

# PARIS AS SEEN BY AN AMERICAN

BY CHARLES D. MERRILL

## FRATERNITY AND HOSPITALITY

Let us walk round the corner from the American embassy on Avenue Kleber to the Rue Galilee. What is this fine little park, 500x1000 feet—the "Place des Etats Unis?" Why should there be such a choice place, so beautifully shaded with plane trees, adorned with statuary and ornamented with borders and seats, in the heart of Paris, named after the United States? Let us see that group in marble at the head of the place. It is a fine sculpture, of heroic size, of George Washington grasping the hand of Lafayette, while behind them stand the banners of the two republics of the United States and France. It is by Bartholdi, the famous French sculptor, and is done with spirit and life. Does it touch your American heart a bit that on this foreign soil and in the midst of this strange city and people you see your splendid Washington standing in perfect fraternity with their splendid Lafayette in the Place des Etats Unis? Come down, now, two blocks further, to the broad "Place d'Jena," the center of one of the finest residence quarters of Paris. What as this? A majestic equestrian statue of Washington in the center of the place. "Good," you say. "I begin to feel at home in this city." Just there on the Champs Elysees opens a fine street where you see with its white letters "Rue Washington," read by every passenger along this finest avenue in the world.

Come now to the great "Place Trocadero," 1000 feet from the Place d'Jena, and here against a green bank is the bronze statue of a great man seated and smiling as he looks out over that wonderful space, the grand entree of two world's expositions. Who is this man? Benjamin Franklin, and the bronze reliefs on the pedestal represent his reception at the court of France in 1778 as ambassador, and the signing of the treaty of Paris in 1785. The inscription on the front declares that he was the sage who brought light to two continents. The blue street sign at the corner behind the statue reads, "Rue Franklin," and not far on in the street is a plaque upon a house indicating that Franklin lived here from 1777 till 1785, and on that roof placed the first lightning rod ever made in France.

"Glorious!" you say. "It warms my heart towards France." And you look down on the great Passy bridge that spans the Seine below you and catch the sunlight from a statue in bronze, a replica of the colossal "Liberty Enlightening the World" in New York harbor, which the French nation gave

to the United States and that has greeted for a quarter century every foreigner and every home-coming American entering that principal port.

Down in the middle court of the Louvre stands a magnificent statue of Lafayette given by the school children of America, set up and unveiled in 1900, within that court of the richest treasure house of the world, where every day of every year a stream of the whole world's pilgrims pass into that unveiled shrine of unrivaled architecture and art.

In the Victor Hugo house in the Place Vorges your eye lights with pleasure on a photograph of Abraham Lincoln and a letter of appreciation from that martyr of liberty to the heroic French author. In a choice park you find a characteristic statue of Lincoln, and everywhere in shops and kiosks the faces of Roosevelt and Taft, and as you take your stand in the Place de l'Opera, in the heart of Paris' heart of life, you wonder if you are not in New York. Standing squarely in front of the Grand opera house you turn on your heel from right to left. That first corner is placarded with the sign "American Express Co.," where reading rooms, bank, postoffice, ticket and express offices are ready to do business with all their customers, just as at home. The next corner is the office of the American steamship companies—where six great lines will receive you or send you from almost any port of Europe. Four doors below is the sign of the American chamber of commerce of Paris, and over the doorways of the next great building, the Grand hotel, you see American grill room, American bar, American restaurant, and straight across the Avenue Opera is "The American consulate," Chicago Daily News, New York Herald, Brooklyn Eagle, a half-dozen American insurance companies and a score of great firms of the United States. And in all these places and on the streets before them your countrymen are everywhere in evidence, and you feel that you have the keys of the city and are welcome to its unbounded hospitality.

Over in the Sorbonne an American professor from Harvard college is giving twenty-five clear and thrilling lectures on American history to French and American students, and the sessions are crowded to the doors. You are introduced to scores of Americans, who tell you that they came to stay a month in Paris and have stayed a year and many have prolonged their sojourn three or four years.

Forty-seven thousand citizens of the

United States were in Paris on a given day of last July, when count was made from hotel and pension registers, and thousands are always here. Just so of all civilized nations—each foreigner sees around him the monuments and reminders, the conveniences and customs of his home land to such a degree that he feels at home. The spirit of fraternity lays strong hold upon him if he tarries even a month in this marvelous city so fraternal and hospitable in its reception of strangers.

