

## *Paris under the last Valois Kings*

THAT three centuries ago Paris was the Elysium of the whole civilised world is a circumstance perhaps insufficiently recognised: yet evidence of the fact is abundant. 'This is not a city, it is a little world,' was the exclamation of Charles V. Andrea Navagero, ambassador from 'that pleasant place of all festivity, the revel of the earth, the masque of Italy,' declared that for beauty, wealth, and gaiety the French capital might well rival Venice.<sup>1</sup> In 1572, the cartographers, Braun and Hohenbergius, wrote still more emphatically in language pirated fifty years later by Hentzner: *Lutetia Parisiorum fertilissimi regni Francici caput atque metropolis, magnitudine incredibili nobilium, mercatorum, civium et studiosorum frequentia, edificiorum et publicorum et privatorum splendore, non modo universæ Gallie sed maximis totius Europæ civitatibus præfertur.*<sup>2</sup> To this I will only add the testimony of Montaigne, who affirmed that Paris and its fauxbourgs covered an area equal to that inclosed by the walls of old and new Rome.<sup>3</sup>

To pass from the perfected conception of Baron Haussmann to the capital of the Valois kings, from the theatre of Napoleonic *coups d'état* to that of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, from the excesses of the Commune to those of the League, is a feat practicable enough to the most prosaic imagination; so numerous are the itineraries, descriptions, and histories produced during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in honour of the new metropolis of art and science, of pleasure and of crime. Amongst the more valuable contributors to this mass of literature we find the brilliant advocate Estienne Pasquier, who expounds the growth of the civic government; the monk Dubreul, who deals chiefly with the ecclesiastical foundations; Belleforest and Sauval, who work less satisfactorily on a more general plan; Corrozet, who appears the prince of cicerones; and Lippomano, who blends the astuteness of a diplomatist with the garrulity of a special correspondent. Contemporary

<sup>1</sup> *Relations des Ambassadeurs vénitiens &c.* Recueillies et traduites par M. N. Tommaseo, 1835. Vol. i. p. 80.

<sup>2</sup> Braun et Hohenbergius, *Civitates Orbis Terrarum*, vol. i. p. 7. Pauli Hentzneri (J. C.) *Itinerarium*. Norimbergæ, 1629, p. 127.

<sup>3</sup> Montaigne (Michel de), *Journal d'un Voyage en Italie*, ed. 1744, vol. ii. p. 111.

illustrations to their labours are found in the maps furnished by Münster, Braun, Melchior Tavernier, and Bertelli. As appendices we have the writings of Delamare, Félibien, Lobineau, and Piganiol de la Force, who, in the eighteenth century, followed as reverent disciples in the steps of the old topographers. From these treasures I have confined my choice to the representation of Paris as it existed for the *bourgeoisie*.

Of old, the capital had been divided into the island or city, the town, and the university. A semicircle traced on a plan of modern Paris from the Pont Royal to the Pont d'Austerlitz, making the Porte St. Denis the centre of the arc, would show the extent of the town walls as delineated in Belleforest's map. An ellipse drawn from the Pont des Arts, through the Place du Panthéon, to the Pont de la Tournelle would perform a like service for the university. Beyond stretched the Fauxbourgs St. Germain, St. Michel, St. Jacques, St. Marcel, and St. Victor, with 'splendid mansions à la romanesque, à la grecque, or à la moderne.' It seemed to Corrozet 'as if Paris never would be finished.'<sup>1</sup> The princes and nobles forsook their old historic hotels, and with the wealthier merchants established themselves in these new suburbs. They were followed by half-ruined provincial families who sought to evade the *taille*, and by the more restless of the city artisans, who hoped for immunity from trade restrictions.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, within the walls a perpetual tumult was maintained by a population estimated at from 400,000 to 1,000,000. 'Men, women, and children passed their lives, if not actually in the streets, at all events at their shop door,' screaming and vociferating. An endless throng of carts, mules, and impediments of every kind blocked the thoroughfares, till nervous strangers like Cardinal Bentivoglio found themselves reduced to a pitiable state of deafness and vertigo.

'Marvellously rich' were the shops in the Rues St. Denis, St. Honoré, and St. Martin; but 'the chiefe streetes of the Island are the very Bridges.'<sup>3</sup> Historians never tired of repeating how strangers would invariably make the mistake experienced by the eulogistic Piedmontese:

Pontes tam multis munitos œdibus atque  
 Artificum manibus, nusquam apparentibus undis  
 Fluminis, ut, si quis pertranseat inscius illos,  
 Se transire aliquas ignoret fluminis undas;  
 Quod, ne vera negem, primum michi contigit ipsi.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Corrozet (Gilles), *Les Antiquités, Croniques, et Singularités de Paris*, 1586, pp. 212, 161.

<sup>2</sup> Delamare (Nicholas), *Traité de la Police*, fol. Paris, 1705-38, vol. i. liv. i. titre vi. pp. 79, 80.

<sup>3</sup> Moryson (Fynes), *Itinerary*, 1617, part i. p. 194.

<sup>4</sup> *Histoire générale de Paris; Collection Haussmann. Paris et ses Historiens aux 14<sup>e</sup> et 15<sup>e</sup> Siècles*, 1867; *Antoni Astensis Epistolæ Heroicæ*, p. 530.

