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In the Slums of Paris.

In Paris there are slums worse than any in New York or Chicago. These are the bas-fonds, the places where brutalizing poverty reigns, where crime broods and breeds. It is in picturesque old Paris, the Paris of the days when the second empire had not yet reformed the main lines of the city, that such spots are found.

An old archway, richly sculptured, which artists love to paint, will lead if you venture through it, to a confused network of winding ruelles, where the crooked houses lean across the slender cobble-stone path in the most bewildering disorder. It is all very mediaeval steeped in a quaint old-word charm. But it is none the less the lurking place of the miserably poor and of desperadoes who drink away the day in the dirty cabarates that occupy the ground floor of every second house, and whose work is all done at night with knife in hand. There are in Paris many such charming spots, whose population is more than half criminal, where the very children have the air of having been marked for crime from their cradles.

In the populous Faubourg St. Antonie, in the cluster of dingy courts and impasses near the Porte Saint Denis, among the side streets of Batignolles, there are colonies whose population is divided by the imperceptible but hard and fast line which marks off the enemies of society from its victims. In the same house there will be on one story families of descent, hard-driven workers, while on the stories above and below crime may be hatching night and day. The poor get entirely callous to the character of the shady persons they brush against on the dirty, dark staircases all day long.

'They seem,' said a police inspector of the St. Antoine quarter, 'to look upon rime as a trade like their own, but a trade for which they do not feel any inclination. A little boy committed suicide the other day because his parents apprenticed him to a sausage maker. He hadn't any scruples against the pursuit; it was just that he didn't like it. That seems to be the way these miserable, poverty-stricken wretches in the criminal quarters feel about crime as a profession. They would end their days rather than adopt it, just because they don't like it, though, perhaps they wish they did!'

It is a curious fact that the criminal class on their side of the wall, are generally well disposed toward their honest neighbors, though a little inclined to treat them with good-humored contempt. There can be no intimacy between thieves and honest men; mainly because the thieves consider themselves the aristocracy of the quarter. But there is an attitude of reserved good feeling as a rule. This, in fact, is one of the greatest misfortunes the poor have to endure for it inevitably means the perversion of a certain proportion of their children who are initiated into the ways of dishonesty and violence from an early age, and form with their young teachers those bands of juvenile criminals that have lately become one of the most alarming features of Paris life.

These companies of youthful ruffians, of whom the oldest is often only 15 or 16, consist generally of some ten or a dozen precocious desperadoes. They assume fantastic names culled from the juvenile libraries at five cents a volume. Some bands that have been broken up of late have proudly declared themselves the Terrors of Montparnasse, the Brigauds of the Batignolles, the Apaches of St. Antoine, the Red Skins of the fortifications. For Fenimore Cooper's Indian stories are much read here in translation. Imagining themselves Parisian reincarnations of the braves of pioneer days in America, the boyish ruffians become the scourge of the lonely quarters of the city, holding up belated pedestrians on the boulevards close by the city limits, or even descending after mid-night to the boulevards of Batignolles and to the dark side streets near the quays.

Burglaries, organized and executed entirely by boys in their teens, have also been alarmingly frequent within the past year or so, and the problem of the increase of juvenile crime is one of the most disquieting questions that the authorities have to consider. It has its roots in the terrible poverty hidden away in the obscure corners of this city of wealth and pleasure.

Even as I write three young scoundrels are on trial for the murder of an old woman who kept a miserable wine shop, the resort of thieves and bad characters generally in one of the cutthroat side streets in the north eastern end of the city. The police evidence shows that the assassins belonged to a regularly organized band, working in almost military discipline under the captaincy of one Levy, called Milo, who is now on trial as the actual dealer of the murderous blow in the case mentioned. He was the supreme boss of the gang and laid his plans with the minutest attention to detail, assigning to each crime contemplated the number of hands he judged necessary, and arranging where each lad was to stand, what he was to do, and how he was to make his exit when the work was done. Most of his merry men were very young—from 16 to 22

In the neighborhood of the famous Helles, or markets, of which M. Zola has written so forcibly, one can see in the night time the most pitiable collection of human wrecks that it is possible to conceive. These degraded creatures flock down in hundreds from every slum district in the city, hoping to get a job at unloading the great wagons full of vegetables that come in from the country to supply the city's dinner tables. And if luck does not throw that chance their way, there is always the hope of eluding the vigilance of the police and laying hands on a bundle of carrots or other food from the stacks several feet high that block the streets all around the market.

