

French inns for years, and have not yet ceased to be astonished at the refined excellence of the repast which is offered in any little poky hole for a florin.

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She was right about the roads. Emphatically they got worse. But we did not mind, for we had a strong wind at our backs. The secret of happiness in such an excursion as ours is in the wind and in naught else. We bumped through some dozen villages, all exactly alike—it was a rolling pasture country—and then came to our first town, Puisieux, whose church with its twisted spire must have been destined from its beginning to go on to a picture post card. And having taught the leading business house of Puisieux how to brew tea, we took to the wind again, and were soon in England; that is to say, we might have been in England, judging by the hedges and ditches and the capriciousness of the road's direction, and the little occasional orchards, bridges and streams. This was not the hedgeless, severe landscape of Gaul—not a bit! Only the ancient farmhouses and the châteaux guarded by double pairs of round towers reminded us that we were not in Shropshire. The wind blew us in no time to within sight of the distant lofty spire of the great church of Pithiviers, and after staring at it during six kilomètres, we ran down into a green hollow and up into the masonry of Pithiviers, where the first spectacle we saw was a dog racing towards the church with a huge rat in his mouth. Pithiviers is one of the important towns of the department. It demands