

THE VARSITY.

A Weekly Journal of Literature, University Thought and Events.

VOL. XVII.

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO, JANUARY 13, 1898.

No. 11.

THE END OF THE CENTURY.

Dim lies the light across the fields; no voice
Is heard with song. But tired as after heat
And summer brilliance sleeps the weary man—
Sleeps or half slumbers. Twilight in a haze!
The giant structures of the day fall now
In shadow, vague, and half revealed, half guessed,
No sound, no murmur from the wells of thought,
Slumbers the world, and slumbering waits the dawn.

IMPRESSIONS OF PARIS.

It is astonishing how quickly first impressions fade away, and only the more general and somewhat intangible memories remain. So that when one comes to write of something which he has not seen for some months, he finds it difficult to be sure of the smaller details, and out of these misty and indefinite general impressions it is hard to get anything concrete enough to set down on paper. I must therefore ask pardon for a very evident vagueness in the following paragraphs.

There are several routes from London by which Paris can be reached—by Dover and Calais; Folkestone and Boulogne; or by Newhaven and Dieppe. We chose the latter, and after a pleasant enough day's journey found ourselves approaching the French capital towards night-fall. The first warning that we were nearing the city was a sight I caught of the Eiffel Tower. I recognized it at once, and a very few moments proved my guess correct for the train drew up in a minute in the Gare St. Lazare. Almost before we knew where we were, we had given up our tickets, had got into a cab, and were set down at an hotel in the Rue de Lafayette.

After getting rid of our luggage, we started out for a walk, but we had to take care not to get lost, for there is nothing more easily done in a strange city at night. On that first evening, however, we had too much to do in finding our way to be able to see anything; so we soon came back to our rooms and went to bed.

The next morning I was awakened by the noise in the streets. I remember thinking it must be about seven o'clock, but what was my surprise to see by my watch that it was only four! I tried to go to sleep again but could not: the noise was too great. At last I gave up the attempt and passed the time in looking out of the window on the busy scene below. The street was paved with square wooden blocks, but there were no rubber tires as in London. The drivers on the carts, omnibuses and street cars were all vieing with one another in making their whips crack, and, as they all seemed to be experts, it was a very interesting competition. The noise some of the men could get out of their whips was certainly extraordinary, and, as the street was pretty well crowded, you might very easily have imagined, if you could only hear and not see, that there were troops on the street who were firing off volleys of musketry.

At last it was time for *café*; of the excellent little *croissants* which accompany *café* we only get enough to

stimulate the appetite. Still this tiny meal serves to stave off hunger till *déjeuner* which we cannot have till half-past eleven or twelve o'clock.

One of the first things that strikes our attention is the beauty of the city. One wonders where all the money comes from to decorate it. Paris seems to have no trade. To be sure there are any number of shops running in size from *les grands magasins du Louvre* down to the smallest *fruiterie* or *patisserie* that could well be imagined. There is indeed unrivalled opportunity for spending money, but perhaps not a corresponding chance for making it. There is evidence of wealth in every direction: the Seine is splendidly embanked on both sides, and at almost every street bridges span the river, and under these beautiful bridges—bridges the most of whose piers are surmounted by bronze sculptures—there pass no river barges laden with goods collected on what you would take for a national highway, but instead numberless little ferry boats are flitting about carrying excursionists, some to Saint Cloud some perhaps as far as Saint Germain.

If we turn to the streets we find just as gay a scene. The *cochers* seem to drive very fast and to a foreigner very recklessly. I remember thinking this very decidedly one day when crossing the Place de la Concorde. It seemed to me that half a dozen hackmen drove at me designedly from different directions, and it was only by dint of a great deal of dodging and running that I escaped. Another very fine square though not so beautiful, I used to think, as the Place de la Concorde, is the Place de l'Etoile. From the latter, if I remember correctly, there radiate nine streets. In the centre of the square towers Napoleon's Arc de Triomphe, from which a commanding view may be had all over Paris. Among the nine streets mentioned are such well-known ones as: the Avenue de Wagram, the splendid Champs Elysées, and the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne.

The last-named street leads to the famous park, the Bois de Boulogne. I remember being in the avenue one Sunday afternoon. A more animated scene it would be hard to imagine. A constant stream of carriages, horsemen and pedestrians kept passing up and down the Avenue to and from the "Bois," as they familiarly call it. It was a beautiful day and everybody was out to enjoy himself—and they certainly seemed to be succeeding.

In another end of Paris lies the Bois de Vincennes, quite an extensive park, too, with pretty little lagoons and islands with fine shaded walks and artificial grottos. With the aid of an omnibus, followed by a short walk, we might go on to the cemetery of Père-la-Chaise—a very curious kind of cemetery and well worth a visit. Anything more different from our idea of such a place it would be almost impossible to think of. Instead of the familiar tombstone, generally even to us forbidding enough looking, each little plot has on it a sort of miniature chapel provided with an open grating in front. It is quite easy to see the inside of these chapels through the iron bars. There is nearly always a small altar and strewed around it little glass cases filled with dreary-lifeless-looking, artificial flowers. I must confess that to me these damp, sunless little chapels with their sad, unnatural flowers were very distasteful. There must be a great many people buried in it, for there seemed