As day begins to draw near the wretched prowlers shuffle away to the low, all-night cafes of the quarter to spend a sou or two on a drink, which by long custom gives the right to remain on the premises till 3 in the morning. These cafes, which are often in cellars, are not counted as night lodging houses, and may, therefore, harbor just as many beings as can squeeze an entrance. In the winter there will sometimes be in one foul, subterranean den as many as eighty miserable, ill-clad, dirty people, men and women and children huddled together on the floor. He is counted happy who can rest his head against the wall out of reach of later comers, and so get a more certain sleep. At 8 o'clock the evil looking tribe is all cleared out to wander round the streets, begging or stealing or trying in some way to earn the few sous that buy bread and the same refuge for the next night.

For other than strictly official purposes the agents of the public safety are often on excellent terms with the dwellers in those dens of iniquity. The king of Greece, to his great surprise, learned that fact when in Paris last October. He had a keen desire to explore the dark side of Paris, and went to M. Lepine to get the assistance of the prefecture.

'I want to see everything,' he said, 'the very worst that Paris has to show.'

The prefect did not half enjoy the proposition. For ordinary individuals who like to pay for special police escort there is little difficulty. But a king is a risky sort of a person to have on one's hands at the best of times; to take the responsibility of having him piloted through the murderous end of the city did not appeal to the prefect But the king was obdurate, and king like, had his way. A sergeant in uniform and two armed agents in civil attire were told off to show King George and his intendant, Col. Thun, the sights of the Faubourg St. Denis late one afternoon. In one dirty wine shop where the most ruffianly toughs were drinking the vile concoction that passes for absinthe in those quarters the king was surprised to see the police sergeant suddenly hold out his hand to a brutal looking Hercules in the group.

'Hullo!' cried the agent. 'How goes it with you these days!' And the gendarme began a friendly chat with the big scoundrel.

'Who is that?' asked the King, when they left the place.

'That, your Majesty, is Desire Rougeot, who came out of jail the other day after serving his term for robbery with violence. I expect we'll nail him again pretty soon; he's always running after trouble.'

'But why did you talk to him in that friendly way?' asked the King.

'Oh, well, your Majesty, it's just as prudent to be polite to these people when one knows them personally and goes down to their quarter. Besides, Desire is not a bad fellow when he's not up to his tricks.'

The king brought his tour to a hasty determination. When, at parting, he gave a handsome gratuity to the police sergeant for his trouble, he said, with a smile, 'I hope that we may meet again when next I come to Paris—but not in the company of your friend, M. l'Assassin Desire!'

As a matter of fact, the criminal population are imprudent enough to make it a point of honor, or of bravado, to be on friendly chatting terms with the police as long as the latter do not presume too much upon the acquaintance. They look upon it as sportsmanlike to give the cordial "bon jour" of ordinary social relationship to the men who have arrested them before and would like nothing better than to snap the cuffs on them again. The police on their side are not indisposed to meet the scoundrel half way. Often a chance indiscretion from the lips of a blackguard gives them an inkling of some crime brewing or a valuable clue after it has been committed.

Without price one may not stay in these dens unless his reputation as a thief, thug or murderer is so well established that his presence, though otherwise unremunerative, accrues to the honor of the place. The budding criminal, with his spurs yet to be won, must, if penniless, sleep in the street or under the bridge, unless some overzealous agent wakes him up and sets him on his travels again.

On any night of the year, if one passes under the arcades of the Odeon Theatre when the last carriage has driven away with its load of brilliantly dressed society women, one will see the poor arriving in their turn to sleep, wrapped in cloaks or shivering in their rags 'at the Hotel of Beautiful Star,' as they say in their picturesque slang. And, generally, they are left unmolested till the early morning book hunters begin to arrive to dip into the new volumes lavishly displayed all around the theatre. Last winter a young man died in his sleep under the Odeon arcade, and when they carried him away to the Morgue, they drove the other poor wretches from their stony sleeping places. But it was only momentary reaction: after a couple of nights the shrouded figures were lying thickly there again.

