

PARISIAN SLUMS.



NE peculiarity of exterior Paris, since the days of Baron Haussmann, consists in the fact that unlike other large cities, it has virtually no slums. Probably the lowest neighbourhood in Paris is La Villette. As may be supposed, this unusual openness of construction of the *Paris moderne* greatly favours the action of the police in their never ending warfare against occult vice and crime. The various haunts and houses of call for criminals—criminals, like other members of society, must have their resorts for purposes of business and of pleasure—are not by any means inaccessible, and are situated as often as not in the best parts of the city; under of course, the watchful tolerance of authority, which regards such places in the light of so many coverts, where it may be sure of drawing doubtful and dangerous game whensoever the same is 'wanted.'

One of the most thorough-paced and characteristic of Parisian 'dives,' is the Caveau des Halles. It lies within the precincts of the great Central Market. You are in a clean, quiet side street; early morning is the hour, and two or three hundred yards away you can just discern the cheerful bustle of vending and purchasing crowds at the foot of the Halles' big glass and iron walls. A charming Parisian tableau of cleanly, orderly activity and industry. Step, however, through the narrow doorway of this little corner *marchand de vins*. Exchange, in passing, a glance with the *patron* or 'boss,' a large florid-looking man, whose head at all seasons of the year displays the adornment of a coarse fur cap. Then precipitate yourself down the narrow winding staircase at the extreme end of the room, which room, though narrow, is exceedingly long, and the next moment you will find yourself in the bowels of the earth and in the famous Caveau des Halles.

Here an extraordinary scene awaits you. Under the low arches of a vault—so low that you have to stoop for fear of knocking your brains out by coming in contact with the roof—gleams the uncertain light afforded by some score of guttering tall wax candles stuck in drooping tin sockets along the walls. On tables and chains of the coarsest stand glasses too thick for anything to break (thicker even than the skulls of those now drinking out of them), and the knives and forks which some are using are fastened down by means of short iron chains. So terrific is the din kept up by the half-hundred rogues, reprobates, and vagabonds of either sex here assembled, that at first your wits are not sufficiently collected for you to have more than a confused general perception of the appearance of those around. They, meanwhile, have been very closely and attentively examining yours.

When, finally, you are enabled to take a full view of the company among whom you have been brought by the indulgence of that sentiment named by Baudelaire *la curiosité de l'horrible*, you are somewhat startled to perceive how hideous are nearly all these beings. Less of sheer brutality about them, it may be, than about the lowest roughts in New York and London. Less abjectly filthy they are, too, in the matter of their clothing. But a great deal more abjectly filthy as to their facial expression. Herein is where the French ruffian triumphs: in his air of odious depravity, too utter for any less depraved than he to fully conceive, much less describe or suggest in words. And the women, in this respect, seem viler still than the men.

Songs of awful tenour are being, not sung, but squealed or howled or howled. Those glasses of leaden density are being hammered till they ring again upon the surface of the tables, scored deep with every obscene device and design. And now—immediately after a waiter who would be thought a somewhat specially evil looking creature if he were first caught sight of at some galleys, has got through serving you out your 'consummation' with one hand, while keeping the other hand extended for the reception of simultaneous payment—a desperate fight with knives breaks out between a couple of men in blouses who have for some time past been lavishing joint but rival attentions on a female with hair hanging down over her nose like a Skye's. Instantly three sharp-eyed men dressed to represent workmen, who had been sitting quietly at a table a little apart, dash forward and strive to separate the combatants. This new trio, needless to say, are members of the secret police. But before the pair, fighting and foaming at the mouth like savage beasts, can be checked and overpowered for purposes of arrest, one of the two has received a fearful cut extending from the nose to the lips, and falls to actively expectorating blood. The other has been pinked somewhere in the region of the abdomen, and looks, and says he feels, rather particularly bad. The woman with the Skye-terrier hair appears to think it all a splendid joke, for she leans with complete self-abandonment against a groaning table, and laughs till she nearly cries.

But one has seen quite enough of this agreeable resort near Halles, and now one may wend one's way towards Montmartre, with a view to exploring a 'dive' of somewhat different description, well known to the initiate under the name of 'Father Richard's.'

A ring—several rings—at a creaking-bell at a very ordinary-looking door in an up-hill street, and a sliding panel is withdrawn to permit a pair of glittering eyes to view you carefully and long from behind a wire grating. At length a door is opened and 'Father Richard' stands before you. A man of strikingly sinister visage, with livid complexion and coal-black anky beard and hair. Quite the classic poisoner or groler of the boards. Down a long winding passage the 'Father' glumly conducts us, after one word from his lip of welcome in a hoarse, guttural voice—the mark is a pushed aside, and the full view breaks upon one of a general Parisian pandemonium. Gas is flaring, and all too vividly lighting up the faces of a crew seated like Arthur's knights at a large round table, covered with all drinkables of the cheaper sort. Women are here in numbers; a less haggard-looking lot than at the Caveau, but perhaps in reality (if that be possible) more abominably vile. Concerning the representatives of the other sex who are present, one might wager that, if not in each case thieves downright, they are either card 'sharps' or gentlemen attached in a professional capacity to the society of the ladies present, or minor agents of the police that are here combining their business with their pleasure.

