

Paris--The Market Place

M. Romain Rolland gives us an amazingly vital picture of artistic Paris in the new instalment of his extraordinary novel, "John Christopher in Paris."

Here we see a brilliant young German musician trying to find himself in Paris, and if Paris does not find him, he finds Paris. But he does not take Paris at its own valuation. He sizes it up against his own mind, and the result infuriates him, and so we get stinging pages of biting description of the literary and artistic Paris which takes itself so seriously and so vivaciously, and yet which is in essence so rotten. Christopher tears off all the gaudy rags and tinsel from this bedecked Paris, and shows us the ugly skeleton beneath. And not content with that, he seeks out the real Paris and the real France, which is not Paris.

The wealth of detail, the innumerable people and places and points of view displayed are all arranged in a most imposing and massive manner, which show the hand of a master-mind. Mr. Edmund Gosse has declared this story to be "the noblest work of fiction of the twentieth century."

Paris Society

Let us take a rapid glance at this Paris with Christopher, and then hasten on to see the real France and its people of worth. After a very little while—

"He had enough of Parisian society; he could not bear the emptiness of it, the idleness, the moral impotence, the neurasthenia, its aimless, pointless, self-devouring hypercriticism. He wondered how people could live in such a stagnant atmosphere of art for art's sake and pleasure for pleasure's sake. And yet the French did live in it; they had been a great nation, and they still cut something of a figure in the world; at least, they seemed to do so to the outside spectator. But where were the springs of their life? They believed in nothing, nothing but pleasure."

Paris Music and Literature

With regard to the concerts of Paris. "They were given full measure: two symphonies, a concerto, one or two overtures, an act from an opera. And they came from all sources: German, Russian, Scandinavian, French—beer, champagne, orgeat, wine—they gulped down everything without winking. Christopher was amazed that these indolent Parisians should have had such capacious stomachs. They did not suffer for it all. It was the case of the Danaides. It held nothing. "It was not long before Christopher perceived that this mass of music amounted to very little really—and yet everybody was talking about it mysteriously as a thing that would revolutionize the world."

As for the literature of Paris, Christopher was "defeated by the row of this Babel of words."

"The only definite impression that he had at this time was that of a flood of writing which looked like a national disaster. It seemed as though everybody wrote: men, women, children, officers, actors, society people, blackguards. It was an epidemic."

The Theatre and Plays

So with the theatre and its plays. "The men who were at that time in control of the theatres of Paris were extraordinarily skilful at beating up filth and sentiment, and giving virtue a flavoring of vice, vice with a flavoring of virtue, and turning upside down every human relation of age, sex, the family, and the affections. Their art, therefore, had an odor 'sui generis,' which smelt both good and bad at once—that is to say, it smelled very bad indeed; they called it 'amoralism.'"

"With these people all tended to sterile enjoyment. Sterile, sterile, sterile. That was the key to the enigma. Mind and sense were fruitlessly debauched. A brilliant art, full of wit and cleverness—a lovely form, a tradition of beauty, impregnably seated, in spite of foreign alluvial deposits—a theatre which was a theatre, a style which was a style, authors who knew their business, writers who could write, the fine skeleton of an art, and a thought that had been great. But a skeleton. Sonorous words, ringing phrases, the metallic clang of ideas hurtling down the void, witicism, minds haunted by sensuality, and senses number with thought. It was all useless, save for the sport of egoism. It led to death. It was a phenomenon analogous to the frightful decline to the birthrate of France, which Europe was observing, and reckoning in silence. So much wit, so much cleverness, so many acute senses, all wasted and wasting in a sort of shameful onanism!"

"There Must Be Something Else"

"When Christopher went nearer, and listened to the conversations between Rebecca and Faustina, the Roman, or Saint Barbe, the Venetian, he found her to be just a Parisian Jewess, just like the others, even more Parisian than the Parisian women, more artificial and sophisticated, talking quietly, and maliciously stripping the assembled company, body and soul, with her Madonna's eyes."

"There must be something else," said Christopher.

"What more do you want?"

"France."

"We are France," said Kohn, gurgling with laughter.

"There must be something else," he said. "Christopher had to look for it—it was well hidden."

It was through his friend Olivier that Christopher "saw that there might be in Paris minds just as free, men who remained as pure and stoical as any in Europe."

