

the spring. Velvet mosses covered the roof and the window-sills.

The pillar which supported the corner of the house, built though it was of composite masonry, that is to say, partly of stone, partly of brick and flints, was alarming to behold by reason of its curvature; it looked as though it must give way some day beneath the weight of the superstructure whose gable projected fully six inches. For which reason the Local Authorities and the Board of Works bought the house and pulled it down to widen the street. The venerable corner pillar had its charms for lovers of old Limoges; it carried a pretty sculptured shrine and a mutilated image of the Virgin, broken during the Revolution. Citizens of an archaeological turn could discover traces of the stone sill meant to hold candlesticks and to receive wax tapers and flowers and votive offerings of the pious.

Within the shop a wooden staircase at the further end gave access to the two floors above and to the attics in the roof. The house itself, packed in between two neighboring dwellings, had little depth from back to front, and no light save from the windows which gave upon the street, the two rooms on each floor having a window apiece, one looking out into the Rue de la Vieille-Poste, and the other into the Rue de la Cité. In the Middle Ages no artisan was better housed. The old corner shop must surely have belonged to some armorer or cutler, or master of some craft which could be carried on in the open air, for it was impossible for its inmates to see until the heavily-ironed shutters were taken down and air as well as light freely admitted. There were two doors (as is usually the case where a shop faces into two streets), one on either side the pillar. But for the interruption of the white threshold stones, hollowed by the wear of centuries, the whole shop front consisted of a low wall which rose to elbow height. Along the top of this wall a groove had been contrived, and a similar groove ran the length of the beam above, which supported the weight of the house wall. Into these grooves slid the heavy shutters, secured by huge