Room is promptly and obsequiously made for us at the

table; for something in Father Richard's manner has appraised these quick-witted knaves of one's being something a little out of the common run of the Father-Richard custom. And we sit us down alongside of a hat and a countenance—the men all keep their hats on at Father Richard's—belonging to a gentleman, who, if not a murderer, ought to be. Resisting courteously the blandishments of a lady not far off, who shows an eager desire to enter into sentimental conversation, we cast a circular glance along the walls and note, with amusement, perhaps, but no surprise, that twin portraits of Boulanger and Gambetta, marvellously lifeless and stiff, appear on either side of the mantel. Richard evidently is a patriot. His wife, a short, stout being, with one of those smoothly gentle faces not unfrequently to be found accompanying the worst degree of inward sinfulness and villainy, passes hither and thither, bearing, Hebe like, refreshments, which at this thrifty hour of night are in rapid consumption and demand.

But hark! So soon, that ominous rattle! It is—it is 'the box!' Decamp we must, and quickly, else we will be involved in that little game of dice now being improvised for the benefit of the unexpected visitor. One more 'dive' remains to be explored; one more 'flight' would be the more appropriate term, seeing this third place is perched on the very summit of the steep Montmartre height.

A climb, long and hard, through the last lingering shades of darkness before dawn, reminding one somewhat of Arnold's lines:—

'The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight;
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upwards through the night.'

And here is a little rustic-looking street, with trees, and walls, and never the hint of a pavement. 'Aux Assassins,' is the highly-appropriate sign of the wine shop whither one's steps are tending. They don't mince matters here. They claim 'assassins' for their customers, quite boldly. Quite truthfully too, one concludes, as one enters the establishment, where, behind shutters hermetically closed and sealed, cards, billiards, dice, drinking, cursing, singing, and more especially that species of amusement by our rule but graphic ancestors denominated 'drabbing,' are still at fever height. On the broken brick floor, breakdowns are being performed to the 'lascivious pleasing' of a fiddle, manipulated by a person—perhaps himself an assassin—who charges a couple of acous for every tune. 'If ye do not dance; but drink we do, because we must. Drink, pay, look on, and finally depart. Even the longest of night has an end (it is now seven o'clock in the morning), and three 'dives' in one row are enough for the most inveterate diver.—EDWARD DELILLE.

A FAIR ADVENTRESS.

ABOUT fifteen years ago a young woman of noble birth, Miss Goolak-Artemovskaya, went from Volhynia to St. Petersburg, and soon became a figure in the leading social circles of the capital. Her youth, beauty, refinement, and sympathetic nature, as described, attracted to her drawing-room a host of admirers. Officers of high rank and young nobles paid homage to her. Miss Goolak-Artemovskaya lived in high style. Stories were current in the city about her vast possessions in the Crimea and Caucasus, which she had inherited, to account for the luxuries in which she indulged herself. But her days of glory were of short duration. One morning several military officers of high rank discovered that they had been taken advantage of by the beautiful Miss Goolak-Artemovskaya at the innocent game of *dooratshyky*, a most simple game of cards which is very common in Russia, and that since they had been acquainted with her they had lost many thousand roubles.

They reported their case to the police authorities, who found that the lady possessed no property, and that she derived her means of high living by fraud. Not only fleeing her admirers at the card-table, but even forging was traced to her. She was condemned to deprivation of all her personal rights and exiled to Siberia, in the Government of Irkutsk.

A romantic incident was connected with her fate. A young noble, one of her admirers, to whom she had paid but little attention in her palmy days, attested his true love for her. He married her in prison and followed her voluntarily to the place of her exile. He devoted his life and money toward making her comfortable. She, however, wearied of the dullness of her life and determined to escape. She played the pious woman and so successfully carried on her religious hypocrisy that she became widely known for her godliness and was finally allowed to settle in Irkutsk. Here, at last, she and her husband appeared quite happy. They set up a respectable little household and lived comfortably together, for a time. Their little parlours soon became the centre of attraction for the *jeunesse doree* and military dignitaries of the city. But reports reached the Governor that the penitent Goolak-Artemovskaya, who indeed visited the churches during the day, amused her guests in the evening with the game of *dooratshyky*. Notice was sent her that under no consideration should cards be played in her house, or she would be sent back to the village where she had been located before. So card-playing had to be given up.

The husband of the tricky woman found out after a while that she conducted her household on a larger and more luxurious scale than he could afford. He discovered, moreover, that she had dresses and jewellery which he had not bought for her. At last he learned that she had become too intimate with a rich merchant, who owned the house in which they lived. He remonstrated with her, but could get no satisfaction. Having convinced himself that the woman was incorrigible, he abandoned her, but she continued living in her accustomed fashion. Her charms were great, and she never lacked friends.

