and some of his dishes have long been the joy of Parisian epicures and the despair of Parisian chefs. There, for example, is his poulet vallée d'Auge. One sees the name upon Parisian menus now, but one tastes the real thing only in the dining-rooms of the old inn at Dives. Here is a luncheon menu prepared for a motor party from Trouville, a menu not too long, but calculated to call up to the gourmet who has lunched in the Salle des Marmousets memories of past delights.

[Pg 130]

Potage Dives.
Melon.
Sole à la Normande.
Poulets à la vallée d'Auge.
Aloyau Hastings.
Pêches flambées à la Guillaume le Conquerant.
Galette.
Fruits.

Oh, that fish sauce, those little chickens cooked in fresh cream, those peaches flavoured with other fruits and dropped in raspberry syrup and brandy—all eaten from a genuine fifteenth-century carved table in a room that might serve for a curio collector's dream of heaven! Verily the epicureans of Trouville and Paris should mention M. Le Remois in their prayers.



In the Club Grounds at Deauville

A sound all modern comes in through the Gothic doorway and wakens the group around the fifteenth-century tables from their dream of bliss. The car is waiting in the courtyard and driving the cockatoos to hysteria. There is a hasty donning of dust-coats, a climbing into the huge touring-car, an exchange of compliments with M. Paul, a waving of hands, and then the long white road through a green, green land, and Trouville in time for polo and dinner and the Casino.

Such excursions are now essential features of the seashore life. Trouville is motor-mad as is Paris, and last season there was not half enough garage room to accommodate the crowd. At every hour of the day great machines dash up to the hotels and unload well-known men and women from Hamburg, from Carlsbad, from Vichy, from Vienna, from Berlin, from Brittany, from Paris, from anywhere and everywhere. The King of Greece arrives at the Hôtel Paris in a Mercedes, the Shah of Persia spins blithely up to the Casino in a Panhard, a Russian Princess steers her motor into the narrow winding way of the Rue de Paris and brings it up with quick turn before Doucet's popular corner or in front of the fashionable pâtisserie. An English Duke has run up from Boulogne in his Daimler, the American Millionaire has made sixty miles an hour from Paris in his Packard, in order to meet his yacht in the bay of Deauville. It is an automobile show of the finest, the grande semaine at Trouville, and, later, automobile week at Ostend brings together a host of cars even more cosmopolitan, just as it brings together a crowd of folk still more cosmopolitan, than that of Trouville.

Yachting, too, is an important feature of Trouville life, and the bay is always well filled with sleek sea-going craft during grand semaine. Few of the very large yachts are French, but a fleet of beautiful small yachts has sailed up the Seine from Melun which is the anchorage for the Yacht Club of France, and there are a few imposing yachts flying the French colours. Trim English and American yachts by the dozen anchor off the Trouville shore for the great week, and there is a constant going and coming between boats and shore, a perpetual interchange of courtesies between the smart folk of villas and hotels, and the yachting visitors. Sometimes it is not the villa set that lunches and dines aboard the yacht. There are hilarious doings out there on the sea, when certain parties from the Hôtel de Paris are entertained, but those who hear tales of these doings when they stroll through la Potinière only shrug their shoulders, What can one expect when the season at Trou-Deauville, according to the traditional phrase, "bat son plein"?

[Pg 131]

[Pg 132]

Evening at Trouville means an elaborate dinner at one of the private villas or hotels, and an hour or two at the Casino, or perhaps some private social function following in the wake of a dinner—dancing, bridge, music, theatricals. The Hôtel de Paris is the public dining-place par excellence, the best vantage-ground from which to watch the passing show, but it is no easy matter to secure a table at the Hôtel de Paris during the height of the season. The most extravagant and modish part of the Trouville crowd—aside from the occupants of the handsomest villas—is quartered at the Hôtel de Paris. A crowd quite as swell but more inclined to quiet goes to the Grand Hôtel de Deauville, but rooms at this hotel are all taken months in advance by folk belonging to the Deauville set. The Hôtel de Paris rooms are reserved far in advance, too, but by a clientèle less exclusive. Money is the one essential at the Hôtel de Paris, but one must have plenty of that. There are always famous mondaines, millionaires, royal personages, staying at the Paris; but there, too, one finds the Parisian demi-mondaine, the noted jockey, the great actress, the wealthy tourist, and the worthy bourgeois of Paris will often save thriftily all year in order that he may afford a week at the Paris during the season. It is chic to stay at the Paris, and it is vastly amusing. Incidentally it is, as has been hinted, expensive. To have the humblest and scappiest of rooms one must pay at least six dollars a day, and the prices of suites run up into appalling sums. Restaurant prices, too, are monumental and tips are no small item. The waiter who serves one is the most ingratiating, the most efficient, the most knowing of his kind, but if one does not give the suave Shylock the full ten per cent of his bill, which is the letter of his bond, it will be much better not to come back again. They have retentive memories, those waiters; they are used to lavish generosity—and tables are always at a premium.

[Pg 133]

It is practically impossible to secure a table for dinner without first enlisting the head waiter's sympathy by a discreet tip of from five to fifty francs, and a thousand francs has been paid for a table during grande semaine. The cuisine is not remarkable—not so good, for instance, as that of the Paris Café de Paris, which is under the same management; but much beside food goes to make up one's money's worth when the coveted table has at last been obtained, and there are few things more amusing to a student of men, women, and things than to sit in some corner of the café and watch the world go by. To thoroughly appreciate the show one should have, across the table, a friend who is versed in the gossip of the European capitals, and who can name the diners and tell their stories; but even the stranger within the gates can get a vast amount of entertainment out of the heterogeneous crowd, the amazing types, the beautiful clothes, the superb jewels, and many of the stories are written so plainly that he who runs may read.

[Pg 134]

After dinner the crowd drifts into the great Casino and now for a certain part of the idlers begins the serious business of the day. It is the custom to say that there is no high play in France to-day and that the great days of gambling are over, but every year folk go away from Trouville who could furnish circumstantial evidence to refute that theory. Play is more guarded than it once was. The gambling does not jump at the eyes. On the first floor of the Casino near the music a few modest tables of petits chevaux attract a crowd of players whose heaviest plunging is but a matter of a few francs, and many transient visitors go away thinking that this outfit represents the gambling of Trouville; but habitués of the place know better than that. Up on the second floor there are trente et quarante and baccarat, but even here the limit is not high. Many women surround the tables here, and women make up a large percentage of the crowd admitted to the tables of the third floor, where play runs high and admittance is not altogether easy to obtain; but on the fourth floor are tables from which women are barred and to which only the men accustomed to play for very high stakes are welcomed. Here is the innermost circle of the Trouville gambling Inferno, and here are found men whose very names ooze money. Here are found, too, men who have no colossal fortunes behind them, but who can play high because they are willing to risk all they have. A Rothschild, a Vanderbilt, a Menier, may rub shoulders at the tables, but they will perhaps have an actor, a restaurant proprietor, and a great dressmaker for vis-à-vis, and no one is playing for less than one thousand dollars a point. Last season an American actor was one of the heavy losers in this fourth-floor room, but a theatrical manager evened things up by cashing in a goodly heap of counters representing ten thousand dollars each at the end of a spectacular evening's play in which several of the wealthiest men of Europe took a hand. Men have been beggared at these tables. One prominent racing man lost his stables down to the last horse and bridle in an evening of play. A famous English yacht changed hands as a result of an hour at baccarat. Some of those who are knowing in such matters contend that the heaviest gambling in the world to-day goes on in the Trouville Casino during grande semaine, but one gives that statement for what it is worth, and authentic gambling statistics are not easy to obtain.

[Pg 135]

In order to cover the gambling, the Casino ranks as a club, though everybody gets in—at least on the first floor. While fortunes are changing hands overhead, down here all is light and laughter and mirth. There is no drinking, but that does not trouble thirsty folk for there is first aid near at hand in the Café de Paris; and dinner is still a recent memory. The music is always good and there is dancing for those who want it. Perhaps some popular chanteuse or dancer from Paris is a feature of the evening entertainment, or there may be a costume ball or an effective cotillon. The best theatrical companies of Paris play in the little theatre, and always there are the petits chevaux to offer amusement of a mildly exciting sort.

[Pg 136]

All goes merrily until eleven o'clock, then the crowd pours out into the night, the doors close, the lights go out, and the great building stands dark and grim until morning. The board walk is thronged for a time with late strollers, but it is a poor imitation of Atlantic City's pride, this narrow board walk stretching from the Hôtel de Paris to the Rochers Noirs. Only Ostend can offer a board walk that appeals to Americans as something approaching the real thing.

The strollers melt away from the promenade, the cafés empty, and at a fairly respectable hour Trouville is given over to quiet and night shadow. Late hilarity is the exception rather than the

rule, but enough gaiety is crowded into the hours between eleven A.M. and midnight to last the ordinary summer resort for a fortnight.

Dieppe, of course, echoes certain notes of the Trouville season and is as gay in its own way, though it has not the fine sparkle of the more Parisian resort nor such an exclusively chic villa set as that of Deauville.

[Pg 137]

One hears as much English as French in the Hôtel Royale and the Casino and on the beach, and more swell Americans congregate at Dieppe than at any other one of the European summer resorts. For the great racing week crowds flock in, as at Trouville, from all the coast and inland resorts, and in at least one feature the Dieppe races surpass any others of the seashore circuit. No finer natural steeple chase course is known to the racing world than that at Dieppe, and the steeple chase races there are events that make a notable sensation even among the many sensations of the Normandy season.

At Ostend it is German that disputes supremacy with French, and there are more Austrians and Germans there than at any other place on the Jockey Club racing circuit, but one misses the familiar Parisian faces, for my lady of Deauville does not often go to Ostend even for the grande quinzaine of August; and, oddly enough, even the "filles de Paris" do not make much of the Ostend season.

The crowd is an immense and interesting one even without the French element, and money is spent as prodigally as at Trouville—even more prodigally perhaps and a trifle more crudely. The Café de la Plage has the reputation of being one of the most expensive places in the world in which one may order a dinner, the promenade, as has been said, is the best on the coast, and the Kursaal is one of the finest in Europe. The programme of the days is as crowded as that of Trouville, and life at Ostend moves at a breathless pace,—tennis tournaments, golf tournaments, automobile races, motor-boat races, horse races, children's fêtes, balls, flower festivals, theatre, excursions, déjeuners, dinners, yachting—but the list is endless. There is gambling, too, at Ostend. Gambling cuts comparatively little figure at Dieppe, and the Belgian government has muzzled it at Ostend, but here as in Paris one may always play at one's private club, and there is a private club at Ostend where during the quinzaine play rivals that of the famous fourth-floor room at Trouville during grande semaine. Many of the same players are in evidence in both places, but at Ostend entrance to the club is a very serious matter. The king of Belgium, notorious viveur and most practical sovereign, has been extremely firm in regard to Ostend play, and permits it only on the guarantee of the club that no scandal shall arise to discredit the little Belgian country. Any serious gambling fracas would mean an immense forfeit to the government, and consequently rigid measures are taken to safeguard the play. Anyone desiring admission must be introduced by reliable members and his name must be posted for three days before he is accepted. No exceptions are made, and a rich American who presented written introductions from two of the best known and wealthiest men of Europe last season was promptly turned down.

[Pg 138]

"These gentlemen are members. We know them well. Monsieur is doubtless altogether eligible, but our rules are our rules. We cannot accept cards of introduction, but if Monsieur will come here with sponsors who are members—"

[Pg 139]

Money would not buy the entrée. The directors of the Ostend Club take no chances. They leave that to the gamblers at the club tables.

With Ostend the season ends, and during the next week all of the expresses running to Paris are crowded with homing holiday folk. Dinard and the other Brittany resorts have been crowded as has Normandy, but Dinard is not so popular with the smart Parisienne as is Trouville, and money is not spent so lavishly in the Brittany resorts as in those of Normandy. Some Parisians of the fashionable set have wandered to Switzerland or to German or French spas. Others have spent the summer in quiet country houses and châteaux far from fashion's haunts; but from all quarters they flock to Paris when August is past, and Paris welcomes them with smiles. She has amused herself after a fashion, but the summer has been long and a trifle dull.

[Pg 140]

CHAPTER VIII

THE MERRY-GO-ROUND

The Parisienne adores Paris, but she is subject to acute attacks of that modern malady to which the leisure class is peculiarly susceptible, and which one of Madame's countrymen has aptly called the "nostalgie d'ailleurs"—homesickness for elsewhere.

Moved by that spirit of restlessness she forsakes Paris—in order that she may better love that city of her heart. She does not yearn for rest, but she wants change, and so she goes flitting here and there within easy reach of Paris—always within easy reach of Paris. Her fashion circuit is circumscribed by that national sentiment which makes the average Frenchman an unhappy and protesting alien anywhere outside of la belle France.

Madame goes to Monte Carlo; for the Côte d'Azur Rapid has made the Riviera resorts mere suburbs of Paris. She goes to Tangiers; for, after all, Tangiers is France, and in the French quarter of that picturesque place one finds a limited edition of Parisian society. But as for Cairo—no. The fashion show in Cairo, during the height of the season, is a great one, but it is furnished chiefly by English and Americans, and one finds few smart French folk in the throng. The Pyramids are too far from the Avenue des Acacias and the Rue de la Paix.

[Pg 141]

The Monte Carlo season is not, like the seashore season, an obligatory decampment. One may stay away from the Riviera without imperilling one's social position, while a summer spent in Paris would stamp one as quite outside the social pale; and, though there is, during January and February, a mighty going and coming to and from the south, Paris is gay and crowded all through the winter.

Great private fêtes are usually reserved for the spring season, unless some special event calls them forth, but there is a merry-go-round of more or less formal entertaining, and the society woman needs an expert accountant to keep her engagement book, and the *semainier* which records the at-home days of her friends, in intelligible order. There is time in the winter for the intimate reunions that are likely to be crowded out in the whirl of spring social functions, and when Bagatelle and Puteaux and la Boulié and the other open-air rendezvous are eliminated from the Parisienne's calculations, she can more often meet her friends in her own home or in theirs.

Balls are not a remarkably important feature of the Parisian season. There is dancing, of course, but the Frenchmen, as a rule, do not care for it.

"The ball? Je m'en passe," said a society man of Paris, when questioned about the matter.

"In America it is, perhaps, different. There one dances and one sits out dances, and one converses, and one flirts. Here, it is usually for the demoiselles that dances are given. You know our French girls? The writers tell us that they are emancipated, that they know many things. Perhaps,—but they do not show all this at the dance. One is introduced, one takes the girl from her mamma, one dances with her, one returns her to her mamma. C'est finis. Gai ça, n'est-ce pas? For the man who wishes to marry, to settle himself, the private ball may have much interest; but for one who seeks merely amusement, entertainment,—Grace à Dieu, il y a d'autres choses."

[Pg 142]

Truly, there are other things, a multitude of them. The Parisian hostess makes a feature of the musicale and certain salons are famous for music of extraordinarily good quality. Private theatricals, amateur or professional, are a social specialty in Paris. Bridge is a passion there as elsewhere. Parisian vivacity and buoyancy make even the formal reception an occasion lively rather than depressing.

But, when all is said, the dinner is the private social function dearest to the Parisian heart, and the successful Parisian hostess understands the art of dinner-giving as do few other women in the world. An elaborate menu and a gorgeous and extravagant decorative scheme seldom enter into her calculations. There is a rational number of courses, perfectly cooked, perfectly served, there is a dainty and attractive table; but the extravagant display, the eager striving after unique and picturesque effects in table decoration, the costly souvenirs which mark the formal dinner in New York, are not often a part of the French scheme.