The Other Paris

"Christopher avowed the trouble he had taken to gain some knowledge of the country; he drew up a list of all the Frenchmen he had met in the circle of the Stevens and the Roussins: Jews, Belgians, Luxemburgers, American, Russians, Levantines, and here and there a few authentic Frenchmen."

"Just what I was saying," replied Olivier. "You haven't seen a single Frenchman. A group of debauchees, a few beasts of pleasure, who are not even French, men-about-town, politicians, useless creatures, all the fuss and flummery which passes over and above the life of the nation without even touching it. You have only seen the swarm of wasps attracted by a fine autumn and the rich meadows. You haven't noticed the busy hives, the industrious city, the thirst for knowledge."

"I beg your pardon," said Christopher, "I've come across your intellectual elite as well."

"What? A few dozen men of letters? There's a fine lot! Nowadays, when science and action play so great a part, literature has become superficial, no more than the bed where the thought of the people sleeps. In literature you only come across the theatre, the theatre of luxury, an international kitchen where dishes are turned out for the wealthy customers of the cosmopolitan hotels."

The Real French

"The theatres of Paris? Do you think a workman even knows what is being done in them? Pasteur did not go to them ten times in all his life! Like all foreigners, you attach an exaggerated importance to our novels, and our boulevard plays, and the intrigues of our politicians."

"If you like I will show you women who never read novels, girls in Paris who have never been to theatres, men who have never bothered their heads about politics—yes, even among our intellectuals. You have not come across either our men of science or our poets. You have not discovered the solitary artists who languish in silence, nor the burning flames of our revolutionaries. You have not seen a single great believer, or a single great skeptic."

"As for the people, we won't talk of them. Outside the poor women who look after you, what do you know of them? Where have you had a chance of seeing them? How many Parisians have you met who have lived higher than the second or third floor? If you do not know these people, you do not know France. You know nothing of the brave, true hearts, the men and women living in poor lodgings, in the garrets of Paris, in the dumb provinces, men and women who, through a dull, crab life, think grave thoughts, and live in daily sacrifice—the little Church, which has always existed in France—small in numbers, great in spirit, almost unknown, having no outward or apparent force of action, though it is the very force of France, that might which endures silence, while the so-called elite rots away and springs to life again unceasingly."

The Provincial Reserves

"You are amazed when you find a Frenchman who lives not for the sake of happiness but for the sake of duty, to accomplish or to serve his faith? There are thousands of men like myself, men more worthy than myself, more pious, more humble, men who to their dying day live unflinchingly to serve an ideal, a God, who vouches them no reply. You know nothing of the thrifty, methodical, industrious, tranquil, middle class living with a quenchless, dormant flame in their hearts—the people betrayed and sacrificed, who in the old days defended 'my country' against the selfish arrogance of the great, the blue eyed ancient race of Vauban. You do not know the people; you do not know the elite."

"Have you read a single one of the books which are our faithful friends, the companions who support us in our lives? Do you even know of the existence of our young reviews in which such great faith and devotion are expressed? Have you any idea of the men of moral, might and worth who are as the sun to us, the sun whose voiceless light strikes terror to the army of the hypocrites?"

"You are all the same. All your countrymen who come among us see only the parasites who suck our blood, literary, political, and financial adventurers, with their minions and hangers on and their harlots; and they judge France by these wretched creatures who prey on her. Not one of you has any idea of the real France living under oppression or of the reserve of vitality in the French provinces, or of the great mass of the people who go on working heedless of the uproar and potter made by their masters of a day."

Where Are the People?

Christopher asked Olivier: "Where are your people?" "I see only the elect, all sorts, good and bad."

"The people? They are tending their gardens. They never bother about us. Every group and faction among the elect strives to engage their attention. They pay no heed to anyone. There was a time when it amused them to listen to the humbug of political mountebanks. But now they never worry about it. There are several millions who do not even make use of their rights as electors. The parties may break each other's heads as much as they like, and the people don't care one way or another so long as they don't trample the crops in their wrangling; if that happens then they lose their tempers, and smash the parties indiscriminately. They do not act; they react in one way or another against all the exaggerations that disturb

their work and their rest. Kings, Emperors, Republics, priests, Freemasons, Socialists, whatever their leaders may be all that they ask of them is to be protected against the great common dangers, wars, riots, epidemics and for the rest to be allowed to go tending their gardens. When all is said and done, they think: 'Why won't these people leave us in peace?'