On the Petit Pont the apothecaries displayed 'beautiful bowls filled with the most *recherché* remedies.' The millers on the Pont aux Meuniers turned the water power to account. The lath and mortar houses on the old wooden Pont au Change belonged to the goldsmiths, and contained a treasure of wealth that could not be equalled in any other European capital. Nevertheless, of the bridges that connected the town to the city, and consequently to the university, the Pont Notre-Dame was the only one available for carts and horses.<sup>1</sup> To such traffic must be added 'incredible swarms of judicial and legal officers, litigants, agents, merchants, bankers,' pleasure-seeking cavaliers and ladies who were ever moving to and from that wonderful Palais, the heart of the community and the centre of interests as diverse as can well be imagined. Troops of barefooted pilgrims journeyed thither from afar to worship the instruments of our redemption enshrined at the Sainte-Chapelle. The mammon of unrighteousness held a yet larger congregation on 'the plain pitched walke' open to the sky which served as the 'Pallace of Exchange.'<sup>2</sup> In celebration of royal entries or marriages, emperors, kings, and princes feasted in the great hall. Their banquet would be spread on that marble table which the comedians of the *basoche* periodically used as a stage,<sup>3</sup> and round which the chief law officers of the crown habitually sat to sell justice to the highest bidder. 'In Paris the court of justice may be considered as hell,' says Cellini. He moreover avers that from its scenes of din and uproar Dante had derived ideas for his *Inferno*. Every spare corner in the Pandemonium was leased by the bailiff of the Palais either to lawyers *pour y assigner lieu à leurs parties*,<sup>4</sup> or to tradesmen who were mostly booksellers. Round the interior of the courtyards artisans erected their sheds. The corridors within favoured many a lover's assignation, and under the patronage of Henry III became the resort of the fashionable world. Here and in the adjoining Salle des Merciers dealers exhibited all manner of merchandise, from old clothes to the latest novelty in ladies' attire, or those elegant nicknacks for which the city was already celebrated.<sup>5</sup>

The seat of the Paris parliament and of the various government offices, 'to discourse on the duties of all the place-holders in the Palais would be endless.'<sup>6</sup> The courts opened at six o'clock during the summer, at seven during the winter months. The judges would sit an extra hour on receipt of an *écu* from each contending party.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Amb. vén.* vol. ii. p. 598. Moryson, part iii. p. 69.

<sup>2</sup> Coryat (Tom), *Cruautés*, 1611, ed. 1776, p. 80.

<sup>3</sup> Saaval (Henri de), *Histoire et Recherches des Antiquités de la Ville de Paris*, 1724, in fol. vol. ii. p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Dubreul (J.) *Théâtre des Antiquités de Paris*, 1639, 4to. p. 171.

<sup>5</sup> *Amb. vén.* vol. ii. p. 598.

<sup>6</sup> Münster, *Cosmographie universelle*, 1575, vol. i. p. 184. <sup>7</sup> *Amb. vén.* vol. i. p. 242.

Francis I would give the nomination of a *général des monnaies* to a Mademoiselle de Roye *pour en faire son proffit*.<sup>1</sup> As a rule, however, every appointment, whether in the legal, judicial, or financial department, was purchased direct from the crown and could only be held by the *bourgeoisie*. Small unsalaried places would fetch 1,000 livres.<sup>2</sup> The post of a *conseiller du parlement* cost 6,000 livres; his pay amounted to one-tenth of that sum.<sup>3</sup> The *conseiller* of a minor court received 100 livres,<sup>4</sup> a stipend less than that of a *curé*. Office being bought for life could be sold again by the possessor. In 1580, M. Brisson gave 60,000 livres to M. de Bellièvre to vacate in his favour a presidentship in the Grande Chambre. *Je laisse à penser coëme le peuple de France pouvoit attendre bonne justice d'officiers pourvez d'estats si chèrement acheptez*.<sup>5</sup>

Large as was the number of placemen, not less formidable was the array of their subordinates. In the reign of Henry III the *basoche*, or society of lawyers' clerks, practising in the Palais and the Châtelet comprised nearly 10,000 members. Among other privileges they were ruled by an elective king, a chancellor, and a full complement of civil officials.<sup>6</sup> Their military staff maintained the discipline of their armed levies. Their martial zeal was proved by the manner in which 6,000 of their troops aided to suppress a revolt in Guienne in 1548. Their terpsichorean agility was displayed in the dances they occasionally performed for the king's delectation.<sup>7</sup> At the same time their literary and histrionic efforts gained them a permanent place amongst the fathers of the French drama.

Out of the 165 individuals in Paris and the fauxbourgs who demanded seignorial rights,<sup>8</sup> a large proportion claimed also the prerogative of seignorial justice. To those who were able to enforce their pretensions were due the thirteen different local tribunals in which temporal authority was exercised by seculars or ecclesiastics.<sup>9</sup> Till 1547 each boasted the power of inflicting capital punishment; each possessed its own dungeons and gibbet.<sup>10</sup> Paramount as the royal representative was, or ought to have been, the *prévôt de Paris*. He presided at the Grand Châtelet,<sup>11</sup> the earliest of Lutetian citadels. A quaint crescent-shaped mass, whose numerous and irregularly built turrets still guarded the Pont au Change, and whose portal was still called the Gate of Paris, even

<sup>1</sup> Cimber, *Archives curieuses de l'Histoire de France*, série 1<sup>e</sup>, tome iii. p. 97.

<sup>2</sup> *Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris sous le Règne de François I*, publ. par L. Lalanne, 1854, pp. 123, 124.

<sup>3</sup> *Amb. vén.* vol. i. p. 45.

<sup>4</sup> Miraulmont (P. de), *Mémoire sur l'Origine des Cours dc. dans l'ancien Palais*, 1584, p. 84.

<sup>5</sup> *Journal de Henri III*, par N. Poulain, 1621, pp. 74, 75. \* Corrozet, p. 118.

<sup>6</sup> Félibien et Lobineau, *Hist. de la Ville de Paris*, 1725, fol. vol. iv. p. 634.

<sup>7</sup> Dubreul, p. 802.

\* Corrozet, p. 203.

<sup>8</sup> Sauval, vol. ii. p. 590.

