

want of a couple of coats of paint and a good wash? Of one thing I felt sure, the noise had never been so appalling; never had the air been so filled with the hooting of the endless motors, the clanging, ringing and rattling of the steam and electric trams; of that a stroll, no, a strenuous walk up the Boulevard St. Sebastopol at a busy time fully convinced me. Was this really the beautiful city of my youth and my daydreams? Well, one cannot always be twenty, and one looks with other eyes when the glamour of youth has passed; but for all that Paris—the real Paris, still alive as no other town is alive—fascinated and held me once again, and—I am going back next year.

Our hotel was "very central," as the guide books say, so that the next morning we could at once stroll into the Tuileries Gardens. When I was last in Paris the blackened ruins of the Tuileries palace still lay across the end of the gallery to remind one of stirring, terrible times; they are now cleared away, and two small obelisks alone mark the site of the brilliant Court of Napoleon III. and his lovely Eugénie. A little further I had another shock. Right in the Louvre square rises a huge, glaring statue of Gambetta, with a bombastic inscription and extract from one of his speeches. He looked remarkably out of place on the threshold of the Louvre, and one immediately began to make invidious comparisons between the statues inside and the one out. It must have required a good deal of nerve to erect a modern statue within a stone's throw of the Venus de Milo and the Discus thrower. However, modernity must have its innings.

I have often been told, and am quite ready to believe, that the picture collection in the National Gallery is quite as fine and better arranged than that of the Louvre. Very likely, but think of the environment, the setting of the great art treasures of the Louvre. Can one raise any great interest in the pepper-pot *per se*, and does Trafalgar Square call anything to one's mind but futile meetings of the unemployed and addresses by well-meaning but illogical Labour leaders? But the Louvre, founded by Francis I., the liberal patron of all the arts (whose saturnine portrait in the gallery, by-the-by, hardly gives one a just idea of his gallant and gay disposition), continued, *con amore*, by all the following Kings of France, and teeming with historical memories, the gorgeous gilded Hall of Apollo, Henry IV.'s creation, the little window through which, so legends say, Charles IX. fired on his flying Huguenot subjects, Louis XIII., Anne of Austria and the frivolous Duke of Burlingham, the boyhood of Louis XIV. with the Fronde hammering

at the gates for Mazarin; why the Louvre is worth a week's visit for its memories alone, before you touch its art treasures. And to me the pictures and statues it contains are those I thought most beautiful, most perfect, when I was young, and I am not very changeable. I am in love to-day, as I was when a girl, with Titian's "Young Man with the Glove," whilst the "Venus de Milo" is still the last word to me of dignified, reposeful, powerful womanhood. Also, it is interesting to note how the little Corporal rifled Europe for treasures to adorn the palace of the old French kings. Most were, of course, returned to their indignant owners in 1814.

I don't suppose one Londoner in a hundred knows the spot where Charles I. was beheaded, but who can pass across the Place de la Concorde without recalling that where the obelisk now stands the guillotine ended Louis XVI., the hapless Maria Antoinette, and the flower of the French nobility; you have only to close your eyes to hear the tumbrils rattling over the cobble stones. Poor Strassbourg in the corner, still wears her crape and mourning wreaths as she has for the last thirty-five years, curious that she should be regarded with so much poetical affection by Teuton and Gaul alike.

From the Place de la Concorde up the Rue Royale to the Madeleine is a few minutes stroll, it is one of the buildings that just escaped destruction in '71. What a fight it must have been across and over the Rue Royale barricades up those great broad steps and into the church running red with the blood of the last defenders of the Commune. On those famous steps stood now nothing more formidable than a few old beggar women, of whom I bought a little metal token of the Virgin for memories sake. It is a fine church, for those who like the style, commenced (let me consult my guide book) by the amiable and vicious companion of Madame de Pompadour, Louis XV., and, after many vicissitudes, completed eighty years later at a cost of £500,000. Much happened between the time that scaffolding went up and came down.

But it is on the other side of the water the real old Paris lies, for when the Louvre was but a hunting box, Nôtre Dame was a stately church and the Ile de Paris the heart of the French monarchy. And there is so much to see there. The beautiful old museum of Cluny—in the most exquisite fifteenth century house—built over Roman baths, the dower house of that Princess Mary of England, who, *vide* Mrs. Markham of my childhood, killed her old husband (the estimable

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