PARISIAN MARTYRS.

The Joys and Troubles of New Year's Day.

PARIS, Dec. 25.—Réveillon, Christmas, Noël, New Year's Day, New Year's gifts, étrennes! Oh! Strenes derived from the Latin strena, in the dictionaries, instead of the old custom by the Parisians! The end of the year is not like a time of rejoicing; it will be said, but that one's joy is constantly troubled by such reminders that it is a season of heavy calls upon the purse.

In the middle of November the Parisian receives the visit of the letter carrier, who lays down an assortment of calendars for the new year, accompanied by a template a-sort of the French postal regulations. The postman does not mention the word *cadeau* but he looks it terribly. Item, one, two, four, or five dollars, according to the amount of consideration you receive. A few days afterward the *porteur des journaux*, the postman who delivers the printed mail matter, rings at the bell, and announces that he is the man who brings the newspapers, or, to put it in the French style, "he declines his names and qualities." Item, one, two, or four dollars, as above. The next visit will be from the telegraph messenger. Item, forty cents to one dollar. Then follow the carriers of each of the Parisian journals to which you subscribe: "Monsieur, c'est le porteur du *Figaro*," &c. Item, forty cents. The concierge's boy, the baker, the confectioner, the butcher, even the *rémouleur* pay increased visits to you. On Christmas eve all the children run a-foot in the chimney, and expect to find it full of presents in the morning, and the mamma of these children likewise expect the fruit of the hunt to contribute to the joy of the youngsters. And so the marrying-in goes on preceding to strenes, and New Year's day comes. The most ceremonious day in the Parisian calendar.

Dress on this day of the ancients ancient dress as described in the films of the Academies and poet Vionnet. When James, regent, the circle of the year brought back the first day of January, all hence visiting in the street, strangers, relative, friends, with other in solemn good wishes and presents. Only by their assemble vanity the French have conserved the present date of the New Year's Day in Paris the most unfolds hostess, the most charming woman, presents to you in return of a redition; your wife, your mamma, your sister, your fiancée, the nursing, courtesy of the usually charming door porter is tendering as the kiss of Judas; each compliment has its tariff; each seasonable greeting is pecuniary equivalent, and all that between the *doux* the *Jour de l'An* has spoiled by sordid interest. The spelling of the Egyptians was equally pay compared with the spoiling of the Parisians by the Parisians in the season of strenes. Everybody expects a present; wife, daughters, sons, servants, and door porter. Those who are in a position to have presents to give receive upon Christmas as a part of their income. The postman, for instance, are authorized by the head of the department to make their annual pecuniary visits. They appoint delegates in each district, who are collected at a place to be agreed upon, and there divide the whole body of postmen, according to locality. In the tenements, too, each water pipe, each *étrenes* into a common treasury, of which, as in the case of the ordinary concierge, the proprietor receives a portion. The rest is divided among all the waiters. In the public offices and administrations the employees likewise expect a gratuity. In "spell" establishments the servants in making their engagements ask the amount of strenes they can expect on the ensuing year, and the system is thus so much on wages and perquisites, strenes up to a certain limit for each additional year of service.

In the government offices, in each case, the amount of the strenes is fixed, and, although the rule is not absolute, it is considered a breach of delicacy to refuse to give. In the department of the Legion of Honor, Army and Navy, the clerks in Ministry has to remain the customary appearance of a gentleman on a sum which is frequently may go to not less than the amount of a month's salary, so that his name in the *Journal officiel* on the list of examinations which has the Chief of the signs each New Years Day, either in the month of January or February. Item, from 5 to 10 dollars. Item, Rouen. It is strange, indeed, that a man should obtain an coveted position which has become general in France that every third person you meet on the boulevards wears a rosette or bow in his buttonhole. The value of this, in a pecuniary point of view, is estimate by the indescriminate manner in which it is bestowed.