<sup>11</sup> Corrozet, pp. 49, 50.

as in the days when taxes had been there received, and justice administered under Roman provosts and in Cæsar's name. On the *prévôt's* assistant, the *lieutenant civil*, devolved the supervision of the various tradesmen and purveyors, as also the settlement of matters connected with leases, sales, contracts, wills, &c. The monopoly of drawing out all such deeds belonged to the notaries of the *châtelet*. The title of the *lieutenant criminel* was indicative of his duties. He and his civil colleague had the aid of thirty-two *commissaires* distributed amongst the sixteen districts of Paris. They were enjoined to acquaint themselves with the circumstances and migrations of the inhabitants, and to seize all disturbers of the peace, vagabonds, blasphemers, or any who ventured abroad at night without carrying a lighted candle. Further, the *châtelet* had at its command the *sergens à cheval et à verge* (tipstaves) and the *sergens du chevalier du guet* (police constables). Of the latter some were posted in sentry-boxes in the main thoroughfares; others 'patrolled the streets at night, making, however, such a clatter that evil-doers had plenty of time to escape.'<sup>1</sup> In fact, the authorities acknowledged in their own edicts that 'endless were the complaints they received of rioters, housebreakers, and murderers.' Doubtless they were more successful in their proceedings against the indigent and often starving university students who were threatened with the halter unless they desisted from singing *saluts* in the streets for alms.<sup>2</sup> During the captivity of Francis I, the political influence of small school children was regarded as dangerous to the state. Their annual election of a little king was forbidden, as also the singing of the old nursery rhyme used in the game:

Vive la France et son alliance !  
Vive la France et le roy aussi !<sup>3</sup>

The choice of their own magistrate, the *prévôt des marchands*, belonged by right to the municipality. Too often, however, the *échevins* found themselves forced to elect the king's nominee to reign in the *hôtel de ville*. He held the keys of Paris,<sup>4</sup> controlled the river traffic, levied taxes on all provisions entering the town,<sup>5</sup> granted passports,<sup>6</sup> commanded the civic garrison with its archers, crossbowmen, and arquebusiers, ruled the municipal police, and appointed 'the *quarteniers*, *cinquanteniers*, and *dirimiers* to regulate their respective districts as colonels, captains, and lieutenants regulate their regiments.'<sup>7</sup> He also performed the functions of a

<sup>1</sup> *Amb. vén.* vol. ii. p. 612.

<sup>2</sup> *Journal d'un Bourgeois*, p. 458.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 233. Pasquier gives the original version as :

'Vive l'enfance et son alliance !

'Vive l'enfance et son roy aussi !'

*Recherches*, vol. i. p. 877.

<sup>4</sup> Münster, *Cosmographie* (Belleforest), vol. i. p. 186.

<sup>5</sup> Sauval, vol. iii. pp. 245, 246.

<sup>6</sup> Münster, vol. i. p. 180.

<sup>7</sup> Corrozet, p. 67.

metropolitan board of works, of a guardian of highways, of a sanitary inspector, and of a poor law commission. Through his agency were raised the 'gifts' demanded by the sovereign. Not satisfied with these, Henry III would make summary and illegal seizure of all the moneys in the municipal treasury.<sup>1</sup>

The boundary between the royal and civic magistrate, the *prévôt de Paris* and the *prévôt des marchands*, is somewhat difficult to define. Yet it was more amicably observed than the limits within which Francis I sought to confine the temporal power of the great ecclesiastical jurisdictions. Take, for instance, the most ancient of French religious foundations, that of Sainte Geneviève. In time of calamity her precious relics would be carried to and from Notre-Dame with every mark of devout reverence, and escorted by all the notables in church and state. That his prayers for the public weal were accepted by God, and that his desire would be granted, was the conviction of each individual in the long procession.<sup>2</sup> Honour to the powerful patron saint necessitated honour to the priests attached to her service. Hence her ecclesiastical court was independent of the bishop of Paris, of the primate, and of all save the Holy Father. Even he, on visiting the capital, repaired to her shrine and took oath to respect the privileges of her community. Her convent, surrounded with high embattled walls and extensive fortifications, resembled a feudal castle rather than a religious house. Over a large part of the university of Saint Marcel her abbots enjoyed *les droits de haute moyenne et basse justice, de faire bruler, d'aubaine et d'Espagne et autres belles particularitez appropriées aux seigneurs qui ont droit de plain haubert. Et pource ils ont leurs prisons, juges, greffiers, procureurs fiscal et autres officiers de justice.*<sup>3</sup> With their co-rivals for temporal power, the bishops of Paris and the abbots of St. Martin, they maintained a ceaseless triangular duel, whilst one and all were ever ready to wage their strength against that of the châtelet. An incident, belonging, it is true, to the preceding century, deserves narration for the sake of the consummate insolence therein exhibited. In 1408 two students committed homicide and were hanged by order of the *prévôt de Paris*. The university considered this an encroachment on their jurisdiction. They disregarded the fact that the judge was not only the royal representative, but withal the special guardian of their own privileges. They condemned him to cut down the corpses, to kiss their lips, and in ludicrously penitential guise to convey the bodies to the church of the Mathurins.<sup>4</sup>

That these religious corporations had a strong basis for their claims, cannot be doubted by those who peruse the charters granted them by earlier sovereigns. Francis I acted on expediency rather

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires Journaux de Pierre de l'Estoile*, ed. 1876, vol. ii. pp. 59-61.

<sup>2</sup> Corrozet, pp. 13, 14.

<sup>3</sup> Dubreul, p. 210.

<sup>4</sup> Corrozet, pp. 135, 136.

than facts when he declared that the privileges the priests had thus secured they had obtained by mere usurpation, when he repeatedly reversed their judgments and denied their right to inflict capital punishment. Convinced of the necessity of re-establishing in Paris his own tribunal as the one supreme court of common law, 'he determined to suppress all these seignorial justices. Letters to that effect were issued Feb. 16, 1539, but were never carried into execution. This important reform was postponed till the reign of Louis le Grand.'<sup>1</sup>