"But the politicians are so stupid that they worry the people and won't leave off unless they are pitched out with a fork, as will happen one day to our members of parliament. There was a time when the people embarked upon great enterprises. Perhaps that will happen again, though they sowed their wild oats long ago; in any case their embarking is never for long, very soon they return to their old age companion: the earth."

"It is the soil which binds the French to France, much more than the French. There are so many different races who for centuries have been tilling the soil side by side, that it is the soil that unites them, the soil which is their love. Through good times and bad they cultivate it unceasingly; and it is all good to them, even the smallest scrap of ground."

"Christopher looked down. As far as he could see along the road, around the swamps, and on the slopes of rocky hills, over the battlefields and ruins of action, over the mountains and plains of France, all was cultivated and richly bearing; it was the great garden of European civilization. Its incomparable charm no less in the good fruitful soil than in the blind labors of an indefatigable years, who for centuries have never ceased to till and sow and make the land ever more beautiful."

Fifty Years Hence

"Yes," said Olivier, "I wish we could jump fifty years. This headlong gallop towards the precipice must end one way or another; either the horse must stop or fall. Then we shall breathe again. Thank heaven, the earth will not cease to flower, nor the sky to give light with or without music! What have we to do with an art so inhuman? . . . Very soon. . . . I see other stars arising in the furthest depths of the East."

"Bother the East!" said Christopher. "The West has not said its last word yet. Do you think I am going to abdicate? I have enough to say to keep you going for centuries. Hurrah for life! Hurrah for joy! Hurrah for the courage which drives us on to struggle with our destiny! Hurrah for love which maketh the heart big! Hurrah for friendship which rekindles our faith—friendship a sweeter thing than love! Hurrah for the day! Hurrah for the night! Glory be to the sun! Laus Deo, the God of joy, the God of dreams and action, the God who created music! Hossannah!"

God's Perpetual Advance

The fine old Abbe Cornelle, to whom "the history of the world was only the history of the perpetual advance of the idea of God," said to Christopher: "You are like thousands of others! You see God every day and never know it is He."

"His surfeit of doubts and disgust with Parisian sensuality had for the last two years been slowly restoring God to his place in Christopher's heart. Not that he believed in God. He denied God. But he was filled with the spirit of God. The Abbe Cornelle used to tell him with a smile that like his namesake, the sainted giant, he bore God on his shoulders without knowing it."

"You Lack Blood"

Christopher certainly had Divine Spark, and he tried to convey it to Olivier.

"My dear Olivier, you French people have plenty of good qualities but you lack blood. You most of all. There's nothing the matter with your mind or your heart. It's your life that's all wrong. You're sputtering out."

"Why should you think that your revolt will carry such little weight? A sturdy, upright conscience which dares assert itself is a mighty thing. More than once during the last few years you have seen the state and public opinion forced to reckon with the views of an honest man who had no other weapons than his own moral force, which, with constant courage and tenacity he had dared publicly assert."

"And if you must go on asking what's the good of taking so much trouble, what's the good of fighting, what's the good of it all?"

"Then, I will tell you: Because France is dying, because Europe is perishing—because if we did not fight our civilization, the edifice so splendidly constructed, at the cost of centuries of labor, by our humanity, would crumble away. These are not idle words. The country is in danger, our European mother-country—and, more than any, yours, your own native country, France. Your apathy is killing her. Your silence is killing her. Each of your energies as it dies, each of your ideas as it accepts and surrenders, each of your good intentions as it ends in sterility, every drop of your blood as it dries up, unused in your veins, means death to her. . . . Up! Up! You must live! Or, if you must die, then you must die fighting like men."

The International Society of Archaeologists has a department for exposing fraudulent relics. In this country there are several manufacturers of bogus Indian relics, which are shipped to Europe as "genuine pre-Columbian stone implements," and so perfect as to deceive even experts. One concern makes a business of buying up poor but genuine specimens and converting them into fine ones—changing a 5-cent arrowhead, for instance, by making bars and re-sharpening it, into a 50-cent article that might be shown with pride by a collector.