There exists, by the way, one philosopher who has no pity for these outcasts, or who, if he pities them, pities them only for their ignorance. He is George Drutschel, a Bavarian, who has been amusing Paris for some weeks past by his peculiar theories and habits of life. He calls himself the natural man, and appears on the boulevard clothed only in a loose garment of thin, gray cloth and a pair of sandals, which costume, he says, is all anybody needs by way of vesture in snow or rain or in summer sun.

'The poor would be the happiest class in society,' he says, 'if only they did not understand their phyical health by foolish living when they have got a little money, and by winning and pining when they haven't any.'

Kruger's Gift to Wilhelmina.

Ex-Pres. Kruger's wedding gift to Queen Whilhelmina is a work of art, although in the form of the most prosaic of feminine possessions, namely, a thimble. The youthful ruler of Holland is said to be skilful with the needle and an expert embroiderer, so this glorified thimble is an appropriate souvenir.

The gift is of gold and decorated by a celebrated artist, M. de Vernon of Paris, in a unique and simple design, symbolic of the industrious habits of Queen Wilhelmina's countrywomen. Around the base appears a procession of lovely maidens, busily engaged in sewing, embroidering or winding wool.

Battle-Field Courage.

There is the story of a bullying colonel who turned on one of his sides during a battle and cried, 'Captain——, you are frightened! You are, sir. You are scarred!'

'You're right,' replied the captain, 'and if you were half as scared as I am you'd be six miles in the rear.

Beer and Kisses in Munich.

This is carnival time in Munich and beer etiquette is consequently more stringent than at other seasons.

When you choose a seat at a table in a cafe at which others persons are sitting, you follow the German custom by asking the company generally if it is agreeable for them that you should sit there; permission being granted, you bow to each separately and distinctly. Then you order your beer. If it is in a cafe, you get a half-litre in a glass with a metal lid to it; it in a brewery a stone mug (called a maasskrug, never a stein, as in America), also with a lid. The thing to do after you get your beer is to keep your eye on that lid.

The proper thing, whether the people at the table are strangers to you or not, is to turn to the woman nearest you' or to a man, if there be no women there, which is unusual, and ask her in your best German if she would condescend to 'prosit blumen' with you. Blumen is the poetic name for the froth on your beer. When you make that request the woman murmurs to her companions that the gentleman wishes to' prosit blumen.' Everybody instantly stops talking and raises his glass, and you shove yours out in your fist at each one in turn, being particularly careful to look each person severely in the eye when you repeat 'prosit blumen!' It is a mortal insult to slur over this eye glance, and ten to one you'll be called to account if you appear to do so intentionally.

'Mein Herr, sie haben mich nicht augeschaut!' usually means an exchange of cards and a Mensur among students.

Having introduced yourself by drinking your froth, you now are a member of the table company and may sail into the general conversation, join in the songs and explain all about your life and private affairs of which the German is always curious to know, even in busy carnival times. Later in the evening—or morning, according to how entertaining you have found your companions—you, may suggest, or join in, the drinking of brotherhood.

This is accomplished through the agency of more beer, contained in a slender glass about thirty inches high, called a Humpen and holding a liter and a half. You drink brotherhood by locking your arm in the arm of your neighbor, and, with the hand of the locked arm, seizing the glass at the lower extremity. It is a difficult thing to do without spilling the beer down your neck, but whether it goes by the outside route or by the gullet you must keep the glass to your lips until your breath has utterly gone. The amount of beer you drink or don't drink measures the duration of the brotherhood.

In the meantime it is to be presumed that you have kept a watchful eye on your original glass, not so much because you must remember how many times the Kellnerin has refilled it (the girl never remembers), but on account of that troublesome lid. You need never be afraid that anybody will surreptitiously raise it and leave it up any more than you need fear that any one will fish in your pockets for pfennigs; but it is only the Bavarian who always remembers to slam down the lid the instant he has taken the glass from his lips.