According to the old-established system convicts were sent to man the navy. Under the sanction of Henry II it had been attempted to transport some of the most dangerous felons to the Brazils, that they might 'gain the barbarous natives to the right knowledge of God and to the exercise of true religion.'<sup>2</sup> Still the numerous gaols of Paris continued full to overflowing. The pillory was erected in the centre of the *halles*. It was sometimes occupied by bankrupts,<sup>3</sup> sometimes by the lepers and plague-suspects who had infringed the quarantine regulations.<sup>4</sup> Heretics were burnt in front of Notre-Dame, in the pig market, in the *halles*, and in the cemeteries. In 1535 the practice was somewhat checked by Paul III, 'who, learning the execrable and horrible justice taken by Francis I on the Lutherans,' wrote a letter of remonstrance to the king.<sup>5</sup> For the punishment of ordinary malefactors, gibbets were scattered all over the town, and were constantly at work. Occasionally the executioner's hand was stayed: the criminal had mounted the scaffold, when at the last moment a girl advanced from the crowd, demanded his hand in marriage, and by right of custom obtained his release.<sup>6</sup> The *maître des hautes œuvres* made the more elaborate exhibitions of his skill on the Place de Grève. It was there that Salfède was torn in piece by horses, strangled, beheaded, and quartered whilst Henry III and his young queen witnessed the spectacle from the *hôtel de ville*.<sup>7</sup> There similar tortures ended the sufferings of Jean Poltrot, the assassin, who had been brought from Orleans to Paris fast bound to the corpse of the duc de Guise.<sup>8</sup> There, too, in 1587 was Chantepie broken on the wheel. With intent to kill his wife's lover, he had conveyed to him a casket of such cunning workmanship that, when the lid was raised, six-and-thirty pistol barrels sent twice as many bullets whizzing through the room.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Delamare (N.) *Traité de la Police*, 1705-38, fol. vol. i. liv. i. titre ix. p. 140.

<sup>2</sup> Haton (Claude), *Mémoires de, Récit des Evénements accomplis de 1558 à 1582*, publ. par F. Bourquelot, 1857, 4to. vol. i. p. 37.

<sup>3</sup> Sauval, vol. ii. p. 602.

<sup>4</sup> Delamare, vol. i. liv. iv. titre xiii. p. 617.

<sup>5</sup> *Journal d'un Bourgeois*, p. 458.

<sup>6</sup> *Archives curieuses*, série 1, vol. viii. p. 371. Buchon, *Collection des Chroniques nationales*, vol. xl. p. 401.

<sup>7</sup> *Journal de Henri III*, p. 107.

<sup>8</sup> Haton, vol. i. p. 324.

<sup>9</sup> *Journal de Henri III*, p. 210.

But place of direst portent to fallen statesmen, disgraced favourites, and defaulting treasurers, was Montfaucon. Coryat described it as 'the fayrest gallows that ever I saw, built upon a little hillocke' outside Paris, and consisting 'of fourteen pillars of free stone.' The culprit's hands were tied behind his back, he was placed on a tumbrel, the executioner preceded him on horseback, the priest walked by his side. Passing up the Rue St. Denis, a halt was made before the gate of the Filles Dieu, where the sufferer received from the nuns the bread and wine known as *le dernier morceau du patient*. Then the procession hurried on through the Porte St. Denis to the Aeldama of Paris. There the offender expiated his crimes, real or imaginary, surrounded by the rotting and mangled corpses of less noteworthy delinquents who had been executed within the walls, and the equally mutilated effigies of those who had saved themselves by flight.<sup>1</sup> Of justice in masquerade some curious details are to be found in the records of the prefecture for 1599. The missing criminal had belonged to the châtelet. A shirt with ruffles was bought for 8 sols; a pair of black trunk hose for 20 sols; and an advocate's robe was hired for 12 sols. A lay figure made by a painter for 4 livres 8 sols was apparelled in these garments.<sup>2</sup> Attended by a priest, it was conducted to the scaffold and executed with the same ceremonies that would have been shown to the living subject.<sup>3</sup>

In the midst of these judicial barbarities, Belleforest affirms that 'nowhere were the poor so delicately fed.' This duty, hitherto performed by the church and the feudal seignor, had recently devolved on the state. The change had necessitated a new system. This was provided in 1544 by the municipality of Paris, and was entitled the Bureau des Pauvres.<sup>4</sup> Under its regulation the *procureur du roi* was installed as the *roi protecteur des pauvres*. Thirty-two *bourgeois commissaires*, comprising nobles, counsellors, ecclesiastics, lawyers, and merchants, were appointed to collect alms from households and in churches, and to act as relieving officers in the sixteen *quartiers* of the capital. They carried the public bounty to the homes of the poor and acquainted themselves with their necessities. For the aged and infirm they found shelter in the Hôpital des Petites Maisons at St. Germain. Little destitute children were boarded out amongst their own relatives at the expense of the *bureau*, those older were apprenticed to tradesmen, or sent to the Hôpital de la Trinité in the Rue St. Denis, a large industrial school where the blue-coated inmates were instructed in every description of handicraft. The orphans of citizens were consigned to the Hôpital du Saint-Esprit, those of strangers to the Enfants-Rouges.

<sup>1</sup> Sauval, vol. ii. p. 587. Also Piganiol de la Force, *Description historique de la Ville de Paris*, 1765, vol. iv. pp. 78-80.

<sup>2</sup> Sauval, vol. iii. p. 622. <sup>3</sup> *Amb. vén.* vol. ii. p. 614. <sup>4</sup> Dubreuil, pp. 699-706.

Poor travellers were directed to St. Gervais, whilst Les Filles-Dieu offered a temporary refuge to women on their journeys or pilgrimages. The distress of *les pauvres honteux* was privately alleviated by the *curé* or churchwarden. The *commissaires* met twice a week at the *bureau* in the Place de Grève to arrange accounts, to assess those citizens who refused voluntary contributions, and to hear the complaints of the poor. A master barber was always present on these occasions to relieve the afflicted and to detect the impostor. A doctor and a surgeon were yearly nominated to attend the paupers in their own dwellings. Every barber, before he could graduate as a master, had to practise gratuitously for six months amongst the sick poor of the district allotted to him. Few of the officers of the *bureau* received any emolument save in exceptional cases. Thus during the plague in 1553 the municipality was required to engage four doctors and six barbers at stipends varying from 400 to 120 livres.<sup>1</sup>