Relics of Stevenson

Of the relics of the great dead, few seem to have the poignancy or tenderness of those associated with the childhood of genius. The market preferred Charlotte Bronte's manuscripts to the simple samplers of the alphabet and the Lord's Prayer, painfully achieved in a dull back room in the Hawthorn parsonage when she was a little child, and John Keats's inspired scripts fetched much more than the medal won by him at school for trying to improve on his record of naughtiness. Yet to be fond of the less valuable is pardonable. Soon at Sotheby's will be seen the writing desk on which Robert Louis Stevenson penned or dictated "Catriona," and all that feeling will be evoked which hungry collectors showed when Dickens's study furniture, Goldsmith's chair in which he mused, Burns's farmhouse bureau, and even that gauche thing, Bunyan's "anvil," were sold, says the London Daily Telegraph.

But we like best of all the Stevenson relics—and there are many—a little green book with the last pages and the covers gone, given to him by his nurse, "Dear Cummy," when he was a little lad of four. It is a copy of that solid chunk of heartening stuff, "A Book About Boys," by J. S. Arthur, the first story in which is "The Test of Courage," with an illustration of derring-do and the scrap of brave dialogue below:

"You will stand alone, Harry.
"I cannot help it."

Stevenson's Nurse

This and the rest of the stirring engravings were lovingly colored from "Master Lew's" paint box, and we all can share his brave joy. Admirers of Stevenson know well the beautiful bond of affection between him and his old nurse, Miss Alison Cunningham, happily still alive, and able to write only last month to Sotheby's, authenticating the writing desk and other relics. With regard to the desk she says:

"Lew and I lived for a time in the library, where the writing table always stood, and it is more than likely that Lew scribbled on it, as he was often doing so on what he could use for his scribbling."

A further letter from Mrs. Stevenson is more explicit, and she states that her husband and his amanuensis (the late Mr. Dick, who had been Stevenson's father's confidential clerk) used to work at the desk together, and looked very nervous whenever she looked in on them at the study in the house at 17 Heriot-row, Edinburgh.

Miss Cunningham has been induced to part with that New Testament in which, as a boy of seven Stevenson put his initials in pencil with the intention of presenting the book to his mother. He was however allowed to keep it, and he eventually gave it to his old nurse. With this is a photograph of Mentone inscribed, "To Cummy, from Robert Louis Stevenson," and there is also an old album of photographs with family portraits. The faithful will delight in these, as well as in a fine letter to Mr. Dick dated Hyeres, March 12, 1884 from which is the following:

"I re-read the other day that heart breaking book, the Life of Scott. . . . one should read such books now and then—but O, not often. As I live I feel more and more that literature should be cheerful and brave spirited, even if it cannot be made beautiful and pious and heroic. We wish it to be a green place. The Waverley novels are better to re-read than the over true life, fine as dear Sir Walter Scott was. The Bible in most parts is a cheerful book; it is our little piping theologues, tracts and sermons that are dull and dowdy; and even the shorter catechism, which is scarcely a work of consolation, opens with the best and shortest and completest sermon ever written upon Man's chief end."

Much interest too lies in a manuscript written in his father's office and corrected by Stevenson the elder and Mr. Dick, entitled, "The New Lighthouse on the Dhu Heartach Rock." Despite these, the writing desk will doubtless make the biggest appeal, and we may recall that Burns's farmhouse bureau realized £600 last year.

Sheridan's Domestic Tragedy

Real pathos is disclosed in a series of letters written by the brilliant Richard Brinsley Sheridan to the beautiful Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire, her sister Countess of Bessborough, and her friend, Lady Betty Foster—Gainsborough and Reynolds beauties all. Nothing can be more touching than the letter to the Duchess in which he refers to the drooping wife, the lovely Miss Linley, whom Sir Joshua immortalized in his picture of St. Cecilia.

"Last night she desired to be placed at the Piano-Forte. Looking like a shadow of her own picture, she played some notes with the tears dropping on her thin arms. Her mind is become heavenly, but her mortal form is fading from my sight, and I look in vain in my own mind for assent to her apparent conviction that all will not perish. I mean to send for my son, and she wishes for him."

The eternal tragedy of the invalid permeates this correspondence, with sympathizing society beauties, and no wonder that many passages of an intimate nature have been scored out by the Duchess and her sister. In one letter he sadly recalls his romantic elopement with his wife:

How many years have past since these un-

reasoning restless waters, which this night I have been gazing at and listening to, I bore poor E., who is now so near me fading in sickness from her natural attachments and affections, and then loved her so that had she died as I once thought she would in the Passage, I should assuredly have plunged with her body to the Grave. What times and changes have passed!