On the other hand, the French hostess displays a tact and finesse amounting to genius in the selection and grouping of her guests, and, as a result, her dinner goes off with a verve which no amount of extraneous gorgeousness could achieve. The Parisienne of the better type,—*"she of the subtle charm, to whom every man is a possible admirer"*—has a famous opportunity for exhibiting her charm at the dinner table—particularly at the "little dinner." From the time she could lisp she has been trained to please and be pleased. She lacks the cultivated imperiousness of the American woman, and though she too, rules, her method differs from that of our social tyrant. Instead of demanding man's allegiance and devotion, she sets about winning them. She is gay, agreeable, witty, sympathetic, thoughtful of man's little needs, indulgent of man's little foibles; and her influence, though less assertive, is subtler than that of the American woman who claims her throne by divine right. Someone has said that "*cherchez la femme*" is written over every phase of Parisian life, and the thing is true. The Parisienne's influence is felt in politics, art, business, society, and yet the Parisienne is so essentially feminine, and the Parisian is so sure of his supremacy, so unconscious of any bondage save that of love or gallantry.

[Pg 143]

The Parisienne was born to dining. She has adopted tea-drinking. Fifteen years ago it was almost impossible to obtain a good cup of tea in Paris. To-day Paris is flooded with tea. The change has come about through the Anglomania which, within recent years, has attacked Parisian society. Tea came in with polo and golf, and English tweeds, and long walks, and all the other Anglo-Saxon strenuousness which has disturbed French traditions. It has become the

[Pg 144]

fashion to adopt English sports, English clothes, English customs, English slang.

The Frenchwoman has a form of the mania less virulent than that which has attacked the Frenchman. She may go in for *le sport*, may do violence to her inclinations and her Louis XV heels by walking,—or as she calls it, "footing,"—may employ an English maid and interlard her conversation with English phrases; but she draws the line at English clothes, while the French dandy's ultimate ambition is to be mistaken for an Englishman, and to that end he employs London tailors, cultivates English habits, and succeeds in being as much like a Londoner as the *Place de la Concorde* is like *Trafalgar Square*.

Five o'clock tea is a matter-of-course necessity in London. In Paris it is a fad, and to "five-o'clocker" is one of the unfailing diversions of the smart Parisienne, whether *mondaine* or *demi-mondaine*.

Naturally, being a social fad instead of a personal comfort, afternoon tea is seldom served to Madame when she is alone in *boudoir* or *salon*.

If one is at home to one's friends, and there is an appreciative audience for a tea-gown of rare merit, then there is good reason to five-o'clocker under one's own roof; but, on the whole, the Parisienne loves better to make a *toilette* worthy of applause and sally forth to drink her tea under the eyes of her world.

Columbin's was the first of the fashionable tea-rooms. Just why the little *pâtisserie* on the *Rue Cambon* leaped into fame, it is hard to say. *Anglomania* was rife, the Parisienne needed new amusement. A shrewd *pâtissier* combined the psychical moment with superior-toasted currant muffins and cakes and tea and a convenient rendezvous. All the smart Parisian set flocked to Columbin's, the narrow *Rue Cambon* was crowded with imposing equipages, the curb was lined with dapper grooms, and in the little tea-rooms, between five and six, there was one of the most impressive fashion shows of the fashion-making city.

[Pg 145]

There is no need of putting the story in the past tense. The crowd and the fashion show are still to be seen in the *Rue Cambon*, though Columbin's has spread over more space and rival tea-rooms have sprung up like mushrooms all over Paris. On almost any corner one may now get a good cup of tea, but among the multitude of tea-rooms only a few have caught the fancy of the fashionable Parisiennes.

Rumpelmayer's on the *Rue de Rivoli* is one of the few, and is perhaps the most successful rival of Columbin's among the Parisian *mondaines*; but tea hour at the *Ritz* is vastly entertaining, if less exclusive, and more cosmopolitan, while at the *Elysées* there is music and things are excessively gay. "Too gay," says Madame of the chic Parisian set, with an expressive shrug of her shoulders, but one goes to the *Elysées* all the same.

Possibly a pretty woman is prettier in ball or dinner *toilette* than in any other dress,—though one might take issue even with that theory; but surely individuality and distinctive elegance count for more in street costumes of the handsome type than in any other item of a woman's wardrobe. The tea-hour crowd at—say Columbin's, on a winter afternoon, diffuses an atmosphere of luxury, elegance, richness, that even Paris would find it hard to surpass. She is so coquette in her velvets and broadcloth and furs, this dear Parisienne. She steps from her carriage and passes through the door which her groom hurries to open. Inside is a murmur of many voices, a ripple of laughter, a rustle of silken stuffs, a scent of violets. Madame looks about her and smiles—an inclusive smile, for she recognizes so many of the women who are grouped about the little tables. Then she trails her *chiffons* forward in the manner habitual with Ouida's heroines, and she stops to choose just the little cakes she will have with her tea. The little cakes of Paris merit consideration. She turns her back upon the tea drinkers as she deliberates, my lady chez Columbin. It requires supreme confidence in one's figure and one's dressmaker to turn one's back gracefully, carelessly, upon one's most merciless critics, but Madame does it with nonchalance, and when she has settled the weighty question of cakes she finds her way to a table, stopping here and there to exchange greetings and jests with friends. She is perfectly gowned, wrapped in superb and becoming furs, smiling under the shadowing brim and nodding plumes of her great hat or under the tip-tilted absurdity of her tiny *toque*. And all around her are women of the same type, exotic products of a society highly artificial, sensuously material. Some of them are beautiful, some are homely, all are extravagantly dressed, and all have made that effort to appear beautiful which is with the Parisienne—more than with any other woman of the world—an absorbing passion.

[Pg 146]

[Pg 147]

It is this determined spirit of coquetry which leads the *mondaine* of Paris to make up in a fashion which in other cities is relegated chiefly to the class without the social gates. The Parisienne makes up frankly, conscientiously, with thought only of the effect obtained and with no effort to attribute to nature the results of her maid's skill or her own. Her cosmetics are as much a part of her *toilette* as her frock or her hat, and her French audience applauds her make-up instead of criticising. It is coquette, this artificiality, it shows that desire to please which is the fundamental principle of French femininity. If one is beautiful—that is excellent. If one is not beautiful, but makes a heroic effort to appear so,—that too is excellent. The French public forgives all save indifference to the true feminine *metier*.

Over in the spacious rooms of the *Ritz*, at the tea hour, one will find more English and Americans than French, though the French go there too, and there is a sprinkling of many nations. The crowd is more mixed than that of the *Rue Cambon*, in features other than that of nationality. Few *demi-mondaines* go to Columbin's. Why?—It is hard to tell,—but they do not go. Occasionally, *demi-mondaines* of the highest class drift in, but they are out of their element. There are hardly enough of them to give each other confidence.

[Pg 148]

At the *Ritz* things are different. There one is likely to see the most famous half-world beauties of Paris drinking tea, and at the *Elysées* the percentage of notoriety is still greater than at the

Ritz.

They love dearly to range themselves alongside of the haut monde, these cocottes of Paris, but they like a large and varied scene, a certain amount of moral—or immoral—support. The restricted intimacy of a rendezvous like Columbin's is not to their taste.

At the Palais de Glace the demi-mondaine shines. Here is a setting to which she lends herself readily, a setting, moreover, in which she may pose beside Madame of the beau monde and measure charms with her.

Only the social elect may skate at the Cercle des Patineurs in the Bois, and there one finds the society women of Paris gliding over the ice or chatting around the braziers on the banks of the horseshoe lake. It is the most chic of social rendezvous, this skating club in the Bois, but the weather clerk is no respecter of high society, and there are comparatively few weeks during the winter when open-air skating is practicable in Paris.

Down at the Palais de Glace on the Champs Elysées, the management deals out artificial ice to the just and the unjust every day during the season. Even in October there is skating at the Palais, and it is chic to skate then, just as it is chic to eat fresh strawberries in January, while, during midwinter, this skating-rink is one of the most popular afternoon resorts in Paris. The Parisian skating costume is a triumph, and the Parisiennes skate well, conscious of their own grace and revelling in that consciousness. Some of the great ladies of the French world are famous skaters; especially certain members of the Russian colony; and there are demi-mondaines too who skate marvellously well,—particularly two or three Danish beauties, who have taken on a Parisian lacquer. After all, it is hardly fair that the demi-mondaine of Paris should be credited entirely to the essential immorality of French society, and constitute a reproach against French womanhood, for the class is cosmopolitan to an extraordinary degree, recruited from Spain, from Italy, from Austria, from Russia, from Germany, from Sweden, from Denmark, from all countries of Europe, and centred in Paris because there are concentrated the wealth and prodigality of a material and luxurious civilization, because there the cocotte can live her short day so brilliantly, so dizzily, that during it she can quite forget the inevitable hideousness of the long days to come.

[Pg 149]

The little grisettes of the Latin Quarter and Montmartre are largely French, and bear the homely French names,—Suzanne, Rose, Marie,—but they are, on the whole, the most honest, the least degraded and corrupt, as they are the humblest of the class to which, broadly speaking, they belong. A grade higher—or lower—according to the view-point of the one who classifies, is the little cocotte of the cafés and dance halls, the Cri-Cri of the Casino, the Fol-Fol of the Elysées Montmartre. When the boulevards and the better theatres and cafés are reached, the name is prone to take on dignity. Antoinette, Diane, Heloise appear. And further still up the cocotte's ladder comes an insistent "Mademoiselle" or "Madame." When the cocotte has become truly demi-mondaine, when she buys her clothes on the Place Vendôme, and acquires a villa at Trouville, an hôtel in Paris, she adds Madame to a high sounding, mouth-filling name, such as Montmorency or Beauregard. Perhaps she even preempts a title. There, for instance, was the Princesse d'Araignée. She was very quiet, this Princess, very retiring, but Paris knew her as it knew the king who was for many years her lover, and to whom she was loyal, though he came but seldom to Paris. He is dead now, that royal lover—a tragic death—and the Princess—but this was to be a story of her title.

[Pg 150]

The title was, on its face, self-explanatory. "The Spider Princess" had a fine appropriateness in the half-world of Paris. One day some one spoke jestingly of the name. The Princess shook her head.

"It is really mine," she said gravely, "mine since I was a baby."

The jester looked incredulous.

"But yes. I will tell you," said the Princess. "I am of Normandy. You did not know? Yes, I am of Normandy. I was born there in a little village by the sea. Such a very little town. I can see it now. My father was a fisherman. Big and brown and strong, my father—and kind. But yes, of a kindness. He loved me, and I—I adored him. My mother was good—an honest woman, but it was my father whom I adored. When he was at home I trotted always at his heels—une toute petite bébé, brown and plump and laughing always."

[Pg 151]

There was a big rock in the harbour—an immense jagged rock in the water. The waves washed over it always, save on one day during the month. Then it was quite out of the water and it lay there like a great spider in the sunshine, with long legs running out into the foam. Along the coast they called it l'Araignée.

"It fascinated me, that big rock spider. All the month I watched for it, and when it came up out of the sea I cried to be taken out to it. My father took me. He was like that always—très indulgent, mon père, and I—what I wanted I must have.

"He would carry me down to his boat and row out to the rock and then we would eat our luncheon there, and he would tell me stories and I would play—une bébé, vous savez. I had then but four years, and I was happy—Dieu, que j'étais heureuse. The fisher-folk came to know me there on my rock, to look for us, mon père et moi, and they called me la Princesse d'Araignée. Yes, that was my name. Everyone called me that, smiling, and I was proud.

"One does not stay always a baby. I grew up, and the father died. It was dull there in the little Norman village. I wanted excitement, and—what I wanted I must have, I was always like that.

"The story tells itself after that, n'est-ce pas? I came to Paris, and I found the excitement. But one does not use the name of an honest father here in Paris. Il était tellement bon, mon père.

[Pg 152]

"I remembered that I had been a princess and I took my title once more. La Princesse d'Araignée! You see it is really mine, the title. The rock is still there in the sea,—but, mon père et moi—"

A far cry from the Palais du Glace, yet not so far after all, as memories go; for the Princesse d'Araignée was at the Palais du Glace one December afternoon long ago, and her king was by her side.

If one does not skate, still one goes to the skating-rink. The promenade is crowded on popular afternoons with all the types familiar in leisure Paris. Women in airy gowns and picture hats furnish effective contrast to the feminine skaters in their short skirts and jaunty toques. A fragrance of flowers and perfumes floats in the air, the ring of the skates sounds through the swinging melody of the music. Once more the Parisian artificiality—once more the Parisian charm.

On one afternoon in the week the crowd at the Palais takes on a most chic and exclusive tone. The prices are higher on that day, but high prices would never shut out the cocotte and her following. Quite the reverse. An unwritten law accomplishes what the increased prices would not accomplish, and Friday afternoon smart society claims the rink for its own. That is le jour chic at the Palais de Glace. If one goes on other days—as one does—there is a fair field and no favour.

The theatres of Paris are in full swing during the winter, and new plays are magnets for the society set as for all Paris; but even the smartest of Parisians are democratic when it comes to theatre-going, and no one or two houses claim their allegiance. The Théâtre Français, the Odeon, les Nouveautés, les Variétés, le Vaudeville, le Théâtre Antoine, le Théâtre Sara Bernhardt, le Maturin,—to all of these Madame goes, and to the cafés chantants in addition. Wherever there is clever entertainment, there one finds the swell Parisienne. She is catholic of taste.

[Pg 153]

Americans visiting Paris in summer are likely to have a curious idea of the Parisian theatre, as of many things Parisian. Then the better theatres are closed, the actors are probably away with the summer holiday folk, or, if the exigencies of their profession keep them in Paris, they are occupying little villas at Ville d'Avray, at Bougival, or in some other convenient suburb, whence they can run in for rehearsals or professional business when necessary.

Only the cafés chantants and the variety theatres are open and beckoning to the summer visitors, and the crowd at these places has little of the true Parisian character, is made up chiefly of strangers from the colonies, from America, from a host of regions whose summer climates are more trying than that of Paris. The shows are amusing in their way, the crowd is amusing too, but neither is calculated to give one an accurate idea of Paris theatre or of Paris theatre-goers. Indeed, one thing about the summer attendance at Les Ambassadeurs, le Jardin de Paris, and the other resorts that draw the crowd during July and August, always impresses Parisians themselves as phenomenal and distinctly shocking. The "jeune fille" of France does not frequent "ces coins là," but respectable American fathers and mothers tranquilly take their daughters with them to cafés chantants, variety theatres, even to the dance halls of the Rive Gauche and of Montmartre. A goodly number of these rendezvous exist solely for the delectation of visiting strangers and, like the Moulin Rouge, are supported chiefly by the American tourists' money. That the Moulin Rouge is dead speaks well for the educational development of the American traveller, but from the ashes of the place, which had nothing save sheer vulgarity to commend it, has risen a variety theatre with café balconies, and some of the dance-hall features of the old resort are retained in modified form. The Café de la Mort, and the other melodramatic and banal cafés, where efforts are made to provide the visitor with a shock that will sustain the reputation of Paris for devilish wickedness, are, like the Moulin Rouge of unblest memory, provided for the edification of travellers, and supported chiefly by American dollars. Even Maxim's, which means to the average American the last word on Parisian impropriety, is, by Parisians themselves, considered one of the concessions to American and English expectations and tastes.

[Pg 154]

"Maxim's? Oh c'est bête ça—toujours les Américains chez Maxim," says the Frenchman, disdainfully.

There is wickedness enough of a purely Parisian flavour in Paris, heaven knows; but the lurid spectacles provided for the tourist are perhaps the least immoral if the most vulgar of its manifestations.



At a Rothschild Garden Party

The Opera is a tradition of the Paris season. All of the swell clubs have boxes and the society folk who can afford it subscribe, yet the opera is not so important an item of the social year in Paris as in New York, and one will usually see more elaborate toilettes and more fashionable women in any one of the popular theatres than at the Opera.