With equal zeal did the *bureau* attack their supplementary task, the repression of mendicancy. They rigidly struck off their lists unworthy claimants for aid, including those who neglected to wear on the right shoulder the red and yellow cross that was the pauper's badge. Strolling and penniless waifs were returned to their own provinces, 'for Paris cannot support the poor of the whole kingdom.' Able-bodied but incorrigible beggars were imprisoned at night, and by day were chained together in couples and taken out to work as scavengers.<sup>2</sup>

The leper-houses were under the direction of the order of St. Lazare. Sufferers from erysipelas were treated at the Hôpital St. Antoine. But the Hôtel-Dieu was the only general hospital. Early in the century the surveillance had been transferred from the church to the municipality. The nursing was entrusted to the St. Augustine nuns: *Pour les gaiges et loyers elles ont la grace de Dieu et auront Paradis à la fin*. Curious must have been the spectacle yearly witnessed on Easter day when the goldsmiths' wives attired in all their bravery betook themselves to the hospital wards to tend the sick, to dress their wounds,<sup>3</sup> and to lay public claim to that gift of charity which Belleforest notes as the special attribute of the Parisian lady. Nor was the custom unattended with danger, for so fetid was the atmosphere that in 1581 the little children admitted as patients died daily from its poisonous effects.<sup>4</sup> Even after the addition made to the establishment by Duprat's wealth, the accommodation must have been sorely inadequate to the needs of a fast increasing population. Félibien relates how into one curtainless pallet would be thrust six and even nine sufferers, the plague-stricken together with those prostrated by

<sup>1</sup> Félibien, vol. iv. p. 762.

<sup>2</sup> Félibien, vol. iv. p. 713.

<sup>3</sup> Dubreuil, p. 60.

<sup>4</sup> Sauval, vol. iii. p. 615.

other maladies.<sup>1</sup> When discharged as cured they were fed at their own homes for one week at the expense of the institution. The bodies of those who died could be obtained by the surgeons for the purpose of dissection.<sup>2</sup>

When Machiavelli visited Paris he found *una moria si grande che ve ne muore più di mille al dì*. Throughout the century public and private records testify to the constant recurrence of plague and other epidemics. *Aucunement nette* was the usual report of an official inspection of the town. Filth and mud lined the streets, and were piled up against the gates of the churches. When large crowds were expected, as on the occasion of the funeral of Louise of Savoy, the *prévôt de Paris* ordered the interment of the corpses and other relics of humanity that were attached to the gibbets and walls, lest the tainted air should produce a pestilence.<sup>3</sup> After the massacre of St. Bartholomew the dead lay exposed for two or three weeks to the summer sun; at last the *prévôt des marchands* employed the gravediggers of the cemetery of S. Innocents, who for 20 livres buried 1,100 bodies in eight days.<sup>4</sup> Under ordinary circumstances, but still more frequently in times of sickness, the clergy would delay or refuse to bury the poor till assured that the deceased had remembered the interests of the church in their last testament.<sup>5</sup>

In the heart of the town, and approached through the shambles of the *halles*, was the cemetery of the Innocents. Its age was already reckoned by centuries. *La terre on dit estre si pourrisante qu'un corps humain y est consommé en neuf jours*.<sup>6</sup> Dogs prowled undisturbed amongst the bones with which the place was strewn. At night thieves and other desperate characters found sanctuary within its walls. The medical faculty urged the need of closing a burial-ground which was at once a scandal to decency and a danger to the public health, but in vain. A prolongation of its existence was insured by a method of which the loathsomeness could only be palliated on the score that it provided the Parisians with *tres belles et bonnes glasses à représenter la grandeur et l'impertinence de nostre vanité humaine*.<sup>7</sup> The limited area of the cemetery was economised by the erection of eighty arcades. Some of these were the gift of munificent citizens like Nicolas Flamel, and were decorated in fresco with the legend of *les trois morts et les trois vifs*, or other subjects of a kindred nature. Sheltered by these cloisters, milliners exhibited their wares, promenaders strolled, and women dictated love letters to public scribes, whilst around them labourers pursued their task of interring and disinterring the dead.<sup>8</sup> Overhead, supported by the arches, rose tier upon tier the

<sup>1</sup> Félibien, vol. iv. p. 679.

<sup>2</sup> Félibien, vol. iv. p. 764.

<sup>3</sup> Sauval, vol. iii. p. 615.

<sup>4</sup> Sauval, vol. iii. p. 634.

<sup>5</sup> Félibien, vol. iv. p. 619.

<sup>6</sup> Corrozet, p. 67.

<sup>7</sup> Dubreul, p. 618.

<sup>8</sup> *Revue universelle des Arts*, vol. iii. pp. 11-29.

*galetas* or open lofts. Thither the older tenants of the tombs were removed in various stages of decay in order to make room for new comers. Nor even then were they left in peace. During the siege of the capital in 1590 the famishing inhabitants attempted to manufacture into bread the dust of their fathers, but,

Ce détestable mets avança leur trépas,  
Et ce repas pour eux fut le dernier repas.<sup>1</sup>

Yet it must not be concluded from the parsimony with which the Parisians grudged to the dead the earth necessary to cover them, that land was hard to be got, or that the fortifications inclosed a mere wilderness of houses. Vineyards, cornfields, pastures, and windmills, found ample space. There were besides the extensive *cultures* belonging to the different religious foundations, and which were employed for tillage or horticulture.<sup>2</sup> To satisfy the Valois passion for architectural embellishment, numerous untenanted or dilapidated palaces and *hôtels* had been pulled down, and the land offered for the erection of new streets. Still much of it remained waste. Indeed, considering the high rate of interest generally prevailing, town property does not seem to have been a very profitable investment. On the demolition of the Hôtel de Bourgogne in 1543, Jean Rouvet bought the ground from the crown. Forthwith he let a large portion to the Confrères de la Passion at a yearly rent of 225 liv. tour., with right to them to purchase at 4,500 liv. tour.; terms indicating a return of five per cent. on the capital.<sup>3</sup>

