

excellent incomers, by hiring themselves as witnesses to bills, marriages, deaths, and legal instruments. The French law allows no woman to witness a legal paper, and requires seven witnesses to some documents. I have seen some laughable incidents where the witnesses were incompetent, the legal instrument was important, and the officer was irritated by the farce in which he was obliged to play a part.

There is not a Paris vintner with a spark of self-respect under his waistcoat who has not at least one "guardian angel" in his employment. The "guardian angel" is a cherub of placid temper, in smock shirt, ears insensible to vituperation, arms strong enough to parry and support, honesty that can see gold, silver, and copper, without remembering hocus-pocus. When, by oft wetting his throat, a customer grows limp and so imaginative as to see streets, houses, and lamp-posts dancing a *grand galop infernal*, expressly to prevent him from walking home, the guardian angel then makes his appearance, rifles his wet countryman's pockets, draws the weak arm in his, walks the brainless fellow home, gives his wife all the contents of the pockets, and carries away her blessing.

There is nothing odder in Paris than the private collections, especially the cabinets of pictures. Had Raphael lived a thousand years, and painted day and night, he could not have covered the canvas shown in Paris as his works. Some of these collections contain the clothes of eminent people; others have buttons; others still have shoes; here are snuff boxes; there are wigs; yonder are fire-irons. All sorts of trash have their idolaters, as I discover, when I visit these queer nooks. I come away convinced there is nothing lost in this world. The earnest look, the important air, and the pride these people take in showing their collection, though it be only chessmen, is amusing.

How strange, too, are the girls who go every Sunday to the Hotel des Invalides to cheer the lagging spirits of the old war-beaten men, who deprive themselves of wine or tobacco during the week to give four cents to the child that prattles of hope and the future with the airy confidence childhood alone possesses, and recalls to the half-closed eyes and half-insensible ears of the veterans a time when they, too, hoped, and they, too, mirrored themselves in bright eyes, and by flattering

speeches made them sparkle. There, also, are women who take the old soldiers to dry nurse, who feed them and treat them and give them company—a kind word here, a gentle smile there, an exhibition of interest in the continued conjunction of soul and body on which the old soldier's pension hangs.

Unless it be the bread six feet long which stands in bakers' shops like grenadiers at a review, nothing strikes a stranger more forcibly than the numbers of idle people of the lower class seen lolling on the benches of all the public squares. How do they get the bread of idleness? I was some time since in Place de l'Observatoire, which was unusually thronged. I met a policeman of my acquaintance and asked him: "Who are all these people?" He answered: "Professional thieves." When I recently visited the cellars of the great markets, the officer who went with me became very angry with the people in the cellars, who were noisy. He said to me: "Every one of these people is a thief, liberated this morning." All of the people seen sleeping on benches are vagabonds. Were they found asleep in the streets at night they would be arrested, so they walk all night. Many of them are inmates of some of the asylums where decayed servants and the like are harbored during their last years; but it is astonishing how many able-bodied people are to be found among these saunterers. The ambition of Frenchmen of all classes is to lead an idle life; and to enjoy this idleness they gladly deny themselves what we consider the prime necessities of life. If a Frenchman have bread and wine he is never hungry, and never grows lean. Nor does he care for fire in winter. I have often been surprised to find the dining rooms, even of wealthy people, unwarmed, and to hear them say: "We never have a fire in the dining-room, for we find the meal warms us very comfortably." Being so easily satisfied, many of them cease to work as soon as they have acquired a revenue of \$200 a year.

In the public squares there is a never-failing round of amusements, which may be enjoyed without charge. Here is a noisy dealer in puns, which he rattles off as fast as he can make his tongue go, and which he sells for one cent the printed sheet. His wit by infusion is always in demand. Hard by