There were about a quarter of a million people of other nations in Paris all the time. Though diverse in religious belief, different in political creed, strange in habit and method of life, each foreigner is welcomed with such fraternity and hospitality that he feels a proprietorship in the city after one week's stay. He feels welcome, he enjoys the visit, he carries longer than he expected, he comes again.

There is a great colony of Russians, with their splendid churches and hotels and societies—as much at home as in Russia. A colony of Turks who have spent most of their life in Paris. Scores of thousands of Italians, Spanish, English, Austrian, Dutch, American sojourners. No other city in the world could entertain the whole world at four universal expositions within half a century and stand the strain upon its hospitality and purse, for probably on each occasion there was financial loss. The city is indeed a continual world's exposition in itself, with its quarter of a million strangers, of a deeply friendly and fraternal spirit. No city offers such free public entry to all its museums, galleries, public buildings and parks as Paris. It is the everyday sight in the Louvre and other great galleries of art to see bonnetless servant girls and the humblest garcon viewing the pictures and sculptures, and admiring the splendid rooms and jewels and historic relics. The governments of the city and republic believe that those who cannot afford to pay a franc for the enjoyment of these treasures are just the ones who need to see them as an education in loyalty and appreciation of the splendid advantages which their own city offers in comparison with the world. And you see, therefore, in the people themselves an appreciation of their own city and land which prevents emigration to other lands, and a contentment with their surroundings that is seldom seen in other cities. This makes them more ready and able to render the sojourn of the stranger among them agreeable and protracted, for the very fact that fewer emigrants

leave France than any other country of Europe, and more who do leave it return to it, is an unanswerable proof of their contentment at home. And such a country is always attractive to travelers.

At the Metro (underground railway) station one afternoon in the rush for tickets you give for fare a 25 centime piece which is imperfect. You have just received it at another Metro station, and speaking French poorly it is hard to explain to the ticket seller, and before you can do so or get another coin from your pocket, a big, good natured Parisian pays the fare, pushes you forward and slips away in the crowd with a side remark to others, "He is a stranger." Anything and everything for the stranger seems to be the spirit of the real Parisian and as an example of it, in the Sorbonne, with its 12,000 students, one-third of whom are from foreign lands, the strangers are ever the first consideration both of French students and professors. Such monuments as the Alexander III bridge, one of the most beautiful bridges existing, built to commemorate the alliance with Russia, with many such memorials throughout the city in marble and stone and bronze, and the evidence seen also in many beautiful gold and silver medals in the mint, are parts of the proof of the fraternal and hospitable spirit of the French toward other nations.

And the reason for this spirit is not only found in the native Gallic disposition—the happy nature which desires to please and make others happy—but is also hereditary in Paris as a city. The foremost savant in city lore now living says that "The Twelve Masters of Paris" played (in the twelfth century) a role in mediaeval poetry analogous to the "Seven Sages" in ancient Greece, and that for its early cosmopolitan character was chiefly indebted to its university, to which flocked the students of all nations to hear its most accomplished professors. "The great Fo're du Lendit" held each June in the plain between Paris and St. Denis (a suburb) brought visitors from all Europe and was the prototype of the modern world's fairs in which Paris is foremost.

The care of the stranger is thus easy and natural and is a striking element in Parisian life today and this spirit of fraternity has been increased and maintained in modern times. Paris stays at home more than any great city and yet entertains more strangers than any other city.

you're giving imitations of the old Arab guy that gave away—libraries in Bagdad. Well, now, can you whistle up a fairy that'll solve this hen query, or not?"

When the young man ceased the margrave arose and paced to and fro by the park bench for several minutes. Finally he sat again, and said, in grave and impressive tones:

"I must confess, sir, that during the eight years that I have spent in search of adventure and in relieving distress I have never encountered a more interesting or a more perplexing case. I fear that I have overlooked hens in my researches and observations. As to their habits, their times and manner of laying, their many varieties and cross-breedings, their span of life, their—"

"Oh, don't make an Ibsen drama of it!" interrupted the young man, flippantly. "Riddles—especially old Hildebrant's riddles—don't have to be worked out seriously. They are light themes such as Sim Ford and Harry Thurston Peck like to handle. But, somehow, I can't strike just the answer. Bill Watson may, and he may not. Tomorrow will tell. Well, your majesty, I'm glad anyhow that you butted in and whiled the time away. I guess Mr. Al Raschid himself would have bounced back if one of his constituents had conducted him up against this riddle. I'll say good night. Peace to yours, and what-you-may-calls-its-of-Allah."