Surrounding the châtelet was the *grande boucherie*, whose proprietors claimed for their rights a pedigree of 500 years. Though no longer allowed to monopolise the meat trade, they still possessed their own jurisdiction and gaol.<sup>4</sup> The display of animals in the horse market could only be compared to a military review. The *halles* had been rebuilt by Henry II, and every trade was assigned its own locality. To watch the rapid disappearance of the enormous quantity of poultry and game brought thither on certain mornings, was one of the recognised sights of Paris. The stranger who like Moryson fell among thieves, was fain to replenish his wardrobe by resorting to the brokers of old clothes in La Friperie.<sup>5</sup> The art collector might occasionally purchase in the *mégisserie* some treasure from the cargoes of images, pictures, and ornaments that had been transported thither from English churches by the iconoclastic zeal of our reformers.<sup>6</sup> Nor in any sketch of Paris, however imperfect, can so famed a mart as the fair belonging to the abbot

<sup>1</sup> Voltaire, *La Henriade*, chant x.      <sup>2</sup> Delamare, vol. i. liv. i. p. 75, plan vi.

<sup>3</sup> Parfait, *Hist. du Théâtre françois*, 1745-49, vol. i. p. 59.

<sup>4</sup> 'Ont chambre de conseil, seps et prisons, scel et jurisdiction,' Dubreul, p. 785.

<sup>5</sup> Moryson, part i. p. 195.

<sup>6</sup> Corrozet, p. 172.

of St. Germain pass unnoticed. Within a space of 322 by 200 feet were nine streets of small shops all built of wood; one large roof of the same material covered in the whole structure. During the eight days the festivity lasted the trade in jewellery, linen, cloth, and pictures was considerable, and proportionate also were the tolls levied thereon by the proprietor.<sup>1</sup> Less profitable was the Landit, or fair appertaining to the abbot of St. Denis, though in animation, at all events, it equalled its rival. In 1556 the rector of the university, the masters of art, and other dignitaries discarded their long robes and hoods for 'dissolute and indecent accoutrements and clothes,' armed themselves with swords and sticks, and, accompanied by their followers, went to the merrymaking, where they encouraged riots which ended in bloodshed and murder. A time-honoured claim to all the parchment sold there was the pretext for this conduct, which drew upon the rector an admonition from parliament.<sup>2</sup> Sauval notices the fact that all the fairs were held near some church, and owned by some ecclesiastic. All save that of St. Germain took place on some holy day, not even excluding the last three days of Holy Week.

The few years that intervened between the visit of Lippomano and that of Moryson to Paris, had sufficed to change it from a town of wood and mortar into a substantial stone-built city. The houses rose to four and even six storeys, the windows were glazed,<sup>3</sup> and the walls hung with mats as a protection against the cold.<sup>4</sup> The streets were lighted by candles suspended from every first-floor window.<sup>5</sup> In addition to the different *rues des estuves* and *rues des estuves aux femmes*, public baths were to be found at every step; in times of pestilence they were closed.<sup>6</sup> To the nomadic taste of the native population, as well as to the constant ebb and flow of provincials and foreigners, was due the infinite variety of furnished lodgings. They could be hired by the day or otherwise, from the palace of the great seignor to the little room at two or three écus a month.<sup>7</sup> With an apartment at this latter price and with food from a *traiteur*, a gentleman would find himself lodged and fed comfortably enough for 150 ecus a year.<sup>8</sup> In 1571 the good paved roads that had been constructed from Orleans and Rouen to the capital had rendered possible the establishment of *coches à la mode d'Italie*,<sup>9</sup> the same that Moryson disparages as 'long waggons covered with cloath,' journeying very slowly. For town use carriages could be hired at seven or eight rials a day.<sup>10</sup> However, as this luxurious mode of conveyance had been prohibited

<sup>1</sup> Piganiol de la Force, vol. vii. pp. 196, 197.

<sup>2</sup> Moryson, part i. p. 188.

<sup>3</sup> Félibien, vol. iv. p. 676.

<sup>4</sup> *Amb. vén.* vol. ii. p. 608.

<sup>5</sup> Corrozet, p. 190.

<sup>6</sup> Félibien, vol. iv. p. 769.

<sup>7</sup> *Amb. vén.* vol. ii. p. 488.

<sup>8</sup> Delamare, liv. iv. titre xiii. p. 628.

<sup>9</sup> Moryson, part i. p. 196.

<sup>10</sup> Moryson, part iii. p. 60.

by a decree of parliament in 1563, judges and counsellors, for the sake of consistency, kept to their old custom of riding on mules decked with foot cloths.<sup>1</sup> Saddle horses thus attired could be had for fifteen sous a day.<sup>2</sup> Courtiers careered about the streets full tilt and sword in hand; sometimes two would be mounted on the same steed. Ladies rode behind their cavaliers pillion fashion.<sup>3</sup> They were also carried in litters. Young unmarried women might go alone to a neighbouring church: on other occasions they seldom left the house unattended, but walked a step or two behind their mother, followed by a serving maid or lackey.<sup>4</sup>

Writing in 1578, Bodin assures us that during the dynasty of the Valois kings prices had increased twenty-fold; thus the cost of a sheep or a calf had advanced from sous to livres.<sup>5</sup> The change was mainly due to the sudden influx of gold. As it had effected a proportionate rise in wages, the interests of the working classes were nowise prejudiced. More detrimental to their prosperity were the taxes which the king, municipality, and *hauts justiciers* levied on everything that was brought in or out of the town. Yet so great was the tendency to centralisation that food was cheaper in Paris than in any other part of France, and 'so abundant that it seemed to fall from the skies.' The superfluity encouraged that over-indulgence in the pleasures of the table which Bodin and Lipomano alike deprecated as the most pernicious of the national defects. We find Dr. Silvius teaching that it was advisable to get thoroughly well drunk once a month in order to stimulate the digestive organs.<sup>6</sup> Montaigne mentions a ten-bottle gentleman of his acquaintance. Indeed, the acknowledged prevalence of the vice could alone have rendered possible the insolence with which Henry III pretended to condone as a post-prandial indiscretion the decree by which the doctors of the Sorbonne pronounced his deposition.<sup>7</sup> Keepers of inns and eating-houses far outnumbered other tradesmen. The business of the pastrycook became a high art, and was strictly protected; at the same time those who belonged to it were forbidden under divers penalties to make patties of bad meat or fish, or tarts of sour cream, 'for fear of the inconveniences and maladies that might arise.'<sup>8</sup> To warm up pastry that had been cooked the previous day was also a misdemeanour. But chief of all aids to *gourmandise* were the *traiteurs*. They sold to the *bourgeois* the fowl larded, cooked, and ready for table for less than the retail market price of the raw material. They supplied

<sup>1</sup> Coryat, vol. i. p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> Moryson, part iii. p. 60.