It seems, however, that her last trump was played this winter. Among her friends was a governess who had been brought from Moscow by one of the rich merchants at Irkutsk for his children. The lady was highly educated and refined, and in stature and appearance resembled Goolak-Artemovskaya. After her arrival in Irkutsk the wily Artemovskaya became her intimate friend. Last autumn both Artemovskaya and her friend, the governess, disappeared from Irkutsk. Searches were made, but the fugitives could not be discovered. At last a peasant reported that he had found the body of a respectably dressed woman near the river a few versts from Irkutsk. It was the body of the poor governess. As she had disappeared from the city together with the convict Goolak-Artemovskaya, suspicion arose that

the latter had played her foul in order to get possession of her passport. Searches for the fugitive convict were made with increased energy. She was discovered in the town of Maryinsk, in the Government of Tomsk. She had assumed the name of the poor governess and used her passport. She was arrested and taken to Irkutsk for trial.

A BIG CONTRACT.

THE case of the Plymouth man who had his love letters produced and read in court should teach other lovers moderation in the making of oedipal contracts.

In a single postscript the Plymouth man undertook to deliver to the lady of his choice no fewer than 1,000,000,000 kisses, and as such contracts are not infrequently made in love letters, it may be well to give a thought to the magnitude of the undertaking.

Whoever will take the trouble to figure it out will find that even if this amorous swain should give the lady 15,000 kisses a minute (and we affirm that no person could hope to do more than that), and even if he could keep up this rate of osculation twenty-four hours a day, never pausing to sleep, eat or take a breath, working 365 days every year, it would take him more than 100 years to complete the contract and by that time, it is painful to reflect, the ardour of his love may have cooled.

Even at the end of 100 years, counting 15,000 kisses a minute, there would remain an undelivered balance of 200,000,000,000—a number which in itself might appal the most industrious.

We therefore feel constrained to advise writers of love letters not to undertake contracts of such magnitude.—*Tit-Bits*.

FALLING IN LOVE BY TELEGRAPH.

THE telegraph companies of the United States are on the eve of abandoning the employment of women as telegraph operators. Mischievous Cupid is at the bottom of the trouble. It is he who will have to bear the responsibility of the close of a popular profession to the fair sex, and the mere mention of the word 'love' in any of the large telegraph offices has much the same effect on the managers and superintendents as a red rag would have on a bull. The managers complain that no sooner does a woman operator get thoroughly broken and become an adept in handling the wire, than she invariably falls in love with one of the male employés of the office, quits work, and gets married. This, of course, necessitates all the trouble of training a new operator, and of annoying changes in the constitution of the staff.

The managers have attempted to deal with this perversity and contumacious of their female operators by eliminating wherever possible all the male clerks from offices where women are employed. This, however, has proved useless, and has merely led to the development of a new feature of matrimonial business, of which until now the telegraphers have the monopoly. This may be briefly described as 'marriage on tick.' To fall in love at first sight is the lot of many, but it is reserved for telegraph operators to fall in love without any sight at all. The little telegraph instrument, with its brass key and sounding-plate, is made to take the place of eyes, and to stamp upon the brain the image of the one adored, though a thousand miles away. It is said that an experienced operator can tell from the sound of the click whether the sender is a man or a woman. The touch of the latter is more delicate than that of a man, and the little bright blue spark on the sounding-board from a woman's hand has often sent a thrill of joy through the heart of the receiver at the other end of the wire, and kindled the fire of love in his soul. Courtships of this kind are economical. There are no theatre parties, picnics, or ice-cream symposiums to be looked after. Innumerable have been the matches made in this fashion, where all the arrangements have been perfected over the wire, without either of the parties seeing each other except in picture form.

THE PATH THROUGH THE CLOVER.

We strayed together where the path
Goes winding through the clover,
And 'cross the soft, sweet orchard glass
Where apple boughs hang o'er
We watched the waving of the hay,
All ready for the mowing,
And saw the blueness of the sky,
And felt the fresh winds blowing,
And to our light, few hearts the day
Was glad as glad could be,
And nothing lacked of fair or bright
For Margaret and me.

But at the brook our ways diverged,
Mine up the hillside leading,
And here across the gentle slopes
Where peaceful flocks are feeding,
In slight uncertainty we stood,
We thought not of dividing,
While each the other's doubting steps
Rebuked with playful hiding,
In mood half vexed, half laughing, we
Could never quite agree
If I should cross the fields with her,
Or she its hills with me.

At last we took our separate ways,
Our hearts with anger burning;
Each longed to call the other back,
But scorned to think of turning.
Ah, me, had we but read aright
The omen clear before us,
We had less lightly held the faith
No future can restore us
Nor sigh to think how better far
For both of us 'twould be
If I had crossed the fields with her,
Or she its hills with me.

KATE TUCKER GOOD.