The margrave, with a gloomy air, held out his hand.

"I cannot express my regret," he said, sadly. "Never before have I found myself unable to assist in some way. 'What kind of a hen lays the longest?' It is a baffling problem. There

is a hen, I believe, called the Plymouth Rock that—"

"Cut it out," said the young man. "The Caliph trade is a mighty serious one. I don't suppose you'd even see anything funny in a preacher's defense of John D. Rockefeller. Well, good night, your nibs."

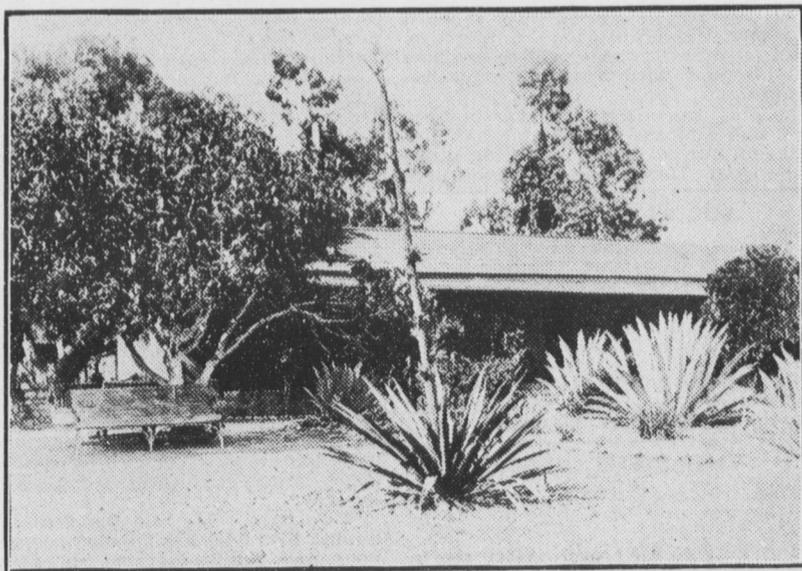
From habit the margrave began to fumble in his pockets. He drew forth a card and handed it to the young man.

"Do me the favor to accept this, anyhow," he said. "The time may come when it might be of use to you."

"Thanks!" said the young man, pocketing it carelessly. "My name is Simmons."

Shame to him who would hint that the reader's interest shall altogether pursue the Margrave August Michael von Paulsen Quigg. I am indeed astray if my hand fail in keeping the way where my peruser's heart would follow. Then let us, on the morrow, peep quickly in at the door of Hildebrant, harness maker.

Hildebrant's 200 pounds reposed on a bench, silver-buckling a raw leather martingale.



Grounds of Casa Verdugo

Bill Watson came in first. "Vell," said Hildebrant, shaking all over with the vile conceit of the joke-maker, "haf you guessed him? 'Vat kind of a hen lays der longest?'"

"Er—why, I think so," said Bill, rubbing a servile chin. "I think so, Mr. Hildebrant—the one that lives the longest— Is that right?"

"Nein!" said Hildebrant, shaking his head violently. "You haf not guessed der answer."

Bill passed on and donned a bedtick apron and bachelor hood.

In came the young man of the Arabian Nights fiasco—pale, melancholy, hopeless.

"Vell," said Hildebrant, "haf you guessed him? 'Vat kind of a hen lays der longest?'"

Simmons regarded him with dull savagery in his eye. Should he curse this mountain of pernicious humor—curse him and die? Why should— But there was Laura.

Dogged, speechless, he thrust his hands into his coat pockets and stood. His hand encountered the strange touch of the margrave's card. He drew it out and looked at it, as men about to be hanged look at a crawling fly. There was written on it in Quigg's bold round hand: "Good for one roast chicken to bearer."

Simmons looked up with a flashing eye.

"A dead one," said he. "Goot!" roared Hildebrant, rocking the table with giant glee. "Dot is right! You come at mine house at 8 o'clock to der party."

## LITTLE AND BIG

Can't keep from laughing when we see a little bit of a man with a great big look of disgust on his face.—Galveston Tribune.