<sup>3</sup> Montfaucon, *Monumens de la Monarchie française*, 1729-33, vol. v. pl. xlvi.

<sup>4</sup> *Amb. vén.* vol. ii. p. 560.

<sup>5</sup> Bodin (Jean), *Discours sur le Rehaussement et Diminution des Monnoyes &c.* 1578, 8vo. (No pagination.)

<sup>6</sup> *Essais de Montaigne*, publ. par Leclerc, 1836, vol. i. p. 411.

<sup>7</sup> *Journal de Henri III*, p. 200. <sup>8</sup> *Archives curieuses*, série 1, vol. viii. pp. 377-87.

Amphitryon with every requisite for a dinner party, either at their own house or his, charging so much a head 'from a teston up to twenty écus.'<sup>1</sup> The most popular of these establishments, that of 'the Moor,' was frequented by all ranks from the king down to the shop-boy, who had no hesitation in expending three livres on his dinner.<sup>2</sup> Artisans and small tradesmen fed on mutton, roebuck, and partridge; they fasted on whale, salmon, cod, and salt herrings.<sup>3</sup> During Lent severe restrictions were imposed upon the sale of any sort of meat, game, or poultry. Under Francis I women were sent to the stake for eating forbidden food on Fridays and Saturdays.<sup>4</sup> Henry II caused to be publicly burnt an indulgence by which Julius III had sanctioned the consumption of butter, eggs, and cheese during the penitential season.<sup>5</sup>

In the most unpretending households silver cups, plates, spoons, and basins were in common use. In richer establishments both the precious metals appeared in profusion on the buffet;<sup>6</sup> turkey carpets were spread on the floor,<sup>7</sup> and the beds were adorned with gold cloth and embroidery. The general extravagance was increased rather than checked by the sumptuary laws. Ladies were forbidden to array themselves in fabrics heavy with the spoil of Peruvian mines. Therefore they imported from Milan dresses made according to the letter of the law, yet costing 500 *escuz la façon*.<sup>8</sup> The mask, the shield of intrigue which completed the outdoor costume of the great lady, was prohibited to the *bourgeoise*. She was, moreover, restricted to the use of woollen stuffs, to a certain silk material called *armoisin*, to cloth hoods, and to narrow sleeves of black, a colour of which even her wedding dress was principally composed.<sup>9</sup> In consequence of such regulations fifty to sixty respectable women were arrested one Sunday and imprisoned by the *prévôt des marchands* for dressing above their station.<sup>10</sup> As for the men, 'every lackey and scoundrel went about appalled in silk.' The wardrobe of a young courtier contained at least twenty-five to thirty different suits. A fraudulent financier, overburdened with wealth, used to send his shirts to Flanders to be washed and gauffed. Ultimately he was stripped by the executioner of all save one of these dainty garments and hanged for his peculations, a *finale* which filled Bodin with infinite satisfaction.

A large portion of the people's amusement consisted in witnessing the festivities of their rulers. They saw the king eat his dinner;<sup>11</sup> they watched the nobles in jousts and torneys; they gazed

<sup>1</sup> *Amb. vén.* vol. ii. p. 602.

<sup>2</sup> Bodin.

<sup>3</sup> *Amb. vén.* vol. i. p. 12, vol. ii. p. 574.

<sup>4</sup> *Journal d'un Bourgeois*, p. 447.

<sup>5</sup> Félibien, vol. iv. p. 762.

<sup>6</sup> Bodin. <sup>7</sup> *Mémoires Journalaux de Pierre de l'Estoile*, ed. 1876, vol. iii. p. 256.

<sup>8</sup> Bodin.

<sup>9</sup> *Amb. vén.* vol. ii. pp. 556, 562.

<sup>10</sup> *Journal de Henri III*, p. 245.

<sup>11</sup> Hantzner, p. 154.

on royal pageants. Often these took the form of a water frolic; the river would be covered with Neptunes, sirens, tritons, and dolphins, whilst enthusiastic crowds thronged the quays.<sup>1</sup> Henry III kept at the Louvre for his own diversion lions, bears, and bulls to fight with the *dogues*.<sup>2</sup> The citizens probably found such amusement beyond their means, for in Braun's map of Paris, 1572, we see no trace of the baiting pits which figure so distinctly in his plan of London. Those who diverted themselves with dice, cards, or ninepins, were liable to corporal punishment,<sup>3</sup> but to hazard money on tennis was differently viewed. Francis I had wished to legalise all debts thus contracted. It was essentially the national pastime. Lippomano speaks of 1,800 racket courts, and declares that 1,000 écus were daily spent on tennis balls. *Al fresco* dances in honour of the patron saint of the parish too often ended in the abduction of women, in quarrels and murders.<sup>4</sup> Equally discountenanced by the law were the irreverent personations of sacred characters given by the parishioners of St. Nicolas on Corpus Christi day. In the Pré aux Clercs Huguenots sang their psalms.<sup>5</sup> In the Place St. Antoine black bears and wild men of the woods were on view.<sup>6</sup> Bands of strolling players, jugglers, and mountebanks haunted the streets.<sup>7</sup> Five sous, or the half-day's wages of an artisan, was willingly paid for admittance to an exhibition of horsemanship.<sup>8</sup> Four sous was the entrance fee to the performance given at the Hôtel Bourbon by a troupe of Italian comedians known as I Gelosi.<sup>9</sup> In the markets Les Enfants sans Souci gave delight to the multitude; a short *sottise* was the prelude, a *moralité* the *pièce de résistance*, and a brief farce the conclusion of their entertainment. Three or four times a year the Basochiens played pieces of their own composition in the Palais, burlesquing the great men of the day with more wit than prudence. At the Hôtel de Bourgogne the Confrères de la Passion were busy under the injunctions of parliament exchanging the buffoonery of their old sacred mysteries for pieces of a more secular character. The actors mounted the stage at eight in the morning and toiled on till evening, a pause being made from twelve till two for dinner. Sometimes the play lasted six or seven months: mass, sermon, and vespers were alike forgotten, whilst the town flocked to that 'house of Satan' where drunkenness, gambling, and every kind of debauchery revelled unrestrained.<sup>10</sup> Almost identical evils were said to attend the processions that for a time became the dominant folly. Henry III set the example, and was ever ready to take the leading

