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Part First

“ De Paris à Versailles, lon, là,
De Paris à Versailles—
Il y a de belles allées,
Vive le Roi de France !
Il y a de belles allées,
Vivent les écoliers ! ”

ONE sultry Saturday afternoon in the summer of 1847 I sat at my desk in the junior school-room, or *salle d'études des petits*, of the Institution F. Brossard, Rond-point de l'Avenue de St.-Cloud ; or, as it is called now, Avenue du Bois de Boulogne—or, as it was called during the Second Empire, Avenue du Prince Impérial, or else de l'Impératrice ; I'm not sure.

There is not much stability in such French names, I fancy ; but their sound is charming, and always gives me the nostalgia of Paris—Royal Paris, Imperial Paris, Republican Paris ! . . . whatever they may call it ten or twelve years hence. Paris is always Paris, and always will be, in spite of the immortal Haussmann, both for those who love it and for those who don't.

All the four windows were open. Two of them, freely and frankly, on to the now deserted play-ground, admitting the fragrance of lime and syringa and lilac, and other odors of a mixed quality.

Two other windows, defended by an elaborate network of iron wire and a formidable array of spiked iron rails beyond, opened on to the Rond-point, or meeting of the cross-roads—one of which led northeast to Paris