What has the interval of my life been, and what is left me but misery from Memory, and a horror of Reflexion? Night, Silence, Solitude, and the Sea will unhinge the cheerfulness of anyone when there has been length of life enough to bring regret &c., &c."

It is better to think of Mr. Sheridan as the shining star of debate in the House which he so much dazzled with his first speech against Warren Hastings that an adjournment was at once moved. In one of his rare letters, addressed from the House of Commons, he writes:

Grey has just moved the amendment . . . he labored under the disadvantage of rising immediately after one of the most brilliant and magnificent pieces of declamation that ever fell from that rascal Pitt's lips. Detesting the Dog as I do, I cannot withhold this just tribute to the Scoundrel's talents. I could not help often lamenting in the course of his harangue what a pity it is that he has not a particle of honesty in him. He would be a real treasure if he had a grain. Here's Submission to your Will.

"I am half drunk, and can write no more—perhaps had better not have written half so much."

The above form part of Mr. W. S. Sichel's collection, and have great historical value. His collection of drawings, portraits, and relics connected with Lady Hamilton will also be offered. An unusually remarkable series of illuminated manuscripts includes some worthy of ranking with the Huth possessions. Among the books for this sale (Dec. 13-15) is a 1659 Bible prepared for presentation to Charles II. on his arrival in England at the Restoration. In front is a large oval portrait of Queen Henrietta Maria, and on the first fly-leaf is an epitaph on Charles I. beginning:

"So falls that stately cedar, while it stood
That was the only glorie of the wood."

Lastly—lest we forget—Bunyan's copy of Foxe's "Book of Martyrs" will at length be sold by the trustees of the Bedford Literary Institute.

CANADIAN LEGAL STANDARDS

Canadian bushel standards are set by the Inspection and Sale Act, administered by the Dominion Department of Trade and Commerce. This act specifies that "in contracts for the sale and delivery of any of the under-mentioned articles the bushel shall be determined by weighing, unless a bushel by measure is specially agreed upon, and the weight equivalent to a bushel shall (except as specially provided) be as follows: Barley, 48 pounds; buckwheat, 48; flaxseed, 56; Indian corn, 56; oats, 48; peas, 60; rye, 56; wheat, 60; beans, 60; beets, 60; bituminous coal 70; bluegrass seed 14; carrots, 60; castor beans, 40; clover seed, 60; hempseed, 44; lime, 70; malt, 36; onions, 50; parsnips, 60; potatoes, 60; timothy seed, 48; turnips, 60 pounds."

A legalized bushel weight has been established by the United States Government (mainly for customs purposes) for but few agricultural products as follows: Barley, 48 pounds; castor beans (shelled), 50; buckwheat, 42; corn (shelled), 56; corn meal, 48; flaxseed (linseed), 56; oats, 32; peas, 60; potatoes, 60; rye, 56; wheat, 60 pounds.—Farmer's Advocate.

REFLECTIONS ON SUNDAY

Cordelia and I are fairly pious people. We are even so old fashioned that we like to go to church. It is not a universally popular pastime among the Protestants of our acquaintance but for my part I have to go, if it's only to be reminded that there is another force always working to make life possible and palatable besides the wisdom of majorities (aforesaid) and the abilities of legislatures to legislate and the powers of courts to keep them from overdoing it.

Those things—the majorities and the legislatures and the courts—are eddies in the great current. I feel when I am in church more as though I was up in the great current itself. I like to go; it is such a beautiful chance to think. Somehow it invites the soul queer as it is. I like to hear the Bible read I like to differ with the honorable apostle when I cannot as yet reach his conclusion about something and to wonder how it happened to him to say something so marvellously well. I like to differ with the prayer book a good deal, and not to mind at all so long as they don't put me out. Prayer books are not time tables, and ought not to be expected to be up-to-date right to the minute.—Harper's Magazine.

A Foxy Scheme

"Tommy, if you'll saw some wood I'll tell you what I'll do."

"What's that, dad?"

"I'll let you have the sawdust to play circus with."

An attachment for converting eyeglasses or spectacles into automobile goggles has been invented by a Philadelphian.