[Pg 155]

When spring comes to Paris and the horse-chestnuts burst into bloom, new elements enter into the merry-go-round. The clubs in the Bois and outside of Paris become centres of social

activity, the races begin, al fresco dining and tea-drinking are in order. Hostesses blest with such grounds as those of Baronne Henri Rothschild give picturesque garden parties, there are chic evening fêtes at Puteaux, elaborate open-air charity entertainments are organized. Riding and driving in the Bois, which has continued languishingly during the winter, takes on new spirit.

The Avenue des Acacias is thronged with carriages and motors at the driving hours, and now and then women descend from their carriage to promenade, to chat with friends, to display their toilettes.

The Avenue des Acacias is the drive of drives for the mixed crowd of smart folk, but the old nobility of France prefers to drive in stately hauteur along the Avenue de la Reine Marguerite. One must make some protest against the levelling of class barriers.

The two most fashionable bridle-paths run along beside these two favourite driving avenues, but the whole Bois is a paradise of bridle-paths, and near its centre is a spot which has been chosen as the favourite meeting-place of chic riders at certain hours. The Parisians are riding more since things English became the fashion, and many of them ride very well, though the men affect English horsemanship to the point of caricature; but, on the whole, the French are better at haute école riding than at park riding. They make the best circus riders in the world, but the horsemanship of the average rider on the bridle-paths of the Bois leaves much to be desired.

[Pg 156]

As for driving, there are many good whips, but the accomplishment is not general, and few Parisiennes of social prominence drive. It is not "convenable," and though several of the greatest ladies of France hold the reins over their own fine horses in the Bois, driving alone with a groom is generally ranked in the same category as walking alone with a dog. The woman who does either must expect uncomplimentary classification, unless she stands high enough to be a law unto herself.

And apropos of dogs, the pet dog show is always one of the events of the spring season, an occasion that calls for artistic effect in mistress as well as dog, produces scores of effective tableaux, offers testimony concerning feminine folly. There are good dogs shown, dog aristocrats of unimpeachable birth and breeding, but their exhibition is enveloped in such a flurry of chiffons, such a hysteria of pride, ambition, emotion. Nowhere in the world has the dog endured such insults to his sturdy, canine simplicity as in Paris. Nowhere else has he been so dandified, so coddled, so spoiled. The pet dog of the Parisienne of high degree is likely to be a sybarite, and the pet dog of the famous cocotte leads a luxurious existence that demands prodigal expenditure.

[Pg 157]

One Parisian dog tailor has a most flourishing and successful business. He is the Paquin of dogdom, and let no one think that he is not an artist. When Madame brings her little angel to him for a spring outfit, there is an impressive paraphrase of Madame's own sessions with her couturier,—a serious conference concerning materials, colours, trimmings, models. In New York a dog blanket is a dog blanket. It may be cheap or expensive, but it is probably bought ready made and approximately fitted. The Parisian dog tailor considers his client's figure, complexion, air.

"But no, Madame. I find that he has not the breadth of chest to wear that model—and the colour! He is not of a type for the blue and silver. A warm violet, now, with the embroidery in more tender shades, and a touch of gold? Bon! And the curving line on the shoulder? It gives an air of slenderness, that shoulder seam. Madame has samples of the other costumes she wishes to match?"

Absurd? Of course it is all ineffably absurd, but the mania for dress extends even to the lapdog in Paris.

The little angel has also his boots—of fur for the cold, of oilskin for the dampness. He has his tiny kerchiefs of cobweb fineness, embroidered with his name or monogram, and tucked into the pockets of his handsome coats. He wears jewelry, more or less costly, collars, bangles, even bracelets. One notorious Parisienne has a collection of jewelry for her dog that is worth a fortune, collars of cabuchon emeralds and diamonds, of pink pearls, of cunningly wrought gold and lucky jade. It is a hobby of the mistress, this dog jewelry, and when one's specialty is the speedy bankrupting of Grand Dukes and wealthy American fledglings and rich Portuguese Jews, one has the money for one's hobbies.

[Pg 158]

The pet dog show is not a dog clothes exhibit. The entries are judged upon their canine merits, but it is amusing all the same, this event, and the mistresses pose most charmingly with their pets. Nothing that happens in Paris lacks its theatrical note.

The Fête des Fleurs belongs to the spring season, but it does not belong to the smart Parisian set, though every one turns out to see the show. The fête is given in the name of charity, and doubtless charity covers its sin, but there is more than a little vulgarity and horse-play mixed with the picturesque beauty of the scene. A part of the Bois is roped off, and an entrance fee is charged for all sight-seers and equipages passing the barriers. So much for charity. The rest is merry-making of a somewhat promiscuous sort. Every seat along the avenues is taken, masses of flowers are banked high along the curb, to be sold as ammunition for the battle of flowers. Bands are playing, flags are fluttering, garlands are swinging from decorated poles, and past the judges' stand by the pigeon-shooting club files an endless line of carriages, carts, automobiles, fiacres, conveyances of all types, from the butcher's cart, bearing the honest butcher and his wife and children, to the electric victoria of the most famous dancer of Paris. Only the chic society woman is conspicuous by her absence. One seldom sees, in the Fête des Fleurs procession, faces familiar in the exclusive salons.

[Pg 159]

But the sight is an interesting one, for all that. A Parisian fête does not need the indorsement of the Faubourg St. Germain in order to be gay, and the public celebrities and demi-mondaines turn out in all their glory for the Fête des Fleurs.

Pretty women look out from the riot of flowers that covers hansom, victoria, dog-cart, phaeton, automobile, and money has been spent like water to furnish some of the beauties with their setting. One phaeton is literally hidden under purple orchids, and holds two blondes elaborately arrayed in white and violet. Behind comes a victoria trimmed in thousands of yellow and red roses and bearing a noted Spanish dancer. A popular opera singer has made her motor car a moving bank of pink roses and violets.

Bunches of forget-me-nots and daisies and pinks are hurtling through the air. A popular lionne of the day is so pelted with fragrant ammunition that she springs up in her carriage bower and stands, a slender mousseline-draped beauty, laughing under the rain of nosegays, and with gay abandon returning her assailants' fire.

In the carriage just behind hers are two gorgeously gowned women, old and haggard and hideous under their cosmetics, derelicts, favourites who have outlived their day, and are fighting the hopeless fight against defeat and misery and oblivion; but the beauty of the flower battle does not look behind her and read the memento mori. She is having her day now. What has yesterday or to-morrow to do with a Fête des Fleurs?

[Pg 160]

There are other public fêtes on the floodtide of the Paris spring,—plebeian, many of them, and the Fête de Neuilly is one of the most plebeian; yet it is chic to go to Neuilly at least once while the van dwellers from all the highways and byways of France are in camp along the Avenue de Neuilly. From every direction the vagabonds have gathered,—a motley crew of gipsy wanderers, strolling entertainers who, after a winter in the provinces, have found their way back to the borders of the Paris they love.

Ramshackle booths, tents, shooting-galleries, carousels, acrobats, fortune-tellers, snake-charmers, lion tamers, ventriloquists, fat ladies, magicians, vendors of every imaginable cheap and tawdry thing—the old Coney Island multiplied by ten and invested with a Gallic lightness and sparkle in place of its own dull vulgarity. That is the Neuilly Fair.

Smart folk give jolly little dinners and, after, take their guests out to Neuilly for a lark. They visit the side shows, and shoot at the balls, and buy ridiculous souvenirs, and ride on the carousel, and throw confetti, and give themselves up to vulgar amusements with the infantile joyousness that is a characteristic Parisian mood.

[Pg 161]

Madame is very charming in all her elegant perfection against the tawdry background of Neuilly, and she knows that she is charming—all of which helps to make the "Neuilly evening" a popular item on the June programme.

There was once a crown prince who went to the Neuilly Fête, and who saw a gipsy girl there. He was bon garçon, this crown prince, and he was doing the fête incognito and with a thoroughness that included making friends with many of the van folk. The gipsy girl was beautiful. She killed herself afterward, far from Paris, in the country of the Prince, but one expects comedy, not tragedy, of the fête de Neuilly.

Princes and kings are frequent visitors in Paris, and when they come officially, everyone, from the President of the Republic to the street-sweeper of the boulevards, conspires to do them honour. But his Royal Highness loves better to visit Paris incog. and amuse himself according to his own will. He has even been known to make an official visit, to endure with cheerful resignation the formal entertaining lavished upon him, to be escorted to the station by a guard of honour and high officials, to wave a courteous adieu from his car window, and, within forty-eight hours, to be back in Paris, incognito, with only one or two members of his suite for attendants and only his own tastes to be consulted in the matter of entertainment. Even royalty is human.

Paris dances and sings and fiddles her way through the spring days—as she has danced and sung and fiddled her way through history; and when July comes and the blinds are drawn down in the fashionable residence quarters, still Paris is not dull.

[Pg 162]

Swarms of visitors from the Colonies, from Southern Europe, from America, fill the gaps left by departing Parisians. Restaurant tables are crowded. Les Ambassadeurs, l'Horloge and their rivals do a flourishing business. Only the onlooker who knows the real Paris misses the gayest element of the Parisian world from its accustomed haunts, and finds the Parisian summer a dreary interregnum twixt season and season.

[Pg 163]

CHAPTER IX

THE HUNTING SEASON AT THE CHÂTEAUX

With September, Parisians renounce their allegiance to Neptune. For that matter, Neptune has little to do even with the seashore season of the Parisian world. The hoary old fellow is but a detail of the stage setting. Whatever sovereignty he may have claimed at Trouville, Dieppe, Dinard, he long ago made over to Venus Anadyomene, and even she cannot hold her courtiers. There comes a day when the sands that have for months bloomed riotously in Parisian gowns and sunshades and millinery, stretch away, yellow and lone, before deserted casinos and empty hotels.

The seashore season is over. The hunting season is on.

Venus Anadyomene has given way to Diana, goddess of the chase. Pagan Neptune has handed the fashionable crowd over to Christian St. Hubert, patron saint of venery.

There is an element of farce in certain phases of French hunting, for the Frenchman is born to theatrical effects as the sparks fly upward, and the good shopkeeper of Paris goes a-hunting in a fashion that has been the delight of *Punch* artists for many years. He is so round and rosy and valiant and important this French sportsman of *Punch*, his hunting costume is so elaborate, he is so lavishly equipped with hunting paraphernalia. The railway stations of Paris are crowded with hunters of this class when the falling leaves are aswirl in the forests of France; but Monsieur is only one of many French hunting types, and the English go far astray when they make the caricature inclusive, just as they strain the truth when they picture the French follower of hounds as a dapper and rotund little fop clinging frantically round his horse's neck and shouting—"Stop ze hunt! Stop zat fox! I tomble! I faloff! Stop ze fox!"

[Pg 164]

If the London cockney should arise en masse each October and go forth to hunt as does the bourgeois of Paris, there would doubtless be amusing sights in the railway stations of London; and though the fox hunting of France does not compare favourably with that of England, there's many a fox-hunting English squire who would fall by the way if he attempted to ride with a wiry French marquis on an all day and night wolf hunt through the woods and plains of Poitou.

The chase is a passion with the French, and all classes save those to which a day's holiday, a gun, and a dog are unattainable joys hail the advent of the shooting season with enthusiasm. One sees the solitary hunter in the marshes near the city, or searching patiently for birds on ground where no placards warn trespassers away. The toy estates that fringe the woods near Paris are carefully enclosed in high fences of wire net, and there, on clear autumn mornings, there is a mighty fusillade among the thickets while Monsieur in his English tweeds, and Madame in her newest and most impractical shooting costume, and their equally decorative friends, play at la chasse.

[Pg 165]

Since the greater part of the French land is subdivided to a remarkable degree, and the average proprietor cannot shoot over his own place without danger of killing the owner or the game on adjoining property, many shooting alliances are made between groups of men owning adjacent lands, and the privilege of hunting over the whole territory is accorded to each of the group, while the game killed is apportioned according to fixed rules. There are other hunting syndicates more ambitious, renting or owning expensive preserves in country far from Paris, and, of course, there are the fortunate owners of large estates who have on their own preserves enough good shooting to satisfy even the most exacting of English sportsmen.

Millionaire bourgeois own a majority of the important preserves of Seine et Marne, Seine et Oise, and Oise, and the Rothschilds have the finest shooting estate in France, at Vaux-de-Cernay. Kings and princes from all quarters of Europe have shot the birds of the famous banker, who is a power behind many thrones, and some of the fêtes that have followed great hunts in the Rothschild coverts have been memorable ones. Four thousand pheasants were slaughtered to make a holiday for the last royal guest, and after the hunt came an evening of dazzling fête and spectacular illumination of all the country round.

[Pg 166]

There are other estates where the chasses à tir are famous and where sumptuous entertaining is done during shooting season; but it is in the chasse à cour that France lives up to its old traditions and can show the disdainful Englishman sport not known on the English country side.

The area of the French hunting districts is comparatively small, for over half of the hounds of France are found in Vendée, Anjou, Touraine, and Poitou, but the packs are many and admirable and the sport is good. In the remote regions there is boar hunting, that for an exciting run and a dangerous finish beats anything England has to offer. The Frenchman will go far for a boar hunt, but he will not take many of his favourite hounds with him. English foxhounds are cheaper and the boar is sure to make short work of any dog that runs in on him when he stands at bay, bristles erect, little eyes red with rage, foam flying from his champing tusks; so, as a rule, the French dog is used only to locate the boar, and English dogs are offered up, if sacrifice there must be.



Baronne Henri de Rothschild at the Meet

For wolf hunting the French hounds are called into service, though it is difficult to break any hound to wolf scent, and nothing wears a dog out more effectually than a wolf chase. Good horses are required, too, for a wolf hunt is likely to mean a night out and a tremendous straight-away run over a wide area, and even when dogs and horses and hunters are of the best, an old wolf will usually give them all the slip. The beast has phenomenal endurance and cunning. For hours he will idle along just in front of the hounds, knowing they dare not attack him while he is fresh. Then, when the pack is beginning to breathe hard and labour a little, Monsieur *le loup* shows what he can do in the way of speed when he really gives his mind to it. Away he flies, a streak of yellow grey, leaving his pursuers far behind, and the chances are that pack and hunters have but a magnificent run for their pains. One of the most famous sportsmen of France, who keeps a pack devoted altogether to wolf hunting, says that he has killed less than a half dozen old wolves in his hunting career.

[Pg 167]

Louveteaux—young wolves—furnish most of the sport, and here the story is a different one; for the year-old wolf provides a long and brilliant but usually successful run, and frequently a kill in the night when flaming torches held by huntsmen in picturesque livery throw weird lights and shadows over the scene.

Small wonder that the Frenchman who chases wolf and boar returns the Briton's scorn in kind, and calls the English fox hunt a "promenade à cheval." There is a certain amount of justice in the phrase, for the Englishman of fox-hunting fame hunts to ride instead of riding to hunt.

The French sportsman shrugs his shoulders, too, at the stag hunt of old England.

"To bring a tame deer in a box and push it under the noses of the hounds—Ce n'est pas la chasse, mon ami," says the Marquis, with fine contempt, and while his description doesn't apply accurately to all English deer hunting, it is true that tracking the deer comes nearer deserving its title of royal sport in France than in England.

[Pg 168]

Contrary to *Punch* tradition, the gentleman of France is usually a good shot. Shooting has been an essential part of his education and even the veriest dandy of Paris may be uncommonly handy with a revolver or gun. Such prowess is a part of the traditions of his race. Duelling was a passion and a diversion with his ancestors; and while serious duelling is, even in France, a trifle obsolete to-day, the customs due to it still exist. Monsieur le Marquis fences cleverly and shoots as well. Possibly he has his private shooting-gallery and practices there for a while each morning; but, whether or no he has this private practice, he is fairly sure to turn up at some one of the public shooting rendezvous during the day. The Tir au Pigeon Club in the Bois is the nucleus from which all of the open-air clubs of Paris have developed, and is one of the most popular rendezvous for the smart Parisian set. The same is true at Deauville, at Nice, and wherever fashionable Parisian colonies are to be found, and the events at the exclusive shooting clubs in these places will always bring together a notable collection of society folk and an impressive exhibit of Parisian chiffons.