Now, you anybody can be decorated, even actors, against whom an exception had long been made. A *fin* moment, any bowing to a lady, the lady can ask the asset. Consequently, this order was conferred in favor of Got, the senior member of the Comedie Française, and among the members of the Institute. Item, fifty dollars. A year's salary will figure in New Year's Day gifts, and will be those of the singer Faure and of Coquelin himself. In the matter of decorations, as in most other matters in France, kissing goes by favor, not merit. Is by letter and inclination. The Pope, as a Pope, can give spontaneous, but a man must apply for it, either personally or through the intermediary of some influential person. Even Mr. Gambetta, the inventor of the Gambetta cigar, who has just been bombarded knight of the Legion of Honor, has had to apply for the decoration, although the real value of decorations is well known, the Parisians have many for bribes of influentials. There is a decoration in the Rue Mosnier, a street where art, freemasonry, and gallantry live in harmonious disorder, who is entitled the "Order of Bedroom." Item, demand of the Order of Bedroom upon Him in a warm moment by a kind, maybe chaste proof is not managed to obtain. The great demand of the royal personage for the "Bedroom" in the Rue Mosnier is the priority in his book to gain in order to open the entrance gate of Paris houses, set the porter's hand wand ring. One night he carried the road exile in the hall. *Combien* is the price of this? "If you please," cried the road exile. Then the porter narrow his mouth at the "road exiling national: Ah! your Ma-sty for me, *combien? mon plait.* Such a gift was not to be refused, and now on high days and holidays the *mon plaisir* can sit in his dreary lodge, sing the deep bass of the Pyrenees, and be fondly caressed by brigadiers. Will be fondly caresses in brigadiers that cresses his manly and authoritative man, and ponders over the vicissitudes which have long before his time befallen that race of proscribed exiles who founded that order of chivalry to which I belong.

For a fortnight before and a week after New Year's Day the whole physiognomy of Paris is changed. The dry goods stores are crowded by toys, bijoux, books, and all kinds of things for presents; the comestible shops are given up to bonbons, sweetments, preparations of pâté and mondeule truffles studded with thousand truffles. Along the sidewalk of the boulevards the crowd is so considerable that a lane is formed in which the ingenious Parisian carriage delay their manifestations, wares, ornaments, dolls' furniture, cheap toys, pastry, musical instruments, hawk birds, bronzes, purses, everything in short, that comes into the chaste exclamation of a street boy. The entire boulevards are likewise given up to farmers and mountebanks, and within fifteen minutes' walk of the Grand Opera you may find somnambulists, fat women, persons without hair or nails, the sisters Mill, who have two heads and four legs and one body; one of these sisters was born in 1857 and the other in 1860." At all the cross roads you will find swings and roundabouts and all the delights of a country fair. Around the central square the stalls are crowded by very modest folks, who cannot afford to pay five or six francs for the hire of a stall on the boulevards. These dealers sell everything in the way of old rubbish that is to be found in bric-à-brac and marine store shops; old prints, old clothes, instruments, old cocked hats, caps, pots and pans, old iron, plates, china, tenth-rate curios, among which you may sometimes find a prize, and, as the poet says:

> All manner of chamber
> And nooks and lanes and marmosettes in hole,
> Nitre tinted that the sun never shines on,
> And the rats with which they fetch it are scarce,
> Which, I do not endeavor that we type,
> Are the chief ingredients of a wholesome
> Might be forthcome for dose and dysentery.

The whole affair of *étrenes* is, indeed, "dear and desirable." Paris, transformed into a Bonsoir Fair, is insupportable. There are so many people in the streets that you cannot walk, so many vehicles that you cannot ride, so much dirt that you cannot clean, so many calls upon your purse that you are reduced to poverty, so many bals and fêtes that you get no sleep. The very newspapers become unreadable. The season of *étrenes* calls forth the old articles full of platitudes, commonplaces and of things that have been said over and over again. The Christmas article and the New Year article are inevitable, some are descriptive, others are historical. The descriptive article will tell you that this is the season when the streets are crowded with people, when people in the boulevard's windows to books for presents, bound in scarlet cloth and rich in gilding and morocco leather; when the confectioners in a mass produce their new bonbons, the Marquise, or what not; when inflated India rubber elephants swing above the doors of the toy shops; when the ingenious journalists describe the manner in which the rubbers and talking dolls are manufactured, when mummies in Egyptian cabinets are set forth, and the required number of lions have been provided. The historical article will narrate the origin of Christmas or give a summary history of toys, let us suppose. It will tell us that about every year Paris is in labor with a new toy. The current fashionable Mechanical Monstrosity, that the dancing craze was invented in 1793; he will trace the rise of toys from the "Cu-Pan" hoop of 1794 down through the long a sequence of the hoop craze, the "Grenadier of the Tro-cadero," the pergun, the *question romaine*, until he arrives at the scientific and financial toys of the day, the patent telegraph and the Stock Exchange. He will point out how remarkably the taste for precision and exactness has been developed during the past twenty-five years. He will show how the invention of infinity toys, camera, cameras, telescopes, panoramas, diagrams, &c., has been developed during the last