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IN THE STREET

IN my almost daily perambulations through the brilliant, through the drab, and through the ambiguous quarters of Paris, I constantly come upon street scenes that bring me inquisitively to a standstill. Not that they are particularly novel or startling. Indeed, to the Parisian they are such banal, everyday spectacles that he passes them by without so much as a glance. But for me, familiar though I am with the physiognomy of the Amazing City, these street scenes, amusing or pathetic, sentimental or grim, possess an indefinable, a never-failing charm.

For instance, I dote on a certain ragged, weather-beaten old fellow who is always and always to be discovered, on a boulevard bench, under a dim gas-lamp, at the precise hour of eleven. Across his knees—unfolded—a newspaper. And spread forth on the newspaper, scores and scores of cigarette ends and cigar stumps, which have been industriously amassed in the streets, and on the terraces of cafés, during the day. Every night, on this same boulevard bench, at the same hour of eleven, the old fellow counteth up his spoil.

“Fifty-five, fifty-six, fifty-seven,” he mutters.

“Eh bien, le vieux, how are affairs?” asks a