There are many Frenchwomen who can hold their own with the men when it comes to the handling of a gun, and a few who can follow hounds as pluckily as any English Diana; while, as for the wearing of charming shooting costumes, for the covert, or for luncheon with the guns, of dressing effectively for the meet, of donning exquisite negligées for the tea hour when the huntsmen may be expected to straggle in, tired, valiant, and loquacious,—there the Parisienne leads the world. The tea gowns and shooting costumes of the Place Vendôme and the Rue de la Paix are the true triumphs of the French hunting season and the wearing of them is to the average château guest a thing much more important than the killing of game—is, in fact, her method of following the chase. Nimrod may enjoy having his adored one by his side in the covert or running neck and neck with him behind the hounds, but he has little time for admiring her then. His heart is with pheasant or hare or deer. The story is a different one when he goes back to the château in the gathering twilight and finds daintily gowned women waiting, in the glow of fire and candle-light, to greet him with enthusiasm and listen with rapt attention while he fights his battles over again. Then is the hour of the sportswoman, for there's more truth than fiction in the theory so audaciously exploited in "Man and Superman." The form of the chase which appeals most keenly to women the world over is the pursuit of man, and the Parisienne in particular is a zealous devotee of the sport.

[Pg 169]

A Frenchwoman famous for her advanced ideas,—the "new woman" translated into French—went to Berlin some years ago, and a conference of the emancipated was called to do her honour. She came into the audience hall, exquisitely gowned, the most delightfully feminine of figures.

[Pg 170]

She looked aghast at the band of strong-minded, atrociously dressed women assembled to hear her; and then, throwing aside her premeditated address upon woman's suffrage, she plunged into an eloquent plea for the union of becoming dress and emancipated womanhood, winding up with a fervent appeal to her sisters to remember always that they must dress to please the men.

There spoke the true Frenchwoman, new or old; and the fair guests at the châteaux, whatever may be their feeling about the chase of stag or the shooting of birds, never are so lacking in sporting spirit that they neglect dressing to please the men.

For the Parisienne in general the hunting season means only an excuse for château visits, and a château visit means only picturesque meets at which one may wear one's smartest morning frock, chat with friends from other châteaux, flirt with gallant huntsmen, and, perhaps, follow the hunt at a discreet distance in cart or automobile; it means luncheon with the guns in English fashion, and another opportunity for a smart costume; it means the tea hour of coquetry and chiffons; it means superb dinners to which come fashionable folk from the country round about; it means evening festivities of all kinds. Oh, an excellent opportunity for the displaying of one's wardrobe resources, is the château visit, and a super-excellent opportunity for *les affaires de cœur* is offered by the informal intimacy of a great house party.

The pretentiousness of château entertainment depends, of course, upon the financial condition of the owner, and it is at the country places of the rich bourgeois, rather than in the most famous historic houses of France, that money is spent most freely during the château season, though American millions have made some aristocratic house parties famous for prodigal extravagance.

[Pg 171]

Where money need not stand in the way, the programme of entertainment is often a costly one. Perhaps, as has happened before now, theatricals are the order of the day, and the entire company of one of the Parisian theatres is brought down from Paris for the occasion. Or a costume ball is on the tapis and the great dressmakers of the Rue de la Paix are called upon for dazzling costumes. Or a popular diseuse or chanteuse or dancer may be lured away from her café chantant for the evening in order to enliven the lovers of nature who have fled to sylvan haunts.

And always one can play bridge. Ye gods, how they play bridge during the autumn days and nights, those transplanted Parisians!

All through the long days when the men are off after bird or deer, the women, arrayed in the daintiest of bridge coats or frocks, sit around the card tables playing for stakes that are not always low; and indeed there are many days when even the men themselves forsake the coverts for the card tables. During the last château season, rumours ran concerning eighteen-hour sessions of bridge when mesdames and messieurs did not lay down their cards save for hasty luncheon and dinner. Stories were told, too, of immense losses sustained by guests at several famous houses, and games at a louis a point have ceased to be rare in the fashionable Parisian set. Some devotees of the game have, it is said, even installed little bridge tables in the salons of their loges at the opera and spirited games are played there in the intervals of the music, or to the neglect of the music.

[Pg 172]

There are fashionable hostesses who deplore the craze, but the chief accusation brought against the game is characteristically French. One hears little protest against the ethics of bridge, but it appears that the new fad is killing conversation. If this is true, say the critics, something must indeed be done to save France. Conversation is, with the French, a religion, a heritage, an acquirement, an art, and this fine product of the centuries must not be allowed to perish in an epidemic of gambling.

Even after a night spent at bridge, at least a large percentage of the château party is up and off to the meet in the grey of the morning. Madame may, perhaps, sleep later on, but the meet is an occasion, a social function, a golden opportunity for coquetry; and even if one does not expect to follow the hounds one must be in evidence at the reunion. So my lady is up betimes and at work upon her toilette, a toilette to the planning of which she has devoted anxious hours before leaving Paris. One must be très chic at the meet, for les messieurs will be out in force and the sporting scene with its forest setting will admit of a touch of audacity in dress.

Even the true sportswoman of France does not forget to be coquette, and her interest in habit or shooting costume does not interfere with her sporting zeal. There are Frenchwomen who go boar hunting and wolf hunting with their husbands. Others, like the Baronne de Brandt or the Marquise de Bois-Hebert, visit the out-of-the-way corners of Europe in search of exciting sport, and a long list of Parisian society leaders like the Marquise de Beauvoir, the Comtesse de Fels, the young Duchesses de Luyne, de Noailles, and d'Uzes, make excellent records in the home forests.

[Pg 173]

The name of d'Uzes is important in modern French hunting annals, though its claims do not rest on modernity. On the contrary the equipage d'Uzes stands for all that is traditional and historic in French venery, and the dowager Duchesse d'Uzes, holding fast to the customs and traditions of the old régime, keeps up the hunt in her forests as the Duc d'Uzes have kept it up through many a generation and many a change in the affairs of France.

Sixty thousand acres of the forest of Rambouillet are leased by the Duchess for her hunting-grounds, and, though the favourite château of the President of France lies across the woodland from her own hunting château of Bonnelles, and his excellency the President of the French Republic may, if he chooses, shoot birds and rabbits in the forest, which is the property of the state, it is the Duchess who reigns in Rambouillet forest and the republican ruler may not chase the stag there, unless this great lady of old France graciously extends an invitation to him.

What has Rambouillet to do with presidents and republics? It has always been the forest of kings, and its memories reach back through the dim years so far that modern history can but cling to its fingers, while old story and romance haunt every bosky depth and sunlit glade.

[Pg 174]

It was the heart of the ancient forest of Yveline, this forest of Rambouillet, the country of the Druids, a place of mystery and of fable. Cæsar tells how the Gauls hunted the wild bull in those forest fastnesses. Charlemagne went a-hunting under the great oaks and beeches, and by his side rode his empress, Luitgard the beautiful, while in their train came many a mighty warrior and prince; came, too, fair princesses whose names alone are keys to old romance,—Hiltrud and Rhodaïd, Gisela and Theodrada and Bertha, each in robe of green velvet and with silken locks floating free from beneath a golden diadem. For the lover of pictures they still go riding down the forest aisles, those princesses of the far away, "swaying the reins with dainty finger-tips" and smiling on the gallants who rode beside them.

Many a fair lady has ridden in the shades of Rambouillet, with a courtier at her bridle rein, since Charlemagne's day. Each king of France in turn has followed the stag there. Some kings have loved there, some have died there; some, like Louis XIV, have merely been bored there; but it was when Louis XIII ruled in France that venery flourished in its greatest pomp and glory. Many hundreds of officials belonged to the royal hunting equipage in the time of this prodigal Louis, and all the court followed the king when, with sounding horns and baying hounds, he coursed through the woods of Rambouillet.

[Pg 175]

The princes of the blood had their equipages, too, and there is a story of a long-ago day when three stags broke cover simultaneously on the sides of St. Hubert's pond, and behind each streamed a brilliant hunting cortège sporting the gay colours of a princely house. One can see them there on the banks of the woodland pool—the stags at bay, the swarming hounds, the liveried huntsmen, the princes and courtiers in gorgeous array, the background of forest green and the water mirroring the whole. Extravagant folly, of course, those royal hunts, but a brave show. Your good republican loves better to see the president go forth in his tweeds and his slouch hat, with his guides and beaters and his tweed-clad guests, to shoot the timid little wood creatures that are driven into the range of the guns and killed by thousands in the name of sport. It costs less than Louis' hunting, this democratic battue, and, to-day, the peasants of France have bread,—but for the lover of romance, Rambouillet is filled with ghosts that make a finer show than the estimable republican president and his equally estimable but far from picturesque guests.

Pompous venery went down with all things regal in the Revolutionary flood, but Napoleon, ever theatrical at heart, appreciated the dramatic opportunities of the chase, and once more Rambouillet echoed to the bay of hounds and the call of horns, while the little great man rode in Charlemagne's paths.

Since then, the career of hunting in France has been a chequered one. After the revolution of 1848, the forests were leased to the great nobles, but Napoleon III had the vast domains confiscated after his coup d'état, and it was then that the Duc d'Uzes and de Luynes held a great final hunt before abandoning the forests to the usurper, and made a kill that is mentioned with awe by latter-day hunters.

[Pg 176]

But Napoleon cared little for the chase, and in 1868 the dukes were hunting again in their old haunts. The Duc de Luynes died and the Duc d'Uzes took over his pack. When he, too, went the way of all flesh, his widow refused to give up the famous hounds and the traditional equipage. She re-leased the forest, held tenaciously traditions of the chase as they had been upheld by a long line of Ducs d'Uzes. While she lives, at least, the hounds of St. Hubert will occupy their kennels at La Celle les Bordes, and the red and blue and gold of the equipage d'Uzes will flash through the leafy lanes of the forest of Rambouillet.

The Bonnelles season begins on the first of September, but only intimate friends and zealous sportsmen are gathered together in the château at the opening of the season. Later there will be guests of ceremony, royal visitors, and all of the gay Parisian crowd whom the family d'Uzes deigns to entertain.

The dowager Duchess, grande dame of the old school, is mistress of the château, but she has able assistants in her daughter-in-law, the young Duchesse d'Uzes, and in her daughters, the great ladies of de Luynes and de Brissac. They fit in oddly with the venerable customs of Bonnelles, these typical products of a society essentially modern, but the combination of new and old is a piquant one, and the excessively up-to-date young Duchesse d'Uzes never appears to better advantage than when she kneels in the little church of Bonnelles on St. Hubert's Day, or, in bravery of blue and scarlet and gold, follows the hounds of Bonnelles through the forest of Rambouillet.

[Pg 177]

The château of Bonnelles is an imposing pile set in a beautiful park of about two hundred acres, and furnishes room for many guests. Life goes to the same tune there as in the other châteaux during the autumn season, though there is a hint of old-world dignity mingled with the modern gaiety, and among the guests are often included interesting figures not familiar in the very modern salons of Paris. And, too, the hunting is taken rather more seriously at Bonnelles than at many of the châteaux, though even there the late season crowd gives itself over to frivolity rather than to sport.

The kennels of Bonnelles are located at the farm of La Celle les Bordes, about five miles from the château, and the old seigneurial farmhouse is used as a hunting-lodge and a museum for relics and trophies of the chase.

There are packs in France larger than that of Bonnelles. The Menier family, for instance, has sixty couples in its kennels which are perhaps the best in France, while the d'Uzes pack numbers only eighty hounds all told, and of these only sixty run with the pack,—but they are aristocrats, these hounds of d'Uzes, with pedigrees that might put nine tenths of the mushroom nobles of France to shame.

[Pg 178]

The hounds of St. Hubert are the oldest hunting-dogs of history. Before the time of

Charlemagne they were the hunting comrades of kings, and though the pure St. Hubert strain has lost caste and the best dogs of the modern French kennels have been crossed with other blood, it is the old French aristocrat among hounds that gives to the famous French packs their long melancholy faces, their marvellous scent, and their melodious voices.

The dogs of Vendee, lineal descendants of the dogs of St. Hubert, were first favourites in the days of Louis XI, and the d'Uzes hounds trace their lineage back to two royal dogs of that early time,—Greffier, one of the king's most valuable hounds, a white St. Hubert crossed with mastiff, and Baude, the pet hound of Anne of France, daughter to the king. Since that far-away day, the Vendean strain has been crossed with royal English buckhound to the great advantage of the French hound, say those who should know, but, despite this alien blood, it is the descendant of Greffier and Baude that yelps in the kennels at La Celle les Bordes when the dog valets put the pack in leash on the morning of St. Hubert's Day.



The Blessing of the Hounds at Bonnelles

This third of November is a great day at Bonnelles, for the Duchess is ardent churchwoman and ardent patron of the chase, and on St. Hubert's Day the two objects of her devotion fraternize in all pomp and ceremony. Out from the lodge gates issues the pack, and with the dogs go the governor of the pack, the two mounted piqueurs, the two chief foresters, the two chief dog valets, and the lesser officials—all of whom make up the equipage d'Uzes. The huntsmen are in hunting costume of the d'Uzes colours, with hunting-horns slung round their necks and hunting-knives in their belts, the dog valets wear the red and blue without the gold lace, and the chief dog sports the colours of his owners.

[Pg 179]

On they go to the little church of Bonnelles where a crowd is awaiting them. Outside the church there is a group of onlookers drawn here by curiosity to see the famous ceremony, but within the doors one finds a gathering of folk whom one remembers seeing at Longchamps, on the Avenue des Acacias, in the Casino at Trouville. The little Duchesse d'Uzes is there, charming in her habit and in her three-cornered hunting-hat with its blue and red and gold, but she is very solemn now, this gay little duchess, very solemn indeed; for, as we have said elsewhere, she is devôte, and even at the blessing of the hounds she does not relax her pose.

The piqueurs lead the dogs before the high altar, the mass of St. Hubert is said, and, as the priests lift the host on high, suddenly there is a carillon of bells, hunting-horns sound the fanfare of St. Hubert, the crowd rustles to its feet. Out of the church file the priests in gorgeous vestments and the red-robed acolytes bearing the blest bread of St. Hubert. The oldest priest crumbles the bread for the dogs, sprinkles holy water over the quivering muzzles. There is another peal of bells, the horns sound gaily, the hunting folk spring to saddle, the guests who are not to hunt climb into their traps and automobiles, the piqueurs crack the long lashes of their dog whips, the hounds strain at their leashes, and the whole procession wends its way merrily toward the place chosen for the meet,—while the outsider privileged to witness the show rubs his eyes and hurries off to find a calendar, that he may see whether perchance this is the year of grace 1905 or an earlier and more ceremonious time.

[Pg 180]

The rendezvous for the meet is at some carrefour or crossroads, where an old stone cross with ancient inscription usually marks a circular opening in the forest, and there one may see an amusing sight on any morning when the hounds are out. Eight o'clock is the rallying hour, and before that hour, though shreds of night still cling to the trees and blur the forest roads, the Duchess is on hand with the party from Bonnelles, to greet her guests.

Up out of the mist they come, gay parties from the neighbouring châteaux, officers from the nearest garrisons, reinforcements from Paris. Some are in hunting costume, some are driving smart traps, many spin up to the rendezvous in automobiles and the snorting and puffing of their machines mixes oddly with the neighing of horses and the restless whining of the hounds. The red coats of the huntsmen, the bright colours of the officers' uniforms, the chic costumes of the women, lend an aspect of gaiety to the sombre forest setting with its wreathing grey mist, and there is a chatter of voices, a ripple of laughter.

