

ON THE MOVING SIDEWALK

CURIOUS SENSATIONS AND SIGHTS ON A NEW PARISIAN INSTITUTION.

Paris correspondence of The London News.

On the south side of the river the Exposition buildings stand upon three sides of what in London would be called a square. Trapezium would be the right word, but square is the more popular. The longest side, measuring three-quarters of a mile and containing the Avenue of the Nations, is formed by the river. The next longest is formed by the Champ de Mars Palaces, and the third and shortest by the Palace of the Invalides section. The fourth side, open to the city, is bounded by the Avenue de la Motte Picquet. It is obvious that under ordinary circumstances a visitor intending to pass, say, from the Invalides to the Champ de Mars must, without specially contrived means of communication, traverse a large block of streets, avenues and boulevards. The rolling platform, "trottoir roulant," is the special contrivance. It is not a detached structure like a railway train, arriving at and passing certain points at stated times. In the "trottoir roulant" there is no break. In engineers' language, it is an "endless" floor. The "trottoir roulant" is a narrow ribbon of a floor raised thirty feet above the level of the ground, ever and ever gliding along the four sides of the square—a wooden serpent with its tail in its mouth.

The rolling platform is about two and a quarter miles in length. There are ten entries to it and as many exits from it, distributed over the river face, along the Champ de Mars and the Invalides. It never stops for passengers; you step on to it or off it as you do on or off a London "bus in motion, but with the important difference that the rolling platform is only two inches above the level of your shoe soles, and that its rate of motion is slower. As it turns the corners of the huge trapezium, or

of the other leg; each leg becomes as unmanageable as a towel whipped round the leg of a table. Ensnared thuswise, the person manifests an uncontrollable tendency to spin round like a teetotum. After long and leisurely observation, I am inclined to think that of all attitudes on the "trottoir roulant" this is the most absurd. That the victims suspect so too I gather from the sheepish expression of their faces, but these quite innocent misadventures are, in comparison with the great numbers on



ENTRANCE TO PALACE OF LETTERS, SCIENCE AND ARTS.

the "trottoir roulant," few and far between. You will have gathered that the trottoir has become a favorite place of resort. For those of its passengers who have friends in the avenues before whose windows it crawls along it might become a convenient substitute for long deferred calls. Standing on the trottoir, one might chuck one's visiting card through any open window in the Avenue de la Motte Picquet, and exchange salutations with old cronies in the upper stories of Rue Fabert and Avenue de la Bourdonnais. Indeed, I have seen many such exchanges of becks and nods and wreathed smiles. It is also obvious that the "trottoir roulant" may, in its own lazy, loafing way, be made the means of forming new acquaintances. One who sticks to it all day long can scarcely help making some, and for his 50 centimes one may, if he chooses, stay there all day long. Crowds of idlers would do it, but for one thing—the lack of seats. That is doubtless the reason why the company has not provided seats.

CONTROVERSIAL PRAYER.

From The Detroit Journal.
The Layman—Candidly, do you expect your prayer in behalf of the Boers to be answered?
The Pastor—I flatter myself it is unanswerable, sir. Three or four cranks have tried to answer it, through the press, but it seems to me they have failed egregiously.

HIS FIRST RISE.

From The Cleveland Plain Dealer.
"It was the critical point in my career."
"What was?"
"The point of the pin I sat on just before I quit country school teaching and came to the big city."



THE HINDOO CHINESE TEMPLE.

swerves rightward or leftward at some point on one of its sides, its motion resembles the sinuous crawl of a snake.

Thirty feet overhead, supported upon a forest of scaffolding, are laid the steel rails upon which revolve the dwarf wheels of the "trottoir roulant." Upon the two and a quarter miles are congregated two and a quarter miles of more or less idly curious humanity—a ribbon of humanity, as a French journalist calls it. Multitudes of Parisians, provincials, Americans, cockneys, Germans, but principally the first two, glide overhead on the back of this sinuous monster. It is odd to witness, when a shower comes, the sudden shiny apparition of the long ribbon of umbrellas. The monster's voice sounds unceasingly the day long, and half the night. Sometimes it resembles the din made by the lids of twenty million Brodignagian kettles from which the steam is escaping, sometimes the roll of the massed drums of the entire French army. At other times it concentrates itself in a high pitched, fierce iron screech.

How does this infernal muttering, groaning, growling, rattling, screeching affect the dwellers of the Avenue de la Bourdonnais, the Avenue de la Motte Picquet, the Rue Fabert, in front of whose third story windows the "trottoir" rolls past with its load of humanity? In London, where people make a fuss about organ grinders and the tambourine girls of the Salvation Army, it would, I fancy, cause an insurrection. But I have heard of no wild protest in Paris—not a wrathful face have I seen in all those half miles of windows. What shopkeepers and professional people have done is to seize this rare opportunity of advertising themselves. The most striking advertisement is the figure of a doll meant for a newly born baby, stuck in a window, bearing the sign of "Mme. Poussin, Accoucheuse." That baby of flannel and sawdust, with its prematurely wideawake smile, everlastingly holds out its spuds of arms to the ribbon of humanity that glides past everlastingly alike.

For the man of business, intent upon prompt transfer from this to that region of the Exposition, and the idle looker on caring most for the summer air and a smoke, the "trottoir roulant" is a convenient, comfortable and ingenious device. In the first place, the aerial structure is not all mobile. It is divided into three longitudinal parallel sections, the first stationary, the second moving at the rate of about three miles an hour, the third at about six. If you want to make the circuit quickly you stand on the third, and if you are in a great hurry all you have to do is to stride ahead and so add your individual movement to that of the "trottoir roulant." If you want to take it easy and look leisurely about you, you simply step down two inches to the second section, or if you want to come to a dead stop the two inches to the stationary strip. You will often do this in order to admire some street view, or glimpse of the sunlit river, or beautiful building in the Avenue of the Nations, or on the opposite bank of the Seine the cluster of steep roofed old Paris. Going on the "trottoir roulant" is easy as walking, but for all that scores of people come to grief quite harmlessly and comically when first they try it. In Cockayne no same person gets face to the rear out of an omnibus, or attempts to enter it with his silly back turned toward the horses. Many try it on the "trottoir roulant." It is great fun. A stoutish, jolly looking woman has done it, and the result is that she has cannoned against somebody who cannons against a third, who pitches against the stomach of a fourth, whom the unexpected shock temporarily deprives of his umbrella and his hat. Innocuous disaster often happens when a person's foot becomes entangled behind the calf

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