If you should forget to do this even for a moment you will probably never forget again; for before you can say "Jack Robinson" you will be the centre of a maelstrom of writhing humanity, and the whole cafe will be in an uproar. So soon as you can extricate yourself you will see before you on tables, on chairs and mounted on one another's backs a pyramid of men reaching to the ceiling, and close against the plaster in the hand of the topmost man a beer glass. That means that each man in the pyramid, even those with whom you have just drunk brotherhood, grasps also a beer glass, and that the glasses have been superposed, one after another, upon your own innocent little glass which has been left with its lid up.

This is a student prank, and among the students the forgetful man has to pay for refilling all the glasses which may have been put on top of his. But in carnival time the penalty is merely nominal. The man who first discovered your lid up is appointed spokesman for the others whose glasses got on, and he delivers you a severe lecture on the wastefulness of allowing your beer to evaporate because it was left uncovered. You are then obliged to head a procession, in which every man in the cafe is entitled to take part. With glasses in the right hand they make the tour of the entire cafe in lock step, clinking the lids in accompaniment to a student song, named 'Prosit!' which they bellow at the top of their voices. After that you are permitted to take your seat and have your glass replenished.

In carnival time the mask covers many privileges. For instance, if you are masked you may drink anybody's and everybody's beer without asking leave, you may kiss every pretty girl you meet, and you may say and do anything without giving offence.

Women enjoy with men the pleasure of carnival, just as they do everything else in Germany. A girl may stay at home six days in the week, but she will not be deprived of her outing in cafe or brewery on Sundays and holidays, least of all in carnival. But a girl should certainly stay away on these three last days if she be at all squeamish, for she will be inevitable be kissed by strange young men, not once but many times. She may protest, and her parents and companions with her may protest, but she gets kissed all the same. It is better to take it all quietly and with good nature.

Last carnival a party of American girls, attended by three buxom chaperons, went to a cafe to see the sights, and vowed that no man living should kiss them. Their first experience was with a party of six clowns, all students. The clowns started to kiss just because it was all in the day's work. Each got a resounding box on the ear. They looked surprised for an instant, then they grinned at one another. For the next two minutes there was the most wonderful mix-up anybody had ever seen in carnival time, and when it was all over that table, and all the persons around it, looked as if overtaken by a tornado. Not only were the girls kissed, but the chaperons too, and the clowns must have spread the news, because before the night was over that party of American girls were the most kissed girls in the cafe. Which goes to show that people must not try to abrogate the privileges of carnival.

A Jack Rabbit Outruns a Greyhound.

A jack rabbit-greyhound chase, with a carload of coal as an inducement resulted in much interesting sport for a party of gentlemen who assembled at the jack rabbit park of Gen. W. H. Gentry on the Russell Cave road, Ky., on Wednesday afternoon.

Gen. Gentry has a rabbit which he has named 'Teddy Roosevelt,' and which the General considers as good a racer as one can find on the rabbit turf. Mr. A. B. Hutchcraft of Barbourville, Ky., general manager of the Knox-Gem Coal company, has an imported greyhound which he thought could outrun 'Teddy Roosevelt.' He was willing to back his judgment by an offer of a carload of Knox-Gem coal. Gen. Gentry accepted the match, and the two, with Col. H. M. Camp of Knoxville, went out to Gen. Gentry's place, where the chase was had in a twelve acre field. 'Teddy Roosevelt' was started off with the greyhound after him, but 'Teddy' always remained in the lead, and after fully exhausting himself in his efforts to land upon the rabbit, the greyhound abandoned the chase and the General won a carload of coal. At all stages the races was beautiful, and the watchers could scarcely suppress their enthusiasm.

The Mean Thing.

This dollar that I hold in my hand,' he said 'reminds me of a deep, dark, scandalous secret.'

'Oh, George!' his wife exclaimed, dropping her hands in her lap and bending forward eagerly, 'tell me about it!'

'Yes,' he went on, 'it reminds me of a secret of that kind, because it is so hard to keep.

Then she refused to speak to him for three hours, and even began to suspect that he was concealing something from her.