The stag which has been tracked and located before the place for the meet was appointed is reported still close at hand, and the master of the hunt gives the word. The hounds are unleashed and sent forward, while at the carrefour, the noise dies down to a murmur or an expectant hush.

[Pg 181]

Then there is a crash in the thicket, the hounds give tongue, high, sweet, and clear on the crisp autumn air the horns sound the "Stag in view," and away goes the hunt, a glinting line of

colour through the dull November woods. The dogs run close, the hunters ride hard, and at their head is the little Duchess, reckless, excited, joying in the sport, true daughter of a hunting house.

It is easy to understand the passion for the chase, when one rides in the wake of the hounds through the haunted old forest of the Druids while the horns are playing the ancient hunting-airs of France and the hounds' sonorous voices ring full and sweet and sad—for there is ever a melancholy in the music when a pack of St. Huberts is in full cry.

The horses stretch themselves to the chase, the tingling morning air is full of wood scents, the sun is scattering the mist.

Hola! Hola! Madame la Duchesse hunts the stag!

The trembling hares and birds seek the thick covert, but they are safe. No presidential battue this, but royal sport. Madame la Duchesse hunts the stag in the ancient forest of kings.

CHAPTER X

UNDER SOUTHERN SKIES

For the gambler and the cocotte, the Riviera means merely Monte Carlo. The gambler is drawn by the lure of the green tables in the splendid Casino. The cocotte goes where the money-spending crowd is to be found, where she may show her frocks and her jewels and her beauty, where recklessness and extravagance and excitement are in the air. She gambles, too, carelessly or cannily, according to her temperament, and she loves to make a sensation on the terrace, in the Café de Paris, at Ciro's, or best of all in the Casino, where the apparition that draws attention from the piles of money on the green felt must be startling indeed.

Incidentally she acknowledges that there are wonderful views and dazzling sunshine and invigorating air outside the brilliantly lighted, over-heated Casino, and that these things contribute to her enjoyment; but she is not an ardent nature lover, this Parisienne, and she would find the Riviera deadly dull without the life that centres round the gaming tables.

Even the residential element and the smart hotel set of aristocratic Cannes and Anglo-American Nice, of Cap Martin and Beaulieu and Cimiez and Mentone, feel the fascination of M. Blanc's earthly paradise upon the Monaco promontory and spend considerable time there in the course of the season; but for this class the social season is as important as the gambling, and Monte Carlo is but a single feature of the Riviera scheme.

[Pg 183]

It has been said that Cannes, Nice, and Monte Carlo represent, respectively, the world, the flesh, and the devil; and the classification is roughly accurate. Cannes has the most exclusive social life along the coast; its villas are occupied by folk whose names rank high in the social blue-books of the European capitals; the registers of its hotels bristle with sounding titles and its swell clubs have membership lists calculated to impress anyone who loves a lord. The Napoule Golf Club at Cannes has a Russian Grand Duke for president and an English Duke for vice-president; and, on the links, counts and barons, belted earls and multi-millionaires, are thick as leaves in Vallambrosa. Even princes and potentates drive off the tees and struggle in the bunkers. One sees rather more of London than of Paris in the crowd, but there are Parisians, too, and they are even more English than the English in their sporting proclivities, for fashion is a more aggressive thing than nature. The whole atmosphere is English at Napoule. From the architecture of the picturesque timbered club-house to the h's of the servants, everything has a fine British flavour, and save for the frocks of the women and the fluent Parisian French dividing honours with English on the links and in the club-house, there is little to remind the guest that he is in France.

Down in the town, and along the famous Promenade de la Croisette, there is a different story. Here, too, a large percentage of the fashionable crowd is English, but the setting is French where it is not Italian. The Croisette, the Promenade des Anglais at Nice, the terrace at Monte Carlo, are three of the most beautiful, the most fashionable, the most amusing promenades in the world, and the idler may spend many profitable hours upon any one of the three; but each has its distinctive flavour just as each of the three towns has its own local colour and its own crowd, though all share alike in the sparkling beauty of the Riviera summer land.

[Pg 184]

Yachting is an institution even more important than golf in the programme of Cannes. The Cercle Nautique, one of the chief rendezvous for the society set, is exclusive to the last degree, and out in the beautiful harbour splendid sea-going yachts from all parts of Europe and from America are anchored during the season. Some of the yacht owners prefer living in hotels or villas during their sojourn and use the boats for cruising only; but more live aboard their floating palaces, and there is constant going and coming twixt yachts and *quai*, to the immense entertainment of outsiders who get no nearer than this to the social life at Cannes. Carriages roll up to the landing and deposit wonderfully gowned women and men whose names are whispered knowingly by the watching throng. Launches are waiting to receive the load of fashion and celebrity. There is a tableau of coquetry and chiffons, a shuffling of royal highnesses and wealthy commoners, and the little boats move off toward the yacht, where luncheon will be served on deck under the awnings, to the accompaniment of tinkling mandolins and guitars.

[Pg 185]

There are worse things even for royalty than to sit at a violet-strewn table under awnings that flap in the soft sea breeze of a sunshiny February day, and, in the intervals of a luncheon prepared by an artist for an epicure, to look off across dimpling blue water to a curving white line of shore where promenaders make bright impressionistic dashes of colour in the sunlight, and to the grove-embowered villas, the imposing, many-pillared hotels, the mediæval little villages that climb the verdure-clad mountains behind the town.

Cannes is lovely,—far lovelier than Nice in its natural scenery, but Cannes is cold to tourists, dull for those who have not the open sesame to its charmed social circle. The ordinary visitor will find Nice far more gay. Here, too, there is an exclusive villa and hotel set, but it does not dominate the situation as at Cannes. There is welcome and entertainment for everyone at Nice. On the Promenade des Anglais stroll men and women from all countries and all classes, and queer groups collect at "la potinière," the gossip rendezvous which ends the promenade. The new town with its public parks, its fascinating shops, its luxurious hotels and modest hostelrys, its gorgeous restaurants and its cheap eating-places, its clubs, its gambling, its flower markets, its tide of restless pleasure seekers, is as gay a place as the world holds when the Riviera season is at its height, and though one may live there cheaply or extravagantly, it would be difficult to live there dully, unless one were a hardened misanthrope; for all things woo to pleasant folly, and jollity is in the air.

[Pg 186]

To stroll from one's hotel to the famous promenade on a bright morning is to snap one's fingers at carking care. The sunshine is such fluid gold as no northern country knows, the air is fresh, intoxicating, full of warring sea scents and flower perfumes, a sky wonderfully soft, deeply blue is overhead, the Mediterranean is a marvellous changing sea of turquoise and sapphire and amethyst and beryl, with here and there high golden lights where the sun catches a ripple of foam. Boys and girls hold out great handfuls of big, long-stemmed purple violets to you and the fragrance comes sweet and heavy to your nostrils. Women in light summer frocks stroll along the broad white walk, stopping to chat with friends; on the roadway which the promenade borders, roll luxurious private carriages, smart dog-carts, hired fiacres, hotel wagons, all loaded with smiling folk, for one smiles perforce in this world of sunshine and flowers and laughter.

On the inland side of the roadway is a line of hotels and villas and cafés and shops, with tropical gardens breaking the line of gleaming white buildings; and in those shops one may find the best that European merchants have to offer to extravagant womankind; for the famous jewellers and milliners and dressmakers of Paris, London, and Vienna have branch establishments here, and the proprietors of the great houses often spend the season in villas at Nice or Monte Carlo and oversee in person their lively Riviera trade.



The Palace of Folly—Monte Carlo

Paquin, Beer, Doeuillet, and their peers are familiar figures at Nice and Monte Carlo; and these mighty ones of the fashion world may well feel, with a glow of satisfaction, that they are responsible for much of the glittering show that passes in review under their critical eyes.

Nice is not given over wholly to fresh air and promenading.

Down in the Casino of the jetty, a pavilion of many minarets which opens off from the promenade and under whose foundations the sea washes listlessly, there is gambling—trente et quarante, roulette, and, in the more exclusive club-rooms to which one is admitted only by card, baccarat; but gambling is an incident at Nice. All things save gambling are incidental at Monte Carlo, and while a host of folk live in Nice without playing at the jetty Casino or the municipal Casino, but few visitors to Monte Carlo resist the fascination of the gaming tables. There is always a crowd at the jetty Casino after luncheon, lounging, gossiping, gaming, listening to the excellent orchestra; and the crowd about the gambling tables is the mixed and motley crowd one always finds in such a situation, but there are fewer smart folk at the trente et quarante and roulette tables than one sees at corresponding tables in Monte Carlo. The fashionables of Nice choose the baccarat club-rooms for their rendezvous, and it is there that you must go to see modish women and well-known men gossiping, flirting, and playing high.

There is a popular restaurant adjoining the gambling rooms,—a gorgeous restaurant, brilliant with scarlet lacquer and Chinese decorations, though chop suey is not on the menu,—and many of the baccarat players dine or sup there; but there are so many places in which to lunch or dine or sup in Nice that one may find a meal to suit any palate, and a price to suit any purse.

The Helder has the same proprietor as Armenonville and the Café de Paris, and much the same crowd. The Regence is the Helder's great rival, and after these comes a long line of town restaurants, each with its individual claim upon the diner's attention, while out on the hills and all along the coast are famous hotel restaurants and cafés to which the gay Nicois resort.

There is tea-drinking, too, and the places where women flock at the tea hour are many, but while my lady of aristocratic Cannes is likely to drink her tea at the Cercle Nautique or in some other exclusive haunt, Madame of Nice frequents tea-rooms such as those of Paris; and tea hour at a place like Vogades offers an interesting study in femininity, though the crowd is frightfully mixed and, sometimes, unconscionably gay.

It is during carnival time that gaiety becomes a trifle furious at Vogades. The regular winter visitors and residents of Nice frown upon King Carnival and dread his advent; but for the transient visitor the show is an amusing one and the common folk of Nice throw themselves into the celebration with a gay abandon that sometimes approaches objectionable license. Who cares whether a few fastidious critics are holding aloof from carnival gaieties when ninety per cent of the motley populace of Nice is eating, drinking, dancing, and making merry, when fun and folly are running riot, when all the town is ablaze with garlands of electric lights and artificial flowers, when confetti is raining through the air and grotesque figures fill the streets.

Vulgar, of course. All carnivals are vulgar and the line between mirth and horse-play is easily crossed, but it is a pity not to see the carnival at Nice at least once, and not to enter into the spirit of the thing, without a handicap of aristocratic prejudices. The age of spontaneous mummery is past and carnival foolery has a strained and artificial note in this self-conscious day,

[Pg 187]

[Pg 188]

[Pg 189]

but one may be merry in Nice when King Carnival sits enthroned and a multitude, hiding its irresponsibility behind masks, gives itself up to folly.

All through the season there are fêtes in Nice. The Battle of Flowers is more like the real thing than is the Parisian imitation; the Corso Automobile Fleuri brings out a brave array of flower-decorated automobiles; the children's flower fête is the prettiest thing of its kind in Europe; and there is a water fête in the bay of Villefranche, where flower-decorated boats and floats loaded with musicians and merry-makers swarm on the blue water, and flower battles rage amid music and laughter and the murmur of the waves. Grim war-vessels are usually lying in the harbour and the revellers row out to pelt the monsters derisively with flowers and jests, and to aim violet bunches impartially at the cannon's mouth and the ranking officer's head.

Yes, Nice is gay,—absurdly gay; and if, at its gayest, it is not smart, still one will see the loveliest of Parisian toilettes in the restaurants and the Casino, and on the promenade.

[Pg 190]

There are lovely villas in Nice, hidden away, even in the more crowded parts of the town, among palms and aloes and banana trees and eucalyptus, and gay with yellow mimosa and other flowering things while behind the town on the hillsides are villas lovelier still, gleaming white amid groves of orange and lemon trees and tropical vegetation, and overlooking shore and sea. Wherever there is space for them flowers grow, and every breath of air is sweet-scented. In the distance, beyond the grey-green slopes where the olives thrive, are misty, snow-capped mountains, and far away along the coast stretches the white thread of the Corniche road, that road of marvellous views and picturesque surprises, which is the heart's delight of the motor maniacs on the Riviera.

Motoring is a passion with the Riviera crowd as with every holiday crowd to-day, and though many of the roads are too steep and narrow and rugged for motors, or even for comfortable driving, the few that are practicable are beautiful enough not to grow monotonous. From one resort to another, all along the coast, the automobiles go scudding, and even the steep hills of Monte Carlo swarm with puffing cars. A little danger more or less makes small impression upon the Monte Carlo crowd. Skidding recklessly down hill is, figuratively speaking, the metier of so many of the throng that haunts the Casino and fills the great hotels.

Life at Monte Carlo is essentially sensational. A continual whirl of excitement seems to be the ideal of the habitué, and the class that centres there spends money recklessly, without reserve and without calculation. There are gamblers who haven't the money to spend; but they live cheaply at some one of the nearby resorts, where they may lose themselves between Casino hours, and in the little town of fine hotels and cafés and shops which clings to the skirts of the Casino, life goes to a merry tune. Perhaps the unwholesome fever of the gaming rooms infects the district; but, whatever the cause, Monte Carlo sees little of the sanely joyous life that may be found at other Riviera resorts. Everything is brilliant, luxurious, dramatic, but of restfulness and simple pleasure the beautiful spot knows nothing, and though, for a few days, even the fastidious traveller may be well amused there, for a longer stay it is wise to go outside of the miasmatic circle.

[Pg 191]

The incongruity between drama and setting is one of the most striking things about the place, though familiarity dulls the first swift impression of the contrast. If ever man diverted God-given beauty to the devil's uses, he has done it there upon the Monaco shore, and the serpent was no more out of place in Paradise than is a gambling Casino on that picturesque promontory overlooking the Mediterranean—but the daughters of Eve have smiled upon the Casino as their ancestors smiled upon the serpent, and though their gambling has been for smaller stakes than hers, they have made a somewhat spectacular record of their own. The feminine element at Monte Carlo is one of the most characteristic and dramatic features of the resort. Nowhere else in the world will one see women of all classes gambling openly and heavily; nowhere else are the alpha and omega of feminine folly so sharply and obviously contrasted—and so gaily and recklessly ignored. Around the tables, from opening until closing hour, crowd women derelicts; each train that stops at the station below the wonderful terraces brings more. The veriest ingénue might read the stories of wreck and disaster, yet the warning makes not the faintest impression upon the fair feminine craft steering head on toward the rocks.

[Pg 192]

How can Fifi of the wonderful frocks and jewels guess that she will lose once too often at the little green tables, that the day of adorers ready and eager to pay her losses will pass, that youth and beauty will make way for such shrivelled and haggard age as that of the painted and bedizened harpies who haunt the gaming rooms, staking their few francs and watching for opportunities of making way with the stakes of other players.

For the average casual visitor to Monte Carlo, these hags of the Casino are among the sharpest and cleanest cut of first impressions. Later one grows used to them, ignores them, allows them to take their places in the shifting human panorama that is in its way as fascinating as the roulette and trente et quarante which brings the crowd together; but at first these hideous old women of the furrowed faces plastered with rouge, of the furtive eyes, of the loose lips, the trembling claw-like hands, the dirty laces, the false jewels, have a hateful fascination, obscure all other impressions.

[Pg 193]

There are many of the harpies living entirely by fraud, and though croupiers, detectives, and attendants know some of them and suspect others, it seems impossible to keep them out of the Casino. Occasionally the doors are barred to someone, but under the present administration admission rules are more lax than they were in the old days, and the whole character of the Casino crowd, while perhaps not more vicious, is certainly more vulgar than it was under M. Blanc's régime.