<sup>1</sup> Montfaucon, vol. v. pl. vii. *Journal de Henri III*, p. 89.

<sup>2</sup> *Journal de Henri III*, p. 123.

<sup>3</sup> *Journal d'un Bourgeois*, p. 205.

<sup>4</sup> Félibien, vol. iv. p. 764.

<sup>5</sup> Félibien, vol. iv. p. 733.

<sup>6</sup> Hentzner, p. 149.

<sup>7</sup> Félibien, vol. iv. p. 764.

<sup>8</sup> Pierre de l'Estoile, vol. ii. p. 81.

<sup>9</sup> *Journal de Henri III*, p. 38.

<sup>10</sup> Parfait, *Hist. du Théâtre français, 1745-49*, vol. iii. p. 238.

part in such extravagances when rehearsed by his own Confrérie des Pénitents. Once, however, on the occasion of a solemn pageant of the church he forbade any woman to appear, alleging that, where ladies are there is no devotion.<sup>1</sup> Later on political discord succeeded in enduing the love of excitement with the transitory fervour of a religious revival. In the depth of the winter of 1589 we read that not only nude men and women, but even young children, paraded the streets at midnight 'in processional devotion.'<sup>2</sup> Popular preachers would enthral the attention of their audience for several consecutive hours by dissertations full of the wildest invective against those in power. As for the squibs, epitaphs, sonnets, dialogues &c. printed daily and hawked about the town, their name was legion, and the license allowed them incomprehensible. Yet though in these satires abhorrence of the infamy of their rulers finds utterance in the coarsest expressions, some harmonious chord of toleration, some thrilling note of patriotism, sounds ever and anon above the blatant ribaldry.

The troubles of church and state have no place in this sketch. Yet I may briefly notice some anomalies incidental to that period of transition. Women worshipped an old statue of Isis in the church of St. Germain.<sup>3</sup> Pasquier discoursed on the religious rites of elephants.<sup>4</sup> The sick repaired to the cemetery of the Innocents to make vows before the holy thorn, whose branches, long aforesaid, withered, appeared on the morrow of St. Bartholomew 1572 clad in fresh green foliage and white blossoms—'a sign of the delight experienced by the Almighty in the massacre of his foes.'<sup>5</sup> Catholics and Huguenots pillaged churches, desecrated tombs, and rivalled each other in deeds of disgusting sacrilege. The only unseen power they feared was that exercised by the professors of the black art. These were therefore to be destroyed. In 1572 the accursed brotherhood mustered 30,000.<sup>6</sup> From time to time one of them would be burnt; still many and bitter were the complaints of the 'full liberty enjoyed by such vermin.' But what else could be expected? For was not Henry III himself 'a sorcerer and the friend of sorcerers'? He was known to make oblations to the devil in the Bois de Vincennes. He had not only rescued from justice men condemned to death for witchcraft, but had sentenced their judges to pay fines and damages. *Quelle honte à un roy! Quelle douleur à un pauvre peuple très chrestien de vivre sous l'impïété d'un tel tyran!*<sup>7</sup> However, when the murder of the two Guises had exhausted the patience of the Parisians, we find them

<sup>1</sup> *Journal de Henri III*, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> Pierre de l'Estoile, vol. iii. p. 247.

<sup>3</sup> Dubreul, p. 271.

<sup>4</sup> Pasquier (E. N.) *Recherches &c.* vol. ii. p. 252.

<sup>5</sup> Corrozet, pp. 190, 191. Haton, vol. ii. p. 681. <sup>6</sup> *Journal de Henri III*, p. 200.

<sup>7</sup> *Les Sorcelleries de Henri de Valois et les Oblations qu'il faisoit au Diable dans le Bois de Vincennes, avec la Figure des Demons*, chez Didier Millot, 1589, p. 13.

also invoking the Satanic aid. In January 1589, whilst offices for the repose of their martyred favourites were celebrated in the metropolitan churches, this very christian people placed on the altar wax figures representing the king. Between each service they uttered certain incantations and struck a knife into the royal effigy, piercing it to the heart at the end of the fortieth and final mass. The unhallowed charm worked well. Before the summer was over, the dagger of a monk had delivered France from the last of the Valois.

At the same time expired an Opinion, 'the bastard daughter of Reason and Passion,'<sup>1</sup> who during her short career had proclaimed, *Faire service au roy et respecter sa majesté, ce n'est pas servir un tyran qui indignement porte le nom du roy et qui renverse les loix du royaume et en aliene le domaine. Combattre pour le service du roy, c'est combattre pour le royaume, pour sa patrie et pour l'estat, et non pas pour une personne particuliere.*<sup>2</sup> Two centuries later her descendants reissued from obscurity.

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<sup>1</sup> Pasquier, vol. ii. p. 251.

<sup>2</sup> *Advertissement des nouvelles Cruautés et Inhumanités desseignées par le Tyran de la France*, par Bolin Thierry, 1689, p. 13.