The system of the women thieves is a simple one. An excited crowd surrounds a roulette table; many of the players know comparatively little about the game. The stakes are placed, money is

lost or won, and raked in or distributed, in less time than is required for the telling of it. While a novice hesitates, wondering whether the money on a certain number is really hers, a yellow hand reaches across her shoulder and snatches the stakes. Even if the victim is sure that she knows the offender, she hesitates to make a scene, to be implicated in a gaming-room scandal, and the thief audaciously counts upon this immunity. Sometimes, however, an attendant sees the transaction and lays a firm hand upon the old woman's arm before she can get away. Or perhaps the croupier of the immobile face and the eyes that see all things notices the hand closing upon money to which it has no right and brings his rake down sharply upon the thin wrist in time to stop the move.

There are other wrinkled and haggard old women in the Casino crowd,—women less contemptible, more pitiable, but unpleasant sights for all that. They come to the gambling rooms to play, not to steal; but the gambling fever has burned out all that was pure womanly in them and nothing is left to them in life save the vice they hug to their hearts. Some of them have been playing there ever since the first years of the Casino, missing never a day from the opening to the closing of the season, and usually staying all day long in the hot, ill-ventilated rooms. They have but little money and they play cautiously, watching the run of the game, making innumerable notes in little note-books, taking no great risks.

[Pg 194]

One Russian princess is among the number. Old habitués of the Casino say that when she came there first, twenty-five years ago, she was beautiful, superbly gowned, magnificently bejewelled, but gaming is in the Russian blood and the princess was a born gambler. She squandered her fortune, pawned her jewels, sank lower and lower in the gambling mire, gave herself up more and more unreservedly to her absorbing passion. To-day, she lives in a cheap pension at Mentone and belongs to the class known in Monte Carlo as "the bread-winners,"—a class of gamblers making a regular daily visit to the Casino, playing until perhaps ten, fifteen, or fifty francs ahead of the bank, and then leaving. If one is content with making a mere daily pittance out of the tables, the thing can be surely and systematically done; and, every morning the first train brings an army of these bread-winners, together with hundreds of bolder gamblers. There is always a crowd waiting at the Casino doors when they are opened, always a wild scramble for the chairs around the tables; and, once comfortably seated, these early comers are usually good for the day, or at least until dinner-time. They are the most economical and persistent, though not the most profitable, of the Casino's patrons.

[Pg 195]

Fashionable folk favour shorter gambling hours. If Madame is staying at one of the Monte Carlo hotels,—at the famous Hôtel de Paris, let us say, a hotel beloved of Parisian demimondaines and their satellites, but patronized by cosmopolitan great folk as well,—she arises very late and has her breakfast on a terrace with a sunlit sapphire sea stretching out before her and an awning sheltering her from the too ardent sun. The chances are that it is a delectable breakfast, for there is good cooking in Monte Carlo. The prodigal crowd that spends its money there demands high living, and the Café de Paris, with its Indian interior and its famous grill-room, has seen gay dinners and suppers in its time and has appropriated a generous share of the winnings of lucky gamblers, beside helping the Casino to rid the unlucky player of his money.

Ciro's, too, has played its part in nineteenth-century romance and scandal and had its share in the Monte Carlo harvest. The proprietor, an energetic and diplomatic Italian, has made a large fortune and deserves it, for he can produce for his cosmopolitan patrons on demand any dish from buckwheat cakes to the most delicate frittura, and any drink from vodka to Jersey apple-jack. Perhaps that is stating the case too strongly, but he is a remarkable restaurateur, this *Ciro*.

[Pg 196]

These are but two restaurants of the many; and if one tires of the town, there is the mountain restaurant at la Turbie, to which one climbs by a funicular and where the air is keen and cool from the snowy mountain peaks. Even the view alone is worth the trip to la Turbie; for, from the restaurant terrace, one looks down upon Monaco with its palace and cathedral, upon Monte Carlo with its snowy villas and Casino amid their groves and gardens, and upon miles of summer sea.

When déjeuner is ended there are many ways of passing what is left of the day. The terrace is thronged during the late morning hours, and if one has breakfasted early enough there is time for a stroll there—a stroll that calls for a smart costume, if one makes pretence of being truly chic. Up and down the beautiful promenade saunter the idlers—a crowd as interesting and as mixed as that of the promenade des Anglais or the promenade at Trouville. Past they file, rosy-cheeked, middle-class Englishwomen in ill-fitting frocks, consummately modish Parisiennes, notorious in Monte Carlo as at home, fat German Jewesses, American girls chaperoning their tired and patient parents, French, American, and English actresses, great ladies from all countries, men of every type, from hard-faced chevalier d'industrie to reigning monarch, from gilded youth to elderly roué.



The Crowd at Monte Carlo

One sees many a new fashion note on the Monte Carlo terrace, and, later, costumes still more chic are in evidence at the Casino concert, to which come music lovers from all the neighbouring resorts, for the Monte Carlo orchestra is one of the best in Europe and even moralists who have serious scruples to forbid their gambling do not hesitate to take advantage of the concerts provided by the profits of the tables.

[Pg 197]

For the sporting contingent there is driving and motoring during the early afternoon, before the chill creeps into the air; and on the terrace overlooking the grounds of the International Pigeon Shooting Club there is always a crowd watching the shooting below. Butchery rather than sport, this pigeon shooting, but the Monte Carlo club is the most famous in the world and draws the crack shots from all countries. Betting runs high among the sportsmen and the onlookers, and the club events are a great source of entertainment to those who have heart and stomach for such sport.

After the tea hour, the Casino begins to fill with the crowd that is its mainstay, the high-playing, heavily plunging, extravagant crowd, willing to buy excitement at any price, and some of the heaviest gambling is done in those hours just before the dinner. The hush grows more pronounced, more oppressive, and the croupier's monotonous voice sounds more clearly in its maddening iteration, "Messieurs, Mesdames, faites vos jeux.—Les jeux sont faits. Rien ne va plus."

Every seat at the tables is filled, crowds are clustering behind the chairs, leaning forward to play, watching with excitement an unusual run of good or bad luck, but quiet, intent, absorbed. There is never noise and confusion, never an outbreak that can create scandal. A battalion of official employees attends to that, and quickly, effectually suppresses any objectionable scene.

[Pg 198]

Monsieur François Blanc, who was responsible for Monte Carlo, was fond of saying that he had made and kept the place "absolutely respectable." He is dead now, this M. Blanc, but before he died he built a cathedral not far from his Casino, and in a mortuary chapel of the cathedral reposes the old Prince of Monaco, who granted to M. Blanc the rights that made Monte Carlo possible.

The scoffer smiles at that cathedral; and yet M. Blanc offered it to le bon Dieu in all sincerity. He was a quiet, unpretentious little man, devoted to his family, charitable, abstemious in his habits, playing no game save billiards, gambling not at all, a good man so far as personal life went, and without scruples concerning his gambling paradise. He insisted rigidly that play at Monte Carlo should be under absolutely fair conditions. As for running a great gambling establishment—it was a business like another. He was not ashamed of his metier and allowed no threats nor pleas nor argument to disturb him. Men and women would gamble.—Eh bien, here was a beautiful place in which they might indulge their propensity without fear of dishonest treatment. If they ruined themselves, if they committed suicide,—that was their affair. They would have done the same thing elsewhere and he would have preferred their doing it elsewhere, for suicides and scenes interfered somewhat with prosperous business. A host of detectives and attendants was employed by M. Blanc to prevent suicide or hush it up if it occurred, and an official department was established for the purpose of furnishing unlucky patrons of the Casino with money enough to betake themselves elsewhere. Ruined gamblers were eloquently urged not to die upon the premises. Railroad tickets and certain sums of money were supplied to worthy applicants to whose hard luck and financial collapse officials of the gambling rooms could testify. The system was not, however, purely charitable,—M. Blanc did not believe in pauperizing the poor. An I. O. U. was accepted in exchange for funds supplied, and it was understood that this note must be met before the holder could ever again be admitted to the Casino. Some time ago statistics showed that forty thousand pounds had been distributed by this department of ways and means—but that thirty thousand pounds had been repaid. From which one may argue a large proportion of human integrity or of gambling mania, as one is optimist or cynic.

[Pg 199]

M. Blanc had made his fortune in administering the gambling affairs of Homburg and Baden Baden. When Germany shut down upon gambling he looked about for a place in which he could establish a gambling resort without fear of interference from a paternal government, and his shrewd eye fell upon the little principality of Monaco. His Royal Highness the Prince of Monaco, who was absolute ruler of this little kingdom three and a half miles long by one mile wide, came of an illustrious line of gentlemanly pirates, and since piracy had fallen from favour in the Mediterranean, his revenues were not so princely as his title and palace. He was pleased to make over his piratical rights to M. Blanc in consideration of an annual subsidy which gave him an income really royal. Incidentally the Frenchman agreed to attend to the municipal affairs of the

[Pg 200]

province, to free the subjects of the Prince from all taxation, and to guarantee that no one of them should be allowed to enter the Casino. An excellent bargain from a material view-point the old Prince made. His successor, Albert I, the scholarly scientist and Prince who now lives in the ancient palace of the Grimaldis, where the little town of Monaco huddles on its isolated rock, facing the Monte Carlo fairyland across the port of Condamine, has scruples concerning the source of his income, it is said, but the Monte Carlo lease, which is held by a syndicate since M. Blanc's death, has until 1913 to run. Then we shall see what we shall see. The Prince, who is a French nobleman, has French revenues which would keep him from penury, and he is a man of simple tastes; but it would be a sacrifice for a saint to give up a royal fortune for a scruple, and one can hardly expect a worldly monarch to court canonization in such fashion.

Once in possession of his promontory, M. Blanc proceeded to spend a fortune upon it. A gambling enterprise had already been tried there but had failed, partly through mismanagement, partly because the place was inaccessible, visitors being obliged to arrive by water and be taken ashore in small boats.

The natural location was, however, beautiful beyond description, and M. Blanc had the genius to appreciate his opportunity. The architect of the Paris Opera House was called into consultation and a five-million-dollar Casino was built. Everything that art and money could do to make the gambling rooms, the corridors, the concert hall, the theatre, luxurious and beautiful was done. Splendid terraces, gardens, fountains, were added; a great reading-room was supplied with the most complete collection of periodical literature in the world; the finest of classical concerts were given in the concert-hall; the best artists of Paris were engaged to present the latest and most successful Parisian plays in the little jewel of a theatre; capitalists were induced to build a railroad to the place and a big elevator was constructed to carry up from the trains all who did not care to climb the terraces; a luxurious café was installed in the Casino grounds.

[Pg 201]

M. Blanc was a frugal man, but he could scatter money like chaff for a purpose, and he fulfilled his purpose. The fame of Monte Carlo spread far and wide. Visitors flocked there from all over the world, and the time was short indeed before the originator's money had returned to him with interest many times compounded. To-day, after the income of the Prince is handed over to him, after the taxes of the principality are settled, after the immense staff of official employees, the musicians, the artists, are paid, after the repairs and running expenses have been provided for, the stockholders divide an annual profit of from two million to two million five hundred thousand dollars. A profitable business, as M. Blanc foresaw when he made his investment.

The syndicate which now holds the lease and manages the palace follows as far as possible the system of M. Blanc, but the body has not the old manager's genius for doing the wrong thing in exactly the right way, and the place was not what it once was. M. Blanc had made the Casino a club and so retained the right to bar or eject whom he would. In the old days the age limit was strictly observed. Now one sees mere boys and girls at the tables. For a long time a frock coat and high hat in the daytime, and evening dress after six, were de rigueur, and women's toilettes were carefully considered. Lord Salisbury and his wife were once refused admission at the door because the Premier wore a shabby old felt hat and tweeds, and a celebrated actress who once appeared in a highly æsthetic costume was told she could enter after going home and changing her déshabillé.

[Pg 202]

To-day, everything from dress clothes to bicycle costume is permissible in the Casino, though a careful toilet is the rule, and a host of very shabby and disreputable gamblers mingles with the more aristocratic set. The crowd is more sordid, more vulgar, less chic than of old. Fewer high-class English and French patronize the tables, and the German Jews who have taken their places have not improved the general tone of the throng.

But all this the ordinary visitor does not know, and even now the place is as fascinating as it is unwholesome.

In the evening come the most brilliant and spectacular hours of the Casino day. Then one sees the exquisite frocks, the superb jewels, the celebrities of good and ill repute. The women wear elaborate evening dress, usually topped by a picture hat, and though many mondaines avoid conspicuous Casino toilettes, the demi-mondaines vie with each other in gorgeousness of attire.

[Pg 203]

Some of these rivalries have afforded tremendous entertainment for onlookers who appreciated the moves in the feminine game. Liane de Pougy and la belle Otero, for example, have contributed largely to the Monte Carlo amusement programme during recent years. Deadly rivals these two, who fought their battles wherever they went in Fashion's train, in Paris, at Trouville, at Monte Carlo. Both were lionnes of the most formidable type, leaving a wake of ruin and disaster behind them, devouring fortunes with Brobdignagian voracity, plunging into the maddest extravagances. Men raved over their beauty, though cooler-headed critics insisted that Otero was only a rather coarse and common Spanish type, with bold, staring eyes, a cruel, sensuous mouth, and a good figure, while de Pougy, with her long neck and cat-in-the-cream expression, deserved no beauty prize.

The toilettes of the two were legion and beggared description. Their jewels were a proverb.

One night, at the Casino, one of the rivals appeared wearing all her jewels, and even the maddest gambler stopped his play to look at her. From head to foot she was ablaze with precious stones of the finest water, diamonds, rubies, sapphires, emeralds, and pearls, gleaming on throat and arms and fingers and in her hair, covering her bodice, fastened upon her skirts.

The achievement was the sensation of the season. Nothing else was spoken of the next day, and triumph was written large upon the face of the wearer of the jewels; but she had reckoned without her host. The Casino was more crowded than usual on the following evening. Curious folk went to see how one beauty would carry off her victory and how the other would accept her defeat. The triumphant one was handsome, beaming, self-satisfied, but her rival was late in

[Pg 204]

coming and gossip whispered that something dramatic was to be expected.

It occurred.

Down the length of the gambling rooms walked the woman for whom the crowd was waiting. She was perfectly gowned, but with an exquisite and elaborate simplicity, with a good taste beyond question. Behind her came her maid decked in jewels from coiffure to slipper toe, enjoying her part in the comedy, yet awed by the fortune she carried with her.

No words were necessary, the most unlettered could read the retort. Madame also had jewels—as many and as fine as those of her rival. If anyone doubted that fact, let him observe. But as for wearing all one's jewels at once,—impossible for a woman of taste!

The reign of la belle Otero is over. Liane de Pougy's tenure of favour is very uncertain, but they have furnished the Riviera with a wealth of gossip in their time. Monte Carlo would miss their annual duel, were there not younger favourites, as beautiful and as shameless, to air their toilettes and jewels and jealousies in M. Blanc's "absolutely respectable" rendezvous.

[Pg 205]

Few women go to Monte Carlo without trying their luck at the tables, though the fall from grace on the part of the ordinary tourist may mean only a few francs lost or won. Starry-eyed young girls, staid matrons with respectability stamped upon their brows, stern, elderly spinsters—all may be seen at the roulette board where small stakes may be hazarded; but they are the novices, the transients who are tasting the new experience with a fearful joy. The seasoned and systematic woman gambler is another thing. So is the reckless woman who does not bother about system and risks large sums as lightly as she waves her fan, and with far less calculation.

Langtry belonged to this last class. In her heyday, one might see her, charmingly gowned, radiantly beautiful, twisting up thousand-franc notes and tossing them on the table to lie wherever they might fall, losing as carelessly as she won and far more often than she won.

Otero and de Pougy, and many of their guild, are of the shrewd and canny type, gambling to win, and taking the game of chance seriously, though worrying little over losses and throwing away winnings with both hands. The brilliant jewelry shops and the Mont de Pieté of Monte Carlo are equally prosperous. The winners buy jewels, the losers pawn them,—but, on the whole, it is the men who gamble heavily. Three fourths of the women who have money enough to play extravagantly care more about what they wear to the Casino than about what they win or lose, would rather win at hearts and chiffons than at roulette. Occasionally a woman, like the old Russian princess, ruins herself dramatically at Monte Carlo, but more often it is the petty woman gambler who comes to grief—the woman who has only a little money and no resources to draw upon when that little is swallowed up. Not long ago six little American chorus girls, who had heard much about the gaiety and extravagance of Monte Carlo, and had conceived the idea that between luck at gambling and luck at love a half-dozen pretty Americans might corner considerable of the gaiety and of the wherewithal for extravagance, went down to the Riviera and tried trente et quarante.

[Pg 206]

A few weeks later, when they were penniless, miserable, absolutely stranded, without money either to stay or to go home, Sybil Sanderson heard of their plight and played good angel for the six homesick, disillusioned, singed little moths. The flames are cruel at Monte Carlo.

But it is the man who really supports the Casino, the man who squanders fortunes at the tables, the man who evolves infallible systems, who gives himself up utterly to the gambling, who commits suicide on the terrace, or breaks the bank.

Suicides are few, and the few are carefully covered up, concealed. The management even denies that they occur, but ugly rumours are persistent and many seem to be backed by facts. Detectives are eternally vigilant to suppress scandal. They rise from the ground, they fall from the trees, they follow the lucky winner to his hotel or train in order to see that he is not waylaid and murdered or robbed by thugs, as has happened before now, they shadow desperate losers and prevent ugly scenes, they instruct the penniless where to find the benevolent gentleman who is willing to furnish transportation away from Monte Carlo for the human sponge that has been squeezed dry.

[Pg 207]

The bank breakers are even fewer than the suicides. In the old days, a certain amount of money was allowed to each table for one day. If the bank lost that amount, the table went out of commission for the rest of the session; but now, if a lucky player breaks the bank, it means only a wait of a few minutes until a new package of money can be brought from the vaults. When the money arrives, play goes on.

Charles Wells, an engineer, was the man whose spectacular winnings inspired the song concerning "the man who broke the bank at Monte Carlo," but many another man has done the thing and some of them have repeated the operation several times. There, for instance, was Garcia, who broke the bank again and again and was a nine days' wonder at Monte Carlo. He died a wretched death in the slums of Paris, that lucky Garcia.

And there was a New York salesman among the bank breakers. Some of the older New York business men may remember him, for he was a popular fellow and he cut a wide swath in Europe. First he broke the bank at Monte Carlo,—broke it with fine spirit and éclat and was the envied hero of the hour. Then he went to Paris and opened a gambling place that quickly became famous. Baccarat was the game, and the New Yorker's luck held. He could not lose. His name was known all over Europe. Paris gave him the title of Le Roi Baccarat, and in the morning papers the latest doings of the baccarat king were as much a matter of course as the stock market reports.

[Pg 208]

Of course the luck changed. It always does. One day the baccarat king began to lose, and he was as persistent in losing as he had been in winning. The close air of the gambling rooms had affected his lungs and his health went with his money. One of the many women who had loved

him in his brilliant day, took him, a consumptive pauper, to her lodgings, and gave him shelter, food, and care, but she had no money to do more. Finally several of the man's old friends and business associates in New York heard of his condition and sent money to bring him home. He came, a dying man, and a little later the same friends contributed the money to bury him.

Histories of that sort are common among the men who have broken the bank at Monte Carlo.

As for the Casino management, it does not lament when some one breaks the bank. Far from it. Such a run of luck advertises the fairness of the game and encourages gamblers. The syndicate is frankly pleased when anyone wins in spectacular fashion—or in any fashion whatsoever, for winning only fans the gambling fever and in the end it is always the bank that wins. The old saying launched in M. Blanc's day is true: "C'est encore rouge qui perd, et encore noir, mais toujours Blanc qui gagne."

The bank of Monte Carlo is honest as the Bank of England. No hint of trickery has ever been associated with it, but outside the Casino there are gambling resorts of a different character. It is said that more money is lost at the private gambling clubs of Nice in a night than at Monte Carlo in a week; and whether or not this is true, it is certain that more men are ruined in these outside gambling hells than in the Casino. The game at the latter place is fair; only cash stakes are allowed; there is no bar and anyone drunk enough to make a scene is expelled. At many of the private clubs the play is dishonest; I. O. U's are accepted; and a drunken fool may gamble away not only all he has with him, but all he has elsewhere or ever expects to have, and more. Not all of the suicides along the Riviera are due to M. Blanc's gambling palace.

It is difficult to keep away from the subject of the gambling when one talks of Monte Carlo. A famous show of frocks and jewels and women is on view there; the fashions of the coming summer are launched there; the social game is played with verve and zest there; But, at a distance, one remembers rather the crowd around the green tables under the great chandeliers, the flushed faces, the twitching mouths, the trembling hands, and the uncanny, oppressive, breathless hush that follows the croupier's "Rien ne va plus."

[Pg 209]

[Pg 210]

CHAPTER XI

LES AMERICAINES

Many Americans swing round the calendar with the fashionable Parisiennes. Some of them, having married into the innermost circles of the French aristocracy, belong to the most exclusive French set and jealously guard their privileges, associating little with their own countrywomen of the American colony, for there is a world of difference between the Parisian social standing of the American woman who has married into an aristocratic French family and the American woman of the American colony. The latter may be brilliant, popular, and rich, may entertain extravagantly and live in a whirl of gaiety; but, as a rule, there are certain Parisian salons to which she has not the entrée, certain doors stubbornly closed to her, despite her beauty and wit and wealth. There are exceptions, of course, but, generally speaking, the hostess of the American colony does not have upon her visiting list the names of the greatest ladies of the French set. Her dinners cost more than any given in the Faubourg St. Germain, her cotillion favours are a nine days' Parisian wonder, she draws round her a wealthy and amusing circle of fellow Americans and foreigners, but she has not the open sesame to French doors which other Americans have gained by marriage,—paying dearly sometimes for their social privileges.

[Pg 211]

The American colony is a shifting, transient thing, changing continually, yet always the same in its general character and always an important factor in Parisian life. Americans living in other parts of Europe drift into Paris at some seasons to swell this colony, or join the crowd on the Riviera or on the Normandy coast; and then there is always the casual visitor, the American who runs over to Europe for frocks or frivolity, but makes no pretence of living abroad.

Among this last group are a majority of the smartest folk of American society, and a number of these passing visitors are accorded social honours seldom granted to the resident American in Paris. It is among these women, too, that the Parisian tradesmen find their most profitable patrons, and a large percentage of the loveliest confections turned out by the great dressmakers of Paris is carried away in the trunks of private American customers.

It would be hard to overestimate the importance of the American woman in the Parisian fashion scheme. She pays out more money to the famous dressmakers and milliners of Paris than all of their other private patrons taken together; and, even when she herself is not of the class that does its shopping in Paris, still she swells the receipts of Paris tradesfolk, for in order to satisfy her tastes an army of American buyers goes to Paris twice a year and carries home French materials, French models, and French ideas, which will be incorporated into the output of all American caterers to woman's vanity, from the manufacturer of inexpensive, ready-made frocks to the swellest of New York dressmakers.

[Pg 212]

In 1893, Worth went to the trouble of looking up Parisian dress statistics and found that the value of the material consumed annually in France for women's dress was two hundred million dollars; that one hundred million dollars' worth was supplied to the Parisian dressmakers and that the American share of the whole amount was more than that of all other countries counted together. The statistics also showed that fully one half of the Parisian dressmakers' sales was carried off in personal luggage,—which, of course, means private sales.

All this figuring was done thirteen years ago and at that time the sales had increased two hundred and fifty per cent within twenty-five years. Since then the rate of increase has been even greater. American extravagance in dress has advanced in great leaps, and M. Worth's figures would doubtless seem small if compared with to-day's statistics.

The dressmakers of Paris are, of course, disinclined to give information concerning the amounts of money paid to them by their private customers, but they are willing enough to give estimates without names attached, and the extravagant expenditures of certain wealthy Americans are common gossip in the dressmaking circles of Paris.

The most important single order for dress ever placed in Europe came from an American source, but, for certain private reasons, it did not find its way to Paris, and there was weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth, mixed with the buzzing gossip of the Parisian ateliers when the facts concerning this famous order leaked out.

[Pg 213]

A bride's trousseau was the occasion for the spectacular outlay, and Drecol of Vienna was the lucky dressmaker. Just what the bill amounted to, the firm has never been indiscreet enough to confess; but well authenticated reports place the sum at two hundred thousand dollars, and rumour runs it up to two hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

The items were enumerated in the order, but carte blanche was given in every case and all that was demanded was that each garment should be as nearly perfect for its purpose as the firm could make it. Life has nothing better to offer an artist dressmaker than an opportunity such as this, and the Viennese firm endeavoured to live up to the situation.

There was, for example, a certain long cloth coat on the list. It was to be green, of a shade indicated, and it was to have for trimming six Imperial Russian sable skins. The skins were to be of the finest quality and perfectly matched. No limit was set to the price. A simple matter this, in the estimation of the novice, but Drecol knows better. Three of the skins desired were obtained without trouble, a fourth was secured after some search, a fifth was found far from Vienna, but the sixth proved a will-o'-the-wisp. Buyers chased it from one end of Europe to another. There were plenty of superb sables, but not one to match perfectly the other five, and the maker's faith was pledged, his blood was up. St. Petersburg, Nijni Novgorod, Leipsic, Paris, London, all the great fur markets knew the hunters of that sixth skin, and the quarry was finally run to earth and

[Pg 214]

added to the collar of the unassuming coat provided for an American bride. Not one person out of a thousand could have gauged the value of the furs, could have understood the perfection with which they were matched, but one can imagine that a dressmaking establishment does not organize an all-Europe sable hunt for any small sum.

In that matter of furs, our American women have become recklessly lavish. Everyone can remember the time when even the most fashionable of society women considered one sealskin coat a cherished possession justifying pride. Now, women of the multi-millionaire set will buy a twenty-thousand-dollar sable coat as nonchalantly as though it were a linen duster. One New York importer who caters largely to the ultra swell clique went abroad last fall commissioned to buy three sable coats, two of which were to cost any sum up to twenty thousand dollars, while the price of the third might soar to thirty thousand if the buyer should find what he would consider good value for that sum. There are several forty-thousand-dollar sable coats in this country, and sets costing from five thousand to ten thousand dollars may be counted by the hundreds.

Moreover, the fashionable woman does not content herself with one set of furs, but buys them to match her costumes, as she would buy a veil or a pair of gloves, and will own perhaps a dozen sets, discarding immediately any that begin to show wear or are not of the latest cut. One Western woman bought five fur coats in New York this season, one a superb affair of sable, one a motor coat, and the other three fancy short coats trimmed in lace and embroidery. Now that no one with money spends a summer in a warm climate, the fashionable woman's furs are in commission all the year round, and the American, like the Parisienne, will wear her sables over a summer frock in August, if she is where the temperature is chilly. Naturally the wear and tear is greater than in the old days when furs were carefully put away during half the year, and the modern *élégante's* furs have to be frequently replenished.

[Pg 215]

My lady's furs are only one item of many included in her year's wardrobe, and the other items are proportionately expensive. The heads of establishments counting among their *clientèles* the wealthiest women of New York and of the other important American cities were consulted in the compiling of the list that follows, and were asked for conservative estimates of the sums spent annually for goods in their lines, by a representative woman of the very smart set. In every case the authority consulted emphasized the fact that some of our women spend much more than the sum mentioned, and that occasionally, for some special reason, a customer will plunge into phenomenal extravagance.

Here is the list, which is, after all, but a fragmentary one, for it is hard to estimate upon the thousand and one little things of dress:

[Pg 216]

Evening gowns	\$3,500
Dinner gowns	3,500
Carriage and reception gowns	3,000
Street frocks	2,500
Automobile and sports	1,500
Negligées	1,500
Lingerie	2,500
Fur	2,000
Gloves, parasols, hosiery, neckwear, etc.	2,500
Hats	1,200
	\$23,700

The reader who has not looked into the matter may consider this sum total an exaggerated one; but, on the contrary, it is, while of course only approximate, a very modest average made up from the figures furnished by reliable tradesfolk in positions warranting their speaking authoritatively. Furs, for instance, set down at two thousand dollars a year, sometimes mount to forty thousand in one season. Twenty-five hundred dollars may seem an appalling amount to pay out for lingerie during the year, but one authority quoted four thousand dollars and another thirty-five hundred, and both added that there were New York women who spent even more than that. At *Mademoiselle Corne's* place,—perhaps the most fashionable of the lingerie establishments of Paris, an inquirer was shown several trunkfuls of fine lingerie ready to be sent to an American customer, and among the items were sets of three pieces priced at nine hundred francs (one hundred and eighty dollars), lingerie tea-jackets at four hundred francs, lingerie petticoats at three hundred and fifty francs. At that rate twenty-five hundred dollars will not go so very far, and in this day of lingerie marvellously embellished with handwork and real lace, prices mount to surprising heights.

[Pg 217]

The elaborate negligée is of comparatively recent acceptance in America, but now the boudoir gown and tea-gown are considered important by chic Americans, and five hundred dollars is no unusual price for an exquisite tea-gown. One New York woman bought three at that price from a Paris maker last fall, so fifteen hundred dollars is surely a mild figure for the year's negligées.

Twenty-five hundred dollars will not begin to pay for the gloves, silk stockings, parasols, fans, and such little accessories bought by a woman of the class under consideration, during a year and no estimate has been made upon jewels, for there the scale may slide to any figure.

All this expert testimony as to the extravagance of the American woman of fashion may vex the souls of the righteous and lead the philosopher and student of social economy to gloomy prophecy concerning the future of American society, but the moralizing may be done elsewhere. Here is only a statement of facts, and it is undeniably a fact that the fashionable women of America spend more upon personal luxuries than any other class in the world, save only a small group of Parisian *demi-mondaines*.

[Pg 218]

It is not only the New York woman who is extravagant, though since wealth is concentrated there, that city is the headquarters of the spenders. The spirit has spread all over our country, and wherever one finds great American fortunes, there one finds the woman of the costly frocks and furs and jewels.

The largest single order ever placed with a Parisian dressmaker was given to Worth by a Chicago woman—and an elderly woman, not socially conspicuous despite her wealth. Twenty-five trunks were used for shipping the order, and one hundred and forty expensive garments were packed into the trays. Every city of importance and a host of the small towns are represented upon the books of the Paris houses. The City of Mexico has a clique of society women famous for dress, and the South American trade is considered very important in Paris. Dwellers in the States have a "magerful" fashion of appropriating the term American for their own private use, and appear to harbour a vague general idea that south of Palm Beach and Miami a bead necklace is the accepted costume; but the tradesfolk of Paris know better. Crowds of wealthy South Americans flock into Paris each summer and spend money lavishly upon clothes, jewels, and all the other luxuries of a prodigal civilization. In all the South American capitals one finds the woman of the French frock, and Buenos Ayres, in particular, has a smart set remarkable for the fashion and extravagance of its women.

Naturally it is not only in the province of clothes the money-spending mania of America asserts itself. Among Americans of wealth the cost of living has swelled to a startling figure. Numerous magnificent homes equipped with every luxury that money can buy, entertainment on a princely scale, servants by the score, horses, carriages, automobiles, steam-yachts,—all these are the necessities of the multi-millionaire who is in society. The floral decorations for a dinner or ball often cost thousands of dollars, and five hundred dollars' worth of flowers for a small dinner in New York or Newport is no unusual order. Cotillion favours for a large ball have been known to cost ten thousand dollars, and thousands of dollars go to the caterer upon such an occasion.

[Pg 219]

When the Castellanes, during their social career, spent forty thousand dollars on one evening's entertainment, all Paris was agog, but that sum has been far exceeded for single social functions in New York, and from ten thousand dollars to twenty thousand dollars is no surprising cost for a successful ball.

Every year the social standards mount higher, in point of expenditure, and new methods of getting rid of money are added to the already long list. The motor, for example, has added from fifteen thousand to twenty thousand dollars to the annual expenditure of numerous wealthy men who have motor mania in its acute form, buy many superb cars, employ expensive machinists and chauffeurs, build fine garages, and race their cars.

But all this extraordinary lavishness is confined to a comparatively small part of our population, affects but a little clique of millionaires, and while even in smart society a large contingent is living beyond its means, a majority of the most extravagant American money-spenders have fortunes ample enough to justify their annual expenditures—at least from a financial point of view. It is the increasing extravagance in dress and luxury among the classes of more moderate incomes that is most interesting to a social student, and the American tendency is, proportionately, as marked here as in wealthier circles.

[Pg 220]

All along the social line American women are spending more for dress than ever before. Each year marks a rise in the grade of goods demanded and sold, and manufacturers, merchants, and dressmakers all testify to the remarkable improvement in American standards of dress during recent years.

The rise of the ready-made frock has had much to do with bringing about this result, and few outsiders have any conception of the growth and importance of this industry. Forty years ago very few models were brought to this country from Europe, and very few women even of the wealthiest class knew much about Paris shopping. As for the woman of humble social position she was quite out of touch with French fashion. About thirty-eight years ago, A. T. Stewart launched the first ready-made frocks, and record has it that they were frights. Shortly after that there were four small establishments in the United States manufacturing women's ready-made garments. To-day there are forty-eight hundred houses devoted to such business in New York City alone, and some of the largest American dressmaking factories are in towns outside of New York,—in Cleveland, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. Everyone of these manufacturers sends men to Paris at least twice during the season to buy models, obtain sketches, notes, and ideas. Even the cheapest of the ready-made costumes to-day has in it some faint echo of Parisian art, and there are American manufacturers of ready-made coats and frocks who make no low-class goods at all.

[Pg 221]

If one walks into Paquin's establishment and pays five hundred dollars for a frock, one feels that she is paying a good price, but there are specialty houses in New York turning out ready-made models at five hundred dollars and making nothing for less than one hundred dollars; and these expensive costumes find ready sale.

Occasionally a woman retains the old-time prejudice against ready-made garments and wonders why anyone will pay two or three hundred dollars for a ready-made gown. Given a choice between a gown made to order by Paquin and one at the same price from a New York manufacturer, it would doubtless be the part of wisdom to take the Paquin creation; but there is no Paquin in New York, and though there are some exceedingly good dressmakers here, there are also many who charge high prices without the ability to justify them. Many women who have had disastrous experiences with such makers claim that, at least, in a ready-made frock one can be sure of the general effect, and that if it comes from a good maker, whether French or American, and is well cut to begin with, it will even after alteration fit better and do more for one's figure than a made-to-order gown from incompetent hands.

[Pg 222]

There are still cheap ready-made garments on the market, but demand for good materials and

fine workmanship is steadily growing and, through the efforts of manufacturers to meet this demand, ideas of better dressing have been spread broadcast.

Fortunes have been made quickly by men who have kept step with this improvement in taste and supplied good models of Parisian design and excellent workmanship for the American ready-made trade.

One manufacturer came to this country twelve years ago, in the steerage, and went upon a tailor's bench at fifteen dollars a week. He was a Russian or Polish Jew, which is equivalent to saying that he belonged to the greatest money-making race on earth. He saved a little money, opened workrooms. To-day he has a factory in which he employs nine hundred men and women, he lives in a beautiful home on Riverside Drive, he goes to business in a big automobile, he has done a two-million-dollar business within the last year—and all in ready-made frocks of the better grades.

There is much talk of sweat-shop labour in connection with women's ready-made clothing, but as a matter of fact only the very cheapest of the ready-made trade is associated with the sweat-shop. Years ago some of the better shops declared a crusade against such labour and tabooed the factories dealing with it. The other big firms fell in line, and manufacturers, realizing that their trade was at stake, came up to the mark in respect to the housing, treatment, and wages of employees.

[Pg 223]

The manufacturer of the twelve-year record has a factory absolutely sanitary and treats his nine hundred employees admirably, even supporting a small hotel in which he harbours any of his work folk who may be ill or in trouble and need help. These workers are chiefly Polish and Russian Jews and Italians, the German contingent, which was once large, having almost disappeared, and wages are good. Competent men tailors are always in demand and can make at least from fifteen to eighteen dollars a week, while many of them get as high as from forty to eighty dollars. Some of the manufacturers have salesmen on the road at fifteen thousand dollars a year, and even pay as high as twenty-two thousand dollars.

The buyers, too, command large salaries, and these salaried men very frequently become manufacturers themselves or open specialty shops for the sale of ready-made garments. One New York salesman, who has recently gone into the retail business in a comparatively small way, cleared one hundred thousand dollars last year and will do better this year. Another man of ability went to the head of one of the big dry-goods houses here and asked for a good position.

"Why don't you open workrooms of your own?" he was asked. "Haven't you any money?"

"Only twenty-five hundred dollars."

"That's enough. Go rent some rooms. We know what you can do. Let us know when you are ready and we'll place an order with you for four times twenty-five hundred dollars." That was eleven years ago. The manufacturer retired with a fortune some time since and amuses himself now by speculating largely in real estate.

[Pg 224]

One of the few dressmaking geniuses in this country is another manufacturer of ready-made frocks—but of the highest class models only. He failed at first,—possibly because he *was* a genius, but nine years ago he took a fresh start and now he is a millionaire—but still an artist. He takes a handful of silk and throws it at a figure, gives it a pull here, a plait there, and voilà!—an effect better than his rivals could obtain through careful and painstaking labour. In Paris that man would be great. Here he is merely rich, and his million keeps him from Paris.

All these stories of success and these business statistics merely serve to illustrate the point with which the discussion of ready-made clothing began, the increasing taste and extravagance of American dress. The American woman, whether of wealth or of very moderate means, insists upon having good clothes and is getting them.

Perhaps she buys them ready-made, perhaps she goes to Paris for them, perhaps she has them made by dressmakers who go to Paris for their models, but, in any case, she has them. For the same amount of money her mother spent she will obtain better artistic results,—but she spends more money than her mother dreamed of spending and more money than she herself would have thought of spending ten years ago. An education in extravagant dress comes easily to any woman, and once educated to the topmost notch of the domestic dress production, the Parisian frock is the American's next requirement.

[Pg 225]

There are good dressmakers on this side of the water, quite good enough to satisfy any save the hyper-fastidious, but our best dressmakers do not go about their business as do the best dressmakers of Paris. They are business men or women, their French fellow craftsmen are artists. There is in Paris the same type of dressmaker we have here, but there is, too, the artist dressmaker who is something higher in the scale, and it is through him that Paris is the fountain-head of fashion. There is little original work in dress here. Good workmanship we have. Our plain tailor work, for example, is the best in the world; but our makers are content to copy French ideas and French models and they have no such high standards as have the sponsors of those models. The Irish-American dressmaker is said to be, next to the French, the best in the world, but she adapts, she does not create. Perhaps in Paris she too might soar, but here she copies French models well, makes money, and is content.

In the early spring and in August there is a migration of American dressmakers. By the hundred they go to Paris, and buyers from all over the country swell the crowd. Some of the important buyers have set sail long before, but they are men who represent extensive interests, with whom buying is a fine art and to whose expense account the home firm sets no limitations.

[Pg 226]

One American buyer, representing the largest importer of model gowns and cloaks in this country, a man better known, perhaps, than any of his profession, in the famous Parisian ateliers, sees the models in these ateliers before the ordinary buyer is given a glimpse of them. Yet even

then they are no new things to him. He has seen all of their most striking features before.

He does not drop into Paris with the buying flock, visit the great dressmaking establishments, and accept as law and gospel whatever chances to be shown there. He knows what is what. The dressmakers know that he knows and treat him accordingly.

For months he has been on a still hunt for the fashions of the spring that is yet distant. He stopped in Madeira at the very beginning of the winter season, for he knows, as the Parisian dressmakers know, that an exclusive little coterie of the world's smartest folk begins its winter with a few weeks in Madeira, and that in the Funchal toilettes are to be found many hints that will become laws when springtime comes to Paris.

Early in December the hunter follows the trail to Algiers and on to Cairo, though since the automobile has made Italian touring a fad, many of the smart folk spend a part of their winter in motoring, and the Algiers and Cairo seasons are not quite what they were as gathering places for the fashion clans.

A little later the cream of the fashionable world is on the Riviera, and our buyer haunts the Monte Carlo Casino during February. No smallest fashion straw escapes his watchful eye. He knows the fashion leaders of all Europe and America by sight. He can cap each striking costume with the name of the wearer, and, probably with the name of the maker, and he uses his time profitably until, late in the month, the birds of fine feathers take wing once more. It is almost time for Auteuil and, from all over the world, fashionable folk are pouring into Paris.

[Pg 227]

Spring models are on view there in the great ateliers, and this American receives respectful attention at the hands of the dressmakers, for his orders will be large—and have been large for many years past. Moreover, he has by this time a very good idea of what he wants, and he will demand exclusive models instead of taking the models prepared for the majority of the dressmaking and buying pilgrims. He knew many of the autocrats of fashion when they first put up their signs and, through the advertisement and backing of his firm, many a Paris dressmaker now famous obtained the American clientèle that was the foundation of his fortunes.

A valuable customer this, and there are other Americans of his class who see the best that Paris has to offer. Some of the more important American dressmakers also place large orders, insist upon exclusive models, and are greeted impressively by the saleswomen; but the most of the crowd buys as little as possible and sees as much as it can, and the saleswomen, fully alive to this fact, make a point of allowing the minor dressmakers to see as little as is consistent with courteous treatment. Often a group of little dressmakers will form a syndicate to buy one model and will go together to the great establishment. There, being really buyers, they are politely received, and they all take mental notes of every fashion hint that comes their way during the visit. They study Paris fashions, too, wherever they are to be seen, on the streets, in the theatres, at the restaurants; and during their summer visit they perhaps run up to Trouville to see the fashion show there. They have a jolly time as well as a profitable one, and after a few weeks come home to spread French fashion news from Maine to California, and furnish such adaptations of what they have seen as their varying abilities can accomplish.

[Pg 228]

The clever buyer usually stays on in Paris after the crowd of his countrymen and of European dressmakers has departed; for the more exclusive models and ideas are reserved for the delectation of the chic Parisienne and the private buyer, and he wants to see what is offered to this clientèle as well as what is shown to the trade. Finally he too sails for home, where much of his plunder has arrived before him. American women often wear a Parisian mode before it has been worn in Paris, and this is especially true of autumn modes; for Parisiennes are still away from Paris when American dressmakers and buyers are securing and sending over their autumn models, and, too, an American woman travelling in Europe for the summer may buy her fall outfit in Paris during August, bring it home and begin wearing it in September, before Parisiennes have left the seashore and settled down to thought of fall clothes. This applies, however, chiefly to the few American fashion leaders, and a radical Parisian mode seldom achieves actual popularity in America before late in the season or perhaps the following season. The models have been brought over and shown, have been bought and worn by the knowing and courageous; but the great crowd of American women is slightly conservative and hesitates to take up any radical Parisian fad until after the novelty has become somewhat familiar through being exploited by the ultra-fashionable few.

[Pg 229]

One of the greatest Parisian dressmakers said recently in a private conversation that he never felt confident of general popularity for an original and striking model until after seeing it upon one or two of his most chic American customers.

"I do not know what it is," he said, "but there is something distinctive about the way an American wears her clothes,—a grace, an elegance, but also a naturalness. A Frenchwoman has a genius for dress, but she makes up for her toilette. She is supremely artificial; she will wear anything that is launched and make herself up to fit the mode. Your American doesn't do that. She wears her clothes superbly, but the clothes must be of a kind she can wear. That a Parisienne looks well in a model means nothing as an indication of what women in general will think of the innovation; but when I put the model upon one of my best American customers, I know at once what to expect. They are lovely in their chiffons, those Americans, provided they have possibilities of loveliness. It is a pleasure to dress them."

[Pg 230]

There are American women who go to Paris regularly three times a year to replenish their wardrobes, and these private American customers are the apple of the dressmaker's eye. Madame will perhaps be in Paris only a few days. Everything is made to bend to her fittings, her own particular saleswoman gives up the days to her, the heads of the departments are called in for advice and assistance, the master himself gives the frocks his personal attention. There is a couch in the private fitting-room upon which Madame may lie down if she becomes tired, the

daintiest of luncheons will be served to her there if she has not time or inclination to go elsewhere. Everything is made so smooth, so agreeable, and if the bills are large, what is that to the wife or daughter of an American multi-millionaire? There are New York women whose dressmaking bills in Paris run up to fifty and sixty thousand dollars in one year, but who could afford to spend five hundred thousand a year on clothes if they chose to do it.

Occasionally nowadays a fashion originates in America and crosses to Paris. The tourist coat with loose belted back, the long tailored coat, the walking skirt, the floating veil—all these were worn in New York and later taken up by smart Parisiennes, but the fashion tide usually sets the other way, and we accept slavishly what Paris furnishes.

The great French dressmakers to a certain extent control the fashions, but they work with the manufacturers. One will see the head of a great silk factory sitting at a table with Beer or Paquin or Doeuillet in the Café de Paris, and talking earnestly, seriously. Materials for the future season are being weighed in the balance. The artist dressmaker is the manufacturer's critic, his guide, philosopher, and friend, and in this close connection lies one of the secrets of artistic French dressmaking. In Paris one can always obtain the wherewithal to carry out an idea. If necessary the manufacturer will make the material expressly for Monsieur's purpose, and many an exquisite fabric has begun and ended with one length run through the loom. The dressmaker and his customer wanted that especial thing and wanted the gown to be absolutely unique. Expense was not considered and one can obtain anything in Paris if one will pay for it. Once an order came from a great lady in Rome. She wanted a ball gown such as she described for a certain occasion. The maker had only three days' time in which to execute the order, and the quantities of white pansies which must absolutely be the trimming were not to be found in Paris. Discouraging? Not in the least. Monsieur set a multitude of flower-makers at work making white pansies for him. The frock was finished and sent from Paris to Rome by a special messenger. Time was too short to admit of experiments with express companies.

[Pg 231]

When the American dressmaker or professional buyer chooses a model, cards to the manufacturers who furnished the fabric and trimmings for the frock are given her and she buys the materials for as many duplicates of the model as she expects to make. She buys other materials, too, laces, buttons, novelties of all kinds, that will enable her to achieve frocks differing from those of her rivals, and skilful Parisian buying is to-day a very vital part of the fashionable American dressmaker's business. Duties upon the importations are of course tremendous, and during certain months the New York Custom House is so choked with French chiffons that there are maddening delays in getting the boxes through.

[Pg 232]

Paris would miss les Americaines if they should suddenly lose their interest in French clothes, but there's no danger of that event. Paris is the fashion centre and will continue to be the fashion centre. As for our women—each year they grow more ardent in their worship of the Vanities.

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE

—Plain print and punctuation errors were corrected.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK IN VANITY FAIR: A TALE OF FROCKS AND FEMININITY ***

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE
THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE
PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg™ License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg™ electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg™ electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg™ electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”
- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.
- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.
- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you ‘AS-IS’, WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™’s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive

Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations (\$1 to \$5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.